

Advocate p3 11/3/09

Auction galloping toward Brigadoon

By Lucy Rickard

BRIGADOON may soon be home to Perth's richest annual horse auction, if plans revealed to the *Advocate* go ahead.

Swan Hills MLA Frank Alban, East Metropolitan Region MLA Helen Morton and City of Swan Mayor Charlie Zannino are putting forward a strong case to bring the Magic Millions Thoroughbred Auction Sales to the State Equestrian Centre.

The event is currently held at Belmont Racecourse, and while the Magic Millions is

happy at that location, it is understood the Belmont City Council is keen to develop the area and the auction may soon need a new home.

With buyers from all over the world and up to \$300 million spent at the auction, the Swan Valley is expected to be one of several areas in Perth bidding for the event, but Mr Alban believes Brigadoon would provide the ideal option.

Chief executive of the State Equestrian Centre, Hamish Johnston, agreed and said it would bring many positives for residents, landowners and the equestrian industry.

"From a marketing and tourism perspective it would be great for Brigadoon and the Swan Valley," he said.

Mr Johnston said if Brigadoon were given the green light, they would start their upgrades "tomorrow" and be ready for February 2011.

"Upgrading the stabling and increasing the number of stables we have and beautifying the area would be the main focus," he said.

"Belmont is currently the preferred location and the WA Turf Club is fighting tooth and nail to keep it there."

He said Brigadoon offered a solid economic option, as it was well-established, and required a small investment for upgrades.

The lease at Belmont is due to expire within a year, and Mr Alban said there was significant scope to develop a purpose-built horse sales facility in the Swan Valley.

He added that local business owners were in support of the bid, with many committing to developing new and additional accommodation, and the provision of services to cater for the many visitors and buyers the event brings.