

Club plays waiting game on pokies



Up in the air: Kevin Shannahan.

By **Michael Randall**

THE Dandenong Club is undecided on how best to secure gaming machines under new licensing legislation.

The club's lobbying played a part in changes to the Gambling Regulation Amendment (Licensing) Bill so venues could purchase 100 per cent of their current allotment, up to a maximum of 40 machines.

Originally, all clubs would have had to bid against each other to secure machines.

President Kevin Shannahan said the club's next move was up in the air. "We are now guaranteed 40

machines at a determined price, which we believe is a positive step for all community clubs.

"We currently have 86 — you can buy 20 in first instance, then another 20 and then to buy any more after that, you have to go to a bidding process.

"We might decide not to accept the 40 and bid for the whole lot through the bidding process. We might get them cheaper or we could get them for twice the price. We're hanging on to see a little bit further down the track."

Mr Shannahan said the club needed "at least 80" machines to continue to provide financial support

to community sports clubs and other groups.

The club has donated more than \$90,000 this financial year.

South Eastern Metropolitan region MP Gordon Rich-Phillips said he was "delighted the Brumby Government has been forced to back down".

He said the legislation would have seen "many community clubs in Dandenong driven to the wall".

Gaming Minister Tony Robinson said the new arrangements would provide some certainty to clubs with gaming machines by giving them the option to pre-purchase entitlements ahead of the bidding process.