

MEDIA RELEASE

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Corryong Saleyards offer an alternative for producers

Thirty years have passed since the Towong Shire Council last operated the Corryong Saleyards and local producers and agents are excited about the future of the facility following Council's decision to resume its operation and management. Plans are underway for an expanded calendar of activities, and the Council has invested in new equipment, including cattle and calf scales, for the facility.

"Under the new management arrangements, the Corryong Saleyards will offer an attractive and viable alternative for Upper Murray and Border producers to showcase their livestock," said Cr David Wortmann, Towong Shire Council Mayor.

"The Saleyards have been under a long-term lease since the 1980s, but with the lease expiring in June this year, there was an opportunity for Council to review all the options for its future," explained Cr Wortmann.

Council commissioned the *Corryong Saleyards Futures Study*, which was undertaken by independent firm GHD Consulting. The Study explored the level of support from local producers, agents and the community for a Council-managed facility and whether the Saleyards could be sustainable in the long-term.

"We were pleased to note from the Study that the Corryong Saleyards could have a viable future, and that the facility is viewed as a valuable asset in the Upper Murray," said Cr Wortmann.

The Study identified that most agents felt that there was scope to increase the number of sales at the facility from one annual sale to up to six sales annually. An increase to the fees and charges at the facility was also among the Study's recommendations.

"Under the previous lease arrangements, it was difficult to introduce increases to the fees and charges associated with using the facility," said Cr Wortmann.

The Study showed that, because of the terms of the lease, the most recent rise in fees and charges at the Saleyards was in 2006, where fees rose just 50 cents for bulls and 2 cents for sheep.

"Now that the lease has concluded, Council has adopted a revised schedule of fees for the Saleyards which brings them to a level similar to other small Saleyards, but still well below the fees and charges at the new Northern Victoria Livestock Exchange at Barnawartha,"

"We feel that these changes will position the Corryong Saleyards as a viable alternative selling point for local producers" said Cr Wortmann.

After thirty years, there will be a period of transition between the previous lease arrangements and the new Council management arrangements. Infrastructure which was installed and owned by the previous leaseholder will be removed in coming months.

Council has purchased new calf scales and these will be operational in early August. Council has also purchased new cattle scales.

"We are confident that Council's investment in new cattle scales and race scanners, which will be installed at the Saleyards shortly, will serve the community well for many years to come," said Cr Wortmann. "Once this transition-period has concluded and the new equipment is in place, operations can really get going," he said.

The Corryong Saleyards Operations Manual was recently released by Council and provides details on how agents can book and utilise the facility as well as the updated schedule of fees and charges. The Operations Manual will be reviewed in coming months when a new management committee is formed.

"The Corryong Saleyards management committee, which will be established as a special committee under section 86 of the Local Government Act, will provide Council with the expertise and advice to manage the facility effectively," Cr Wortmann explained. "Local agents, transporters, producers and interested people from the local community will be invited to express their interest in joining the committee," continued Cr Wortmann.

The management committee will be responsible for the day to day operational decisions at the Corryong Saleyards, and will also provide recommendations to Council on issues such as fees and charges, setting the hours of operation and plans for future capital investment in the facility.

Council expects strong interest in the management committee and has already received several enquiries from locals about how they can get involved in the management of the Corryong Saleyards.

"We are really pleased with the level of enthusiasm from the local community for the new management arrangements at the Saleyards, and we're looking forward to seeing applications from prospective members of the management committee," said Cr Wortmann.

Council will be holding a meeting of agents and transporters in the near future to discuss the new arrangements at the Saleyards.

Applications for the Corryong Saleyards management committee will open in coming weeks and will be advertised in the Corryong Courier and the Border Mail. Information, including the Corryong Saleyards Operations Manual, will also be available online at www.towong.vic.gov.au or by calling Towong Shire Council on 02 6071 5100.