

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2011



This is the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of LeadWest's News Summary. A wide range of issues were covered in the local newspapers this past week. Issues to do with rail, roads and schools were picked up in state-wide and national newspapers.

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### BRIMBANK

#### KEILOR DOWNS' TOM HARD-WIRED FOR SUCCESS

*Brimbank Leader – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/tom-hard-wired-for-success/>

Tom Bogusiak has a fascination with how things work.

The Victoria University Secondary College year 12 student has a whole room full of old appliances such as VCRs and microwaves.

"When I was younger, I spent years pulling things apart," Tom said.

"When I was four I received solar-powered fan from my uncle and I was fascinated by it."

It should come as no surprise Tom, from Keilor Downs, received the highest score for electrotechnology last year and recently received a prestigious Premier's Award. He received a study score of 49 out of a possible score of 50 for the VCE VET subject when he was in year 11.

This year, he is studying maths, physics, chemistry, English and systems engineering and hopes to study engineering at university because of its "hands on" nature.

Two other Brimbank scholars to receive the Premier Awards were Keilor Downs College graduate Robolge Nipuni Lenora for physics, and Joanne Ha from St Albans Secondary College for further maths.

#### BULLYING VICTIMS 'FLOCK TO CLINICS'

*Brimbank Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/bullying-victims-flock-to-clinics/2187812.aspx>

A western suburbs psychologist has welcomed the passing of laws which could see bullies face up to 10 years in jail.

The new anti-workplace bullying law, which was passed in the upper house of Parliament last week, has been dubbed 'Brodie's Law' in memory of Hawthorn waitress Brodie Panlock, who was bullied at work before she killed herself in 2006, aged 19.

Maria Mercuri, the director of 16 psychology clinics including two at Sunshine and Taylors Lakes, said many adults in Brimbank and the north-west were victims of bullying.

"I've seen a definite rise in people coming to our clinics in the last three years who have been victims of bullying and harassment at work," she said.

"It seems to happen more to people of ethnic backgrounds because some don't know their rights and have just arrived in the country so aren't highly skilled."

She said victims often felt ashamed to talk about bullying and that they couldn't get help.

"Some people are affected physically and throw up before work or suffer panic attacks out of fear."

#### TRIUMPH FOR PEOPLE POWER

*Brimbank Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/triumph-for-people-power/2187805.aspx>

Jubilant Brimbank residents have won their year-long battle to have power lines placed underground.

The state government's power line relocation committee has agreed to help electricity distributor Powercor fund the \$2.8million project.

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Powercor will begin laying cables through residential Sunshine West and Ardeer in mid-June, working until August.

The first step will be removing the power poles already installed along Ridgeway Parade, Nancy Street and Whitesides Avenue.

Corporate affairs manager Hugo Armstrong said Powercor had been working to balance everybody's needs.

"We are pleased we have been able to meet the wishes of residents, and also to provide a power supply to the new businesses that will create large numbers of jobs and other opportunities for Brimbank residents, as well as improving the reliability of the local electricity supply. We're confident this is a win for all parties."

Residents campaigned against the overhead lines on grounds including health, visual impact and fairness.

Sunshine West resident Larissa Stewart said they were ecstatic with the underground plan.

"The fact that they have listened to the community is a big win," she said.

Residents only learnt of the new lines when Powercor began erecting poles on Ridgeway Parade early last year.

It suspended work after residents complained they were not consulted before the project began.

Ms Stewart said the lines would have been a blight on the area and had people worried about their health.

"There still isn't conclusive evidence that high-voltage lines don't cause health issues."

The lines will supply power to Paramount Industrial Park in Deer Park and nearby residential areas.

Ms Stewart said the lines would have travelled overhead until they reached new subdivisions, at which point they would move underground.

"We would have been paying the price for the expansion into these new developments, which really wasn't fair to people in established areas."

A grassroots campaign convinced Brimbank Council to approach the state government for funding. Western Metropolitan Region MP Andrew Elsbury described the outcome as a great result for the community.

The committee will provide up to \$110,000 to allow the project to proceed.

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### **WORKERS RALLY FOR PAY PARITY**

*Brimbank Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/workers-rally-for-pay-parity/2187809.aspx>

Overworked social and community service workers fear more north-west residents in desperate need of support could be left to fend for themselves if pay rates are not improved.

Employees in the social and community services [SACS] sector will take to the streets tomorrow, calling on the state and federal governments to approve a pay increase in line with government workers to help attract and retain vital staff.

Fair Work Australia last month announced it had reached preliminary conclusions about an equal remuneration order for the sector.

The order was sought by unions to correct gender-based disparity between the pay of SACS workers and employees in state and local government.

Despite the historic decision, Australian Services Union organiser Leon Wiegard says the state and federal governments are yet to agree to fund a minimum wage increase, which Fair Work Australia will decide in August.

"The governments need to commit to the funding before the decision is made so that Fair Work Australia can come up with a fair decision," he said.

"It is becoming increasingly difficult for employers to attract staff and if funding isn't provided soon there will only be further crisis in the sector."

Youth worker at Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services in St Albans, Sandra Di Giantomasso, is concerned residents will miss out on key services if the workers' push is unsuccessful.

"There are a lot of vulnerable families in Brimbank and the north-west and we do intensive case work with people with mental health issues or who have income support issues," she said.

"At the moment there is a high turnover of staff because of a lack of funding, and if workers aren't supported then the hugely disadvantaged community in the local area will miss out."

She said she often didn't feel like she was in a professional position, even though she spent four years at university to get a degree to work in the sector.

She said it was not unusual for workers to be on a wage of just \$40,000.

"People who work for the local or state governments in the same role can earn \$20,000 more than we do."

### **CLEAR SKIES AHEAD FOR SUNSHINE**

*Brimbank Leader – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/clear-skies-ahead-for-sunshine/>

People power has paid off after a decision to place overhead power lines in three Brimbank streets has been given the flick.

Power lines were originally planned to be installed overhead along Ridgeway Parade, Nancy Street and Whitesides Avenue in West Sunshine.

But after almost 12 months of petitions, protests and community meetings, Powercor announced last week it would instead place the lines underground, with work to start this month and be completed in August.

The works will be jointly funded by the State Government and Powercor, with the bulk of the \$2.8 million projected cost coming from the electricity provider.

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The government's Power Line Relocation committee will contribute \$110,000. Powercor will also pay for re-vegetation, as planting the cables underground will require trees to be removed.

Former Brimbank councillor and Ardeer and Sunshine West Powerlines Action Group representative Geraldine Brooks said she was thrilled but not surprised by the backflip.

"The community has shown resilience," she said.

