

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

13TH MAY 2011



This is the 2nd edition of LeadWest's News Summary. Much of the past weeks news with direct mention of Melbourne's west is focused on response to the Victorian Budget. You may well have already seen these articles, but here they are in a handy consolidated format.

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BRIMBANK

WELCOME REBATE FOR BRIMBANK FAMILIES

Brimbank Leader – 11th May 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/welcome-rebates-for-brimbank-families/>

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LOCAL community agencies hope a boost to mental health services in this year's state Budget and discounts to assist low-income families will help those worst off in Brimbank.

New funding announced last week will give mental health patients four beds at the Sunshine Hospital, providing access to acute and clinical mental-health care.

Headspace services will benefit from a \$6 million boost, although it has not been confirmed if Sunshine's facility is one of them.

Brimbank Council administrator Peter Lewinsky said the council was happy with electricity concessions and a fee subsidy to make kindergarten in the year before school free for low-income families.

He was also happy with cuts to stamp duty for first-home buyers and money for protective-service officers at railway stations and a program to curb alcohol-related violence among young people.

Community West executive officer Robyn Shilton welcomed a 17.5 per cent cut to electricity bills year-round for low-income households. But despite the initiatives to help poor families, she said a lack of transport funding meant they would remain disadvantaged.

"What we really need in Brimbank is a SmartBus linking to the north," she said.

STATE ST ALBANS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

Brimbank Leader – 10th May 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/caught-in-crossfire/>

A ROW has erupted over funds earmarked to plan for the removal of the St Albans level crossing, with the State Government accused of wasting taxpayers' money.

Local Labor MPs claim three studies have already been completed to get rid of the notorious traffic bottleneck, with one in 2009 gaining strong local support.

In last week's budget, the state government earmarked \$16.5 million for planning to remove 10 level crossings, naming the St Albans crossing a priority.

Actual construction won't be funded until 2013, once designs are complete. Western Metropolitan state Liberal MP Bernie Finn said the planning work was essential.

"In the past 11 years there has been nothing - no planning, no design, no consultation, nothing," Mr Finn said. "We've had to fire the whole exercise up and provide money for design, planning and extensive community consultation."

But via a basic Google search Leader uncovered proof of at least one study by VicRoads to grade separate the crossing, also pointing to a concept plan developed in June 2010 in consultation with Brimbank Council, the Department of Transport and local residents and business owners.

Labor Derrimut MP Telmo Languiller said the former State Government had allocated funds to remove the crossing.

"In my opinion we were well advanced in having it fixed up," he said.

Labor Kororoit MP Marlene Kairouz said the west had been "tricked" by the Coalition's announcement the crossing would go.

"No more money should be wasted on design," Ms Kairouz said.

"It is time for action, not waste."

Mr Finn said any previous studies would be considered by the new government.

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"We will take into consideration any previous government (studies). But in terms of design and planning, nothing was done at all," he said.

St Albans Traders Association secretary Asip Demiri, who cheered upon hearing the crossing would eventually be removed, changed his mind upon inspecting the fine print.

"They mention it as a priority but how are they prioritising it?" he asked. "They've got a cheek to even mention it and not act on it."

"It is an insult to the families of the west and to the memories of those killed along the rail line over the years."

Brimbank Council administrator Peter Lewinsky called for the government to start physically removing the crossing.

"We'd like less planning and more doing things. This has been a hotspot for a long time," he said.

THANKS FOR NOTHING, BRIMBANK SAYS

Brimbank Leader – 10th May 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/thanks-for-nothing-brimbank-says/>

BRIMBANK residents and Labor MPs have slammed the Coalition Government's first State Budget, saying it will sharply increase disadvantage in the west.

Of billions of dollars allocated, the few Brimbank-specific projects include planning to remove the St Albans crossing and four new mental health beds at Sunshine Hospital.

Labor MPs Telmo Languiller, Marlene Kairouz and Natalie Hutchins have labelled the Budget bad for locals.

"They have not focused on things that will benefit not only the western suburbs, but the whole of Victoria," Mr Languiller said. "We are a manufacturing hub and the area generates a lot of wealth for the state."

Greens ex-councillor Geraldine Brooks said the Government should be "ashamed", adding: "It is really disappointing that **we will see no redress or greater equity for the western region, when clearly it has been neglected for years.**"

"More and more vulnerable people will fall off the edges and have less and less ability to access services and participate in community life."

But Western Region state Liberal MP Bernie Finn defended the Budget, saying it was designed to meet the Coalition's \$5.1 billion election promises. He said disgruntled residents should meet him to have their projects considered for the next budget and that, if they didn't, they risked missing out.

"If you don't ask, you don't get," Mr Finn said.

Brimbank Council said broader spending programs in the Budget, such as first-home buyer concessions, would help local residents.

"We'll gratefully accept what they throw our way," council administrator Peter Lewinsky said.

