

# News Release

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# Tony Piccolo MP

*State Member for Light  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier  
Chair, Volunteer Ministerial Advisory Group  
Deputy Chair, Business Development Council  
National Convenor, F.I.A.P.*

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2011

## Supreme Court Backs Racecourse DPA

**The South Australian Supreme Court has thrown out a case mounted by the Town of Gawler to overturn the Gawler Racecourse Development Amendment Report (DPA) in a decision handed down on Friday.**

The decision has been welcomed by the Member for Light, Mr Tony Piccolo who has been critical of the Council's decision to take the State Government to Court.

Mr Piccolo said the case was a complete waste of ratepayers' money and was not supported by the local community.

Mr Piccolo said the case and subsequent decision raises serious questions about the competence of the Gawler Council to provide effective governance for the local community.

"While Council has been cutting back on grants to community groups, withdrawing support for volunteer programs and slugging local sporting groups higher fees, it has been quite willing to waste ratepayers money on a court action which is not supported or in the best interest of the community"

A report presented to Council last week stated legal costs incurred by the Council had blown out from an estimated \$20-30,000 dollars to a staggering \$100,000.

Mr Piccolo said the Council assured the community in a number of public statements that the case would cost at worst, \$30,000.

"The Council has either lied to the community or have no idea what they were doing," said Mr Piccolo.

"Either way, the case raises serious questions as to the fitness of the Council to govern."

Mr Piccolo said from his reading of the decision, the Court rejected every claim made by the Council to have the Racecourse DPA overturned.

"There is no silver lining in this case for the Gawler Council."

"I feel sorry for the ratepayers of Gawler who have to foot the bill for this completely unnecessary action."

“Everybody has lost from this case; the ratepayers of Gawler, the local Jockey Club and the local community who have backed the development.”

Mr Piccolo undertook a survey of local residents last year and they overwhelmingly backed the proposed development.

The DPA provides for:

- a local shopping centre,
- improved traffic management at the intersection of Potts and Main North Roads
- additional land for the High School
- investment that will help keep the Racecourse financial

Mr Piccolo said he would be writing to the Ministers for Local-State Government Relations and Urban Planning and Development seeking their advice as to whether the Council has behaved in such a manner that would require some external intervention.

Mr Piccolo said someone has to be held accountable for this debacle.

END