

partnership



Natalie Dando (North East Catchment Management Authority), Peter Serpell and Rhonda Serpell (NECMA) enjoy the sun before the official opening of the renewed Livingstone Park in Omeo on Friday. K951-8610

Consulting Australia, local contractors and suppliers, the natural resources team from GLaWAC, and students from the Omeo Primary School and other members of the community."

Mr Bull said.

"Livingstone Park is now far more resilient to future flood events, environmentally much healthier, and is once again a great place to visit and enjoy."

tec to close

The closure reflects the change in demand for agricultural training across the state and the reforms to the Vocational

Education and Training sector that compel ongoing viability and sustainability of courses.

Courses already underway will be taught out next year, giving current students a chance to complete their studies and formalise their qualifications.

Horticulture and equine studies courses being taught at Farmtec will be relocated to other Advance TAFE campuses.

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- Editorial -

No politics thank you

East Gippsland's good fortune is to have a shire council that is so far spared the scourge of party politics. This doesn't mean that the council always does what the people want (as Bastion Point keeps reminding us). It doesn't mean that the council always gets everything right. It doesn't mean that its operations are a model of transparency.

It does mean that the taint of political partisanship is largely absent; that the people of our municipality are spared the hypocrisy, name-calling and irrationality that so often masquerades as serious debate in state, territory and commonwealth. That's how it should be.

Municipal government was never meant to be a training ground for aspiring politicians or a laboratory for trialling policies at local level that might attract votes on a larger stage.

While no nation can function without politics, Australia tends to have more than its fair share of it. The past six years of parliamentary uproar have stretched our patience and dampened our enthusiasms to the point where most of us have had more than enough. We are sick of hearing politicians say that public service is the main reason why they go into politics.

Actions speak louder than words. So do motivations, especially those we don't want others to know about. But sooner or later they always rise to the surface. Real motivations can be hidden only with difficulty; there are too many prying eyes, concealed cameras and an inquisitive media.

Management of municipalities is different from other tiers of government. Domestic issues are the proper domain of councils, and there are more than enough issues to occupy ratepayers and councillors alike, without falling into introspection or insularity.

East Gippsland's relative isolation from the rest of Victoria gives us the opportunity to deal directly with pressing local needs while remaining open to the state, the nation and the world. Achieving that sort of balance should be required of all candidates for municipal office.

No distractions

How would East Gippsland fare if councillors were to align themselves along party lines? Worse still, what if they cast their lot with the factions that now riddle, muddle and divide the state and federal parties?

Several answers spring to mind. One is that councillors ambition for state and federal repre-