Ms Brooks said about 2000 people would have been affected by the overhead powerlines.

The main reasons for opposition were health concerns for children, as the lines would have been placed near Ridgeway Parade Kindergarten.

"Children would have been exposed to high electric and magnetic field levels," she said.

A Powercor-commissioned study of EMF levels in the area found that the new SU027 feeder would "hardly affect the existing background EMF level" at properties along the proposed cable route.

John Kodric, who has lived on Ridgeway Parade for 30 years, started the petition in April last year.

"We've worked very hard with petitions and protests, and it has finally paid off," he said.

"I've got grandchildren, I could not have let this go through."

Western Metropolitan MP Andrew Elsbury welcomed the announcement.

"The local community deserve this and I congratulate everyone who was involved in the community campaign."

Powercor Corporate Affairs Manager Hugo Armstrong told the Leader last week the community was promised its views would be taken seriously.

"Our challenge has been to find a way to do it, and there have been a range of issues to deal with in the intervening months, which we have now resolved," he said.

Mr Armstrong said most low-voltage power lines in new urban areas, such as Cairnlea, were underground. Ms Brooks said the decision would set a precedent for grass-roots protesters.

### **EXTENSION PLAN PUT IN THE RING FOR KEILOR**

*Brimbank Leader – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/extension-plan-put-in-the-ring-for-keilor/>

Brimbank Council is talking with Keilor Basketball Association about adding three new courts at the basketball centre.

The news follows a community outcry after the Leader reported that the council had budgeted just \$60,000 for lighting replacement and changeroom upgrades this financial year.

But last week the city confirmed the talks were occurring and that a design for the extension should be ready in two months.

Community wellbeing general manager Kelly Grigsby said the design would go to the basketball and netball associations for discussion before being considered for the council's 2012-13 budget.

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"An agreed design is likely to suggest a way to stage any development such that the costs and development can be spread over more than one financial year," she said.

Basketball association president Wayne Clarke said an agreement was in place to improve the stadium, adding: "We understand the people of Brimbank desperately want new courts.

"Both the Brimbank Council and the association have similar visions for the future, so it has become more of a working partnership than just a business deal."

Mr Clarke said allocation in last month's budget was "no surprise" to the association but he was confident of more in next year's.

"The mindset has changed," he said. "There is a need ... and we are putting plans forward."

The Leader understands late last week an extra \$90,000 was allocated to the association to remove and replace an old spectator stand.

The council would not confirm the amount but said it hoped to have satisfactory seating in place as quickly as possible.

More than 3000 basketballers play with basketball association each week.

Last July the Leader reported the council would consider doubling the number of courts at Keilor following a review of sports facilities in Brimbank.

### **BILINGUAL? BRING IT TO BRIMBANK**

*Brimbank Leader – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/bilingual-bring-it-to-brimbank/>

A Brimbank migrant centre is on the hunt for bilingual carers.

The Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre's multicultural home support service in Sunshine is looking for both male and female people from Arabic, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Maltese and Turkish backgrounds to provide in-home support.

Spectrum team leader Monica James said carers were needed to help meet the high demands.

"There is a large ageing migrant population with growing needs for home support service," she said.

"Formal qualifications in aged care are preferred; however, personal life experience will be highly regarded."

Spectrum data showed more than one in every three clients who receives community aged care in the North West was born overseas.

The same data indicates a higher proportion of people from a non-English speaking back Leg 3 ground using community and aged-care services, when compared with those from an English-speaking background.

Spectrum would provide free training with guaranteed employment.

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## MARIBRYNONG

### MULDER 'DENIAL' PUTS TRUCK PROJECT IN DOUBT

*Maribyrnong Weekly – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/mulder-denial-puts-truck-project-in-doubt/2188037.aspx>

Roads and Transport Minister Terry Mulder has undermined the future of a \$380million project to divert trucks off residential streets after contradicting advice from VicRoads about its benefits.

And a local MP says Mr Mulder has to explain whether he knowingly misled the public accounts and estimates committee hearing last month.

Facing questioning on budget spending, Mr Mulder was asked by Altona MP Jill Hennessy when the state government would commit to continuing the \$380million truck action plan and "give local residents some peace of mind" that there would be relief from trucks.

Mr Mulder said: "Early advice that I received in relation to this indicated to me that without WestLink, this particular upgrade would be very quickly taken up with additional vehicles and no real benefit would be seen in the future."

Mr Mulder's statement contradicts advice he was given in January by VicRoads acting chief operating officer George Mavroyeni.

Incoming ministers are briefed on the status of major projects by the departments they represent following a change of government.

In a progress report for the minister, obtained by the Weekly under freedom of information laws, Mr Mavroyeni wrote: "Traffic analysis shows that the Truck

Action Plan, in its own right [without WestLink], provides a significant contribution to improving access to the Port of Melbourne as well as reducing truck traffic in residential streets by around 50 [per cent]."

The truck plan was put forward by the previous Labor government to get trucks off residential streets after years of lobbying by residents.

It would include ramps linking Hyde Street to the West Gate Freeway, removing up to 5000 trucks per weekday from Francis Street and Somerville Road.

But only \$41million for stage one, widening and strengthening Shepherd Bridge and realigning the northern end of Moreland and Whitehall streets, was included in the 2011-12 state budget. Mr Mulder has said the remaining work is under review.

State Williamstown MP Wade Noonan said Mr Mulder had "serious explaining" to do.

"He needs to come clean about whether he knowingly made statements to an important parliamentary committee that clearly contradicted the advice that he had received from VicRoads.

"This is a most important issue and the minister shouldn't be playing games with local residents."

Maribyrnong Truck Action Group spokesman Peter Knight said Mr Mulder's office had not responded to repeated requests for a meeting and the latest revelation about his contradictory statements called into question his ministerial competence.

"If they're ignoring us, VicRoads and the EPA - what are they doing? Who are they listening to?"

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"If they're pulling out of the Truck Action Plan they need to be prepared for prolonged and regular disruption of port traffic.

"If we have to go back to square one and blockade Francis Street every month in peak hour until he commits to a plan to get trucks off residential streets then we'll do that."

Late yesterday, Larissa Garvin, a spokeswoman for Mr Mulder, said the minister's comment in PAEC "referred to an earlier comment in an Infrastructure Australia submission that Truck Action Plan would provide an interim reduction in truck numbers until WestLink can be provided. The comment was made in context of the government's decision to review the Truck Action Plan."

