



CULTURE WEEK: Bund der Bayern Bavarian dancers Reinhard Struve, Kerry-Anne Palzewski and Thomas Knoll with Kirton Point Primary School students Michael Pettitt, Terriah Miller-Pickett, Jayden Howe and Dianne Bales. The Bavarian dancers performed at the opening ceremony of Kirton Point's Culture Week yesterday to help launch a week of festivities.

Dancers kick off Culture Week

CULTURE Week at Kirton Point Primary School kicked off yesterday with a performance from a group of Bavarian dancers at the opening ceremony.

Culture Week has been running at Kirton Point for several years and gives students the opportunity to experience the world around them.

Kirton Point Primary School principal Heather Curtis said the purpose of the event was to expose the students to different cultures and teach them about diversity.

"The theme of the week is celebrating diversity," Mrs Curtis

said. "The world is made up of many different cultures and we want to expose our kids as much as possible to those cultures and teach them what each culture brings to the world."

Mrs Curtis said the students had always benefited from Culture Week.

"We teach our children that not everybody is the same as you," she said.

"We teach them to understand, accept and celebrate the differences in the world."

Bavarian dancer from the Bund der Bayern group Reinhard Struve said the group

had performed over the weekend at the Port Lincoln show and members were enjoying their time in Port Lincoln.

Culture Week runs throughout this week with an array of different events taking place.

Today is cultural food day, tomorrow is cultural arts day, Thursday will be a full school assembly where the students will share what they've learned and Friday is the annual Aboriginal cookout.

Mrs Curtis said the students would be allowed to dress up in their cultural colours throughout the week to help celebrate.

■ By Harry Fisher

Water price changes could impact regions

A PROPOSAL to price water to reflect its true cost could have a negative impact on South Australia's regional areas if in-built subsidies are taken away without being replaced with alternative support systems.

The Port Lincoln City Council last week considered a draft report from the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) looking at reform options for SA Water's drinking water and sewerage prices.

The council has raised concerns about the impact some of the commission's findings and recommendations could have on regional areas.

The council's chief executive Rob Donaldson said the council agreed in principle with pricing essential services to reflect their true costs, however any change to current pricing structures for drinking water and sewerage services should take into account the social, environmental and economic impacts on the state's regions, which were recognised for their critical role in the economy and society but may require more essential services investment than Adelaide or areas closer to the metropolitan area.

The commission's inquiry found moving to more economically efficient usage and supply charges would lead to "an unwinding" of cross-

subsidies currently built into drinking water prices, where business customers cross-subsidise residential customers.

If this was implemented, the commission recommended transitional and ongoing support for vulnerable customers through fixed payments rather than a subsidised water usage charge, to ensure usage charges remained cost-reflective.

"Currently, around 20 per cent of all water customers receive a concession and around 5000 are exempted, at least in part, from paying water charges," the report said.

"Well-targeted subsidies and concessions are a critical step in ensuring that the economic benefits of the proposed reforms can be realised, while ensuring that those customers most in need of financial assistance can receive it."

Mr Donaldson said if in-built regional subsidies were removed, it would be important for alternative methods to be implemented to provide the same or better support for regional communities.

He said the results of the commission's inquiry would need to be considered by the government, but the draft report recommended considerable changes to pricing, including only charging signed up customers for services, rather

than applying a fixed charge to all properties that have services available to them, even if they are not connected.

Mr Donaldson said it was not about changing the amount of revenue SA Water generated but it would shift around the way the burden of raising that revenue fell on different users.

The report also considers a move to bill the end users of the water rather than the land owner and recommends considering charging different prices for water use depending on the local supply source and transportation costs.

The inquiry found capacity-based charging was the most cost-reflective way to set SA Water's drinking water supply charges, and if usage charges were reduced to cost-reflective levels, drinking water supply charges would need to increase significantly for SA Water to recover the same amount of revenue.

"This would lead to bill increases for most residential customers while large water users may receive lower bills." The commission's draft report is available online at www.escosa.sa.gov.au and people can comment on draft findings and recommendations by September 10.

The inquiry is expected to be finalised in December.

■ By Billie Harrison

Pool decision last night

By Billie Harrison

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PORT Lincoln councillors last night considered a recommendation to buy the leisure centre and refurbish it to ensure the community continues to have access to an indoor pool.

Councillors were expected to make a decision about whether or not to invest in an indoor aquatic facility at a special meeting last night.

If councillors decide to go ahead with the project, a new or improved indoor aquatic facility could be in line for up to \$2 million from the state government's Major Projects Program.

An expression of interest has been lodged with Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock for funding from the program, which was designed to generate economic

growth and stimulate job opportunities and new investment in the regions.

The program provides funding from \$500,000 up to a maximum of \$2 million with leveraged investment at a minimum of \$3 for each \$1 of grant funding.

The council's chief executive officer Rob Donaldson discussed the council's expression of interest for funding for the project with Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) chief executive Scott Ashby earlier this month, highlighting the importance of the indoor aquaculture facility project to the area.

There was a strong response to the \$8.55 million program with 40 expressions of interest submitted from around the state before the mid-July deadline.

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