

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

17th JUNE 2011



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BRIMBANK

BRIMBANK URGED TO GO WALKING IN THE RAIN

Brimbank Leader – 16th June 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/walking-in-the-rain-to-have-kids-crying-fowl/>

Rain, hail or shine, the 2011 Walking in the Rain event will take place on Sunday, June 19.

This year's walk is along Taylors Creek, which features ancient red gums, lakes, ducks and waterfowl.

The walk starts at 10am at the Watergardens Town Centre and finishes at Overnewton Gatehouse Gallery in Keilor, with registration from 9am.

Walkers can choose from either a 3.5km or 5.5km walk.

Free transport is provided to return people to Watergardens Town Centre at the walk's end.

A complimentary lunch, refreshments and entertainment will be on offer at the gallery.

Each participant will also go in the draw to win a \$250 Watergardens Town Centre voucher.

Other prizes include a \$500 Good Guys voucher for the Brimbank school which has the most participants.

Dogs are not permitted to go on the walk.

IS KEILOR'S ILLEGAL TURN A 'DEATH TRAP'?

Brimbank Leader – 15th June 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/illegal-turn-death-trap/>

Concerned motorists are calling for a notorious Keilor intersection to be closed before someone is killed. Hillside resident Tony Scerri passes the Calder Freeway and Organ Pipes Rd intersection almost daily.

It is illegal for motorists to make a U-turn at the intersection when coming from the city.

VicRoads installed the ban to address community safety concerns. But that does not stop scores of motorists flouting the law, Mr Scerri says.

He has described the intersection as a "potential death trap".

"If nothing is done, someone will get killed at this intersection," he said.

Mr Scerri claims he saw about 10 illegal turns in a half-hour period on a weekday.

Brimbank Highway patrol confirmed the high count.

Sergeant Rod Stein said the turn was not only illegal, but extremely unsafe.

"There have been no major collisions here, but that is due to good luck more than anything," he said.

"It's a highly dangerous manoeuvre and extremely unsafe.

"We are down there every week, morning and afternoon, booking drivers."

VicRoads acting regional director for metro north west, Robin Miles, said a proposal was in place to improve the intersection.

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"VicRoads, Brimbank Council and Victoria Police are aware of this issue and have developed a proposal to further improve safety here," he said. "In the context of previous investigations, this proposal will be considered for future funding."

Mr Scerri said he believed closing the intersection immediately was the best solution.

"If nothing is done, someone will get killed at this intersection," he said.

Motorists caught turning illegally are fined \$119 and receive two demerit points.

SUNSHINE HOUSE PRICES LEAP AT DOUBLE CITY RATE

Brimbank Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/sunshine-house-prices-leap-at-double-city-rate/2195108.aspx>

Sunshine house prices have more than tripled in the past decade, making it one of only three suburbs in the west to feature in the state's top 20 fastest growers.

The 2001 median house price in Sunshine was \$145,500. Ten years later it's \$447,500.

At 208per cent, this was the 11th highest jump in the state, almost double the 109per cent metropolitan rise.

Only Footscray enjoyed a higher rise in the west, according to figures released last week by the Real Estate Institute of Victoria. Kew topped the list with a 366per cent increase in median value, from \$417,500 to \$1.95million.

REIV spokesman Robert Larocca said Sunshine's rapid rise was part of an emerging trend in the west. He singled out its proximity to the city and good transport connections as key factors.

"A large part of the increase is simply the recognition that this area has been undervalued for a long time. You can get a home for half or a third of the price you would be paying in the east for a home the equivalent distance from the city."

Mr Larocca said the stigma about the western suburbs had faded and people were taking the area at face value.

"Money talks. Buyers will make their judgment and if they continue to find what they are looking for in the west, this may well continue."

Douglas Kay Estate Agents agents' representative John Derham believes there are a number of factors drawing people to Sunshine.

He pointed to the area attracting operations such as VicRoads and courts, development of the shopping centres and redevelopment of the public pool as all helping make it a liveable area.

"With the redevelopment of the Sunshine Hospital and new aged care facilities, it's really catering for people from the cradle through to the senior years."

Mr Derham said Brimbank Council and police had also invested a lot of energy into improving services and safety.

"It's all to do with the residential amenity that this suburb offers.

"It is a big, diverse and vibrant suburb."

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RECIPES HELP BEAT RISK THAT'S INHERENT

Brimbank Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/recipes-help-beat-risk-thats-inherent/2195099.aspx>

Being taught how to prepare traditional foods from their homeland using healthier ingredients is one way members of the Pakistani community in Brimbank can reduce the risk of developing diabetes.

About 50 members from the community took part in an information session on the importance of healthy eating in Keilor on June 6.

It was part of a series being presented this month by Victoria University's Australian Community Centre for Diabetes.

Dr Nithya Selvakumar told participants how a healthy meal could control or manage blood glucose levels.

"Many of the people who came to the talk don't get much exercise and eat food which is high in carbohydrates," she said.

"I told them the importance of eating food in small portion sizes and to keep their calorie intake consistent."

Members of the Pakistani Association of Australia showed how to cook traditional meals in a healthier way.

"We can cook the same meals using less oil and salt and we prepared a healthy lunch for the people to try," member Azra Yasmine said.

"Instead of preparing desserts which are high in fat and sugar we gave the audience fresh fruit." International studies have shown residents with a south Asian background are 6-10 times more likely to develop diabetes than the general population.

Data released last year showed Brimbank had the highest number of people in the state with diabetes, with more than 10,000 people diagnosed and a further 758 cases recognised each year. Keilor's Milena Jankovic, who is from Serbia, also attended the session to learn more about diabetes.

"There are a lot of Serbian diabetics in Brimbank who have never heard of diabetes prevention sessions. I'm a diabetic and I read about the sessions in the North West Weekly and wanted to come along to learn more about my condition."

Deer Park diabetic Mumtaz Iqbal was pleased to learn about healthier meals.

"I think it is great they are doing this for the Pakistani community especially as they telling us how much we should eat. They are showing us how to look after ourselves which is very important," he said.

The next session at the Old Shire Hall in Keilor on Monday will look at ways Pakistani residents can take part in physical activity. Details: 0433772807.

RECYCLING STARS HAILED AS GEMS

Brimbank Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/recycling-stars-hailed-as-gems/2195109.aspx>

The simple act of recycling the right goods can earn Brimbank households a welcome reward.

The council's recycling inspection team will randomly inspect recycling bins until August, awarding a \$50 voucher for people who are recycling correctly.

Brimbank chairman Peter Lewinsky said waste reduction was high on the council's agenda and an important step towards sustainable living.

Brimbank households already recycle slightly more than the state average, with 288 kilograms recycled each year compared to 283 across Victoria. About 17,700

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tonnes of recycling is collected in Brimbank each year, but Mr Lewinsky believes there is room for a reduction in waste.

"The new 'Be a Brimbank Gem' program will reinforce the message that there are benefits in recycling right."

One of the main areas for improvement is keeping plastic bags out of the recycling bin. Clean plastic bags can be returned to supermarkets for separate recycling. More details: www.brimbank.vic.gov.au.

BRIMBANK DRAGNET SWEEPS UP SCORES

Brimbank Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-dragnet-sweeps-up-scores/2195103.aspx>

A highly visible police operation has swept through Brimbank's crime hotspots, leading to a number of arrests.

Held on June 1, 3 and 5, Operation Trojan targeted antisocial behaviour, drug and road offences, robberies and assault.

Police arrested three people for being drunk, three for assault and four for drug offences during their checks on 507 people.

Acting Inspector Chris Gilbert said a man was also charged with weapons offences.

"As part of a routine check some of our members identified a man in possession of a firearm and ammunition.

"That is the sort of result we know this can have, simply by having that extra presence out there."

Police also checked 380 vehicles and performed 271 breath tests. They caught 77 people speeding and one drink-driver, detected seven seatbelt offences and four unlicensed, disqualified or suspended drivers.

Acting Inspector Gilbert said the operation was spread evenly across Brimbank.

"We made good use of extra resources such as the operations response unit," he said.

"People could definitely see we were out there; it was a high-visibility operation.

"It does give some confidence to people when they see us out there on the streets in this way."

Police were also out in force monitoring motorists during the long weekend and they intend to repeat the operations soon.

GET YOUR RECYCLING RIGHT, BECOME A BRIMBANK GEM AND WIN

Brimbank Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/get-your-recycling-right-become-a-gem-and-win/>

Responsible recycling is set to pay off for Brimbank households.

The Be a Brimbank Gem campaign encourages residents to recycle correctly by putting only recyclable material into their recycling bin.

Until August, the Brimbank Council recycling inspection team will randomly select recycling bins placed out for collection and will look inside before they are emptied.

The team will slap a Brimbank Gem sticker on the bins with the right recycling material, with rewards available to their users.

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Brimbank chairman of administrators Peter Lewinsky said recyclable levels in the municipality were above the state average. "However, waste reduction and increasing the level of recycling continues to be a key objective for council," he said.

"We are committed to developing waste minimisation programs that will help residents continue to reduce their waste through increased and better recycling and sustainable living."

SUNSHINE CHILDCARE MAY BE SHUT DOWN

Brimbank Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/shutdown-looming/>

A long-running Sunshine childcare program will be forced to close following government funding cuts.

Duke Street Community House has offered occasional childcare for 18 years to families in Brimbank.

It has received \$17,000 to \$19,000 each year from the federal and state governments combined through the Take a Break Occasional Childcare Program, enabling it to run four childcare sessions weekly - each with 15 places.

