

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

11th November 2011



For past editions please visit www.leadwest.com.au

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BRIMBANK

YOU GET SAY IN HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Brimbank Leader— 9th November 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/you-get-say-in-housing-solutions/>

Brimbank Council wants community feedback to help decide on housing solutions to cope with projected growth in the west.

The council signed off on its long-anticipated draft strategy, Home and Housed, at a meeting last week.

The strategy will form a long-term plan for residential land use and development in the municipality.

It comes after nine months of surveys, focus groups and feedback.

It highlights investigation areas for development of high density housing and predicts Sunshine to have significant population growth - forecast to increase 7272 by 2021 to a total population of 52,310.

Chair of Administrators Peter Lewinsky said the council would take a pro-active approach to manage population pressure.

“Community consultation to date indicates that there’s a general understanding that population growth and housing development are inevitable but need to be managed properly to protect the qualities of Brimbank’s neighbourhoods, ensure new housing is well-designed and provide adequate levels of infrastructure, including green open space,” he said.

“As part of this third and final stage of consultation, we’re seeking feedback on the detail of the strategy, including suitable locations for new housing.

“Once we’ve heard back from the different workshops and from taken on board any submissions, we’ll update the strategy and roll it out from early next year.”

The council will hold workshops in St Albans, Sunshine and Sydenham and staffed displays in Keilor and Deer Park before Christmas.

The housing strategy, including fact sheets on each of the five council districts, is on the council website. Submissions should be made by December 23.

WORLDWIDE SUCCESS FOR POET

Brimbank Leader— 9th November 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/worldwide-success-for-poet/>

A budding Brimbank poet was lost for words upon hearing she had received a United Nations international poetry award.

Aspiring writer Hashela Kumarawansa, in year 11 at Keilor Downs Secondary College, entered the United Nations Poetry for Peace Contest in September.

Entrants were invited to hear testimonies of Japanese atomic bomb survivors, called Hibakusha, and respond to their stories in verse.

Hashela penned How can I forget? and was awarded second prize, selected from 741 poems worldwide.

Her poem was read out at a ceremony at the UN headquarters in New York City on October 25.

“It took days to sink in,” the teenager said.

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"I've been writing poetry for years, but only started entering competitions this year."

But it would seem the Hillside resident is a natural.

She won the first competition she entered, which was the teenage poetry section at this year's Brimbank Council's Literary Awards.

"I like to express myself through words," she said.

Hashela said she plans to keep at the craft in the years to come.

"I would really like to keep writing once I finish school, and become a news reporter," she said.

SHOCK OVER THE AXING OF STEINER

Brimbank Leader—9th November 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/shock-over-the-axing-of-steiner/>

A handful of Brimbank parents are reassessing options for their children's futures following the abrupt closure of a learning program in Footscray.

Shocked parents are pulling their children out of Footscray City Primary School after the Department of Education scrapped its Steiner program and disbanded the school council.

Students from the school were sent home with a letter late last month informing parents the dual stream program which encourages creative learning, was being axed - with just seven weeks until the end of the school year.

School councillors received an email with 26 hours' notice of a meeting where they were informed they would be replaced.

Sunshine West father David Wlazlo, whose daughter is due to start in the program next year, said he was weighing up his options.

"We liked that it was an alternative that was embedded in the mainstream curriculum," he said. Mr Wlazlo said he and other parents in Sunshine with students already at the school felt it would be a "long haul" to travel to Collingwood, which is the next closest dual stream school.

Maribyrnong councillor Catherine Cumming, who has three children in the Steiner program, said the way the department notified the school community was "horrific" and left students and parents in tears.

With 125 of the school's 280 students enrolled in the program, Cr Cumming said the decision was a "failure" by the Department.

Education Department spokeswoman Jane Metlikovec said the decision was final.

"The school has spent 10 years attempting to create a harmonious relationship between all members of the school community," she said. "This has not been able to be achieved.

"As a result, it is appropriate for a new school council to be appointed to oversee this fresh start."

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HOUSING FUTURE

Brimbank Star – 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/322/story/143800.html>

Brimbank City Council will focus on providing more variety and choice of housing as one of the aims of their new planning guide.

The council released their draft housing strategy 'Home and Housed' last week after months of consultation with residents.

The document will help council identify sites for different types of residential development and supports "affordable, adaptable and accessible" housing, while dealing with the expected population growth in Brimbank in the coming years.

Around 950 homes were constructed each year between 2004 and 2008, but this has increased to more than 1439 homes each year between 2009-2011 in Brimbank.

"The Housing Strategy is about responding to this growth and putting in place a plan that will determine where new housing is best located so that the existing character of Brimbank's suburbs is protected," the report states.

'Home and Housed' also found multi-storey housing is "thinly spread" across the municipality, which is "worrying" as it's uncertain where new housing can be constructed.

According to the report, most objections to multi-storey development in Brimbank stem from concerns about increased traffic and congestion.

But more multi-storey housing could be on the cards for the Sunshine, St Albans, Deer Park and Sydenham planning districts, where council has identified a need for "more variety and choice".

Meanwhile, the Keilor district is seen as needing housing that "enables the elderly to continue living at home rather than moving into care".

Residents can make submissions about 'Home and Housed' to the council until December 23.

A NATURAL PROGRESSION

Brimbank Weekly – 8th November 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/a-natural-progression/2349552.aspx>

A Brimbank community mental health outreach service is spearheading a pilot project to help not-for-profit organisations go green.

Norwood Association has been awarded silver status in the Victorian Council of Social Service's sustainability program, in recognition of staff efforts to put into practice environmentally friendly measures.

Norwood's sustainability officer, Kevin Brimer, says an initial environmental assessment pointed to a number of areas in which the service could reduce its environmental impact.

They included waste reduction, reducing vehicle miles and using environmentally friendly paper and products.

"We have four sites - in St Albans, Deer Park, Sunshine and Caroline Springs - and we have appointed environmental sustainability representatives at each location. We've done things like improving recycling and putting timers on the air-conditioning to make sure it doesn't run overnight," he said.

Working with Co Efficiency Australia, Norwood will measure the reduction in power and water usage and assess the overall success of the program.

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DOG ATTACK: CHARGES OVER FATAL MAULING

Brimbank Weekly– 8th November 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/dog-attack-charges-over-fatal-mauling/2349575.aspx>

Police have laid eight charges against the owner of the dog that fatally mauled Ayen Chol in St Albans in August.

A 57-year-old St Albans man was charged over the pit bull-cross attack that killed the four-year-old girl and hospitalised two of her relatives.

The eight charges include one count of owning a dog that attacks a person causing death, two counts of owning a dog that attacks a person causing serious injury, and three counts of owning a dog that chases or worries a person.

He was also charged with being the owner of a dog found at large and failing to register a dog.

The charges come more than two months after Ayen was killed inside a St Albans home.

Cousin Anglina Mayout, 31, suffered bite wounds to her hands and arms trying to fight off the dog and her daughter, Nyadeng Goer, 5, was bitten on the back of the head.

The dog was put down after the attack - one of almost three dozen dog attacks on people in Brimbank in the past 12 months.

Ayen's death prompted new laws to be rushed through State Parliament.

They enable councils to put down unregistered, dangerous dogs and make the owner accountable for any injury or death the animal may cause.

Brimbank Council's general manager for city development, Stephen Sully, said there were 38 restricted-breed dogs registered with the council before the attack and introduction of a registration amnesty.

"There are now 43 restricted-breed dogs registered with council."

Three pit bulls were surrendered to the council and two dangerous dogs at large were found. All have been destroyed.

The council received 12 calls via a dangerous dog hotline about suspect dogs. Eight have been investigated and cleared.

The council also moved a successful motion at the recent Municipal Association of Victoria state council calling for greater government funding for enforcing animal legislation.

The St Albans man will appear at Sunshine Magistrates Court on December 6.

The maximum possible fine for a dog that attacks a person causing death is \$4886.

He faces potential fines totalling \$19,786 across all eight charges.

ST ALBANS SCHOOL URGES CLUBS TO SHARE ITS STADIUM

Brimbank Weekly– 8th November 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/st-albans-school-urges-clubs-to-share-its-stadium/2349573.aspx>

The principal of a St Albans school is inviting Brimbank sports clubs to make use of its new stadium.

St Albans Heights Primary's sports centre was opened on October 14 by federal MP Bill Shorten.

Principal George Kalandase believes it could help fill a need for clubs which would otherwise be playing in unsuitable venues.

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Last week, the Weekly reported that the council's draft sports strategy had identified a shortage of facilities for indoor sports like soccer, netball and basketball.

The St Albans Heights development was part of a \$2.5 million package funded under the federal government's Building the Education Revolution, which aims to modernise schools and support local jobs to stimulate investment.

The basketball-sized facility is also suited to futsal, netball and volleyball.

Council's youth services division is offering a supervised active youth program and on weekends the facility is being used for church-related activities.

Mr Kalandadse said interested groups could use the facility on Tuesdays after 5pm and on Saturdays.

"We are not interested in people having 21st birthdays here and it was built specifically for sport," he said.

"We've offered it to the local netball and basketball communities and had no response. At the moment we have volleyball and futsal teams using it, but we'd like a greater spread of sports."

BRIMBANK COUNCIL PROBES SAFETY OF EX-TIPS

Brimbank Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-council-probes-safety-of-extips/2349554.aspx>

Brimbank Council has moved to assure residents living near two former landfills that the sites appear to pose no major health risks.

The two former quarries at Sunshine Energy Park in Albion and Carrington Drive Reserve in St Albans were used as rubbish tips in the 1970s and '80s.

General manager of infrastructure and environment Paul Younis said an initial report on the sites last September indicated a number of potential risks to the surrounding environment due to "deficiencies in the soil cap over the old tips and the management of landfill gas and groundwater contamination".

The Environment Protection Authority recently issued pollution abatement notices for the sites.

The council had already engaged Ken Mival of URS Australia as the EPA-appointed environmental auditor to oversee the environmental investigations.

"He has been working closely with the EPA on this matter," Mr Younis said.

Environmental and engineering consulting firm GHD has been installing monitoring bores along Denton Avenue and within the landfill sites as part of the second stage of investigations into the sites.

Test pits have been dug in the landfills to test the integrity of the soil caps and determine whether or not they meet EPA standards.

GHD has also been identifying the boundaries of the landfill sites using records, historical maps, aerial photographs and other methods.

Mr Younis said URS was auditing the bore test results, with the council due to consider a report in the next couple of weeks.

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BRIMBANK COUNCIL: HELP US PLAN HOUSING SURGE

Brimbank Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-council-help-us-plan-housing-surge/2349577.aspx>

More medium-density housing in town centres is among the solutions offered by a new strategy that will determine the location and form of new housing in Brimbank over the next 10 years.

The draft plan 'Home and Housed' is out for community consultation until December 23.

The council will hold workshops in St Albans, Sunshine and Sydenham, with staffed displays in Keilor and Deer Park, before the summer holidays.

The document shows population growth is forecast to increase significantly in the city's south-east, which includes the suburbs of Sunshine and Albion, by 2021. This area's population is expected to grow by 7272 in that time.

In the north-west planning district, which includes Sydenham and Taylors Lakes, the population is expected to increase by 1196.

Council chairman Peter Lewinsky said the council had to take a proactive approach to managing population pressure.

"Being 'home and housed' is one of humanity's most basic needs so we would benefit from having the views of as many residents as possible," Mr Lewinsky said.

"Most homes in Brimbank are pretty much the same. Four out of five are detached houses.

"There are high levels of home ownerships but low levels of public housing."

Mr Lewinsky said options for older residents or people with disabilities were limited.

He said the plan considered how housing would adapt to changing household sizes and needs.

"Greater housing density is also obviously part of the solution," he said.

"It doesn't necessarily mean high-rise apartments.

"The draft strategy puts the case for more medium-density apartments in and around town centres, close to public transport.

"The tricky part is getting the right balance and not undermining neighbourhood character."

DIABETES HOT SPOT

Brimbank Leader— 8th November 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/diabetes-hot-spot/>

Brimbank is in the midst of a diabetes epidemic with an average of 15 new cases diagnosed each week.

Figures released yesterday by Diabetes Australia-Vic show Brimbank is the No 1 hot spot for diabetes in metropolitan Melbourne, with almost 12,000 residents living with the disease.

The figures are rising at an alarming rate, soaring by 212 per cent over the past 10 years. In 2001 there were just 3774 cases.

Diabetes Australia-Vic chief executive Prof Greg Johnson said while Brimbank had the highest number of people with diagnosed diabetes in the state, it was not unique in experiencing an increase in the illness.

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“The main drivers of this epidemic include weight gain (overweight and obesity) across almost all age groups and all ethnic groups, driven by unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity,” Prof Johnson said. “The genetic mix of communities also plays a part and Brimbank includes a mix of ethnic groups with a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes.”

Diabetes can lead to potentially lethal complications including heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and blindness.

Australian Medical Association Victorian president Harry Hemley said diabetes was “one of the most significant challenges” doctors face.

“Doctors in general practice need greater resources to better co-ordinate the complex, multidisciplinary care for people with diabetes in their practices,” Dr Hemley said.

Prof Johnson said in the next 10 years hospitals and health services will see an increasing demand as diabetes becomes the state’s No 1 disease.

“To combat diabetes, we need to focus on three types of prevention,” he said.

“These include primary prevention of risk factors by creating healthier food environments and healthier activity environments, targeted prevention programs for those at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes, and prevention of complications and hospitalisations for people with existing, diagnosed diabetes.”

IT'S TIME TO SET THE PACE

Brimbank Leader – 5th November 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/its-time-to-set-the-pace/>

Albion Football Club stalwart Allan Williams is calling on the State Government to provide \$7000 to install two lifesaving defibrillator machines at his club.

Williams, known as Titch, is the club’s head trainer and said he believed automated external defibrillators could save the lives of players, spectators and anyone else who was using the clubrooms or grounds.

“In the western region of a Sunday we’ve had one death (of a spectator) and a couple of near fatal heart attacks,” Williams said.

“We need all the clubs to get defibrillators.”

Williams, who helped to start the club in 1961, said players in other leagues had died of heart attacks and it could happen at any club.

“People think their worst injury will be a hamstring or calf muscle,” Williams said.

“But if you get hit in the chest hard enough your heart can go out of rhythm.”

Member for Western Metropolitan Region Bernie Finn raised the club’s plight in Parliament last week.

He asked the Minister for Sport and Recreation Hugh Delahunty to provide the money.

“I know the Albion Football Club is a frontrunner in many ways in the western suburbs, and it is good to see Allan Williams, as head trainer, once again leading the pack,” Mr Finn said.

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"One would hope that the minister will come up with the \$7000 and will kick that one right over the goal umpire's hat."

HOBSONS BAY

MP GIVES MO A GO

Hobsons Bay Star— 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/321/story/143989.html>

After many claims that Western Metropolitan Region MP Andrew Elsbury has trouble shaving his face, he has decided to refute these claims by announcing he has joined many hundreds of men, and women, in supporting the cause of Movember.

Mr Elsbury said that he was pleased to support such a fantastic endeavour and that rumours that his shaver had broken were unfounded.

The serious nature of depression in men is a cause that Mr Elsbury supports however it is the work on issues surrounding prostate cancer which caused Mr Elsbury to take up this endeavour.

Mr Elsbury's father passed away last year after a battle with prostate cancer, an event that has had a long-term effect upon not only Mr Elsbury but also the entire family.

"My father did not get to see the birth of my second daughter or me being sworn in as a Member of Parliament," he said.

FUNDING HELP FOR SEAWEED MACHINE

Hobsons Bay Star— 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/321/story/143971.html>

The State Government will pay 50 per cent of the cost of a new beach cleaning machine to collect seaweed at Altona beach.

Member for Western Metropolitan Region, Bernie Finn made the announcement last Thursday on behalf of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith.

Mr Finn said the decision was a good result for the council and residents right across the western suburbs who make use of the beach.

The new machine is expected to improve seaweed removal efficiency and allow seaweed to be recycled in a sustainable manner.

"The current seaweed collection method picks up too much sand to enable efficient recycling to take place," Mr Finn said.

