



BARGAIN BUY: Adjoining land owner Tom Mason considers whether \$20 for the Skinner RD Hall is too cheap.

Photo: AIDAN RODLEY

Neighbour takes STC to task over giveaway price for hall

By AIDAN RODLEY

THE \$20 Skinner Road Hall will be moved to its new home at the Stratford A&P Showgrounds on Friday, but it could be leaving behind a legacy of controversy.

The decision to sell the hall was confirmed by the Stratford District Council at its meeting yesterday after considering a submission by adjoining land owner Tom Mason.

Mr Mason aired his concerns on ensuring the site was left in a tidy condition with a road fence, the future use of the land, and on whether the SDC should have used a public tendering process to maximise returns for ratepayers.

Mr Mason told The Daily News yesterday he was quite happy for the hall to go the A&P Association, but he was concerned about the council's policy for the sale of the land.

"At what stage do their wishes get over-riden for what's best for the ratepayers?" he asked.

"Can I just offer them \$20 for other assets? You have to ask where you draw the line."

At yesterday's council meeting, deputy mayor John Edwards also raised Mr Mason's comments about the process of selling the hall for the benefit of ratepayers.

He noted, however, that it was the wishes of the Skinner Road Hall committee to sell the hall to the A&P Association and it was in the council's best interests to respect its wishes.

The council decided it was best to sell the hall to the A&P Association so it could be retained for public use and the war memorial features it contained would not be lost.

The land will be transferred back to the property from which it was gifted, with the new owners agreeing to clean up the site and have it fenced.

Mr Mason said he had not aired his concerns for any personal gain — the land was not practical for him to take over as there was a drain between his property and the site of the hall.