But Children and Early Childhood Development Minister Wendy Lovell announced earlier this month the State Government would scrap the program on December 31.

The former Labor government rescued the program last year after federal funding was withdrawn.

Manager Bronwen Merrigan said the house would be forced to shut down without the support. "Fees would have to rise and the hours of childcare cut, meaning that the service would no longer be viable and we would have to close," she said.

Three people would also lose jobs.

Ms Merrigan said other programs at the house would suffer without a childcare option. "Parents won't attend if there is no childcare available. The childcare option really underpins what we do and makes our programs more attractive."

The Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centre's Association executive, Angela Savage said many families who used occasional care were on low incomes and could not afford increased fees.

Western Metropolitan state Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury said the Government "cannot be expected to take over the Federal Government's funding responsibility" and encouraged parents and residents to lobby the Federal Government.

BRIMBANK CRIME RATE SOARS'

Brimbank Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/crime-rate-soars/>

Brimbank had the state's second-highest crime rate increase, latest Victoria Police figures show.

The municipality's crime rate soared 8.6 per cent in the year from April 2009-March 2010 to April 2010-March 2011.

Brimbank's crime spike was headlined by a surge in crimes against the person, which jumped 31.2 per cent.

Assaults led the charge, skyrocketing 38.1 per cent in the year (from 1014 offences recorded to 1400).

Crimes against property also rose (up by 6.3 per cent), including a surge in robberies (up 31.3 per cent) and property damage (up 12.6 per cent).

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But the number of residential burglaries reported is on the slide, dropping 13.8 per cent (from 1502 offences to 1295).

Meanwhile, the number of drugs offences reported fell 5.8 per cent (from 775 offences to 730).

Brimbank Inspector Mick Grainger said crime continued to be a problem for the municipality.

“The Brimbank community continues to face challenges around increases in robbery and assault offences,” he said.

Last month the top cop ruled out placing CCTV cameras around the municipality to help reduce crime, and said a boost to police numbers around the St Albans railway station had failed to stem robberies in the crime hot spot.

Insp Grainger said many of the assault statistics could be attributed to an increase in reports of family violence and assaults within the family home.

“This gives me comfort that our community is increasingly reporting what was once a ‘taboo’ crime,” he said.

Insp Grainger said while residential burglaries were reducing, burglaries at school and business continue to rise.

He said police would continue to focus on improving community engagement and policing factors around violent crime, property crime, organised crime, public order, emergency management and road safety.

BRIMBANK WORKERS SLAM MEASURE TO CATCH TAX EVADERS

Brimbank Leader – 12th June 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/brimbank-workers-slam-measure-to-catch-tax-evaders/>

Building firms in Brimbank are facing more paperwork because of the Federal Government’s tax evasion measures.

The measures were introduced to “improve tax compliance across various aspects of the economy”.

From July 2012 building and construction industry businesses are required to report to the ATO on payments made to other contractors.

But contractors have labelled the requirement as “needless red-tape”. Derrimut electrician Paul Tobin, said the requirement was another stack of paperwork to add to his desk.

“It’s certainly going to make things difficult,” Mr Tobin said. “To me it appears the Government want to make us the auditors for other people.”

National Electrical and Communications Association chief executive James Tinslay said it would put unnecessary administrative burdens on the industry.

“The Government should be focusing on cutting red tape ... not on introducing initiatives that will force many electrical contractors to spend more time reporting,” Mr Tinslay said.

DALAI LAMA VISITS WEST

Brimbank Weekly – 10th June 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/dalai-lama-visits-west/2191847.aspx>

An appreciative audience hung on to the 14th Dalai Lama’s every word as he delivered a message of peace and “warm-heartedness” at Footscray today.

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The Tibetan leader's first visit to the west was as a guest of youth worker Les Twentyman and his 20th Man Foundation.

A large crowd, including children from local schools, gathered under a clear blue sky at Maddern Square for the chance to hear the Dalai Lama.

His discourse was intensely serious: that the health and well-being of mankind relies not on our material wealth but on our ability to show affection for each other, particularly children and those in need.

"Trust, friendship is the key factor for [a] happy life. Genuine trust, genuine friendship you cannot buy with money.

"Genuine friendship comes only through trust, through openness. These things, everybody has the same potential, same ability."

MARIBRYNONG

SIX YEARS ON, A HUB'S HUMMING TO BRING HELP

Maribyrnong Leader – 16th June 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/six-years-on-a-hubs-humming-to-bring-help/>

A new era of disability services has been heralded in Maribyrnong, with the official opening of the refurbished community hub facilities at Annecto David House.

The \$500,000 Williamstown Rd community facility will provide extra training, support and integration services for people with a disability, experiencing disadvantage and carers.

Annecto chief executive Estelle Fyffe said the renovations of the 1950s building had been the result of six years of hard work. "(Before the works) services were not as readily available," she said. "People from all over the west use the service and we hope this centre can demonstrate what can be done, as a centre of excellence."

Bradley Mollison, 23, said he'd been working with Annecto for the past two years and had volunteered with Foodbank, Footscray Community Arts Centre and the Altona Men's Shed as well as participating in gardening and sports programs. He hoped the expanded centre and industry partnerships would lead to a horticulture job.

Community Services Minister Mary Wooldridge said the new community hub broke down barriers in providing day services for more than 250 people with a disability and their families.

REGIONAL RAIL LINK: UNRELENTING FIND VOICE AMID THE RUMBLINGS

Maribyrnong Weekly – 15th June 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/regional-rail-link-unrelenting-find-voice-amid-the-rumblings/2195538.aspx>

Footscray residents fighting for measures to reduce noise and vibration from the Regional Rail Link project hope to have a voice at the planning table following the formation of a community reference group.

Residents whose homes are being acquired and those left to put up with noise levels that an Environment Protection Authority report revealed could cause chronic sleep disturbance say they have been frustrated at every turn in attempts to get timely and accurate information on the project's progress.

Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the newly formed Regional Rail Link Community Reference Group (CRG) would be a two-way channel for project

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information to and from residents, businesses, interest and industry groups, and project managers Regional Rail Link Authority.

The group comprises seven community representatives. Seddon resident Hugh Oates will represent Maribyrnong. Mr Oates, a resident of the area for 12 years, said that while his home was not being acquired, it was right next to the rail line.

"There are real advantages for the community with this project and we've got to recognise those advantages, but we've got to make certain they recognise the disadvantages.

"I don't believe the costs of noise attenuation are too high, but the state government is under financial constraints and they will try to have the least-cost option minus the frills, and [may consider] noise attenuation frills."

The government is undertaking a further noise and environmental impact study. Planning Minister Matthew Guy recently told Parliament an environmental management plan was not needed for the project's "preparatory works" next month as it involved moving existing tracks by "seven to eight metres" rather than building new ones. Mr Oates encouraged residents with issues to contact him: setao@connexus.net.au or 0413591342.

COPS, CAMERAS IN 'STREET-SWEEP'

Maribyrnong Weekly – 15th June 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/cops-cameras-in-streetsweep/2195533.aspx>

Maribyrnong police's Inspector Tony Long acknowledges the introduction of a CCTV camera network across Footscray won't be a 'silver bullet', but he hopes the system will be integrated with the reinstated 'Street Sweeping' operations to tackle drug offences.

A lack of resources has previously prevented the Footscray station from using plainclothes officers in operations to target drug offences in the CBD, but a freeing up of manpower will soon allow the unit to restart with the help of CCTV cameras.

"The street-sweeping operations will be a great help in being more proactive in our policework. It gives a lot more of an ability to move; it unties our hands a bit," Inspector Long said.

"We will use the cameras to monitor suspicious drug offence activity and then our plainclothes officers will be able to swoop."

Inspector Long acknowledged that an 11per cent drop in drug offences over the past 12 months in the latest crime statistics could be attributed to a lesser focus on drug offences rather than any particular police operation.

The most worrying number for police is the 4per cent rise in assaults over the same period 12 months ago.

Inspector Long said efforts were being undertaken to engage youth in the CBD. "We've had an increase in engagement with youth in the area. If our officers come across young people we engage them in general chat, nothing aggressive, just to establish contact."

Police have charged a 24-year-old Footscray man with one count of murder following a brawl outside the Bubble nightclub in Melbourne's CBD about 3am on Sunday. Vu Tien Dung, of Rupert Street, Footscray, faced the Melbourne Magistrates Court on Tuesday in relation to the death of a 29-year-old man believed to be from Maribyrnong.

The 29-year-old was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital where he died.

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STATION SAFETY DIVES

Maribyrnong Leader – 15th June 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/station-safety-dives/>

Despite calls for much-needed action on the unsafe and ageing Tottenham station, a resident says the situation is worsening.

Maribyrnong Leader revealed the frustrations and concerns about the station in January with an increasing population putting pressure on poor parking, drainage and pedestrian safety.

The station surrounds were the scene of an unsolved double hit-and-run last year, killing young arts advocate Slycoh Marowa. The Rupert St carpark, which VicRoads refuses to acknowledge, has no lighting and is continually flooded while a section of the fence protecting pedestrians from speeding traffic in the Ashley St tunnel as been missing for three weeks. A resident who lives close to the station and catches the train every day said it was “beyond a joke”.

“Three weeks is ridiculous, it’s only a matter for time before there is a serious injury or death from someone slipping and falling into the path of oncoming traffic,” she said.

“It has to be the most destitute station but no one will take responsibility for it. I feel unsafe walking at 6.30pm.

“It’s busier than West Footscray station, and yet that’s where they’re upgrading (as part of Regional Rail Link).”