"The new machine will separate sand from seaweed on Altona beach providing a product that can be used for recycling purposes.

"The beach cleaning machine will reduce the cost of seaweed disposal by reducing the amount of material going to landfill and the amount of beach sand removed in the cleaning process."

Hobsons Bay CEO Bill Jaboor said the government's decision to contribute \$43,780 in funding to the machine was a great result.

"We hope it (the machine) is successful so other bayside councils can adopt the technology," he said.

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In September, 217 tonnes of seaweed was removed from Altona beach and disposed in landfill.

The machine will allow collected seaweed to be recycled and used as fertiliser.

BRIFFA SETS HIS SIGHTS ON HOBSONS BAY TOP JOB

GNN– 9th November 2011

<http://gaynewsnetwork.com.au/news/northern-territory/2768-briffa-sets-his-sights-on-hobsons-bay-top-job.html>

According to the Hobsons Bay Leader, intersex councillor Tony Briffa has thrown his hat into the ring for the top job at Hobsons Bay City Council.

Briffa is currently serving his second term as Hobsons Bay deputy mayor and says he is "very likely" to run for mayor in 2012.

Current mayor, Michael Raffoul, has not indicated he will run in 2012.

Other potential candidates have yet to indicate whether they will step forward for nomination.

Briffa was behind the formation of Hobsons Bay's first Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Community Advisory Group, established in September this year.

The group advises council of the needs and interests of the GLBTIQ community and assists in the review and evaluation of council services.

Hobsons Bay City Council is a member of Go West, an initiative of the Western Region Councils group – including Williamstown, Footscray, Spotswood and Yarraville – that actively encourages queer arts.

One outcome of the initiative is the new West Hollywood festival, co-presented by the Melbourne Queer Film Festival, at Yarraville's Sun Theatre earlier this year, and Go West sponsored seven events in the 2011 Midsumma festival.

An active member of the community, Briffa was born with Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, with doctors originally deciding he should be raised as a girl.

From the age of 12 onwards Briffa repeatedly told doctors he was not a girl, that he was a boy.

DROP-IN CENTRE PROVES A HIT FOR LAVERTON STUDENTS

Hobson Bay Star– 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/321/story/143961.html>

A pilot lunchtime program at Laverton P-12 College is engaging students and is in high demand.

The program, a Hobsons Bay City Council Youth Services drop-in centre, is the first of its kind for the council.

Developed in partnership with the school, it ensures access to information, programs and services for children, young people and their families at Laverton P-12.

The college's social well-being co-ordinator David Stanley said the program had so far been well received by the students.

"I think it's a worthwhile program," he said.

Mr Stanley said Youth Services run activities and engage the students who voluntarily attend the centre.

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The program's two youth services officers and Mr Stanley see 35 to 50 students each week at the drop-in centre when it operates on a Friday.

Hobsons Bay community services director Peter Hunt said access to support services in Laverton, particularly youth services, was an issue.

"As the students regularly see the same school staff, it is sometimes helpful to speak to someone outside of the school," Mr Hunt said.

"Students now have a place where they can attend and interact with Youth Services staff and other students.

"The program is beneficial for students to participate in recreation in and outside of school so they feel more empowered and less isolated."

Mr Stanley said he would like to see the program continue at the school.

"There are a lot of needy kids here," he said.

"Youth Services do a lot with the school."

Mr Hunt said the program was a great example of how local schools, the community and the council can work together to ensure better outcomes for families.

"Students have the opportunity to engage in programs, develop trusting relationships with other participants, officers and teachers, as well as links to a broad range of programs and activities throughout the municipality."

BREAST SCREEN TOTALS DOWN

Hobsons Bay Star – 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/321/story/144000.html>

Less than half of Wyndham and Hobsons Bay women underwent breast screening in the past 24 months, according to the latest statistics.

The figures released by Breast Screen Victoria show that in Wyndham only 50 per cent of women took advantage of the screens while in Hobsons Bay it was only 44 per cent.

This is below the current statewide participation rate of 53.8 per cent and the target rate of 70 per cent.

Member for Tarneit, Tim Pallas, said women needed to know the risks they were facing by not receiving a scan.

"Being a woman over 50 years of age is the biggest risk factor for breast cancer and therefore a high participation rate among women aged 50 to 69 years in the Breast Screen Victoria program is necessary to ensure substantial reductions in mortality from breast cancer," he said.

According to Breast Screen Victoria however, the results for both municipalities are fair when compared to other areas, but more needs to be done to raise awareness of the services being offered.

Breast Screen Victoria encouraged women aged 50 to 69, even those who have not had breast symptoms or changes, to take part in a free screening.

Jill Henessy, Member for Altona, said the earlier women take up the free offer the better.

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"It is important that women in Wyndham take advantage of this program as regular screening is the best way to ensure early detection and early detection is the key to successful treatment."

HOBSONS BAY YOUTHS IN FUN RUN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Hobsons Bay Leader— 9th November 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/hobsons-bay-youths-in-fun-run-to-make-a-difference/>

A group of young people dedicated to making their community a better place will help raise money and awareness for homeless youths this weekend.

Hobsons Bay's Youth Voice committee will host a 5km fun run from Altona Meadows to Altona this Saturday, November 12, and it is hoping to gather community support for its largest event to date.

Youth Voice member Alex Birrell said the run would raise vital funds and awareness for Altona's Latitude: Directions for Young People program which helps youths find accommodation, transitional housing and provides outreach support.

Ms Birrell, 20, who has been part of Youth Voice for about a year, said the run - organised with the help of council delegate Cr Luba Grigorovitch - was the most ambitious project the group had undertaken.

"One of our members is part of a running club and he thought it would be a great way to raise awareness for the charity and get the community involved," Ms Birrell said.

The run will start at the 100 Steps to Federation in Truganina Park and finish at Logan Reserve, Pier St.

There will be local youth bands playing, a barbecue and other activities.

Ms Birrell said Youth Voice, which has members aged 13 to 21, was a good way to get involved. "I just wanted to help out in the community and I spoke to (Cr Grigorovitch) and she said young people could really get out and help involved through Youth Voice," she said.

"As I got to know them, I realised they really did make a difference and it's a really good thing to be a part of."

Registration starts at 9am for a 10am race start. Entry is \$5 or by donation.

POLICE BUSY BREATH-TESTING BOATIES

Hobsons Bay Star— 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/321/story/143965.html>

The Williamstown Water Police were kept busy over the long weekend not only rescuing stranded boaters and jet skiers but also conducting their annual Cup Day booze boat operation.

Last Tuesday, members positioned themselves on Maribyrnong River in Footscray breath testing drivers and checking vessels as they cruised by.

Sergeant Andrew Lilly said the boat operates like a booze bus with last Tuesday marking the first time members were able to process drink-drivers on board - previously having to take them down to the station.

"Over the last couple of years the traffic has died down a lot, since they put the rock wall up," he said.

"It's now just virtually for transport, whereas they used to sit and watch the race from their boat."

Sgt Lilly said like driving a car, boat operators are well aware they shouldn't be over .05 when operating a boat and should be .0 if under 21.

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"We check boat licences, vessel registration; we also check all their safety gear – flares in date, fire extinguishers charged, life jackets on board."

Police were pleased with the overall behaviour of vessel operators.

During the operation, police checked 43 vessels, spoke to 216 people and conducted 43 breath tests.

None of the breath tests yielded a positive result, however four penalty notices were issued for safety breaches.

NO SOCCER PITCH FOR SEAHOLME RESERVE

Hobsons Bay Leader – 8th November 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/no-soccer-pitch-for-seaholme-reserve/>

Hobsons Bay Council is expected to scrap its plan to turn Seaholme's Fell Reserve into a junior soccer training pitch after a community backlash.

First mooted in the draft Altona Central Sports Precinct Plan earlier this year, the idea drew heavy criticism from nearby residents.

The council is now expected to vote at tomorrow night's council meeting to adopt the precinct plan, but excluding the plans for Fell Reserve.

The plans for the public reserve proposed turning it into a permanent training pitch for the Altona City Soccer Club, which currently uses it on a temporary basis, removing a rose garden and installing permanent flood lights.

A council report shows 57 per cent of the 155 written public submissions on the draft precinct plan were about Fell Reserve.

Sixty-five per cent of the 89 submissions about the reserve opposed the council's proposal, while 31.4 per cent supported it. The rest were unclear.

The council also received a 508-signature petition in favour of the proposal from Altona City Soccer Club and a 214-signature petition against it from members of the Noordenne Residents Action Group.

The council now proposes continuing to use Fell Reserve as a sports reserve on a trial basis and to review its use annually. It also plans to retain the rose garden and undertake landscaping to improve the look of the reserve.

The rest of the draft Altona Sports Precinct Plan is expected to pass unchanged.

HOBSONS BAY A DIABETES HOT SPOT

Hobsons Bay Leader – 8th November 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/hobsons-bay-a-diabetes-hot-spot/>

A diabetes "epidemic" is sweeping across Hobsons Bay, with the latest figures revealing nearly 3000 residents were diagnosed with the disease in the past 10 years.

Data released by Diabetes Australia - Vic yesterday shows there are 4824 people in the municipality who have diabetes - an increase of 2927 cases, or 154 per cent, since 2001.

More than one in 20 residents - 5.5 per cent of the population - now has the illness, making the municipality a diabetes hot spot and the area has the third-highest rate of diabetes in metropolitan Melbourne. The statistics show about six residents a week are diagnosed with diabetes.

Westgate Diabetes Support Group convener Faye Cook said the increased incidence of diabetes in Hobsons Bay was directly linked to financial hardship in the western suburbs.

"My feeling is it's because, financially, people are struggling and, unfortunately, all the unhealthy food is the cheapest," Ms Cook said. "When you're on a strict

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budget, whether it's healthy or not, that's what you go for (and) people need to realise you can't do that."

But Ms Cook, who was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes four years ago, said that despite the high number of diabetics living in the area, the support group's monthly meetings average just 15.

"We do have a problem getting people to become more aware," Ms Cook said.

Diabetes Australia - Vic chief executive Prof Greg Johnson said Victoria was in the midst of an epidemic and communities and local government needed to work together.

"Local planning can limit the availability of unhealthy foods and promote better access to healthy foods (and) can ensure people have good access to physical activity opportunities," Prof Johnson said.

The Westgate Diabetes Support Group meets at the Altona Bowling Club in Civic Pde at 10am on the first Tuesday of the month.

SAND DISAPPOINTMENT IN ALTONA

Hobsons Bay Leader— 8th November 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/sand-disappointment-in-altona/>

An eleventh-hour attempt by Hobsons Bay Council to get 13,500 tonnes of unwanted sand from Black Rock's Half Moon Bay for Altona beach has been rejected, with the State Government allocating the sand to Elwood beach in the east.

But there was some good news for Altona beach, with Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn announcing the State Government would help the council buy a new seaweed recycling machine to help keep the seaweed problem under control.

As reported in the Leader last month, the council asked for the sand to help finish the regeneration of the western end of the beach between Romawi and Bayview streets.

While Environment Minister Ryan Smith did not respond to queries about where the sand was going, Mr Finn told the Leader the sand was headed for Elwood.

But Mr Finn said Mr Smith had a "very keen personal interest" in Altona beach and was "keen to see this beach go from strength to strength".

"I know there are some other issues, but the fact that the minister's interest has been aroused is a fairly good thing," Mr Finn said.

In a visit to the beach last Thursday, Mr Finn said the Government would chip in \$43,780 - about half the cost of the new seaweed recycling machine - to help the council buy the machine. The council will fund the remaining cost.

"This is a good result for the local people who use this beach, a good result for people across the western suburbs who come to this beach and a good result for the environment," Mr Finn said.

The new machine cleans the seaweed by removing sand and other debris, allowing it to be recycled into liquid fertiliser instead of going to landfill. The council trialled a similar machine in May this year.

Council chief executive Bill Jaboor said it was a win for the community and the environment.

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INTERSEX COUNCILLOR LIKELY TO BE MAYOR

Star Observer – 7th November 2011

<http://www.starobserver.com.au/news/2011/11/07/intersex-councillor-likely-to-be-mayor/65196>

Victoria could soon have its first intersex Mayor with Hobsons Bay City Councillor Tony Briffa looking likely to win the top job in the city's west.

Currently Deputy Mayor, Briffa told the Star Observer he believes he has the numbers to win the mayoralty on December 2.

No other councillors have yet firmly indicated they will challenge Briffa's bid.

"I think I've got a good chance of being elected because I have served as Deputy Mayor for two terms now and I have a lot of support within the community," he said.

"It would hopefully help break down the stigma and taboo associated with having an intersex condition and feeling different and at the same time educate people in the community about the intersex condition."

Briffa was born with both male and female physical attributes. He was assigned a female gender as a child and his male genitals were removed.

Eventually feeling uncomfortable as a woman, he started hormone replacement therapy and changed his identity documents to male.

Briffa says he is now comfortable identifying as being both male and female.

Since being elected to Hobsons Bay Council, Briffa has been the driving force behind the municipality advancing on LGBTI issues.

The council has hosted events for Melbourne queer cultural festival Midsumma and developed an inter-council liaison group to look at LGBTI issues, including recommending local libraries stock queer literature.

Last week the Hobsons Bay Weekly reported that doubt had been cast over Briffa's ability to run for the position given he was found to have breached the councillor code of conduct for sending unauthorised emails and press releases criticising a Mobil oil refinery public relations adviser.

It's understood, however, there is nothing in local government laws preventing Briffa from becoming Mayor.

"The only thing in the Local Government Act that would prohibit someone from becoming Mayor is if they're found guilty of serious misconduct by VCAT [Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal] and VCAT specifically bans a person becoming a Mayor for a period," Briffa said.

"Obviously that isn't the case with me ... there's nothing that's happened to preclude me from being Mayor."

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MARIBRYNONG

SCHOOL IN TURMOIL

Maribyrnong Leader— 10th November 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/school-in-turmoil/>

Shocked parents are pulling pupils out of Footscray City Primary School after the Department of Education axed a learning program and disbanded the school council.

The students were sent home with a letter late last month informing parents that the Steiner program was being scrapped. School councillors were then emailed 26 hours' notice of a meeting where they were told they would be replaced.

School councillor Anna Ritman, of Yarraville, said she first heard the decision from her children. She said the nearest school that offered the Steiner program was in Collingwood and that she would need to move house to send her three children there.

Maribyrnong City councillor Catherine Cumming, who had three children in Footscray City's Steiner program, said that the way the department had notified the school community was "horrific" and left students and parents in tears.

She said that, with 125 of the 280 students enrolled in the program, the decision was a "failure" by the department.

"They've demolished the (school) community," Cr Cumming said.

She said five other schools offered the program, meaning "the other regional departments are able to make it work". Cr Cumming said she had "no choice" but to take her children out of the school.

Footscray City school council president Tim Sharkey said "the west is entitled to choice like any other region of Melbourne" and predicted that the Education Minister would reinstate the program.

But department spokeswoman Jane Metlikovec said the decision was final. Footscray City had tried for 10 years to create harmony between all school community members, but without success, and a new school council was needed.

Members of the school community rallied outside the Department of Education in the CBD on Sunday.

Angry parents have formed a new group. Details: savefcps.org

REGIONAL RAIL LINK: RESIDENTS SOUND ALARM ON RACKET

Maribyrnong Weekly— 9th November 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/regional-rail-link-residents-sound-alarm-on-racket/2352338.aspx>

Footscray residents living next to the rail line are calling on the state government to commit to building noise walls to soften the sound of extra trains that will run as part of the \$5 billion Regional Rail Link.

They've questioned the methodology of a recently released noise impact assessment that concluded there would be only a small increase in noise levels from extra passenger trains.

The state government-commissioned report stated noise levels between Moonee Ponds Creek and Tottenham would increase by 1-3 decibels due to a small relative increase in overall train traffic.

Yet the "small" increase puts passenger train noise levels over the acceptable levels under NSW and Queensland guidelines.

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The predictions differ from an earlier Environment Protection Authority report released early this year, which found noise from extra rail traffic could cause chronic sleep disturbance.

The disparity in the findings has puzzled residents who, after analysing the train-traffic data, concluded that only four extra peak-hour trains would be added to the crowded Sydenham, Werribee and Williamstown lines by 2024.

