



A right to know

By Richard Hughes, Woodend

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Councillor Russell Mowatt, in his letter concerning Hanging Rock ('At a cost', *Express*, May 6, 2014), laments the state of disrepair of various facilities at the Rock, including the tennis courts and the racing club.

He should know, but evidently doesn't, that the upkeep and maintenance of club facilities are solely the responsibility of the relevant club.

The public facilities he mentions, such as the picnic tables and toilets, are certainly the responsibility of the Rock's management, which is the council. That these facilities are rundown can be laid squarely at the door of the council, as for the past 20-odd years, it has been the sole manager of the Rock, and its management has been lacking.

The council cannot say that there is no money, as the Rock has a reserve fund of almost \$300,000, and makes a profit almost every year.

I recall Cr Mowatt being quoted in *The Australian* on September 17 last year as saying that council's actions were premised on the 1993 Management Plan; I rather think that he meant to say that they pretty much ignored this plan, as almost nothing of it has been implemented. He also said in this article that "it takes \$300,000 to keep it (the Rock reserve) up to standard and it's becoming a cost impost on council". Where did he get this figure and what does it mean? As for becoming a cost impost on council, and it being too expensive for council to maintain, again Cr Mowatt should know, but evidently doesn't, that Hanging Rock has always been entirely self-funding, and that not one cent of council money has gone into it.

Councillor, please have the courtesy and the courage to show us specifically where you think we are wrong, rather than continuing this council's practice of making a sweeping statement and then hiding behind it.

The community has a right to know the full truth of this Hanging Rock debacle, but

we don't get anywhere near that from this council.

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