

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

12th August 2011



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BRIMBANK

THREE-WEEK CRACKDOWN ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT CRIME

Brimbank Leader – 10th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/three-week-crackdown-on-public-transport-crime/>

Police are launching a safety blitz on Melbourne's transport system.

The three-week campaign, launched today, will see nine separate operations target the city's rail, tram and bus services in a bid to stamp out anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol use, and petty crimes.

Nine separate operations will form part of the three-week blitz including blitzes targeting end-of-the-line stations, targeted weapons searches at railway stations and a CBD tram operation, anti-drug operations.

Police will also be targeting anti-social behaviour on train lines as people head into the city on weekends, and a Friday and Saturday night operation which aims to catch troublemakers in the act.

Assistant Commissioner Andrew Crisp said the operation aimed to send a strong message to those who committed crimes or behaved poorly on public transport safety.

"We will be targeting alcohol, illicit drugs, anti-social behaviour and opportunistic crimes such as robbery and theft.

"Police will be targeting those people who might think it's okay to drink on a train or intimidate other passengers. It's a small group of people – but those are the ones we are watching.

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"We are taking a hard line on this behaviour and we don't want to hear excuses."

Victoria Police has also created a new pocket sized public transport safety guide which provides facts and figures and safe travel tips.

Transit safety police will be passing on the guides to commuters throughout the operation.

The blitz runs from tomorrow until September 2.

THEY'RE WATCHING

Brimbank Star— 9th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/308/story/138174.html>

A new police surveillance van trawling Brimbank's streets is believed to be behind a sudden drop in crime.

The high tech CCTV van with cameras mounted on the roof was posted to Brimbank last week to patrol crime hotspots around the city's train stations and town centres.

The van, which is usually based at the Footscray police station, is now being used in Brimbank to crack down on repeat offenders and prevent crimes including robberies and burglaries.

The van was driven around the city, honing in on robbery hotspots including the Sunshine railway station and car park, and burglary rife suburbs Derrimut and Cairnlea.

Operators continually take footage, which is later analysed in a bid to identify repeat offenders.

Senior Sergeant Fred Grove from Sunshine's Criminal Investigation Unit told Star the van had already had some early success, with a noticeable decline in crime last week.

"At this stage we don't have any statistics but anecdotally we have certainly noticed a dramatic drop in crime," Sen. Sgt Grove said.

"It has been quite effective especially around the train stations and we're hoping to get access to it on a regular basis."

But Sen. Sgt Grove said other recent police measures could have contributed to the downward crime trend, including an increase in foot patrols and police operations.

Last month, Brimbank Council officers joined police in the first of regular foot patrols planned for St Albans.

The joint patrols aim to promote public safety and awareness.

BRIMBANK LAND ON CHOPPING BLOCK

Brimbank Weekly— 9th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-brimbank-land-on-chopping-block/>

Almost 700 residents have made submissions to the Brimbank Council on its proposal to put up 14 pieces of land for sale.

At a meeting on May 17 a report was tabled identifying the land proposed for sale.

Submissions closed yesterday for the first seven - in Sydenham, Keilor, Taylors Lakes and West Sunshine - to go under the microscope.

The properties were identified as areas with open spaces nearby with the council saying sale proceeds would go into improving other parks.

But the move outraged some residents.

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Former Brimbank mayor Margaret Giudice said it was an insult to the former elected councillors that the blocks of land, previously protected by the council, were now under scrutiny by unelected administrators.

Ms Giudice said many of the land parcels had been given to the community as part of developer contributions.

"It's not just the threat of losing open space, it's the worry for the residents of what might be built in its place," Ms Giudice said.

Our Parks Not For Sale committee chairwoman Virginia Tachos expected more than 100 submissions from members.

"It's going to impact thousands of residents, so the council need to come and see how much we use and enjoy these parks."

"People have already said if the land is sold they will move."

Ms Tachos said residents wanted guarantees their submissions had been received.

A public question time at a council meeting last month turned rowdy after residents said questions they had submitted to the council had not been answered due to a server issue with the council's website.

"There has been very limited interaction, and limited format.

"It hasn't been the same open process we would've had if we had councillors," Ms Tachos, the wife of former councillor Stuart Miller, said.

Infrastructure and Environment general manager Paul Younis said the council intended to meet "with those who request the opportunity to make a personal submission."

Correspondence received so far included detailed submissions on individual sites, pro-forma letters and petitions, covering all sites.

Protectors of Public Lands Victoria convener Julieanne Bell said parks were "absolutely essential" to people's health.

"Healthy parks mean healthy people," she said. "Kids that are healthy have access to back yards and nearby open space."

According to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council total public open space in Brimbank is 1872ha, a ratio of 9.7ha of parks per 1000 people compared with a metropolitan average of 5.8ha.

The 14 properties being considered are worth about \$3 million combined and could go on the market within three years.

Mr Younis said the council had invested more than \$10 million transforming almost 50 parks in the past four years.

EXTRA WATCH ON BRIMBANK DOGS

Brimbank Weekly— 9th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-extra-watch-on-brimbank-dogs/>

Brimbank Council will add an extra animal ranger to its team following a review of its animal-management services.

It comes following alarm in the community over the number of dog attacks.

Last year, 84 dog attacks were reported to the council, and in four cases owners were fined.

The council has three officers but acting city development general manager Stuart Menzies said a fourth animal-management officer was "in the process of being appointed".

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More education on responsible pet ownership would follow.

"This will include the requirements and advantages of registering your pets, as well as efforts to promote responsible pet ownership and community safety," Mr Menzies said.

In the 2010-2011 financial year, 107 fines were dished out to residents who did not register or renew registration of their pets.

In the same period, 180 fines were issued for wandering dogs. Keilor Downs resident Andrew Watters' father-in-law, aged 77, was attacked by two dogs, thought to be pit bull terriers or pit bull cross last month.

His pet Chihuahua cross had to be put down after the attack.

Mr Watters said action was needed before more people were injured or even killed.

The maximum penalty for the owner of a declared dangerous dog that has attacked a person or animal, causing serious injury, is \$14,334 and six months' imprisonment.

The maximum penalty for a dog which is not declared dangerous is \$4778.

Meanwhile, police have ruled out reports that an elderly woman was mauled to death by dogs in Albion late last month.

Victoria Police Sgt Anita Brens said police were investigating the 90-year-old's death but dog bites had happened after she died.

NO DETENTION CENTRE PLANS: BRIMBANK COUNCIL

Brimbank Weekly – 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/no-detention-centre-plans-brimbank-council/2251881.aspx>

Brimbank Council has moved to allay fears that an immigration detention centre is being planned for the former Kealba Secondary College site.

Residents living near the Driscolls Road site believe talks are taking place behind closed doors that could lead to a detention facility being built in their neighbourhood.

One resident said the information had come from someone within Brimbank Council.

"You can't just build a detention facility in a residential area among kids and families," the resident said.

"Imagine if there was a riot or outbreaks of trouble like we have seen at the other centres?"

But general manager of city development Stephen Sully said council had no knowledge of any such proposal and would have no role in the provision of such a facility.

"The administration and management of detention centres in Australia are the responsibility of federal authorities," he said.

A deliberately lit fire that caused more than \$1million damage ripped through the school on June 18.

A team of 45 fire fighters battled to bring the blaze under control. Investigations revealed fires had been set in at least six separate areas.

The council understands that the Department of Education is looking to dispose of the site but is unaware of the precise timetable.

"When a school closes, the department does not necessarily move immediately to dispose of the site," Mr Sully said.

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No approach has been made to the council proposing any rezoning of the site. Such a proposal would need council's support and the public would need to be notified.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship public affairs officer Steve Pivetta said the department regularly considered sites across the country in which to locate detention facilities.

"But there are no plans to build a detention facility at Kealba," he said.

An Education Department spokesman said the surplus site was being readied for sale according to state government policy.

BURGLARS HIT MELTON'S GROWTH CORRIDOR

Brimbank Weekly– 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/burglars-hit-meltons-growth-corridor/2251878.aspx>

Police are urging residents to report any suspicious activity following a 90per cent rise in residential burglaries in Melton Shire's eastern growth corridor.

The number of commercial property burglaries has also gone up by 33 per cent in and around Caroline Springs.

About \$30,000 of chainsaws and brush cutters were stolen from Squires Mowers and Machinery in Ravenhall at 4.12am on July 30.

Store owner Peter Squires (pictured) said he feared his store could be targeted again given the rise in burglaries in the area.

"It's the first time it's happened to us and there isn't much you can do, but we have beefed up our security," he said.

Brimbank's Inspector Michael Grainger said there had also been a rise in residential burglaries in the municipality.

"We have seen a rise in the Derrimut area and we have increased our surveillance efforts there," he said.

POKIES REFORM PUSH NUDGES PM

Brimbank Weekly– 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/pokies-reform-push-nudges-pm/2251885.aspx>

The InterChurch Gambling Taskforce, including Salvation Army major Brad Halse, has taken its campaign for pokies reform to Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

Representatives of church groups across Brimbank and the western suburbs descended on Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten's Moonee Ponds office on Thursday, pressing him to take their cause to Canberra.

The group presented Mr Shorten with signed postcards they want sent to the Prime Minister.

The postcards outline its requests for pokies reforms. At the top of the list is changing legislation to enable gamblers to set loss limits when they start a gaming session.

PATHWAY OF PICTURES

Brimbank Weekly– 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/pathway-of-pictures/2251876.aspx>

Walking to school has taken on new meaning for Albion and Ardeer children like Imogen, Orlando and Matilda.

Brimbank Council's Footloose Footpaths project has created seven footpath murals in Albion and Ardeer to make the walk to school as fun as can be.

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The murals depict games like hopscotch and legless lizards and ladders, with others portraying images of local flora, fauna and history.

Pupils of Ardeer, Albion and St Theresa's primary schools were involved in the design process.

Along with Mother of God Primary School pupils, they recently received activity books that tie in the mural designs and outline how to play the footpath games.

The project was developed with a \$20,000 grant from the Transport Accident Commission and came out of the Vic Health-supported Streets Ahead program.

TEENS IGNORE CYBER WARNINGS

Brimbank Weekly— 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/teens-ignore-cyber-warnings/2251877.aspx>

School principals across the north-west fear students are not getting the message about cyber safety following a spate of recent incidents.

Caroline Springs College assistant principal Gary Eckersall said a growing number of north-west students were engaging in cyber-bullying and sexting activity.

"It seems problems with cyber safety are getting bigger and bigger and students don't seem to be aware of the consequences of their online actions," he said.

"Kids seem to think they can say anything online because they are not speaking to a person face to face."

Melton police's community liaison officer, Leading Senior Constable Joanne Mutsaerts, visited the prep-9 college last week to stress the importance of cyber safety.

She said many young people didn't realise their electronic footprint could one day be analysed by employers when they applied for jobs.

"All schools in the Brimbank and Melton areas are having issues with cyber safety and it does seem to be a growing problem.

"A large percentage of kids don't understand there are legal consequences if they support hate mail."

According to the Australian Communications and Media Authority, 94 per cent of 14- to 15-year-olds have at least one social networking profile and 61 per cent of children aged 12 to 17 are likely to accept a friendly request from a stranger.

Sunshine College principal Tim Blunt said it was important to educate parents about how to ensure their children were cyber-safe.

"We got our students to run information sessions to teach parents about Facebook and web-based games," he said.

"It's about educating the entire community about stuff which can occur in this electronic era."

PARK PEOPLE JUST WANT TO BE HEARD

Brimbank Weekly— 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/park-people-just-want-to-be-heard/2251879.aspx>

North-West residents fear poor consultation could obliterate their concerns at Brimbank Council's controversial parks sale proposal.

Our Parks Not for Sale committee chairwoman Virginia Tachos is concerned that many residents aren't aware of yesterday's cut-off date for submissions.

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"I dropped off my submission at the council's municipal office in Keilor and the people at the front desk didn't even know what it was for," she said.

"Council only sent out letters to 700 residents about the sale and I'm concerned a lot of people didn't know about the cut-off date."

The council has earmarked 14 sites which could be sold to fund its multimillion-dollar parks upgrade plan. The parks range in size from 624-7961 square metres.

About 50 residents stormed out of a council meeting at Keilor Bowls Club on July 19, frustrated at not being allowed to table questions.

Questions lodged through the council's website were not put due to "technical difficulties".

About 60 residents gathered for a picnic at Cohuna Park on July 31 to raise awareness of the council's proposal.

"The process needs to be transparent and I hope council provides a proper forum for discussion on the proposed sale," Ms Tachos said.

Council's general manager of infrastructure and environment, Paul Younis, said correspondence had been received from close to 700 people.

"This includes detailed submissions on individual sites, performance letters and petitions on all sites."

He said the council intended to give submitters the chance to speak to their submission.

On August 27, residents will continue their protest against the proposed sale at a community gathering at a park at 7a Patterson Avenue, Keilor.

TRIP LIGHT FANTASTIC FOR THE GARDENS

Brimbank Weekly– 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/trip-light-fantastic-for-the-gardens/2251887.aspx>

The community is being urged to help the Lions Club of Caroline Springs as it works to upgrade local parks and gardens.

The club will host its fourth annual dinner dance on Saturday, and Secretary Ross Williamson hopes the event will raise thousands of dollars for its latest project.

"Since opening the club in 2007, we've upgraded a lot of parks in the Caroline Springs area and made generous donations to flood and bushfire victims across Victoria," he said.

As part of its new project, the club plans to install playgrounds for children and plant trees at Caroline Springs' Millennium Gardens.

"In its latest budget, Melton Shire Council gave us a grant worth \$25,000 to put towards the garden project and we're hoping to use the money to generate more funds," Mr Williamson said.

"We will run barbecue fund-raisers in Melton Shire and hope to receive grants from the community and state government."

Mr Williamson said the club also hoped to attract new members.

"We need all the support we can get and our numbers are a bit low with only 13 registered members," he said.

"Hopefully people will come along to the dinner dance and see what we're all about."

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Saturday's event at The Club in Caroline Springs starts at 7pm. popular six-piece band Midnight Mist will provide entertainment and raffles will be drawn throughout the night.

Entry is \$75 and includes a three-course meal.