Fair Go for Footscray Rail Residents spokesman Nick Fahey said the train traffic numbers used in the Noise Impact Assessment Report released last month were at odds with the government's previous statements.

"When they announced Regional Rail Link they were talking about adding double or triple the number of trains to serve the west, but now they're talking about just four extra trains here and there in peak hour and almost none in off-peak times," he said.

"People have lost their homes to this project and all along we've been told that it's necessary; it's going to make a huge difference. If it's only going to be a few extra trains in peak hour, you have to wonder if it's all worth it."

Residents say the downgraded noise projections free the government of any responsibility to provide noise barriers.

The latest report modelled the effectiveness of different types of barriers but these were left out of the project design requirements due to the "... absence of a settled government policy which provides guidance on what noise barriers are appropriate..."

Railway Place resident Simon Obarzanek said a noise wall would be a fraction of the overall project cost and would be the most effective protection for residents. "The report says the impact is particularly difficult for people close to the rail lines

with wooden houses, small backyards and heritage-listed neighbourhoods that make it almost impossible to redevelop their homes to avoid noise," he said.

Regional Rail Link spokeswoman Kate Eskdale said the government had prepared principles for a draft noise policy and it would ensure that any additional noise mitigation resulting from application of a new rail noise policy would be incorporated in the project.

"This does not exclude the provision of noise barriers in the future by the Regional Rail Link Authority or a third party," she said. Asked about the difference in train traffic projections, she said the latest noise report considered only projects the state government had committed to over a 10-year period.

"The previous report included other rail projects that may have been funded or delivered before 2030. However, decisions are yet to be made on these projects. The Noise Impact Assessment Report was peer-reviewed and completed in consultation with the EPA."

SOCCER SCHOOL HAS TALENT ON TAP

Maribyrnong Star— 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/321/story/144061.html>

Australia will produce some outstanding soccer talent in the near future if Maribyrnong College has anything to do with it.

The school's soccer program needs to be seen to be believed, giving participants an introduction to professionalism at a young age while they continue their studies.

Students get the benefit of outstanding coaching through the program's technical director Arthur Papas who returned to Maribyrnong College after working at the AIS for two years. He is also the performance analyst at the Melbourne Heart.

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Other staff members include a specialised football conditioning coach, two technical coaches and a specialised goalkeeping coach who is also an A League goalkeeping coach.

"The whole thing was to come back and implement the national curriculum through our program which is what the FFA (Football Federation Australia) is trying to do. We want to try to develop players based on that curriculum," Papas said.

"We are not about trying to win tournaments or trying to be the biggest or the strongest. We really are after a long-term growth in the athlete."

The program has grown in recent years from six students to 66 with 54 boys and 12 girls involved. That growth has seen success stories begin to emerge. The most recent involved Jeremy Walker, 18, and John Buceto, 16, who have been selected to receive youth contracts with A-League sides Melbourne Victory and Melbourne Heart respectively.

The Heart and Victory rivalry does not stop at the senior level, with the youth league sides also desperate to notch up a win against their cross-town rivals.

"It's quite similar, the fans bring a bit of feeling to it as well," Walker said.

Buceto and Walker are training between five and six times a week as well as playing in games.

"Once they reach this kind of level we really make sure that we are not overloading them with their training because Maribyrnong is not the most important thing in the world," Papas said.

Buceto was rapt to pick up his contract with the Victory and said he thought the Maribyrnong program had been great for his development.

"Even the younger guys he (Papas) has them learning the AIS way and getting them in the right training patterns from a young age which is great for them," Buceto said.

"I knew that this would be a stepping stone in my development and I was honoured to get the opportunity. Now I will try and just work hard and show that I'm keen to improve."

Walker moved to Melbourne from Tasmania at the start of the year to join the soccer program and has had the added pressure of VCE to contend with.

The next thing Maribyrnong students will be able to enjoy as part of that growth is a FIFA approved pitch on the school site.

WON'T STOP FIGHT AGAINST FAULTY FINE

Maribyrnong Star— 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/320/story/144017.html>

An irate ratepayer is calling on Maribyrnong City Council to compensate him, after issuing him with a contentious parking fine.

Allan Frith was fuming after the council sent him a \$122 parking fine for stopping in a No Stopping area along Yarraville's Murray St in August.

Mr Frith had pulled out of a car parking bay at the rear of the Sun Theatre on 11 August to allow another driver to take the space.

As he drove off, the hay fever sufferer pulled over briefly on Murray St to blow his nose.

Mr Frith stopped in front of a No Standing sign that pointed to the left, so he stopped his car to the right of the sign.

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But, unfortunately for him, another No Standing sign about 30 metres away pointed in both directions.

“It gives the impression you’re legally parked,” he said.

“Even if it did have the arrow pointing both ways, I had just pulled over to blow my nose and drive right off. I didn’t even stop the car.

“It’s un-Australian to enforce the law like that.”

Mr Frith explained the predicament to Maribyrnong City Council, but they initially refused to retract the fine.

Mr Frith said the council only overturned the fine when he threatened legal action and said he was going to contact the media.

In a bizarre turn, the letter overturning the fine arrived the same day as a penalty reminder notice for \$144.

“They were prepared to hit me with a fine, how about they give me \$140 (for getting it wrong)?

“It’s not about the money, it’s the principle.”

The Hoppers Crossing resident grew up in Footscray and Yarraville and is currently renovating a property in the area, with plans to move back in coming months.

Maribyrnong City Council general manager Ian Butterworth said the council would now amend the signs. The council would not comment on whether or not it would compensate Mr Frith.

GROWTH DRIVES STRATEGY

Maribyrnong Star– 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/321/story/144031.html>

Two transport strategies have been developed by Maribyrnong City Council to cater for the projected population growth in the municipality.

The draft Maribyrnong Integrated Transport Strategy considers all the transport, parking, access and mobility elements that affect the municipality, while the draft Northern Maribyrnong Integrated Transport Strategy focuses on the transport network in and around Highpoint Shopping Centre.

Both strategies are long-term plans which will help guide the development of Maribyrnong’s transport system over the next decade and focus on offering more sustainable transport.

The two strategies are out for consultation until 9 December. They can be viewed at the Footscray Town Hall, libraries or online at www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au.

SENIORS HAVE COMPANY ON THE MENU

Maribyrnong Star– 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/321/story/144055.html>

Maribyrnong City Council has joined the Community Chef program to provide meals for its Food Services program.

Meals will now be prepared by Community Chef and delivered to the relocated Footscray Senior Citizens Centre in Raleigh Rd, Maribyrnong, for distribution by council staff.

Shared meals are served in the dining room at the Raleigh Rd centre to encourage social interaction.

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The council's Food Services program provides 67,000 meals each year to the homes of residents who are having difficulty preparing adequate meals for themselves or to people signed up to the Shared Meals program.

"Community Chef was created specifically to provide 'meals on wheels' services and will offer our residents a great menu choice," mayor Sarah Carter said.

Community Chef is a wholly-owned local government enterprise that makes meals for the delivered meals programs of 21 Victorian councils.

SPORTING CLUBS TO DUMP RUBBISH SKIPS

Maribyrnong Star – 9th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/321/story/144050.html>

Maribyrnong City Council is trialling a waste management program at three Yarraville sporting clubs in a bid to scrap skip bins.

The council is giving rubbish and recycling bins to the Yarraville Seddon Eagles, Footscray Baseball Club and Yarraville Cricket Club – which all operate from Mclvor Reserve – to use for the weekly rubbish collection.

The trial is part of a council bid to help the clubs recycle, save money and remove the skip bins, which have become targets for illegally dumped rubbish and graffiti.

Previously clubs were using skip bins or taking their rubbish home, with limited facility to recycle.

Each of the clubs is responsible for recycling its waste, storing the bins and ensuring they are put out for collection each week.

"This is an important pilot program at one of our most highly utilised sporting pavilions and is helping our local sporting clubs manage their waste more efficiently both from a cost and recycling perspective," mayor Sarah Carter said.

"The council service is more cost efficient than the skip bins previously used and cuts down on the problem of dumped rubbish and most importantly lets the clubs properly sort and dispose of their recyclable waste."

The trial will help the council and the three clubs identify and resolve any potential issues so the program can be finetuned and rolled out across the municipality.

The pilot program will finish next month and a report will identify other clubs and pavilions earmarked to receive the new service.

MARIBYRNONG COUNCIL OWED \$7 MILLION

Maribyrnong Leader – 9th November 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/7m-owed-and-rising/>

More than \$7 million in unpaid rates, service charges and infringement notices are due to Maribyrnong Council.

The Maribyrnong Leader has found unpaid parking fines have increased 500 per cent from \$132,000 in 2009 to \$795,000 in 2011.

This does not include "doubtful debts" which could take them up to \$3 million.

In 2010, the council installed 30 car parking machines which accounted for 612 parking spaces across Footscray.

With 69 more machines being rolled out across 720 parking spaces, the number of parking fine debtors is expected to increase.

Footscray Traders Association president Grant Miles said a large percentage of the fines would have included fines from parking cameras which were removed in March.

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But he said council had since started taking photographs with hand-held digital cameras of cars parked illegally and sending out infringement notices up to two weeks later.

Mr Miles said it showed the council was “overzealous in their issuing of parking infringements”.

“They’ve suddenly awoken in the last few years to it being a very substantial revenue stream,” Mr Miles said.

He said it was “indicative (that) the sheer number of fines that they’re issuing has gone way up”.

A further \$1.1 million is owed in unpaid infringements and \$2.7 million in rates, which is steadily increasing by about \$100,000 each year.

The council is also owed \$1.6 million in sundry expenses, almost \$800,000 in GST and \$81,000 in deferred rates.

Council corporate services general manager Stephen Wall said the percentage of rates debtors was actually falling compared with the increase in the number of ratepayers due to population growth in the municipality.

“As unpaid rates are a debt against the land, council will eventually receive the rates owed when the property is sold,” Mr Wall said. “Council vigorously follows up on outstanding debts and fines through the range of legal options available, including court action in the case of infringements.

“People issued with infringement notices have a range of payment options available, including staged payment plans for those facing genuine hardship.”

VACCINE VICTIMS UNITED

Maribyrnong Leader— 8th November 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/vaccine-victims-united/>

Girls from all over the country will gather in Maribyrnong for the next meeting of a support group for those who had a “life-changing reaction” to the cervical cancer vaccine Gardasil.

Monash resident Naomi Snell, who says she suffered MS-like symptoms after having Gardasil, is the founder of Australian Gardasil Girls, which is taking vaccine manufacturer Merck to court.

Ms Snell said she began feeling sick after her first shot of the vaccine, which immunises against human papillomavirus, the most common cause of cervical cancer.

“I had a full auto-immune and neurological attack,” she said.

“At stages, I was unable to stand and walk.”

Others in the group claim they suffered miscarriage and anaphylaxis as a result of the immunisation.

Ms Snell said the group was meeting on December 1 at Federal Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon’s office, where they would be presenting a petition.

“The aim is to really raise awareness of our plights,” she said.

“A lot of us have written to Nicola and have gotten limited response.”

Ms Snell said there was a problem with there being “no vaccinating injury compensation scheme in Australia”. “(Gardasil) was a government scheme in which we got free inoculations so it’s unfair that the girls and families are left to fend for themselves,” she said.

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Ms Snell estimated she had lost about \$100,000 in wages to date which exacerbated her “enormous” medical expenses. Ms Roxon said she had not been contacted by Australian Gardasil Girls.

“To date, more than 6.2 million doses of Gardasil have been distributed in Australia and the overall number of suspected adverse events reported following Gardasil administration is very low, and consistent with other new vaccines and adverse event rates reported in other countries,” Ms Roxon said.

“As of September 15, 2011, a total of 1767 suspected adverse reactions have been reported in Australia following vaccination with Gardasil.”

MAYORAL RACE NARROWS

Maribyrnong Leader– 8th November 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/mayoral-race-narrows/>

The race to become Maribyrnong’s next mayor is down to two, a councillor says.

With five Maribyrnong councillors Australian Labor Party aligned, the two independent councillors claim they stand no chance to be elected mayor.

Independent councillor Dina Lynch gave Leader the hot tip - “it’s a two-horse race ... it’s either Martin (Zakharov) or John (Cumming)” - the two ALP councillors yet to serve as mayor”.

Cr Lynch said she would not be running because there was no point.

She claimed the independents were excluded from the decision making.

Cr Catherine Cumming, another independent, threw her hat in the ring for the top job, but was doubtful about her chances. “It would be an honour as a lifelong (Footscray) resident,” she said.

“I’ve been the longest-serving councillor there (but) I’m an independent so obviously that’s the reason why I haven’t been made mayor.”

Deputy Mayor Mr Zakharov confirmed he was thinking about running for mayor and said, as one of two ALP councillors yet to be elected as mayor, “on a political level” there was a chance for him.

Councillors Sel Sanli, Sarah Carter and Michael Clarke, who have served as mayor, said they had no intentions of running for the job because it should be shared around.

While Cr Clarke said he would love to be mayor every year, he would put his hand up for deputy mayor. He said he would back his fellow ALP councillors, but also Cr Lynch as she was “a worthy candidate”.

TREE CHANGE IN WEST YARRAVILLE

Maribyrnong Leader– 5th November 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/tree-change-in-west-yarraville/>

A community project in West Yarraville will be a model for future streetscape design in Maribyrnong.

West Yarraville On the Nose Community Group received \$50,000 from Cargrill Australia to plant up to 300 trees in the streets.

Cargrill was ordered to fund a community environmental project in addition to spending \$600,000 to improve its premises

City West Water acting managing director Geoff Gardiner said the West Yarraville Accelerated Street Tree development project was designed to transform the streets with trees to deliver improved air quality for better health outcomes, shade, habitat and food for birds and insects.

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“City West Water plans to use findings from this project to act as a pilot for Greening the West and hopes to facilitate the roll-out of further projects across the western metropolitan area,” he said.

Mr Gardiner said Greening the West was an initiative to increase vegetation and tree canopy cover in the western suburbs.

YOTN spokesman Bruce Light said the new trees would not only improve the health and wellbeing of people and provide visual improvement, they would replace trees that were poorly performing.

The planting is due to begin in the streets bordered by Francis and Roberts streets, Geelong Rd and Footscray Cemetery next May.

MELTON

\$87M YOURS TO BE HAD IN LALOR SEAT

Melton Leader– 10th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/87m-yours-to-be-had-in-lalor-seat/>

More than \$87 million in lost superannuation remains unclaimed in the federal electorate of Lalor, including Melton.

Prime Minister and Lalor federal Labor MP Julia Gillard said data from the Australian Taxation Office showed Lalor had 23,374 “lost super accounts”.

The combined accounts contained more than \$87 million in unclaimed super.

Ms Gillard called on constituents to claim their “lost” super.

“People can lose track of their super when they move house or change jobs,” she said. “However, a super account is considered ‘lost’ by the Tax Office only after it has been inactive for over two years and where the owner can no longer be contacted.”

Across Australia there are more than 3.4 million lost superannuation accounts, worth more than \$12 billion. The average amount in lost super is about \$3500, which if invested over a 20-year period equates to about \$12,500 to spend in retirement.

To make it easier to find and consolidate super accounts, the Federal Government has established a phone service, Super Seeker, and an internet search tool.

The tools allow people to locate their missing super accounts, potentially adding thousands of dollars to their retirement savings.

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"After your home, superannuation is the second-largest investment a person has," Ms Gillard said.

"It's your money, so track it down and roll it over.

"Make sure it is there for your retirement."

People can track their lost super by visiting ato.gov.au/superseeker or by calling the Super Seeker hotline on 13 28 65.

Both services are free.

MELTON LOBBIES STATE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Melton Leader— 10th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-lobbies-state-on-domestic-violence-prevention/>

Melton Council is taking a zero-tolerance approach to family violence in the shire.

Family violence covers controlling behaviours, including physical, sexual, and/or psychological abuse.

Mayor Justin Mammarella said the council would work with Keilor state Labor MP Natalie Hutchins on a campaign to lobby the State Government for increased support services in the west. The mayor said that, to stop the cycle of family violence, there needed to be more funding for social support services; reduced social isolation and improved community contact points; and new programs for families in high-risk situations.

