

## COUNTDOWN TO BULLDOGS CAMP

SPORT



## WIMMERA IRRIGATION SERIES

STARTS FRIDAY



# Study delay

By MICHELLE DRYBURGH

HORSHAM could be years from having a multi-purpose sports stadium after councillors voted against funding a feasibility study in the next budget.

Cr Mark Radford's push for a \$20,000 feasibility study into a stadium was lost in a 3-4 vote on Monday night. Council then passed a motion by Cr Gary Bird to renew Horsham's Sport and Recreation Strategy at a cost of \$60,000.

The last strategy, completed in 2005, identified an indoor sports stadium as a medium to long term priority for Horsham, giving it a delivery timeline between June 2010 and June 2012.

Cr Bird, a Horsham Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee member, said he believed a new strategy would contain the same projects but would be necessary to obtain government support.

"The strategy will tell us what we already know," he said. "I don't like spending money on these things but unfortunately the state and federal levels require updated strategies in order to give us funding."

"To move forward with the times we have to pay consultants to do this."

Cr Lindy Muller, also a committee member, said a new sport and recreation strategy would outline goals for the next five to 10 years. She said only then could feasibility studies into individual projects be completed.

"It's no good doing a study if your baseline is no good," she said.

"We need to be seen to be doing this

through the right steps."

Cr Radford said he did not know what to think of the other councillors' decision.

He said the 2005 sport and recreation strategy was similar to one in 1995. A third strategy would be a waste of money.

"If council doesn't take the advice of what strategies say, why spend ratepayers' money on it," he said. "In 1995 we were talking about building a stadium, in 2005 we were talking about building a stadium and on February 7, 2011, we're talking about building a stadium."

Horsham Table Tennis Association president Jeff Pekin was in the gallery during the debate.

The association has been based in Maydale Pavilion at Horsham Showground since 1962 and has lobbied council for an indoor sports stadium for decades.

Mr Pekin said he was extremely disappointed Cr Radford's motion was lost and feared the project would again "fall to the back of the shelf".

"In five years we could be in the same boat unless council acts on it quickly," he said. "It really needs a bit of foresight because we are just going around in circles. They need to realise this wouldn't just be a home for table tennis but also netball, volleyball, badminton, squash and indoor cricket, and all these sports would bring a lot of people to Horsham if we had the right facility."

"We will keep writing letters and hopefully one day, they will see the big picture."



### CULTURES COMBINE:

Compton Homies and Popz, an American cricket side, played a Johnny Mullagh XI at the Johnny Mullagh Oval at Harrow on Monday evening. The Johnny Mullagh XI won the match but it was about much more than the final result as cultures were explored. Compton, a team of Latinos and African Americans from varying backgrounds, is touring Australia for the first time. The Johnny Mullagh XI is a team of Aborigines which honours the original Aboriginal side which toured England in 1868. Compton's Ted Hayes and Johnny Mullagh XI's Wayne Bell enjoyed a laugh after Hayes dismissed Bell, a true reflection of the spirit in which the game was played. For full story, see page 33 of today's Mail-Times.

Picture: KATE HEALY

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