

NEXT WEEK: NEW COLUMNS

MONDAY

From the editor's desk...

New editor Matt Taylor's views



WEDNESDAY

Gen Y it matters

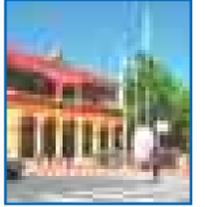
Issues that matter to our youth



FRIDAY

Friday Soapbox

Prominent locals to give big-picture insights



Should we have longer trading hours?

Independent MP Richard Torbay says yes, but Armidale businesses disagree

By STEPHEN JEFFERY
Twitter: stephenejeffery

RETAILERS in Beardy Street Mall are reluctant to extend their trading hours on weekends, despite a push by Member for Northern Tablelands Richard Torbay to increase activity in the precinct on Saturdays and Sundays.

Sunday trading was first permitted in Armidale in 1997, after a controversial 6-5 vote by Armidale City Council (now Armidale Dumaresq Council).

However, almost 15 years on, most businesses in the Mall remain closed on Sundays, with those that choose to open usually closing by noon.

Mr Torbay, who cast the deciding vote in favour of Sunday trading when he was mayor, said a higher level of retail activity in the Mall was a way of attracting more visitors to town.

"I think we need to encourage Armidale to have as many trading hours as possible without

HAVE YOUR SAY
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hurting retailers, because with visitors to town and the high student population, there should be a rethink of the current system," he said.

The Independent MP advocated co-operation between Armidale Dumaresq Council and the Armidale Business Chamber to help promote the Mall as a weekend destination.

"The chamber of commerce and Council should campaign together in a joint marketing campaign or a rostering system and make Sunday trading a more attractive prospect for retailers," he said.

Armidale Dumaresq Council general manager Shane Burns said Council had attempted to encourage the extension of weekend trading hours in the past, but failed to garner enthusiasm from retailers.

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PLC Armidale Foundation Successful Women Series

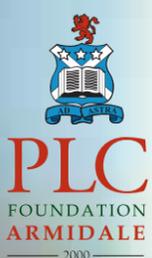
Presents a networking lunch and Key Address
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