MUTED APPLAUSE FOR LIBRARIES BACKFLIP

Brimbank Weekly— 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/muted-applause-for-libraries-backflip/2251882.aspx>

The state government has made a spectacular back flip on its cuts to library funding, bowing to a vocal public campaign.

More than \$5 million in library funding was pulled last month, but Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell reversed the decision last Thursday, announcing \$6.5million in additional spending over the next three years.

Brimbank libraries are now guaranteed to have funding restored for 2011-12 through a single up-front payment.

"The government will ensure library funding levels are sustained while we undertake a landmark review of Victorian library services and funding arrangements," Ms Powell said.

A bipartisan 'libraries ministerial advisory committee' will be re-established to review the role, services and funding of libraries.

Councils will be sent a new agreed funding agreement covering 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson said the reinstatement of cut funding was great news, but it failed to address the underlying problems.

"The level of funding has declined over years in real terms and there is no guarantee the Liberals will address that issue.

"We're looking for a whole reassessment of how funding is provided. We need some sort of guarantee that funding will increase in a way that keeps pace with growing populations and increases in cost of living.

"The cost of running libraries outstrips the rise in CPI [consumer price index] because of wage costs. We would be really pleased if they would work to address that."

Municipal Association of Victoria president Bill McArthur said the decision reflected the outpouring of community passion for local libraries.

"While the improvement in this year's funding will not meet the full expectation of councils, from next year we will see more substantial progress in the state's recurrent funding commitment."

Brimbank Council's general manager community well-being, Kelly Grigsby, said it was important the review did not justify cuts.

"If anyone is in doubt about the important role that our libraries play in the community, they need only step foot in one of our five libraries to see that Brimbank libraries are the lifeblood of our community."

BRIMBANK RESIDENTS DIVIDED ON COUNCIL

Brimbank Weekly— 9th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/pokies-reform-push-nudges-pm/2251885.aspx>

Brimbank residents are divided about whether the area is ready to elect its own councillors in next year's local government poll.

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Some want to see a return to a fully elected council, but others are calling for another term under administration.

Brimbank's councillors were sacked in 2009 in the wake of a damning report by Victorian Ombudsman George Brouwer into the strife-torn council.

Administrators Peter Lewinsky, Meredith Sussex and Joanne Anderson were appointed until the October 2012 election.

But Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell is yet to announce whether the administrators will remain in place beyond the scheduled election.

Deer Park Residents and Traders Association secretary Les Tarczon said he supported the disbanding of the previous council, but Brimbank was ready to return to democracy.

"The administrators have done their job, but the community is now ready to elect their own councillors. We will have had two-and-a-half years of administration and it has been great for transparency, but it's time we had the confidence in people to use their votes."

Sunshine Residents and Ratepayers Association president Darlene Reilly said members wanted to see one more term under administration.

"There have been improvements in governance in Brimbank under the administrators and the community feels there has been progress in the responsible allocation of funds for the things the area most needs."

Delahey Action Group convener David Anderson has suggested a middle path.

His group is pushing for a further two years under administration, then a return to an elected council.

That would ensure the council was operating smoothly when the handover was made, he said.

The shorter term would also enable people to form their judgment on the new councillors ahead of the next election two years later.

WEST SUNSHINE PUPILS GIVE GOVERNOR TOP MARKS FOR SCHOOL VISIT

Brimbank Leader – 5th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/pupils-give-governor-top-marks-for-school-visit-fbready/>

One of Victoria's most prominent migrants has inspired students in West Sunshine.

The Governor, Alex Chernov, and his wife, Elizabeth, had morning tea with students at St Paul's Primary last week. It was his first official school visit in his role as Governor.

The visit came after 28 students from grades 5 and 6 wrote 17 letters to Mr Chernov expressing an interest in his role and his experiences growing up in a new country.

Born in Lithuania to Russian parents, Mr Chernov migrated to Australia as a boy.

A lawyer and former Supreme Court judge who has also been chancellor of Melbourne University, Mr Chernov was sworn in as Governor on April 8.

St Paul's senior co-ordinator Grace Frazzica said the students were "impressed and excited."

"The letter writing started after we started learning about migration," she said. "He spoke to students about his experiences as a migrant, and they were happy with how down to earth he was, and how such an important man gave them a personal recount of his upbringing."

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As a token of their appreciation, students gave Mr Chernov a school T-shirt and Mrs Chernov flowers.

St Paul's is one of Brimbank's many multicultural schools, with students coming from varied backgrounds including Sudan and Vietnam.

ART TO REFLECT ST ALBANS' CULTURES AND DIVERSITY

Brimbank Leader— 5th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/art-to-reflect-st-albans-cultures-and-diversity-fbready/>

Preparations have started to light up St Albans with the community's hopes and dreams.

A major public art project, featuring four permanent contemporary artworks, will be launched in the central business district area in coming weeks.

Artists Andrea Tomaselli and Dianne Beevers were selected to create the \$250,000 project, Seeds of Hopes and Dreams, to revitalise public space in St Albans.

One 7.5m metallic structure, inspired by native yam daisy, will be lit up at St Albans Square.

Tomaselli said it was important for the artwork to reflect the community's mix of cultures and diversity.

"St Albans is a point of arrival and a point of departure so it was important to see the seeds fly in, establish themselves and fly away again."

Two large daisy stencils will be erected on the corner of Main Rd West and Mitchell St and in Alfrieda St, marking the gateway to the town centre. A fourth structure will be placed in Alfrieda St.

HOBSONS BAY

MOTHERS FOCUS ON DYSLEXIA

Hobsons Bay Leader— 11th August 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/mothers-focus-on-dyslexia/>

A turnout of more than 200 parents and teachers at a dyslexia information session in Williamstown highlights the need for more awareness and support, organisers say.

The western suburbs' Dyslexia Support Group West, started by Altona North mother Julie Martin and Yarraville mum Rebecca Cleaver, held its first public session at Williamstown Primary School on August 1 and attracted a bigger crowd than expected.

"We were very pleased with the response and the turnout really suggests a real need for this type of thing in the community," Ms Cleaver said.

She also said about 60 per cent of the estimated 250 guests were teachers.

"We had a huge spectrum in the audience," Ms Cleaver said.

"Some parents and teachers are just starting out on their journey and some have been on it for a few years."

Guest speaker on the night was the Murdoch Children's Research Institute's Nola Firth, who is part of the National Dyslexia Working Party that recommends officially recognising dyslexia as a learning disability and improving early assessment for children.

The support group will continue to meet monthly while a core group will look at surveys completed at the session.

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The group hopes to lobby the State Government to recognise dyslexia as a specific disability, to fund assessments for dyslexia in schools and to provide better support services for parents and teachers.

Ms Cleaver said the group received great support from the Rotary Club of Point Gellibrand, local libraries and politicians including Labor MPs Wade Noonan, Jill Hennessy, Marsha Thomson and Daniel Andrews, Greens MP Colleen Hartland and Liberal MP Bernie Finn.

The Education Department did not respond before Leader's deadline.

STATION CAMPAIGN STEPS UP

Hobsons Bay Star – 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/308/story/138318.html>

The campaign to re-open Paisley and Galvin Railway Stations has stepped up, with Hobsons Bay City Council calling on the Transport Minister to meet with them over the issue.

Last week, the council voted to write to the Minister and ask him to discuss the fate of the two disused stations, located between Newport and Laverton.

The municipality's works and assets director, Phillip McDonald, said the council recently received a letter from the State Government which said they had "no intention" of re-opening Paisley and Galvin Railway Stations.

But Councillor Tony Briffa said he hoped the council would receive a "favourable response" from the Minister for Public Transport, Terry Mulder, in reply to their latest plea.

Hobsons Bay CEO Bill Jaboor has also written to Mr Mulder recently, asking for a public meeting to discuss the new timetable changes which have been a problem for some commuters on the Altona train loop.

A Facebook page devoted to the issue, titled 'Re-Open Paisley Station in Altona North', has even been created.

The internet site states: "People living in Altona North have no access to train lines" and the "nearest train stations to Altona North are 40 minutes walk away"..

The Facebook site encourages train travellers to sign an online petition for the reopening of Paisley Station.

So far, 13 people – mostly from Altona and Newport – have signed the petition, while more than 30 people have 'liked' the Facebook page.

Altona MP Jill Hennessy also recently called on the State Government to address "the very heavy demand for transport and stations" in Hobsons Bay and Wyndham.

DSE TO FOOT PART OF ALTONA NORTH DRIVEWAY REPAIRS

Hobsons Bay Leader – 10th August 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/dse-to-foot-part-of-altona-north-driveway-repairs/>

The popular Italian Social Club in Altona North has been given \$45,000 to fix its bumpy, potholed driveway by the State Government department that the club says was responsible for damaging it.

The club, which shares a driveway in Kyle Rd with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, said the department damaged the road with heavy trucks and machinery in 2009 and did not adequately repair it.

Club maintenance manager Filippo Franze told the Leader the club had had trouble hiring out its facilities - an important source of income - because of the driveway.

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn told an overjoyed Mr Franze and club vice-president Frank Conidi last week that Environment Minister Ryan Smith, who visited the club in April, had confirmed the department would pay \$45,000

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towards the repairs.

But with estimates to fix the driveway ranging from \$50,000 to \$60,000, the club is hoping Hobsons Bay Council, which built the original driveway, will chip in and has started discussions with Hobsons Bay Mayor Michael Raffoul.

MARIBRYNONG

YARRAVILLE FUEL STORAGE SITE BID NEAR HOMES

Maribyrnong Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/yarraville-fuel-storage-site-bid-near-homes/2254194.aspx?storypage=0>

A bulk fuel storage site could be built near homes in Yarraville as concerns persist over planning regulations for land use near major hazard facilities.

The Port of Melbourne Corporation is calling for expressions of interest for a long-term lease on a 23,000-square-metre site between Francis and Lyell streets.

The closest house is about 500 metres from the proposed site.

The Weekly understands international company Vopak has expressed interest in the site to build and operate bulk fuel storage worth more than \$100 million, which could be operating in 2014.

Vopak has operations in 31 countries and specialises in building and operating storage for bulk liquids such as gaseous chemicals, oil products, petrochemicals, biofuels, liquefied gases and vegetable oils.

The Weekly's questions to Vopak about the specific use of the site, including whether a pipeline network would be built and the amount of truck traffic to and

from the site, went unanswered. An email from communications manager Juni Ramli read only: "As a listed company, we do not discuss and comment on rumours or individual projects. Vopak is a company with growth strategy and we are constantly looking for opportunities to grow in order to strengthen our leadership position. If we make an investment decision, only then will we inform through a press release."

A site of that nature would need a number of approvals, including from Maribyrnong Council and Environment Protection Authority, which would be open to public submissions.

Councils have sought clarification on buffer zones that separate hazard facilities and homes.

Maribyrnong Council sustainable development manager Nigel Higgins said the council was concerned about the planning regulations around major hazard facilities and had put forward its views to port environs advisory committee hearings last year.

"The main concerns were about the need to have risk and health buffers clearly expressed in the planning scheme so that buffer requirements are evident and able to be considered in planning decisions."

Mr Higgins confirmed the proposal was discussed at a meeting co-ordinated by the Department of Industry and Regional Development and attended by the council, EPA, Worksafe and Vopak. "Planning issues surrounding the proposal, including buffer and truck issues, were raised."

No application has yet been lodged with the council or the EPA.

Mr Higgins said a major hazard facility was not a preferred development in the area but was permissible as it was in an industry 1 zone.

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Planning Minister Matthew Guy says he will decide on planning regulations around hazard sites and near the port after he receives the ports and environs committee report with the Department of Planning's advice.

GO WITH FLOW OF MARIBYRNONG RIVER HISTORY

Maribyrnong Leader– 10th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/go-with-flow-of-maribyrnong-river-history-fbready/>

Nestling below the future of Maribyrnong, the past is waiting to be discovered, and fighting to be remembered.

At Pipemakers Park on the banks of the Maribyrnong River, below the new Edgewater housing development and expanded Highpoint Shopping Centre, supporters of the Living Museum of the West are busy working.

The last of the Maribyrnong River Edge Art Movement (MREAM) artists are moving out following a controversy that challenged the very idea of what the eco-museum was, and wanted to be.

A drop in funding by the former Brumby State Government had left the museum dependent on the artists' rent, but their presence in the historic bluestone building was against Heritage Victoria conditions and some said against the spirit of the museum.

However one of the artists' aims, to attract more people to the hidden gem, is as always being pursued by the museum committee and volunteers.

Rows and rows of boxes and filing cabinets within the museum contain 100 years' worth of maps, photos, paintings and documents.

The task now is to sort the items out and establish new exhibitions in the former art studio space and tour them around municipalities

For the first time, nearby Jack's Magazine will be accessible to the public thanks to a road linking Pipemakers Park with the network of buildings and blast mounds that make up Victoria's largest gunpowder magazine.

The museum's Peter Somerville said the historic site would be a big drawcard. Also part of the reinvigoration is a push to get other western councils involved.

"It's not just the history of Maribyrnong, it's the western region," he said. "You wouldn't believe you're in the metro area when you're here."

Mr Somerville said school groups and walking groups were regulars to the site, with inquiries for weddings and an international event were also starting to come through.

Visit the History of the Land Discovery Trail garden, built around the concrete foundations of the former pipe factory, hear how Gallipoli came to Maribyrnong River, see how frozen food was pioneered among other local secrets at Pipemakers Park and Living Museum of the West.

PAP TESTS ENCOURAGED IN WEST

Maribyrnong Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/pap-tests-encouraged-in-west/2254255.aspx>

Western Region Health Centre has received a grant to run cervical screening information sessions to encourage more women to have regular pap tests.

PapScreen Victoria's community development grants program gives grants of up to \$2000 to 19 community-based organisations across Victoria for projects that encourage women to have tests.

PapScreen Victoria wants to increase the number of women who have pap tests every two years. It says close to 90per cent of women who develop cervical cancer

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have either never had a pap test or didn't have them every two years. It says educating women helps dispel myths and alleviate anxiety and uncertainty around cervical screening.

