

# New era dawns for substation

By Vaughan Mawbey

HOBSONS Bay councillor Steven Kingshott is looking forward to the day when the Newport railway substation is transformed into an arts centre.

At an open day at the substation last Sunday, he told a crowd of 500 people: "You can imagine, just by looking at this superb old building, what it will be like when complete - alive with music, dance, drama, visual arts, literature, film and multimedia, heritage and crafts.

"An auditorium will host performances, a wealth of artworks will be displayed in the gallery and people will gather at the cafe and restaurant."

Cr Kingshott presented a cheque for \$20,000 from the council to local residents Darren Williams and Nigel Edwards, who are the driving forces behind the substation project and who have secured a further \$20,000 "in kind" sponsorship. He said the money would enable the site to be cleaned up in preparation for a VicUni training program that would allow up to 53 people to build the first stage of the arts centre.

The restoration project was expected to take 10 years and would be "a real boon" for the Newport area, Cr Kingshott said. On completion it would bring visitors to the local area, increasing trade and creating more jobs.

Terry Bracks, the wife of the Premier, said the project would provide work experience opportunities for young people.

For many years the Newport substation had been "a blight" on the local area, she said.

"This project will eventually transform the substation into a community arts hub for all Hobsons Bay residents to use and



About 500 people turned out at last Sunday's open day at the Newport substation, at which Terry Bracks (inset) launched the project that will see the building transformed into an arts centre. Pictures: Tania Tanti.

appreciate," Mrs Bracks said.

"Cleaning up what can only be described as an eyesore will also ensure that the neighbor-

hood character of Newport is protected and improved for its residents and for the people who visit the local area."