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PAGE 10

READY TO RALLY IN TULLAH

PAGE 3



NEW CHARGES: Spreyton Fresh director Michelle Distill is concerned about a rise in registration fees for packing houses who export to certain countries. She says the increase in costs may mean the company won't be in a position to export cherries to some countries. Picture: Jason Hollister.

FEES HIKE MAY STOP EXPORTS

Spoils of the overseas cherry market may be lost as Spreyton Fresh faces increased charges to make up for 'past inefficiencies'. CAMERON WHITELEY REPORTS, Page 3.

\$11m surgery pledge

EXCLUSIVE

By ARYELLE SARGENT

THE Liberals have pledged an additional \$11 million for elective surgery on the North-West Coast over four years.

Their planned boost to the health system will deliver more than 2000 extra elective surgery procedures, depending on the complexity of the surgery.

This means Coasters will have a better chance of getting their surgery sooner, ultimately improving quality of life.

Deputy Opposition Leader Jeremy Rockliff said as a part of the Liberal plan for a brighter future, a majority Hodgman Liberal government would provide help to hospital services on the Coast.

"For the North-West region, this will see hospital beds re-open, more frontline health staff and thousands more elective surgery procedures," Mr Rockliff said.

However, it isn't just the patients that benefit from this \$11 million boost.

Healthcare professionals in the hospitals will also appreciate the additional funding for the North-West Coast's hospital services.

"For health professionals, it will mean surgeons can get back into the operating theatre, there'll be more jobs for our Tasmanian-trained nurses, fewer double shifts and less frustration for all hospital workers," Mr Rockliff said.

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Spitting pips over fees

Company's export market at risk due to spike in costs

By CAMERON WHITELEY

A STEEP increase in fees could force a North-West fruit exporter to cease delivery of its cherries overseas.

Spreyton Fresh director Michelle Distill said Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry fees for registration of packing houses that export product to certain countries has risen from \$550 to \$1800 this year.

It will further rise to \$8530 next year, presenting an overall increase of 1450 per cent since 2011.

Mrs Distill said the company only exported for about four or five weeks a year in the summer, to countries including Taiwan, China, Japan, Korea and Thailand.

Most are classified as protocol countries, meaning they have certain restrictions to allow exports in, and an inspection process has to take place before the fruit can enter.

Mrs Distill can't understand the justification behind the increase and said the company would have to consider whether or not it was even worth exporting.

"The only thing we've heard is because they [DAFF] had been inefficient, they have decided this



ABOVE: Spreyton Fresh director Michelle Distill takes Braddon Labor MHR Sid Sidebottom and Senator Kate Lundy on a tour of the Spreyton Cider Co. Picture: Jason Hollister.

LEFT: Cherries being sorted at Spreyton Fresh.

great deal of fruit and that [the fees] would have negated any profit out of exporting.

"We haven't decided one way or another, you would have to look at it very closely as to whether it's worthwhile."

Mrs Distill wrote a letter to Braddon Labor MHR and Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Sid Sidebottom highlighting the company's concerns.



like until the middle of December.

"If the fee was going to be \$8000 per year, you wouldn't bother," she said.

"This year we didn't export a

'Increase due to past inefficiency'

SID Sidebottom says a rise in fees for those exporting horticultural product overseas is a result of inefficiencies of years past.

"The new fees and charges have been developed to correct longstanding under collection of fees and cross subsidisation over several years," the Braddon Labor MHR and Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture said.

Mr Sidebottom was speaking about a rise in registration fees for packing houses that export product to certain overseas countries.

Fees were just \$550, but will increase to \$8530 next year.

In light of this, Spreyton Fresh is now considering whether or not it is worth exporting its cherries.

Mr Sidebottom said he understood the concerns of the company and encouraged them to contact the DAFF to discuss available options.

Liberal Senator Richard Colbeck said he believed the increase was a result of a policy removed in 2009 that provided a 40 per cent rebate on charges relating to exports.

Mr Colbeck said he sympathised with smaller operations, and said they would find it difficult to justify paying such fees.

Pro-mining rally 'is not for politicians'

By MARK ACHESON

TODAY'S pro-mining rally at Tullah is about the concerns of community members and not the politicians, according to Tullah Progress Association secretary Jenny Bowie.

"We don't want this to be a political thing," Ms Bowie said. "We don't want them gathering political points.

"It's about the community and the silent people who really want this."

Ms Bowie said that while crowd members wouldn't compare with last year's rally in Burnie, all the boxes for organising the event had been ticked.

"This rally is really community-driven and what it means to have viable industries," she said.

Ms Bowie said the outcome for mining in the region would go further to affect the day-to-day lives of community members.

"Statistics have shown that there has been a real drain in community members," Ms

Giddings lends voice to cause

THE pro-mining rally will start 11am today at the Tullah Community Hall.

The list of speakers includes:

- Premier Lara Giddings.
- Deputy Premier Bryan Green.
- Legislative councillor Ruth Forrest.
- MC Darryl Gerrity.
- Ian Wakefield, branch secretary of the Australia Workers' Union.
- Wayne Bould, Tasmanian

Bowie said.

"We've had to say goodbye to sons and fathers. The mine would make a huge difference."

According to Ms Bowie, the town's population will double if mining goes ahead.

"Riley Creek would create 80 jobs and the Mount Lindsay mine will create in excess of 200," she said.

Australia Workers Union branch secretary Ian Wakefield

Minerals Council president.

■ Rodney Bennion, miner.

■ Mal Jago, miner and resident.

■ Kim Mcdermott, resident.

Speeches will be followed by an open-microphone session for residents.

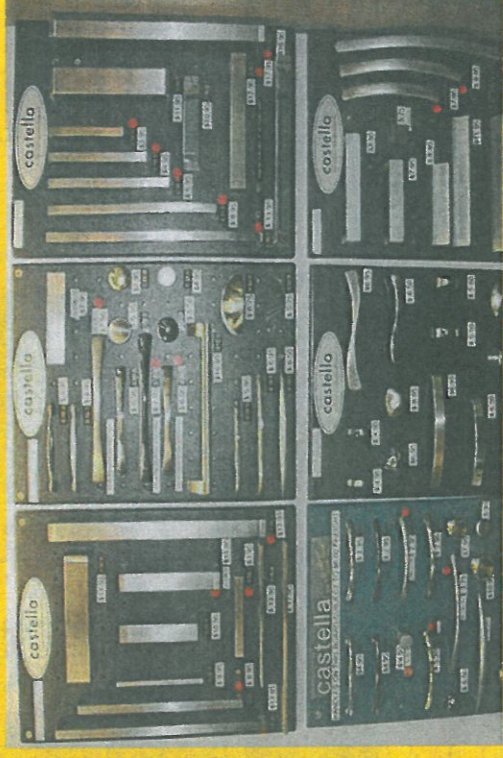
■ A community session will be held at the Tullah Hotel, with poems, jokes and music after the rally.

said the rally would provide an opportunity for mine workers and their families to have their say.

"The residents want to come out and show their support for responsible mining," Mr Wakefield said.

"We've helped to organise this but it's the community members that want to express their support for the mining industry."

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