WAGE REDUCTIONS REMEDIED

Maribyrnong Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wage-reductions-remedied/2254253.aspx>

Seven warehousing businesses in Footscray and Laverton are under investigation for allegedly failing to comply with workplace laws following random audits by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Fair Work inspectors checked the books of 56 employers across the two suburbs and breaches were identified at 11, five relating to the underpayment of wages and six in relation to pay slips. A total of \$54,200 has been recovered for 51 employees who were underpaid.

Thirty-eight businesses inspected were meeting their workplace obligations.

Fair Work Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson says inspectors had worked with each employer to voluntarily rectify their breaches and put processes in place to ensure they did not re-occur. Seven businesses remain under investigation.

Workers or employers seeking support should contact the Fair Work Ombudsman via www.fairwork.gov.au or 131394.

SPACE INVADERS FIND GOING TOUGH

Maribyrnong Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/space-invaders-find-going-tough/2254204.aspx>

Spaces to run, kick the footy or escape the city are at a premium in Maribyrnong, which has one of Melbourne's lowest proportions of space per resident.

A Victorian Environmental Assessment Council investigation released this week found that just under 10 per cent of land in Maribyrnong is public open space.

The municipality has 258 hectares of parks, gardens and sports fields, equal to 3.5 hectares for each 1000 residents.

It's the fifth-lowest in the state, behind Glen Eira (4.7 per cent), Stonington (6.7 per cent), Wyndham (9.1 per cent) and Boroondara (9.6 per cent).

Of those 258 hectares, 142 are owned by the council, 114 are Crown land and the rest are in the hands of a public authority.

The report, Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation, noted there were fewer opportunities to create public open space in established suburbs than in the growing outer suburbs. As well, Melbourne's increasing population would result in a loss of quantity and quality of public open space. The report recommended the state government come up with a strategy to tackle long-term planning for, and tracking of, open space.

KEEP FOOTSCRAY PARKING FEES AT BAY

Maribyrnong Leader– 10th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/keep-footscray-parking-fees-at-bay-fbready/>

The proposed doubling of paid parking bays in Footscray would unfairly disadvantage the sick, elderly and disabled, according to Pickett St business owners.

Maribyrnong Council has asked for feedback on a plan to make drivers pay for about 700 extra parking bays in the CBD.

About 90 people have signed a petition organised by Footscray Physiotherapy and Hydrotherapy Centre against the proposal.

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Owner Nathan Feldman said he was “outraged” by the council’s attempt to “draw blood out of a stone”. He estimated the extended paid parking would cost a regular client, many of whom were on pensions, \$200-300 a year.

Mr Feldman said shoppers rarely parked in Pickett St and walked to the shops, so the street should be exempt from the paid parking plan, designed to increase customer turnover.

Baptcare Westhaven Footscray Community aged care facility office manager Paula Miranda said the centre had more than 50 signatures on a petition.

Ms Miranda said paid parking would reduce the time visitors and volunteers would spend with residents and would hit staff who used the on-street parking.

“We have some people in palliative care and their families stay all day - for them to pay it’s too harsh,” Ms Miranda said.

Councillors will vote on the plan at the August 16 meeting.

Saltriver Ward councillor John Cumming said the proposal needed more work.

“I’d like to see some changes (to it), I’m not a big fan of paid parking,” he said.

Cr Cumming said the issue of parking needed to be looked at with a longer term approach and in line with the council’s Skyline study, examining housing density in the area.

“ We need to control parking better than we do but I think we need to look at it in conjunction with the Skyline study at a more longer term approach,” he said.

“I don’t see the need for more paid parking now, if it was the same in Yarraville I’d be happier but it’s not fair we (Footscray) always have to carry the can.”

MINISTER URGED TO RELEASE TRUCK DATA

Maribyrnong Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/minister-urged-to-release-truck-data/2254201.aspx>

Maribyrnong Council has taken the unprecedented step of writing to Roads Minister Terry Mulder seeking the release of statistics about truck traffic it paid to have compiled.

Details of the March truck counts in Footscray and Yarraville have not yet been released.

The council's infrastructure and engineering manager, Ian Butterworth, said the council had not seen this year's counts and had "raised its concerns with the VicRoads regional office and has written to the minister seeking release of the results".

"Since introduction of the truck curfews in 2002, a joint arrangement has been established between VicRoads and Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong councils to undertake annual traffic counts on major roads in Spotswood, Yarraville and Footscray over two weeks in March to monitor traffic [including trucks] and the impacts of the two truck curfews."

Last year's counts showed truck traffic increased over the year from March, 2009, by 46per cent on Moore Street, Footscray; close to 2500 trucks use it daily. Buckley Street, Footscray, had a 30per cent increase in night truck traffic, with close to 3000 trucks using the road daily.

Community groups, including the Maribyrnong Truck Action Group, say they have put multiple requests to Mr Mulder for a meeting only to be told "he's too busy".

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MTAG spokesman Peter Knight said truck counts had always been released as soon as they were completed. "What is minister Mulder hiding and why is he hiding it? It's critical that we have access to information regarding these counts and if they are not released very soon MTAG will instigate a freedom of information claim to find out just what is going on."

Opposition roads spokeswoman Jacinta Allan said the state government was "completely ignoring" the issue. "It smacks of outrageous arrogance that the government are ignoring a substantial community here in the western suburbs of Melbourne who just want them to get on and fix this problem."

HEALTH REFORMS: LESS WASTE, LESS WAITING TIME

Maribyrnong Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/health-reforms-less-waste-less-waiting-time/2254202.aspx>

A landmark agreement has been reached on national reforms that MPs say will deliver a more certain future for the west's health needs.

The historic health reform agreement between the federal and state governments promises less waste, greater accountability and cuts to waiting times for patients.

And it sets the scene for greater local control of hospitals.

An extra \$19.8billion in federal funding will flow to public hospitals through to 2019-20, rising to a total extra \$175billion to 2029-30.

The funding enables 2.9million extra cases in emergency departments; 2million additional inpatient services, including major surgery; and 19million more outpatient consultations, such as minor surgery or physiotherapy.

The agreement sets a four-hour target for emergency waiting times by 2015 and a 100per cent elective surgery target by 2016. The federal government will pay for

45per cent of growth in hospital services in 2014-15, increasing to 50per cent in 2017-18.

New hospital networks will enable management decisions to be made locally.

Premier Ted Baillieu said the agreement delivered up to \$300million extra for Victorian hospitals in 2013 and \$4.1billion from 2014-15 to 2019-20.

"Victoria has taken a lead in negotiations with the Commonwealth on this agreement and has worked in good faith since coming to government to get the best possible deal for the people of Victoria.

"The new agreement draws heavily on the Victorian health service model, including activity-based funding and local hospital governance arrangements, which we have had for some time here."

Victoria has been exempted from the federal takeover of home and community care services, and the state government maintains control over the hospital system to protect local health service networks.

HOME COMFORTS FOR TOTS IN DAY CARE

Maribyrnong Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/home-comforts-for-tots-in-day-care/2254200.aspx>

It's just another visit to a friend's house when children show up at Lina Morvillo's house for day care.

Mrs Morvillo is an educator and part of the Maribyrnong Council-run family day care scheme, which provides childcare and learning for children from birth to age 12 in the homes of registered, qualified and experienced educators.

It includes full-time, part-time and occasional care any day or night of the week, and also school holiday care for primary schoolchildren.

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According to peak body Family Day Care Australia, there are more than 103,000 children in care across the nation and 12,000 family day care educators. "The children are best mates," Mrs Morvillo said of the bonds the groups of up to four children forge. "They all say, 'We're going to Lily's house'."

She got involved after her daughter, also named Lily, was born, and she enjoyed the experience. Mrs Morvillo is now studying for her diploma in early childhood teaching and cares for up to four children in her home as part of the family day care program.

She said that because each day care group was small the curriculum could be adapted to the individual child's needs.

"I would design a program for them, but it's dependant on their interests. They might start talking about seeds and plants so we would learn about that for a while."

Maribyrnong Council is looking for more people like Mrs Morvillo to expand the program.

The council's community well-being manager, Arden Joseph, said home-based care was traditionally less expensive than centre-based care as fees were charged for booked and used care only versus paying the full-day fees.

PLANS TO CUT LIBRARY FUNDS SHELVED

Maribyrnong Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/plans-to-cut-library-funds-shelved/2254198.aspx>

The state government has bowed to public pressure and reneged on a plan to pull more than \$5 million out of public libraries, but advocates say the reversal does little to address long-term chronic underfunding.

The cuts had been met with a public outcry and many councils pledged not to sign the proposed funding agreement with the government.

In a back flip late last week, Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell said the government would provide:

- \$6.2million in 2012-13 and 2013-14
- A top-up of \$200,000 this year to "ensure no library receives any less money than they did last year"
- Re-establishment of the libraries ministerial advisory committee (Libraries MAC), which will include a representative from the Opposition
- \$100,000 for a comprehensive review of the role, services and funding of libraries

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson said that while the reinstatement of funding was good news, funding levels had declined over the years.

"We are really looking for a whole reassessment of how funding is provided. We need some sort of guarantee that funding will increase in a way that keeps pace with growing populations and the increase in cost of living.

"The cost of running libraries outstrips the rise in CPI because of wage costs and we would be really pleased if they would work to address that."

Municipal Association of Victoria president Bill McArthur said it would push for a formal funding partnership agreement similar to agreements already operating in other areas of joint responsibility, such as maternal and child health.

"At a minimum, we'd expect to see a better base allocation of recurrent state funding that recognises the role of modern libraries, plus annual indexation that

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ensures grants increase in line with population and core library costs such as wages, books and technology."

Shadow minister for local government Richard Wynne said the funding turnaround was the result of a passionate community campaign.

"Ms Powell and Mr Baillieu need to understand the community will not let this government undercut Victoria's public libraries."

UNCLEAR FUTURE

Footscray Star— 9th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/308/story/138206.html>

Time is running out for Footscray residents and businesses whose properties will be acquired to make way for the Regional Rail Link, with the 31 August deadline fast approaching.

Maribyrnong City Council's longest-serving councillor, Catherine Cumming, is just one of many people to be affected by the \$5 billion project.

Cr Cumming last year learned her Nicholson St business, The Barefoot Doctors Clinic, would be acquired to make way for the Regional Rail Link.

She took over the building 11 years ago on a 20-year lease when it was a derelict piece of VicTrack property.

Cr Cumming told Star her business had been in limbo ever since she found out about the acquisition, with the clinic experiencing a drop in clientele as soon as the Regional Rail Link project was announced.

"People became apprehensive and would call and say 'are you still there? Where are you going to go? What's going to happen?'

"Then, the time that has been consumed by me to do what is needed in the way of looking for new locations, meeting with solicitors, meeting with accountants, has just taken away from my business.

"I haven't done anything in the way of building my business, I've almost had to scale down my business to be able to do all the work that the Regional Rail Link has required of me.

"Their timeline doesn't really fall into everyone else's schedule.

"They've requested information from my accountant, from my solicitor, I'm trying to relocate and... it doesn't look like it's all going to happen by that day for me.

"I'm hoping that the Regional Rail Link people can be flexible in ways to accommodate me and not throw me out on the street."

Cr Cumming has yet to find another location for the business. She told Star she has a property in Williamstown, but said it wasn't in the same advantageous location or as accessible as the Nicholson St property.

Meanwhile, Footscray residents whose houses are being acquired are reluctant to talk to the media.

"They are feeling severely bruised by the whole experience and many are worried that speaking out publicly at this stage may jeopardise their negotiations," Fair Go for Footscray Rail Residents spokesperson Nick Fahey said.

ADDING UP HOMELESS IN CENSUS

Maribyrnong Leader— 9th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/adding-up-homeless-in-census/>

Changes to the way homeless people are counted in the Census will dramatically distort the truth about the problem in the west, according to housing advocates.

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The Australian Bureau of Statistics, which records Census data, will crunch the numbers itself, rather than let two professors assess them independently as in previous years.

A report on the new ABS criteria showed the 2006 Census homelessness count would be revised down from 104,676 people to 63,472 and the youth homelessness count from about 21,000 to 5000.

ABS social condition statistics assistant Bob McColl said the count needed to be more consistent and rigorous if it was to be used to govern policy and track the changes.

But North and West Homelessness Network's Zoe Probyn said the group was concerned about some of the "assumptions" made under the proposed changes.

Under the existing definition of homelessness, anyone living on the street or in a car, squatting, living in a hostel, shelter, refuge, crisis accommodation or at a friend or relative's house or in a boarding or rooming house is considered homeless.

Ms Probyn said that in the revised 2006 homelessness estimates, many people living in caravans and over the age of 50 were removed from the count because the ABS assumed they were "grey nomads" despite the growing number of older people forced to live in the temporary accommodation to make ends meet.

In the northwest region for the past few weeks, outreach workers and 10 specially trained Census collectors had been hard at work instructing those in temporary accommodation to write "none" in the suburb/locality box for the Census question, "Where does this person usually live?"

"The Census figures are absolutely crucial to understanding the extent of homelessness in our communities and are used by the Government to make critical policy and funding decisions," Ms Probyn said.

"It's really important that they are as accurate as possible, if we get an under count (of homeless people), the consequences will be huge and we won't get another go for five years."

Half Moon Caravan Park resident Helen said she and her husband, Keith, had been living in a van for more than 12 years while waiting for public housing.

Helen said the Brooklyn Park was not an ideal home as the caravan was cramped, and she and Keith had numerous falls on the uneven and poorly lit ground.

She said she hoped the Census figures would further highlight the desperate need for more public housing.

Mr McColl told the Leader the ABS was still working with a reference group to iron out some issues with the homelessness criteria to ensure everyone was appropriately categorised.

Homeless people are given an extra week to fill out their Census forms.

THERE'S NO BETTER DAY CARER THAN ANOTHER MUM

Maribyrnong Leader— 9th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/theres-no-better-day-carer-than-another-mum/>

Maribyrnong Council is recruiting qualified residents to run day care from home to keep up with demand for services.

Under the Family Day Care Scheme, registered and experienced educators provide full-time, part-time, before and after school or occasional care for children up to 12 years old.

Maribyrnong mother of three Lina Morvillo decided to join the scheme after the birth of her third child.