A VicRoads spokeswoman said the pathway fence was the responsibility of Maribyrnong Council.

Maribyrnong infrastructure and engineering general manager Ian Butterworth said council had requested VicRoads repair the fence. A Department of Transport spokesman said there were no scheduled upgrades for the station.

A spokeswoman for Roads Minister Terry Mulder failed to return Leader’s calls.

PATIENTS' LONG WAIT AT NEGLECTED WESTERN HOSPITAL

Maribyrnong Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/patients-long-wait-at-neglected-western-hospital/>

Patients at the ageing Western Hospital waited up to three times longer for some surgeries than the national average, performance data shows.

Victorian Hospital Performance Data for 2009-10 showed patients waited longer than average in 10 of 24 surgical categories.

The median wait time for myringoplasty, surgery of the eardrum, was 295 days, compared with the national median waiting time of 101 days.

The quickest median waiting time for the hospital was for a hysterectomy - 13 days compared with the national median of 50 days.

Procedures at the hospital with the highest turnovers were plastic surgery (659 cases), orthopaedics (624) and general surgery (569).

Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said population growth had seen demand for urgent elective surgery increase.

The percentage of patients waiting more than a year for surgery was also cut from 12 per cent in December to 3 per cent in May.

Ms Cook said Western Hospital was one of the oldest major hospitals in the state and was looking to improve its appearance, despite financial constraints.

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The 2011-12 State Budget provided no funding for building work at Western Health. Western MP Bernie Finn last year said fixing the hospital was a priority.

PROUD TO FIGHT FOR THE BATTLER

Maribyrnong Leader – 13th June 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/proud-to-fight-for-the-battler/>

Denis Nelthorpe had a choice when he started his law degree.

He could have taken the path of many others in his profession defending big-paying clients that would lead to healthy pay packets and perhaps a plush CBD office.

But he chose a path of a consumer lawyer, which often means fighting for people who can't afford the basics, let alone big legal bills.

And while Mr Nelthorpe's Footscray office is less palatial than a CBD suite, he does have a sense of pride and recognition he would not have gained had he chosen another course.

The Moonee Ponds resident would become a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia yesterday when the Queen's Birthday Honours were announced.

"I always saw a law degree as a position of privilege that allows you to basically pursue justice on behalf of ordinary citizens," he said. "It has always been my intention to use my law degree to assist those in need the most.

"I was perhaps naive, but when I arrived at university I was surprised to find most saw law as a means of making money. It certainly had never occurred to me as to why anyone would pursue a career in law for money."

Since then, Mr Nelthorpe has been employed by just about every Ombudsman's service, with a focus on utilities (water and energy), personal finance and insurance.

He has spoken out against aggressive door-knocking debt collectors employed by local councils; driven reform in consumer credit and taxi drive insurance; and helped families devastated in the wake of Black Saturday via the Bushfire Legal Help Unit.

He is chief executive officer of Footscray Community Legal Service and recently won a consumer champion lifetime achievement award for decades of fighting for the rights of vulnerable consumers in the non-profit sector.

Another achievement has been his colloquially-named "bugger off" letter, endorsed by legal aid centres around Australia, where Centrelink recipients can have their debts waived when the prospect of recovering the owed money is almost zero.

And Mr Nelthorpe's clients are likely to need consumer lawyers more than ever as basic utility costs continue to rise.

Other locals to receive Queen's Birthday honours were Leadwest chairman and Western Health board member Ralph Willis and Footscray-based Department of Human Service worker Paul Acreman.

DALAI LAMA SPREADS PEACE IN MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Leader – 10th June 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/dalai-lama-spreads-peace-in-maribyrnong/>

THE Dalai Lama greeted hundreds of followers and fans while spreading his message of peace in Maribyrnong today.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

17th JUNE 2011



Cars lined the streets around Braybrook's Quang Minh Temple as followers packed in to hear some pearls of wisdom from his holiness, who officially blessed the new site.

After joking about how much the regal building must have cost, he told followers and dignitaries including Footscray MP Marsha Thomson, Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten and acting Maribyrnong mayor Martin Zakharov to choose faith over money.

"One thing is very clear, materials will not bring inner peace," he said.

"If you look in a supermarket to buy peace of mind – impossible! Eventually we realise there's a limitation to wealth."

Looking at Mr Shorten, he called for world peace.

"People are fed up with violence," he said.

But it was among the young people in Footscray's Maddern Square where the Tibetan Buddhist leader had the most impact.

Aided by prominent social worker Les Twentyman, his holiness spoke with six local young people after greeting more dignitaries, including Footscray Inspector Tony Long, Western Metropolitan Region MP Bernie Finn and Western Bulldogs coach Rodney Eade.

The Dalai Lama told the crowd of local school students they were responsible for their own happiness.

"We all have the same potential to lead a happy life," he said.

"Young people really need affection, when that lacking they become difficult."

He also implored education and training for young people who'd lost their way.

Impressed by the work of the 20th Man Foundation, which helps thousands of young people in the western suburbs, his holiness made a \$100,000 donation to the fund.

Though in his typically humorous way, he told the crowd "don't expect a substantial donation – I myself am a refugee" before deciding on the sum.

Taking questions from the crowd, one young girl asked him what the meaning of life was.

"The very purpose of our life is happiness ... not misery," he said.

West Footscray resident Samantha, 19, who spoke with the Dalai Lama, said the meeting was enlightening.

Despite having her house burned down, being stabbed and being a single mother, she said she could still look at the bigger picture.

"He's so positive, so happy, it gives you a sense of meaning," Samantha said.

Roebuck Security manager Rodney Gadsden, who co-ordinated the two events, said it had been months worth of planning and everything had gone to plan.

His holiness also delivered a message of hope to all refugees at an event in Melbourne today.

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MELTON

CASH BOOST FOR MELTON GREEN GROUPS

Melton Leader – 16th June 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/cash-boost-for-melton-green-groups/>

FIVE Melton environment groups are \$1000 richer thanks to grants allocated by Melton Council as part of World Environment Day celebrations.

The funding will enable the Friends of Toolern Creek to produce education and promotional materials and buy prizes for the schools competition at the Platypus Festival 2011.

The Friends of Melton Botanic Garden will build 30 bat boxes in the Melton Botanic Gardens and produce educational materials.

Toolern Vale Landcare Group will produce promotional material to encourage new membership and publicise the group, while the Melton Environment Group plans to install bird and possum boxes on the Arnold's Creek bio-link at Brookfield Village.

The Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group will run a community engagement day at Pinkerton Forest and Bush's Paddock to increase membership.

STEEL IN MELTON'S GROWTH

Melton Leader – 15th June 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/steel-in-meltons-growth/>

A sculpture representing new growth has been added to Melton Council's public art display in High St.

Created by Mt Macedon artist Charles Aquilina, New Growth consists of a branch made out of corten steel that has been added to an existing Victorian blue gum trunk.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the art complemented the street and was a wonderful example of public art in the shire.

"This artwork symbolises the growth within our shire, and it is fitting that it will take pride of place in such a high-profile public location," he said. "The council is proud to support public art wherever possible and projects like New Growth demonstrates council's proactive and innovative approach to supporting public art."

DONATION SHEDS LIGHT ON MELTON SES

Melton Leader – 15th June 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/donation-sheds-light-on-melton-ses/>

MELTON SES volunteers will now be able to see clearly at night thanks to a \$500 donation from Dulux Paints.

Unit publicity officer and volunteer Nick Gargalakos said through Bunnings, Dulux Paints regularly picked a community-based organisation to benefit from a \$500 donation.

This time, Melton SES was the lucky recipient.

Mr Gargalakos said the money would be used to upgrade essential lighting needed by volunteers in night-time emergencies and for training and public

ROAD TOLL PLAGUES MELTON

Melton Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/road-toll-plagues-melton/2194438.aspx>

MELTON is Victoria's 10th-worst area for road fatalities, new figures reveal.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Data released by the Transport Accident Commission last week shows Baw Baw topped the list with 15 fatalities in the 12 months to April. It was followed by Benalla, Casey, Mornington Peninsula and Wangaratta (all 11), Bendigo (10), and Cardinia, Central Goldfields, Geelong, Melton and Mitchell (9).

Melton's figure was higher than its seven deaths recorded in 2010.

But Melton's Leading Senior Constable Allan Edwards said it could be troublesome to compare the raw data on face value.

"It is difficult to say it's an increase in context when considering the number of vehicles using the road and population increase over the 10 years. It is not an outrageous increase."

He said factors such as fatigue, speed and drug and alcohol impairment accounted for most single-vehicle accidents.

Leading Senior Constable Edwards urged motorists to travel with caution during winter.

"No matter what the conditions are, you must drive to them," he said.

"The other factor is that not everyone drives safely so you have to allow for other people's mistakes and lapses in concentration, and drive defensively".

Calder Action Group president Russell Mowatt said he would welcome any improvements designed to reduce fatalities on the freeway.

He agreed motorists should drive to conditions but said that if roads weren't up to a safe standard there was only so much that could be done.

"Other groups and other shires need funding, too, but we need to get to the top priorities and unless you get to that window of opportunity for the federal budget in 2014, you miss out," Mr Mowatt said.

The group, which formed in 2007, has worked with VicRoads to develop a plan to prevent illegal U-turns at the Calder Park Drive and Calder Freeway interchange and the Organ Pipes Road and Calder Freeway interchange.

The plan was approved by VicRoads in late May and Mr Mowatt now wants the Baillieu government to commit funding for the project.

