

WANGARATTA Chronicle

IN OUR 121st YEAR

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NEWS



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Seniors maintain pressure



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\$300,000 drug bust

MOTORING



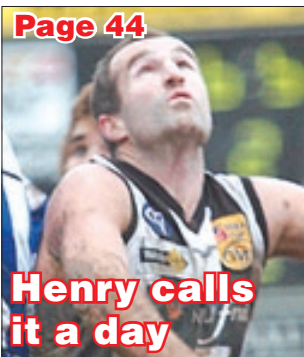
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PROPERTY



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SPORT



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Henry calls it a day

WEEKEND WEATHER
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Public phones may be axed



HUNG UP: This public phone booth in Ely Street is one of nine across Wangaratta earmarked by Telstra for removal, a move opposed by city councillor, Neville Wright. Full story page 2.

PHOTO: Simone Gladigau

Hall heat builds

Council goes on front foot as petition numbers swell

By PHILIP NOLAN

THE Rural City of Wangaratta has moved into over-drive in its bid to win back public support for its planned \$7.5m performing arts centre.

However, it looks to have a big challenge on its hands, as the numbers on a petition circulating objecting to the demolition of the current town hall complex top the 4000 mark.

The council plan to knock over the 50 year old town hall and replace it with the new arts centre has run into a storm of protest on several fronts, with one of the major concerns being the perceived lack of consultation by council with the community.

Council, through chief executive officer Doug Sharp and senior officers, has already given several presentations to key community groups to win favor for the plan - and with some good results, in-



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Councillor wants town hall to stay, for seniors' use.

cluding an "about-face" by Business Wangaratta.

However, the 4000 plus names now on a petition indicates a huge amount of public unrest.

And one of the petition organisers, former two time council mayor and citizen of the year, Bill O'Callaghan, said yesterday that people were still rushing in to add their name to the protest.

"We will be keeping the petition open until Sunday, and it is hard to say just how many names we will end up with. But one thing is for certain, and that is that local residents are very upset about plans to demolish the memorial town hall without ever being directly consulted," he said.

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Stem cell therapy in China to treat rare brain disease

By JEFF ZEUSCHNER

DESPERATION and hope has led a Wangaratta mum to China to undergo revolutionary stem cell therapy for a rare brain disease for which Australia has no cure or treatment.

Jill Keenan, with husband Mac by her side, has spent the past month at Nanshan Hospital in Shenzhen, re-

ceiving a series of stem cell injections, together with daily therapy, for her Sporadic Cerebellar Ataxia - Multiple System Atrophy (MSA).

The condition causes the shrinkage of cells within Mrs Keenan's cerebellum - the rear part of the brain which coordinates muscle movement.

As a result, she suffers balance and speech difficulties, sharing symptoms

similar to those people afflicted with Parkinson's disease.

The veteran Wangaratta school teacher, who had taught thousands of students across local schools in the past 30 years, first noticed symptoms four years ago, but it was six months before the rare disease was diagnosed by neurologists.

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Jill and Mac Keenan.

WEB POLL: Should town hall be demolished for new arts centre? Vote online www.nenews.com.au

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