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She is now halfway through a Diploma of Children's Services and her youngest daughter couldn't be happier.

"I'm really drawn to the nurture and care of children," Ms Morvillo said. "I can spend so much more time with my daughter and the kids this way. It's a far richer and rewarding experience. It's the best of both worlds, working and looking after your child."

The home-based care is regulated by the State Government and coordinated by the council but it is up to carers to develop educational and stimulating activities for each child. Mayor Sarah Carter encouraged passionate, dedicated and caring educators to attend an information session about the scheme on August 11.

The session runs from 2-6pm at Maribyrnong City Council, cnr Hyde and Napier streets.

BRUSH OFF ANGER FOR FOOTSCRAY

Maribyrnong Leader— 9th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/brush-off-anger-for-footscray-fbready/>

Finance for a desperately needed dental clinic in Footscray is proving tougher than pulling teeth.

Western Region Health Centre is petitioning the State Government to fund a \$9 million redevelopment of its Geelong Rd and Paisley St clinics.

Buildings and equipment at the public clinics are more than 50 years old and not capable of supporting new technology.

WRHC has said a commitment for the money needs to happen in the next 12 months.

Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews visited the Geelong Rd clinic last Friday to lend support to a call for action. Labor had promised a new centre as an election commitment last November.

"Ted Baillieu announced \$26.5 million in oral health over the next four years and had no mention of these buildings, so he's effectively saying he's not interested for the next four years," Mr Andrews said.

Western Liberal MP Bernie Finn has been campaigning to his cash-conscious party leaders for months to fund the new centre and has visited the sites numerous times.

"We made it clear this year's budget was about campaign obligations and now we're lobbying to be included in the next budget," Mr Finn said.

To show support for WRHC, sign the petition online at wrhc.com.au/saveourdentalclinics or at any of their clinics across the western suburbs.

MELTON

A WIN FOR THE UNDERDOGS AT TOOLERN VALE

Melton Leader— 11th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/a-win-for-the-underdogs-at-toolern-vale/>

These are the award-winning faces of one of Australia's much maligned and misunderstood animals.

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Toolern Vale's Dingo Discovery Sanctuary and Research Centre has been awarded the Protection of the Environment Award at the Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria 2011 Sustainable Cities Awards.

The centre was nominated for its Learn About Dingoes project.

Owner Lyn Watson said winning the award fulfilled an "impossible dream".

"Historically the dingo is the greatest underdog on earth, so to be recognised and to win this award is a huge honour," she said.

"You always have your fingers crossed, but we never expected to win anything like this."

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the award recognised the centre's tireless work in protecting and enhancing the environment.

The Toolern Vale centre is bequeathed to the Australian Dingo Foundation so it can remain open for future generations.

"We're essentially giving our whole life's work to the foundation and we need to make sure that we recruit young people that understand our philosophy," Ms Watson said.

The centre is keen to build a larger visitor centre.

The property is open each weekend in August for children over 7 and adults to visit the dingo pups.

Booking are essential.

FACEBOOK WARNING ON MELTON SEX ASSAULTS FALSE, SAY POLICE

Melton Leader – 11th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/facebook-warning-on-melton-sex-assaults-false-say-police/>

Melton Police say claims of a series of sexual assaults in Melton South on teenage girls are false and are just creating hysteria in the community.

A Facebook message has warned Melton South parents to "please consider driving your kids to school" after the discovery of a distressed teenage girl in a paddock in Clarendon Drive last month.

The post alleges two females were abducted, and one raped, while walking to school.

"Parents please read - Melton South - another young female was raped, again while walking to school," the post read.

"That's two abductions within a week and a half. It's so sad to hear that my friend's kids cannot walk to school or go outside to play without fear of this happening. Please share this with everyone."

But Melton CIU Detective-Sergeant Robert Henley has denied the claims.

"There have not been a series of sexual attacks on females in public places in Melton," he said.

"These posts are just creating hysteria in the community."

The 13-year-old girl, who was walking to school, was found by a passerby in a paddock on July 26.

She was reportedly in a distressed condition and could not remember what happened to her.

She was taken to the Royal Children's Hospital in a stable condition with pains in her head and neck.

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Det.-Sgt Henley said police have so far ruled out sexual assault, but are “exploring the possibilities of an assault, a medical or accidental” reason for her collapse.

“At this stage police and medical staff are trying to determine what happened,” he said. “Police do not believe it was a sexually motivated crime (and) are not discounting other possibilities.”

The school that the girl attends is believed to have addressed teachers over the incident.

IF YOU PLANT IT, THEY WILL COME

Melton Leader– 11th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/western-highway-road-delay-is-the-limit/>

The next time you see this bare paddock, it could be a forest.

That’s the vision of water authorities and local environmentalists.

Western Water and Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group are working side-by-side to transform an area at the Melton Recycled Water Plant into a wildlife habitat corridor of grassy woodland.

The area sits between Pinkerton Forest, endangered remnant greybox grassy woodland on Western Water land and Bush’s Paddock, made up of critically endangered plains grassland, owned by Melton Council.

Western Water managing director John Wilkinson said the aim was to join up the “islands” of bush to allow endangered species to move between different areas.

This Saturday (August 13) the dream of creating the forest will take off, with a public planting day.

PLEG spokesman Daryl Akers said the project was “pioneering”.

“To be creating a forest from nothing is really an extraordinary challenge, and will take decades,” he said.

“By restoring the habitat in this area we can help endangered wildlife to recolonise, and make species less vulnerable to natural disasters such as bushfire.”

WESTERN HIGHWAY ROAD DELAY IS THE LIMIT

Melton Leader– 11th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/if-you-plant-it-they-will-come/>

Speed limits on the Western Highway realignment at Anthony’s cutting remain at 80km/h more than six weeks after the new road opened.

The limit was supposed to increase to 110 km/h four to seven days after opening on June 26. The new road section between Melton and Bacchus Marsh opened nine months ahead of schedule. But extra repairs and bad weather have forced continued speed restrictions and long delays for motorists.

The works have removed steep hills and tight curves that had contributed to 21 casualty crashes in recent years.

VicRoads project director John Moylan said the road had been opened with a temporary surface as soon as possible, and VicRoads was looking at getting the road up to 110km/h by the end of this week, weather permitting.

“Due to the nature of the temporary seal, some repair works may be required on the new road surface until a final seal is applied in late summer, when the warmer weather conditions are better suited for pavement sealing,” Mr Moylan said.

“Despite the road opening ahead of schedule, works are continuing on the new freeway, including landscaping, installation of safety barriers, and pavement works to tie in the existing freeway to the new.

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"The speed limit on the new Western Freeway is currently 80km/h - the speed limit cannot be raised to 110km/h until the tie-in works are completed."

Mr Moylan said recent poor weather had delayed work.

"Every effort is being made to complete these works as soon as possible," he said.

PM PRAISES MELTON'S SPIRIT DURING WHIRLWIND VISIT

Melton Leader – 10th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/pm-praises-meltons-spirit-during-whirlwind-visit/>

Melton South students have got up close with Australia's most powerful woman.

The Prime Minister and Federal Labor Member for Lalor, Julia Gillard, paid a whirlwind visit to Melton Shire last Friday.

Ms Gillard was on hand at Melton South Primary School to officially open the school's multi-purpose centre.

"It is great to be back in Melton to celebrate the opening of the multi-purpose centre and to witness its impact on the school," Ms Gillard said.

She was then a special guest host at the Above and Beyond awards ceremony at the Melton Community Hall.

"Those individuals who received awards today have selflessly worked to help other members of this great community," she said.

"As Prime Minister and local MP, I am proud of Melton's community spirit."

Earlier in the week, Ms Gillard attended several functions during her trip to Melbourne, including the launch of former Victoria Police commissioner Christine Nixon's memoirs, *Fair Cop*.

LESS CASH TO GO SPLASH IN MELTON SHIRE

Melton Leader – 10th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/less-cash-to-go-splash-in-melton-shire/>

Melton Shire residents earn more than \$20,000 a year less than Victoria's richest residents.

Latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show Melton shire residents' average wage in the 2008-09 financial year was \$43,237.

That figure was a long way behind the state's top earners from Bayside City Council, including Brighton, who raked in an average of \$65,568 a year.

Victoria's lowest-earning workers were from Yarriambiack Shire Council in the state's northwest, which had an average wage of just \$30,035.

But Melton Shire's average wage has jumped \$2170 from 2007-08, its highest increase since 2003.

Average wages have increased \$7676 since 2003-04, up from \$35,561.

In 2008-09 Melton Shire had 44,391 earners bringing home almost \$2 billion.

But the shire still rates below the 2008-09 Victorian average wage of \$45,246.

The shire was the third-highest-earning municipality in the north-west behind the Macedon Ranges (\$47,247) and Wyndham (\$46,318).

Neighbouring municipalities Moorabool (\$43,219), Hume (\$42,688), Brimbank (\$41,527) and Ballarat (\$39,301) all earned less than Melton.

Melton's acting manager business, growth and sustainability Adrian Murphy said average earnings would rise with population growth.

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THIEVES IN MELTON CAR SPREE

Melton Leader– 10th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/thieves-in-melton-car-spree/>

Police are warning Melton residents to lock up their vehicles and remove valuables after \$13,000 worth of goods were stolen in a week.

The thieves pinched an array of items from eight cars between July 27 and August 2, the most popular being Global Positioning System instruments.

The stealing spree began when an Engel car fridge worth \$2000 was stolen from the canopy of a Mazda ute parked at a house in Howie Close on July 27.

Two days later, almost \$5000 worth of goods, including a GPS system and tools, were taken when thieves removed the rear driver's side window of a Ford Ranger parked outside a house in McKenzie St.

Later that day, another GPS and items worth \$870 were stolen from a Subaru Forester parked in the driveway of a house in Church St.

Three vehicles were also targets in Melton West on July 31.

A Holden Calais parked in the driveway of a Willow Court home was jacked up on bricks and had its four wheels stolen.

Meanwhile, more than \$1000 worth of items, including a GPS and two gauges, were stolen from a Toyota 4Runner in Churchill Way when offenders smashed the driver's side window.

A GPS system and money were stolen from a Ford Falcon parked in the driveway of a Stanford Tce house on the same day.

And on August 2, a GPS, phone charger and cash were stolen from a Hyundai Santa Fe parked in Stafford St, Melton South.

On the same day, various items, including a baseball bat and two baseballs, were stolen from a Ford Falcon in Lorimer St, Melton.

JULIA GILLARD: MELTON HOSPITAL PUSH SPURS HEALTHY DEBATE

Melton Weekly– 9th August 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/julia-gillard-melton-hospital-push-spurs-healthy-debate/2252929.aspx>

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has thrown her support behind Melton's push for its own public hospital.

In an exclusive interview with the Weekly, the Lalor MP said she would work with Mayor Justin Mammarella as the council continued its campaign for a hospital.

That campaign was launched following a petition initiated by resident John Southall.

However, Ms Gillard said: "The state government would have to decide whether it was the right place for a hospital under the new health reform agreement that we struck and announced [last] week."

She added that under the new agreement, which was welcomed by Djerriwarrh Health Services chief executive Bruce Marshall, the government would no longer be capping services.

"What we're doing now, is we are saying we will be equal partners in the growth of hospital costs ... run your hospitals so that the activity is meeting needs, and we'll keep stepping up as activity steps up and meeting half of the costs," she said.

"If the state government does choose to create a new hospital, funding from us will automatically flow to the activity within that hospital."

Ms Gillard said the reforms would provide more hospital beds and local control.

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However, Premier Ted Baillieu said the deal would make little difference to the state's health system.

"I am realistic to the point that this will, for Victorians, not make a great deal of material change," he said.

"This is very much about growth funding ... we are not going to say no to the additional funding."

Praising the reforms, Mr Marshall said he was "extremely hopeful" that the fastest-growing population in Australia would receive greater access to local healthcare services, particularly for emergency presentations, theatre procedures and births.

Cr Mammarella said that as the second-fastest-growing municipality in Australia, Melton urgently needed more health services.

"For our current population and the future residents in our new growth areas, it is vital to have better health service options."

LIGHTING CHINESE LANTERN OF LEARNING IN CAROLINE SPRINGS

Melton Leader– 8th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/lighting-chinese-lantern-of-learning-in-caroline-springs/>

More than 12,000 km from China, Melton Shire children are learning the Chinese way of life.

The municipality's first Chinese school, Xinjinshan School, has opened at Caroline Springs College's Brookside campus.

The school's numbers are growing by the day, prompted by a surge in the Chinese population in the west.

School Principal Ivan Chan said there was a high demand for places at the school.

"We've seen that the Chinese population in Melton shire is getting bigger and bigger, and we needed a group to represent the welfare of these people. And Melton Council has strongly supported this idea," Mr Chan said.

"The school will serve the needs for our next generation.

"Students can learn a second language, which is good for their career path. But it's also about community inclusion and engagement - because this school doesn't only open up for Chinese, it opens up for everyone and everybody gets a chance to learn a wonderful language which will be beneficial for the future."

The school runs on Saturdays from 9.30am-12.30pm.

BIG SHOPPING CENTRES WELCOMED BY MELTON MAYOR

Melton Leader– 8th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/big-shopping-centres-welcomed-by-melton-mayor/>

A planned new shopping centre for Toolern will act as a boost to Melton's Woodgrove shopping centre and not a hindrance, says Mayor Justin Mammarella.

The present Melton Township will double in size to nearly 100,000 residents when the massive Toolern estate in Melton South is finished.

With growth also expected in the Rockbank corridor, Cr Mammarella says Melton will need two large shopping centres to cater for residents' needs.

"We feel, if anything ... there will be a higher usage of Woodgrove shopping centre. We're talking about an increase of 40,000 to 60,000 people through the Toolern area and many of those ... will be going to the Woodgrove shopping centre to shop," he said.

"We feel what is on offer in the existing part of Melton, including the High St, will be in high demand as a result of development in Toolern, and we will encourage

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that. I'm also sure there will be many residents in the older part of Melton going to Toolern to shop and work because a lot of this is about job creation in that area."

Now 22,000sq m of retail floor space, the Woodgrove centre is expected to expand to 50,000sq m by 2016, excluding the neighbouring Coburn Central shopping centre.