### **DIESEL POISON LEAVES INNER WEST FUMING**

*The National Times – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/diesel-poison-leaves-inner-west-fuming-20110607-1fqxa.html>

On June 27, the residents of Yarraville and the inner west celebrate a dubious anniversary. Ten years ago on that day, the Environment Protection Authority measured air quality on the now notorious, Francis Street. This was in response to concerns voiced by residents about the levels of truck traffic and associated diesel fumes that had increased exponentially following the completion of the Western Ring Road and CityLink in the 1990s.

The number of trucks using Francis Street had increased to the point where it was, and remains still, blighted with about 7000 trucks every day. Many of these trucks exit the West Gate Freeway and use Francis Street as a short cut to the port; many more head to the port from container terminals just west of Yarraville and use the entire length of the street as a rat run.

Nearly all could access the port more quickly using the Bolte Bridge, but won't because transport companies and drivers don't want to pay tolls. This is having a devastating impact on the residents of Francis Street and other streets in the inner west.

Yet many Melburnians who have not been to the area still imagine it as part of an industrial zone adjacent to the port, and wonder why people have been complaining about the issue for so long. This image is far from the truth. Francis Street is a residential street lined on both sides with houses for most of its length. It also features a childcare centre and community centre, and has a primary school within a stone's throw.

To imagine what life is really like for residents, you have to imagine waking every morning to a queue of trucks metres from your house filling two lanes and sometimes stretching for 300 metres, blowing black smoke as they edge their way towards the port.

You have to imagine not being able to get your car out of the driveway to take the kids to school because of this slow-moving wall. You have to imagine not being able to hang your washing out because it gets covered in black soot, and not being able to sleep properly at night for the roar of engine brakes and the clanking of trailers. And you have to imagine wondering whether these trucks are causing your child's asthma.

The picture I paint is a daily reality for thousands of residents in the inner west, and in the 12 years I have lived in the area things have slowly worsened. At times the pollution is genuinely choking and this is reflected in the measurements taken by the EPA in 2001, which revealed some of the highest levels of diesel pollution ever recorded in Australia.

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These levels regularly breach the EPA's own intervention points and would lead to prosecution were they produced by a factory. At the time they were taken, they did lead to a flurry of activity by the Bracks government, which implemented night truck curfews.

But when the EPA returned a year or so later to conduct repeat air testing it found that the curfews, while helping to reduce truck numbers at night, had little effect on overall diesel pollution levels.

It might be expected that, armed with this information, the EPA would make a fuss, pressure government to fix the situation, and look into the possibilities of legal action. It would be reasonable to expect it to do the job it is charged with - protecting the environment.

The EPA has not acted and now 10 years have passed. And in that 10 years, nothing has been done about the trucks on Francis Street and Somerville Road, the trucks in Footscray, the trucks that arrive in ever increasing numbers and which are poisoning the inner west.

Should anyone think that that's a little over the top, consider what we know about diesel pollution: the EPA itself says that there is "no safe level of exposure to diesel fumes" and international studies suggest that diesel pollution contains the most carcinogenic substances known to man. The studies also suggest that the effects of diesel are most harmful to children. In addition, the Maribyrnong Truck Action Group commissioned a health impacts study in 2005 and found asthma rates for people living on Francis Street could be three times higher than those of other Melburnians.

A glimmer of hope for residents did appear a couple of years ago when the Brumby government, goaded by transport adviser Sir Rod Eddington, committed to building West Gate on/off ramps.

This measure would provide an alternative route for trucks needing to access the port and would take most of the traffic off Francis Street. It would also solve problems on Somerville Road and other affected streets, and is a solution that everyone appeared to agree on. Even the then shadow transport minister, Terry Mulder, seemed to support it. Disappointingly, he not has mentioned it since the election and has refused to meet with resident groups.

Even more disappointingly the EPA, which should be protecting, caring for and improving our environment, does nothing. It has never returned to conduct repeat air testing, has never issued a fine and has never made a public statement condemning this situation.

After so many years of government inaction, shelved studies and schemes that go nowhere, we need the EPA to stand up, show some teeth and say enough is enough.

### **SUPER BODY TO RULE ON OLD SITES**

*Maribyrnong Weekly – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/super-body-to-rule-on-old-sites/2188043.aspx>

A new state government authority will take over planning of urban redevelopment sites of "state significance", which could include the Maribyrnong Defence site.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy last week announced the creation of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), which will focus on urban redevelopment and renewal of old industrial sites.

The sites could include land at Fishermans Bend and the rest of the Docklands precinct.

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URA would be self-funded, along the the same lines as VicUrban, which is funded through its development arm.

And it would target private-sector investment for areas designated for urban renewal.

The previous state government last year launched a vision for the Maribyrnong Defence site, which would include 3000 homes.

Construction is not expected to begin before 2014 and after the Department of Defence has completed remediation of contaminated soil.

Opposition planning spokesman Brian Tee said the new authority risked becoming an avenue for the minister to "ride roughshod over communities and councils and their views".

A spokeswoman for Mr Guy said it was yet to be determined if the URA would take on planning of the Defence site, now the work of VicUrban. She said councils and residents would have avenues for input on large-scale urban renewal projects that were "consistent with the processes surrounding a site of state significance".

### **FOOTSCRAY'S BRAND NEW BRIDGE WON'T FIT THE NEW PLATFORMS**

*PTUA Website – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.ptua.org.au/2011/06/05/potd-footscray-bridge/>

This is Footscray's very impressive-looking new railway station bridge. It opened last year, part of a \$61 million investment in urban renewal in the area.

Unfortunately shortly after it was completed, the Regional Rail Link project determined that part of the bridge will need to be modified to cater for the extra platforms to be built. They're claiming it will merely be "extended" — as if it's some kind of extendable table. We suspect they'll actually spend millions partly demolishing and rebuilding one side of the bridge.

Given the Regional Rail Link project has been in the works almost as long as the bridge upgrade, was it too much to ask that the design for the bridge could have included space for the extra platforms?

Passenger have also complained that the bridge provides minimal cover from the weather, and that the steps from the platforms are very steep.

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## MELTON

### **MELTON COUNCIL BUDGET SUBMISSIONS ROLL IN**

*Melton Leader – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melton-council-budget-submissions-roll-in/>

Submissions about Melton Council's 2011-12 draft budget have rolled in ahead of its adoption this month.

Melton Residents Association president Peter Rowan said he would speak at a submitters meeting next Thursday, June 16, about two topics neglected in the draft budget - activating the Melton Weir development strategy and construction of a bridge connecting Abey and Brooklyn roads.

Mr Rowan said the Melton Weir plan, dated April 2005, had been sitting at the council gathering dust for six years.

"Not many people are aware we have a major river flowing through our town with no access to residents," he said.

