

Teahouse dries out for locals

JON ANDREWS

RICKETTS Point Teahouse will remain dry, much to the relief of 40 residents objecting to the granting of a liquor licence.

At last Tuesday's Bayside Council meeting, councillors were split on whether to allow the Beaumaris institution to apply for a liquor licence, with the refuters winning out five to four.

The council rents out the Teahouse for \$106,000 a year and is required to grant approval before any owner can apply to the State Government's liquor licensing board for an alcohol permit.

Five objectors pleaded with councillors to refuse permission to apply for a licence, as council officers had recommended a limited noon-3pm drinking allowance time-frame.

Beaumaris Conservation Society spokesman Ronald Morris said residents were very concerned about the licence request.

"We see the clamour for a liquor licence as an intrusive challenge to what the Teahouse is all about," he said.

Russell Hellier, who has lived across from the sanctuary for 48 years, said he has seen too many changes at the Teahouse.

"My worry is that if a partial licence is granted, this will soon be extended, which will bring the same problems that have happened at the Pavilion hotel - there will be bedlam," he said.

Owner Renato Poci denied any alcohol licence would bring trouble. "I am taken aback by the attitude of the objectors; many are customers of mine," he said.

"I find it amazing that after developing a business there we are going to throw it away because we can't supply a beer or a wine with a meal."

Cr Michael Norris said the council had to take a tough stand, as there had been a "policy vacuum" regarding the Teahouse.