Queensland Investment Corporation, which owns Woodgrove and nearby Watergardens in Taylors Lakes, wants to attract two department stores, a new supermarket and more shops to Melton.

Cr Mammarella said many residents had spoken to him about the possibility of attracting retail giant Myer to Melton, either at Toolern or Woodgrove.

"I constantly hear from Melton residents that they want different options; in particular, Myer is often mentioned," he said.

"There are also other retail outlets that they find in other areas but not here in Melton."

THEY'RE LEARNING WHILE EARNING

Melton Leader— 7th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/theyre-learning-while-earning/>

The Woolworths Earn & Learn program will see schools and children around the country benefiting from up to \$5 million worth of educational resources.

According to research by retailer Woolworths, teachers and parents rate computing equipment, books and educational DVDs or software as the three most important resources schools need.*

Woolworth's supermarkets director Greg Foran said feedback from the community showed there was a great need for resources.

In response, the Woolworths Community Grants scheme has evolved into Woolworths Earn & Learn and is proudly supported by Leader.

The initial response to the program has been overwhelming, with close to 3000 schools already registered in the first week, Mr Foran said.

Woolworths has partnered with Modern Teaching Aids (MTA), the biggest supplier and distributor of schools equipment in the country, to make a range of more than 7000 products available through the Earn & Learn program.

"We wanted to create a way for all Woolies customers to help schools and kids in their local area," Mr Foran said. "As a community, we can all help support the education of our kids."

The Earn & Learn initiative allows us to assist children and teachers across the country.

* Source: Woolworth's online survey of 805 parents of school-aged children and school staff, January 2011

RESIDENTS WANT FAIR DIP ON RESERVOIR

Melton Leader— 7th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/residents-want-fair-dip-on-reservoir/>

Melton Council will consult key stakeholders about the future of Melton Reservoir, including more public facilities.

The stance comes after a report from a parliamentary intern claimed it has neglected the reservoir for the past 30 years.

The council will receive updates on existing operations and development priorities, and consider funding for pathways, seats and shade.

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Melton West resident Andrew Maclean says the reservoir should also be open for public boating. At present, he drives two hours to Nagambie to use his boat.

"I was told if I wanted to use the Melton Reservoir I would have to join the Melbourne Runabout and Speedboat Club and pay around \$1200 per year," he said. "For the amount of times I take my boat out that equals around \$300 plus running costs each time I put it into the water.

"How can the MRSC hold this monopoly on our reservoir?"

Melton mayor Justin Mammarella said the council would strive to adapt to changed circumstances.

"The reservoir endured a prolonged period of drought, particularly over the past six years, which coincided with the adoption of the Melton Reservoir Development Strategy in 2005," he said.

"Council understands the heightened community interest as a result of current water levels, and will continue to consult with key stakeholders and advocate on behalf of its residents for improved future community outcomes in accessing and using Melton Reservoir."

Cr Sophie Ramsey said council needed to act.

"This has been before, and endorsed by, three sitting councils already," she said. "We need to get on with it and hold this work in high regard for future funding."

DISMAY ON NEW MELTON YOUTH HOME TWIST

Melton Leader – 5th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/dismay-on-new-melton-youth-home-twist/>

A Melton resident fears her fight to get 24-hour supervision at planned youth housing may be under threat after a new planning application was lodged at the Coburns Rd site.

Neighbour Lauren Talbot took a planning application to build 10 units for troubled youths to VCAT in February.

VCAT refused her request but granted several other conditions including some weekend supervision and a 24/7 phone number for a support worker.

However, Ms Talbot fears her hard work may become redundant after Melton Council notified her of a new planning application to subdivide the land into three blocks.

"Does this mean I will lose any considerations made by VCAT - of course it will," Ms Talbot said.

"I've spent so much time and money taking the last application to VCAT ... now I'll have to go through it all again. Common sense tells me that the new planning application will succeed the old one, and now the VCAT orders won't be the same."

But council chief executive Kelvin Tori said the new application for the land did not supersede or render the previous permit for the community care unit's void.

He said the council had not yet ruled on the latest application and that, even if the council or VCAT approved the subdivision, the units could be built before subdivision was completed.

"The land could also ultimately have the benefit of two permits, and it would then be up to the owner to determine which permit to proceed with," Mr Tori said.

"Unless the permit for the community care units expires, it does not become invalid or void."

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Mr Tori said 13 letters had been sent to adjoining owners and occupiers about the application for subdivision. There was no requirement to notify all the residents who objected to the original application.

MOONEE VALLEY

ROAD DEATHS INCREASE

Moonee Valley Leader—9th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/road-deaths-increase/>

An increase in Moonee Valley road fatalities has alarmed the TAC.

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) released statistics on Monday that showed Moonee Valley was now classed a “problem area”, because the number of road deaths had jumped from one to three this year.

These have been pedestrian related incidents, which are the most common cause of road deaths in the north-west municipality.

As previously reported, Moonee Valley police are looking at ways of reducing pedestrian injuries and deaths through a series of awareness campaigns.

The report also highlights that last year the TAC accepted more than 5500 claims involving hospital admissions from people injured in transport accidents - an increase of about 100 more than in 2009.

TAC chief executive officer Janet Dore said the community often ignored the hidden road toll of serious injuries.

“There is no doubt that it is an absolute tragedy when someone is killed on our roads, but we must not forget the other 5,500 Victorians who suffer ongoing physical and mental injuries from transport accidents,” Ms Dore said.

Ms Dore also expressed frustration that the majority of locations listed in the top eight deadly areas are no strangers to road trauma.

“Locals and visitors to these areas need to be aware that we do not ignore these statistics - we use them to help facilitate targeted police enforcement to remove dangerous drivers from the roads,” she said.

“I urge people travelling in these areas to take greater care.”

Ms Dore said that while she was confident Victoria could achieve another record low road toll, there was no time for complacency.

“Road safety is everyone’s problem - we all need to own it and make a conscious effort to drive safely if we’re going to reduce the needless trauma happening on our roads.”

CRIME DATA WORTH WATCHING

Moonee Valley Leader—9th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/crime-data-worth-watching/>

The success of grassroots crime-fighting could be undermined under proposed changes to Neighbourhood Watch, an MP has warned.

Essendon state Labor MP Justin Madden said plans to centralise administration, combined with Victoria Police’s decision to not release localised crime data, would undo the work of local volunteers.

“If it ain’t broke don’t fix it,” Mr Madden said.

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Mr Madden attended the Moonee Valley Neighbourhood Watch district meeting on August 1, where Neighbourhood Watch state president Andrew Brideson briefed local co-ordinators Ron Kennelly, Trevour Sinclair and Ian Hiscock.

The proposed central administration to scrutinise applications for the Baillieu government's community safety grants was also discussed at the meeting. "I fear that the new centralised administration combined with the new community safety grant application process will be used to silence local volunteers' criticism of the government's failure to provide local crime statistics," said Mr Madden. "The recent spate of property damage, exemplified by the petrol bomb attacks on several motor vehicles in Moonee Ponds this week, reinforces the need for local Neighbourhood Watch to be strongly supported by the local community."

Other items discussed included the failure of a Baillieu government election promise to reintroducing street-by-street crime data statistics.

The release was not approved by Victoria Police, which said the policy exposed privacy issues. Ron Kennelly, the Moonee Valley Neighbourhood Watch convener, remained adamant that local crime statistics were "very important".

"It gives the people the confidence that things are not bad," he said.

"Or if there is a problem somewhere, it comes out in the crime stats and we can do something about it."

STAR INGREDIENTS

Moonee Valley Leader— 9th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/star-ingredients/>

From takeaway store kitchens to five-star dishes, Lachlan Diamond just had his first taste of success.

The Strathmore chef recently won the Moonee Valley Foundation Board Apprentice Award after impressing judges with his passion for cooking and his culinary aspirations.

It was only 10 years ago Mr Diamond was deep-frying chicken at the Moonee Ponds KFC.

Today, he is pursuing his Certificate III in Hospitality and Commercial Cookery at Broadmeadows Kangan Institute, with dreams of one day working in Italy.

"What I've found most interesting about cooking is the different products you handle and the amazing things you can put on a plate," he said. "After my studies, I hope to travel to Italy and learn new things from different restaurants. Within two years, I'd like to have completed my European studies and come back to share what I've learnt with everyone else."

The Apprentice Award is a \$2700 grant given to young adults in Moonee Valley who pursue and achieve excellence in a chosen vocation.

Teacher Darryl Selzer said Mr Diamond had been a star student and brought plenty of inspiration to his cooking.

"Lachlan's definitely deserving of this award. He has what it takes to get far in this industry - great passion and love for food."

The Moonee Valley Foundation, established in 1986, aims to provide continuing encouragement and financial incentives for local young adults. Along with the apprentice grant, a principal grant is for adults aged 18-28 who show excellence in their field.

A VCE school motivational award is also offered.

The annual Moonee Valley Foundation awards night was last Friday.

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MOONEE VALLEY PLAYERS DROP \$77 MILLION

Moonee Valley Weekly— 9th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-players-drop-77-million/2251315.aspx>

Moonee Valley gamblers have blown more than \$77 million on electronic gaming machines in the past year, latest figures reveal.

The loss equates to \$874 for each adult in Moonee Valley, or about \$250 more per adult than the state average.

It's also more than \$1.5 million higher than the previous financial year's loss of \$75,473,013.36.

Moonee Valley is also home to the state's fifth-highest revenue-raising pokies venue with players losing \$18,714,501 at Skyways Tavern in Airport West in the past financial year.

To put the figure into perspective, Moonee Valley Council expects to collect \$77 million from its entire rate base in 2011-12.

There are 8.46 gaming machines in Moonee Valley for each 1000 adults.

Victorian InterChurch Gambling Taskforce chairman Mark Zirnsak said the results showed it was clear more needed to be done to help problem gamblers.

"It's absolutely alarming that people are losing as much on these machines as they are paying to local government for services.

"It shows the need for further measures to curb problem gambling, such as people being able to set loss limits, a maximum of a dollar being lost per button press and opening hours changing to 10am, with midnight closing.

"The evidence shows it's people with gambling problems who are there late at night and early in the morning."

MORE ON THE WAY?

Moonee Valley Weekly— 9th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/more-on-the-way/>

There could be more pokies venues in Moonee Valley under State Government amendments to gambling regulations.

Local councillors have expressed caution over a new model that allows venues to manage their own electronic gaming machine (EGM) licences, now managed by Tatts Group and TABCORP.

There are 20 outstanding pokies entitlements up for grabs in Moonee Valley after two venues cut their machine numbers. Moonee Valley Council suspects it will receive more planning permit applications for new gaming premises.

In response, it adopted a Gaming Position Paper last Tuesday that will ask applicants to conduct a social impact survey, allowing the community to have their say about potential gaming venues.

Cr Jim Cusak said the policy was important because Moonee Valley punters spent above average amounts playing the pokies.

"Moonee Valley has a considerably high gaming access and expenditure in comparison to neighbouring municipalities and metropolitan averages," Cr Cusak said. "When the average person in Moonee Valley is spending \$800-900 on machines per year, it tells you something about the level of money that goes into the industry."

There are 11 EGM venue operators across Moonee Valley with 746 poker machines.

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Gamblers Anonymous volunteer and reformed gambler Allan, who did not disclose his surname, said pokies were a “potential death trap” for problem gamblers.

“They’re easy to access. You can walk in there, have a drink, you don’t have to interact with anybody and you’re in your own space and so the process begins,” he said. “Anything that creates awareness about the social impacts of these machines is a great thing, so I commend council on its policy.”

Cr Miriam Gillis said the council’s policy aimed to ensure minimal social and economic impact on the community, discouraged installing gaming machines in disadvantaged areas and minimised risks of exacerbating problem gaming.

ESSENDON STUDENTS LEARN TO WALK THIS WAY

Moonee Valley Weekly– 9th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/essendon-students-learn-to-walk-this-way/2251317.aspx>

Essendon Primary School pupils have 'boarded' Moonee Valley Council's Walking School Bus program.

The school is the latest to join 13 others in the "up and walking" program.

A walking school bus is a group of children who walk to school accompanied by two adults - one "driver" at the front, like Cathy McDonald with Owen (pictured) leading the bus at Essendon North Primary School last week, and one "conductor" at the back.

The program is aimed at increasing physical activity for students and reducing traffic congestion around schools. Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said it was a great way for children to get to school safely while having fun at the same time.

"If you can't join the walking school bus, we'd encourage parents to walk to school with their children."

CHURCHES PUNT ON PM

Moonee Valley Weekly– 9th August 2011

<http://m.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/churches-punt-on-pm/2251314.aspx>

The InterChurch Gambling Taskforce is taking its campaign for pokies reform to Prime Minister Julia Gillard. Representatives of church groups across Moonee Valley and the western suburbs went to Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten's Moonee Ponds office on Thursday, pressing him to take their cause to Canberra. They gave him signed postcards they want sent to Ms Gillard. The postcards outline pokie reform they'd like to see, and at the top of the list is changing legislation so gamblers must set loss limits each time they play. Ms Gillard promised gaming legislation reform shortly after her narrow election victory last year. The churches group also wants to see a limit to the hours gaming venues are open and a reduction, to \$1, in the amount of money at stake for each play. The group has called for a ban on ATMs in pokie venues and wants to rein in marketing by online wagering and sports betting companies. Taskforce chairman Mark Zirnzak said while not a cure-all, the requests would be a start to fixing a growing gambling problem. "They are probably not going to fix problem gaming, but what we need are safeguards. "That is what these are." Mr Shorten acknowledged that gambling was a legitimate pastime that could get out of hand for some people. "When gambling becomes a problem, it doesn't just affect the gambler; it affects their family, their friends, and the whole community. "The churches I met with understand this from first-hand experience. "An average of \$861 is lost to pokies for every resident each year. "That's why our government is working so hard to tackle problem gambling, to give gamblers the tools they need to take control of their own gambling and reduce the rates of gambling addiction in the community."

MOONEE VALLEY APPLAUSE FOR LIBRARIES BACKFLIP

Moonee Valley Weekly– 9th August 2011

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<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-applause-for-libraries-backflip/2251313.aspx>

The state government has made a spectacular back flip on its cuts to library funding, bowing to a vocal public campaign.