MELTON MOTHERS GAIN FROM NETWORK

Melton Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/melton-mothers-gain-from-network/2194437.aspx?storypage=0>

MELTON mothers are being urged to forge strong support networks and break free from the grip of social isolation.

It comes as new Australian Bureau of Statistics data reveals more mothers than ever are juggling work and raising children.

The ABS research shows the number of families where mothers are employed has increased in both couple and single-mother arrangements.

In 2009-10, 66 per cent of mothers in couple families were employed, up from 59 per cent in 1997.

An even bigger jump was recorded for single mothers, surging from 46 to 60 per cent.

More than half of all mothers in a couple with a child aged under four were working, rising to four in five where the youngest dependent child was over 15.

Diggers Rest resident and Mothers Network of Burnside and Caroline Springs president Deborah Watson understands the pressures faced by modern mothers.

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When Mrs Watson had her second child, Katie, now 3, she soon returned to work and now teaches computer and business courses on a casual basis.

"The cost of living is hard enough with regular bills plus all the kids' activities and needs," she said.

Her husband works full-time, presently seven days a week, and her income helps reduce financial pressure.

She said balancing work and home life was often difficult, especially being away from her children.

"Marcus and Katie's grandparents are the unsung heroes; they help out quite a bit.

"My husband and I are both working because it's something we need to do at the moment. Hopefully, it will change in future."

Her role as president of the mothers' group, which stages regular gatherings in Melton, Sunbury, Hillside, Caroline Springs and Burnside, is another role she considers important.

"We [the mother's group] have come from tragic beginnings - after a mother took the life of her baby, which was believed to be because of social isolation and postnatal depression," Mrs Watson said.

Through the meetings, the women support each other and vital friendships are formed.

"One lady told me after some time in the group, 'I'm so glad I met you, I was so lonely'."

She said support groups were crucial for all mothers, who face many changes after giving birth and returning home.

Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital director of nursing Julia Meek said the federal government's new paid parental leave had lessened the financial burdens on new mums.

But it could be quite difficult for others to find suitable and reasonably priced child care.

While there is the risk of working parents feeling guilty at not spending more time with their children, there are also upsides.

Bacchus Marsh resident Rebecca Hicks said her daughter, Violet, 1, was learning at day care and benefiting from increased social interaction.

"I love it that she has a chance to develop with other kids her age and develop normally. It's nice for me as well to have adult conversations. I think we both need it."

More details on the mother's group can be found at www.melton.vic.gov.au

Anyone with personal problems can phone Lifeline on 131114.

ASSAULTS ON THE RISE IN MELTON

Melton Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/assaults-on-the-rise-in-melton/2194440.aspx>

Police are urging Melton residents to speak up and refuse to accept crime following a spike in local figures.

New Victoria Police data covering the period from March 2010 to April this year reveals a 19.7 per cent increase of crime against the person in Melton.

Rates for assault rose by 10 per cent and burglary by 20.6 per cent.

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Property damage (down 11 per cent) and road fatalities (down from 8 in 2009 to 5.6 in 2010) were notable improvements.

Inspector Mario Fiorentino said reducing robberies, commercial burglaries, assaults, family violence incidents and car thefts remained priorities for police.

Robberies were often occurring in shopping centres, railway stations and public areas where mostly young people on foot were carrying off goods such as phones and portable music players.

Inspector Fiorentino said a rise in the number of family violence victims reporting incidents was, in fact, a good sign because such crimes continued to be under-reported in the area.

"We encourage people living in fear ... if anyone knows of family and friends living in fear ... let the authorities know so we can give them the protection and help they need."

Phone information on a crime to Melton police station on 97477999 or Crime Stoppers on 1800333000.

AWARDS MARK VCE SUCCESS STORIES IN MELTON AND MOORABOOL

Melton Leader – 12th June 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/awards-mark-vce-success-stories-in-melton-and-moorabool/>

MELTON and Bacchus Marsh students were among 307 top-performing Victorian students who were honoured on May 30 with a Premier's VCE award.

Brenda Nepomuceno Silva, from Caroline Springs College, and Bacchus Marsh Grammar students Stephanie Neal and Nicholas Smith were recognised for outstanding scores in a VCE subject last year.

Ms Silva, 18, received a perfect score of 50 for English as a second language and is now studying a Bachelor of Arts at Melbourne University.

She said she had a passion for writing and hoped to forge a career in either writing or education.

Ms Neal's top score was for psychology and Mr Smith's for software development.

"This is a celebration of the truly exceptional effort made by students who excelled in their VCE last year through a combination of commitment, passion, talent and plain hard work," Premier Ted Baillieu said.

FUNDS NET COURT IN DIGGERS REST

Melton Leader – 12th June 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/funds-net-court-in-diggers-rest/>

A new netball court will be among improvements at Diggers Rest Recreation Reserve.

The reserve is set for a \$60,000 overhaul as part of the State Government-funded country football and netball program.

The upgrade will include the construction of an acrylic-surface netball court, perimeter fencing, court lighting and shelter.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the funding was a great result for the Diggers Rest sporting fraternity and the wider community.

"The construction of the netball court will greatly improve the facilities available to the Diggers Rest Football and Netball Club and increase active participation opportunities available for the broader community," Cr Mammarella said.

Construction is expected to take eight weeks, with the court to be ready for next year's netball season.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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EXFORD WEIR VANDALS LOCKED OUT

Melton Leader – 11th June 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/exford-weir-vandals-locked-out/>

Patrons have been put on notice following continued anti-social behaviour and property damage at waterways around Melton and Moorabool shires.

Southern Rural Water will enforce a ban on after-hours access at Exford Weir and Merrimu Reservoir following repeated vandalism and graffiti at the venues.

The Leader reported in February that playground equipment had been stolen and damaged.

There was also graffiti on the walls of toilet blocks, people found defecating on toilets, large amounts of litter dumped, and needles and syringes left around the toilet block.

Southern Rural Water water supply general manager John Tesoriero said the organisation often received comments about damage or rubbish.

“We have a strong focus on safety and our staff endeavour to keep recreation areas as clean and tidy as possible, but the issue continues to take up large amounts of time and resources.”

Mr Tesoriero said both reservoirs were open to the public from 9am-4.30pm, seven days a week, but are closed to everyone, including pedestrians, after hours.

He asked day visitors to keep the parks clean, take rubbish home, use the toilet facilities provided, obey all signs and notices and keep dogs on lead at all times. “We are working with local police, Water Police and other stakeholders to manage this issue.” 1300 139 510.

MOONEE VALLEY

READY TO CATCH HOONS

Moonee Valley Leader – 15th June 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/ready-to-catch-hoons/>

Police will enforce “the toughest hoon laws Victoria has ever seen” from July 1.

Avondale Heights police Sen-Sgt Andrea McAlpine said although hoon driving wasn’t a “big problem” in Moonee Valley, like neighbouring Hume and Moreland, police were still looking forward to implementing the laws aimed at reducing road trauma.

Under the changes, impoundment of vehicles will extend to repeat offences of unlicensed driving, drink-driving and drug-driving and the period of impoundment or immobilisation will be 30 days rather than 48 hours. Hoons caught a second time face losing their car for up to three months.

Sen-Sgt Andrea McAlpine said the new laws also enabled police to carry out roadworthiness inspections on hoons’ impounded cars, issue defect notices or ban the use of the vehicle outright.

“These new laws will further reduce those numbers, hopefully leaving us with no hooning at all,” she said.

Fawkner traffic management unit impounded 46 cars in Moonee Valley, 97 in Moreland and 223 in Hume last year.

Roads Minister Terry Mulder said the new laws would send a clear message to hoon drivers.

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MORE CARS IN \$150M PLAN

Moonee Valley Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/more-cars-in-150m-plan/>

Motorists will have to fight an extra 1200 cars for space on local roads during peak hour, if the planned Moonee Valley Racecourse development goes ahead.

A traffic study, commissioned by Moonee Valley Racing Club to map the traffic impact of its \$150 million master plan, said 11,000 extra car movements would be generated from the racecourse area each day. A total of 1200 movements would be during peak hour.

The report said the road network would experience increased congestion during peak hours if road works weren't undertaken. This would include introducing traffic lights and roundabouts.

"Given the limited road reserves available, it is acknowledged that there is only limited works that could be undertaken to improve intersection operation in the vicinity of the site," the report said.

The introduction of clearways during peak hours in Pascoe Vale Rd, between Mt Alexander Rd and Wilson St, was also suggested to improve traffic flow.

The traffic study calculated traffic movements on local roads near the racecourse, including Dean, McPherson and Wilson streets and Pascoe Vale Rd.

Significantly, it did not include Mt Alexander Rd, which is the most direct route to the city from the racecourse.

A key component of the master plan will be encouraging the 6000 new residents to walk, cycle or catch public transport.

Private car ownership will be deterred, with less than one parking space a dwelling to be provided.

The GTA report also found there would be an extra 2500 public transport trips generated a day. This would be distributed between trains, trams and buses.

Despite the traffic concerns, the report said the site was suited to high-rise development, "given its proximity to Moonee Ponds Activity Centre, excellent public transport facilities and off-road bicycle facilities on the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail".

ESSENDON RESIDENTS' BATTLE GAINS MOMENTUM

Moonee Valley Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/essendon-residents-battle-gains-momentum/2194755.aspx>

Essendon residents are fighting a proposal to demolish an existing two-storey home and replace it with a five-storey, 20 apartment complex at 142 Buckley Street.

Up to 100 objections have been lodged with Moonee Valley Council and residents have organised two separate leaflet-drop campaigns to make others aware of the proposal.

