

3 December 2003

# **NEWS RELEASE!**

## **MELTON FIRST LAUNCHES PETITION TO DELAY SALE OF MELTON WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL SITE**



**The Melton First action group, formed by Melton residents intent on bidding for the Melton War Memorial Hospital site and keeping it in community hands, has launched a petition to delay the deadline for offers set by the Primary Care Trust.**

The PCT, present owners of the Hospital site, announced a sale period of only eight weeks, including Christmas holiday, with the deadline of 16 January. Melton First Chairman, John Southerington, says this is far too little time for the community to raise the monies needed for the purchase.

"I feel very strongly about this", said Mr Southerington today. "The War Memorial Hospital site was left to the community by its benefactor, Richard Dalglish, yet the PCT is doing all it can to hasten through the sale, effectively preventing the community from putting in a bid."

"It's still debateable whether the site actually belongs to the Trust and is theirs to sell, and we're pursuing that enquiry as well. But Melton First's aim is to keep for the community that which is morally theirs, even if the legal case is eventually unsuccessful."

The petition asks Melton Borough residents to support the action group's initiative by requesting the PCT to delay the deadline for offers until May 2004. Putting back the date will allow the group time to prepare a fully-considered bid and development plan for the site.

"I know many Borough residents feel as strongly about this as I do" Mr Southerington said, "and I ask every one of them to come and sign our petition. Without public support this project is a non-starter. With support we stand every chance of taking back for the community that which is rightfully ours."

**ENDS**

**NOTES: Sign the Melton First petition at the Victorian Christmas Fayre on 7 December and in town centre shops from 8 December. Petition sheets also available from Melton First.**

**For petition sheets and further MELTON FIRST information:**

**Mitch de Faria at The Event Makers**

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**John Southerington, Melton First Chairman, is available for interview:**

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