

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



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BRIMBANK

BUSINESS ADVICE ROLLS INTO BRIMBANK

Brimbank Leader– 1st September 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/business-advice-rolls-into-brimbank/>

A mobile Business Centre will roll in to Sunshine and St Albans next week.

Small Business Victoria's Mobile Business Centre delivers free mentoring and face-to-face assistance to businesses.

It offers professional mentors, provided by the Small Business Mentoring Service, who bring expertise in a range of areas including retail, franchising and marketing.

It will stop in Sunshine on September 5 and 6 and in St Albans on September 9.

The Mobile Business Centre has spent the year touring regional Victoria, helping more than 500 businesses and visiting more than 60 towns.

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn said small businesses would welcome the visit.

"Many small business owners in the Brimbank City Council area lack the time to seek the services they need," he said.

"By touring metropolitan Melbourne for the first time, the Mobile Business Centre will help fill the information gap."

The mini-bus will be opposite the Sunshine Library, 294-298 Hampshire Rd, from 10am to 4pm on Monday and Tuesday, and at the Supa IGA car park, 33 Alfrieda St, St Albans, from 10am to 4pm on Friday.

Details business.vic.gov.au/mbc or on 13 22 15.

BRIMBANK COUNCIL SUPPORTS DANGEROUS DOGS MOVE

Brimbank Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-council-supports-dangerous-dogs-move/2277096.aspx>

Owners of dangerous dogs have just four weeks to register them or face the animals being destroyed.

State Parliament fast-tracked tough new laws on Tuesday that will crack down on dangerous and restricted dogs such as American pit-bulls.

A telephone hotline has also been established that give residents the chance to do in a dangerous dog.

The laws were rushed through in response to the tragic death of Ayen Chol, fatally mauled by a neighbour's pit-bull cross in St Albans a fortnight ago.

Agriculture minister Peter Walsh said the legislation is the first of several measures to get rid of restricted breeds including pit-bulls.

"People should not be in fear of a dog attack when they are walking down a street or their children are playing in their backyard," he said.

The legislation ends the amnesty to register restricted breeds on September 29.

Any dog identified as a pit-bull not registered after that time can be seized and destroyed.

The changes will close legal loopholes to ensure pit-bull crosses become a restricted breed.

People can report a dog they believe is a restricted breed by phoning the dangerous dog hotline on 1300 101 080.

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The dangerous dog hotline will record details of calls and pass them on to local councils.

Brimbank Council Chair of Administrators, Peter Lewinsky, said the law changes are well overdue but welcome.

He said the death of four-year-old Ayen Chol had horrified the Brimbank community and the nation and wants the Federal Government to ensure all states follow suit with the law changes.

“All Australians have the right to be safe from dogs that cause havoc and harm.”

Brimbank Council supports the ‘dob in a dangerous dog’ hotline.

Mr Lewinsky said random and annual door knocks to track down unregistered dogs are not enough to locate every dangerous dog.

“Most of the time we have to rely on public information,” he said.

Mr Lewinsky wants to see a new crime making owners responsible for attacks and facing jail rather than fines.

He is calling on the state Government to help fund extra animal management officers to ensure the new laws can be followed through.

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) has criticised the new legislation.

Victorian president Susan Maastricht said the legislation is not a long term solution.

“The risk is this could lull the community into a false sense of security and do little to address the overall problem of dog bites,” she said.

“We are very concerned that innocent families and family pets will become scapegoats when they’ve done nothing wrong.”

She said all dogs need to be socialised with other dogs and people at an early age.

The RSPCA has serious concerns for breeds that could be mistaken for a pit-bull and has received a number of calls from people worried their pet may be targeted and put down.

DEER PARK BOOKED IN FOR REVAMP

Brimbank Leader – 31st August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/deer-park-booked-in-for-revamp-fbready/>

A revamped Deer Park Library was unveiled to the Brimbank community last week.

With extra 24 computers, 130 chairs dedicated to study and 45 colour-coded power points for Wi-Fi users, the Brimbank Council said the renovations brought the library into the 21st century.

Other changes include redesigned signage, a re-furnished toy library and face-out magazine display units.

And the upgrade is already winning fans, with door counter figures showing an increase in visits of more than 300 per cent a month since the renovations were completed.

The chairman of Brimbank’s administrators, Peter Lewinsky, said the new library was good news for the community.

“The Deer Park Library is an important part of the local community with 13,543 members out of a local population of around 34,000,” he said.

Last month alone, there were 23,691 visits to the library.

Fifty-four per cent of Deer Park residents speak a language other than English at home so the council has installed two new computers with access to more than 200 international newspapers in 50 languages, Mr Lewinsky said.

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ALBION HOUSE TARGETED AGAIN

Brimbank Leader— 31st August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/albion-house-targeted-again-fbready/>

A derelict heritage-listed building in Albion has again been severely damaged by fire.

The 100-year-old building in Talmage St had been the site of three other fires this month.

The latest began about 2.50am last Thursday.

Metropolitan Fire Brigade Commander Bob Undy said the fire began on the ground floor before spreading to the second storey.

It took 20 firefighters about 16 minutes to control the blaze.

Brimbank CIU Det-Sgt Mark Guthrie said the fires had been deliberately lit. "It's an ongoing issue, and quite possible they are being lit by squatters, but we are not sure," he said.

The week before, a fire broke out about 1.20am on August 16.

Brimbank Council general manager Stephen Sully said the council had issued an emergency order to remove all the roof tiles.

"The tiles need to be removed because many are now loose and pose a risk to public safety," he said.

"We're trying to stop the building from further deterioration as it's such a valuable asset, both architecturally and culturally, for Albion and Brimbank as a whole."

The house sits at the rear of the Sunshine City Club car park.

Since tenants left the building about five years ago, there have been a string of fires.

Club manager Brian Smart said the club had applied for a permit for the building to be demolished but backed down due to high legal fees.

The club will appear in the Magistrates' Court this week for non-compliance of a building order last October, which required it to secure and make the property safe in the wake of the other two fires.

Anyone with information about the fire should contact Det-Sgt Gerry Fabro on 9313 3413.

BRIMBANK SCHOOLS RUE STATE CUTS TO VCAL

Brimbank Leader— 31st August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/brimbank-schools-rue-state-cuts-to-vcal/>

Brimbank schools could be forced to axe programs after cuts to vocational education funding.

The State Government has cut \$12 million to schools for co-ordinating the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

The program fosters students wanting to enter a trade rather than higher education.

State secondary schools stand to lose up to \$126,000 each in funding.

Copperfield College's Delahey campus has 150 VCAL students and would lose \$105,000.

Principal Tony Simpson said the short-sighted decision would hit every school in Brimbank.

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"It (the program) cannot afford to run by itself," he said. "It will come at the cost of another program."

Sunshine College principal Tim Blunt said a cut of \$42,000 would affect 30 students and hit college plans for several VCAL students to do school-based apprenticeships.

Victoria University offers VCAL programs at Harvester College and at its Sunshine campus.

Deputy vice-chancellor Prof Anne Jones said the funding cuts would not affect VU's commitment to VCAL. "VCAL programs will continue to be an important and growing part of our work with younger learners," she said.

Opposition education spokesman Rob Hulls said the "cruel and callous cut" would have long-term impacts on education.

Mr Hulls said co-ordinators were essential to run VCAL programs.

"By abolishing them (co-ordinators), Mr Baillieu is abolishing alternative education pathways for our children," he said.

But a spokesman for Skills Minister Peter Hall said the cuts would not hurt teachers or students.

"The funding was intended to establish the program when introduced eight years ago," he said. "That has been achieved and the funding is no longer required."

STUDENTS DEFY AUTHORITIES ONLINE

Brimbank Star— 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/311/story/139388.html>

An internet 'gossip' site previously shut down by authorities has resurfaced under a different name.

Last month, Star reported hundreds of Brimbank high school students were members of the anonymously-run Facebook 'gossip' pages, which cyber-bullied teenagers about their appearance, sexuality and relationships.