Increased resources for local police, extra court resources in the west, behaviour change programs for perpetrators, and more research into appropriate pre-schooler child programs were also needed.

"Council is committed to supporting programs and campaigns that send an anti-violence message," he said. "As a community, we need to send the message that violence against anyone won't be tolerated."

Cr Mammarella commended Ms Hutchins for her great work in raising awareness of this issue.

"I pledge my full support to those community members who confront these terrible circumstances," he said.

"Supporting this campaign is further demonstration of council's commitment to the health and wellbeing of our community and is consistent with our campaign advocating for zero-tolerance against child abuse," Cr Mammarella said.

MELTON DRIVER BEHAVIOUR COPS THE WHACK

Melton Leader— 10th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-driver-behaviour-cops-the-whack/>

Is saving 30 seconds off your road trip worth risking yours or someone else's life?

That's the question police are asking as Leader steps up its community campaign to duplicate Melton Highway.

Leading Sen-Constable Allan Edwards, of Melton highway patrol, said impatient drivers who risked dangerous overtaking were behind most accidents on the highway.

Thirteen people have died and more than 280 have been injured on the killer highway since 1987.

Sen-Constable Edwards said his first experience on the highway would stick in his mind forever.

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"Before I was even working in Melton my wife and I travelled the road in 1984 to look at a block of land we had purchased," he said.

"After the S bend at the dip, a car overtook us on a blind right-hand bend. I was absolutely shocked at the sheer stupidity of it."

While working on a police motorbike, the veteran officer said he witnessed one driver overtaking up to 15 cars at night.

"Impatient drivers overtaking are the real issue," he said. "It's crazy and insane that they are putting theirs and other lives at risk."

While he agreed highway duplication would make the road safer, Sen-Constable Edwards said driver behaviour was the most pressing issue that needed tackling.

"I fully support the campaign - I've been saying for years it needs to be done - but I can also understand VicRoads claims that the traffic volume on the road doesn't justify duplication, yet," he said. "At peaks times the road is very busy, but at other times there is nothing."

Police want drivers to show respect for other road-users and think about the consequences of their driving.

"The major cause of most of the 13 fatalities on this road has been driver error, not road conditions," Sen-Constable Edwards said. "Ask yourself: is saving 30 seconds really worth risking yours or someone else's life?"

MELTON HAS HEAPS OF FESTA FUN

Melton Leader— 9th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-has-heaps-of-festa-fun/>

Young and old lined High St to cheer an array of floats at Melton's 32nd annual Djerriwarrh Festival on Saturday.

During the street parade mechanical failure resulted in a minor collision between an Ambulance Victoria vehicle and a CFA float.

A member of the Victorian emergency services, who was lining the road to ensure public safety, was injured.

Both vehicles were quickly diverted to side roads so the parade could continue uninterrupted.

All the festival favourites were back this year including market stalls, Get Active Expo, Lions Club carnival, Young@Art show, music, activities and workshops for all ages.

The festival ended with a fireworks display.

CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF MELTON SHIRE DOCTORS

Melton Leader— 9th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/critical-shortage-of-melton-shire-doctors/>

Melton Shire's GP shortage remains critical as the shire struggles to attract and retain doctors for its growing population.

With the shire set to boast more than 200,000 residents by 2026, Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the outer western region had the lowest number of GPs per capita of any metropolitan region.

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"The outer west has a rate of 0.23 GPs per 1000 people as compared to the inner east with a rate of 0.56 GPs per 1000 people," Cr Mammarella said.

Cr Mammarella said local health issues such as the high proportion of people with type 2 diabetes and the projected increase in hospital admissions reinforced the requirement for more GPs.

Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella said the shortage of GPs was causing added stress to sick residents.

"They are having to wait long times for appointments with their GP or attend the only walk-in practice in Station Rd, Melton," Mr Nardella said. "This is causing stress and not helping people."

Mr Nardella said retaining existing doctors in Melton had also been difficult.

"I have supported a number of applications for practices to attract overseas doctors," he said.

"As a community, we need to work together to attract more doctors and to keep them."

Djerriwarrh Health Services chief executive officer Bruce Marshall said the shortage of GPs in Melton was one of the most critical issues in the community.

"Djerriwarrh Health Services has been very active, along with Dr Graham Jacobs from Westcare, at bringing attention to the critical shortage of GPs in Melton Shire," Mr Marshall said.

"More than 95 per cent of health needs require the services of a GP in the first instance."

Mr Marshall said Djerriwarrh Health Services, along with both Melton and Moorabool councils, were working to recruit and retain more GPs to the area.

"In reality it will require both Federal and State Government assistance to redress this shortage in both the immediate and long term," Mr Marshall said.

Cr Mammarella said the council continued to advocate and work in partnership with groups such as the Melton Moorabool Strategic Health Forum for increased government investment to address the shortage of GPs in the region.

TENANTS OPT FOR CHEAP TREE-CHANGE

Melton Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/tenants-opt-for-cheap-treechange/2350432.aspx>

Scores of renters are snapping up cheap homes in Bacchus Marsh and Melton as investors lease newly built houses for a median of \$230 a week.

The two towns ranked among the top four suburbs in a list of Melbourne's cheapest rentals.

Rental homes are going for a median weekly rent of \$230 in Bacchus Marsh and \$240 in Melton, while the Melbourne median price hovers around \$360 a week, according to RP Data's 2011 figures.

AAG-Len Smith Real Estate director Len Smith estimated there were more than 750 rental properties in Bacchus Marsh alone.

"In a town with a population of only about 16,000, that's a big return," he said.

Mr Smith said new housing developments such as Timaru Estate and Sarino Park were largely behind the surge in rentals across Melton and Moorabool shires.

"Many of the houses being rented are four-bedroom, double-garage homes," he said.

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"They get all the bells and whistles of a brand-new home, plus the landscape and feel of a quieter area."

Tenants Union of Victoria spokesman Toby Archer said high rents in Melbourne were pushing renters to outer areas like Melton and Moorabool.

"Median rents [in Melbourne] consume more than a third of total household income," he said.

But Mr Smith said people were also drawn to the area in search of "lifestyle" houses.

"Bacchus Marsh is aesthetically beautiful and people are renting here because they think they want to try it out before buying a house, especially if they want to start having kids," he said.

"They can come and enjoy the lifestyle but still continue to save and determine if it's going to be for them.

"Melton has always been affordable and, geographically speaking, it's a great option if you say I want to be 40 minutes from Melbourne and the beach."

Dale Brown rents a three-bedroom house in Darley for \$300 a week.

While he works as a truck driver based out of Dandenong - a two-hour commute away - he says the Bacchus Marsh area fits the bill of the lifestyle he wants.

"I'm from country Tasmania, which is very community-based, but since I've been in the Marsh, I've settled in the Marsh," he said.

"What I love about Bacchus Marsh is that it's central, in the middle of everything - Melbourne, Ballarat, Geelong and the coast."

Since moving to the area two years ago, Mr Brown has joined the Bacchus Marsh CFA and says he enjoys the area's tight-knit community as well as its affordable rent.

RP Data's suburb scorecard lists Bacchus Marsh as equal-fourth-cheapest place in greater Melbourne to rent, following a \$215 median rent in Laverton and \$220 in Sunshine and Albion.

MELTON WORKERS STAY SAFE - MOSTLY

Melton Weekly - 8th November 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/melton-workers-stay-safe-mostly/2350422.aspx>

Melton and Moorabool businesses are being rewarded for having relatively safe workplaces.

WorkSafe Victoria data for 2010-11 shows insurers for businesses in Melton paid out nearly \$1.13 million in workers compensation to rehabilitate 133 employees. That placed Melton 28th among Melbourne's councils in terms of workers' compo costs. Moorabool (30th) recorded 79 claims at a cost of \$706,843.

The figures included people absent from work for 10 days or more, as well as those with treatment costs exceeding \$580.

The safety authority has warned there's no room for complacency with risks still present across many local industries.

Release of the data came as WorkSafe Victoria launched a campaign focusing on high-risk industries, and it coincided with a federal government report showing Victoria having the fewest injuries per 1000 workers of any state or territory.

WorkSafe's executive director of health and safety, Ian Forsyth, said Victorian businesses were safer than ever, but many risks remained.

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"[The same problems are] generally basic matters that can be fixed at little or no cost but if left undone can have devastating consequences," he said.

"They are known hazards with known solutions. Workplaces need to find and fix problems, not wait for an inspector to come or for someone to be hurt or killed."

Industrial Deaths Support and Advocacy's Lorraine Quirke said: "The western part of the state is highly industrialised and the work done often carries significant risks, but it's demoralising to see the millions of dollars being spent by employers in the west in relation to claims for deaths and injuries. It's hard to believe that spending even a fraction of these costs on improving work safety couldn't significantly impact on this appalling toll."

OZ DAY ANN BALLAN ROLE PUT AS PLUS

Melton Leader– 8th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/oz-day-ann-ballan-role-put-as-plus/>

The Victorian Australia Day Committee has defended the use of Crown casino's public relations manager as Moorabool Shire's 2012 Australia Day Ambassador.

Crown's Ann Peacock, daughter of former federal Liberal Party leader Andrew Peacock, will act as the shire's official ambassador in Ballan next year.

Bruce Harnett, chair of the Victorian Australia Day Committee, said there was much more to Ms Peacock's bow than acting as Crown's official spokesperson.

He said the mother-of-two was a highly respected philanthropist and organiser of various corporate, fashion and fundraising events as well as VIP celebrity balls.

"While Ann's employment is as a spokesperson for the entire Crown complex, not just the casino, she dedicates much of her personal time to promotional and philanthropic work with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Million Dollar

Lunch, which raises in excess of \$1 million each year for the KOALA Foundation, and the Shane Warne Foundation," he said.

"Ann is also chairperson of the Moomba Advisory Board. Ann's engagement with these activities, as well as her job with Crown, her broad community knowledge and her enthusiasm for all Australia Day means, have made her a very popular Ambassador since 2004.

"We annually obtain feedback from both communities and Ambassadors on their placements.

"We have never had anything but positive feedback about Ann."

The Australia Day Ambassador program is a national program sponsored by Woolworths.

All Ambassadors act in a personal and voluntary capacity.

POWER LINE CUTS IRK PARWAN RESIDENTS

Melton Leader– 8th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/power-line-cuts-irk-parwan-residents/>

Parwan residents are shocked by their number of power blackouts.

They say they have had nearly 100 cuts in the past 10 years, which they blamed on ageing Powercor infrastructure and old cables.

The latest blackout hit more than 200 homes for 12 hours on October 28.

Powercor has apologised, saying the outage was caused by conductor failure, requiring two separate replacement jobs.

Residents fear that Parwan could suffer a similar fate as Kilmore East on Black Saturday in 2009, when high wind felled power lines, sparking a major fire. The

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Kinglake fire become the state's worst, with 120 deaths and more than 1200 homes destroyed.

Exford Residents and Landowners Association secretary Bill Earle said Parwan residents had had enough and wanted Powercor to ensure a consistent power supply.

"No one minds the odd outage, but Powercor's records will show that they happen consistently in the Parwan area," Mr Earle said.

"I reckon it would be close to 100 outages over the past 10 years. If it happened to a town in Melbourne there would be hell to play."

Powercor corporate affairs manager Hugo Armstrong said there was no doubt Parwan residents had had problems with their power supply for some time.

Mr Armstrong said the causes of the outages had been varied, and included severe weather and rail crashes, but that the age of some of the infrastructure had certainly contributed.

He said a major upgrade project in the area was about to begin, involving the replacement of about 5km of high voltage lines from Parwan Rd along Cummings Rd, Smiths Rd and the Bacchus Marsh-Geelong Rd past Aerodrome Rd.

"This work will begin in December with the standing of poles along the route, and be completed during January and early February when new conductors will be hung," Mr Armstrong said.

"This work will significantly improve the reliability of the network for all customers in the district, as well as its capacity, allowing for new or expanded business activities in the area."

He said electricity would have to be turned off several times, but customers would be told beforehand.

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But Mr Smith said people were also drawn to the area in search of "lifestyle" houses.

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DIABETES RISE 'EPIDEMIC' IN MELTON AND MOORABOOL

Melton Leader – 8th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/diabetes-rise-epidemic-in-melton-and-moorabool/>

Six people in Melton Shire and two in Moorabool Shire are diagnosed with diabetes each week on average, new figures reveal.

The latest report from Diabetes Australia - Victoria, called "Diabetes Epidemic - 10 years on", shows that the number of people with diabetes in Melton Shire has increased by 206 per cent in the past 10 years.

Cases jumped from 1488 in 2001 to 4550 in 2011.

Now ranked 33rd in the state for diabetes prevalence, 4 per cent of Melton Shire's population now has the condition.

In Moorabool Shire the number of diabetics jumped from 379 in 2001 to 1275 in 2011, a rise of 236 per cent.

Ranked 59th in the state, 4.4 per cent of the shire's population has been diagnosed with diabetes.

Djerriwarrh Health Services chief executive officer Bruce Marshall said the increases were "extreme" in both shires and said demand for services remained high.

"Diabetes is one of the main chronic diseases in our community," he said.

"We need to encourage our community to minimise their risk factors and encourage them to help themselves and take some responsibility at limiting risk factors where possible."

Mr Marshall said Djerriwarrh Health Services provided diabetes services at several of its sites but demand would only increase as the population grew.

"We have the services of an endocrinologist at Melton Health and provide a diabetes nurse educator and dietician services from our sites in Melton, Bacchus Marsh, Caroline Springs and a satellite service in Ballan," he said.

"We also assist with the Diabetes Support Group, which is conducted from our Community Health Centre in Melton."

Mr Marshall said it was hoped in the future Djerriwarrh Health Services would be able to set up diabetes prevention groups.

To help reduce the risk of diabetes people need to maintain a healthy weight range, have a healthy eating plan and exercise regularly. Any family history of diabetes should also be discussed with your GP.

Information about diabetes is available from the Diabetes Australia hotline on 1300 136 588.

Referrals to Djerriwarrh Health Services diabetes services can be made on 9747 7609.

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WOMEN RULE THE ROOST IN MOORABOOL STAFFING

Melton Leader – 7th November 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/women-rule-the-roost-in-moorabool-staffing/>

Two-thirds of Moorabool Council staff are female.

The council's annual report shows 173 of the council's 261 staff come from the fairer sex.

It's no place for the boys as only 88 men work for the council. However, all seven elected councillors are men.

The council has a heavy concentration of female employment in clerical areas and in jobs such as social workers, community services and librarians.

The majority of women (83) work in council's community services division while the majority of men (43) are employed in the works department.

Only 10 men work in community services where they are outnumbered 8-1 by women.

And just six women are employed in the works department where the ratio is seven men for every woman.

Women (31) also heavily outnumber men (five) in the council's corporate services section.

In terms of employment, local government is both the smallest and the most "male" of the Government sectors in Australia.

In 2001 local government employed 125,000 people but just over 50,000 of them - or 40 per cent - were women.

Women working in local government has been steadily on the rise since the 1940s.

Women made up only 19 per cent of local government employees in 1947.

But that figure had increased to just over a quarter of the workforce - or 26 per cent - in 1985.

However, in the past decade the increase in women's employment in the industry has slowed.

There was virtually no change in the relative employment of women between 1996, when 39 per cent of council employees were women and 2001 (40 per cent).

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MOONEE VALLEY

REPAIR LIST HIGH FOR ESSENDON SCHOOL

Moonee Valley Leader– 8th November 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/repair-list-high-for-essendon-school-fbready/>

Essendon Keilor College may be closer to a vital upgrade after data revealed it is facing the state's biggest public school repair bill.

The State Government last week announced a full maintenance audit would be conducted in every state school in Victoria.

The announcement came hours after the Herald Sun newspaper published the cost of repairs in the last Education Department audit of 492 schools.

Essendon Keilor College topped the list of almost 500 schools with 1341 faults, needing more than \$3.36 million to fix.

Education Minister Martin Dixon said the audit, which begins this week, would help prioritise maintenance work.

