

27 April 2022

CONSULTATION ON THE SALE OF THE REX COMMENCES

In November 2021, Council decided not to proceed with the Hepburn Hub project, which was to be located at The Rex building in Vincent Street. Council purchased the building in 2016 to accommodate a new library, Council offices, public toilets, community auditorium and community co-working space, known as the Hepburn Hub project. Some building works were undertaken before the project ceased.

Mayor, Cr Tim Drylie, said that “Councillors made a difficult decision to end the Hepburn Hub project and undertake a process to sell The Rex building, understanding that it would result in mixed feelings in the community.”

“Council recognises the benefits of the services and facilities the Hepburn Hub at The Rex would have offered, however, the uncertainty of the final cost, previous construction issues, Council’s financial position and the financial impacts of COVID, storm recovery and operating in a rate capping environment, meant Council determined the additional costs and other risks were too much to incur.”

“Now that the Hepburn Hub project will not proceed at The Rex, Council intends to sell The Rex, however, wants to consider community views before ultimately determining to proceed or not with the sale.”

“While at this point, we don’t see a clear purpose for retaining The Rex, given the lack of finances to undertake any works at the site, if there is strong community support for using The Rex for a worthwhile and suitable purpose, we may be open to exploring alternate ideas, but they would need to be assessed for financial viability and on a range of other factors”, said Cr Tim Drylie.

Council is inviting individuals and community groups to complete a short survey regarding the intended sale of The Rex building. Community groups are encouraged to discuss the proposed sale with their members. Council is not seeking detailed submissions or business cases.

"We encourage groups from across the Shire to take advantage of the discussion pack that has been created and make a submission on the intended sale of The Rex," said Cr Tim Drylie.

More information on the survey and the discussion paper are available on our Participate Hepburn website.

"It is important to note that Council will not revive the Hepburn Hub at The Rex project as it is outside the scope of what we can consider now. We understand the disappointment that many people in the community will be feeling now that we are beginning the sale process for The Rex. However, it is important that we focus our energies on the next steps which is in part to undertake a planning project that will review possible solutions of staffing accommodation and community facilities that were to be included in the Hepburn Hub," said Cr Tim Drylie.

Complete a short survey via Participate Hepburn at <https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au/>.

Submission can be made until 5pm on Friday 20 May 2022. It is expected that Council will make a decision on the sale of the building at its Council Meeting in either June or July.

- ENDS -