Last week, Star discovered the former Taylors Lakes Secondary College Goss site has resurfaced under a different moniker to avoid attention from authorities.

The page, renamed 'Osamaah Binah Ladinah', has more than 250 young members, many of whom have posted comments on the site.

Many are innocuous but one question posed on the site from a Year 7 male student asked, 'Who's the hottest year 7 at TLSC?' with possible answers including several other male and female students.

The anonymous founder of the site also wrote they were getting death threats from other Facebook users of the site.

"I'm not even spreading anything. Look at the last time I posted goss like two days ago and it wasn't (sic) even that bad," the site's founder wrote.

"They're just having fun getting all angry at me."

Other 'gossip' sites still operating within Brimbank include Deer Park Goss which has more than 812 members and St Albans Goss, which has 98 members.

Last month, Star also reported the school's logo was being used on a Facebook site called the Taylors Lakes Compliments page, which has since been deleted.

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A Department of Education and Early Childhood Development spokeswoman said Facebook prohibited content “that is hateful, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence”.

“Bullying, intimidating or harassing any users is also banned,” she said.

“The Department supports schools to report such content to Facebook and request its removal.”

WEST SHOWS HEART

Brimbank Star– 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/311/story/139380.html>

Brimbank residents have united in the wake of the tragic death of Ayen Chol.

A week after the four-year-old St Albans resident was mauled by a pitbull terrier in her home, the community has raised thousands of dollars to help the family, which only months ago lost its home in a fire.

St Albans Early Childhood Learning Centre called for donations in the days following the heartbreaking story and was overwhelmed with the response from the community.

The centre hosted a balloon release in memory of the preschooler and raised enough money to pay for her funeral, which took place on Friday.

Other fundraising events were held across the city, including a sausage sizzle and raffles at Victoria University Footscray campus.

Brimbank resident and liberal arts student Melissa Desantis organised the event after hearing about the tragedy.

Ms Desantis said she was overcome with grief in the days following Ayen’s death and felt compelled to do something to help the grieving family.

The mother of five said staff and students at VU were more than willing to help and everyone had joined in to make the day a huge success.

“I was crying for days,” she said.

“I just kept putting myself in that mum’s position.

“Everyone has come together and I was really surprised at how willing people were to help out.”

Ms Desantis said she was “amazed” at the outpouring of grief from the community and how deeply everyone had been affected by the heartbreaking event.

James van Maanenbergh, president of the Liberal Arts Club, said the fundraising event showed that beyond race and ethnicity, what was important was the community coming together, being tolerant and offering support to their neighbours. He said at the core of the issue was the family who was left without their beloved child.

“What this is about is a mother losing her daughter,” Mr van Maanenbergh said.

The Western Suburbs resident said the group hoped to raise as much money as possible to alleviate the burden on the grieving family.

REWARDING LESSON

Brimbank Star– 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshine-ardeer-albion/311/story/139402.html>

A group of environmentally aware students from Copperfield College last week received a prestigious award for their work on protecting local waterways.

The environment leadership team from the school’s Sydenham Junior campus were presented with the Victorian Science and Mathematics Education Excellence

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Award and received a \$10,000 grant which will go towards further environmental studies at the school.

The group, led by captain Stephanie Tedesco, hosted a youth conference with six other local schools to investigate ways to protect and promote the health of local waterways.

Stephanie, 16, said the conference, which brought together over 100 pupils from across Brimbank with the help of the Brimbank Council, City West Water and the Iramoo Sustainable Centre, was all about "kids teaching kids".

"The conferences were run completely by students," the Year 11 student said.

"It's so important that we get an understanding of the importance of our local environment."

The science student said while the group was surprised to receive the award, the money would go a long way to improving the youth conferences, which they plan to continue well into the future.

Maths and science teacher Anna Vella said the grant would allow the school to provide transport for other schools to attend the conference and would also help the school provide a two-day conference.

"Teaching is different to putting theory into practice," Ms Vella said.

"With the money we can do a two-day program, which will allow the students to put into practice what they have learnt."

Education Minister Martin Dixon said the awards recognised schools which have developed innovative partnerships with industry, tertiary and community organisations to provide students with real opportunities to explore the world of science and maths.

"The school is keeping students engaged and enthusiastic about science and maths through this wonderful program, and I applaud the teachers, school leaders and the school's partners for their good work," Mr Dixon said.

POLICE DOWNPLAY GANG WARFARE

Brimbank Star— 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/311/story/139389.html>

Youth gangs remain a big problem in Brimbank, according to Melbourne youth worker Les Twentyman.

But the area's police said the so-called gangs were not a significant issue within the municipality.

"It always has been an issue in the Brimbank area, since I started working in Sunshine in 1984," Mr Twentyman said.

"Issues from what was the old City of Sunshine, which is now Maribyrnong, are now arising with gangs in Braybrook.

"They've got more entrenched over time, with more disadvantaged youth in the area.

"We've got some very, very severe social issues in Melbourne, especially in the north-west.

"The youth unemployment rates in Brimbank and Maribyrnong are some of the worst in the entire nation."

Mr Twentyman said the gangs were using internet social networking sites to recruit and organise their activities.

He also said gang members "knocked out" a school principal and were attacking other students in corridors at a western suburbs school last year.

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Mr Twentyman said he believed there needed to be youth workers in every western suburbs school and more effort put into engaging young people with education and sport.

Acting Brimbank local area commander, Inspector Paul Allinson, said he did not believe gangs were a significant issue in Brimbank.

The recent media reports of gangs called STA (St Albans), SnK (St Albans N Kings Park), 3020, Sunshine Boys, SKS (Sunshine, Kealba, St Albans), DSC (Dirty Saint Crips) and JSC (Junior Sunshine Crips) operating in the area might not be entirely correct, according to Insp Allinson.

“Some of the named groups aren’t known to exist anymore,” he said.

When asked if gangs were a significant issue in Brimbank, he said:

“I’d say no, but any groups of youth who identify themselves or who, we feel are engaged in anti-social activity, quickly become the focus of monitoring and operations collecting intelligence,” he said.

“We have isolated instances of crime sometimes, involving two or three young people together, but as to whether people consider if that is a gang or not I don’t know.”

He said Brimbank police had youth resource officers who engaged with teenagers and helped steer them away from the juvenile justice system.

In April last year, several Molotov cocktails were thrown into a Toorak house and ‘3020’ was spray painted on its outside wall.

LAWS TIGHTEN LEASH

Brimbank Leader– 30th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/laws-tighten-leash-fbready/>

New legislation aimed at the owners of dangerous dogs is expected to be passed in State Parliament this week.

It follows yet another brutal dog attack on a young girl in Brimbank.

Only days after four-year-old Ayen Chol was fatally attacked by a pit bull-cross on August 17, a 10-year-old Sunshine girl was attacked by a Rottweiler-cross on August 21.

Brimbank Council city development general manager Stephen Sully said the latter dog rushed out from its owner’s property and attacked the girl, who was riding past on a scooter.

The girl was taken to the hospital with puncture wounds.

Mr Sully said the Rottweiler-cross, which has since been put down, was on the council’s dangerous dog register and was monitored. Staff who last inspected the dog’s premises last month noted it complied with legal requirements for keeping a dangerous dog.

The offending dog was declared dangerous after an incident in 2008 in a neighbouring municipality.

Mr Sully said council officers would investigate this month’s attack and might lay charges.

The Baillieu Government intends to increase criminal penalties for offending dog owners and to end the current amnesty for dangerous dog’s pi1137 enabling unregistered dogs to be seized by councils and destroyed.

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Breeds such as American pit bulls are restricted and dogs of any breed that have attacked or threatened people or animals must be registered with a council as dangerous.

Mr Sully said that despite the tragic death of Ayen Chol no more dangerous dogs had been registered with the council.

"We urge all dog owners to register their pets and those who consider their dog dangerous or of a restricted breed to come forward," he said.