More than \$5 million in library funding was pulled last month, but Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell reversed the decision last Thursday, announcing \$6.5 million in additional spending over the next three years.

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said the council welcomed the improvement to recurrent funding while fairer long-term funding arrangements were developed.

"Council's library service will still receive slightly less [about \$11,000, as previously reported] than this year's budgeted amount, but the announcement will provide the opportunity to secure a long-term funding solution for libraries across the state.

"This is great news for Moonee Valley's 57,716 library members who use these vital services to the community."

Mrs Powell said there would be a review of Victorian library services and funding arrangements.

A bipartisan 'libraries ministerial advisory committee' will be re-established to review the role, services and funding of libraries.

Councils will be sent a new agreed funding plan covering 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson said the reinstatement of cut funding was great news, but it failed to address the underlying problems.

"The level of funding has declined over years in real terms and there is no guarantee the Liberals will address that issue," she said.

"We're looking for a whole reassessment of how funding is provided.

"We need some sort of guarantee that funding will increase in a way that keeps pace with growing populations and increases in cost of living.

"The cost of running libraries outstrips the rise in CPI [consumer price index] because of wage costs. We would be really pleased if they would work to address that."

Municipal Association of Victoria president Bill McArthur said the decision reflected the outpouring of community passion for local libraries.

"While the improvement in this year's funding will not meet the full expectation of councils, from next year we will see more substantial progress in the state's recurrent funding commitment."

SUBURBAN BARGAINS APLENTY

Moonee Valley Leader—8th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/property/story/suburban-bargains-aplenty/>

Kensington is an investor "hot spot", according to a ranking of 15,000 suburbs nationwide.

A survey by Your Investment Property magazine found the small suburbs which border Moonee Valley and Melbourne council areas have all the attributes of money-makers.

It was ranked among the top 100 investment areas for properties likely to grow in value.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

12th August 2011



The magazine's editor, Nila Sweeney, said Kensington's historically strong performance in the market and excellent amenities made it a good choice.

"Buyers can get a good deal now on a property that will achieve great growth in the future by choosing the right location," Sweeney said.

"The suburbs that rated best for investment typically had good comparative affordability with neighbouring areas."

Flemington and Travencore also rated in the top 100 for its proximity to the CBD and amenities.

And the numbers seem to back the claim.

Unit prices have only just reached the Melbourne-wide median of \$474,500.

As of the June quarter, the median for Kensington is \$485,000, an increase of 9.3 per cent of its March figure (\$450,000).

According to the REIV, Kensington also recorded a 12.4 per cent increase in its median house price for the June quarter.

The median price is now at \$766,500, well above the Melbourne-wide median and a big improvement on its previous median of \$676,250 for the March quarter.

As of last week, real estate website realestate.com.au showed the cheapest one bed, one bathroom apartment or townhouse in Kensington is selling for about \$350,000. At the high end of the scale, you can pick up a townhouse overlooking Hollard Park, with CDB views, for a cool \$1.1 million.

CITY WEIGHS INTO CHILD CARE CRISIS

Moonee Valley Leader— 8th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/city-weighs-into-child-care-crisis/>

Moonee Valley Council has joined the battle to preserve childcare services across the city.

State Children and Early Childhood Development Minister Wendy Lovell recently announced the Coalition Government would scrap its share of funding for Take-a-Break program in December, after the Federal Government stopped its majority-share funding. A war of words has ensued between the state Coalition and federal Labor governments over who is responsible for funding the service.

Cr Narelle Sharpe said somebody needed to take responsibility because scrapping the program would increase pressure on council resources that were "already bursting at their seams".

"Funding cuts to Wingate Avenue Community Centre, Flemington Neighbourhood House and Kensington Women's Group Childcare Association will close down their childcare services," Cr Sharpe said.

"Where will parents leave these kids? Council's Shuter St and Flemington occasional care centres are already stretched to the limit."

A survey of childcare centres in Moonee Valley found nine out of 10 centres had a "lengthy waiting list".

Wingate Avenue Community Centre's childcare co-ordinator Jan Thorpe said the council support had reinstated the centre's hope for funding.

"We're ecstatic to hear that council is backing our pleas," she said. "Hopefully this will set a precedent for other councils, and they too will support their local centres which provide Take-a-Break childcare."

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The council moved last Tuesday write to federal Childcare Minister Kate Ellis and state Minister Lovell asking for both governments to reintroduce funding for Take-a-Break.

GREEN SEED TAKES OFF

Moonee Valley Leader— 8th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/green-seed-takes-off/>

Ascot Vale Housing Estate residents' environmental initiatives have not gone unnoticed.

The 800-dwelling housing estate began its recycling program only in April, but last week won an award for helping the environment.

The program, run by Wingate Avenue Community Centre and Moonee Valley Council, provided residents with their first recycling bins and taught them to recycle correctly.

The Keeping Australia Beautiful Victoria - Towards Zero Waste award recognises the effort communities put into sustaining their local environment.

Wingate Avenue's environment project worker Paul Collins said the program was well received by residents and had been a great success.

Moonee Valley Mayor John Sipek said residents seized this opportunity with both hands.

"More recycling bins have been added to handle the amounts of recovered material," he said.

"I'm extremely proud that the council and Wingate Avenue Community Centre have been recognised for their work to make Moonee Valley a sustainable city."

Yarra City Council had won Sustainable City of the Year.

Environment and Climate Change Minister Ryan Smith said finalists displayed innovative and sustainable initiatives that would make their local environment a better place.

"The range of initiatives presented by our Victorian finalists highlights the level of commitment Victorians have to forging a more sustainable future for our state," Mr Smith said.

HOP ON ESSENDON'S WALKING BUS

Moonee Valley Leader— 7th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/hop-on-essendons-walking-bus/>

The wheels on the bus went left-right-left when Essendon Primary School students took an active route to school last week.

Students boarded one of Moonee Valley council's 13 walking school buses, which have no seats, lots of feet, an adult driver and a conductor to supervise.

The program aims to increase physical activity and reduce traffic by encouraging students to walk to and from school.

Essendon Primary School assistant principal Leon Leonidas said it was a healthy, fun, cost effective and safe way for students to get to school.

"I am excited about the opportunities this mode of travel gives our students," Mr Leonidas said.

"It will further promote friendships and significantly improve students' understanding of community and the local environment."

Moonee Valley Mayor John Sipek encouraged parents to walk to school with their children if they couldn't join one of the walking school buses, and for schools and parents to contact council for information.

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WYNDHAM

WYNDHAM VALE RENT COSTS RISE

Wyndham Star— 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138305.html>

The cost of renting a property in Wyndham has remained affordable while the price of living in other suburbs continues to rise, according to new figures.

According to statistics released by RUN Property, Australia's largest metropolitan property agency, Wyndham Vale is the only suburb in the municipality that has experienced any rise in rent prices worth mentioning.

The average cost of renting in Wyndham Vale has climbed to \$292.86 a week, just \$5.34 more than last year's average.

Wyndham Vale was the only area from Wyndham that made the list of 45 suburbs.

When compared to Armadale, which has seen an increase of \$36.87 a week in the average cost of renting, Wyndham appears to be travelling smoothly.

Star has previously reported about the lack of rental properties in Wyndham making it difficult for some people to find a home.

RUN Property CEO, Rob Farmer, said rising rents could actually be a good thing for Wyndham, as it encourages more people to buy investment properties.

"Rental growth has been strong and consistent over the past 18 months, so it surprises me that more investors are not taking advantage of the dip in sales activity to secure their next bargain investment," Mr Farmer said.

"Many properties are being re-let during tenants' vacating periods, so they never actually become vacant.

"A good property manager will advertise the property for rent as soon as the existing tenant gives notice so that the landlord does not miss any income."

Mr Farmer said that tenants in places like Wyndham could be "staying put" because research continued to show that rent increases are greatest when tenants move out and the property is advertised for lease.

WYNDHAM'S 'DISHEARTENING' BATTLE AGAINST POKIES

Wyndham Weekly— 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndhams-disheartening-battle-against-pokies/2253802.aspx>

The Italian Sports Club of Werribee's successful bid for more electronic gaming machines has been described by a Wyndham councillor as disheartening.

The state's gambling regulator last week approved the club's application for 13 extra machines.

It comes after Wyndham Council opposed the club's application for more pokies on the grounds the anticipated social and economic impact would be detrimental to the community. The proposed expansion of the club's gaming and bistro areas was knocked back by the council in June after it wanted the number of pokies increased to 70.

Cr Cynthia Mason said the decision was a disappointment but vowed to renew the fight against more pokies in the most vulnerable areas of Wyndham.

"We have to be more prepared and have a stronger policy and we need to stop being on the defensive. If we are going to lose these battles for more EGMs then we need to know where the most suitable places they can go to."

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The latest Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation data shows the existing 57 EGMs at the club netted \$5.7million in 2010-11.

The club successfully argued to the commission that the revenue raised from the extra machines was essential to fund new facilities, including squash courts and a synthetic soccer pitch.

In its findings, the commission cited the benefits to the community as a result of the expansion outweighed the risks. The approval will help Werribee City soccer club's attempts to join Football Federation Victoria's premier league. The City, part of the sports club, has made waves in soccer circles with the recent signings of ex-Socceroos Craig Moore, Danny Tiatto and Joe Spiteri. Sports club general manager Robert Marino did not return the Weekly's calls.

A VCGR hearing next month will decide whether Werribee Football Club should be allowed to increase the number of machines, from 65 to 75, at its Hoppers Crossing venue.

LIBRARY FUNDING BACKFLIP WELCOMED

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/library-funding-backflip-welcomed/2253806.aspx>

Wyndham mayor John Menegazzo has welcomed the state government's back flip on library funding cuts, declaring the result a win for bipartisan council support.

There was unanimous support at a Municipal Association of Victoria meeting last month to oppose funding cuts that would have resulted in an estimated \$5.7million loss in spending on libraries over the next four years.

With councils across the state refusing to sign the funding agreement, Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell last week hastily announced a review and a

new funding scheme that would inject \$6.5million into libraries over the next three years.

While Cr Menegazzo said the turnaround was just a start in the quest for more funding, he was pleased that the concerns of local governments were acknowledged.

"We came from a position of strength," he said.

"It shows what you can do when we are all singing from the same hymn sheet."

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson said the reinstatement of funding was good news but failed to address underlying problems.

"The level of funding has declined over years in real terms. There is no guarantee that the Liberals will address that issue," she said.

MAV president Cr Bill McArthur said the outpouring of community passion for libraries since the initial decision had resulted in an improvement in recurrent funding while fairer long-term funding arrangements were developed.

"It's vital that we protect the ongoing provision of diverse library services and programs that are so valued by Victorian communities and this outcome brings us one step closer," he said.

The MAV has advised councils to sign the new two-year funding agreement in good faith that a thorough review will take place.

SHEDS' IMPORTANCE FOR POINT COOK HAMMERED HOME

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/sheds-importance-for-point-cook-hammered-home/2253783.aspx>

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What goes on behind the walls of men's sheds is, simply, men's business. With more than 550 men's sheds around Australia, Point Cook is earmarked as the next suburb to have its own 'men's space'.

Recognising there was a vital need to fill a void for socially isolated, unemployed or older, retired men, Point Cook resident Bev Morrissey set about the task of exploring the possibility of a Men's Shed in the suburb.

Having approached Wyndham deputy mayor Bob Fairclough, she believes the establishment of a shed will give older men the chance to socialise with other like-minded locals.

The shed will seek to provide men with the opportunity to meet up with each other, have somewhere to chat and do woodwork, metalwork, create toys or work on community projects.

Mrs Morrissey said there were many groups for women but nothing for men.

"The men are left out of a lot of things," she said. "They have shifted out of their homes to move to Point Cook and don't have their garages to work in anymore, so this will give them a space of their own.

"Men need something as much as women do."

Hobsons Bay Men's Shed president Bill McPherson said the sheds gave men something to do and helped them avoid ill-health and depression.

The next step in the process was finding a suitable space, securing funding and signing up members. Mrs Morrissey said the Royal Australian Air Force base would be approached about leasing one of its old buildings.

She said the national men's shed network preferred new sheds to be started in established buildings because the cost of building a new premise was too high.

A Men's Shed in neighbouring Werribee opened last year and has already proven popular with a growing list of members.

Since 2007, Men's Sheds have provided a space where men can contribute to their community and connect with friends, as well as somewhere they can address and talk about health issues, in an atmosphere of old-fashioned mateship.

POLICE WHEEL WARNING

Wyndham Star— 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138309.html>

Wyndham car owners are being warned to keep an eye on their vehicles as a number of cars have been left without wheels in the space of just five days.

On four separate occasions from 25 to 29 July people were left with nowhere to go after their tyres were taken.

The thieves used bricks on each occasion to keep the cars in place while taking the wheels.

A police spokesperson said all of the cars were targeted while they were parked at their owner's homes. Anyone with information is being asked to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

ROAD WORKS TO END

Wyndham Star— 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138307.html>

Despite being slowed down by heavy rain storms earlier in the year, one of Werribee's biggest road reconstructions is almost complete.

The \$1.23 million Tower Rd reconstruction, between the Princes Highway and Goegan St, is expected to be finished by the end of this month.

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The works included the reconstruction of the road pavement, replacement of the kerb and channel, line marking and nature strip reinstatement works.

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo said that segment of Tower Rd was reaching the end of its life and needed reconstruction.

"Tower Rd is an important collector road, used by residents and motorists heading to nearby motels and businesses," Cr Menegazzo said.

"While the works did suffer minor delays due to inclement weather, this project was necessary as the traffic volumes have been steadily increasing, along with our population."

RADIO GOES GAY

Wyndham Star– 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138295.html>

The western suburbs of Melbourne will finally have their own radio show dedicated to gay and lesbian content with a new segment being launched this week.

GO WEST, a new show that will be beamed into resident's cars and homes from 88.9 WYNFM's Werribee studio, had its first show last Sunday.

The two hour weekly program airs from 8pm-10pm on Sunday nights and is hosted by Allan with regular panellists David, Michael and Noel.

