

Trade training centre gets federal funding

By **ANDY BENNETT***

FIRST the good news. On March 5, the Commonwealth Government approved funding of up to \$4.35 million to build the Bridgewater Regional Trade Training Centre on Bridgewater High School land.

This is a wonderful development that will complement our plans to build a new grade nine to adult Learning Centre on the site.

The centre will add great value to the education and training opportunities we provide to our community through the Bridgewater Brighton Learning Federation by improving student access to trade training facilities for secondary students undertaking trade-related pathways as well as assisting people in the community to re-enter education and training and on to work.

The funding will be used to construct a new facility that will include three large workshop areas and associated classrooms and administration spaces as well as outdoor learning areas and storage spaces.

The centre will provide a wide range of certificated courses that lead to apprenticeships and employment including, among others,

electrical technology, construction, bricklaying, carpentry, plastering, plumbing, engineering, agriculture, rural operations and horticulture.

The successful application is the outcome of a great deal of work by the Tasmanian Polytechnic which worked closely with local business and industry to identify skill shortages and with a consortium of schools including Bridgewater and New Norfolk High Schools and Oatlands, Glenora and Campania District High Schools to identify student needs.

We are currently working to identify the location for the building on the Bridgewater High site so we can submit plans to Brighton Council for approval.

We are very hopeful of commencing building by September with a goal of opening the centre in the middle of 2010.

More good news. We have started consultation with our community about what we want to teach and learn in the federation and where, how and with whom that teaching and learning will take place.

Those ideas will be worked into an educational concept brief which will be

the basis of designing the building work that takes place over the next couple of years.

On April 2, as this paper goes to press, staff from all of the schools will meet at the Brighton Civic Centre to begin the task of gathering their ideas for the education brief.

We are busily planning the consultation with students and parents and other interested community members and will begin providing opportunities for people to have their say over the next three weeks.

We will publicise those opportunities through schools and other community organisations very soon. Please look out for your chance to have your say.

Finally, I recently had the opportunity to attend and speak to the Brighton Alive meeting. About 40 people shared news about a wide range of community-based activities.

Individually each of the activities was impressive. Collectively, they underlined just how much goodwill, skill and effort exist in our community.

**Andy Bennett is the manager of the Bridgewater/Brighton Learning Federation*