"Council-owned land near the Melton Pistol Club has a magnificent waterway with old red gums and the plan clearly states this could be developed into a marvellous recreational area and that is what we want."

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Melton council's acting leisure services manager Glenn Mulcahy said the plan had not been activated because of drought, with no water in the area as recently last August.

Mr Rowan said work on Abey Rd was needed to alleviate traffic problems from the highway into Melton and to provide a direct route for those living south of the highway. "People have been screaming about Abey Rd but they are being ignored by council," he said.

Council acting general manager planning and development Les Stokes said the Abey Rd bridge was recognised as an important link in the future road network for Melton and would provide an important connection over Toolern Creek.

At its June 2 meeting the council passed motions by Cr Sophie Ramsey that a briefing on the Melton Weir Strategy and a report be presented outlining current cost estimates for the Abey Road Bridge Project.

Written submissions on the draft budget closed on June 6.

### **'WE NEED 30 DOCTORS', SAYS MELTON COUNCILLOR**

*Melton Leader – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/we-need-30-doctors-says-melton-councillor/>

Melton Shire's immediate need for at least 30 more doctors is "beyond urgent", according to Cr Sophie Ramsey.

Cr Ramsey made an impassioned plea at the latest council meeting, saying the ratio for general practitioners to residents in the shire was one GP to 3750 residents, well above the state average ratio of 1:750.

She said access to doctors and health services was fundamental for the community and claimed doctors in the shire were stressed and overworked, and many had closed their doors to new patients.

"There is a possible wait of up to six weeks to see a doctor in the shire," she said.

Melton shire has on average 41 new babies born and 52 new families move into the shire every week.

"We need urgent assistance," Cr Ramsey said. "We require 30 new doctors immediately just to reach the state average."

"This matter is beyond urgent and advocacy is needed from the council and community to get doctors allocated and retained in Melton shire."

The Leader called several doctors' surgeries and medical clinics in the shire and found private, non-bulk-billing clinics were able to accommodate a new patient in quickly, usually within 24 hours, while at bulk-billing clinics the wait ranged from between three days to three weeks.

At the meeting, a motion by Cr Ramsey was carried for council to write to the federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon, drawing the Government's attention to the shortage of doctors in Melton.

Meanwhile, the campaign for a public hospital in Melton continues to gain momentum, with support for the cause from neighbouring shires and MPs.

### **MAYOR MAMMARELLA IS STANDING TALL FOR MELTON**

*Melton Leader – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/mayor-mammarella-is-standing-tall-for-melton/>

Reporter Liam McAleer quizzed Melton shire mayor Justin Mammarella to get to know the man behind the mayoral robes.

Q. Justin, why did you decide to run for council and what do you love about the position?

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A. I decided to run for council because I wasn't happy with the representation that our community was receiving at the time, and I felt that some of the ideas I had for our growing community would bring benefits to our residents.

From a very young age I took a keen interest in community activities and was always at the forefront of changes within my own circle of peers.

I enjoy the positive responses I receive from members of our community once they see council's initiatives come to fruition.

I also enjoy providing solutions to the many challenges that we confront as a young, growing community.

Q. What are some of the major challenges that you have faced as mayor?

A. Given the unprecedented growth we are experiencing, one of the major challenges is ensuring the delivery of infrastructure and services that are imperative for our vibrant, young, growing community.

Q. What are the top three things you as mayor hope to achieve during this term?

A. One is to ensure that council receives the necessary State Government support for delivery of services to enhance the opportunities for children in our community.

Two is to successfully advocate to the State Government through our campaign for a general hospital in Melton.

Three is to continue to ensure the fiscal financial management of our council in order to keep rates as low as possible.

Q. It's well known that Melton's growth is among the fastest in the country. What services and facilities does the shire need to sustain this?

A. We need the introduction of better health services for our community, more maternal and child health nurses, more sporting facilities, and more educational facilities.

Q. What perception do you think people outside of Melton shire have of the municipality? Does this perception need to change and how can you go about it?

A. During my years representing Melton shire I have discovered that the majority of outsiders see Melton as a fast growing community that offers many lifestyle options.

In fact, it is not hard for me to encourage people to live in, or visit our great municipality.

The rapid changes that are occurring in our community have changed some of the old perceptions that Melton is an isolated, small country town.

Q. Melton shire is quite a multicultural municipality. The traditional Indian surname Singh was even listed as the most common surname in Melton recently. Melton also has a large Sudanese population. Do you think Melton shire residents are accepting or do different cultures have problems assimilating into the shire?

A. During my years serving on Melton council I have met so many people and I can confidently say that Melton shire residents are accepting, tolerant, understanding and empathetic.

In fact, I have often proudly talked about the great Australian spirit that our community embraces.

Q. Growing up, what was your dream career and what did you do before becoming a councillor?

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A. One of several dream careers was serving in the Australian Defence Force, and obviously I have always had a keen interest in representing the community I live in.

Most of my working life I have worked for members of Parliament and most recently I worked for Senator Kim Carr, federal Minister for Science and Research, Innovation and Industry.

Q. What are three things that we might not know about you?

A. I studied philosophy and Australian History.

My interest in politics started at a very young age with the encouragement of my family, who are very community minded.

I was on the student representative council at school and played A-grade competition tennis.

Q. What do you get up to out of hours to relax?

A. I enjoy spending time with my family, my wife and kids.

I enjoy watching movies with my kids and fishing and gardening.

Q. If you were to describe Melton shire in one sentence to someone from overseas, what would you tell them?

A. I would tell them that Melton shire is one of the most unique areas to live in as it offers a range of lifestyle choices such as a mix of rural and urban living.

### **RURAL INCENTIVES LOST ON YOUNG GPs**

*Melton Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/rural-incentives-lost-on-young-gps/2187429.aspx>

A Melton doctor has backed a councillor's call for urgent action to address the area's GP shortage.

Urging the council to write to federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon to again highlight the shire's desperate need, Cr Sophie Ramsey said the situation was "beyond urgent".

Councillors heard there was a ratio of 3750 patients for every doctor in Melton.

Westcare GP Graham Jacobs agreed the shortage was serious and recommended incentives for young doctors.

"There is a shortage of GPs and we are not able to supply these suburbs with the doctors they need as a growing population," Dr Jacobs said.

He said the debt that young medicine graduates were left with was one of the reasons many chose to stay close to the city.

"A lot of doctors choose not to stay with us at Westcare because they are going to pay their debt much quicker if they stay closer to the city, where they privately bill at \$70 a patient," Dr Jacobs said.

"Until governments ask themselves, 'What would we have to do to get young doctors to Melton?', we've some got some major problems."

Dr Jacobs said the ideal ratio was 1100 patients per doctor.