NEW IMPETUS FOR MIGRANT TRAINING

Brimbank Weekly – 10th May 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-impetus-for-migrant-training/2157335.aspx>

EDUCATION and training opportunities are a vital part of helping the Sudanese community adapt to life in Australia, according to a community leader.

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Sudanese Community Association of Australia acting president Lual Deng said service providers must be supported in linking newly settled migrants to work and learning.

His comments follow a series of drunken and violent incidents involving Sudanese men around Melbourne, including a clash with police in Braybrook.

"We feel very sorry for police getting hurt," Mr Deng said. "But a lot of people don't understand these are people struggling with very difficult issues. We in the Sudanese community are working hard to provide them with ways to adapt."

Over the past decade, 22,000 Sudanese have been accepted as refugees by Australia.

The Immigration Department recently released a study of 8500 recent arrivals that found refugees from Africa were the most likely to find work after settling in Australia.

Mr Deng said this showed that many **members of the Sudanese community had successfully integrated into the community.**

"A lot of people are working, a lot of people are improving their skills," he said.

But Mr Deng knows there is much more to be done and he's encouraging members of the Sudanese community in the western suburbs to attend a June 4 workshop that will outline a number of training opportunities with the Australian National Institute of Business and Technology (ANIBT).

Senior business development consultant Prakash Charan said the organisation runs programs for everyone but is putting an emphasis on the Sudanese community.

"We are going to be holding the **workshop in the western suburbs and trying to promote them to the Sudanese community,**" he said.

Courses will be run in business administration, management, aged care and refrigeration and air-conditioning.

The workshops are open to people living in the Brimbank, Melton and Footscray regions and will run from noon-4pm at a location soon to be announced.

"It is providing the courses and support they need and I feel this is going to be the best tool to get the community to upgrade their skills," Mr Deng said.

More details: 9620 3099 or lualdemak@yahoo.com

PROMISES KEPT, NEEDS SHUNNED: LEADWEST

Brimbank Weekly – 10th May 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/promises-kept-needs-shunned-leadwest/2157331.aspx>

BRIMBANK and the western suburbs have been all but forgotten in the Baillieu government's first budget, according to some critics.

The government has come under heavy criticism for funding election promises made to shore up votes in eastern suburbs and regional Victoria ahead of much-needed projects in the west.

Local politicians and Brimbank Council have been unimpressed, with criticism also levelled by council-backed lobby group LeadWest.

LeadWest claims spending is based on ad-hoc political promises at the expense of real community need.

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Chief executive Anton Mayer said the area's rapid growth and need for major urban renewal demanded major investment in infrastructure and community services.

"I'm very concerned that there's little or no mention of any major funding for facilities and services that the evidence shows are very much needed in this region."

Mr Mayer cited education, health, community services, law and order, public transport and roads as areas that missed out on urgent investment.

Projects that were funded included \$70million for the continued redevelopment of Sunshine Hospital and a further \$900,000 for a new four-bed mental health unit.

Road funding included \$18.7million for the Western Highway to Sunshine Avenue stretch of the Ring Road upgrade.

The government has also allocated \$10million for the Sunshine campus of the Victoria University technical trade centre, but it snubbed local schools - among them Sunshine Secondary College - in dire need of rebuilding.

Council chairman Peter Lewinsky said there was a great need for school and health service spending, better road networks and improved public transport. The silver lining for Brimbank residents lies in the hope that general funding may yet assist in tackling local problems.

FAIR AND SQUARE

Brimbank Weekly – 10th May 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fair-and-square/2157964.aspx>

THE biggest facelift for Sunshine in more than a decade is under way as work begins on the \$3.2million Hampshire Square.

The project is aimed at creating a vibrant new area that improves pedestrian access and safety between Sunshine Plaza and Sunshine Marketplace.

Brimbank Council is spending \$2.5million on the redevelopment, with a further \$520,000 from the state government and \$200,000 from Sunshine Plaza.

The first stage of works on the eastern side of Hampshire Road will include pedestrian terraces and crossings, removal of the Sunshine Plaza slip lane and creation of a public square. Landscaping, new paving and improved lights and street furniture are part of a package the council hopes will attract more people to the area.

Council's acting general manager of infrastructure and environment, Nick Mann, says the new town square will be a residents' focal point. "People will congregate in this high-quality public space; it will change the image of the plaza and the streetscape."

Mr Mann believes Sunshine has a lot of potential that will only be realised if it becomes better connected and safer.

"We will be joining these two shopping centre that are terribly disconnected," he said. "A lot of residents feel it's not a safe place to move around."

Sunshine Plaza general manager Glenn Jones said the project would have a flow-on effect for retailers by making Sunshine a more attractive place to visit. "You take your life into your own hands to cross between the two centres. This development is really going to solve all these problems."