To help the council with the location of dangerous dogs, the Brimbank Leader has launched a dob in a dangerous dog campaign.

Last week six dogs were "dobbled in" by worried locals in Derrimut, Sunshine and St Albans.

HOONS NOT GETTING THE MESSAGE: POLICE

Brimbank Star— 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/311/story/139383.html>

New anti-hoon laws have not deterred Brimbank's hoons from driving dangerously, with police impounding 200 vehicles in the area this year.

Between January and last week, Brimbank's Highway Patrol confiscated 200 hoon vehicles across eight months – compared to the 195 they seized in 12 months last year.

Senior Sergeant Ross Burbidge said the State Government introduced tough new legislation on 1 July, allowing police to confiscate hoon drivers' cars for 30 days, instead of the previous punishment of 48 hours.

Last Wednesday, he spoke to Star about Brimbank's hoon problem.

"Up until yesterday they (Brimbank's Highway Patrol) had impounded 200 vehicles so far this year, of which 186 were males," he said.

"Of the 200 this year, 52 were aged 21 or under."

"Since the new legislation came in, in Brimbank alone we've impounded 46 vehicles.

"We thought the legislation may slow people down, but maybe the message hasn't filtered through and people don't seem to care about losing their licence, it's not a badge of honour."

Out the 200 hoons caught in Brimbank this year, 91 were arrested for driving with a disqualified or suspended licence, 44 for speeding at 45km above the speed limit, 36 for improper use of a vehicle (e.g. burn-outs), nine for evading police and eight for careless driving.

Another six were directed by the courts to stop driving, two for speeding 70km or more over the legal limit, two for failing to have proper control of the vehicle and two at 'speeds dangerous'.

"Since the new legislation came in, we thought that might cause it to drop off, but it hasn't," Sen. Sgt Burbidge said.

"Of the 200, 76 were full licence holders, 59 were already disqualified, 48 were probationary drivers, eight were unlicensed, five on their L-plates and one on an international driver's licence."

He said drivers caught hooning faced large fines plus more than \$600 in towing fees when police impounded their cars.

"If you come up a second or third time, the magistrate can sell your car and the owner doesn't get anything," he said.

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Anyone who has information about hoon driving, can contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

WOMEN INVITED TO HEALTH EXAMINATION EXPO

Brimbank Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/women-invited-to-health-examination-expo/2274007.aspx>

North-West women can access information on a range of health issues at an expo on September 4.

The Rotary Club of Keilor's Women's Health Expo will feature stalls set up by health groups like Breast Screen Victoria, Diabetes Australia and the Asthma Foundation. Participants can get a free blood pressure and blood sugar test.

Rotary president Norm Draper says too many women in Brimbank don't get regular health checks because they lead busy lives.

"Women are always busy juggling family, friends and work," he said.

"We ran a men's health project last year and it was very successful. A lot of women approached us and asked if we could do something for them."

The founder of the Brimbank Breast Cancer Support Group, Jean Tavares, says the expo is an excellent idea and she wants more programs like it in Brimbank.

"I know of a case where a woman was told by her doctor that a lump on her breast was just a lump," she said.

"She did nothing about it and the lump turned out to be stage three breast cancer. We need more information sessions on things like cancer held in the local community."

The expo follows a Rotary club-sponsored women's health forum held on Sunday.

"We held a talk at the Errington Community Centre in St Albans and it involved special guests like ABC presenter Debbie Spillane and Victoria University professor Lily Stojanovska," he said.

"The expo forms part of our Step up for Women's Health Project and we're delighted with the response from the community so far."

The expo will be held at the Keilor Hotel between 9am and 1pm.

More details: 0412949302.

NATIVE HEALTH CARE GETS PROACTIVE

Brimbank Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/native-health-care-gets-proactive/2273992.aspx>

Indigenous people living in the west have received free health checks and vital information about access to services at an Aboriginal health day in St Albans.

About 200 indigenous residents attended last Thursday's event which was organised by 12 students enrolled in Victoria University's Mumgu-Dhal indigenous TAFE program.

Indigenous residents are more likely to suffer from chronic illnesses such as diabetes and the event provided information on how they can access appropriate services.

According to the 2006 census, 578 indigenous people live in Brimbank and about 500 live in Melton Shire.

About 24 stalls were set up by groups like Diabetes Australia, Quit, beyond blue and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service [VAHS].

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Mumgu-Dhal program co-ordinator Jaime Binks said she was pleased with the number of indigenous people who attended.

"About 4000 indigenous people live in the western suburbs of Melbourne and the number is rising, but most have to travel to places like Fitzroy to get some health information," she said.

"It is important indigenous people get regular health assessments because chronic illnesses are more prevalent in indigenous populations."

VAHS oral health manager Christine Ingram said it was the organisation's first Brimbank visit.

"We set up a health screening van to test blood-sugar levels as many indigenous people are at risk of getting diabetes," she said.

"[People of Aboriginal descent] were hunters and gatherers so this change in diet over time is partly responsible for high diabetes rates."

The event included performances by the Kutcha Edwards Trio and a taekwondo presentation by the university's sports students.

Mumgu-Dhal student and Footscray resident Ryan Holten-Harding, 17, said he was pleased to see members of the Aboriginal community coming together to learn more about health.

"It is important to have community events like these because it brings people together," he said.

The event received \$6000 funding from Brimbank Council's community grants program.

A FUN WAY TO LEARN FOR ALL AGES

Brimbank Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/a-fun-way-to-learn-for-all-ages/2274006.aspx>

The many chances for adults to learn and have fun in Brimbank will be showcased on September 9.

Community centres and neighbourhood houses will run free workshops at West Sunshine Community Centre on everything from career planning and counselling to computers, relaxation, craft, Zumba, cooking and writing.

From 10am-3pm, 'Spring into Learning' also offers a chance to find out about Brimbank Council's Youth Services and leisure centres as well as U3A.

Lawyers will be on hand to answer legal questions and roaming performers from Westside Circus and the Singlish choir will add a fun twist to the day.

Transport is available from community centres and neighbourhood houses across Brimbank.

Free morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided.

Bookings must be made by tomorrow, phone 93115888.

BROOKLYN FIRM FINED OVER ENVIRO BREACH

Brimbank Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brooklyn-firm-fined-over-enviro-breach/2273999.aspx>

Two Brimbank companies caught breaking the law by the environmental watchdog have been ordered to pay thousands of dollars in fines.

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Australian Tallow Producers in Brooklyn was fined \$20,000 in Sunshine Magistrates Court last week after being found guilty on two charges of allowing offensive odours beyond the boundary of its premises.

Sunshine's Newline Metals International was fined nearly \$6000 by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for washing oil into a stormwater drain.

In February last year, EPA received numerous reports about strong odours from the Australian Tallow site. Inspections confirmed the smell of a "dead carcass" had moved into the area.

EPA director Chris Webb said the court fine was a victory for long-suffering Brooklyn residents.

The Geelong Road company was ordered to pay EPA court costs of \$13,300 and faces further charges next month over alleged odour incidents in August and September last year and an alleged spill of tallow material from the premises.

Brimbank Council's general manager for city development, Stephen Sully, said the prosecution sent a clear message to industry.

"The council is in discussions with Australian Tallow and the EPA in relation to a planning permit application for their Brooklyn site which will assist the operators to bring their property into compliance with industry best practice for their operations," he said.

Hobsons Bay mayor Michael Raffoul has called for tougher penalties for repeat polluters.

"What's \$20,000 when they are affecting the livelihood of our residents at all hours of the day and night? Maybe the CEOs and owners of these corporations causing

the stench should consider a house swap for one month with a Brooklyn resident to exactly understand the seriousness of our issues."

Sunshine scrap metal company Newline Metals International was fined nearly \$6000 last week after washing large quantities of oil from its Judge Street premises into a nearby drain.

DELAHEY ESTATE: BUSES URGED FOR THE ELDERLY

Brimbank Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/delahey-estate-buses-urged-for-the-elderly/2274009.aspx>

A new campaign is aiming to remind Brimbank residents of the many hidden treasures that can be found in their own backyard.

