

EDITORIAL

MOUNT Gambier's forestry sector will be thrown into the global spotlight during the highly anticipated AUSTimber expo next month.

Around 10,000 people - from across the nation and overseas - are expected to flock to the Blue Lake city for what will be the world's only softwood and hardwood timber expo.

A massive coup for the city, the event is poised to be one of the largest in Mount Gambier's history.

With the event being held over a weekend, Mount Gambier retailers have an opportunity to cash in on the spoils of the timber expo.

While the latest logging machinery will captivate visitors at the site north of Mount Gambier, others will be enticed into the city's shopping strip, coffee shops and restaurants.

With the city swelling in numbers, traders must unite and ensure they are open for business over the entire weekend.

Despite the fact that it could boost revenue, it will also help create a reputation that Mount Gambier is a vibrant regional city that welcomes major events and is open for business.

The event is also an injection of confidence for the city that boasts one of the largest forestry plantation estates and associated industries in Australia.

Despite moves to forward sell the government-owned plantations, the forestry sector in the Green Triangle sector is a major showcase for the world.

Even though the sale may create some uncertainty in the sector and has led to concerns about the long-term security of jobs, plantations will certainly remain as one of the key assets and drivers of employment in our region.

The South East is built on the forestry sector and it is fitting that the location will host the major international conference, showcasing the diversity of our cutting-edge industry.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Grants assist veteran community in leading independent lifestyles



SECKER'S SAY

By Member for Barker
PATRICK SECKER

MANY community groups from my electorate contact my office for my support with obtaining funding through government programs.

I am always happy to write letters of support for community groups and encourage people to contact my office on 8531 2466 if you are applying for funding.

One fantastic program that many groups in Barker apply for and have been successful in obtaining is the Veteran and Community Grants funding.

Veteran and Community Grants are available to ex-service and community

organisations, veteran representative groups and private organisations that contribute to the health and welfare of the veteran community.

Veteran and Community Grants help improve the health and wellbeing of the veteran community by supporting a range of projects where they can learn skills to help them remain independent and active, particularly for the elderly living by themselves.

In the latest round of funding announcements, I was pleased that Morgan RSL Sub-Branch was successful in acquiring \$8941 to fund a new refrigerator and to re-surface a wooden floor.

The previous round was very promising for Renmark RSL sub-branch, who were thrilled with receiving \$20,548 towards upgraded kitchen facilities and installation of air conditioning.

I am pleased that these organisations

have benefited from this program, but I am worried that other organisations across Barker will not be able to benefit in the future because of the cuts in funding.

I am extremely disappointed that in the 2011/12 Budget the Labor Government announced savage cuts to this extremely popular funding program.

The Gillard Government has cut \$8m in funding from this program and the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program over the next four years.

The Coalition recognises and appreciates the work done by volunteer veteran welfare and pensions officers, advocates and others in the veteran and ex-service community.

Cutting vital Commonwealth funding support will only make this work even harder.

The Border Watch

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Have your say.

The Border Watch values your opinion.

If you have a view or wish to comment on any community issue we would like to hear from you.

Please write to: **The Editor**
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Preference will be given to letters less than 200 words. Longer letters will be subject to editor's discretion. All letters must carry author's full name and address. Include a daytime telephone number for verification. The Border Watch reserves the right to edit letters for legal purposes and space restrictions.

STREET SWEEPER

Should Mount Gambier City Council's higher priority be building an indoor aquatic centre or developing the old rail lands?



LAURENA BYERS
Mount Gambier

I'd build the pool. It gives the kids something to do rather than a garden they just sit it.



GARY AGIO
Mount Gambier

We've got a swimming pool. I know people want an indoor one, but the railway lands are an eyesore.



KIRSTEN WHEATLEY
Mount Gambier

The railway lands. It's overrun with weeds and it just stands out.