It features panel discussions, interviews and news affecting gays, lesbians and bisexuals with a focus on the western suburbs.

Host Allan said it was about time Melbourne's traditional working class suburbs had a radio station that catered to the needs of gay and lesbian listeners.

"Wyndham and Melbourne's West is the fast growing region in Australia and the number of gays and lesbians, bisexuals and transgender is growing rapidly as singles and couples take advantage of the affordable housing and lifestyle," Allan said.

"I grew up in Laverton in the 1970s and you dare not come out or even show any gay or lesbian inclination or you were beaten up."

Allan said public opinion was shifting in support of gay and lesbian rights and equality, as evident by the establishment of Hobsons Bay Council's new Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee.

"I left the area to be me and get career opportunities and have been gay all my life, and now that I've returned to the area, I feel it's time to give the gay/lesbian community a voice. Sadly, I don't feel comfortable enough to identify myself by my full name", he said.

MIRIAM'S MAGICAL JOURNEY

Wyndham Star– 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138296.html>

Few people could work for 40 years at the same place and still leave work every day with a smile on their face.

But for Miriam Dawe, who has almost been part of the furniture at Wyndham City Council since she started there in 1971 that is exactly how she feels.

Ms Dawe arrived at the council to help with the switch of the telephone exchange from manual to automatic.

Four decades later and she is still there, despite the continuous changes in technology.

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Ms Dawe can still remember the arrival of the computer at the council offices.

“They wouldn’t let on what this great new invention was but we were told we couldn’t miss the meeting where they were going to unveil it,” Ms Dawe said.

“The way they sold it to us was that it was going to be the best thing since sliced bread.”

Ms Dawe has also seen Wyndham’s population boom from around 7500 people to more than 150,000.

“You could see it growing,” she said.

“It didn’t happen overnight, but you could see people continuously coming in.”

As far as retirement goes, Ms Dawe insists she has no intention of slowing down just yet.

“Wyndham has been good to me,” she said.

“I realise that I can’t keep working forever, but I think I’ll stay for as long as I enjoy coming to work every day and while I can still contribute.”

NEW PARK WEBSITE

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138306.html>

Wyndham City has launched a new website aimed at making it easier for tourists to visit the municipality.

Werribee South Caravan Park, which is owned by Wyndham City but operated privately, now has its own website.

Over the past four years, the Werribee South Caravan Park has undergone improvements, including the installation of four new cabins.

Iramoo Ward Councillor Heather Marcus said the Werribee South foreshore was one of many local attractions that made the caravan park so popular.

“Having an easily accessible website will allow people to complete the online booking form their convenience and find out more about the accommodation available, as well as the caravan park itself,” Cr Marcus said.

“The caravan park attracts people from across the country and the world. A recent study showed the largest source of visitors is Victoria at 47 per cent, followed closely by interstate visitors at 44 per cent and international visitors at 9 per cent.”

SUPPORT FOR CARERS IN WEST 'FALLS SHORT'

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/support-for-carers-in-west-falls-short/2253805.aspx>

A Wyndham mother has slammed the new National Carer Strategy for not going far enough to improve the lives of carers in the west.

While Carers Australia tentatively welcomed the four-year \$60million initiative launched by Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon last week, Werribee South resident Aurora Van Mourik said there were still plenty of questions to be answered.

Mrs Van Mourik cares for her nine-year old daughter, Marlee, who suffers from autism as well as a rare genetic disorder.

The family's situation is made even more complex by Aurora's bipolar disorder which requires her husband, Dick, to fulfil the role as her carer.

“It's a really difficult situation, and the only way we survive is to work as a team,” Mrs Van Mourik said.

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The challenges faced by the Van Mourik family are compounded by a lack of practical support networks for carers in Wyndham who may be feeling the pinch.

"The need for respite services or specific health programs tailored for carers is huge," she said.

"What if my husband goes away for a month, as he is doing this week, where is the support then?"

"There is also the ever-present danger that a carer such as my husband can neglect his own health, which can deteriorate very quickly when you are caring for someone with a mental illness."

Under the new strategy, eligibility for the carers allowance for type 1 diabetes has been expanded, while better access has been granted to the carer supplement payment and one-off payments to assist during difficult times.

Carers Australia president Tim Moore said that while the new strategy recognised the work carers did, not all of their funding prayers had been answered. "Obviously the needs of carers are quite significant and we weren't expecting any one strategy would address all situations. We'll continue to advocate for governments to meet the needs of carers."

While Mrs Van Mourik agreed the strategy was a step in the right direction, it seemed only a few boxes were ticked.

"It appears that only a few specialty areas were addressed. For us, we are now just hoping that the shortfalls from this strategy can be covered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme, that's really our last hope."

WYNDHAM BUSINESS AWARDS: INNOVATION SETS FIRM POLES APART

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-business-awards-innovation-sets-firm-poles-apart/2253798.aspx>

Engineering firm Vertech Hume has given seven refugees more than just a job - it has given them a chance to improve their lives and settle into the Wyndham community.

For more than 12 months the Werribee business, which makes concrete poles for power suppliers, has provided its workers with Saturday morning English classes, which they are paid to attend.

The workforce includes six Karen men and one Cambodian man who have spent up to 20 years in refugee camps and are looking to build new lives in Australia.

Vertech Hume director Don Hume said that while the classes helped the men to develop a better understanding of their work, it was their families and communities which benefited most from the lessons.

"[The employees'] kids come to the lessons and then [the men] are going home and helping their wives, who are often left behind, to learn English," Mr Hume said.

"They are supporting the community."

The English classes are subsidised by the state government, which pays for a teacher.

The program recently attracted the attention of a WA television company which filmed a documentary about the lessons.

Mr Hume said the difference in the employees since starting the English classes was significant.

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"The contrast between when they first arrived and after the English lessons is just enormous. When they came here they had their eyes down and they were absolutely terrified they would make a mistake.

"Now, they are contributing and making suggestions. It is a huge benefit all round and it has been a terrific experience for us."

The English lessons are not the only thing Veritech Hume has to be proud of.

The company has developed a world-first manufacturing process to create concrete poles.

Mr Hume and his brother Graeme took 18 years to develop the process and are now able to make 15 poles a day.

HISTORIC FIND

Wyndham Star— 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138308.html>

Historical artefacts possibly dating as far back as 1895 have been found dumped in the Werribee River.

Two large bluestone blocks which are believed to be old pillars from the front of an old Werribee house, were found in the river last month.

The house they belonged to was Manor House, which was built in 1895 and destroyed by fire around 1960.

The mansion was built by Captain Percy Chirnside, the son of Thomas Churnside, who built Werribee Mansion.

Alex Smart from the Werribee River Association said the blocks were discovered after heavy storms in January washed away some of the vegetation covering them up.

"The house was destroyed by fire in the 1960s and obviously some stuff was dumped in the river," Mr Smart said.

"It looks like they just rolled them down the hill into the river."

The Werribee River Association called on Melbourne Water to help them remove the heavy blocks and a crane was eventually brought in to bring them to the banks of the river.

"The Werribee River Association and the Historical Society are working with the Wyndham City Council to create a display for these historic artefacts," Mr Smart said.

"You really have to admire the workmanship on these blocks; I probably couldn't do it with modern machinery, let alone a hammer and chisel."

Manor House was originally located on what is now the corner Wattamolla Ave and Nadda Court in Werribee.

NEW CRICKET CLUB FOR TARNEIT LOCALS

Wyndham Star— 10th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138314.html>

Tarneit's newly formed cricket club is likely to field at least two teams this season, in a major boost to local cricket and the growing Wyndham suburb.

The Tarneit Cricket Club is the first sports club to be established in the suburb and will cater for the rapidly rising population in Tarneit and neighbouring suburbs.

The Titans will field at least one team in the Williamstown and Districts mat competition, but also hope to have at least one team in the Western Suburbs Churches Cricket Association.

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The club will use Thomas Carr College's oval for the season and is working with Wyndham Council to secure a home ground.

Club president Sam Singh said the Tarneit community would reap the benefits of having a local cricket club.

"I believe that a community sports club is essential to provide a platform for people to building stronger communities," he said.

"We are not reinventing the wheel but if you see some of the older suburbs, community sports clubs add a lot of value to everyday life of residents," he said.

"Having a lack of infrastructure in Tarneit prevents people getting together and enjoying the community spirit.

"I hope that Tarneit Cricket Club will enable them to overcome the barriers and build stronger bonds within the community."

Singh also hoped the club would help break cultural barriers that come with a living in a diverse community consisting of many new migrant families.

"Most of the people of Tarneit have moved from other suburbs ... therefore there is a strong need for them to enjoy outdoors and make friends," he said.

"Tarneit Cricket Club is a family-oriented club. We will be involving families by organising family cricket days, which will encourage female and kid's involvement."

The club will build partnerships with local schools and to get a junior program up and running. It also plans to involve its juniors in Cricket Victoria programs.

WYNDHAM DRIVES ADVOCACY FOR INCLUSION

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-drives-advocacy-for-inclusion/2253789.aspx>

Community groups have welcomed Wyndham Council's new advocacy strategy aimed at providing a more focused approach to influencing actions by state and federal governments.

The strategy - shaped by a month-long exhibition that attracted 20 submissions from residents and community groups - outlines key advocacy issues for Wyndham.

Wyndham Transport Advocacy Committee chairman Jim Giddings said the initiative was a proactive approach in highlighting Wyndham's needs to those that hold the purse strings.

"The other tiers of government have been the ones to label us as the fastest growing municipality, so they need to come to the party with the appropriate funding and infrastructure, we've been left behind a bit in that aspect.

"This strategy will be vital in helping us get our point across even more effectively."

Wyndham mayor John Menegazzo said the new approach was a first among local governments.

Cr Menegazzo said it was a necessity for the state's fastest growing municipality.

"This strategy will ensure our advocacy efforts are focused highlights the highest priority issues for Wyndham residents and outlines necessary actions to be undertaken," he said.

As part of the strategy, the council will introduce a director of advocacy.

This move was welcomed by Wyndham Community Education Centre chief executive Jennie Barrera.

"The fact that there is a role now would help bring about a much more focused approach in the lobbying for new infrastructure," Ms Barrera said.

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Mr Giddings said a major focus of WTAC's submissions was to request a more educational role in advising residents how they could be involved in cracking down on the destructive hoon driving culture.

POINT COOK COLLEGE CAR CHAOS UNSOLVED

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/point-cook-college-car-chaos-unsolved/2253786.aspx>

A severe parking shortage at Point Cook College continues to frustrate parents, as Wyndham Council and the school search for a solution.

As reported in the Weekly in May, parents are concerned the chaos caused by the lack of spaces will result in a serious injury to children.

They said congestion outside the school was terrible, with many parents double parking along Tom Roberts Parade and Ponsford Drive.

Some parents have even questioned whether the school, which opened last year, had been built in the wrong place.

Cheree Robinson, who raised concerns about the parking three months ago, said she had not seen any improvement at the P-9 College.

"Nothing has changed. People are still struggling to get a spot near the school and are parking illegally. Council has started fining people who are parking illegally but it is not enough to fix the problem."

Ms Robinson said she would like the council to create a drop-off zone or speak to parents about their parking habits.

Council's chief executive officer, Kerry Thompson, said it could not do much to improve parking and was waiting to hear from the school about a possible trial of a drop-off zone.

"Wyndham staff have spoken to the school about the possibility of a trial pick-up and drop-off section in Ponsford Drive and the school was to advise council officers where the zone should be located. Wyndham City is not in a position to provide additional car parking space or carry out works around the school site as we do not own the land. "

The Weekly's calls to Point Cook College were not returned. However, an Education Department spokesman said the school was working with parents to remind them to do the right thing when taking children to and from school. "The school does have parking options nearby and has communicated its expectations that parents should obey local traffic laws at all times."

LINK TRAILS BETWEEN SUBURBS, SAYS RIDER

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/link-trails-between-suburbs-says-rider/2253792.aspx>

A point Cook cyclist is hoping Wyndham Council will use its new bicycle network strategy to create another cycling route from Point Cook to Werribee.

Last month, Catherine Ryan told the Weekly she feared a cyclist could be hurt or killed travelling from Point Cook to Werribee via Sneydes Road.

She said the road was unsafe because it was used by large vehicles, was the direct path to construction sites and had a narrow bridge.

Last week, Ms Ryan said she would rather see cyclists using the Skeleton Creek and Federation trails to travel between the two suburbs, but this was not possible because the trails do not connect.

She hopes the council's bicycle strategy will include plans to link them.

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"If they are not going to be providing safe routes, people will just be riding on the unsafe route which I think is concerning."

Ms Ryan also hopes the council will include bike lanes and cycle paths when planning new roads, instead of adding them years later.

Mayor John Menegazzo said he was confident the strategy would allow the council to make Wyndham bicycle friendly and address infrastructure problems.

He said the bicycle network would be developed with the help of Parks Victoria, Bicycle Victoria, the Growth Areas Authority and developers.

"This strategy will allow us to develop a much more cohesive system of bicycle paths, fill in missing links and expand the network where necessary," he said.

AUTISTIC SCHOOL: PARENTS RALLY FOR SUPPORT

Wyndham Weekly– 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/autistic-school-parents-rally-for-support/2253794.aspx>

The state government has been accused of being "glib" after saying it understands the frustration felt by parents of children with autism who are still waiting for news of a specialist secondary school promised for Melbourne's west.

Western Autistic School at Laverton and Niddrie caters only for children in prep to grade 3.

Western suburbs' parents, some of whom have been forced to move home because their children have to leave school at the end of grade 3, this week rallied to put pressure on the government.

James Martin, a spokesman for Education Minister Martin Dixon, said the government understood parents' frustration.

"We understand the west has previously been overlooked when it comes to the provision of services for children with disabilities and children with autism.

"The government is committed to rectifying this situation and ... is working with parents and the school community to achieve a positive outcome as a matter of priority."

Danny Sorbello, whose son Dante will be forced to leave school at the end of the year, said parents wanted definitive answers.

"It's more than disappointing that the government is taking so long to release its review into autism education in the west. It's not helped by the glib response from the minister's office that displays a lack of awareness of parents' stress."

