

# Weddings 'in limbo' in post lockdown recovery

Leading Sydney venue and hospitality group Navarra Venues, which operate's Marsfield's Curzon Hall, has warned that weddings will be in limbo despite the Berejiklian Government's commitment to lift lockdown restriction once the State hits the 70% double vaccination target.

Navarra Venues CEO Sal Navarra said wedding operators wanted the Premier and her Crisis Cabinet to explain and justify why wedding venues will be restricted to a meagre 50-guests, when all other hospitality and entertainment venues can re-open under the one person per four square metre

rule.

"As we emerge from lockdown in 2021, wedding operators and our customers are facing the same type of discrimination as we did last year, nothing's changed, it's like Ground Hog Day for us," Mr Navarra said.

"Our customers, staff, suppliers and all of our associated businesses want to know why a restaurant or bar will be able to have so many patrons eating and drinking inside, but a formal wedding reception in a room that holds up to 1650 people, can have only 50 guests?"

"If we're all double-vaccinated and operating under COVID-safe plans at our Navarra venues, what's the difference between 50 and 500 guests? We can't have one rule for one side of the hospitality industry and another rule, for weddings. This ongoing inconsistency makes no sense at all."

Mr Navarra was left seething in June last year, threatening to defy lockdown restrictions when the government allowed a 'Black Lives Matter' protest to proceed, while enforcing a 20 guest limit on wedding venues.

"We cannot deal with – we do not want to deal with upset brides anymore, upset clients anymore, because it's not fair on them," Mr Navarra said at the time.

"We have very large tables, we are prepared to distance the tables, we have very high ceilings and mechanically ventilated



□ Navarra Venues CEO Sal Navarra



□ A bride and groom pose for photographs at Curzon Hall in Marsfield

air conditioning systems..

"We just need to open up to satisfy our clients."

With more than 47 years of events and hospitality experience and more than 175,000 events successfully hosted, Navarra is one of Australia's leading events and hospitality operators.

Founded by Filippo Navarra, Navarra Ven-

ues has evolved under the guidance of his children Salvatore, Giovannino and Marie, offering a range of formal, corporate and casual dining experiences, along with cafes and bars across Sydney.

Navarra locations include: Curzon Hall in Marsfield; Montage in Lilyfield; Conca D'Oro in Riverwood; and CBD Collection in Sydney's city centre.

## Councillor booted from Hunter's Hill Council meeting after comments

A HUNTER'S HILL COUNCILLOR was expelled from Monday night's council meeting after he refused to obey a Mayoral directive to apologise for comments he made in response to advice from a staff member.

Liberal Cllr Ben Collins was expelled by Mayor Ross Williams (Ind) at 7.43pm in response to comments the Mayor ruled he made during the meeting - in regard to advice from Acting General Manager Nick Tobin - related to council financial information being sent for review to an auditor without a vote to do so by councillors.

Councillor Collins said "incorrect responses" had been provided in the advice, based on his interpretation of the requirements of the Local Government Act.

A Dissent Motion put against the Mayor's directive to Cllr Collins was lost by four votes to two with fellow Liberal Cllr Zac Miles supporting the motion.

Mayor Ross Williams said he stood by his directive.

"I'm not going to sit here as Mayor and have staff accused of improper conduct."

"My ruling does require an apology from Councillor Collins."

Councillor Collins said he was not going to be silenced and said he was "only asking simple questions" about council procedures.

"I will absolutely not provide an apology. If you want to throw me out, that's fine."



□ Mayor Ross Williams demanded an apology from Cllr Ben Collins for comments made at Monday night's meeting

**HARDING MEMORIAL PARK in Gladesville** will receive up to \$50,000 in funding.

Councillors voted during Monday night's meeting to increase the \$30,000 upgrade recommended by staff to ensure all playground equipment is repaired or upgraded and there is a possibility that sun shades could be installed.

Local resident Ms Caldwell had earlier addressed the meeting and reported that her daughter had suffered a splinter wound because the park was in a state of disrepair.

Claims had been also circulated on social media that Harding Memorial Park would be closed because the council had given priority to Weil Park in Woolwich and other parks.

"The council is not going to close it, it will be there and it will be funded," Mayor Williams said.

He said the local community will be consulted on the upgrade.

Liberal Cllr Ben Collins proposed that funding for the upgrade be made available from money obtained from the recent sale of a council car park in Gladesville to ensure income from Gladesville is spent in Gladesville.

**STRUGGLING SMALL BUSINESSES** will receive help from Hunter's Hill Council after councillors on Monday approved a financial support package.

