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# Wedding plans in disarray after Burwood Colliery Bowling Club closes

By SAM RIGNEY May 15, 2015, 10 p.m.



The rotunda at Burwood Colliery Bowling Club was a popular place to get married. Several couples had weddings planned for the club before it suddenly closed this week.

[Burwood Colliery Bowling Club closes \(http://www.theherald.com.au/story/3074038/burwood-colliery-bowling-club-closes/\)](http://www.theherald.com.au/story/3074038/burwood-colliery-bowling-club-closes/)

WEDDING plans for dozens of Hunter couples have been thrown into disarray after the sudden closure of the Burwood Colliery Bowling Club this week.

Those planning their special day overlooking Dudley Beach have been left out of pocket and with no place to get married after the club announced via its Facebook page on Tuesday that it would be ceasing business, citing “financial difficulties and lack of patronage”.

Among the worst affected are Singleton's Alex Taylor and Sarah Newbert who now have less than a week to find a new venue for their wedding.

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While Belmont couple Donna and Dale and Marks Point pair Bern Riley and Mark both booked within the last month and say they were told nothing of the club's financial struggles.

All three couples say they received no notification the club had closed and had to read about it on Facebook or through the *Newcastle Herald*.

Mr Taylor and Ms Newbert were supposed to wed at the rotunda overlooking Dudley Beach on Friday May 22.

They paid the club \$250 in September last year to reserve the location and were expecting about 75 guests before heading to Charlestown Bowling Club for the reception.

Mr Taylor said with only 10 days until his wedding he had no idea the club had closed.

He said he and his fiancé would have arrived on Thursday night for a last minute check to find the club empty.

"I managed to speak to [a Burwood Colliery Bowling Club board member] over the phone who told me he was "pretty confident" we could still use the location," Mr Taylor said.

"He said it was Crown land and we should be right to use it. "This is my wedding so I obviously wanted more of an assurance than that."

The *Herald* has tried repeatedly to speak to the board member since the club suddenly closed but messages have not been returned.

Mr Taylor said there was no discussion of the club refunding the \$250. He said the suggestion they didn't need the club to be operating to use the rotunda brought into question exactly what couples were paying for in the first place.

Mr Taylor attempted to get a definitive answer from Lake Macquarie City Council and Crown Lands but was still unclear on whether the wedding would be allowed to go ahead.

That was until he spoke to the administrators of the club, Worrells Solvency and Forensic Accountants, who advised him the wedding could not take place as planned.

"They said there was no insurance in place so the answer was no," Mr Taylor said.

"I suggested we write up a contract or a waiver and say we're using the land at our own risk and they won't be held responsible for anything happening, but they said no to that too."

Worrells liquidator Graeme Beattie, who has been appointed joint administrator, told the *Herald* the club was “closed and accordingly, is unable to provide services”. News ● Business

“Because the club is closed there is not ongoing maintenance of the property and at the moment there is not insurance for these people to go and have these events there,” Mr Beattie said.

“We are trying to look at the alternatives available as a matter of urgency.”

Worrells wants anyone who has booked a function at the Burwood Colliery Bowling Club to call them on (02) 9249 1200.

The ruling means dozens of couples planning on getting married at Burwood Bowling Club Colliery will have to find elsewhere.

Some at short notice, like Mr Taylor and Ms Newbert, while others were booked in as far away as next September.

And they say they’ve tried desperately to get in touch with the club, but calls are not answered and the Facebook page has now been shut down.

Donna booked recently and said the club must have known they were in financial strife.

“It was only three weeks ago that we paid and I believe they knew that something was happening when they took our money,” Donna said.

“To find out through the *Herald* that they had closed was a bit of a shock.

“I sent a message to them on Facebook asking what happens to our money and I know it was read because it says it was read, but no one has replied to me.

“They’ve shut the Facebook page down now.”

Donna and Dale are fortunate they have time to find another venue, but say they want their money refunded.

While Ms Riley said she was disappointed they couldn’t marry at the idyllic location and annoyed they had received no consultation from the club.

“We only paid a deposit, but the money is not the issue,” she said. “The annoying thing is that it was a pretty perfect location. “Not being told and seeing it on Facebook was pretty irritating.”

Mr Taylor says the club didn’t disclose to him that they had gone into administration when he originally paid to reserve the rotunda in September last year.

He was advised of that fact by staff at Charlestown Bowling Club and spoke to management in March this year after the Burwood Bowling Club held its fundraiser events. “They told me then they would definitely still be there in May,” he said. “We booked this in September and they went into voluntary administration in August, but they didn’t mention a word about it.”

Mr Taylor said he and his fiancé loved the location and it was one of the first things they booked while planning their dream day.

Mr Beattie said he and Aaron Lucan were appointed joint administrators of the club on August 6, 2014, by resolution of the Board of Directors.

“At the major meeting of the creditors of the company, held on September 9, 2014, the creditors present resolved to accept the director’s proposal for a deed of company arrangement,” the statement said.

“The deed was executed on September 18, 2014.”

Signing the deed of company agreement meant the club was required to repay its creditors within six months.

After the period was up they applied for a three-month extension but couldn’t raise the cash in time.

Mr Beattie said there would be meeting of creditors on May 20 to consider the future of the club.

“In light of present events, we have recommended that the deed be terminated and the club wound up,” Mr Beattie said.



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