The application was lodged by developer Trisand Pty Ltd.

Neighbouring Violet Street resident Darryl Gough said residents were concerned about the size of the proposed development and the implications of a car parking waiver that is part of the application.

"Parking in the area is already stretched to a local capacity - they are applying for half of what the minimum requirement is."

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Mr Gough said the predicted 90 traffic movements generated each day from the 10 one-bedroom and 10 two-bedroom apartments would affect the neighbourhood amenity.

"It increases the [traffic] risks and hazards, you've got to think of the children who like to ride their scooters here."

Long-time resident Gertrude Downes lives next door to the house earmarked for demolition.

She said the plans were "terrible".

"It shouldn't be allowed, it would ruin my house."

Daniel Bullock from the nearby Essendon Baptist Community Church said he was concerned for the residents who would be affected by the plan.

"Certainly our main concern would be the [lack] of car parking."

The Trisand website states the company "is a privately held company who have built their reputation on 'getting the job done' and has delivered multi-million dollar developments to metropolitan Melbourne".

ERASING MOONEE VALLEY BLACKSPOT

Moonee Valley Weekly— 14th June 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/erasing-moonee-valley-blackspot/2194752.aspx>

VicRoads is attempting to make Moonee Valley's worst accident black spot safer with a \$780,000 upgrade of the Moonee Ponds Junction.

There have been 34 recorded crashes at the junction of Mt Alexander Road, Pascoe Vale Road, Dean Street and Puckle Street in the past 10 years.

Of the crashes, 14 resulted in serious injury.

Work to begin next week will include traffic light, pedestrian crossing and street lighting upgrades.

Mt Road Village Traders Association president Denis Kosnar said the traffic chaos at the junction had frustrated traders and shoppers for a long time.

"Hopefully all the work is going to be good value for money.

"I'll be interested to see what they end up achieving - we assume it will be an improvement."

A VicRoads spokesperson said the work crew was permitted to work between 10am and 3pm Monday to Friday but would try to do the majority of works overnight to avoid traffic disruption.

Roads Minister Terry Mulder said the road works would bring the intersection up to disability compliant standards.

Works should be completed by September.

SHEDDING MEN'S CARES IN MOONEE VALLEY

Moonee Valley Weekly— 14th June 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/shedding-mens-cares-in-moonee-valley/2194753.aspx>

It's only been around for a couple of months but Moonee Valley's Men's Shed is proving a great success.

Moonee Ponds shed facilitator Steven Cottrill said there was a great community feel to Moonee Valley's shed.

"It's for guys that are looking to get out and busy themselves in a workshop situation where there is a social environment.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"Yeah it's for people that might be isolated but it's also for people that might not have access to a workshop.

"It's also great for retired guys that are looking for something to do," Mr Cottrill said.

He said since the shed opened men who attended have used the fully equipped workshop to build bird nesting boxes and possum boxes.

The boxes have been passed on to council parks and garden staff to be used in local parks.

The shed team also hopes to start refurbishing busted bicycles to give to residents who can't afford to buy their own.

Essendon resident Peter Lipp was a tradesmen for 50 years before he retired. He now spends a great deal of time at the Men's Shed working on projects and passing on his knowledge.

"I'm finding myself helping people out and I find that quite rewarding.

"There are people here with all different backgrounds, some haven't seen a tool before.

"I've been down here since it first started and find it quite rewarding, there's plenty of people to talk to and we have the common interest with this wildlife project, which is something I'm particularly interested in.

"I'm all for this, I reckon it's a great thing."

The Men's Shed is a statewide program designed to help men in the community who are isolated or at risk of isolation. The premise is to establish a relaxed place where men of all backgrounds can work together on projects and socialise.

MOONEE VALLEY COUNCIL SAVES WATER

Moonee Valley Weekly – 14th June 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-council-saves-water/2194750.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council has adopted a water strategy for the future management of all water in the municipality. The strategy, developed with community consultation, details plans for increased water harvesting and reducing the amount of pollution entering waterways, bays and groundwater.

"Moonee Valley has achieved great water saving results over the last 10 years, with council reducing its water use by 43 per cent, residents reducing theirs by 32 per cent and businesses achieving a 39 per cent reduction," Mayor John Sipek said.

"This strategy sets more ambitious targets not only to continue saving water but also to improve the health of local waterways, manage floods and better capture alternative water sources."

The council hopes to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in its mains water use and a 50 per cent reduction in non-residential mains water use.

Up to 30 per cent of the council's total water use will be from alternative water sources.

TOO FEW PEDESTRIANS AT KEILOR EAST CROSSING

Moonee Valley Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/too-few-pedestrians-at-keilor-east-crossing/>

An extra 81 people will need to cross a busy Keilor East road each hour before VicRoads will consider installing a pedestrian crossing.

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Residents have been battling for the crossing at the busy T-intersection at Milleara Rd and the Centreway for the past 20 years, with their latest request not met in the 2011-12 state Budget.

A VicRoads feasibility study completed last October found 19 pedestrians crossed the busy road an hour during “peak times” (2.30-3.20pm), not attracting enough foot traffic for a “high priority” crossing.

VicRoads North West acting regional director Robin Miles said this fell well short of requirements.

“The warrant for pedestrian operated signals is typically 100 pedestrians per hour crossing during peak time,” Mr Miles said.

“Therefore there are other locations with a higher priority for pedestrian improvements.”

But Keilor East Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator Trevor Sinclair said people were putting their lives at risk each time they crossed the road.

“I saw a young man in a wheelchair trying to cross the road the other day. The cars just wouldn’t slow down or stop to let him through,” Mr Sinclair said.

“The crossing that is 600m away is used by students from Keilor Heights Primary School. It’s always busy and the elderly shoppers don’t feel safe crossing there.”

Pensioner John Indrizzi said it was only a matter of time before somebody was seriously injured.

“The old pensioners spend a lot of their time down at the Centreway Shopping Centre. It’s only fair that they have safe access to it,” Mr Indrizzi said.

Niddrie state Labor MP Rob Hulls had promised his government would install a \$300,000 crossing with traffic lights if it won last November’s election.

Mr Hulls said he would continue to strongly support a crossing being installed.

Former Moonee Valley mayor Shirley Cornish said council backed residents and had met VicRoads last year, but was not given any time frames.

Roads Minister Terry Mulder did not respond to Leader’s requests.

BACKGROUND: Residents have lobbied for the crossing at a local government level for 18 years, on and off, before rounding up a petition with more than 800 signatures in 2010. VicRoads did a feasibility study in 2010, reporting there had been no fatalities or injured pedestrians recorded from 2005-10. In June 2010 local Labor MP Rob Hulls agreed to back the works, offering \$300,000 for the project as part of his pre-election promise. The Coalition Government did not make a priority of the project and did not allocate money for it in the 2011-12 State Budget.

ELDERLY BOWLED OVER BY PARKING FINES

Moonee Valley Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/elderly-bowled-over-by-parking-fines/>

A parking permit system for elderly members of the Moonee Ponds Bowling Club has been called for, after an increase in parking fines.

The Queens Park club asked Moonee Valley council to consider long term parking options to address difficulties in sticking to the four-hour limit on game days.

Treasurer Andy Smith said most games went for five hours and elderly players were regularly fined for parking.

“Council waived most of the fines but it’s an ongoing problem,” he said.

“It’s all right over the weekend, but very difficult to find parking and stick to the time limit on Tuesdays and Fridays.”

Six councillors agreed to sell the club 10 parking permits and operate the system.

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Councillors Jan Chantry and Shirley Cornish disagreed, saying the scheme would exacerbate parking issues in Moonee Valley and set a precedent for other sporting clubs to apply for similar parking permit schemes.

But Cr Paul Giuliano said council should encourage elderly citizens to stay active.

RESIDENTS BURGLARY WARNING

Moonee Valley Leader – 13th June 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/residents-burglary-warning/>

Robbers are increasingly targeting residential properties in Moonee Valley, new Victoria Police crime figures show.

Figures for 2010-11 show 538 cases of residential burglary, compared with 473 cases in 2009-10.

But Moonee Valley Insp Cindy Millen said burglary on homes was the only crime that increased in the municipality over the past year.

“Police worked tirelessly to identify and arrest the offenders responsible and they are no longer in the area,” she said.

“We encourage you to report any suspicious activity to us so we can act in a timely manner to prevent crime.”

The figures, released last week, compared offences in April 2009-March 2010 and April 2010-March 2011.

Total crime was down by an average of 7.5 per cent across the region.

Crime against the person and theft of motor vehicle remained stable, while property damage dropped 19.2 per cent and assault dropped by 12 per cent.

Family violence also remained a priority for police.

“Members of our community still find it difficult to report family violence, or even understand that they are in fact a victim of family violence,” Insp Millen said.

“Family violence should not be tolerated within our community and you have the right to feel safe.”

Although robberies are down by 12.2 per cent and theft from motor vehicles dropped 4.3 per cent, Insp Millen said a number of reports were preventable.

PARKING FEE UPROAR IN NIDDRIE

Moonee Valley Leader – 13th June 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/parking-fee-uproar-in-niddrie/>

Niddrie traders fear they will have to lay off workers if Moonee Valley Council doesn't reconsider a 628 per cent jump in parking permit fees.

The council is proposing to increase the annual parking permit fee at a carpark at Wallis St Niddrie, to \$2184 per parking bay, compared to \$300 last year.

It would come into effect on July 1. Niddrie Traders Association spokesman Ray Jacobs said the “ridiculous” rise in permits would cause an enormous stir among traders. Council has since agreed to reconsider the fee increase.

