

# Hall hire fee to free up space for family time

## HALL HIRE

FEES to hire council-owned halls on Friday and Saturday night have also been raised.

The council has implemented a new function rate for eight venues across the shire including Don Moore Community Centre, Harvey Lowe Pavillion and Wrights Road Community Centre.

Under the new charges, groups hiring function rooms on Friday and Saturday night will pay \$650 to \$2200, depending on the venue, for a 3pm or 4pm to midnight timeslot on those nights.

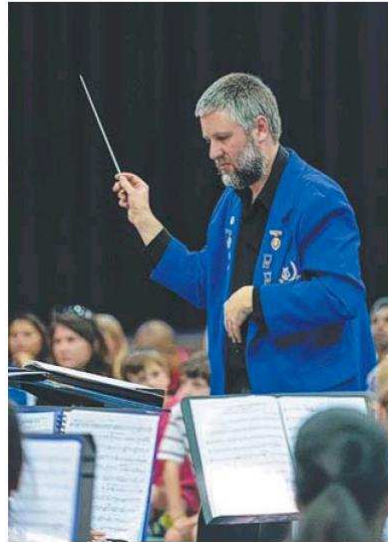
Theatre performance times are excluded.

As an example, Hills Music Academy currently pays \$95 to rent Thompson Hall, in Balcombe Heights Estate, on Friday nights.

A council spokeswoman said groups such as the academy can hire halls from Sunday to Thursday at a cheaper rate or move to alternative venues.

She said the changes would free up function rooms for family gatherings and community functions on Friday and Saturday night.

"Currently, it is difficult to hire a function space on Fridays and Saturdays because regular hirers are booking venues originally designed for functions for just a few hours to run activities like band practice, dance classes



**Hills Musical Academy musical director Garry Clark.**

etc," she said. "This is about balancing the needs of residents looking for function room space vs groups who need regular activity space."

Labor Councillor Ryan Tracey, who voted against the new fees, accused council of putting profits ahead of people.

"What we are doing is pushing out groups that look after our residents and we are making way for parties," he said. "I don't think this is the direction council should be taking."

Cr Haselden said the changes were aimed at achieving the fairest outcome for the community.

"This council unreservedly and repeatedly reinforces the importance it places on supporting the community," he said.