Watpac Civil Landscape is responsible for construction and is drawing on experience in similar revitalisation projects in Bendigo, Footscray and Werribee.

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Project manager Mark Webb said the square would provide first-class finishing not seen when councils try and do a job “on the cheap”.

Sunshine Business Association president Bruce White said local traders were grateful to see the investment in the town centre.

“There will be a flow-on effect to the rest of the CBD,” he said. “Hopefully, it will lead to further transformation, repairs to footpaths and replacement of old chairs and bins.”

The project is the first significant streetscape work in Sunshine since the Hampshire Road upgrade between Harvester Road and Service Street in 2001. Hampshire Road will remain open to traffic and pedestrians throughout the construction period.

Work is scheduled to finish by December.

VALUE IS AN OPEN BOOK IN BRIMBANK

Brimbank Leader – 6th May 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/value-is-an-open-book/>

FOR every dollar spent on Brimbank libraries, four times the amount is returned to the community, a State Library of Victoria report has shown.

The Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries report has revealed the value of return to Brimbank is \$4.20 for every \$1 invested. This is above the state average of \$3.56.

About half the Brimbank population are **members of libraries and Brimbank Council has recorded about 100,000 visits a month.**

Chairman of administrators Peter Lewinsky said the library collections were well utilised, with 25 per cent on loan at any given time.

“It’s no secret that our libraries are well used and highly valued by our community, but it is always gratifying to have an independent body reiterate the value of the service we provide to the community,” Mr Lewinsky said.

“We are particularly proud of our multi-lingual collection, which comprises 17 languages including English.”

Libraries in Brimbank run after school homework sessions, English skills programs, early years learning groups and clubs for a variety of groups.

Public Libraries Victoria Network commissioned the report which president John Murrell said showed investing in libraries was money well spent.

“The report showed overwhelming support for public libraries - people want them, people use them,” Mr Murrell said.

“We need to cater for population growth, in newly developed suburbs and regional Victoria, and an ageing population who require home delivery services and specialised reading formats.”

MARIBRYNONG

JUST KEEP ON TRUCKING ACROSS MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Leader – 10th May 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/just-keep-on-trucking-across-maribyrnong/>

SUFFICIENT funding for the Truck Action Plan was a glaring omission from the State Budget, according to Maribyrnong Truck Action Group spokesman Peter Knight.

The plan, estimated to cost \$380 million, received only \$15 million in the Budget.

Mr Knight said the project went beyond politics.

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"It's about the health and safety of residents," he said. *[Note: LeadWest would add that its also about productivity in freight transport, important for the Victorian and Australian economies]*

"The Baillieu Government should understand the consequences of its decision with regards to opening up extra housing developments."

He said it was already a "third world situation" in Francis St.

"The combination of neglect and adding more traffic to that street will be absolutely chaotic."

Williamstown state Labor MP Wade Noonan said the lack of commitment to deliver the WestLink or Truck Action Plan projects was "outrageous and insulting".

Maribyrnong Mayor Sarah Carter said infrastructure funding for the west was insufficient.

"We welcome the extra beds for mental health care, but I would have liked to see more money contributed towards planning for the infrastructure we need as the fastest growing region in Australia - Westlink or an alternative and also the Truck Action Plan, because we have too many trucks on residential streets and that's only going to grow," she said.

The Budget included funding for Footscray's needle and syringe program to be expanded.

Redevelopment of Rosamond Special School received \$9.5 million and Banksia Adolescent Unit in Footscray will get 46 more mental health beds.

MELTON

KELVIN TORI APPOINTED AS NEW MELTON COUNCIL CEO

Melton Leader – 12th May 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/kelvin-tori-appointed-as-new-melton-council-ceo/>

MELTON Council has appointed Kelvin Tori as its new chief executive officer - a day after Leader submitted a media request asking why it had taken six months to appoint a new CEO.

Leader emailed several questions to council's media department on Monday asking how the search was going and how extensive the selection process was.

Mr Tori was appointed interim chief executive officer on November 15 after the shock departure of former CEO Neville Smith to Moonee Valley.

On Tuesday, a special council meeting was convened when Mr Tori was appointed full-time.

The special council meeting was not advertised nor appeared on council's website.

Cr Bob Turner said it was purely coincidental that Leader's questions arrived the day before the special meeting.

Last year, Mayor Justin Mammarella said the council was prepared to "scour the country" to find its new chief executive and "would take as long as it takes" to find the right person for the job.

Councillors met in January to select a recruitment firm to conduct the search.

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Leader understands the two final candidates were interviewed for the position last week before the decision was taken to appoint Mr Tori.

The second person was an external candidate.

Mr Tori's salary was not released but Mr Smith was understood to have been paid about \$290,000 a year when he left Melton Council late last year.

He upped his pay packet by \$50,000 a year when he joined Moonee Valley.