In partnership with Destination Melbourne, Brimbank Council is encouraging residents to experience all the area has to offer as part of the Discover Your Own Backyard tourism campaign.

Participants have the chance to share in a number of prizes.

The campaign is being piloted in Brimbank following Destination Melbourne research which showed the economic benefit of people catching up with friends and relatives in their own area.

Brimbank administrator Meredith Sussex said the words "tourism" and "Brimbank" were not traditionally found together, yet there were lots of wonderful experiences many locals were still to discover.

"We are fortunate to have a national park in our backyard in the shape of the Organ Pipes, as well as other popular attractions like Brimbank Park," she said.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"But it's not just about these major attractions - our city is home to a list of fantastic parks and playgrounds, wonderful historical and natural attractions and many hidden gems."

The community's diversity is behind the wonderful eateries along Alfrieda Street in St Albans and Hampshire Road in Sunshine, and trendy cafes popping up across the area.

The council wants to hear what people love about where they live, where they like to visit and what they like to do.

Residents have the chance to share in prizes, including a Fujifilm S3400 digital camera with accessories, by revealing their local "hidden gem".

Residents can find out more on Facebook about what Brimbank has to offer and how to win.

More information about the campaign will appear in the Weekly and on the council's website www.brimbank.vic.gov.au

DELAHEY ESTATE: BUSES URGED FOR THE ELDERLY

Brimbank Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/delahey-estate-buses-urged-for-the-elderly/2274009.aspx>

Financially and socially disadvantaged elderly people living in a Delahey housing development are being left stranded because of inadequate bus services, a transport advocate claims.

Delahey Action Group secretary David Anderson says there is no bus service within 800 metres of the privately operated Wintringham housing estate.

He's calling on the state government to extend the 902 Smart Bus route through Brimbank.

"There is a real need for a bus service near Kings Road," he said.

"I think it's great the state government handed over the unit block to Wintringham, but they need to provide adequate transport services for the people living there as most of them don't drive."

The Office of Housing handed Wintringham Housing the keys to manage the Kayak Close site in February and about 68 residents are living in the 124-unit development.

Wintringham, a non-for-profit welfare company, is Australia's largest specialised aged-care service for older people who are homeless.

The former Sydenham Village site had been vacant for many months.

Wintringham CEO Bryan Lipmann said residents at the site were at risk of being isolated because they did not have family to rely on for transport.

"Public transport around our Delahey site is desperately needed," he said.

Wintringham resident Mariella, who did not want her surname revealed, said a regular bus service would make it easier for her to visit her doctor and physiotherapist.

BRIMBANK HIGH SCHOOLS LOSE KEY FUNDING

Brimbank Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-high-schools-lose-key-funding/2273998.aspx>

Brimbank high school principals have slammed the state government's decision to slash \$12million a year from a vocational education program for years 11 and 12 students.

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They say the cuts to co-ordination funding could mean parents will have to pay more money to cover course and equipment costs, while the budgets of other school programs may have to be trimmed.

More than 425 high schools and TAFE colleges with students enrolled in the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) will each lose up to \$126,000 from their budgets next year.

VCAL has been offered in Victoria since 2003 and is designed to keep young people in school by combining industry experience with their education.

Higher Education and Skills Minister Peter Hall claimed the cuts would have no real impact on students.

He said the \$12 million funding allocated to schools to co-ordinate the program each year was no longer needed as it was now well established in schools and local communities.

But Copperfield College principal Tony Simpson said the cuts would impact on what the school was able to deliver to its 150 VCAL students.

Its Delahey campus will be among the hardest hit, losing about \$105,000 a year in co-ordination funding.

"We use the funding to allow the teachers time to publish curriculum for the program and we use it to develop work placement contacts in the community," he said.

"We may have to reduce the amount of VCAL places we can provide so we can still run it successfully."

Sunshine College principal Tim Blunt said the \$42,000 which had been cut from its VCAL program could directly affect families of enrolled students.

"We used some of the funding to subsidise the TAFE costs of the 30-odd kids we have in the program," he said.

"It could mean parents will have to cough up more money to cover TAFE costs and equipment costs."

Mr Blunt said the school would also have to use money from other school programs to maintain the VCAL program's standard.

Caroline Springs College student Sarah-May Dykes, who in May was named an outstanding VCAL student by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, also criticised the decision.

Ms Dykes, 18, said she had struggled to concentrate in school until she enrolled in the VCAL program at the start of last year.

As part of her studies she has become an Auskick coach and runs football clinics at primary schools and the Newport Auskick Centre.

She also co-ordinates clinics at Sunshine-Albion Football Club and is an assistant coach for Newport's under-6 side.

"The VCAL program is very important for a lot of students because it gives you another way to finish high school and you get industry-based experience along the way," she said.

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OPPOSITION CALLS FOR BRIMBANK ELECTIONS

Brimbank Weekly— 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/opposition-calls-for-brimbank-elections/2274005.aspx>

The State Opposition is calling on the government to give Brimbank residents back the vote at the next local government elections.

Parliament has been considering a motion to bring forward the poll from November to October 2012 in order for councillors to get on top of issues before the Christmas break.

Shadow local government minister Richard Wynne used a parliamentary debate to demand resumption of democratic rights.

"By the time of the council elections in October next year the voice of the people of the Brimbank area will not have been heard by elected representatives for over 2 years," he said.

As the then local government minister, Mr Wynne sacked Brimbank Council in 2009 following a damning report by the Ombudsman into council corruption.

"With due respect to the minister, we submit that it is in fact time for elected representatives to be returned to Brimbank so that the full expression of residents' views can be heard by elected representatives."

But Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government, David Morris, said the motion for the election date to be brought forward for Brimbank did not guarantee residents would be able to vote.

"The new provision will ensure that Brimbank is brought into alignment with the other councils with the new general election date as proposed by the bill," he said.

Brimbank residents remain divided over whether the council is ready to return to elected representation.

Earlier this month, the Weekly reported that some residents want to see the administrators stay on, while others want new administrators in their place, and many are keen to see democratically elected councillors return.

The decision ultimately rests with Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell, who is yet to commit to a deadline for her verdict.

CASH CRUNCH HITS BRIMBANK LIBRARIES

Brimbank Leader— 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/cash-crunch-hits-brimbank-libraries/2274004.aspx>

Brimbank's five libraries remain short of cash following the state government's refusal to fund public libraries at expected levels.

The government has backed down on plans to strip almost \$6million in funding for libraries but will commit only to retaining the equivalent value of last year's funding.

The 2010-11 funding level for Brimbank of \$1.14 million leaves a \$20,000 hole in the council's budget for the year ahead.

A report to last week's council meeting by general manager of community well-being, Kelly Grigsby, outlined concerns about public library funding.

Local councils have been required to fund a higher proportion of running costs every year as the state's share of funding dwindles.

The council wants to represent the area's 92,430 library users in the libraries ministerial advisory committee's review of funding, saying government funding is essential for covering daily running costs.

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"The library service provides opportunities for our residents to participate in life-long learning and improve well-being," Ms Grigsby said.

BRIMBANK FOOTPATHS TO A BRIGHT DAY

Brimbank Leader— 28th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/brimbank-footpaths-to-a-bright-day-fbready/>

Walking to school will be a bright experience for students in Albion and Ardeer.

Brimbank Council's Footloose Footpaths project, which involved creating seven footpath murals to help enliven the walk to school for children, was completed last week.

The murals showcase games like hopscotch, and local flora, fauna and history.

Located along school routes and near train stations, shops and parks, students from Ardeer Primary, Albion Primary and St Theresa's Primary were involved in the design of the project, part of the council's Streets Ahead program.

BRIMBANK DONORS MAKE DIFFERENCE IN SPECIAL CARE

Brimbank Leader— 27th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/brimbank-donors-make-difference-in-special-care-fbready/>

Generous donations from the Brimbank community have allowed the Sunshine Hospital to help some of the newest yet most vulnerable residents in the west.

