

Island's history to be shelved

THE PHILLIP Island and District Historical Society (PIDHS) is disappointed by the Bass Coast Shire Council's concept designs for the Cowes Cultural and Community Centre, with no replacement of the society's museum.

Under the proposed plans, the historical society will have displays in different locations throughout the centre, particularly in the new library area.

At present, the society has its own building at the Cowes Cultural Centre, which allows visitors to explore the museum on Thursday and Saturday mornings, as well as by appointment for individuals or groups.

PIDHS committee member Pam Rothfield said the council is trying to fit all of the small organisations into one building, which won't function effectively.

"They're trying to compromise to the extent that it makes things totally unsatisfactory and it jeopardises the future of a number of smaller organisations - the historical society, the Phillip Island and District Genealogical Society and the Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre (PICAL)," she said.

"Under the proposed plans, the displays will be held under glass cabinets, so there's no touching or feeling, no interaction with visitors and the displays.

"There's a security issue, there's a sun issue if it's a lovely bright hall - a lot of the valuable artefacts will perish with sunlight."

PIDHS vice-president Cheryl Overton stressed the importance of local history.

"You don't just learn history in a classroom and you don't learn history when you Google as much as you learn history when you go to a local historical society," she said.

"You learn why Grossard Point's called Grossard, you learn about the rich businessmen that owned the ferries that fought against having the first bridge built, you learn a whole lot of little things that you don't get taught from books - it's a hands on experience and it's all there.

"There are a lot of things there that you can learn about - where you live and where you came from, you can learn about your heritage.

"A lot of our displays you can't put in a glass case, like the figurehead of the SS Speke ship and

parts of the original Phillip Island Bridge."

A suggestion has been made that the PIDHS is not worthy of its own building, as its only open two days per week.

But as Ms Rothfield points out, the Wonthaggi Historical Society is only open Saturdays and during Rotary Sunday Markets, the Cranbourne Shire Historical Society is open two days per week, the Koo Wee Rup Historical Society is open one day per week and the Hastings Historical Society is open two days per week.

All of these societies have sufficient buildings.

"There will be an element of loss when these organisations are integrated into a library or hall, and to lose that compounds everything else that the Island has already lost," Ms Rothfield said.

"We've lost our tip, we've lost our hospital, and there is no wonder that the Phillip Island Progress Association is actually so strong.

"It's a sad thing that we've continually got to stand up and say 'Hey, Wonthaggi's got this, why don't we have it?' but that's really how people feel on the Island."



Phillip Island and District Historical Society committee member Pam Rothfield and vice-president Cheryl Overton are disappointed with Bass Coast Shire Council's proposed plans to not replace the society's museum as part of the Cowes Cultural and Community Centre development. rg010816



Patron of the Inverloch Historical Society, Eulalie Brewster's home and shed are chockers with various items and artefacts as a result of the inaction to find the society a suitable home. Rg020816

Homeless society

THE Phillip Island and District Historical Society isn't the only historical society being neglected in the area, with the Inverloch Historical Society still without a home.

The society has a band of dedicated volunteers and over 4000 various items and artefacts, but nowhere for the public to access and enjoy it.

The society's patron Eulalie Brewster stores a great deal of the society's artefacts at her home in Inverloch.

It makes her feel disappointed there is nowhere to store and display the items.

"We have such a good collection of stuff. The oldest item we have is from 1896," Eulalie said.

"We've built a fair selec-

tion over the years and more things keep coming in. We have a lot of things we need a display place for.

"I've got two computers with a lot of Inverloch history plus all the records that are stored, mainly in my house.

"When the public need it for reference they'll ring us or email us. They ask for photos that are on our website and we can't extract them from albums that are on the floor of my bedroom.

"If we had a proper filing cabinet for them it would be a matter of go to those shelves and you'd know what was in each album."

The Old Inverloch Gaol was purchased by the society three to four years ago and remains in president

Vern Burchett's backyard.

According to Vern, local men and service clubs are busting to restore the prized historic possession.

"The experts say don't restore it until you find a home for it," he said.

"We bought it on the spot naively thinking we'd get some enthusiasm with the council and we could put it down where the rocket shed is, and they just said no.

"Our last meeting with council was with the Mayor and the CEO in December, but there was no result. I wouldn't mind even a bit of enthusiasm, but they just look blank.

"We want an area where people can go down for one, two or three hours at a time, in the right environ-

ment and have computers set up where you can go in and put stuff on disc. We've got nothing."



The Old Inverloch Gaol remains sitting in Inverloch Historical Society president Vern Burchett's backyard, after being purchased in recent years in the hope of finding a home for the society. rg030816