Cr Mammarella said the council was happy to appoint Mr Tori to the role.

"We have absolute confidence in the decision that we have made to appoint Mr Tori to lead the council organisation through the coming years of unprecedented growth," he said.

"The current and future circumstances that Mr Tori will confront are significantly more challenging than what was experienced by previous CEOs.

"He brings a wealth of finance and governance experience to the role and has shown great leadership in meeting the organisation's challenges and implementing council's vision and plan for our community."

Mr Tori said he was very excited about this new step in his professional life.

"I am looking forward to working with the mayor and councillors, the executive team and all staff to ensure that the organisation delivers on the objectives detailed in the Council Plan," he said.

"My particular focus will initially be on delivering consistent high quality customer service, engaging with the community and ensuring council is effective in

advocating to state and federal governments for support in addressing the many challenges that growth presents.

"I am excited by the challenges, and enthused by the opportunities that characterise Melton."

STATE BUDGET MELTON SLIPS UNDER THE RADAR

Melton Weekly – 10th May 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/state-budget-melton-slips-under-the-radar/2157600.aspx>

DESPITE local politicians believing the rapidly developing town should be a "priority" area, Melton did not seem to be high on the list of state government budget considerations.

The council made a number of submissions seeking funding for infrastructure and services, but none of its "big-ticket" items was addressed.

Melton again missed out on money for Djerriwarrh Health Services' new community health centre in Melton. And there was no response to a campaign for a general public hospital.

Mayor Justin Mammarella was disappointed that Melton seemed to have been off the radar.

"We are a fast-growing area and we need support from the state government," he said. "They have been informed of our unique circumstances. We will continue to advocate."

Melton MP Don Nardella said the state budget was "a big let-down for the local community".

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He was also frustrated by the lack of attention to health services in the town, as well as lack of funding for an upgrade to Melton railway station's car park.

"The Baillieu government has shown in its first budget that it is happy to not provide the services and infrastructure needed in a growing community and I'm disappointed for all the residents who are missing out," he said.

State opposition leader Daniel Andrews visited the Melton station on Monday, criticising the government for not delivering improved car park and lighting and security cameras.

"Thousands of Melton commuters use the station every week and these works are needed to keep up with the rising demand for V/Line rail services," he said.

"Already, the Baillieu Government has failed to invest in the future of the V/Line network with no plans to order additional VLocity rail carriages to ease overcrowding on the Ballarat line which serves Melton station."

The realignment of the Western Highway at Anthony's Cutting will get more than \$24.179million this year, while \$2.902million will be spent duplicating Kings Road between the Calder Freeway and Melton Highway.

Gippsland and Southern Rural Water Corporation will get \$3.089million and Western Region Water Corporation a further \$1.191million for projects in Melton.

The state government allocated more than \$30million for land acquisition for schools, which will include Melton North West Primary School.

PROGNOSIS FAIR, DIAGNOSIS POOR

Melton Weekly – 10th May 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-impetus-for-migrant-training/2157335.aspx>

A LOOMING health crisis in the western suburbs will be averted only with a complete overhaul of the system, according to the state government's long-awaited health plan.

Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012–2022: Metropolitan Health Plan reveals that Melton, Moorabool, Brimbank and Wyndham face particular challenges due to existing health problems and a population tipped to grow by more than 40per cent - almost 200,000 additional people - by 2022.

"The growth, together with the poor health status of the population, will place extraordinary demands on health services," the report found.

Despite being home to 11.2per cent of Melbourne's total population, the outer west has only 7.7per cent of GPs, 4.9per cent of aged care and 4.3per cent of mental health services.

Melton has low life expectancy for women and is in the top 10 local government areas for self-reported poor health, smokers and overweight or obese people. It also has the state's highest proportion of people with type2 diabetes and the highest projected increase in hospital admissions.

Health Minister David Davis admitted these problems meant the system faced considerable challenges. **"The implications are clear. Without change, our health system will not be able to meet our future needs,"** he said.

The plan outlines the need for a complete overhaul comprising new planning approaches, new ways of delivering services and investment in capacity and co-ordination.

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However, opposition health spokesman Gavin Jennings said the report was heavy on rhetoric but light on detail. "This health plan fails to deliver one more hospital bed, one more doctor, one more nurse."

Djerriwarrh Health Services chief executive Bruce Marshall said the report correctly identified Melton and Bacchus Marsh as having among the state's fastest-growing populations, which would put extra demands on services.

"We are well positioned to face that challenge and ensure that we are part of the solution to improving the health status of our communities."

MOONEE VALLEY

MATHS MARVELS AT ROSEHILL SECONDARY COLLEGE

Moonee Valley Leader – 13th May 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/maths-marvels-at-rosehill-secondary-college/>

A NUMERACY program with a difference has put Rosehill Secondary College in the running for a Victorian Education Excellence Award.