Volunteers from the Sunshine Hospital Auxiliary have raised \$106,000 over the past two years to buy four incubators for the hospital's special care nursery, which looks after some of the smallest and most vulnerable babies.

The incubators will help babies who need close observation and monitoring for many reasons, including premature births and those needing respiratory support.

Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said the hospital was "enormously grateful".

"As the population of the west continues to grow at an unpre Leg 2 cedented rate, so too does the demand on our services," Ms Cook said. "With the number of births at Sunshine Hospital increasing year on year, this donation will make all the difference in helping us care for the babies of the west."

Fundraising manager Kathryn Farrell said she hoped the volunteers' efforts would inspire the community to give more support.

Sunshine Hospital is the state's third largest maternity site and annually cares for up to 800 babies in the special care nursery, which is expected to relocate to a larger facility in early 2013.

CITY GIVES SUNSHINE PROGRAM A BREAK

Brimbank Leader— 26th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/city-gives-sunshine-program-a-break-fbready/>

Occasional child care at Sunshine's Duke Street Neighbourhood House has been thrown a lifeline.

Brimbank Council will contribute \$25,000 to cover the program for six months from January 1.

It comes after the State Government announced in June it would stop funding the Take a Break program in December.

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

Without government money Duke Street, which offers 15 places four times a week, would be forced to cut its child care program.

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The centre has offered Brimbank families occasional care for 18 years, receiving \$17,000 to \$19,000 annually from the federal and state governments combined.

Manager Bronwen Merrigan said the council contribution was an “incredible reprieve.”

“Our families will be over the moon but it is not the end of the story,” she said.

“We need to keep the issue before both governments. “

Ms Merrigan said about 50 Brimbank families used the service over the last year.

Council administrator Meredith Sussex said occasional child care was “too important a service” to ignore. “It’s not a long-term solution, but it’s a short-term fix for an immediate problem,” she said.

Duke Street is one of six locations in the city offering occasional childcare, with 92 places available in 32 sessions a week.

State Children and Early Childhood Development Minister Wendy Lovell has said her Government would reinstate funding if the Federal Government did.

Families affected by the cuts rallied outside State Parliament last Thursday with toys.

HOBSONS BAY

HOBSONS BAY GANGS NOT A THREAT

Hobsons Bay Leader— 30th August 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-hobsons-bay-gangs-not-a-threat/>

Police claim gangs pose little threat to safety in Hobsons Bay, despite one youth worker’s comments that gang violence is “entrenched” in parts of the municipality.

The comments come after raids by the Acer Taskforce on properties in Altona North and Altona Meadows as part of a wider operation across the northern and western suburbs which netted 21 firearms and a cache of ammunition. Acer Taskforce Det Sen.-Sgt Paul Tymms said police believed the addresses were linked to people of interest to the taskforce.

“(The raid) was to dry up the supply of ammunition and firearms available to persons that we don’t want to see having access to (them),” Det Sen.-Sgt Tymms said.

But Hobsons Bay Criminal Investigation Unit Sen.-Sgt Kerin Moloney said there was no link between the raids and local gangs.

He said Melbourne gangs usually were motivated by criminal activity or just “hanging out”.

“(And) there is nothing from the local crews that I could identify which would point (to) a criminal motivation,” Sen.-Sgt Moloney said.

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"There would certainly be some anti-social behaviour and low level activity like graffiti but, as a whole, (gangs) are not at the forefront of our criminal investigations."

But western suburbs social worker Les Twentyman said gang violence was "entrenched" in parts of Hobsons Bay. He said gangs of "disadvantaged and disconnected" teenagers, many of whom had been expelled from schools, were "hanging around" Altona, Laverton and Newport.

"We need to get kids included by education and sport, not exclude them by getting expelled and running around in gangs," he said.

HARD HOME TRUTHS IN HOBSONS BAY

Hobsons Bay Leader— 27th August 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/hard-home-truths-in-hobsons-bay/>

Laverton Community Centre chief executive Michael Pernar says a State Government report on lodging houses is "full of holes" and does not go far enough.

Housing Minister Wendy Lovell is seeking submissions on the report, which proposes the introduction of 11 minimum standards to protect rooming house tenants.

Suggestions include fire-safe locks on all bedroom doors, keyless privacy latches on all bathrooms and toilets, security doors and windows, natural light and ventilation in all rooms, and laundry, kitchen and dining facilities.

But Mr Pernar said the minimum standards only "glossed up" what people would expect to find.

"They're keeping the house safe so it doesn't blow up or burn down, but what about the person in there?" he said.

Mr Pernar said the minimum standards needed to address food security, cleanliness, heating and cooling, parking, minimum space, amenity, type of tenants, and rent.

"These are the issues (tenants) are coming to me for, saying 'They're pinching my food. I can't cook in the kitchen - it's too dirty'," he said. "(The standards) seem to be safety oriented, which I appreciate, but they haven't addressed real issues hitting people.

"They've missed the mark."

The Regulatory Impact Statement on lodging houses is available for public comment until October 14.

WILLIAMSTOWN'S COOL SEA MUSEUM

Hobsons Bay Leader— 26th August 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/williamstowns-cool-sea-museum/>

History buffs will be able to wade through Williamstown's maritime tradition at a new museum that opens this Saturday.

Giving Leader a sneak peek of the museum, Seaworks chief executive Rennis Witham said the collection had come together from a variety of sources.

"The collection is largely ex-National Trust with many items donated from the Port of Melbourne Corporation, some individuals, the Ship Lovers Society, the Polly Woodside Volunteers and some (pieces) purchased from those donations," she said.

The collection features dozens of models of ships that visited Williamstown, vintage diving gear, historic ships logs, Harbour Trust paperwork dating back to 1877, paintings and life-size model passengers.

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Ms Witham said the museum was an exciting display for local people to enjoy.

"The National Trust pieces haven't been open to the public for some time and about 20 per cent of the collection has been in private collections or sitting in people's sheds," she said.

"It's never been put together like this before."

Ms Witham said the museum would be open to the public "as much as possible" and that Seaworks was seeking volunteers to help with opening hours.

The Maritime and Site Works Collection at Seaworks will be opened by Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury on Saturday at 2pm.

Details and bookings: Seaworks, 9397 2951.

MARIBRYNONG

WOOLIES' NEW HARDWARE STORE MASTERS OPENS IN BRAYBROOK

Maribyrnong Leader—1st September 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/masters-of-their-universe/>

BRAYBROOK will be home to Australia's first Masters Home Improvement store when the Ballarat Rd outlet opens today.

The newest entrant to the hardware market is a joint venture between Woolworths and US home improvement chain Lowe's.

Store manager Andrew Guy said about 150 staff had completed 10,000 hours of training in preparation for the opening.

More than 35,000 products in categories including lighting, painting, flooring, kitchens, outdoor furniture, gardening, windows and walls will be on offer.

The chain hopes to open 150 stores within five years.

BULLDOGS A STEP CLOSER TO EDGEWATER

Maribyrnong Leader—31st August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/bulldogs-a-step-closer-to-edgewater/>

The Western Bulldogs have again come out on top in the battle to move their social venue from Whitten Oval to Edgewater.

A Western Bulldogs spokesman said the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal last week reaffirmed the Maribyrnong Council's approval of the club's Electronic Gaming Machine Relocation Plan.

"This plan provides for a reduction in electronic gaming machines in the City of Maribyrnong from 511 to 500 prior to the commencement of operations at Edgewater," the spokesman said. "In addition, the Western Bulldogs application for Liquor License for the Edgewater social venue was recently heard, and a decision is pending."

Residents against Inappropriate Development in Maribyrnong, long-time objectors to the move, attended both hearings.

RAIDIM president Enzo De Fazio said the group did not stand for "no development".

They were rallying for "something appropriate to the area across the road from residential premises" and they objected on the grounds of traffic, noise, liquor and violence.