The reality for Melton Shire and its growing population was far from ideal.

As reported by the Weekly last year, the population of Melton Shire is expected to grow by 122,850 people by 2031.

It's anticipated that more than 60per cent of this growth will occur in Melton township.

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"We need more help. They choose not to work for us because we don't pay as much; it's as simple as that," Dr Jacobs said.

The federal government gave almost \$300,000 worth of BER funding to private schools that rented their buildings, but went broke and were forced to close.

### **\$300K IN STIMULUS FUNDING WENT TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS THAT SHUT**

*The Australian – 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/k-in-stimulus-funding-went-to-private-schools-that-shut/story-e6frg6nf-1226068255173>

The federal government gave almost \$300,000 worth of BER funding to private schools that rented their buildings, but went broke and were forced to close.

The Victorian Department of Education is now trying to recover \$285,326 of schools building stimulus program money from two private schools that were operated in the state by Independent Colleges Australia.

The colleges in Melton and Casey, connected to the bankrupt ABC Learning childcare group, went into voluntary administration last November after it could not pay its landlord.

The landlord has since sold the Casey site to a nearby Christian school and the Melton site to another company, which is working with parents to reopen the Melton school in July under another name.

The schools were originally entitled to almost \$3 million of school building program funding, but the remaining unspent money is being kept by the Victorian Independent Schools Block Grant Authority to return to the commonwealth. But questions have arisen over how the federal government will get the \$285,326 back from ICA Colleges, since it is unclear whether the funding was spent upgrading facilities owned by the landlord and whether the project got off the ground.

A spokesman for Skills Minister Chris Evans said the recovery action was a longstanding practice of governments, which meant taxpayers got a share of any profit made by a landlord who sold a school that had received taxpayer-funded capital works.

Australian Education Union president Angelo Gavrielatos said the collapse of the schools highlighted the risks and costs associated with funding private schools.

Federal MP Brendan O'Connor, who is now Home Affairs Minister, warned four years ago that children should not be the guinea pigs for Independent Colleges Australia, which had never run a school.

Staff and parents of Melton College, in Caroline Springs 30km northwest of Melbourne, were shocked when the company that owned the school went into administration last November.

After a six-month battle to find an investor and get government approvals, Melton is now preparing to reopen to students next term as Southern Cross Grammar.

Parent Mick Daly remembers seeing plans in the school foyer for new classrooms to be constructed under the Building the Education Revolution program.

Mr Daly, who is now chairman of the Southern Cross Grammar board, thinks that's as far as it went, but is hopeful of getting the unspent BER funding. "We'll take any gift from anyone that's willing to donate to the school so we can increase our infrastructure."

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## MOONEE VALLEY

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### **DOUTTA GALLA CAFE KEEPS COMMUNICATION FLOWING**

*Moonee Valley Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/doutta-galla-cafe-keeps-communication-flowing/2186360.aspx>

Doutta Galla Community Health hopes a Time Together Cafe will make it easier for people diagnosed with dementia to access information and services.

The 'cafe' is a pilot project available to clients who live in the municipalities of Moonee Valley or Melbourne city.

The hope is that people diagnosed with dementia can catch up in an informal setting with carers, experts and different case workers from Doutta Galla and chat about their situation.

"Sometimes it can be difficult for clients and their carers to navigate the health system and to get up-to-date, accurate information in the one place," Doutta Galla chief executive Caz Healy said.

"The cafe project gives clients the opportunity to ask questions and get information from a range of support services in a relaxed and social environment."

She hoped the informal 'cafe' setting also helped reduce the isolation felt by some dementia patients and their carers.

The Time Together Cafe has federal and state funding under the Home and Community Care Program.

The project will include six fortnightly sessions for about 15 people who have recently been diagnosed with dementia and their carers, family and friends.

Times and session lengths will depend on the clients attending.

If successful, Doutta Galla hopes to extend the project.

### **MOONEE VALLEY MAYOR 'INSPIRED BY LIFE'**

*Moonee Valley Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-mayor-inspired-by-life/2186358.aspx>

Moonee Valley major John Sipek got the benefit of more than 400 years of collective wisdom when he dined with some of Moonee Valley's living treasures last week.

Four residents all 100 years or older enjoyed a lunch in their honour at the Moonee Valley Racecourse.

"Moonee Valley is full of amazing people but to sit there and enjoy lunch with these four residents... was simply inspiring."

Elsbeth Norden, of Flemington, was 101 on April 24 and still lives largely independently.

Mrs Norden keeps an active interest in what's happening in Moonee Valley and recently wrote a letter to the mayor expressing her dismay at the killing of a female swan in Queens Park.

North Essendon's Kathleen Nicol was 100 on January 29, and is as equally independent. She loves the races, going out to lunch and used to enjoy dancing.

Rita Smith, also from North Essendon, will be 101 on August 3. The spritely centenarian still cooks dinner, goes for walks and does her own shopping and odd jobs around the house.

Essendon's Richard Davies was 100 on March 18.

He has lived in the same house for 80 years where he raised seven children.

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### MOONEE VALLEY MENTOR TRAINING

*Moonee Valley Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-mentor-training/2186354.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council will hold training sessions for mentors who have volunteered to train young drivers as part of the L2P program.

The TAC-funded program is for learner drivers under 21 who are having difficulty getting the mandatory 120 hours of supervised driving experience.

Often learner drivers do not have access to a supervising driver or a vehicle, or are not able to afford professional driving lessons.

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said L2P had been very successful in the past 12 months.

"Since August last year we have had 12 volunteers helping local young drivers move closer to obtaining their P's. To date there are 27 young people participating in the program at different stages, clocking up almost 110 hours of on-the-road driving experience - but the council is looking for more volunteers to be part of the program as mentors."

### MOONEE VALLEY HELP AGENCIES SEND OUT SOS

*Moonee Valley Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-help-agencies-send-out-sos/2186353.aspx>

Moonee Valley welfare agencies are struggling to cope as more and more people are being forced onto the streets.

The Salvation Army, the Moonee Ponds-based Citizens Advice Bureau and the Helping Hands Mission are under unprecedented pressure to help struggling residents.

Each of the agencies has reported a greater workload than ever before as residents and families seek financial support to pay bills, buy groceries and find accommodation.

Salvation Army Lieutenant Laurel Cummins said the instance of poverty in Moonee Valley was worsening.

"We would probably get two homeless people per week here [at the Mt Alexander Road Salvation Army headquarters]. That might not seem like much but that's just the tip of the iceberg.

"We have people jump the back fence and sleep here in our backyard - whether it's marriage breakdowns, people living in cars, it all happens here."