The Moonee Valley school adopted a new way of teaching maths to year 7 and 8 students and has already seen an improvement in its numeracy results.

Principal Peter Rouse said the school's average scores had gone up compared with the state average, according to the NAPLAN results, in the past two years.

"It's a program developed by a numeracy expert, Chris Coombes, and it's not just about bringing creativity into the classroom but helping students to develop a deeper understanding of maths," Mr Rouse said.

"We introduced it to teachers and adopted its teachings into our curriculum in 2009 and it has already improved our results."

Rosehill Secondary College is running the program with Copperfield College, Kings Park, and Taylors Lakes Secondary College.

It is a finalist in the Outstanding School Leadership Team Award, valued at \$20,000.

The award will be presented at the Crown Palladium on Friday.

STATE BUDGET: NO CROSSING, TRAFFIC JAMS STAY

Moonee Valley Weekly – 10th May 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/state-budget-no-crossing-traffic-jams-stay/2157024.aspx>

HOPES for an upgrade to Essendon Keilor College, a pedestrian crossing at Milleara Road and upgrades to railway stations in Moonee Valley have been overlooked in the state budget announced last week.

The big winner, however, was the Western Autistic School in Niddrie, which was promised \$4million, with \$604,000 coming in the 2011-12 financial year.

The Coalition had committed investing in a prep to year12 autistic school in the west, but where the autistic school funding has been directed is not yet clear.

Sustainability Street spokeswoman Margaret Marshall, who along with the Centreway Traders Association and a Neighbourhood Watch group, led a campaign to have a crossing installed on the busy street, said she had expected the crossing request to be ignored.

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Mrs Marshall said her group would continue its campaign - now turning its attention to Coalition politicians to lobby for a crossing to the Centreway shopping strip from a busy housing estate in East Keilor.

Despite Essendon Keilor College principal David Adamson pleading with Education Minister Martin Dixon to provide funding for an urgent upgrade of his school's Niddrie campus, money was not forthcoming in the budget.

Mr Adamson told the Weekly his school was promised \$10million by Labor MP Rob Hulls but had not even been visited by Mr Dixon.

Mr Hulls said the budget was "the worst education budget in living memory".

"I call it a 'fudget' not a budget - it's a con. I can't believe there is no allocation for the school which the minister himself has said is unsafe."

Essendon MP Justin Madden also weighed in, criticising the budget, particularly in relation to local transport.

"It promised Essendon nothing and delivered nothing," he said. **"Essendon commuters have missed out on any station upgrades and improved train services in the budget."**

"By ignoring public transport in the north-west, [Liberal leader] Ted Baillieu is demonstrating his lack of vision.

"We will see greater levels of traffic congestion funnelled through the Essendon electorate," Mr Madden said.

STATE BUDGET: FUNDS OK, BUT WHERE TO PLACE THE CHILDREN?

Moonee Valley Weekly – 10th May 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/state-budget-funds-ok-but-where-to-place-the-children/2157023.aspx>

NIDDRIE Western Autistic School principal Val Gill admits to confusion about funding directed to her school in last week's state budget.

The school was promised \$4million, with \$604,000 of it coming in the 2011-12 financial year.

On March 31 this year, Western Metropolitan MP Bernie Finn published a statement on his website confirming the Baillieu government was committed to establishing a prep to year12 autistic school in the western suburbs.

But Mrs Gill said the school's Niddrie and Laverton campuses were already full and would struggle to be expanded.

She said a new site would need to be found for a prep to year12 school.

"There can be no decision for anything to happen on this [Niddrie] site as the site is chockers."

"Both campuses are bursting with little children so neither Laverton nor Niddrie is a relevant site."

Mrs Gill said a community consultation project started by the former Labor government was ongoing. Once that consultation was finished there would be better understanding of how the funding could be used.

"This announcement is a little like the cart before the horse - none of us know how this is going to happen."

Mr Finn's office is expected to release a statement about the funding allocation within days.

\$4M AUTISM PROMISE FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

Moonee Valley Leader – 10th May 2011

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<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/4m-autism-promise-for-melbournes-west/>

A \$4 MILLION boost to autistic school facilities has been included in the State Budget, but details on how the money will be spent remain sparse.

The State Government kept a key election promise by pledging \$4 million toward the Western Autistic School upgrade, \$604,000 of which is to come in the next 12 months.

While the remaining money has not been committed, it could still come in future budgets over the Government's four-year term.

It's understood planning and preliminary designs will be included in the \$604,000, but it's unclear where and how the rest will be spent.

The Coalition promised before the election that the prep to grade 3 school in Laverton would be upgraded to cater for students up to and including year 12.

But **Western Metropolitan Upper House Liberal MP Bernie Finn said last week a P-12 in Laverton was no longer set in stone**, and the Niddrie campus could also get a share.