Principal David Adamson said he hoped the findings meant they had a better chance of receiving a \$10 million redevelopment of the deteriorating Niddrie campus.

He hoped parents did not turn away from the school because of the state of the buildings.

"It's a bit of a worry they'll look at that list and think 'we don't want to send our kids there'," Mr Adamson said.

The audit also revealed the repair bill for Rosehill Secondary College (Niddrie) was \$580,746 with 248 faults, Strathmore Secondary College \$592,879 with 97 faults and Buckley Park College (Essendon) with \$103,805.

Buckley Park College principal Tony Tartaro said repair problems at the school were not as big compared to some others in the area. "The real worry for me is the ongoing funding produced to maintain the buildings," Mr Tartaro said.

"The energy involved in getting things done diverts people from their core business, which is teaching and learning."

Niddrie MP Rob Hulls said the government needed to match the Labor Party's pre-election promise to fund the Essendon Keilor College's multi-million dollar redevelopment.

"You don't need an audit to tell you that Essendon Keilor College needs \$10 million spent on it," he said.

The audit is due in May.

DOUTTA GALLA COMMUNITY HEALTH GETS AID

Moonee Valley Weekly– 8th November 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/doutta-galla-community-health-gets-aid/2349187.aspx>

Doutta Galla Community Health's Health Time Project has received \$130,000 in the second instalment of funds from the Melbourne Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

The project works with people experiencing homelessness, tailoring help to meet individual needs and improving access to health and welfare services.

Funding will be used to provide more sessions and build better referral paths for clients between health and welfare services.

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BAND-AID SOLUTION

Moonee Valley Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/doutta-galla-community-health-gets-aid/2349187.aspx>

Opposition education spokesman and Niddrie MP Rob Hulls has panned the state government's decision to provide \$500,000 to adult education providers as a Band-aid solution to cuts to the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

Mr Hulls said the funding would not provide any real assistance to the sector.

"This move to provide a one-off grant to adult education providers, but not a single cent to secondary schools, is a cynical attempt to paper over the gaping hole left by the \$48 million cuts to VCAL co-ordinators," Mr Hulls said.

"The fact is the majority of people enrolled in VCAL courses are doing so through schools and this money will do nothing for them."

MORE PLAY TIME

Moonee Valley Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/doutta-galla-community-health-gets-aid/2349187.aspx>

Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development Wendy Lovell has opened the Gowanbrae Community and Children's Centre.

The \$4.1 million centre offers 30 long-day-care places, 30 kindergarten places, maternal and child health facilities, consulting rooms and space for adult exercise classes.

The state government contributed \$500,000 to the all-in-one facility in Moreland's newest suburb, which borders Strathmore Heights.

"Over the past four years Gowanbrae has had a significant baby boom; today one in 10 Gowanbrae residents is aged four or under," Ms Lovell said.

The need for a kindergarten and long-day-care centre at Gowanbrae was identified as part of the Moreland Council's early year's facilities strategic planning framework.

MOONEE VALLEY COUNCIL PUSH TO 'RECOVER' FUNDS

Moonee Valley Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-council-push-to-recover-funds/2349194.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council will join a push to ensure the federal government continues its Roads to Recovery program.

The council has joined the Victorian Local Governance Association's campaign to lobby for more funds.

Roads to Recovery has supplied councils with funding for the upkeep of local roads since 2000.

In the first four-year phase of the program, Moonee Valley Council received an average of \$484,800 a year.

The council now receives \$325,000 a year.

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said Roads to Recovery funding was essential for the municipality.

He said the funding needed to be extended to accommodate a backlog of local roads in need of renewal.

Roads in Moonee Valley which have been upgraded as a result of Roads to Recovery funding include Barbara Crescent from Christina Court to Duke Street in

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Avondale Heights; Brisbane Street and Adelaide Street to Myrnong Crescent in Ascot Vale; Napier Crescent from Peterleigh Grove to Kilmartin Street in Essendon; and Riverside Avenue from Military Road to Raglan Street in Avondale Heights.

The council will write to Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Opposition leader Tony Abbott seeking bipartisan support for the continuation of the program.

The council will also write to the minister and opposition spokesman for transport, Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten and Wills MP Kelvin Thomson seeking their support.

MOONEE VALLEY RACING CLUB PLANS FAIL TO EASE FEARS

Moonee Valley Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-racing-club-plans-fail-to-ease-fears/2349191.aspx>

Moonee Valley Racing Club has failed in its plans to win over community support with the inclusion of an early-learning centre, kindergarten and 3000-square-metre park in its master plan to redevelop the racecourse.

Save Moonee Ponds member Julie Vulin says she believes residents' resolve to fight the racing club is stronger now the master plan had been lodged and more details are available.

"I've spoken with 50 people and, to give you an idea at how outraged they are, every single person has asked me for an anti-development sign for their house," Ms Vulin said.

"The plans [for a park and early learning centre] to appease or nullify any concerns, they are all platitudes. I see nothing written in stone."

The racing club's multimillion-dollar proposal to redevelop the 40-hectare racecourse site has been in the spotlight since it was proposed in April.

The development includes using part of the site to make way for several 25-storey apartment towers expected to house another 6000 residents in Moonee Ponds.

Racing Club chief executive Michael Browell said the club wanted to stay in Moonee Ponds, and the master plan would assure its future.

"It has become increasingly clear that retention of the site purely for thoroughbred racing is not sustainable," Browell said.

"Reinvention as a multi-purpose facility for the entire community, where racing is one of many activities, is imperative for the club's future in Moonee Ponds.

"This reinvention is at the heart of the master plan.

"Without these major works, the club would need to consider other alternatives and the likelihood of the club remaining in Moonee Ponds could be compromised."

Moonee Valley Council will consider avenues of community consultation at its meeting on Tuesday.

MOONEE VALLEY LIBRARY GIVES TOY JOY WITHOUT COST

Moonee Valley Leader— 8th November 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/moonee-valley-library-gives-toy-joy-without-cost-fbready/>

It is play time for children as our first local toy library opens next Wednesday.

More than 800 toys, including puzzles, train sets, slides, doll houses and miniature roller coasters, will be available from the Moonee Valley Toy Library.

President Debbie Williams said 50 members had signed up and the library could take 200 members.

Ms Williams said parents could save money by borrowing toys instead of buying them, especially before Christmas.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"You can recycle toys and it's also great to catch up with other mums and other families," Ms Williams said.

Members can borrow three or six toys for two weeks.

The library will be based in Essendon and open on Wednesdays, from 10am-noon and Saturdays from 9am-noon.

The toy library is at 129 Lincoln Rd, Essendon.

AVONDALE HEIGHTS CROWN LAND A 'PICTURE OF POSSIBILITY'

Moonee Valley Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/avondale-heights-crown-land-a-picture-of-possibility/2349189.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council wants to transform land surrounding the Avondale Heights Library and Learning Centre into a community hub.

The council is in the final stages of negotiating the transfer of ownership of 1.3 hectares of Crown land on the corner of Military Road and Clarendon Street to become the jewel in the crown of Avondale Heights.

A draft master plan for the community precinct was released last week and includes an early-years hub, new multi-purpose sports facility, youth-focused outdoor space and European-style piazza.

The plans would also involve relocation of the Rhonda Davis and Avondale kindergartens into one new building.

Mayor John Sipek said the draft plan was a long-term guide that could be changed to suit community demands.

"Avondale Heights has been identified as one of the areas in Moonee Valley in highest need of additional community services," he said.

Cr Sipek said the new Avondale Heights library at Military Road continued to attract almost 12,000 visits a month and was confirmation that the site was ripe for further community services.

"The draft vision and master plan seeks to build on the library's success by developing a precinct to house wider community services."

Demographic analysis of Avondale Heights by the council has found the area is lacking community services.

According to council studies, Avondale Heights has the lowest median weekly income in Moonee Valley (\$366), the second largest proportion of 55-64-years olds in Moonee Valley and 2000 residents under 25, which represents one in 10 young people in the municipality.

Council director of city works and development Bryan Lancaster said the project had not been costed and the released plan was "a picture of what was possible".

He said the plan would take two to five years to be developed.

MURPHY'S LORE: CUSACK FRONTRUNNER FOR MOONEE VALLEY MAYOR

Moonee Valley Weekly— 8th November 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/murphys-lore-cusack-frontrunner-for-moonee-valley-mayor/2349196.aspx>

Moonee Valley will have a new mayor in three weeks and the smart money is on Cr Jim Cusack.

Cr Cusack has been a competent representative of the residents in the Myrnong ward since his election to the council in 2005, shouldering the responsibility for the city's economic development.

After six years on the council Cr Cusack is a strong debater with the ability to think regularly outside the square and search for positive solutions to council issues.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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We haven't had a mayor from the south since Lydia Kauzlaric was in charge in 2004-05.

If council elects Cr Cusack the city will have strong, effective leadership for the final term of this council. Elections are due again next November.

MOONEE VALLEY'S MILLION-DOLLAR DEBT

Moonee Valley Leader – 7th November 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/moonee-valleys-million-dollar-debt-fbready/>

Moonee Valley Council is owed more than \$1 million in overdue annual rates, latest figures reveal.

More than 800 ratepayers, mostly residential, have still not met their last financial year payment, raising concerns among financial and legal experts.

The figure makes up less than 3 per cent of what the council expected to receive in rates.

MoneyHelp spokeswoman Carolyn Bond said those struggling to pay their rates were usually experiencing wider financial difficulties. "We get thousands of calls a year and nearly everyone who we speak to feels like they are the only person," Ms Bond said.

MyBudget director Tammy May said her financial advice company was seeing a trend of people being caught in a cycle of constantly struggling to make ends meet.

"More people are just living pay to pay and don't have anything really to show for their money," Ms May said.

Mayor John Sipek said the council was developing a hardship policy to deal with people in financial difficulty. He said rates could be waived or deferred in exceptional circumstances.

Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) executive officer Hugh de Kretser said unpaid rates was a state-wide issue that had led to an investigation of councils suing residents over non-payments.

The joint project with Footscray Community Legal Centre was focusing on eight north-west municipalities including Moonee Valley.

Mr de Kretser said 2005-06 data showed Moonee Valley Council was a creditor in 98 cases of arrears of rates in the Victorian Magistrates' Court.

"Anecdotally, it's still an issue and we're currently finalising our examination of more recent data to see whether it is getting worse," Mr de Kretser said.

But Cr Sipek said the council had not taken any resident to court in the past five years. He encouraged residents in financial difficulty to organise a payment plan with the council.

AVONDALE HEIGHTS' VISION OF PIAZZA

Moonee Valley Leader – 7th November 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/avondale-heights-vision-of-piazza-fbready/>

A European-inspired piazza, early years hub and community foyer are among the ideas Moonee Valley Council has in store for Avondale Heights.

A draft vision and master plan cantering around the Avondale Heights Library and Learning Centre precinct has been released, with an aim of turning the area into a community hub.

The council is expected to take control of about 1.3ha at the corner of Military Rd and Clarendon St, which neighbours the VicUrban-owned residential development site.

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Avondale Heights and East Keilor Association spokesman Frank Di Blasi said anything to improve the area would be welcome. "The place at the moment is so sterile. It needs something livening it up and to be beautified," he said.

Mr Di Blasi said a piazza would provide an area to host recreational activities and events.

About 12,000 visits are made to the Avondale Heights Library and Learning Centre each month.

The council's plans include: merging the Rhonda Davis and Avondale kindergartens into an early years hub; a redevelopment of the gym to include a mezzanine space; and a piazza with playground, fitness station and seating.

Mayor John Sipek said more services were needed in Avondale Heights to meet expected population growth.

This includes proposed developments on Military Rd and at the Maribyrnong Defence site.

But Cr Sipek also said the long-term plans were just visions and residents were urged to get on board with suggestions.

Two information sessions will be held on November 17 and 26 at the Avondale Heights Library and Learning Centre.

DIABETES EPIDEMIC IN MOONEE VALLEY

Moonee Valley Leader – 7th November 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/diabetes-epidemic-in-moonee-valley-fbready/>

Diabetes cases in Moonee Valley have more than doubled in the past 10 years, reflecting a statewide epidemic.

Diabetes Australia data shows Moonee Valley now has 5342 registered cases, up 127 per cent on the 2353 in 2001.

The prevalence of diabetes in Moonee Valley has jumped from 2.4 per cent to 4.7 per cent in 10 years, with at least five new cases diagnosed weekly.

Doutta Galla Community Health diabetes educator Vickie Sathasivam attributed Moonee Valley's increase to poor diet and lifestyle, better diagnosis, an ageing population and migrants at risk of diabetes.

"It's also a lifestyle issue. In my dealings with clients they don't realise they have to be on the move and active," Ms Sathasivam said.

She said migrants from Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern, southern European and African backgrounds could be at a higher risk of diabetes, as they experienced a change in food and lifestyle and greater availability of unhealthy foods.

Diabetes Australia (Victoria) chief executive Prof Greg Johnson said Victoria was experiencing a diabetes epidemic with rates more than doubling in a decade.

Prof Johnson called on councils to use planning to design healthier communities, limiting availability of unhealthy foods and ensuring physical activity opportunities.

Moonee Valley Mayor John Sipek said the council ran programs promoting exercise. It is also working with Western Melbourne Regional Development

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Australia on community health checks for Flemington public housing estate residents to raise diabetes awareness and improve health.

Essendon and District Diabetes Support Group's Edith James said improved medical care, availability of diabetes specialists, diabetes support group referrals and support for exercise and healthy eating programs may also help.

WYNDHAM

STAMP-EDE FOR POINT COOK POST OFFICE

Wyndham Weekly— 9th November 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/stampede-for-point-cook-post-office/2351762.aspx>

After successfully persuading Wyndham Council to bring forward a review of its aquatic strategy, Point Cook residents have turned their attention to the need for another post office in the suburb.

Within a day of it being created, an online petition calling for a second post office was signed by 25 residents, with others adding their names to it daily.

Resident Liz Mumby said she created the petition because of growing frustration by residents with lengthy queues at the town centre's post office.

"By 4pm the queue is out the door and it is always like that. We can stand in the queue for 20 or 30 minutes. I have stopped using it and will travel to Aircraft but we shouldn't have to travel out of the area."

Mrs Mumby said residents were annoyed the Sanctuary Lakes post office was closed down around the time the town centre store was opened, depriving residents of a second option.

She hopes to raise the issue with Prime Minister and Lalor MP Julia Gillard and other government ministers at tonight's community cabinet meeting in Werribee.

Australia Post spokeswoman Melanie Ward said a number of factors were taken into account when deciding the location of a new post office, including expected future growth of the area, business viability and surrounding outlets.

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She said Point Cook was well serviced by four other post offices within a five-kilometre radius and, as such, Australia Post did not believe another was needed.

However, Australia Post would continue to monitor the situation.

LAWRIE EMMINS RESERVE TURNED INTO WASTE YARD

Wyndham Weekly— 9th November 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/lawrie-emmins-reserve-turned-into-waste-yard/2351758.aspx>

A Wyndham club is fed up with rubbish being dumped at Laverton North's Lawrie Emmins Reserve.

For the past four years members of the Wyndham Archery Club have been greeted by piles of rubbish, old furniture and burnt-out cars during their fortnightly shooting practice.

Member Sandra Lee said the problem had got worse over the past 12 months, with several piles of rubbish and tyres being dumped just two weeks ago.

"It is embarrassing for us when we have visitors from other clubs. Last month we had 80 people from around Victoria and the amount of rubbish at the reserve made us look like a big joke.

"There was burnt-out wrecks outside our clubrooms."

Ms Lee said the problem had worsened since Wyndham Council changed its hard and green waste collection policy last year.

The changes mean residents have to pre-book their rubbish collections twice a year, instead of putting hard and green waste out for collection on specified dates.

"My biggest concern is what happens if it becomes too much of a bother to clean up the reserve. Does the council close the ground and say we can't use it?" Ms Lee said.

"It shouldn't be up to us and the council to clean it up."

Council spokeswoman Emily Keogh said three reports were made this year about illegally dumped rubbish at the reserve.

She said council staff visited the site every second day to clean up the mess.

