

NOVEMBER 10, 2021

Saleyard News



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SAFEWORK SA INSPECTION NOTICES

In June 2021, SafeWork SA commenced a compliance campaign focusing on the risks associated with livestock handling and transport. Council was notified on 3 June 2021 that SafeWork SA inspectors would be auditing the Millicent Saleyards to determine if adequate safety control measures are in place to protect workers from injury, including training, manual handling techniques and the provision of appropriate plant and systems of work to separate workers from animals. SafeWork SA inspectors attended the Saleyards on 23 July 2021, which resulted in SafeWork SA issuing five improvement notices. Details of the Notices include:

- The PCBU is to conduct the process of identifying reasonably foreseeable hazards regarding the livestock ramps and yards
- Inspector observed that the layout of elevated walkways in the saleyards area may not be without risk to the health and safety of workers and other persons. Not all elevated walkways had kick/toe boards, not all elevated walkways had handrails.
- Inspector observed that the work environment at the truck wash area was not without risk to the health and safety of workers and other persons. The area has large holes, trip points and waste materials
- Inspector observed that the layout of the access to trucks at the truck wash area was concrete steps without suitable handrails or suitable steps. Such a structure is not without risk to the health and safety of workers and other persons
- Inspector observed that the layout of the entry and exit area adjacent to the livestock ramp was concrete blocks without handrails or suitable steps. Such a structure is not without risk to the health and safety of workers and other persons.

In response to the SafeWork SA Notices, Council publicly tendered various fabrication works in an attempt to address all five Notices at once. Council concurrently requested an extension of time to comply with the Notices from SafeWork SA, taking into account the period of time required to undertake procurement and complete the works. An extension was granted until 7 December 2021.

The open Request for Tender was published on the SA Tenders and Contracts website opening on 3 August 2021 and closing on 28 August 2021. This Tender was advertised in the Advertiser Newspaper (single advertisement), on the Local Government Association of South Australia website and on the Wattle Range Council website. A link to the tender was also directly emailed to select local engineering fabrication companies that were identified by Council staff to possess appropriate skills to complete the project. The Tender documents were downloaded by 23 organisations.

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A compulsory site briefing was held at the Millicent Saleyards on Monday, 13 September 2021. The site briefing was a pre-requisite to submission and consideration of a bid. The briefing was attended by five potential tenderers. Unfortunately, upon closing, Council did not receive any tenders for this project.

One of the local Contractors who downloaded the tender documents and attended the site briefing contacted Council Officers to advise that whilst they were uncomfortable submitting a conforming, fixed price Tender, they would be willing to undertake the work on a cost-plus basis under direct instruction of Council and in consultation with Safework SA. Council is now pursuing this option and is adjusting the scope of work to suit.

Upon the revelation that Council had not received any tenders for the work, Council Officers immediately contacted Safework SA to advise of the situation and seek a further extension of time to comply with the Notices due to a new procurement process needing to be initiated. Safework advised that the first Notice will need to be addressed before a further extension of time will be considered ("The PCBU is to conduct the process of identifying reasonably foreseeable hazards regarding the livestock ramps and yards"). The Australian Standard 5340:2020 Livestock loading/unloading ramps and forcing pens, calls for this hazard identification process to be consultative with users of the site. Council Officers organised three site meetings to walk through the Saleyards and identify any foreseeable hazards.

At the October 2021 meeting, Wattle Range Council allocated an additional \$180,000 for urgent maintenance of the loading ramps, truck wash and other items at the Millicent Saleyards to address the Safe Work SA notices. This funding is in addition to the \$173,000 that was allocated earlier in the year to upgrade lighting, replace timber railings and begin urgent first year repairs to building infrastructure in response to an independent report that was commissioned into the aging assets' short to medium term renewal requirements.

CLOSURE OF THE SHEEPYARD RAMP AND HOLDING YARDS

During the hazard identification process undertaken to address the Safework Notices, extreme risks were identified with the sheep yards infrastructure. Council acted immediately to eliminate these risks and the sheep yard loading ramps and holding pens were closed and locked on Tuesday 2nd November 2021.

The risks identified include:

- Ramp and yard infrastructure that does not meet current standards, posing the risk of a catastrophic consequence to site users and the general public
- Major risks associated with the management of contaminated wastewater that runs off the sheep yard.

Despite sheep sales ceasing at the Millicent Saleyards in 2007, Council understands that a small number of farmers still utilise the sheep yards for consolidating smaller quantities of stock from various farms into larger loads for transport. Council is investigating all future options for the site, including if it's possible to provide this transit service for sheep into the future, however in the short term, due to the risks, current site users will need to make alternative arrangements.



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EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE SALEYARDS SITE

Wattle Range Council is the owner and operator of the Millicent Saleyards. On the 25 August 2021, Council received a written expression of interest from a neighbouring property owner in purchasing a part or whole of the Saleyards site. Council considered this expression of interest at its October Council Meeting and resolved to:

“Authorise the CEO to call for expressions of interest for the purchase of the Saleyards site, 61 Saleyards Road, Millicent CT5620/865 – F216404 in the area named Millicent, Hundred of Mt Muirhead. The Expressions of Interest should specifically call for the long- term intentions of the site including:

- *Operation of sales at the Saleyards*
- *Rider Safe Program lease”*

This Expression of Interest process will be a publicly advertised process by which any person or organisation may express their interest in purchasing the whole or part of the site. There are some internal processes that Council will need to undertake prior to advertising the EOI, including seeking an independent valuation of the site and confirming our Environmental Protection obligations under the current EPA license. Once Expressions of Interest are received, Council will assess the submissions. It is at this time the option to sell some or all of the site will be considered. This decision has not yet been made, Council is currently just seeking Expressions of Interest. It is expected this process will take a few months.

Council’s Waste Transfer Station is currently situated on the same lot as the Saleyards. In order for any future sale of the Saleyards property, the Waste Transfer Station would need to be separated from the existing lot via a land division. Council’s mulching operations would also need to be relocated to the proposed Waste Transfer Station lot, and the footprint of this, along with any future waste management expansion, would need to be accounted for in the land division also.

The Saleyard and Waste Transfer activities currently share a single Environment Protection Authority (EPA) licence. The EPA has confirmed that it would be possible to divide the land and split the licence, if required.

School Holiday Fun at the Saleyards

On a lighter note, Council’s “Full Throttle in Wattle” school holiday program held its inaugural Saleyard excursion as part of its October activities. Children and parents were treated to a guided tour of the Saleyards on the sale day (thanks to our trusty Saleyards Manager, Andrew Robinson). The children were able to witness a live auction and were treated to a full site tour. This was then followed by a bus trip to a local farm, Majardah, where the children were given an extensive farm tour by Councillor Price and had a hands-on experience with cattle, sheep and chickens. This was a wonderful experience for those who attended, which showcased the value of farming and the local food chain we have right here on our doorstep