"A group of parents are looking at another option, which may be a better option," he said.

"It is possible these kids can be taught at a number of schools across the western metropolitan area."

Mr Finn said parents of children with autism, including the lobby group Autistic Angels, remained undecided what was the best fit for their children.

But the Government would decide where the money would go.

Niddrie state Labor MP Rob Hulls said there was "a real haze over what this allocation is for". "I welcome any money for students who attend the Western Autistic School," he said.

"But \$604,000 will only add a coat of paint to it."

Essendon Labor MP Justin Madden said his electorate had been short-changed by the Budget.

"Essendon commuters have missed out on any station upgrades, and improved train services," Mr Madden said.

"By ignoring public transport in the northwest, (Premier) Mr (Ted) Baillieu is demonstrating his lack of vision to boost transport services and (we) will see greater levels of traffic congestion funnelled through the Essendon electorate."

Mr Madden said local families waiting for new facilities to be completed and finalised at primary and secondary schools would all be left disappointed.

WYNDHAM

STATE BUDGET: FASTEST-GROWING CITY 'SHORT CHANGED'

Wyndham Weekly – 11th May 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/state-budget-fastestgrowing-city-shortchanged/2158932.aspx?storypage=0>

WYNDHAM residents were "ignored" and "abandoned" in last week's state budget according to the city's leaders and advocacy groups.

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13TH MAY 2011



While the government highlighted \$20million for the first stage of the Point Cook South-East and Tarneit Central prep-9 schools, key local figures described the budget as disappointing.

Mayor John Menegazzo claimed the budget appeared to have "forgotten the needs" of Australia's fastest-growing city.

"We expected to see some major infrastructure investment specifically listed for Wyndham. **It is extremely concerning that there is no mention of any major roads funding for this city, which is currently in gridlock," he said.**

"Of the \$601 million investment in roads, there was no mention of any local projects."

Cr Menegazzo said Wyndham required major investment in infrastructure across all areas - education, health, community services, law and order, public transport and roads.

"It appears this community has been completely abandoned and I believe residents will share my concerns."

Committee for Wyndham executive director Nik Tsardakis said the city would continue to fall further behind, especially in the areas of community facilities, roads and public transport.

"We need funding for the Duncans Road interchange, more hospital beds and the development of the Werribee Employment Precinct," he said.

"If we're going to continue to be a liveable city, we need more employment, schools, more roads and improved public transport - these are basic needs."

Western Metropolitan Greens MP Colleen Hartland said Wyndham and the western suburbs as a whole had been short-changed.

"They've abandoned funding for the new train station at Williams Landing and the upgrade of Hoppers Crossing station," she said.

"The government has also reneged on its election promise for a new P-12 autism-specific school in Laverton."

LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer had hoped to see major investment in education, health and community services.

"The government's response to our needs in the budget is clearly underdone," he said.

"The government has committed to funding their election promises, but the infrastructure imperatives of the west can't be ignored.

"The west has the highest rate of diabetes, dental disease and the lowest penetration of GPs, so all we can do is continue to provide evidence and argue our case."

However, Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury defended the budget.

"We've provided \$20million for two new schools, and there's still scope within the funding for other programs from which Wyndham could benefit. I'll work to ensure the city receives its fair share," he said.

MORE GPS A MUST IN WYNDHAM

Wyndham Weekly – 11th May 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/more-gps-a-must-in-wyndham/2158910.aspx>

URGENT action must be taken by state and federal governments to attract more GPs and allied health professionals to Wyndham, according to Westgate General Practice Network's Dr Joe Garra.

Dr Garra and WGPN chief executive Corinne Siebel made a submission to State Parliament on May 2 as part of the government's inquiry into liveability options in outer-suburban Melbourne.

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Dr Garra said Wyndham's population boom continued to place a major strain on the city's health services.

Despite a desperate lack of GPs, Wyndham has yet to regain the status it lost earlier this year as a priority area for the federal government. A doctor-to-population ratio is used by the government to determine whether a locality is a district of workplace shortage region, in which funding applications can be made to employ overseas-trained doctors. Dr Garra said it was critical the federal government based its decisions on up-to-date population statistics and provided more warning before changing an area's status.

But he said the city's deficiencies weren't solely confined to GPs.

"We're short of everything, especially psychiatrists, but also many other health specialists. Chronic and complex diseases are significant challenges and there's an increasing prevalence of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, mental health and other social issues such as family violence, drug and alcohol."

For many GPs, working in the west was an unpalatable proposition, because it was often too far from home, he said. For specialists, it was more often than not an easy choice.

"If you're an obstetrician, why would you come out to a hospital in Werribee, when you can probably earn five times the amount for the same job at a city private hospital?"

Along with more than 90 community agencies, the WGPN is leading a push for a Medicare Locals to be centred in the Wyndham and Hobsons Bay region.