The reserve is not the only site in Wyndham where people have been throwing away rubbish, with vacant blocks in Wyndham Vale being frequently used as a dumping ground.

The problem has got so out of hand that the council last week launched a campaign to encourage residents to report illegal dumping.

Mayor John Menegazzo said illegal dumping cost the council more than \$1million a year.

"Victoria Police, the EPA and Wyndham City all have the power to issue infringement notices to those caught illegally dumping and in some cases may take the case to court," Cr Menegazzo said.

"While Wyndham City's legislative services officers are always on the lookout for people illegally dumping rubbish they can't be everywhere, so it's vital that the community is also vigilant and contact council if they witness anyone incorrectly disposing of waste."

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SUZANNE CORY HIGH SCHOOL BOLD DESIGN

Wyndham Weekly— 9th November 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/suzanne-cory-high-school-bold-design/2351770.aspx>

Ella Byrne, Tony Nguyen, Bailey Allen and Mathew Lagamba celebrated the official opening of the western suburbs' first selective-entry high school last week.

Suzanne Cory High School in Hoppers Lane, Werribee, was opened by Education Minister Martin Dixon, Western Metropolitan MP Andrew Elsbury, and the woman it's named after, leading scientist and deputy chairwoman of the CSIRO, Suzanne Cory.

The \$20 million School opened its doors to 200 students earlier this year.

Mr Dixon said the school had been designed to encourage students to achieve great things.

NEW CHAPTER ON CITY'S HORRIFIC CRASH HISTORY

Wyndham Weekly— 9th November 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-chapter-on-citys-horrific-crash-history/2351767.aspx>

Former police officer Craig Hodge vividly remembers receiving the call out to his first hit-and-run incident 20 years ago.

At the time, the Werribee resident was a newcomer to the Victoria Police accident investigation squad, now known as the major collision investigation unit.

"It was in the early part of 1991 and there was a young boy, about 17 years old, riding his bike alongside the old Princes Freeway who was struck by a car from behind at over 80km/h. The impact killed him instantly.

"The driver had then immediately left the scene, leaving the young boy's body on the side of the road. I remember being pretty nervous as it was my first hit-and-run call out and our sergeant was on leave."

The horrific incident forms the basis of a chapter in Hodge's new book Road Kill, a reflection on his time at the forefront of road trauma response in Victoria.

Mr Hodge spares few details as he discusses his time as a crash investigator and 10 fatal road accidents in Victoria that stuck in his memory.

"The whole concept of the book is two-fold. It's to highlight the emotional impact of these road traumas on the investigators as well as providing a road safety message.

"And if you read closely the 10 incidents that I cover really just show that road trauma happens to everyday people doing everyday things."

Mr Hodge concedes the horrific death of the boy in Werribee 20 years ago has only been a footnote in Wyndham's terrible road accident history.

"In Wyndham it is obviously a major issue and I think that it is mainly down to the young demographic. But I also think we're also missing the mark a little bit. It was great to have the road safety forum early in the year about hoon behaviour in the area, but unfortunately those that will end up in these accidents will most likely not be attending a forum like that.

"It's about getting across to kids that it is OK to say 'no' and not [get] in cars that could be involved in a dangerous situation.

"You could be called a wimp, but it is about making that smart decision."

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ON FLIGHT PATH TO CHEETHAM WETLANDS

Wyndham Weekly– 9th November 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/on-flight-path-to-cheetham-wetlands/2351766.aspx>

Migratory birds are again making their way to Point Cook's Cheetham Wetlands.

The wetlands, near Saltwater Coast, provide rare birds like the endangered orange-bellied parrot a home during the breeding season.

Other birds making the journey include the red-necked stint, marsh sandpiper and the pacific golden plover, which also breeds in Siberia.

Parks Victoria ranger Bernie McCarrick, who looks after the wetlands, said the birds travelled to Point Cook from around the world because the area's salt marsh vegetation offered an ideal roosting habitat.

Cheetham Wetlands would be their home until March or April when they began their return trip.

"Cheetham Wetlands was originally a salt works consisting of 81 ponds covering 500 hectares. It had various levels of salinity and water depths that were managed for the shorebirds and waterfowl. During the low tide sequence on Port Phillip Bay, the birds feed on the mudflats, and at high tide they come into the wetlands to roost and feed," Mr McCarrick said.

The birds' arrival comes as a national survey reveals Wyndham is one of the best places in Victoria to spot the orange-bellied parrot.

The survey involved a team of skilled volunteers checking salt marshes, sewage farms, paddocks and golf courses around the state for the rare parrot, with the area between Queenscliff and Werribee found to be its preferred home. The wetlands, which form part of the new Saltwater Coast estate, will continue to be

cared for by Parks Victoria and developers to ensure migrating birds continue to call Point Cook home.

HAIR'S TO MOVEMBER

Wyndham Star– 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143892.html>

Western Region MLC Andrew Elsbury has signed up for a hairy good cause this month.

Last week, the politician said he was pleased to join Movember and in a statement said "rumours that his shaver had broken were unfounded".

The annual Movember campaign aims to raise funds for research into, and awareness of, prostate cancer,

Mr Elsbury's father died last year after a battle with prostate cancer.

"My father did not get to see the birth of my second daughter or me being sworn in as a Member of Parliament. He was an important part of my political journey and he would have been a fantastic grandfather to my second daughter," Mr Elsbury said.

"I congratulate all the other Mo Bros and Mo Sistas who are taking up the cudgel of this year's Movember and encourage the greatest amount of support from people who recognise the tragedy which is men's health issues, especially prostate cancer and depression in men."

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GREEN RAIL SLAM

Wyndham Star– 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143856.html>

The Greens have been slammed by both sides of the political spectrum over comments that the most significant transport project in the western suburbs could be too expensive.

In parliament late last month, Greg Barber, Greens Member for the Northern Metropolitan Region, said the \$5 billion being spent on the Regional Rail Link, “does seem an extraordinarily high price tag to run an extra three regional trains in the morning”.

Liberal Member for the Western Metropolitan Region, Andrew Elsbury, said the comments were a slap in the face to the commuters who will benefit from the landmark project.

“The Greens have shown a complete disregard for the outer western suburbs by writing off the \$5 billion Regional Rail Link Project as a waste of time and belittling the project by claiming that only three extra regional trains would run in the morning,” Mr Elsbury said.

“For him to reduce the project to three trains in the morning and equate that to \$5 billion is stupid and wrong.”

Member for Tarneit, Labor politician Tim Pallas, agreed that Mr Barber and the Greens needed to think about the greater benefits of the RRL.

“The RRL will provide around half the capacity of the West Gate Freeway and increase the capacity of on the line far beyond the sheer number of new trains,” Mr Pallas said.

“If the Greens don’t believe this is value for money, then maybe they don’t know enough about the needs of the Western Suburbs.”

Mr Barber told Star that he was basing his statement on a report into the noise the project will create in which it stated there could be an immediate introduction of three new regional trains.

“The number of new trains we will get out of the Regional Rail Link has never been released, it’s been like a state secret under Liberal and Labor,” Mr Barber said.

“I was just asking the question, and I think we need to forget about all the bravado and get an answer.

“If those figures are correct, those three trains will be snapped up just like that.”

JOBS BOOST

Wyndham Star– 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143872.html>

The State Minister for Manufacturing has hailed the creation of 50 new jobs in Truganina as a win for the West.

In parliament recently, Minister Richard Dalla-Riva said he was joined by Western region MLC Andrew Elsbury at the opening of Extrusions Australia’s \$11.5 million plant.

Previously, the business operated in Laverton North and when full production is reached at its new site, the company will employ around 100 workers – double their prior workforce.

“It was fantastic to have Mr Elsbury join me at the opening of this facility for the design and manufacture of aluminium extrusion profiles for commercial and residential window and door fabricators,” Mr Dalla-Riva said.

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"This is a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility.

"I remind members in the chamber that as the premier manufacturing state in Australia we need to be ahead of the pack in terms of streamlining manufacturing processes and boosting our productivity improvements."

Mr Dalla-Riva congratulated the Victorian Government Business Office, located in Sunshine, for "working to help support this significant expansion by Extrusions Australia through training assistance for new jobs and exploring solar power options for the new facility".

"I congratulate Extrusions Australia on this major new investment in its future as a competitive Victorian manufacturer," he said.

WARNING OVER DRIVEWAY DEATHS

Wyndham Star— 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143878.html>

Wyndham parents are being urged to keep a closer eye on their children as 2011 proves to be a horror year for driveway deaths of kids.

Member for the Western Metropolitan Region, Andrew Elsbury, said six children had been killed in the past 18 months across Victoria when they were run over in their family's own driveway.

The call for greater awareness comes in support of Kidsafe's Driveway Safety campaign.

"I know we are all in a rush now-a-days, but we must stop and think about where the kids are when we're driving our cars, especially when we're backing our cars out of our driveways." Mr Elsbury said.

"As a father of two I can think of nothing more devastating than if by my inattentiveness, either of my girls were hurt or worse."

Mr Elsbury said that according to statistics 85 per cent of parents involved in a fatal driveway incidents were unaware that their child was in the vicinity of the car.

He said that parents should discourage their children from using the driveway as a play area and if they are the only parent at home they should place the children in the car while they are moving it.

"To help us stay alert of the need to keep our driveways Kidsafe I have car stickers for front windshields to remind drivers when they get behind the wheel," he said.

Residents can get a sticker by calling Mr Elsbury's office on 9331 7644 or by emailing andrew.elsbury@parliament.vic.gov.au.

DRAWN TO ART AND HELPING OTHERS

Wyndham Star— 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143871.html>

In addition to creating wonderful artworks, Wyndham Vale resident Claire Hanrahan draws on her creative skills to help the children of prisoners.

The talented artist and designer also volunteers for the charity SHINE for Kids, which supports children who have a parent in the criminal justice system.

Ms Hanrahan said this involved going to prisons and organising artistic activities there for children visiting their parents.

"The kids are so happy and proud of what they've achieved and they get to chat to each other while they create their art and it puts them at ease," she said.

Just like her young charges, Ms Hanrahan said she has loved art since childhood.

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"I've always drawn, ever since I was a kid," she said.

"I like to see the end product and I like that it makes people happy. For me to create something, I don't notice the time, it just goes."

Her subjects range from animals, her family, blossoming flowers and famous musicians to tropical fish.

She also comes from a creative family, as her son is a tattooist and her eldest brother has been an art teacher.

"I've sold a few paintings, mostly of flowers and portraits of people," Ms Hanrahan said.

"I'd like some more time for my personal paintings, but flowers and people make me money."

"I've done a painting of my young niece who is a twin, her brother is upset I haven't done one of him yet, so I have to do that."

In addition to her artwork and volunteering, Ms Hanrahan is a graphic designer at the 'Yellow Pages' and is studying education and training.

With a busy lifestyle, she said the biggest challenge of being an artist was finding the time to draw and paint.

"I would like to have an exhibition in the future and I have all these ideas in my head, I just need time to get them down on paper," she said,

See www.redbubble.com/people/clairehanna for more information or www.shineforkids.org.au to find out about volunteering with SHINE for Kids.

GREEN RAIL SLAM

Wyndham Star – 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143862.html>

The Greens have been slammed by both sides of the political spectrum over comments that the most significant transport project in the western suburbs could be too expensive.

In parliament late last month, Greg Barber, Greens Member for the Northern Metropolitan Region, said the \$5 billion being spent on the Regional Rail Link, "does seem an extraordinarily high price tag to run an extra three regional trains in the morning".

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"If the Greens don't believe this is value for money, then maybe they don't know enough about the needs of the western suburbs."

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CALL FOR WYNDHAM JOBS SUPPORT

Wyndham Star— 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143883.html>

Tarneit MP Tim Pallas has called on the State Government to create a new justice precinct in Wyndham, along with a long-awaited employment precinct.

In parliament last month, Mr Pallas described Wyndham as "Australia's fastest growing local government area" and said almost 60 per cent of residents left the area to go to work every day.

Almost a third of these residents cross the West Gate Bridge to work in Melbourne's CBD.

"Such a lack of localised employment places pressure on our transport network and road infrastructure," Mr Pallas said.

"As Wyndham and Melbourne's western suburbs continue to grow at unprecedented rates these problems will only become more pronounced."

Mr Pallas asked the government "to consider the decentralisation of government services and investment in local infrastructure that will attract employment to the area, such as the Werribee employment precinct".

The previous Labor State Government earmarked 925 hectares of land in Werribee, to become the employment precinct as part of its 'Melbourne @5 Million' strategy.

It has been estimated up to 60,000 jobs would be created across three decades at the precinct.

Organisations already located within the area include CSIRO Food and Nutritional Sciences, the Dairy Innovation Centre, Agrifood Technology, Victoria University Veterinary Clinic and Werribee Mercy Hospital.

In addition, Mr Pallas said Wyndham was "also in great need of a justice precinct, which in addition to providing jobs locally would address capacity issues at the current Werribee courthouse and the broader justice needs of the growing community of Wyndham".

In June, Star reported Wyndham City Council John Menegazzo said he hoped a new police station, courtrooms and emergency services hub would be constructed in the area.

"I think the current police station (in Werribee) needs an overhaul, it certainly looks fairly dated," Councillor Menegazzo said.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

11th November 2011



RARE PARROTS CALL WYNDHAM HOME

Wyndham Star— 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143890.html>

It is thought to be the world's rarest parrot and according to the Department of Sustainability and Environment, one of the best places to spot it is Werribee.

According to the latest national survey the Orange-bellied parrot was spotted 26 separate times, with all but three of the sightings occurring between Werribee and Queenscliff.

Peter Menkhorst from the DSE's Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team said Werribee was lucky to be home to such rare birds.

"With 1200 kilometres of Australia's coast to choose from in South Australia and Victoria, all but three sightings of Orange-bellied Parrots in 2011 were in this relatively small area," Mr Menkhorst said.

"With less than 50 birds left in the wild it is a great effort to find such a big proportion of the remaining population during winter."

The precious bird is considered critically endangered and has been the subject of intense attempts to save it from disappearing for good.

One of the people in charge of counting the number of birds in the wild, Craig Morley, said it was a difficult task tracking them.

"A team of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers checked as many locations for the species as possible during three co-ordinated surveys in May, July and September," Mr Morley said.

"They spent many cold and wet hours searching islands, salt marshes, sewage farms, paddocks and golf courses, including places where the species has been seen before."

The Werribee Sewage Farm has long been considered one of the best places in Australia for bird spotters to catch a glimpse of their feathered friends.

BREAST SCREEN TOTALS DOWN

Wyndham Star— 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143885.html>

Less than half of Wyndham and Hobsons Bay women underwent breast screening in the past 24 months, according to the latest statistics.

The figures released by Breast Screen Victoria show that in Wyndham only 50 per cent of women took advantage of the screens while in Hobsons Bay it was only 44 per cent.

This is below the current statewide participation rate of 53.8 per cent and the target rate of 70 per cent.

Member for Tarneit, Tim Pallas, said women needed to know the risks they were facing by not receiving a scan.

"Being a woman over 50 years of age is the biggest risk factor for breast cancer and therefore a high participation rate among women aged 50 to 69 years in the Breast Screen Victoria program is necessary to ensure substantial reductions in mortality from breast cancer," he said.

According to BreastScreen Victoria however, the results for both municipalities are fair when compared to other areas, but more needs to be done to raise awareness of the services being offered.

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Breast Screen Victoria encouraged women aged 50 to 69, even those who have not had breast symptoms or changes, to take part in a free screening.

Jill Henessy, Member for Altona, said the earlier women take up the free offer the better.

"It is important that women in Wyndham take advantage of this program as regular screening is the best way to ensure early detection and early detection is the key to successful treatment."

HOMELESS NEED MORE HELP

Wyndham Star – 8th November 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/321/story/143874.html>

Living on the streets is tough, and those who work with homeless people know the troubles they can face in the everyday battle to survive.

The Wyndham City Salvation Army's operations manager Terry Brookshaw said in December last year the organisation started holding community lunches on Wednesdays and Thursdays at Café Agape in Werribee.

Every week, between 80 and 150 people show up for the meal, for which much of the food is donated and some workers are volunteers, while others are hospitality students on work experience.