“To be asked to pay \$2184 for one car park per year from paying \$300 is daytime robbery,” he said.

“We'll have to let go of staff if we have to pay that much for a carpark. It's just not practical to expect our staff to use public transport in Niddrie when there is none.”

Niddrie Traders Association represents Keilor Rd traders and about 180 surrounding businesses.

Niddrie trader Brian Atkins said traders association members funded the carparks in the 1970s when Niddrie was under Keilor Council.

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"We bought about 16 houses along Wallis St back then to turn the area into a carpark for staff and customers and Keilor Council agreed to manage and rate the area under a special carpark rate scheme," he said. "When we were rezoned to Moonee Valley Council in the 1980s our agreement continued and we want it to continue."

Council CEO Neville Smith said the proposed fee increase was based on the cost of daily metered parking.

"The opportunity to talk to the Niddrie Traders Association has given council a greater understanding of how the carparks were originally funded through a special rates scheme when this area of the municipality was under the City of Keilor," Mr Smith said.

But permits along Wallis St are not the only parking fees set to go up in the municipality.

The draft budget proposes a \$102 rise for third and fourth residential parking permits, an \$11 rise to replace lost permits and daily parking metre fees will jump from \$12-16.

WYNDHAM

WYNDHAM CRIME: OVERALL RATE CLIMBS 10.4%

Wyndham Weekly – 15th June 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-crime-overall-rate-climbs-104/2195501.aspx?storypage=0>

Robberies and assaults soared in Wyndham in the year to March, new police data shows.

There were also significant increases in residential burglaries and thefts from motor vehicles.

The statistics reveal the number of reported robberies in the city rose by 44per cent, while assaults, excluding family violence cases, were up 17.4per cent. Overall, the city's crime rate was up by 10.4per cent.

Wyndham's Inspector Bill Weatherly said the high number of assaults, robberies and residential burglaries remained a grave concern for police and would be a major focus over the next 12 months.

"A large majority of our robbery victims are young male teenagers walking in the street by themselves.

"On most occasions, items such as iPods and mobile phones are being stolen – these offences are on the increase throughout the western suburbs," he said.

Inspector Weatherly said most assaults were committed by people known to the victim, such as cases of family violence and prison incidents involving inmates.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

17th JUNE 2011



Residential burglaries jumped by 21.3per cent and thefts from motor vehicles by 19.2per cent over the 12-month period, however, thefts of motor vehicles were down.

Despite making 19 separate arrests last month, Inspector Weatherly said residential burglaries continued to be one of the biggest challenges for police.

"Since our burglary unit was established in February, it's made a significant difference in our arrest rate, however the number of offences continues to grow."

Partnerships established between developers and police resulted in a 19per cent drop in the number of burglaries on houses under construction in May. While shopping centres and railway station car parks remain hotspots, Inspector Weatherly said there was a rise in the number of thefts from motor vehicles parked in streets or in the driveways of houses.

"Wyndham is such a dynamic area and growing at such a fast rate the challenges for police over the next decade will be enormous. A visible police presence is required to force our crime rate down."

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Tim Cartwright has again rejected claims the city's 160,000 residents were often served by one divisional van.

A senior Wyndham police officer last week said the city had one van on duty "more often than not" with Altona North and Williamstown units often called upon for support.

"There are very few shifts that are considered quiet times for demand on policing and during those times one divisional van may be rostered," he said. "However, the divisional van is not the only police unit that responds to calls for assistance in Wyndham.

"To portray the view that the divisional van provides the only police service in Wyndham is wrong, it is only one of a number of units that provide a primary frontline service."

NEEDY RESIDENTS FACE CONSTANT BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL

Wyndham Weekly – 15th June 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/needy-residents-face-constant-battle-for-survival/2195485.aspx?storypage=0>

Rising cost of living pressures are forcing more Wyndham families than ever before to seek handouts, with the city's emergency relief services unable to cope.

Between July last year and last week, Uniting Care Werribee Support and Housing gave out 4219 food vouchers and 1384 food parcels to the city's most disadvantaged residents.

Most recipients were from Werribee, followed by Hoppers Crossing, Wyndham Vale, Tarneit, Truganina, Point Cook, Werribee South and Williams Landing.

So high is the level of demand that the agency is relying on donations alone, having exhausted its federal funding well ahead of schedule.

The agency's chief executive, Carol Muir, said it had a few food vouchers left and was advising residents that it might not be able to provide vouchers for the remainder of the financial year.

The agency has assisted 230 families with a combined 568 children.

The 742 single parents helped by the agency's care and concern service were supporting 1642 children, including one family with nine, another with eight and six with seven dependents.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Ms Muir said while most of its clients were privately renting properties, large numbers were in boarding or public housing, with many home owners now asking for support.

"We'll probably spend more than \$50,000 than we've received in funding during this financial year. We've also fully expended the additional money given through donations and grants," she said.

With a large volume of government money going towards the clean-up after natural disasters which struck Victoria and Queensland over summer, the agency expects to receive about 15per cent less funding next financial year.

"The sector received additional funding during the global financial crisis, but it was always going to be a one-off situation," she said.

"We allow two food vouchers per household, three times a year, but next year, that will have to be cut back to one." The agency's crisis counsellor had been forced to cut back a five-day working week to two days.

Although able to keep its pantry stocked with food items sourced from organisations such as Aldi supermarkets, Foodbank Victoria and A Gesture in Laverton, the agency now offers only a limited supply.

A report released by Anglicare Victoria this year showed 25per cent of emergency relief clients couldn't afford to buy prescription medication, almost half couldn't afford dental treatment, and one in five were too poor to eat a good meal once a day.

Chief executive Paul McDonald said the 2011 Hardship Survey provided a graphic insight into the challenges faced by low-income families.

"Nine out of 10 people who took part in the 2010 survey had been forced to borrow money from family or friends and one had resorted to pawning personal items to get by."

Ms Muir said a growing number of Wyndham residents were struggling to cope.

"We receive requests for items such as toothpaste and toilet paper - these are basics which people are missing out on because they have no money to spare."

Ms Muir said that while there was a general sense in the community that we had come through the worst of the global financial crisis, people at the lower end of the scale "faced a constant battle for survival".

SUPER CLINIC FOR WYNDHAM 'GOOD START'

Wyndham Weekly – 15th June 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/super-clinic-for-wyndham-good-start/2195502.aspx>

WYNDHAM'S strained health services have received a major boost, with the city to be home to a \$15million GP super clinic.

But with Wyndham's population expected to rise beyond 400,000, Westgate General Practice Network chairman Dr Joe Garra says ongoing funding is needed to address the city's severe GP shortage.

Prime Minister and Lalor MP Julia Gillard said the Wyndham Vale GP Super Clinic would be run by ISIS Primary Care, which operates six health centres across the western suburbs, including at Hoppers Crossing.

Ms Gillard said the clinic would deliver more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to the city.

The clinic will have GPs, dental care, dietetics, occupational therapy, sexual and reproductive health services, along with social work and family support programs.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Health Minister Nicola Roxon said there would also be a strong focus on chronic disease and preventive health initiatives with ISIS to expand its training of medical, nursing and allied health students.

Dr Garra said any announcement on new health services in this area was welcome but more needed to be done.

"With our population growth, we'll always be playing catch-up with our health services," he said.

"It [the clinic] is not a solution to all our problems but it's a good start."

Last month, Dr Garra told the Weekly that urgent action had to be taken by state and federal governments to attract more GPs and allied health professionals to Wyndham.

Despite a desperate shortage of GPs, the city is yet to regain the status it lost earlier this year as a federal government priority area.

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.

"We're short of everything, especially psychiatrists, but also many other health specialists," he said.

"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."

Dr Garra said working in the west was an unpalatable proposition for many GPs and specialists, because it was often too far from home.

The government has committed \$528million to build 64 GP super clinics and to upgrade and extend 425 general practices, primary care and health services across Australia.

Mercy Health executive director Richard Ainley said the clinic would ease pressure on Werribee hospital by allowing more patients who would have presented to the emergency department to be treated by a GP.

LOCALS BRIEFED ON WYNDHAM'S BUDGET

Wyndham Leader – 15th June 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/locals-briefed-on-wyndhams-budget/>

Fewer than 20 residents attended last week's public meeting on Wyndham Council's budget.

They were briefed on the draft 2011-12 budget and given time to make comments and ask questions.

Residents' comments included that vacant residential landowners should pay more rates to cover the cost of extra inspections brought about by complaints.

Others said the council must start doing capital works the year they were funded.

A resident asked for more detail on the proposed Werribee City Promotions and Information Centre and was told it would promote the council's long-term plans to transform Werribee's CBD.

They were also told how they could have input on the proposed Tarneit Gardens Community and Ageing Well Centre, to be built on the Cadell Ave and Penrose Promenade corner.

The centre is to include kindergarten and maternal and child health rooms as well as programs for older people.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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It is to be the base for a council team supporting people with a disability and the elderly at home.

As previously reported, the draft budget includes an overall 5.5 per cent rates rise for the coming year. The council said the rise was needed to help pay for the city's largest-ever capital works program of \$106.22 million.

With the \$37.30 municipal charge and \$224 garbage charge, rates and charges for a \$327,000 house will rise by \$86.

WYNDHAM VALE ROADWORKS HALTED

Wyndham Leader – 15th June 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-wyndham-vale-roadworks-halted/>

Aboriginal artefacts have been dug up at Wyndham Vale, bringing a multi-million dollar roads project to a standstill.