"Parents need to make decisions about their kids' schooling and for many parents that means moving house to get closer to a suitable school for their kids and this delay is adding to that stress."

On Monday, Mr Sorbello met Western Metropolitan Greens MLC Colleen Hartland, who urged the government to listen to parents and not leave families in limbo.

LAND OUT WEST TIPPED TO DRY UP

Wyndham Leader– 10th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/land-out-west-tipped-to-dry-up-fbready/>

Within 30 years there will be no land left to buy in Wyndham and Melton, and Tarneit will be Melbourne's biggest suburb.

Matthew Deacon, from researcher's id consulting, said population forecasting would be a "guessing game" beyond 2036, with most land expected to have been developed.

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"Based on the zoned land that we know of, we should be able to cater to 2041, but post-2041 there will be no land left in Wyndham and not much left in Melton," he said.

"Beyond 2041 there will be a bit of land in the south-west, some in Sunbury and a little bit around Beveridge but that's it."

Tarneit will be the city's largest suburb by 2031 with a population of 74,932.

Wollert in Melbourne's north will experience the city's largest growth, up 5719 per cent from 871 people to 50,685 over the next 20 years.

Mr Deacon said "more infrastructures must go into the west to cater for the huge growth".

"There's no question councils will have to spend money and work a lot in these areas and no doubt they will rely on State Government money for things such as rail improvements," he said.

Mr Deacon said in the past 10 years there had been a "real investment push in the west" and the stigma associated with the western suburbs was beginning to diminish.

"Melbourne's growth over the past 10 years has been due to a lot of external migration from overseas and interstate and these people don't have these prejudices about Melbourne, which locals have," he said.

RAMADAN DINNER HELPS DISPEL MYTHS ABOUT ISLAM

Wyndham Weekly— 10th August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/ramadan-dinner-helps-dispel-myths-about-islam/2253793.aspx>

A Ramadan dinner has helped bridge the gap between Wyndham's Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Last Sunday night's dinner, hosted by Hoppers Crossing group Youth Victoria, was attended by about 500 people.

Organiser Rashid Alshakshir said the event helped people understand about Muslim customs and beliefs.

"A lot of people I spoke to that were not Muslim said they learnt things they didn't know about Islam. We focused on the basics and a lot of people went home with an understanding of what the basics of Islam were," he said.

Mr Alshakshir said the dinner gave non-Muslims a chance to talk to women wearing burqas, which helped dispel stereotypes and myths.

"It was a good opportunity for people to see women in burqas and go up to them and talk to them face-to-face."

Among attendees were members of Victoria and federal police, Wyndham councillors and Western Metropolitan Region MP Colleen Hartland. Ms Hartland had invited the group to meet with her again to discuss ways to bridge the gap between the two communities.

HOON DRAG BRAG

Wyndham Star— 9th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/308/story/138207.html>

A Facebook page boasting about the hoon culture in Wyndham has been set up just days after the ninth death on the municipality's roads so far this year.

The page, entitled "Oh you're from Werribee? 'excuse me while I do a burnout'," has almost 700 members who regularly share photos of themselves driving dangerously.

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It comes as industry experts claim the key to solving the hoon crises in Wyndham is to re-educate drivers, not to fix every road.

The road toll has now reached nine, almost double the number of people killed in Wyndham for the whole of 2010.

At a community forum held last month to try and solve the hoon epidemic, fierce debate was caused when some people in attendance suggested that low quality roads could be why there are so many more fatal accidents in Wyndham than neighbouring municipalities.

Norm Robinson, whose son was killed in a car crash, said road conditions could be just as important as driver mentality.

"Fix the roads, fix the drivers and then you'll be closer to fixing the problem," Mr Robinson said.

Captain of the Point Cook Ambulance Station, Brett Parker, said roads needed to be looked at as a contributing factor.

"The number of accidents that we're going to and the problems we're having with black spots around this municipality, we need to have a serious look to see what we are doing to address those problems," Mr Parker said.

"The volumes of traffic that we're getting in this municipality that are increasing every month and every year and the main arterial roads around this municipality are carrying volumes of traffic than they're not designed to do."

But Chairperson of the Wyndham Transport Advisory Committee, Jim Giddings, told Star that people needed to adapt to the conditions of the roads.

"With that particular accident in Werribee South, speed was the main contributing factor, I'm led to believe," Mr Giddings said.

"The onus is always on the driver to suit the conditions they are facing, and that includes the quality of the road.

Wyndham Mayor, Cr John Menegazzo, said the council was doing its bit to improve problem roads.

"If we could wave a magic wand and solve all of our road management problems we would, but reality is we can't do that," Cr Menegazzo said.

"Bill Weatherly (Wyndham's police Inspector) spoke and I think he's got some real problems with Werribee South and we acknowledge that."

WIN ON WERRIBEE POKIES BID

Wyndham Leader— 9th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/win-on-werribee-pokies-bid/>

The state's gambling regulator has approved the Italian Sports Club of Werribee's application for 13 more electronic gaming machines.

Wyndham Council had opposed the application, saying the machines' social and economic impact would be detrimental to the community.

Councillors voted in June to reject the Heath Rd club's plans to expand its gaming and bistro areas and increase its machines to 70.

Ultimately, the expansion decision will be made by the state planning tribunal after the council failed to rule within the required 60 days.

Cr Cynthia Manson told the meeting she was taking a conscience vote.

"I'm trying to find a way to prevent an increase of electronic gaming machines in this community," she said.

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The club's \$6.8 million master plan includes new soccer change rooms and a grandstand with four function rooms overlooking Galvin Park for the Werribee City Soccer Club.

Sports Club general manager Robert Marino told the Victorian Commission of Gambling Regulation that the facilities were essential to the soccer club's ambitions to join the Football Federation Victoria's premier league.

The sports club also planned to build new squash, tennis, netball/basketball courts and a synthetic soccer pitch.

Mr Marino successfully argued that this would not be possible without revenue from additional pokies.

The commission found that the risk of harm from the pokies outweighed the benefits the revenue would bring.

Next month the commission will hear the Werribee Tigers Football Club's bid to increase the number of machines at its Hoppers Crossing venue from 65 to 75.

The football club is expected to argue funds generated by the 10 extra machines at The Tigers Clubhouse will pay for \$10 million worth of improvements to the club's home ground, Chirnside Park and revive its home finals hopes.

INFORMAL VOTES HIGH IN GILLARD'S OWN SEAT

Wyndham Leader— 9th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/informal-votes-high-in-gillards-own-seat/>

Prime Minister Julia Gillard's seat of Lalor, which includes Wyndham, recorded the third highest percentage of informal votes at the last federal election.

Researchers at the Museum of Australian Democracy reviewed voting behaviour for the federal and state elections.

The informal vote in Lalor was 6.24 per cent, just behind Calwell, which includes Broadmeadows, and Keilor (6.53 per cent) and Gorton, including Melton and part of Truganina (6.71 per cent). At last year's state election, Niddrie had the highest percentage of informal votes, at 8.31 per cent.

Museum acting director Andrew Harper said the number of Australians who did not have their say at the ballot box was surprising.

"When you combine voter turnout with the number of informal votes, the number of people who are not registered and those who choose not to submit a donkey vote, ... you could have around a quarter of the voting population not having their say," he said.

ROAD TOLL UP TO 10 IN WYNDHAM

Wyndham Leader— 8th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/road-toll-up-to-10-in-wyndham/>

Wyndham suffered its 10th road fatality of the year at Laverton North last week.

And two drivers were injured in a head-on car collision at Werribee while two pedestrians were hurt in a hit-and-run at Hoppers Crossing.

All were taken to hospital.

The city's road toll for the first half of this year is now double that for the whole of last year.

Many Leader readers sent emails last week on ways to help prevent road collisions in response to a forum organised by local police last month to find ways to get the road safety message out.

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In the latest fatality, on August 1, a truck crashed into the back of another truck on Boundary Rd near Marwen Drive just before 9am, killing the driver of the rear truck, a Craigieburn man, aged 40.

Two days later, a Werribee man, 32, was trapped for about 45 minutes with leg fractures after a crash on the Duncans Rd overpass about 9.40pm.

A Werribee woman, 28, from the other car was injured.

On Saturday, two Tarneit women, 18 and 29, were hit by a car as they walked on a dirt path alongside Tarneit Rd in Hoppers Crossing at 4.40am.

The car did not stop.

Police continue to investigate a fatal collision on Forsyth Rd in Hoppers Crossing on July 28, at 8.30pm.

Two cars hit a pedestrian, a Seabrook man, 56, about 100m north of Industrial Ave.

The second car did not stop.

A Point Cook man, 31, took himself to Werribee police station the morning after the collision.

No charges had been laid last week.

WERRIBEE HOSPITAL DISTRESS

Title of New source– 1st August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/werribee-hospital-distress/>

A Hoppers Crossing mother is calling on other Wyndham parents to go straight to the Royal Children's Hospital with sick or injured children after a bad experience at Werribee Mercy Hospital.

Joanne Dodsley told the Leader she was forced to drive her injured one-year-old daughter to the Royal Children's Hospital in Parkville after being told by Werribee hospital staff they could not treat her child's gaping head wound.

Mrs Dodsley said her daughter Courtney fell at a playground and hit her head on the base of a water fountain on Monday afternoon last week.

The distraught mother pulled off her shirt to stop Courtney's profusely bleeding forehead, rushed home and drove to the Werribee hospital's emergency department.

"We waited there for three hours," Mrs Dodsley said.

"Once we got through, they said to me they didn't have the facilities to stitch her up at the time as they believed her head needed to be stitched rather than glued."

She said she was told to go back at 10.30pm (it was 5.30pm) or she could try Sunshine Hospital.

She said she was told that her daughter could not eat in case she needed to be sedated later.

"You can't starve a one-year-old and pull her out of her bed at night," she said.

"She had this gaping hole in her head. I was very distressed. It was supposed to be an emergency. They didn't even check if she had concussion."

Mrs Dodsley said she took Courtney to the Royal Children's Hospital where she was assessed and her wound immediately glued.

She said she would make an official complaint and wanted to warn other parents.

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Mercy Health south western health services executive director Richard Ainley said the treatment recommended by doctors required Courtney to not eat beforehand and so it could not be provided more quickly.

“We do sympathise with parents for the distress that waiting for care with a sick or injured child can cause,” he said.

“When more specialist treatment is required, we will transfer children to larger facilities such as the Royal Children’s Hospital or Sunshine Hospital.

“Each year we care for more than 10,000 children and this represents more than a quarter of all emergency department presentations.”

He said Mrs Dodsley’s complaint would be fully investigated.

RESIDENTS DEMAND TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT WERRIBEE INTERSECTION

Wyndham Leader– 5th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/residents-demand-traffic-lights-at-werribee-intersection/>

Residents have called for the installation of traffic lights at the intersection near a planned medical centre opposite the Wyndham Civic Centre on Princes Highway.

Wyndham Council last week approved the centre, on the corner of Wattle Ave, despite receiving 80 objections to the original plans.

The developer, Wyndham Property Holdings Pty Ltd, agreed to reduce the operating hours of the centre from 24 hours to 7am to 10pm, seven days a week.

It also agreed to contribute \$150,000 towards the design and construction of traffic management measures either at the intersection or at a location between Sneydes Rd and Cherry St.

The company is directed by Rosa Di Natale, wife of prominent Werribee businessman Aldo Di Natale.

Objector Paul Doolan said the intersection was “screaming out for traffic lights ... at nine in the morning, traffic from Duncans Rd banks back to Wattle Ave and we residents simply can’t get out”.

Mr Doolan said it took him 20 minutes to reach his daughter’s house on the other side of the highway because traffic meant he had to use the freeway and the Hoppers Crossing exit to get there.

He said he was concerned traffic lights would not be installed because the council meeting was told that the portion of Princes Highway was not a VicRoads priority.

Another objector, Richard O’Connor, also said traffic lights were needed at the intersection.

He was pleased the centre’s hours had been reduced.

“It’s not ideal but it’s a hell of a lot better than what was initially proposed,” he said.

ACROSS THE REGION

OPEN SPACES TO SHRINK AS MELBOURNE GROWS

The Age– 8th August 2011

http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/open-spaces-to-shrink-as-melbourne-grows-20110807-1ihpr.html?from=age_sb

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Melburnians will have less room to kick the footy, walk the dog or take personal training sessions in coming years as population pressure squeezes the city's cherished public open spaces.

A ground-breaking report released today by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council warns that public open space, such as local parks, gardens and public golf courses will have to cater for communities swelling by more than 1500 new residents a week.

"Public open space per capita is likely to decrease over time for almost all municipalities," the report concluded. It looked at 29 metropolitan councils.

Population growth in areas such as Bayside, Brimbank, Glen Eira and Moonee Valley had already exceeded population projections for 2016, the report noted. "The community perceives that Melbourne's increasing population will result in a loss of quantity and quality of public open space," the report commissioned by the state government found.

"Without the retention and creation of public open space on both public land and local council land, public open space per capita will decrease over time for almost all municipalities in the investigation area."

The report recommends the Baillieu government prepare a "metropolitan open space policy and strategy that provides a long-term plan for public open space" and maintains "an open space inventory" to keep track of open space.

Open space was defined in the Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation report as "those areas of public land and local council land that have an accepted and ongoing community use for outdoor recreation and informal activities and that are

freely accessible to the public". It did not include land zoned as green wedge or farming and rural conservation.

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council member Ian Harris said community responses to the inquiry indicated "a strong feeling that open space is essential to the liveability of Melbourne".

Mr Harris said public open space should be considered mandatory infrastructure like schools and hospitals. "There is a lot of research now around the world linking open space to community health, to child development. It is quite critical in terms of the liveability of communities," he said.

VicHealth acting chief executive John Fitzgerald said open space was a key factor for healthy living. "Public open space is one of the essential ingredients of a healthy city and a healthy population," he said.

Mr Fitzgerald said it was particularly important where backyards had made way for larger homes or subdivisions.

The report recorded 22,360 hectares of public open space inside Melbourne's urban boundary across the 29 councils, but because the study was the first of its kind it was unable to say whether the amount of public open space was increasing or decreasing.

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