Citizens Advice Bureau acting president Jan Murphy said the organisation had run out of food vouchers to give to people in need.

The organisation is given government funding each financial year for the vouchers, but that funding dried up weeks ago.

The bureau is giving out food parcels supplied by the Helping Hands Mission, however sometimes those supplies don't last a full week.

Mrs Murphy, who has volunteered at the bureau for 11 years, said this was the highest level of demand she had seen.

"Normally we do things to stretch [the funding] out but this year it didn't make it - the desperation of people is really bad.

"A lot of people can't pay their utility bills because their rent bills are so high and a lot of people have been forced onto the streets. If you saw our side of it you would be shocked."

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Mrs Murphy said while groceries wouldn't help families pay bills, hopefully it would help them save money that could then be used to pay rent.

Moonee Valley Council, which distributes federal funds to the bureau, is expecting a funding announcement soon..

### **MOONEE VALLEY STICKS TO TRADITION**

*Moonee Valley Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-sticks-to-tradition/2186357.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council will continue to formally recognise Australia's traditional owners at formal occasions.

The council has reaffirmed its commitment to its Reconciliation Policy which includes acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, at the beginning of formal council events and all meetings.

The council's commitment follows Premier Ted Baillieu's announcement he would not force his ministers and public servants to acknowledge traditional owners at formal events.

Mayor John Sipek said the council last year adopted a 2010-14 Reconciliation Policy.

The council is also a member of the Western Regional Local Government Reconciliation Network.

### **MOONEE VALLEY TO RECYCLE FREE**

*Moonee Valley Weekly – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-to-recycle-free/2186361.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council will hold a free e-waste weekend on June 18 and 19.

The Transfer Station at 188 Holmes Road, Moonee Ponds, will accept computer equipment, home office equipment, mobiles and charges, computer game equipment and entertainment equipment free of charge.

More than seven tonnes of items were dropped off at last year's e-waste weekend.

More than 350 computers were taken to the transfer station to be recycled last year.

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said electronic equipment was made up of hundreds of different materials and all of those materials were valuable.

"The e-waste days will allow residents to recycle these old electrical appliances safely. We all love buying new things but it is very important that we think carefully about what we do with the things we no longer need."

### **CUSTODIANS OFFENDED**

*Moonee Valley Leader – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/custodians-offended/>

Aboriginal elders and rival politicians have urged Premier Ted Baillieu to reconsider his decision to drop at official events the mandatory acknowledgment of traditional land custodians.

The Brumby Labor government introduced the practice for ministers and public servants to acknowledge traditional Aboriginal land owners during its tenure, but the Baillieu Government scrapped the protocol last month.

Mr Baillieu said he supported the protocol, but it needed to be delivered to an appropriate audience for it to be "actually heard rather than delivered".

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Western Suburbs Indigenous Gathering Place founder Colleen Marion said the Aboriginal community was offended and appalled by the announcement.

"I think it's unbelievable that the Government can come up with a decision like that," Ms Marion said.

"We don't get anything else, why can't we just get an acknowledgment at the very least?"

"We are the original custodians of this land."

Essendon MP Justin Madden said the decision lacked heart.

"I was deeply saddened by Mr Baillieu's political game with acknowledgment of the traditional land owners," Mr Madden said.

Federal member for Wills Kelvin Thomson said the acknowledgment showed Australians came from a number of traditions.

"I think mayors and government ministers will continue to acknowledge country, and I hope they do," Mr Thomson said.

Moonee Valley Mayor John Sipek said council would continue to acknowledge the traditional land owners.

State Aboriginal Affairs Minister Jeanette Powell said if the acknowledgment of country was not optional it would become "tokenistic" and be "diminished".

"Making suitable and heartfelt acknowledgments that subsequent speakers may choose to echo - this is a real and genuine acknowledgment that means something to the speaker and the audience, rather than a mandated set of words," Ms Powell said.

### **A WET, WILD LAND THAT IS FULL OF LIFE**

*Moonee Valley Leader – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/a-wet-wild-land-that-is-full-of-life/>

There is a new wetland at Afton St Conservation Park.

The former defence site has been transformed into a reserve after Moonee Valley Council purchased it from the Defence Department in 2003.

The 17ha Essendon reserve is home to more than 12,000 indigenous plants, animals, boardwalks and paths.

The wetland will help improve the water quality of the Maribyrnong River, harvest stormwater for sports fields and increase local biodiversity

Aberfeldie Brownie Guides leader Kathy Cook said the wetland would also help educate children about taking care of the environment.

The council will acknowledge the new wetland as part of a World Environment Day event this Sunday.

The family event will be at the corner of Afton St and The Boulevard from 12-2pm, and will include guided tours, interactive displays, a pet information stand, planting of indigenous flora and a barbecue.

## WYNDHAM

### **STILL NO DECISION ON WERRIBEE SCHOOL SITE**

*Wyndham Leader – 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/still-no-decision-on-werribee-school-site/>

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The future of an old public school falling into disrepair at Werribee remains unclear, six months after it closed.

Glen Devon Primary School closed last December to merge with Werribee's Glen Orden Primary School, now known as Wyndham Park.

The Education Department said last week it was still exploring its options for the future use of the vacant site, but said for the first time that it was not surplus to its needs.

The department had said if it did not need the site it would offer it for sale to government departments and agencies, then to Wyndham Council, and then by public auction or tender.

State and local politicians said a decision was needed soon.

Mayor John Menegazzo said: "There is no doubt that the school has fallen into a state of disrepair since it was closed last year, which is unacceptable given the proximity to residents, the key location of the site and the need for the buildings to be retained."

He said the site needed to be maintained and secured so it could be kept by the department for educational purposes.

Ararat state Labor MP Tim Pallas agreed.

He said he had been contacted by residents.

The department said it had upgraded security, including putting up fences and shutters.

As previously reported, police are investigating crimes at the site including smashed windows and theft of copper wire and pipes.

Playground equipment has also been stolen.

### **TAX CHANGES BRING RELIEF TO LANDOWNERS**

*Wyndham Weekly – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/tax-changes-bring-relief-to-landowners/2187988.aspx>

Landowners have welcomed the introduction of reforms to the Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution which will force developers to cover the cost of the controversial tax, designed to pay for schools and transport in new suburbs.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy introduced a bill in State Parliament last week, making the tax fully payable at the end of the subdivision process.

Mr Guy said the GAIC reforms would also provide for in-kind work agreements as part or full payment of the tax.

Michael Hocking, chairman of landowners' lobby group Taxed Out, said the announcement was good news, especially for landowners and home buyers.

