

Bayview Clipper drifts into debt

by Paul Weston

ONE of the northern Coast's most luxurious registered clubs, the Bayview Harbour Clipper Club, is facing a financial crisis and members are set to vote on its future.

The Bulletin has obtained documents which show a special meeting for the club's 350 members to be held at the Runaway Bay club on May 27.

With its waterfront views, the club has one of the best locations on the Coast's northern end.

The documents obtained by The Bulletin include a report by club president, Mervyn Smith, which revealed that the club has outstanding debts of more than \$120,000.

Auditors confirm the club has incurred a trading loss of \$28,000 for the financial year up to the end of March.

Since the beginning of this year, interest on the club's mortgage had been costing the club about \$780 a month, but this did not repay any of the principal, he said.

"The trading loss for the year 1999-2000 is \$28,000 to \$30,000 as at the end of March and this is confirmed in an independent auditor's report," said Mr Smith.

"Clearly, our club cannot continue to absorb these losses and it is the purpose of the coming special meeting to address and resolve this situation."

When contacted yesterday, Mr Smith confirmed the meeting would be held but declined to comment at length.

"Members will be meeting later this month to review their situation and make some decisions on the future of the club," said Mr Smith.

"Beyond that there will be a number of options. At this stage it's a sensitive issue."

The Bulletin understands one options includes the introduction of poker machines but it is a move unlikely to be embraced by all members.

The notice of the meeting includes two motions, the first requiring members to support a rise in the annual membership fee from \$20 to \$170.

If that motion is not carried, members will vote on an administrator being appointed, that motion requiring support of 75 per cent of members in attendance to be successful.

Ron Hilton, who had the management rights to the club for nine years until last year, said yesterday he believed club members would not support the first option.

Mr Hilton said he hoped the facility, which could be worth at least \$1 million, would be maintained because it was doubtful if a similar licence could be granted again.

The other fear for members is that the assets of the club will be given to rival clubs in the area.

"It's probably the most well-appointed club on the northern end of the Coast. It's just the membership that has let it down," said Mr Hilton.

The Bulletin contacted the current manager but could not obtain a comment.

2000