The federal government has promised the scheme would make it easier for patients to access services by linking GPs, nurses and other health professionals, hospitals and aged care facilities.

An initial group of 42 Medicare Locals is expected to start operation by July, however the Victorian boundaries are yet to be announced.

ANSWER LIES IN POWER OF WYNDHAM'S PEOPLE

Wyndham Leader – 10th May 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/mps-angry-that-wyndham-road-plans-miss-out/>

WYNDHAM'S population boom and infrastructure lag need to be made a bigger problem for state and federal governments if the city is to attract more funds, a resident says.

In a letter sent to councillors and the Leader, Michel Hermence says those governments benefit from population growth through stamp duty and taxes.

He asked if they would take more notice of Wyndham's at-capacity roads and inadequate public transport if the local council stopped approving building and subdivision permits.

"We need to collectively persuade government to fund the desperately needed projects by making our problem their problem," he said.

Mr Hermence is among an increasing number of residents writing to the Leader over the impact of the city's booming population, which is now growing faster than any other in Australia.

He said residents supported Cr Kim McAliney's comments at a public meeting this year that council should halt growth unless state and federal governments increased funding to cater for new residents.

Cr Shane Bourke has said "people power", used to defeat plans for a toxic waste dump at Werribee in 1998, was needed to secure more for Wyndham.

He suggested council hold a public forum, which it is considering.

Mr Hermence said while the bulk of funds needed to upgrade roads and public transport had to come from state and federal governments, the council had to stop spending money on projects that did not improve infrastructure.

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"I would rather money is put towards funding road improvements than projects such as the 'Active in Wyndham' flags," he said.

Mr Hermence's letter was also sent to VicRoads and WorkSafe.

MPS ANGRY THAT WYNDHAM ROAD PLANS MISS OUT

Wyndham Leader – 10th May 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/mps-angry-that-wyndham-road-plans-miss-out/>

WYNDHAM'S share of the State Budget prompted strong reaction last week.

Tarneit state Labor MP Tim Pallas said he was "bitterly disappointed" funds for ramps at Werribee's Duncans Rd-Princes Freeway interchange and for the Werribee Employment Precinct were not included.

Altona state Labor MP Jill Hennessy said the State Government had "caved in" to pressure for a new school at Point Cook but that the fight would continue for a new school at Truganina, not funded.

Committee for Wyndham chief executive Nik Tsardakis said the city's present and future needs had not been met.

"It's disappointing no new funding or solutions have been committed," he said.

Mr Tsardakis said Wyndham's growth was largely due to affordability and that cuts to stamp duty for first-home buyers in the budget would further increase the population and pressure on infrastructure.

Mayor John Menegazzo said the planned Duncans Rd interchange - allowing motorists to bypass gridlock at Werribee-Cottrell streets - topped a list of arterial roads projects that failed to get money.

He said the city needed a timeframe and planning structure for the employment precinct, which could employ up to 60,000 people.

The precinct would cut the almost 70 per cent of residents travelling outside the city for work and who placed pressure on roads and public transport.

The council also wanted but did not get state funds for buses to run more frequently than every 40 minutes during peak hours, and for more car parking at Werribee and Hoppers Crossing train stations.

Cr Menegazzo hoped Wyndham would get its fair share of extra police funded in the budget, saying the city had one police officer for every 1200 residents, compared with the state average of one per 400.

FINN: STOP 'WHINGEING' WYNDHAM MAYOR

Wyndham Leader – 10th May 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/finn-stop-whingeing-wyndham-mayor/>

WYNDHAM'S mayor says the city has been abandoned by the State Government in its first budget.

But a state Liberal MP representing the West says Wyndham is getting a big share, and the mayor should stop whingeing.

As reported at the wyndham leader.com.au last week, Wyndham-specific projects to be funded by the state over the next year are \$2 million of \$10 million to start work on a new school at Point Cook for students in prep-9, and \$2 million of \$10 million to start work on a new school at Tarneit, also for prep-9.

Mayor John Menegazzo said Wyndham - now the fastest-growing municipality in Australia - had been forgotten.

"It appears this community has been completely abandoned," he said.

But Western Metropolitan state Liberal MP Bernie Finn said it was getting the budget's big-ticket item, the planned regional rail link.

"I don't know why the mayor would be whingeing, because Wyndham has been given billions of dollars," Mr Finn said.

The regional project is in the budget but exact funds for it are still to be determined.

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Cr Menegazzo said the city also needed state funds for arterial roads upgrades, local job creation, more frequent bus services and more carparks at local railway stations.

Mr Finn and another Western Metropolitan state Liberal MP, Andrew Elsbury, said they were aware of Wyndham's issues and would continue to advocate for solutions.

The regional rail link line should be completed in 2016, and the new Tarneit school in Crossway Ave, and Point Cook school in Alamanda Blvd, in 2013.