The support package includes a rebate of \$400 for ratepaying businesses and/or their landlords as well as funding for a Shop Local campaign.

It brings Hunters Hill in line with similar packages recently offered by the neighbouring Lane Cove and City of Ryde Councils.

"You need only walk through Gladesville or Boronia Park to see the impact this (lockdown) has had," Liberal Cllr Zac Miles said.

"There are businesses that have not been able to operate for eleven weeks and we are hearing the hurt."

Independent Cllr Jim Sanderson said the \$400 rate rebate was "not very much in the scheme of things" and urged the Federal Government to offer the same level of support it offered businesses when the pandemic first broke out early last year.

Acting General Manager Nick Tobin said rate paying landlords would be eligible for the rebate if their premises were unoccupied while Cllr Ben Collins (Lib) said the council should be aware that some closed businesses will not reopen again.

## Harbourside communities celebrate the battle that saved the Woolwich Docks

HUNTERS HILL and other foreshore municipalities are celebrating this week's 20th Anniversary of the successful Battle To Save Sydney Harbour.

The celebration coincides with the proclamation of The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act on September 20, 2001 which saved the Woolwich Docks and other significant heritage sites from a development agenda supported by former Prime Minister John Howard.

Hunters Hill conservationist Phil Jenkyn OAM took part in the battle and told The Weekly Times it was the "most difficult and rewarding" fight he'd taken part in.

"It was a bloody and protracted battle to save the former Defence sites around Sydney Harbour from being flogged off to the private sector," he said.

"These were important heritage sites in public ownership and of national significance and this five year Battle for Sydney Harbour involved community action groups around the Harbour, at Woolwich, Cockatoo Island, Middle Head, North Head and elsewhere."

Mr Jenkyn was among the Defenders of Sydney Harbour Foreshores coalition which was supported by the National Trust, Hunter's Hill Council and the Sydney Coastal Councils Group with support from all political parties, except the Liberal Party.

In Hunters Hill the government proposed to sell Woolwich Docks for a private marina with a four-storey residential development and multi-storey units overlooking parklands known as the Horse Paddock and the Goat Paddock.

"The community was outraged, not only in Sydney but across the nation," he said.

"We were determined these significant public lands should remain preserved and protected in the public domain."

"It was a strong force lined up against the government but what Hunter's Hill was facing in 1996 and early 1997 was the fact that the government had already made a decision to sell off the vast majority of Woolwich Dock and the adjoining Parklands to private developers."

"They'd been occupied by the Defence Department but already in the process of being vacated."

A public meeting was called in early 1997 and Hunters Hill locals formed an action group



□ Phil Jenkyn OAM of Hunters Hill was at the forefront of the successful campaign to stop the Howard Government selling off the Woolwich Docks and other harbourside land to property developers. TWT On-the-Spot PHOTO

called Foreshore 2000 Woolwich.

Mr Jenkyn led a Community Reference Group.

"The community view was that these heritage sites must remain in the public domain and be properly protected and conserved."

"Principles and tactics were agreed on and the arguments for retention and preservation were advanced, The Weekly Times got involved and the government was attacked from every angle."

As well as support from TWT Managing Editor John F Booth AM, the community groups were also backed by former Mayor Sue Hoopmann OAM and former General Manager Barry Smith.

The community also received support from Premier Bob Carr.

"The support of Premier Carr was crucial," Mr Jenkyn recalls.

"In September 1997 at Woolwich, he announced that his Government would block any development on the former defence sites in Sydney Harbour."

"The community had support, not only from Bob Carr and Tom Uren AC, but from activists like Jack Munday AO and from people respected by the Liberal Party, including Barry O'Keefe AM, Kevin McCann AM and Peter Lowry OAM."

A Senate Inquiry in April, 2000 supported the community and

the government's plan was defeated in the Senate in June that year.

"The Government backed down and the lands were properly protected in public ownership by an Act of Parliament creating the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust," he said.

"We should all be grateful to those in our community and around the Harbour who stood up, were counted and who achieved a very significant victory, not only for their local community but for Sydney."

Significantly, the Battle to Save the Sydney Harbour created an awareness that the harbour belongs to the people who live there.

This is reflected in a wide range of development controls harbourside councils have placed on the foreshore alongside environmental protection measures.

"Recently, by way of amendment to the Act, the life of The Trust has been extended in perpetuity, and appropriate safeguards and restrictions placed upon long leases," Mr Jenkyn said.

"Today The Trust enjoys wide community and political support."

Councils in TWT Territory that share the Sydney Harbour foreshore include Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, the City of Canada Bay and the Inner West Council.