"The community lunch is for people who may just need a cooked meal or the companionship, or maybe they haven't had a meal because they've been living on the streets which we call sleeping rough," Mr Brookshaw said. At the Wyndham City Salvation Army's main office, workers can sometimes offer food parcels and mattresses to those people in need, who have been referred to them by Centrelink.

However, Mr Brookshaw said if people needed assistance with housing, the Salvation Army's assessors would refer them to other agencies.

He said sometimes the not-for-profit organisation was so inundated with requests for help they were forced to turn people away.

"We see that on a day-to-day basis with the community services," he said.

"We do know there is an increasingly significant need in Wyndham and in the area of homelessness, help needed can range from emergency accommodation, transition housing and short-term to long-term.

"We know of people sleeping down by the Werribee River in their car.

"Someone recently came in because they were sleeping in their car and their mattress was stolen from their vehicle, so they needed a new mattress to sleep on."

Mr Brookshaw said the issue of homelessness in Wyndham was invisible to many residents but it could be heartbreaking to witness people in need.

"Donations are going to help, we are always looking for more resources and people. A big issue is we've had federal funding reduced, which is one reason we can't do all we used to," he said.

"We could be open seven days a week, 12 hours a day, and we still would need more space on the calendar."

See salvationarmy.org.au/Werribee for more information.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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WERRIBEE ZOO GORILLAS SETTLING IN WELL

Wyndham Weekly– 8th November 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/werribee-zoo-gorillas-settling-in-well/2350647.aspx>

Visitors are expected to flock to Werribee zoo in the coming weeks following the opening of its gorilla enclosure.

The \$3.6 million exhibit was opened on Monday and is home to three western lowland gorillas who moved to Werribee from Melbourne zoo earlier this month.

Zoo director Sally Lewis said the opening of the exhibit marked an important milestone in the zoo's history.

She said the 6000 square metre enclosure had been designed to raise awareness of the plight of gorillas in the wild, as well as providing Motaba, Yakini and Ganyeka with a fun home.

The exhibit will be used as a regional holding facility for bachelor male gorillas who may be called on for breeding at other zoos in the future.

The gorillas were relocated to Werribee because their Melbourne Zoo exhibit was due for redevelopment and carers felt they needed a larger exhibit.

CALL FOR BETTER BUSES IN POINT COOK

Wyndham Leader– 8th November 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/call-for-better-buses-fbready/>

More bus services are needed urgently to reduce an over-reliance on cars in Point Cook, a local MP says.

Altona state Labor MP Jill Hennessy has urged the Coalition Government to commit to introducing more buses to make public transport an attractive alternative to cars.

Ms Hennessy told Parliament last week that buses would help to free up space on roads and in car parks at railway stations, which are used beyond capacity.

“Population growth in the west has led to the eternal dilemma for local residents; the roads are congested and so it is a nightmare to drive; the bus services are inadequate to get to the station, where it is too hard to find a car park,” she said.

“The car parking problems at Laverton and Hoppers Crossing, along with recent changes to services on the Altona Loop, means better solutions must be found.

“A more accessible bus network to get to the station could help ease the daily burden of trying to get to work or school.”

Ms Hennessy said Labor had set aside \$1.4 billion over 12 years for more bus services in the Victorian Transport Plan.

This is to be re-evaluated by the Public Transport Development Authority, which will start operating early next year.

Ms Hennessy also pointed to two local bus reviews as examples of her party trying to fix the local transport problems before it lost power last year.

WERRIBEE LESSONS IN REPAIR

Wyndham Leader– 8th November 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/werribee-lessons-in-repair-fbready/>

Portable classrooms have arrived at a Werribee school to replace ones closed after a partial roof collapse.

As reported last week, students at Galvin Park Secondary College have been forced to take days off due to their school having no room for them.

Education Department spokesman Stuart Teather expected the portable rooms to open yesterday. No further forced days off were anticipated.

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Principal Julie Myers said a science wing with about 10 rooms had to be closed on October 24 after part of its roof collapsed.

With less space, year 7 students had to take last Thursday off. The year 8 students missed class last Monday, as did year 9 students on October 25.

Ms Myers said the ageing roof was due to be repaired, but recent heavy rain exacerbated the damage.

The damage was being assessed.

Tarneit state Labor MP Tim Pallas said parts of the school needed to be rebuilt.

He said there were areas outside the science wing with water damage and mould.

Mr Pallas said the Liberal Government was spending far less than Labor did on school maintenance.

“Galvin Park is in urgent need of substantial capital upgrade and I call on the Baillieu Government to take immediate action,” Mr Pallas said.

The spokesman for Education Minister Martin Dixon, James Martin, hit back, saying it was the result of 11 years of neglect under the previous Labor government.

“The roof didn’t just start leaking on the day of the last election,” Mr Martin said.

The Coalition last week announced maintenance audits for all Victorian public schools and extra funds for maintenance.

DIABETES WARNING IN WYNDHAM

Wyndham Leader – 8th November 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/diabetes-warning-fbready/>

Diabetes is growing at such a rate it has reached epidemic status, health experts say.

Diabetes Victoria released figures last week that showed 252,000 Victorians are living with diabetes, at a rate of 73 new cases each day.

Locally, there are nearly nine new cases diagnosed each week.

The number of Wyndham people with diabetes reached more than 6500 this year, up from 2000 in 2001 - about 225 per cent. Only 1.5 per cent of the local population had diabetes 10 years ago. That figure is now 3.8 per cent.

Part of the reason for the increase is Wyndham’s booming population, which jumped 96.6 per cent in the past 10 years.

Diabetes can lead to potentially deadly complications, including heart attack, stroke and kidney failure.

It can also lead to blindness, lower limb amputation and erectile dysfunction and is associated with depression.

Unhealthy lifestyles and poor heating choices are key triggers of the disease.

DA-Vic’s chief executive, Prof Greg Johnson, said Victoria faced a diabetes epidemic and communities and local government could play an important role in prevention. “Local planning can limit the availability of unhealthy foods and promote better access to healthy foods,” he said.

“Planning can ensure people have good access to physical activity opportunities such as walking and cycling, recreation facilities and public transport.”

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AMA Victorian president Dr Harry Hemley said doctors faced greater burdens as the rates increased. GPs needed “greater resources to better co-ordinate the complex, multidisciplinary care for people with diabetes”, he said.

SHEDDING HEATHDALE'S OLD PERCEPTIONS

Wyndham Leader— 6th November 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/shedding-heathdales-old-perceptions/>

Anne Walters is proud to call Werribee’s Heathdale estate home.

Mrs Walters, 64, is among residents helping to renew the estate and change perceptions of it.

“When I first moved in, I had people tell me, ‘Don’t move there, you don’t want to live there with all the crims’,” she told a Wyndham Council meeting last week.

“But I found it’s just a great place to live.

“There’s a vast majority of people there that are just fabulous people.”

Mrs Walters, battling cancer for the second time, is a tireless volunteer at the Heathdale and Neighbours Community Shed with resident Brian Werner.

She was at the meeting to accept a certificate of appreciation from the council on behalf of locals who participated in a community-driven project to improve the estate.

Areas selected by the State Government for Neighbourhood Renewal projects are characterised by run-down housing, rising rates of crime and unemployment, low levels of school completion and further education qualifications, poor health and a lack of adequate community infrastructure and access to services.

Mrs Walters said this was changing.

During the project from 2003 to this year, more than \$10 million has been invested in the area, including for a community centre now being built.

Heathdale also now has its own neighbourhood association, which Mrs Walters chairs.

“We can hand Heathdale on to our grandchildren now and other children that live in the area and be very happy that we’ve given them a decent, worthwhile place to live,” the great-grandmother said.

The estate bordered by Derrimut, Heaths, Shaws and Tarneit roads has more than 6800 residents.

COPS ROCK IT OUT

Wyndham Leader— 5th November 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/cops-rock-it-out/>

A sell-out crowd of 400 seniors boogied to the sounds of the Victoria Police band at Hoppers Crossing last week.

The concert was the last of Wyndham’s Seniors Festival events. The festival is held annually to celebrate and acknowledge people aged 60 and over.

The concert, the first festival event to sell-out, was last Tuesday at the Wyndham Leisure and Events Centre.

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ACROSS THE REGION

DELIVERING VICTORIA'S REGIONAL RAIL LINK

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport – 9th November 2011

http://www.minister.infrastructure.gov.au/aa/releases/2011/November/AA201_2011.aspx

Delivery of Victoria's Regional Rail Link — currently the nation's biggest public transport infrastructure project — is gathering pace, with the construction of two new platforms at Southern Cross Station now complete.

The Prime Minister and Victorian Government also confirmed the tendering processes associated with the other major packages of work on the project are well advanced.

When complete, the Regional Rail Link will connect more Victorians to jobs as well as education and recreation opportunities in Melbourne's west - one of the fastest growing regions in Australia.

The Gillard Government is determined to make Melbourne and regional centres such as Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo even better places to live, work and raise a family.

The laying of a new, dedicated track from West Werribee to Southern Cross Station will give regional services more direct access to Melbourne as well as free up seats on existing metro services.

In total, this new line is expected to provide capacity for an extra 9,000 passengers during peak times.

Procurements underway on the project include:

Southern Cross Station to Moonee Ponds Creek — Track, Civil and Trackside Signalling Equipment, and Melbourne Yard Interlocking contracts awarded. The Suburban Interlocking contract is being finalised.

Southern Cross Station to Footscray — the tender process is underway for the competitive Target Outturn Cost phase.

Footscray to Sunshine — is in the final stages of the procurement process.

Sunshine to Deer Park — the procurement process is being finalised.

Deer Park to West Werribee — in the final stages of the procurement process.

West Werribee Junction — tender process underway for the main design and construct contract for the Bulban Road Bridge.

Train control and systems — final stages of the procurement process.

In addition to the completion of Southern Cross platforms 15 and 16, early works have already been completed on both the Footscray to Sunshine and West Werribee Junction sections of the project.

The project is moving quickly to the delivery stage, with the Christmas period this year a crucial time for the construction teams.

The delivery stage of Regional Rail Link is a massive undertaking and everything is being done to hit the ground running once contracts are awarded.

Necessary remaining land acquisitions to accommodate the Link are also either underway or nearing completion.

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PLAN TO MAKE FRINGE LIVEABLE FOR A MILLION PEOPLE

The Herald Sun – 9th November 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/plan-to-make-fringe-liveable-for-a-million-people/story-fn7x8me2-1226189379408>

Melbourne's growth suburbs would become vibrant communities under a \$200 billion State Government blueprint to house an extra one million people over the next 20 years.

New railway stations, major road links, well-resourced town centres and job precincts are envisaged under the bold plan to be released today.

The Baillieu Government wants Melbourne's cherished liveability to be replicated on the city fringe, with residents living in affordable housing close to shopping centres, schools, health services and jobs.

What it means for your community. Read the full report here from 9am.

Can Melbourne cope with another million? Vote and have your say below.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy said yesterday the Growth Corridor Plan could be the nation's biggest construction project.

"This is about managing Melbourne's growth into the future ... how the city will manage an extra million people over time," he said.

"And it can be done with improvements to transport, regionalising jobs in our suburban centres and better health and education facilities in those centres.

"You could potentially house up to 1.3 million people, you are looking at a plan the size of Adelaide."

Major features include:

OPTIONS for new rail stations in growth areas such as Sunbury, Toolern, Clyde, Tarneit, Donnybrook and Wyndham Vale;

Possible road projects such as the outer metropolitan ring and new arterials;

Construction of 350,000 new homes and jobs for 400,000 people;

A majority of residents living within walking distance of well-serviced town centres; and

Major new parks and reserves and protection of natural habitats.

Overseeing the plan is the Growth Areas Authority, which will take public submissions from today in a six-week consultation period.

GAA chief executive Peter Seamer said the plan, begun under the previous Labor government, was about opportunity and protecting the best of Melbourne.

"We want a town centre to be a place for employment, for alfresco eating ... where you'd like to go on a Saturday morning and have a cup of coffee," he said.

"We want to be creating Box Hill and Brunswick, we don't want to be creating a horrible place like Belconnen (in Canberra) with its sprawl and its very low density."

The growth areas plan will be a key part of a new metropolitan planning strategy being formulated over the next two years for the whole of Melbourne.

Mr Guy said that, while funding for new rail station options was yet to be allocated, he was confident developers would contribute.

"We changed the law to allow the developers' growth areas tax to be used on state infrastructure," he said. "The tax may be used now to offset or construct a railway station or interchange."

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Tony De Domenico from the Urban Development Institute Australia Victoria said it was welcome news to those who couldn't afford housing now.

"Many Victorians have not only found owning a house out of reach, but even renting was getting beyond the reach of many families," Mr De Domenico said.

He said it would also help ensure the working future of the more than 200,000 people directly and indirectly linked to the development industry.

SLOW PROGRESS IS A BURDEN TO REFORMS

The Age – 8th November 2011

<http://theage.domain.com.au/real-estate-news/slow-progress-is-a-burden-to-reforms-20111107-1n3ps.html>

Local government and planning laws are again under review but history suggests that reform does not always follow.

Research for the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government shows many changes recommended in numerous state and national inquiries over the past decade have never been implemented.

Unfinished Business? A Decade of Inquiries into Australian Local Government looks at the findings, recommendations and outcomes of nine major inquiries into local government between 2001 and 2008.

Based on research conducted by Brian Dollery, professor of economics at the University of New England, the paper was compiled by ACELG's director, Graham Sansom.

"A significant number of recommendations of the inquiries have been reflected in policy and legislative change but generally responses to the inquiries have been patchy," Professor Sansom said. "The evident differences of opinion between state

and local governments on priorities for further reform have slowed the process of change."

The paper points to two underlying barriers to the implementation of reforms:

State governments tend not to respond to inquiry recommendations unless they initiate and control the agenda themselves.

Despite commissioning several of the inquiries, local government has mostly failed to assemble and prosecute packages of reforms that are acceptable to councils generally and that also appeal to other key stakeholders - especially state governments.

The federal government had also been slow to act in the more limited areas for which it has responsibility, notably repeated findings that the system of distributing general purpose financial assistance grants to local councils should be re-examined.

"However, a review has recently been announced and, together with a review of the inter-government agreement on cost-shifting and the national tax forum, could lead to significant change," Professor Sansom said.

While follow-up and implementation of reports had been slow, there were some policy initiatives that had been welcomed by local government, the paper says.

These have included the Inter-Governmental Agreement Establishing Principles Guiding Inter-Governmental Relations, federal funding for community infrastructure in response to the global financial crisis and for improved asset and financial management, a review of rate-pegging by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and the introduction of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

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LABOR AND GREENS SET TO GIVE THE CARBON TAX THE GO-AHEAD

The Herald Sun— 8th November 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/labor-and-greens-set-to-give-the-carbon-tax-the-go-ahead/story-fn7x8me2-1226188180921>

Prime Minister Julia Gillard arrives back in Australia today to celebrate the historic vote in the Senate to pass the controversial carbon tax.

After Kevin Rudd failed to do it, the package of 18 Bills is set to be approved by Labor and Green senators after months of bitter political debate.

Opposition climate spokesman Greg Hunt last night said the Coalition would mount a last-ditch effort to ask the Government to call an election before introducing the carbon tax on July 1.

Liberal Senator Simon Birmingham will try to amend the Bills to stop electricity generators from having to buy permits before they need them - a change electricity generators said would take pressure off power price rises.

Climate Change Minister Greg Combet hit back at yesterday's Herald Sun report that chemical company Coogee had dumped a \$1 billion world-class factory because of the carbon tax.

He said Coogee would be fully compensated under the Government's \$9 billion industry protection plans that were designed to make sure industries with high carbon pollution were not put at a disadvantage.

"The fact is that a highly-efficient methanol producer like Coogee Chemicals is likely to end up with no net carbon price liability," he said.

The Government said Coogee and its chairman Gordon Martin had donated more than \$91,000 to the Liberal Party in the past decade.

The plant manager of Coogee's factory at Laverton North in Melbourne's west, Grant Lukey, hit back at the criticism.

"We are not Liberal stooges," he said. "This is about a policy that is no good."

He rejected the Government's assurance that Coogee would be better off under the carbon tax.