The Coalition promised no Wyndham-specific projects leading up to last year's state election.

SQUEEZE AT WYNDHAM TRAIN STATIONS

Wyndham Leader – 6th May 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/squeeze-at-wyndham-train-stations/>

PARKING chaos at Hoppers Crossing and Werribee railway stations has led Wyndham Council to seek an urgent meeting with VicTrack and the public transport director.

The move comes after council officers put pamphlets on cars at Hoppers Crossing railway station stating that the Government, not the council, was responsible for station parking.

Cr Heather Marcus said at last week's council meeting that more space for parking should be established on unused VicTrack land at both stations.

She said the council had been lobbying for years for more parking but was fobbed off by the former Labor Government and the Department of Transport.

"I have had enough and I know the council has had enough and I know the commuters have had more than enough," Cr Marcus said.

She said a council suggestion that more car parks be created on VicTrack land near Costa Mitre 10 and Market Rd, Werribee, was rejected by the Labor Government because it was considered too far for commuters to walk to the railway station.

"That is gobbledegook. Commuters park farther away than that as it is," Cr Marcus said.

She said the lack of parking discouraged people from using public transport and added to Wyndham's already serious traffic congestion.

The council has called for a report into the issue and on Wyndham bus services, to be presented at its next meeting.

The council will ask the State Government about progress on the implementation of a review of Wyndham bus services.

The results of the review were announced in December 2009 and the then Labor Government promised a 30 per cent increase in Wyndham's bus service starting early last year.

It included five new bus routes and improvements to eight existing routes including greater frequency, for longer hours and on more days to more areas.

But Cr Marcus said services remained infrequent and inadequate and were not co-ordinated with train timetables.

ACROSS THE REGION

FRICION AS VICTORIA GETS FRACTION OF FUNDS

The Age – 8th May 2011

http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/friction-as-victoria-gets-fraction-of-funds-20110507-1edif.html?from=age_sb

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VICTORIAN motorists will benefit from \$630 million of federal road funding in Tuesday's budget, but it will be a fraction of a massive boost planned for New South Wales.

On Tuesday, Treasurer Wayne Swan will unveil the next financial year's spending on roads, with the lion's share - \$2.2 billion - going to NSW. In a move that will leave the Baillieu government under more pressure to deliver on its election promises, **Victoria will receive about a quarter of NSW's road funding in the same period.**

The budget will also allocate \$448 million in 2011-12 to the Regional Rail Link, Victoria's biggest public infrastructure project.

The road projects, funded under the federal Nation Building Program, include extending the Geelong Ring Road over the existing Princes Highway, the West Gate Bridge strengthening, realignment of the Western Highway and widening of Clyde Road in Berwick.

Mr Swan said the projects would cut travel times and deliver safer driving conditions for more than 450,000 drivers a day.

"Building up Victoria's roads and railways has been a major priority of this government from day one and this budget will keep delivering on infrastructure for the people of Victoria," the Treasurer told The Sunday Age.

"Building better roads is not just about cutting commute times so Victorians can spend more time with family and friends, it's also about building up vital economic capacity and enabling the state to grow sustainably," Mr Swan said.

The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics has calculated the federal government's investment in the road projects will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits worth at least \$2.6 billion, the Treasurer's office said.

Victorian infrastructure also faced slim pickings in last year's federal budget, in which the resource-rich states received the majority of the funding.

The political landscape has also changed for this year's budget, with the new Premier of NSW, Barry O'Farrell, determined to win back a large proportion of infrastructure funds after years of State Labor governments not being aggressive in their bids to the Commonwealth.

Victoria is seen as having done well out of federal infrastructure funds during the Bracks-Brumby governments.

Mr Swan has warned his fourth budget will be tough. The government has already announced that over four years it will save \$950 million with changes to the fringe benefits tax for company cars, \$1.1 billion on increasing efficiencies in the public service, \$3.1 billion in closing the chronic dental disease scheme and \$500 million by halving the 20 per cent discount for students who pay their HECS amount upfront.

On the spending side, the government will fund \$425 million in teacher bonuses over four years, \$772 million to extend benefits for families with teenagers and \$200 million for students with disabilities.

The Gillard government says it is investing a record \$7 billion to renew and expand Victoria's road and rail infrastructure over the six-year life of the Nation Building Program, which ends in 2013-14.

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The injection of \$2.2 billion to fix some of the state's most notorious road black spots and rail corridors will make NSW the big winner in the budget. Major highway upgrades will include bypasses on the Princes Highway at Bega and the Hume Highway at Holbrook, as well as duplicating sections of the Pacific Highway.

More than \$900 million will be spent on the projects and work is expected to begin in the next financial year.

Streamlining Sydney's congested and ageing freight rail network is an essential part of the federal government's plan to open a freight railway corridor from Brisbane to Melbourne.

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