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Meanwhile, Maribyrnong Council is exhibiting a draft gambling policy that aims to reduce the negative impact of gambling on the community.

The policy has a particular focus on EGMs.

The draft gambling policy aims to create a planning scheme amendment to give council the power to reduce the number of gaming machines in socially and economically disadvantaged areas of the city.

MARIBYRNONG CRIME ON THE RISE

Maribyrnong Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/maribyrnong-crime-on-the-rise/2276171.aspx>

Crimes against the person and property have risen significantly in Maribyrnong, according to police.

Statistics released yesterday show overall crime in the municipality increased by 5.5per cent in the 12 months to June.

Footscray's Inspector Tony Long said: "Police in the Maribyrnong police service area (PSA) continue to be challenged by an increasing crime rate.

"Both crimes against the person and against property have risen significantly compared to the previous year. Significant effort has been directed at halting these increases, and progress has been made."

Crimes against the person increased by 9.4per cent and crime against property was up 7.1per cent.

Drug offences were also up, by 18.6per cent.

Inspector Long said PSA and divisional resources had been focused on trouble areas in the suburb.

The introduction of Footscray CBD's closed circuit television was already having an impact.

"The system is up and running, with a formal launch planned for mid-September.

"The system has been a great benefit to police, already providing evidence to support prosecutions and allowing us to direct resources to incidents occurring within the coverage area.

"This system, which forms part of an overarching public safety strategy undertaken by police, the council and state government, will provide a great resource for us to prevent and solve crime." Inspector Long said an announced boost in police numbers would also help.

NICE LITTLE EARNERS IN MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/nice-little-earners-in-maribyrnong/2276177.aspx>

The average income of Maribyrnong residents continues to be above the state average, according to new figures.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' The Wage and Salary Earner Statistics for Small Areas for 2008-09 shows the average income of Maribyrnong residents is \$45,732 per year, compared to the state average of \$45,267.

In 2003-04, Maribyrnong residents earned, on average, \$12 more a year than those across the state.

Stonnington, in Melbourne's inner east, averages the highest income in Victoria with \$63,798.

Lead West's chief executive officer, Anton Mayer, said the increase was due to a different demographic starting to move into the area. "Maribyrnong has a greater

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gentrification than it once did. People are increasingly working in professional services, which are increasing the average salary."

BULLDOGS, COUNCIL SETTLE POKIES RELOCATION

Maribyrnong Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/bulldogs-council-settle-pokies-relocation/2276173.aspx>

The long and costly saga over the Western Bulldogs' gaming venue at Edgewater is all but finished after the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal approved a final condition of the planning permit.

The Bulldogs were required, as part of the permit conditions, to relocate pokies from their other venues before they could go ahead with Club Edgewater.

The relocation plan was not to Maribyrnong Council's satisfaction and the two parties met in VCAT last week where the matter was settled.

All that remains is approval for a liquor licence and a construction management plan.

A liquor licence decision is pending.

Despite opposition from the council and residents, the Western Bulldogs in late 2009 won their battle to build the venue, which will have a 250-seat bistro, sports bar, 70 electronic gaming machines, a cafe, function rooms, 59-room hotel and 295 car spaces.

The hearings cost the council and ratepayers \$825,000.

Maribyrnong Council sustainable development manager Nigel Higgins said the plan meant the removal of 11 machines from the municipality before the club opened and removal of gaming machines from the municipality if the number of machines exceeds 500 at any time between August next year and August 2017.

"Any reduction in the number of machines in our city is a positive step," Mr Higgins said.

"This plan reduces the number of [machines] and so is working toward a reduction of gaming expenditure over time."

Residents Against Inappropriate Development in Maribyrnong spokesman Enzo De Fazio said the group realised the venue would go ahead, but it would make sure it got the best possible outcome for the suburb.

"Our ultimate aim is to ensure the facility has no liquor licence at all. But we are realists and understand there are external pressures beyond our control – even at a State Government level.

"Therefore, any little wins [and] dispensations are better than none at all. Nobody has knocked on my door and said, 'Fantastic, we're getting the Bulldogs social club here'. It's been the opposite - ever since 2008," Mr DeFazio said. "This community will be on their back ensuring they meet their requirements under the construction management plan and their general operations."

Maribyrnong punters lost \$56.6million on the pokies in 2010-11, up marginally on the previous year's figure of \$56.2million. The losses amount to \$986 for each person in Maribyrnong, well above the average state loss of \$611 per person.

The council last week launched a new draft gambling policy, which includes proposed changes to the planning scheme that will allow the council a greater say in where gaming venues can be built in an attempt to reduce the high concentration of pokies in disadvantaged suburbs, such as Braybrook.

The Western Bulldogs did not respond to a request for comment.

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REGIONAL RAIL LINK: RESIDENTS DEMAND SECOND REPORT

Maribyrnong Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/regional-rail-link-residents-demand-second-report/2276180.aspx>

The state government is pressing ahead with works on the Regional Rail Link, but nearby residents are yet to gain any comfort over noise and pollution levels.

The government last week named two consortiums which have been shortlisted to build the Southern Cross station to Footscray stage of the project.

Works on that stage will include modifying the bridge at Dynon Road; building a 1.1-kilometre viaduct between South Kensington and Hopkins Street, a new rail bridge across the Maribyrnong River and a rail-over-rail flyover near the Joseph Road precinct; and realigning tracks on the Werribee line between Maribyrnong River and Hopkins Street.

Contractors have started boarding up houses that have been acquired in readiness for demolition.

But residents whose homes are near the tracks but not being acquired are demanding the release of a second noise and vibration report.

An earlier report by the Environment Protection Authority revealed the works could cause chronic sleep disturbance for nearby residents.

The government is undertaking a further noise and environmental impact study and a spokeswoman for Planning Minister Matthew Guy said a Noise Impact Assessment Report was "currently under consideration".

She did not say whether, or when, it would be released. Residents are seeking assurances that noise abatement will be a key consideration of the project's design and that all investigations are made public.

An RRL Authority spokeswoman said case managers were working with individual occupants on specific circumstances, and a community welfare officer was providing support and links into appropriate services for some residents. "Extensions have been granted to the occupants of properties who have requested to stay beyond August 31. Requests for an extension to the possession date are considered based on individual circumstances. Demolition is expected to start in late September."

VCAL: SCHOOL SPENDING CUTS TO HURT THE VULNERABLE, SAYS UNION

Maribyrnong Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/vcal-school-spending-cuts-to-hurt-the-vulnerable-says-union/2276178.aspx>

Funding cuts to vocational training in high schools are an "attack on the most vulnerable" students, including many in the western suburbs, the education union says.

The state government is cutting \$12 million a year to employ co-ordinators of Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning programs.

The VCAL program is a secondary qualification that, as well as numeracy and literacy, focuses on "hands-on" skills and links students with apprenticeships or traineeships.

VCAL co-ordinators help to develop curriculum and assessment materials, build partnerships with local employment networks, and co-ordinate student administration.

In Maribyrnong, Braybrook College and Footscray City College run VCAL programs. Both schools declined to comment on the cuts. However, Australian Education Union Victorian president Mary Bluett said the cuts would force schools to either take money from other programs to continue supporting VCAL or discontinue the

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program. "Footscray City and Braybrook colleges offer VCAL," she said, "so they are able to cater for all their students and prepare them for life after school. [VCAL can] lead to an apprenticeship or traineeship or serve the needs of the more academic students. This is an attack on the most vulnerable students."

Ms Bluett said the programs were not self-sufficient and co-ordinators were needed to help students find work placement and find more employers as the program expanded.

Victoria University deputy vice-chancellor Professor Anne Jones said the cuts would not affect VU's commitment to the program.

A spokesman for Education Minister Martin Dixon said some VCAL funds had been used by schools to provide teachers with time release from their classroom duties.

"This co-ordination role is now largely undertaken by 'local learning and employment networks' and through workplace learning co-ordinators. The changes in funding should not impact on teachers' jobs and should have no impact on students undertaking VCAL."