"You can't go ahead with an investment without an iron-clad guarantee being locked in," Dr Lukey said.

\$1B PROJECT SHELVED BECAUSE OF CARBON TAX: HUNT

ABC News— 7th November 2011

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-11-07/1b-project-shelved-because-of-carbon-tax-hunt/3638694?section=vic>

The Federal Opposition says a company operating in Prime Minister Julia Gillard's electorate will shelve a \$1 billion project because of the carbon tax.

The government's climate change policy is set to pass the Senate tomorrow.

Opposition environment spokesman Greg Hunt says Coogee Chemicals' methanol factory at Laverton is now under threat and plans for a \$1 billion plant elsewhere in Australia will be abandoned because of the carbon tax.

Mr Hunt says the company is considering transferring methanol production to China.

"They won't create new jobs here, but they will look at producing in China, where the emissions are four times higher," he said.

"So investment goes overseas, jobs go overseas and under the carbon tax global emissions will go up rather than down."

The Government says Coogee Chemicals has misunderstood the policy.

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It says under the clean energy plan, the assistance to the company, should it go ahead with its billion dollar investment plan, would outweigh any impost under the carbon tax.

LABOR REJECTS CHEMICAL COMPANY'S CARBON TAX CONCERNS

The Australian— 7th November 2011

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/carbon-plan/labor-rejects-chemical-companys-carbon-tax-concerns/story-fn99tjf2-1226187447306>

A Melbourne chemical company warning it could scrap a \$1 billion expansion project because of the carbon tax could be better off under the scheme, Climate Change Minister Greg Combet says.

Mr Combet has offered to send officials from his department to meet with Coogee Chemicals management to explain the government's carbon tax assistance measures.

GOVT ASSURES COMPANY ABOUT CARBON TAX

The Sydney Morning Herald— 7th November 2011

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/govt-assures-company-about-carbon-tax-20111107-1n2mp.html>

On the eve of a historic carbon tax vote in the Senate, the federal government has rejected claims the scheme has caused a Melbourne methanol producer to shelve expansion plans.

Labor says Coogee Chemicals, based in Prime Minister Julia Gillard's outer Melbourne electorate, will be no worse off under its carbon package, which will provide compensation to business and consumers.

The company says it may close its methanol factory in Laverton, Victoria, and it has shelved plans for a \$1 billion plant that would have provided 150 jobs elsewhere in regional Australia because of the carbon tax to take effect from July 1 next year.

Coogee Chemicals says the carbon tax will make the plant, which would have provided export earnings of \$14 billion, uncompetitive and unviable.

Instead, methanol production will be transferred to China where emissions from the production process are four times higher and there is no carbon tax.

Senator Penny Wong on Monday said the company would not be disadvantaged by competitors in places such as China.

"The coalition would not let the facts get in the way of a scare campaign," Senator Wong told parliament.

"The fact is that a highly efficient methanol producer like Coogee Chemicals is likely to end up with no net carbon price liability."

The company would be entitled to more than 100 per cent of its carbon price liability in the form of free carbon permits, she said.

That's because the new facility would be operating at much lower emissions intensity than existing facilities.

As well, the company had misinterpreted assistance arrangements in thinking there would be no support after five years.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott said the case demonstrated that Prime Minister Julia Gillard was "not listening to her own people".

"This is a prime minister who is not listening to the public. She's so obsessed with maintaining her arrangement with the Greens that she's not listening to her own people. She's not listening to her own voters," Mr Abbott told reporters in Melbourne.

Opposition climate action spokesman Greg Hunt said the Coogee Chemicals case is a classic example of how the carbon tax will drive up emissions, not reduce them.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"Jobs will go to China, investment is lost and the emissions of CO2 will go up because China uses coal rather than LNG for methanol production," he said.

The Senate continued a fiery debate on amendments for the government's clean energy future legislation on Monday.

The opposition and independent Senator Nick Xenophon have moved amendments to delay implementing the carbon price until after an election is held because of concerns over the government's mandate.

The tax will clear parliament's upper house on Tuesday when Labor forces a vote.

With the help of the Greens, the government will have in place for the first time a mechanism to price carbon.

It begins with a \$23-per-tonne carbon tax on the 500 biggest polluters from July 1, 2012, ahead of a market-driven emissions trading scheme in 2015.

PM BETRAYS HER OWN WORKERS: OPPN

The Sydney Morning Herald– 7th November 2011

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/pm-betrays-her-own-workers-oppn-20111107-1n2d0.html>

The federal opposition has accused Prime Minister Julia Gillard of betraying workers in her own electorate as the Senate prepares for a vote on the government's carbon tax.

The tax is being blamed for the possible closure of a methanol factory in Laverton, Victoria, and the shelving of plans for a \$1 billion plant that would have provided 150 jobs elsewhere in regional Australia.

Coogee Chemicals says the carbon tax made the plant, which would have provided export earnings of \$14 billion, uncompetitive and unviable.

Instead methanol production will transfer to China where the emissions from the production are four times higher.

Opposition climate action spokesman Greg Hunt says it is a classic example of how the carbon tax will drive up emissions, not reduce them.

"The prime minister has betrayed not only the Australian voters but also workers in her seat of Lalor," he said in a statement on Monday.

"Jobs will go to China, investment is lost and the emissions of CO2 will go up because China uses coal rather than LNG for methanol production."

The tax will clear parliament's upper house on Tuesday when Labor forces a vote on its clean-energy future legislation.

With the help of the Australian Greens, the government will have in place for the first time a mechanism to price carbon.

It begins with a carbon tax on about 400 big polluters from July 1, 2012 ahead of a market-driven emissions trading scheme in 2015.

CHEMICAL PLANT IN CARBON TAX CLOUD

Sky news– 7th November 2011

<http://www.skynews.com.au/businessnews/article.aspx?id=682315&vld>

A chemical company in Prime Minister Julia Gillard's own electorate looks likely to shut down because of her government's carbon tax.

Coogee Chemicals says it has also shelved plans to build a \$1 billion plant that would have provided 150 jobs in country Victoria, NSW or Queensland, the Herald Sun reports.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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The company's chairman, Gordon Martin, said the carbon tax made the plant, which would have provided export earnings of \$14 billion, uncompetitive and unviable.

The Laverton factory in Ms Gillard's electorate takes natural gas from Bass Strait and turns it into methanol.

'The carbon tax will stop a significant Australian project that would value-add to Australia's abundant gas resource and jeopardise the long-term sustainability of the existing methanol plant at Laverton,' Mr Martin said.

CHEMICAL COMPANY IN PM JULIA GILLARD'S ELECTORATE TO SHELVE A \$1 BILLION EXPANSION BECAUSE OF THE CARBON TAX

The Telegraph— 7th November 2011

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/chemical-company-in-pm-julia-gillards-electorate-to-shelve-a-1-billion-expansion-because-of-the-carbon-tax/story-e6freuy9-1226187047963>

A chemical company in Prime Minister Julia Gillard's electorate said it would shelve a \$1 billion expansion because of the carbon tax.

With the \$23 a tonne tax set to be approved by the senate tomorrow, Coogee Chemicals said it threatened sustainability and jobs at the nation's only methanol factory in Laverton North in Victoria.

Coogee Chemicals chairman Gordon Martin said the company had planned a new \$1 billion plant in country Victoria, southern Queensland or NSW - around Climate Change Minister Greg Combet's electorate - which would have created 150 high-skilled jobs and export earnings of \$14 billion.

But Mr Martin said the carbon tax - to come into effect on July 1 - would make any new plant "uncompetitive and unviable".

"The carbon tax will stop a significant Australian project ... and jeopardise the long-term sustainability of the existing methanol plant at Laverton," he said.

Laverton plant manager Grant Lukey said the factory had the lowest carbon dioxide emissions per tonne of any methanol plant in the world.

"We've spent 16 years developing the best technology and now a world-scale project is going to go belly-up," Dr Lukey said. "In its place China will build plants with four times the CO₂."

Dr Lukey added that the 94.5 per cent compensation the Laverton factory would receive was only for five years, and would then be subject to review. "In five years we could become uneconomic," he said.

Opposition climate spokesman Greg Hunt said: "There couldn't be a plainer example of the stupidity of the carbon tax than losing a \$1 billion investment with all of the associated jobs while sending global emissions up rather than down.

"The fact existing jobs are at risk in the Prime Minister's electorate shows she's not only betraying the Australian people but she's betraying workers in her backyard."

Acting PM Wayne Swan said when the senate passed the carbon tax it would be "a historic day for Australia".

"As well as a cleaner environment, it will deliver better jobs for our children and grandchildren and a more secure economic future," he said. "It's not an easy reform, but it's the type of responsible policy that this government is committed to delivering."

A tax of \$23 a tonne will be paid by the top 500 polluters from July 1.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

11th November 2011



GILLARD TURNS OFF THE LIGHTS

The Herald Sun – 7th November 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/opinion/editorials/gillard-turns-off-the-lights/story-e6frfhqo-1226187048611>

The world is likely to be a dirtier instead of a cleaner place as a result of Prime Minister Julia Gillard's carbon tax.

This is because the industries that cannot survive in a disadvantaged Australia will go offshore. Many of these will be industries labelled "energy intensive and trade exposed."

One of the first examples, revealed in today's exclusive Herald Sun report, is a billion-dollar chemical plant.

The Coogee Chemicals methanol plant will be shelved after the carbon tax starts next year because these projects only receive financial protection for five years.

China will be the winner. But the plants it is building will produce four times the emissions of the plant planned for Australia.

Victoria was one of three sites being considered. Others were in NSW and southeast Queensland. Ironically, the NSW electorate of Climate Change Minister Greg Combet could have been one to miss out. The plant would have meant 150 badly needed new jobs in his Charlton electorate.

The loss to the economy is significant. The plant would have returned \$14 billion in export earnings.

The future of the company's existing methanol plant at Laverton North in Ms Gillard's own electorate of Lalor in Melbourne's west, is also in doubt in the long-term. The Coogee Chemicals plant near Ms Gillard's house in Altona faces the same

competitive disadvantages under the carbon tax as many other intensive industries.

Ms Gillard and Mr Combet may argue that these industries will find clean and sustainable alternatives, but solar and wind power can never supply the energy needs met by more efficient use of coal and gas.

But driven by the demands of the Greens, whose support she needs to stay in power, Ms Gillard is determined to risk all.

The loss of this plant and the jobs it would bring is an alarming example of the uncertainty that will pull back Australia's growth.

This tax is wrong and comes at the wrong time as financial markets and global economic stability are threatened.

COOGEE CHEMICALS SAYS CARBON TAX THREATENS THE COMPANY AND JOBS

The Herald Sun – 7th November 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/coogee-chemicals-says-carbon-tax-threatens-the-company-and-jobs/story-fn7x8me2-1226187052910>

A chemical company that operates in Prime Minister Julia Gillard's electorate says it will shelve a \$1 billion world-class expansion because of the carbon tax.

With the Senate set to approve the historic climate change policy tomorrow, Coogee Chemicals says it also threatens the long-term sustainability and jobs at the nation's only methanol factory in Laverton North.

Coogee Chemicals chairman Gordon Martin told the Herald Sun the company had been planning a new \$1 billion plant in country Victoria, southern Queensland or in NSW around the seat held by Climate Change Minister Greg Combet.

It would have created 150 high-skilled jobs and export earnings of \$14 billion, but Mr Martin said the carbon tax made it "uncompetitive and unviable".

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"The carbon tax will stop a significant Australian project that would value-add to Australia's abundant gas resource and jeopardise the long-term sustainability of the existing methanol plant at Laverton," he said.

Mr Combet today rejected the concerns raised by the company, saying the Government's industry compensation package, worth a total of \$9.2 billion over four years, would assist companies such as Coogee, which produce a lot of carbon pollution.

"The fact is that a highly-efficient methanol producer like Coogee Chemicals is likely to end up with no net carbon price liability under our industry assistance arrangements, so they will not be at any disadvantage compared to their international competitors," Mr Combet said.

The company would actually be better off under the carbon tax because of free carbon permits, he said.

"It would get more assistance than its total carbon price liability, because the new facility would be operating at much lower emissions intensity than existing facilities," he said.

The existing plant is in Ms Gillard's western suburbs seat of Lalor, where she will host Community Cabinet on Wednesday.

The Laverton factory takes natural gas from Bass Strait and turns it into clear, colourless liquid called methanol.

Plant manager Grant Lukey said "every home will have something that includes methanol".

It is a critical ingredient for items such as particle board for building, table tops, aerosols, windshield wiper fluid, plastic soft drink bottles, paint, cycling tights and mattress foam.

Overseas it is an alternative to ethanol for car fuel, particularly in China.

Dr Lukey said the Laverton factory had the lowest carbon dioxide emissions per tonne of any methanol plant in the world.

He said emissions were four-times greater at coal-based plants in China where 11 were built this year.

"We've spent 16 years developing the best technology and now a world-scale project is going to go belly-up," Dr Lukey said.

Mr Combet said Coogee had based its claims on an assumption that there would be no assistance after five years.

"This is despite repeated advice from the Government that this is a misinterpretation of the assistance arrangements assistance scheme," he said.

But the company told the Herald Sun there was no guarantee the assistance would last.

"You can't go ahead with an investment without an iron-clad guarantee being locked in," Dr Lukey said.

"We raised our concerns directly with Greg Combet's office, in his office in Canberra. They were totally unresponsive to our concerns. They didn't share our concerns at all."

Mr Combet said with an investment like the one proposed by Coogee, infrastructure costs, exchange rates, and input costs including natural gas prices are far more significant than the Government's carbon price.

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"For example, to make this investment gas pipelines would have to be constructed to the company's proposed new facilities in NSW or Victoria – at an unknown cost," he said.

Opposition climate spokesman Greg Hunt blamed the Government.

"There couldn't be a plainer example of the stupidity of the carbon tax than losing a \$1 billion investment with all of the associated jobs while sending global emissions up rather than down," Mr Hunt said.

Acting Prime Minister Wayne Swan said when the Senate passed the carbon tax it would be "a historic day for Australia".

"As well as a cleaner environment, it will deliver better jobs for our children and grandchildren and a more secure economic future," Mr Swan said.

"It's not an easy reform but it's the type of responsible, forward-looking policy that this Government is committed to delivering."

A tax of \$23 a tonne will be paid by the top 500 polluters from July 1.

Industry gets \$3 billion a year in compensation and households \$5 billion in tax cuts and welfare.

ALTONA RESIDENTS CALL FOR MORE SAND ON THEIR BEACH

The Herald Sun – 6th November 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/seaside-sand-wanted-in-the-west/story-fn7x8me2-1226186715931>

For Altona residents, including our PM, life's a beach - but one that needs more sand.

While affluent Bayside beachgoers have knocked back a mountain of fresh sand and branded it "poor-quality dirt", residents in the west are eager to use it to bolster their own seaside haven.

Hobsons Bay councillor Tony Briffa said the 13,500 tonnes of sand, previously dumped at Half Moon Bay, would improve the summer for many in Melbourne's western suburbs.

Mr Briffa, previously a Greens candidate and now an independent, said Melbourne's east had been favoured by the top tiers of government, while the west had been neglected.

And he said having the Prime Minister live in Altona did not win the area access to better resources.

"Having the PM in the area hasn't done anything to boost services," he said.

Govt back flips on \$500,000 sand plan Herald Sun, 14 Oct 2011

"We really haven't gotten much from the State or the Federal Governments. We've been duded by both."

The council's chief executive, Bill Jaboor, said he would lodge a request with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to secure the sand, which was removed from Black Rock last month in a \$90,000 State Government back flip.

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It had previously been feared that Half Moon Bay was eroding, prompting the sand dump, but Environment Minister Ryan Smith later declared the beach stable amid a local backlash.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Sustainability and Environment said the sand was not destined for Altona - it had already been earmarked for another location, yet to be revealed.

She said Altona might not be the ideal place for the sand, because of refurbishment projects that had already taken place at the beach.

Mr Briffa said 40,000 tonnes of sand had recently been put on Altona Beach, but that the western end of the strip could still do with more.

He said many residents had backed his call for the sand to come to Altona.

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