

The Leader

The Barossa's Favourite Newspaper

Volume 101 No. 5098

Wednesday, March 4, 2020 \$1.60 (inc. GST)

84 PAGES

Ph: 8564 2035
www.barossaleader.com



Fantastic Autumn Savings vouchers

INSIDE

Playground removed

PAGE 4



Autumn Home Ideas

12 PAGE LIFT-OUT



John's frustrated



By Emma Clark

The owner of Chateau Tanunda and the Barossa's last train carriages, the Barossa Wine Train, has expressed his frustration at what he describes as the State Government's lack of vision for rail and tourism.

Mr John Geber said getting the Barossa Wine Train back on the track would be the "sizzle" the region needs, referring to it as the Barossa's equivalent to McLaren Vale's iconic cube.

Continued on Page 3

Chateau Tanunda owner, Mr John Geber is calling for the Tanunda rail line to be reinstated.

Owner sees benefits in rail

Continued from Front Page

With this year's vintage facing a decline and the full affects of the coronavirus yet to be realised, Mr Geber said now is the time to get the train back on the track and build on the tourism offering.

"We have our very own train and our own station... the only thing we don't have is the line access," said Mr Geber.

Mr Geber holds great fear for the train line as the Kroemer's Crossing roundabout project gains momentum.

"This is a very serious thing... Kroemer's Crossing is so over engineered it was always that the train line would go through," said Mr Geber.

The announcement this year by Member for Schubert and Transport Minister, Mr Stephan Knoll that an expression of interest for the rail corridor failed to identify viable long term use has added another hurdle to Mr Geber's train plans.

Mr Knoll said the process showed there was no proposal that was feasible "without a prohibitive amount of taxpayers' dollars being required".

"There is nothing stopping Mr Geber or any other proponent pursuing a commercial venture similar to the Steam Ranger service on the Fleurieu Peninsula," said Mr Knoll.

The last passenger service to the Barossa was in 1969 and Mr Knoll said "the reason this passenger service was discontinued and has not been reinstated since is because it just doesn't stack up and the cost to run it is too prohibitive."

Mr Geber said the region needs a new tourism offering and felt the train use, similar to what is now offered at Byron Bay and in Perth to Fremantle would add to the current food and wine offering and would not only attract tourists but add employment and economic benefits.

Mr Geber is desperately keen to meet with Mr Knoll and Premier and Tourism Minister, Mr Steven Marshall to further discuss the train line and getting the Barossa Wine Train back on the track.

He also sees potential to team up with Penrice Quarry and getting the quarry train back on the tracks too.

"If you walk away from the track, you will never get it back and you ruin an asset for the rest of time," said Mr Geber.

"I am terribly disappointed after all we have done and how the community has worked together to have been side swiped by our own member.

"The train can be up and running with a can do attitude. This, with the hotel, was the biggest game changer for the absolute good of the Barossa and still keep our integrity."

Mr Geber has spent decades on this project and the Barossa Wine Train continues to be stored at the National Railway Museum.

According to Mr Geber, the train remains in good condition.



Chateau Tanunda owner, Mr John Geber is calling for the rail line to be used.

New offering planned for Chateau Tanunda

As he continues to work on getting the Barossa Wine Train back on the tracks, Chateau Tanunda owner, Mr John Geber is also working on further improvements to the Tanunda infrastructure in what he describes as one of the exciting tourism offerings for the Barossa in some time.

He is currently in negotiations with three major hotel companies in together developing an up to 200 room hotel for Tanunda.

The feasibility study for the project has already been done, according to Mr Geber and architectures are engaged for the \$30 million project.

The land swap process between Chateau Tanunda and The Barossa Council is one of the final steps for the project to continue.

"Once the land swap goes through, it will be one and a half years to two years before we start," said Mr Geber.

In addition to this, Mr Geber is looking forward to the creation of a culinary education centre at the Chateau with the \$4 million project to be positioned behind the Barossa Backpacker's building.

He hopes work on the 40 bedroom facility will start this year.