The artefacts - stone chippings from tool-making dating back thousands of years - were uncovered at the site of a \$5.4 million Wyndham Council project to reduce road congestion.

The project, including constructing 1250m of McGrath Rd between Bulban and Black Forest roads to link Wyndham Vale to Bulban Rd and provide a bypass to gridlock at Werribee-Cottrell streets, was to be completed last year.

Some works have been at a standstill for almost a year and will not resume until the registered Aboriginal party for the area, the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation, approves a plan to manage the cultural heritage.

The council hopes to open the road on budget later this year.

It said work started in May last year after it received advice the site was unlikely to contain cultural heritage.

However, the council said that during works last year, the artefacts were found.

As a result, it was required by law to stop work and hire a cultural heritage adviser to complete a cultural heritage management plan.

Dr Roger Luebbers, now completing the plan, said almost 100 artefacts had been found. He said Aboriginal people would have been drawn to water supplies at the site.

The council would not say who it initially employed to assess the site or who later found the artefacts, saying this was under investigation.

Mayor John Menegazzo said it had no choice but to stop works.

The project, previously described by the council as critical for Wyndham Vale's booming population, includes traffic lights at McGrath-Black Forest roads, wetlands on both sides of McGrath Rd and a 50m wide culvert bridge.

The Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation declined to comment.

WYNDHAM HIT BY A JUMP IN OFFENCES

Wyndham Leader – 15th June 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/wyndham-hit-by-a-jump-in-offences/>

Robberies, assaults and more are on the rise in Wyndham, according to the latest Victoria Police crime figures.

The figures released last week compare reported offences in April 2009-March 2010 with those in April 2010-March 2011.

They show robberies increased by almost 45 per cent to 97 reports. Even when Wyndham's population boom was taken into account, by calculating the crime rate per 100,000 people, robberies were up 33 per cent.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Reported assaults rose 19 per cent to 964. More than 300 of these were related to family violence. What do you think? Tell us below.

Assaults per 100,000 people rose 9.4 per cent.

Thefts from cars was the most commonly reported crime, followed by house burglaries and criminal damage.

All three types of crimes were more common.

Thefts from cars were up 19 per cent to 1510, an average of four a day.

Thefts from cars per 100,000 people increased 9.6 per cent.

House burglaries were up 21.3 per cent to 1269, and per 100,000 people, 11.6 per cent.

Property damage reports rose slightly to 1252.

However, when calculated per 100,000 people, they dropped almost 7 per cent.

There were 386 cars reported stolen, down two.

When calculated per 100,000 people, car thefts fell by 8.5 per cent.

The overall local crime rate increased by 10.4 per cent to 10,027 reports.

When calculated per 100,000 people, it rose 1.5 per cent.

Local inspector Bill Weatherly said there were many challenges facing Wyndham police and they would continue to tackle these.

As previously reported, Wyndham Council and the Police Association have said the city desperately needed more police.

For crime prevention advice and more local crime figures, visit police.vic.gov.au

WYNDHAM GP SUPER CLINIC DEAL ON

Wyndham Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/super-clinic-deal-on/>

A \$15 million GP super clinic, including dentists, social workers and occupational therapists, will be built in Wyndham Vale this year.

Where in Wyndham Vale is still to be determined, with a site yet to be found and purchased, but a spokesman for Prime Minister and Lalor MP Julia Gillard said last week it was expected, subject to land rezoning and Wyndham Council approval, that construction would begin this year.

The spokesman said it was hoped land could be found close to a new railway station to be built at Manor Lakes as part of the regional rail link project.

The Federal Government signed an agreement last Wednesday with ISIS Primary Care to develop and operate the Western Melbourne GP Super Clinic.

Ms Gillard said the new clinic would deliver more doctors, nurses and other health professionals and better access to health services for Wyndham residents.

"The Government wants to make it easier for all Australians to see and contact a doctor closer to home," she said.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon said the clinic would provide integrated, multi-disciplinary healthcare for patients under one roof.

"The GP super clinic will provide much-needed medical infrastructure and services in a community that is set to be one of the fastest growing regions in the state," she said.

The clinic will have a strong focus on chronic disease and preventative healthcare.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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ISIS Primary Care is involved in the education and training of undergraduates and postgraduate students across a range of health disciplines and intends to expand this program when the clinic opens its doors.

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo welcomed the news.

"We are very pleased to hear about that because the lack of health services in Wyndham is something we have been highlighting," Cr Menegazzo said.

ROCK RAGE ON WYNDHAM ROADS

Wyndham Leader – 14th June 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/rock-rage-on-wyndham-roads/>

Rocks have been thrown at buses and a taxi in Wyndham recently.

Passengers and drivers have almost been hit by the rocks.

Windows and doors have been smashed, causing thousands of dollars' damage.

Police are investigating and calling for information.

The Leader understands there have been more than 10 cases of people throwing rocks at buses at night in the past few months.

On Saturday, June 4, rocks were thrown at two Westrans buses travelling along Heaths Rd, near Westmill Drive, Hoppers Crossing, at 8.10pm.

Two side windows were smashed on one bus and a side window and front glass door on the other.

One rock flew in front of two passengers, just missing them.

The shocked drivers, servicing different routes, had to pull over after their vehicles were hit and police were called.

On Sunday, June 5, rocks were thrown at a taxi on Bulban Rd near a roundabout at Cottrell St, Werribee, at 1.30am.

One rock smashed the taxi's rear window and landed on the back seat. Others hit the bonnet.

The driver told police the rocks were thrown by a group of males of African appearance.

POINT COOK ROADS CAN'T DO THE JOB, FINN SAYS

Wyndham Leader – 11th June 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/point-cook-roads-cant-do-the-job-finn-says/>

An Upper House state Liberal MP has compared Point Cook Rd to a "goat track", while a recent VicRoads report confirms what Wyndham residents know already – freeway travel speeds are slowing during peak times.

Western Metropolitan MP Bernie Finn told Parliament last Tuesday that Point Cook had a major traffic problem and that Point Cook Rd in particular was "not a lot better than a goat track, particularly at the moment, after a good deal of rain".

"We have thousands upon thousands of people using this main road every day and it is just not up to the job," he said.

"Sneydes Rd is another one not up to the job. We have thousands of people endeavouring to go about their daily lives, and they cannot get around with any degree of ease because of these difficulties."

Mr Finn said the State Government should sit down with Wyndham Council and come up with a traffic management plan and "a significant injection" of funding to improve Point Cook roads.

Mayor John Menegazzo welcomed Mr Finn's remarks.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"I am quite pleased that our local state representatives are speaking up on behalf of Wyndham and confirming what the council and residents have been saying for a long time," he said.

"I reiterate his comments that the State Government sit down with the council and work out what our priorities should be in this city in terms of road infrastructure."

The VicRoads 2009/10 Traffic Monitor, released last week, showed travel speeds on Melbourne's M1, including the West Gate Freeway, had decreased by 12.6km/h during the morning peak and by 10.2km/h during the afternoon peak.

VicRoads executive director network and asset planning Robert Freemantle said this reflected the impact of M1 roadworks.

DALAI LAMA VISITS WEST

Wyndham Weekly – 10th June 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/dalai-lama-visits-west/2191849.aspx>

An appreciative audience hung on to the 14th Dalai Lama's every word as he delivered a message of peace and "warm-heartedness" at Footscray today.

The Tibetan leader's first visit to the west was as a guest of youth worker Les Twentyman and his 20th Man Foundation.

A large crowd, including children from local schools, gathered under a clear blue sky at Maddern Square for the chance to hear the Dalai Lama.

His discourse was intensely serious: that the health and well-being of mankind relies not on our material wealth but on our ability to show affection for each other, particularly children and those in need.

"Trust, friendship is the key factor for [a] happy life. Genuine trust, genuine friendship you cannot buy with money.

"Genuine friendship comes only through trust, through openness. These things, everybody has the same potential, same ability."

ACROSS THE REGION

MEGA-JAIL PLAN FOR WESTERN SUBURBS

The Age – 14th June 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/megajail-plan-for-western-suburbs-20110613-1g0n3.html>

Minister for corrections Andrew McIntosh last month denied knowledge of any money being spent on a new prison site in Deer Park, but has now been shown to have authorised up to \$5.25 million in February.

Minister for corrections Andrew McIntosh last month denied knowledge of any money being spent on a new prison site in Deer Park, but has now been shown to have authorised up to \$5.25 million in February.

A DISUSED rocket range in Melbourne's outer west has been earmarked as the location for Victoria's biggest prison, under a confidential scheme developed by Labor and now backed by the Baillieu government.

Documents obtained by The Age reveal the government has allocated millions of dollars for an environmental assessment of Crown land at Ravenhall, near Deer Park, a site approved by Labor for construction of a mega-prison in 2009.

Corrections Minister Andrew McIntosh last month told The Age he knew little about the land and denied knowledge of money being spent on it. "I'm not aware of any money. I don't know what our obligations [are]," he said.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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But The Age has obtained a memo signed by Mr McIntosh in February in which he approved spending of up to \$5.25 million for the environmental assessment of the site.

The Coalition, despite its tough-on-crime policies, did not propose a new prison in its election campaign last year. Instead it promised \$268 million to add 500 beds to existing prisons. In last month's budget it allocated just \$35 million for the first 108 of those beds.

However, a surprise inclusion in the budget was \$2 million for a business case for a new male prison, the location, delivery model and cost of which would be left to the Department of Justice.

As revealed in The Saturday Age, a business case for a 700 to 800-bed men's prison under a public-private partnership (PPP) had already been prepared under Labor.

