

Bendigo Advertiser (/)

Divisions as merger goes into rough

By BLAIR THOMSON

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Bendigo Golf Course

ISSUES have emerged between the Bendigo and Eaglehawk golf clubs as a planned merger stalls.

The two clubs have differed on plans for the merger and Worrells Solvency and Forensic Accountants has been voluntarily appointed to liquidate the Eaglehawk club.

The Eaglehawk club closed due to a lack of funds, Worrells partner Nathan Deppeler said.

He said the club had about \$550,000 in liabilities and about \$1.6 million in land assets, with creditors likely to be paid in full.

"We'll explore ways to try to continue discussions with Bendigo Golf Club," Mr Deppeler said.

"Failing that, we'll have to explore other avenues unfortunately, which may mean offering land for sale to the free market.

"The merger is still on the table.

"I think the mechanism or logistics of creating the merger have been difficult.

"It's certainly still an option and it's going to be looked at.

"It's the first option that has to be looked at before exploring anything else."

Mr Deppeler said there was no time frame for when or how the issue might be resolved.

Bendigo Golf Club president Andrew Johnston said differing legal opinions had caused issues between the clubs.

"We were going to join the two clubs together," he said.

"We never got that far advanced that they could sort that.

"Eaglehawk has taken its own advice.

"Eaglehawk members acted on the advice given to them, and it was contrary to what Bendigo Golf Club was trying to do.

"Bendigo Golf Club is still dealing with the liquidator at this stage.

"Eaglehawk has closed and we've given them use of our course while the matter is worked through."

Mr Johnston said it was "tough times" for the Eaglehawk club.

"Bendigo Golf Club is doing everything it can to help Eaglehawk through these tough times," he said.

"Bendigo Golf Club has acted to ensure Eaglehawk can continue in some form.

"The delays and their decisions are out of the hands of the Bendigo Golf Club and now rest with the liquidator."

Mr Johnston said Eaglehawk Golf Club did not have a president at the moment.

An update on its website said the club had "overwhelmingly" endorsed the appointment of the liquidator.

Issues with the merger were reported as early as September, when the club said the merger was taking longer than expected.