REGIONAL RAIL LINK: FOOTSCRAY STREET A GHOST TOWN

Maribyrnong Leader— 31st August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/living-in-a-ghost-town/>

Departure day has fallen upon Footscray residents whose properties are being acquired for the Regional Rail Link.

Today was D-day for residents, but last week Buckley St, Footscray already resembled a ghost town.

Fair Go For Footscray Rail Residents spokesman Nick Fahey reported last Tuesday that the process of boarding up empty houses had started.

Mr Fahey said though the group had fought for houses to be boarded up to prevent squatters or people damaging the properties, it made the street seem "very ghostly".

Mr Fahey said many residents had negotiated with the Regional Rail Link Authority to extend the vacancy date.

"It would appear that the Regional Rail Link Authority is responding and that they're being more lenient than before," he said.

While some residents had been in luck and received extensions from the authority, he said it was difficult to know how many people had "finally bitten the bullet and left".

But Mr Fahey said the acquisitions were not the only hardship faced by residents.

"In relation to the people staying on, there's a big issue there with the noise and vibration report that's gone to the planner."

Following a damning Noise Analysis EPA report completed last year, Mr Fahey said a new Noise Impact Assessment Report had been completed and was now with Planning Minister Matthew Guy.

Mr Guy's spokeswoman confirmed he had the report but said she could not give a timeline on when the minister would make a decision.

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LEARN TO CREATE A KITCHEN GARDEN IN SIX HOURS

Maribyrnong Leader – 31st August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/learn-to-create-a-kitchen-garden-in-six-hours/>

Picking up on the popularity of food, cooking and DIY television programs, Victoria University will run a course to help residents build their own source of fresh produce.

Sandra Pullman, a horticulturalist with 20 years of experience, will teach a six-hour course Create a kitchen garden at VU's community garden in Seddon.

Participants will learn how to construct garden beds, create healthy soil, choose seasonal vegetables, understand companion planting, use water efficiently, and understand fertilisers and mulching and how to control pests and diseases.

The course fittingly follows the approval of the Growing Food, Growing Maribyrnong project in July under which Maribyrnong Council aims to create more than 315 community garden plots.

Leader readers were quick with suggestions for possible garden plot sites for the council to consider including: West Footscray YMCA; West Footscray Senior Citizens Centre; on land around Footscray City Primary School and part of the Melbourne Bus Lines car park on the corner of Buckley and Albert streets.

VU's kitchen garden course will be run on September 3 and 10 from 9.30am-12.30pm at Urban Green Living and Learning Hub, 113-115 Albert St, Seddon, at a cost of \$180 for both days. Bookings: 9919 8545 or urbangreen.hub@vu.edu.au.

MARIBYRNONG DRUG LAB UNCOVERED

Maribyrnong Leader – 30th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/maribyrnong-drug-lab-uncovered/>

Police are dismantling a volatile drug lab found in Maribyrnong this morning.

The house in Bloomfield Avenue was one of six properties across the western suburbs raided as part of Operation Matador – a 10 month investigation into the manufacture and trafficking of ecstasy.

Search warrants were also executed at properties in Navigator St, Maribyrnong, Mount Alexander Rd in Ascot Vale, Honeyeater Grove in Narre Warren, Eucalyptus Dr in Maidstone and McIntyre Dr in Altona.

Four men were arrested as part of the operation, including a 22-year-old Maribyrnong man, a 26-year-old from Maidstone, a 20-year-old from Altona and 20-year-old from Narre Warren.

Drug Taskforce Detective Acting Inspector Dale Flynn said the “sophisticated (and) clandestine” laboratory was in an extremely volatile state.

“We consider the lab uncovered in Bloomfield Ave to be extremely dangerous to the public,” Insp Flynn said.

“We are concerned about the chemicals involved which could potentially be explosive with some considered carcinogenic.

“To be able to successfully dismantle a laboratory of this nature following a ten month long investigation is very pleasing; the potential for something to have gone wrong was very real.”

Clandestine Laboratory Squad investigators and specialist chemists are at the scene.

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WORKSHOP FOR ALL GREEN THUMBS

Maribyrnong Star – 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/311/story/139503.html>

Residents with green thumbs and interests in the environment are invited to attend two sustainability workshops.

Maribyrnong City Council is presenting a Green Lunchbox Session and Greening Maribyrnong Conversation in September, which will both provide information about sustainable living.

The Green Lunchbox Session, 'Your Spring Veggie Garden', will teach residents about the best vegetables and herbs to plant in spring to enjoy healthy food throughout the season.

'The Egg and I: Keeping Chickens in Your Backyard' will be the topic for the Greening Maribyrnong Conversation, exploring all you need to know about keeping happy, health chickens at home.

'Your Spring Veggie Garden' will be held from 12.30-1.30pm on Wednesday 7 September in the Function Room at Maribyrnong Council offices.

'The Egg and I: Keeping Chickens in Your Backyard' will be held from 11am-1.30pm on Sunday 11 September at West Footscray Neighbourhood House.

To register or for more information on either session contact the Sustainability Officer on 9688 0357 or visit www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

HIGH ON HEROIN

Maribyrnong Star – 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/311/story/139486.html>

Maribyrnong is considered one of the worst municipalities in Victoria for heroin abuse, according to a study by Turning Point and Eastern Health.

The study comes hot on the heels of police announcing a series of new operations targeted at eliminating the presence of drugs in Footscray's CBD.

According to the report, Maribyrnong is ranked second behind the City of Yarra, clocking up almost 200 heroin-related incidents between 2009 and 2010.

Since 2008, the number of ambulance response to heroin overdoses across the municipality has increased from 106 to 123 incidents for 2010.

The number of heroin-related call outs has also increased since 2008, rising from 174 to 198 for 2010.

Footscray Inspector Tony Long said the high number could be reduced by targeting ways people had access to drugs.

"It's our responsibility to minimise drug access in the community, and by doing that we'll prevent the number of people overdosing in the streets, and consequent crimes that stem from substance abuse."

Maribyrnong Mayor Sarah Carter said council was adamant in reducing the number of drug-related incidents in the area.

"Our priority is to ensure safety in the broader community, and council has been implementing programs to ensure rehabilitation remains the forefront of our actions," Cr Carter said.

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The report also revealed the number of alcohol-related ambulance attendances has decreased in the past 12 months.

Since July 2009, the number of alcohol-related ambulance attendances across Maribyrnong per month has decreased from 24 to 12.

The total number of alcohol-related attendances per annum across the municipality has dropped from 202 to 190 between 2008 and 2010.

"The council's inclusion of the alcohol exclusion zone in Footscray's CBD has changed the way we police alcohol abuse," Insp Long added.

"Police presence has been one of the main deterrents of people being drunk in a public place," he said.

Insp Long also said police would continue operations to reduce the presence of drugs and alcohol within Maribyrnong.

"We've got some big operations planned between now and the end of the year," he said.

"We're also working closely with our Operations Repose Unit, which will deploy a greater number of officers across Footscray's CBD in the coming months."

A Western Health spokeswoman said most overdose incidents were dealt with by Ambulance Victoria and didn't necessarily come into the hospital.

POKIES UNDER REVIEW

Maribyrnong Star— 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/311/story/139491.html>

The density of pokie machines across Maribyrnong could be significantly reduced, if a new council draft policy is adopted.

Last week Maribyrnong City Council announced a renewal to its previous gambling policy, which will grant greater regulatory powers to councils.

Prior to 2003, local government areas only had the capacity to advocate on the number of electronic gaming machines in the area.

The new policy also an aim to reduce the impact gambling has on disadvantaged communities.

Victorian Interchurch Gambling Taskforce chairperson Dr Mark Zirnsak said he was glad councils were taking initiative to reduce pokie machine numbers in their areas.

"These policies are important and need to be imposed within councils to make the state government aware of their pokie machine caps," Dr Zirnsak said.

"At the Interchurch Gambling Taskforce, our role is to minimize the harm and maximize any community benefits from gambling".

