



# Teahouse extension proposed

by DENISE GADD

SANDRINGHAM Council is considering extending the Ricketts Point Teahouse on the Beaumaris foreshore.

The teahouse has been operating for six months and is leased by Mr David Griffith and Mr John Hancock.

Mr Griffith told council that there was not enough kitchen or storage space in the new building and also public toilets were urgently needed.

Council staff then suggested that as well as creating extra space, perhaps the building would be better served all round by being extended to seat an extra 20 people, taking the numbers up to 65.

## BYO

Plans have already been drawn up but Mr Griffith said if the extensions got the go ahead he would have to open for dinner on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights to make it worth his while, therefore he would require a BYO licence.

"I would have to pay an extra \$10,000 a year in rent so I would have to open some nights," Mr Griffith told The Advertiser.

He emphasised that he would not be interested in using a BYO licence during the day.

"Mr Griffith said a male and female toilet were high on his list of priorities because the building only provided one invalid toilet and this was not enough to cater for the number of visitors to the teahouse on a hot day.

Mr Griffith said he had built up a reasonable lunch trade over the past six months but problems were caused by an "enormous bottleneck in the kitchen" which is why he needed more kitchen and storage space.

According to a council report, many of the concerns raised by the lessee had arisen from the

unexpected popularity of the teahouse which, the report said, was being operated differently from what council and the architect had originally envisaged.

The report said the estimated cost of the alterations would be \$65,000 so the lessees would have to pay at least an extra \$10,000 a year taking the annual rent to \$26,000.

The Mayor, Cr Watson, said she was against the teahouse being built in the first place therefore she did not approve of the proposed extensions. She was also against a BYO licence being granted on the grounds that the foreshore was a very special place.

"People would just sit and drink and that's not the idea of the teahouse," said Cr Watson. Cr Jim Bisset was in favor of extending the building as long as council received extra rent to cover the costs but was not interested in the lessees getting a licence "because then it would become like a restaurant."

Extending the teahouse could "lead it into a restaurant which wasn't the point of the exercise" according to Cr Laurence Bottomley.

He said the community would have reacted quite differently if it had known the new teahouse would be run like a restaurant, therefore it would be unfair for council to change course mid-stream.

As far as the licence was concerned, Cr Bottomley said he didn't object to anyone having a glass of wine with a meal.

"It's very civilised but a licensed restaurant is completely different from what's going on down there," he said.

"That was one of the fears originally voiced by some councillors - that it would turn into a restaurant."