"This is clearly the fairest and most efficient method of collecting development charges and brings Victoria in line with the rest of Australia," he said.

"These amendments reinstate property rights the former government took from families and the elderly living on the outskirts of Melbourne."

The controversial GAIC legislation was introduced by the former Labor government last year in order to fund future infrastructure and services in growth areas. Under the scheme, those who purchased properties inside an expanded urban growth boundary around Melbourne's fringe, including Wyndham, would have been slugged \$95,000 a hectare when they sold their land.

Affected landowners maintained there would not be a massive increase in land values once it was rezoned. Landowners mounted a long campaign to have the tax

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scrapped, saying it would ruin them. They marched on Parliament calling for the tax to be applied not on the first sale of land, but when it was developed.

Mount Cottrell resident Catherine Flower told the Weekly last year that once their four-hectare property was rezoned, council rates would have gone up tenfold. The purchaser would have faced a bill of more than \$380,000 if it was put up for sale. Ms Flower said landowners would now feel more comfortable without having a tax "hanging over their heads". But she feared many would choose to sell up and move, worn out after the long battle.

Mr Hocking said the changes were too late for some. "Since the upfront GAIC policy was announced in December 2008, our members have witnessed properties failing to sell, contracts of sale falling through and mortgage finance refused," he said.

Mr Guy said the tax would reduce developer holding costs, improve housing affordability and go towards roads, public transport, health, education, community and recreation facilities, and protection of trails and creeks.

However, opposition planning spokesman Brian Tee said the government's changes were "deeply flawed". "Because developers don't have to pay this charge until the end of the process, things like transport, health facilities, parks and recreation facilities may lag behind the housing being built in growth areas."

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## ACROSS THE REGION

### **CRIME IN CITY DOWN BUT BURBS 'SCARY'**

*The Australian* –9<sup>th</sup> June 2011

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/crime-in-city-down-but-burbs-scary/story-fn59niix-1226071984628>

The latest Victoria Police crime statistics show the city streets are safer than they were a year ago but that in Melbourne's fastest-growing outer suburbs, crime rates are outstripping the population boom.

The statistics were issued yesterday with no fanfare or explanation from the top brass, which is being investigated by the state Ombudsman to determine whether figures showing a drop in crime were cherry-picked for political purposes on the eve of last year's state election.

While crime is down in the CBD and across the state generally, residents in Melton, a municipality in the middle of Australia's fastest-growing population corridor, say they are too fearful to let their teenage kids walk the streets alone.

The new figures, which compare the year to March 2010 with the year to March this year, show a 14.5 per cent drop in the rate of crime in Melbourne's CBD, adjusted for population, and a 5.7 per cent fall in crime across the state.

In areas such as Melton and Brimbank, booming suburbs to the city's west, the increase in most categories of crime outstripped rampant population growth.

In Melton, the raw numbers show robberies up 20 per cent, assaults up almost 18 per cent and non-residential burglaries up almost 30 per cent.

When adjusted for population growth, the increases were 12.1 per cent, 10.1 per cent and 20.6 per cent respectively.

The picture is no better in neighbouring Brimbank, which includes some of Melbourne's most socially disadvantaged suburbs. There, the total number of crimes reported jumped 8.6 per cent, propelled by a 31.3 per cent rise in robberies and a whopping 38.1 per cent surge in assaults.

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Melton bakery worker Tammy Forti said the area had a safe, country-town feel when she moved there 16 years ago but she no longer felt safe walking through her suburb.

"It was so different then, that's why I moved here," Ms Forti said. "Now it's just scary. My kid is 17 and I won't let him walk around by himself. There is a lot of trouble here at night."

Local inspector Mario Fiorentino said the crime levels were "difficult" to deal with but were driven by a small, recidivist group.

"Any area that is going through considerable growth will experience it," he said.

"We're hoping to see some significant increases in resources to coincide with that growth over the coming years."

Inspector Fiorentino said the figures were "bloated" by people coming from outside Melton to steal from easy targets, such as unmanned construction sites.

Victoria Police, apparently spooked by the continuing political fallout over its statistics-handling, refused to put forward a spokesman yesterday to comment on the overall crime picture.

A month before last November's election, Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe suggested crime was falling, highlighting a 14 per cent drop in street assaults in the CBD as "promising".

Police failed to mention there had been a big rise in other types of assaults, such as in car parks and at railway stations, until this emerged in a leaked internal police report in March.

**'WEST GATE BRIDGE A DISASTER' FOR CITY**  
*Geelong Advertiser -9<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

[http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/article/2011/06/09/262821\\_news.html](http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/article/2011/06/09/262821_news.html)

The West Gate Bridge is one of the biggest hurdles to development across Geelong and the Surf Coast, a key lobby group has told a launch of the State Government's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund.

State Government Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development Damian Drum was yesterday urged to make drastic improvements to the region's road and rail links with Melbourne.

"Those transport links are becoming the biggest barrier to the development of our region," G21 chair Ed Coppe told Mr Drum during the forum on Geelong's waterfront.

"The West Gate Bridge is fast becoming a disaster."

Mr Coppe also called for additional rail services between Geelong and Melbourne, including more work on the \$4.5 billion Regional Rail Link.

G21 CEO Elaine Carbines said the Geelong to Melbourne corridor was the fastest growing in the nation.

Traffic pressures from new suburbs like Point Cook were forcing Geelong commuters to sit on the Princes Freeway for two hours some mornings, she said. "This problem's not going to go away, in fact it's going to get much worse," she said.

Although not classed as regional projects, Mr Drum acknowledged transport upgrades, including a tunnel beneath the Maribyrnong River, remained priorities for the region.

"One of the major inhibitors for this region revolves around (the) West Gate Bridge so therefore in order to give Geelong what it truly, truly wants, (it) is a

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metropolitan project. (But) we're not going to be using the Regional Growth fund for regional development on a project in the city of Melbourne. We have to look at those nuances."

He declined to specify which projects were in contention for regional funding in the Barwon South West.

"There's a whole range of other projects, major, big ticket, big money projects that are going to be highlighted by the Regional Development Australia Committee for recommendation by the (State) Government," he said.

"Some of them are in the billions and billions of dollars so we need to be mindful of what is available."

About 40 per cent of the \$1 billion fund will be distributed by local development committees and councils, he added.

Geelong City Council has previously identified 13 major projects, including a convention centre, a new administrative building near Geelong railway station and a minerals spring spa in Eastern Park.

The council has already secured \$15 million from the State Government's Regional Growth Fund for a new library in the city's cultural precinct.

It is now hoping to attract matching funding through the Federal Government.