Labor cabinet documents show the construction, maintenance and operation of such a prison would run into billions of dollars over the typical 25-year-life of such a PPP project.

Mr McIntosh insisted "all options" were "on the table" for locating the prison - including in regional Victoria. However, this seems at odds with his own approval of millions to be spent on the Ravenhall site, and the urgency of getting the scheme under way.

The Coalition has promised 500 new beds by 2015. Under its revised plan, almost 400 of those beds will be in the new prison. But it will struggle to honour its promise if it has to find a new site. Accepting Labor's choice of a government-owned site in Ravenhall would save time and money.

Confidential Labor cabinet documents from late 2010 reveal that the Department of Justice scoured the state in 2008 and 2009 for a site, identifying a shortlist

including near Pakenham and Warragul in Melbourne's south-east, and Kilmore to the north.

Labor eventually settled on the former defence site at Ravenhall adjacent to the existing Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (women's) prison and Metropolitan Remand Centre. A cabinet subcommittee endorsed the Ravenhall site for a new prison in October 2009. This was never made public.

The Department of Justice is also working on plans for a large women's prison complex, also proposed as a PPP.

Community legal groups, academics and human rights campaigners are concerned about the Coalition's hard line on crime, which includes an end to home detention and suspended sentences. They say scarce funds will be sapped from other services such as schools and health, with no guarantee of reducing crime or its causes.

FORMER TREASURER RECOGNISED

Hobsons Bay Leader – 13th June 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/former-treasurer-recognised/>

Former federal treasurer and Williamstown resident Ralph Willis has been appointed an Officer (AO) of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours.

Mr Willis, who grew up in West Footscray, was honoured for his "distinguished service to the Parliament of Australia, particularly in the areas of economic development and industrial relations, to the superannuation industry, and to the community".

The chairman of Western Health and advocacy group LeadWest, Mr Willis said he was "pleased but somewhat embarrassed".

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"Whatever I did, it wasn't to get honours. Rather, it was doing the best I could at the time."

From 1983-1993, Mr Willis held federal ministerial portfolios including finance, transport, communication, industrial relations, and employment. In 1993, he was appointed treasurer, a position he held until 1996. Mr Willis said the Prices and Incomes Accord, which he worked on under the Hawke Government, was a highlight of his career.

"We had high inflation and high unemployment - a rather unusual situation. We used the accord with trade unions to get the economy back on a growth path and make it much more valuable."

He was also heavily involved with the introduction of superannuation, which helped him during his time at the "coalface" of superannuation funds later in his career.

Mr Willis's community endeavours include being chairman and treasurer of the Mietta Foundation, chairman of Melbourne City Opera, a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Youth Employment, and a board member of the Westgate Community Initiatives Group.

TED BAILLIEU BRACES FOR MEETING ABOUT VICTORIA POLICE CRISIS

Herald Sun - 13th June 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/ted-baillieu-braces-for-meeting-about-victoria-police-crisis/story-e6frf7jo-1226073988170>

Premier Ted Baillieu is bracing for an explosive meeting tomorrow with a growing group of MPs increasingly unhappy with the crisis surrounding Victoria Police.

After more than a week of damaging headlines and paralysis at the top, Liberal MPs are demanding action and leadership.

Outspoken Liberal backbencher Bernie Finn yesterday told the Herald Sun he shared the deep concerns of colleague Bill Tilley over the treatment of the ousted deputy police chief, Sir Ken Jones.

The feud within police command between Chief Commissioner Simon Overland and Sir Ken has blown into Mr Baillieu's first full-scale political crisis since winning power in November.

Mr Tilley, the parliamentary secretary for police and emergency services, had warned he might go as far as sitting as an independent because he was so unhappy with the Government's handling of the problem.

But after a day of political pressure and in a brief two-line statement, Mr Tilley last night said he remained "a committed member of the Liberal Party and a strong supporter of the Baillieu Government".

He warned, however, that he "will be working within the parliamentary party to address issues of concern".

Any defections would put the Coalition's slim majority at risk. The Coalition has 45 seats to Labor's 43 in the 88-seat Lower House.

The State Government went into shutdown mode yesterday, with advisers failing to provide answers to key questions asked by the Herald Sun.

Mr Tilley, who served in Victoria Police for 11 years, is the most vocal of a growing group of Coalition MPs furious the Government's meddling in Victoria Police has backfired.

They are especially unhappy with the role played by Mr Baillieu's right-hand man, Michael Kapel, in undermining both Sir Ken and Mr Overland.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Mr Finn confirmed there is a growing anger within the party over the issues and it will be raised for debate in the party room.

"I share Bill Tilley's concerns," he said.

"I will strongly express my views in the party room.

"Hopefully this will be sorted out this week as I don't want to see more good people hurt."

Many MPs contacted by the Herald Sun are refusing to publicly comment about the problems, but, behind the scenes, there is deep unrest at Mr Baillieu's style of leadership.

"Things are running out of control and it doesn't look like anybody is in charge," a Liberal MP said.

Last week, Mr Baillieu said no decision would be made until all four reports into Victoria Police were made public.

It may be next year before the report into police command is completed.

BALLARAT TRAIN SHUT-DOWN WILL DETER COMMUTERS: EXPERTS

The Courier – 10th June 2011

<http://www.thecourier.com.au/news/local/news/general/ballarat-train-shutdown-will-deter-commuters-experts/2191972.aspx?storypage=0>

Shutting down trains between Ballarat and Melbourne will deter people from using public transport and force commuters back into their cars, experts have warned.

V/Line will replace all trains travelling between Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne with buses for 16 days from July 2 to 17, as work begins on realigning tracks to make way for Victoria's Regional Rail Link.

Once complete, the rail link will give Victoria its first dedicated regional track.

But experts say disrupting trains to build the track will defeat its purpose.

"If we're closing things down like that it means that we're risking the patronage growth that we've had already," said Dr John Stone, from the Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport.

"Once people have their service taken away, it may make it harder to win them back."

Rolf Bergmaier, a rail consultant who has worked in rail operations in countries across Europe, said maintaining a regular train timetable was a key factor in attracting passengers.

"This means that each service type has to have an all-day identical service pattern," he said. "I'm not aware if this exists in Victoria."

With the rail shutdown just three weeks' away, some commuters are choosing to take annual leave rather than face adding an extra 45 minutes to their trips to work.

Agnes Yen, who comes from Scarsdale to catch the train to Melbourne from Ballarat, said she planned to take a week off work to avoid disruptions.

"I already wake up at 5.30am to catch the train, so the thought of getting up any earlier is quite painful," she said.

Ms Yen said that while she was happy with V/Line's service, she and other commuters had received next to no information about the scheduled maintenance to the rail line.

"Most of the time, V/Line is really good – I lived in the city for many years and am used to using Metro. But, when V/Line doesn't go well, it goes bad in a big way."

Fellow commuter Lee Humm said many people felt forced to take holidays.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"I've taken two days off, but that's all I can take as it's a busy time at work," she said.

"Some people are toying with the idea of a car pool, but that's difficult when everyone works in different parts of the city and parking in the city is so expensive.

"We just don't know what's going on. Basically, we turned up one morning and found a note on our seats saying buses would replace trains in a two-week period. That's it."

V/Line spokesman James Kelly said V/Line was in the final stages of developing the bus timetable and hoped to have it available to download from the V/Line website by the end of next week.

Mr Kelly said V/Line would offer a combination of express and semi-express buses, and buses that stopped at all stations.

DALAI LAMA SPREADS HOLINESS AND JOY

Yahoo 7 website –10th June 2011

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/a/-/business/9620902/dalai-lama-spreads-holiness-and-joy/>

The Dalai Lama reduced western suburbs youth worker Les Twentyman to tears with a \$100,000 donation to his charity.

An overwhelmed Twentyman broke down and almost fell off the stage when the Tibetan leader made the offer.

Mr Twentyman said the Buddhist leader was addressing a crowd of almost 500 youths, school children and community workers in Footscray when he made the surprise announcement, sending the room into jubilant applause.

He told the Herald Sun: "He just said, 'I'd like to contribute to your charity. I want to make a donation of \$100,000.

"I almost fell off the stage. People had to grab the chair and push it back."

Twentyman said the money will go towards putting around 1,000 kids back in school, and providing homeless youths with a meal everyday.

His holiness also addressed the top end of town at a Melbourne Press Club luncheon this afternoon, with the plight of refugees at the top of the agenda.

He issued a plea to smaller nations to have a bigger impact on the global refugee problem. The source of the problem, he says, needs to be tackled at its root.

He drew on his own experience in exile to urge Australians to act on the issue.

His holiness seems to have captivated audiences everywhere, apart from Canberra where the PM has yet to commit to a meeting on refugees and other key issues.

Opposition leader, Tony Abbott, is meeting the spiritual leader on Thursday, but the Prime Minister is yet to agree to host discussions.

Australian novelist and Dalai Lama ambassador Jacqueline Pascarl told 7News she would be gravely disappointed if Gillard shuns the spiritual leader throughout his visit.

"He's a spiritual leader of a major religion that encompasses so many Australian people," she said. "It disappoints me that some one of such holiness and compassion is being ignored.

"There is a show of confusion on her part about where she stands on various issues."

Samdup Tsering, of the Australian Tibetan Council, told 7News: "I feel if she didn't meet with him, it's very disappointing. In Australia now we have a large Tibetan community.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

17th JUNE 2011



"It would let us down as Australians - absolutely let us down."

The Dalai Lama will be in Melbourne over the long weekend and then heads to Canberra on Thursday,

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