### **18-DAY RAIL LINE CLOSURE CRITICISED**

*The Age* –9<sup>th</sup> June 2011 by Clay Lucas

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/18day-rail-line-closure-criticised-20110609-1fv0t.html#ixzz1OpsXOsr>

Thousands of suburban and regional train passengers will be badly disadvantaged by a shutdown next month that an international rail expert says will help Metro and V/Line save money.

But the 18-day shutdown - so work on the Ballarat, Bendigo and Sydenham lines can be carried out - would not be considered in many other transport systems, rail consultant Rolf Bergmaier says, because of the impact on passengers.

Another transport expert has also warned that the shutdown will convince many who have begun travelling by train to get back in the car, clogging Melbourne's roads in the west.

Advertisement: Story continues below Between July 1 and 18 the three rail lines will shut for repairs, and as a test of the first major works on the \$5 billion Regional Rail Link.

The works could have been done only on weekends and overnight, but instead are being done on weekdays as well, although during the quieter school holiday period.

During the shutdown, replacement buses will add at least 30 minutes each way for Sydenham line passengers, while Ballarat and Bendigo commuters will have at least 45 minutes added to journeys.

Mr Bergmaier has worked as a senior planner with the Swiss national railways and on Zurich's renowned system, and worked in almost a dozen countries to improve rail operations. He is now based in Sydney.

Asked about the shutdown plans by Metro, V/Line and the Baillieu government, he said it would not be done in more efficient railway systems. "Maintenance under operation", he said, was the method that most railways employed for major upgrades. "The cheapest [option] is the total closure of a rail line for a period of some weeks."

There is also disquiet in the public transport sector over whether there is a need for the complete closure, which will be the first of several carried out for the

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Regional Rail Link project. The Sydenham line will be closed at least three times between July and January 2014.

Mr Bergmaier said the option of shutting lines for weeks at a time was seldom chosen. "Perhaps once per 50 years per line only," he said.

Total closure offered rail operators a chance to save money, but disadvantaged customers, who he said would "require more travel time and are less comfortable".

John Stone, from Melbourne University's transport research centre, said the decision to stop trains for such a lengthy period would force many back into their cars.

"Many are using V/Line services for the first time. It will be very hard to win them back," he said.

Dr Stone demanded Transport Minister Terry Mulder "stand up to the lazy mentality of the operators", and push for the long-promised new Public Transport Development Authority to manage projects better.

Mr Mulder defended the decision to allow the closures, saying the other options were far less palatable.

"The alternatives would require a series of weekend rail closures and overnight rail closures," he said.

### **TRANSPORT PILLAR MEMBER REPRESENTS GEELONG REGION ON REGIONAL RAIL LINK COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP**

*G21 News – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

[http://www.g21.com.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=610:transport-pillar-member-represents-geelong-region-on-regional-rail-link-community-reference-group&catid=3:top-stories&Itemid=53](http://www.g21.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=610:transport-pillar-member-represents-geelong-region-on-regional-rail-link-community-reference-group&catid=3:top-stories&Itemid=53)

G21 Transport Pillar member Ian Westerland has been selected to represent the Geelong region on the Regional Rail Link Community Reference Group (CRG). Mr Westerland is a Community Development Access Officer at the City of Greater Geelong.

Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder, who announced the names of the independent chair and community members of the CRG, said the Reference Group was a significant step in the progress of the project with the group being a key link to the community.

"The CRG will play an important role in providing information about the project to residents, businesses, interest and industry groups, as well as feed back any issues or concerns to the project team," Mr Mulder said.

"The CRG involves local community representatives creating a direct line of communication between the project team and the community."

Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Anthony Albanese, said members of the group were selected based on their linkages with local people and ability to represent a broad range of views.

"It is pleasing to have such a diverse and dedicated group committed to working towards the success of the project," Mr Albanese said.

"Regional Rail Link will benefit both regional and metropolitan train passengers, which is why it is so important community members have direct involvement in helping to shape the project."

The group will be chaired by Mr John A Nicol who is currently serving as chairperson of the Victorian Desalination Project Community Liaison Group and who served as chairperson of the EastLink Community Reference Group.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2011



Mr Nicol is a qualified Civil Engineer and Executive Director of the Nicol Group and brings with him a wealth of experience from previous roles.

Mr Westerland is one of seven representatives who have been selected to represent the local community. The other six representatives include:

- Mr Hugh Oates (Maribyrnong)
- Mr David Anderson (Brimbank)
- Ms Leah-anne Howie (Ballarat)
- Mr Vincent Nally (Bendigo)
- Mr Peter Maynard (Wyndham)
- Mr Graham Hooper (Moorabool)

Also invited to sit on the group are representatives from the Regional Rail Link Authority, project contractors and relevant councils including:

- Melbourne
- Melton
- Maribyrnong
- Brimbank
- Geelong
- Ballarat
- Bendigo
- Wyndham

Regional Rail Link is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments.

The project will provide capacity for enough extra trains for thousands more passengers across the Melbourne and country rail networks in the peak period.

You can contact the CRG community representatives by emailing [RRL-CRG@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:RRL-CRG@transport.vic.gov.au) This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it . Your email will be directed to your nominated recipient.

More information on the project can be found at [www.transport.vic.gov.au/rrl](http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/rrl)

### **MELBOURNE RESIDENTIAL MARKET NEEDS WESTLINK TUNNEL**

*OzInvest – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011*

[http://www.ozinvest.com.au/property-news/economic\\_indicators/melbourne-property-investment-needs-westlink-tunnel-project](http://www.ozinvest.com.au/property-news/economic_indicators/melbourne-property-investment-needs-westlink-tunnel-project)

West Melbourne's growing industrial and residential markets need the Victorian government to push ahead with the WestLink tunnel project, according to representatives from the property industry.

By 2030 around 30 per cent of the population of Melbourne is forecast to live in the west and, for those interested in Melbourne property investment, it is important that the infrastructure keeps up with demand.

The Baillieu government is currently reviewing the proposed WestLink project, which at stage one will involve an underground link from Paramount Road in Tottenham to Dynon Road in Footscray.

Stage two is an above-ground link from Paramount Road to the Western Ring Road in Sunshine West.

A major upgrade to the West Gate Bridge is set to be finished in mid-July but property industry commentators say this is not enough.

"There is currently far too much competition on the West Gate Bridge between commercial trucks and vehicles and city-bound car traffic," said Nathan Bingham from Colliers International to the Sydney Morning Herald.

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Mr Bingham welcomed the \$3.2 billion proposed regional rail link. He also noted the big residential precinct planned for Fishermans Bend will push businesses further west.

"This adds further importance to the need for road access to the CBD from the west," he said.

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