But Monash University Department of Health Social Sciences Dr Chris Livingstone said the odds are stacked against council most of the time.

"Unfortunately, some of the recommended council policies don't hold up against state legislation in court. Take the Edgewater development in Maribyrnong, for instance. That caused a lot of pain for the council when it was approved by VCAT".

"Until we have serious reforms proposed by the Federal Government, the community problem with gambling will not go away."

Gamblers in the City of Maribyrnong lost more than \$56 million through gaming machines in 2010/11, with Braybrook suffering the heaviest losses with \$16.6 million. Currently, there are 439 gaming machines operating across the municipality, with losses equating to \$1000 per adult.

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Across Maribyrnong, the number and concentration of electronic gaming machines in disadvantaged areas is significantly higher than other areas.

Community members wishing to provide feedback on the draft gambling policy should contact council's social planning and research officer on malcolm.roberts-palmer@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au.

PILLS CAUSING PAIN IN MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Leader – 30th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/pills-causing-pain-in-maribyrnong/>

Over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse in Maribyrnong has more than doubled.

The latest Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre survey shows that the steepest increase in ambulance call-outs was linked to the misuse of common pain relievers.

The survey also shows that in the 2009/10 financial year heroin overdoses increased 16 per cent in Maribyrnong.

The 123 heroin overdoses ambulances attended - the second highest number in Melbourne - accounted for 10 per cent of all metropolitan heroin overdoses.

But it was the rise in call-outs for legitimate medications that stood out. In 2009/10, there were 31 analgesic (painkiller) related call-outs in Maribyrnong, an increase of 63 per cent from the previous year.

Ambulances attended 34 call-outs to anti-depressant related incidents, a 48 per cent increase.

While call-outs for sleeping pill abuse were stable, the number, at 102, was significant.

Beyond blue board director and psychiatrist Michael Baigent said the number of anti-depressant scripts written over the past decade had been steadily increasing.

Associate Prof Baigent said there were some people who experienced side effects, but if people took the medications as prescribed and were being monitored, there should not be a problem.

Turning Point senior research fellow Belinda Lloyd said that if medications were used inappropriately, there could be a negative outcome.

In particular, Dr Lloyd said the risks associated with mixing prescription drugs and alcohol was significant.

In good news, there has been a 6 per cent decrease in the number of alcohol related call-outs.

Mental Health Minister Mary Wooldridge said that as part of the development of Victoria's drug and alcohol strategy, public consultation had started and the Government had called for submissions. Details: health.vic.gov.au/aod/strategy

Overdose Awareness Day is tomorrow, Wednesday, August 31.

Support for people who have a problem with drug use is available through DirectLine on 1800 888 236 or counsellingonline.org.au

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MORE BITE FOR ATTACK-DOG LAWS

Maribyrnong Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/more-bite-for-attackdog-laws/2274002.aspx>

A national overhaul of dangerous dog laws appears likely in the wake of the fatal mauling of Ayen Chol.

Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten has urged caucus to consider stricter controls on dangerous dogs, a call taken up by Justice Minister Brendan O'Connor.

Mr O'Connor will work with the Attorney-General and his state counterparts to bring each state's laws into line.

"These types of attacks are horrific and they touch the heart of the community and of every parent," he said.

Both parties in Victoria have vowed to put politics aside and toughen the Crimes Act to impose criminal penalties and possible jail terms on owners of dangerous dogs.

Brimbank Council chief executive Nick Foa said it supported the move.

"Fines of \$4500 - the maximum allowable - are completely inadequate when it comes to protecting the community."

Brimbank has 13,355 registered dogs, including 33 of the 243 dangerous dogs on the state's dangerous dogs' register.

Most are guard dogs used to patrol factories and industrial estates.

Monash University Accident Research Centre research shows an average of one child a day is taken to hospital as a result of an injury from a dog attack across the state.

Two-thirds of respondents to an online Weekly poll wanted pit bull dogs outlawed in Victoria.

MARIBYRNONG NUDE SWIMMERS BAN

Maribyrnong Leader– 30th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-maribyrnong-nude-swimmers-ban/>

Swimming rights for a nudist group at the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre have been suspended by the local council.

The Solar West Nude Leisure Group had been using the MAC every second Saturday for "swim nights" for the past 20 years without incident until last week when Channel 9 News and the Herald Sun reported that a photograph of naked children was posted on the group's website.

In response, Maribyrnong council suspended the group's use of MAC.

"The use of council's facility by this group has been suspended as this group had posted inappropriate photographs on a publicly accessible website that were taken within council's facility and were completely inconsistent with community standards," Maribyrnong CEO Vince Haining said.

Mr Haining said council officers would meet with the group and seek further information.

But a spokesman for Solar West Nude Leisure Group said the suspension was mutually agreed upon.

The spokesman said the group had received information that a protest was being organised for last Saturday, August 27.

The spokesman said the posting of a photo - taken six years ago - on a website that had been inactive since 2007 was an oversight.

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He said the image was “miniscule” and did not identify any particular individual.

“It’s not even really identifiable that it’s a child except that they’re standing next to taller people.”

He said the group had 52 paid-up memberships for about 100 adults and there were “a couple” of children in the club ranging in age from babies to teenagers, but they did not attend often.

STATE GOVERNMENT BANS BONG SALES

Maribyrnong Leader– 29th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/state-government-bans-bong-sales/>

BONG sales in Melbourne will be outlawed.

The legislation, which will come into effect from January 1, 2012, bans the sale, display and supply of bong components and bong kits from retail outlets.

Health Minister Mary Wooldridge said the ban will stop bongs being seen as a normal retail item.

“While cannabis remains an illegal drug, one of the commonly used methods of consuming it – the bong – is widely available to buy,” she said.

Cannabis is the most used illicit drug in Victoria, with one third of Victorians over 14 having used it.

“We want to stop the confusing message that while it’s okay to display and sell equipment used for smoking cannabis it’s illegal to smoke cannabis,” Ms Wooldridge said.

The restrictions will also be applied to limit the display of the traditional hookahs.

TOTTENHAM RATED 'WORST'

Maribyrnong Leader– 27th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/tottenham-rated-worst/>

Tottenham is Melbourne’s worst train station, commuters say, and West Footscray and Footscray aren’t far behind.

More than 1800 people contributed to the pt4me2 Better Station Survey, which placed West Footscray as Melbourne’s third-worst and Footscray eighth-worst.

The ranking came as no surprise to Maribyrnong Leader, which has revealed the shocking state of the station in many stories over the past year - and highlighted issues such as car parking, safety and most recently racist graffiti.

Safety and accessibility were also worries at West Footscray and Footscray stations.

Metropolitan Transport Forum chairwomen Cr Jackie Fristacky said many stations were in a “time warp”. Cr Fristacky said: “There will have to be improvement, but there are short-term things that can be done, such a security and lighting, to improve stations.”

She said that, despite an upgrade, Footscray station was still on the list because it was “designed for show, not users”. The station needed ramps or escalators and the leaking roof fixed.

More surveys will be organised before the forum presents its budget submission for 2012-13 improvements.

At last week’s council meeting, ward councillor Catherine Cumming spoke of issues at Tottenham station, calling for the Rupert St car park to be developed, the intersection and underpass on Ashley Rd fixed and for landscaping.

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The council has previously called for access to be improved.

WEAPONS DOWN IN MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Leader— 26th August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/weapons-down-in-maribyrnong-fbready/>

It was the final person searched at Footscray Station last week that allegedly had the biggest haul - a knife and an imitation gun.

Of the 433 people checked by about 40 police officers with mobile walk-through metal detectors and hand-held wands, just two men were allegedly carrying weapons.

Two other men were found to have outstanding warrants and several penalty notices were handed out for transport infringements, including for failing to have a valid ticket.

A 28-year-old Laverton man was arrested and released pending summons for possessing an imitation firearm.

Another man found carrying a knife was issued a \$1000 fine.

Transit safety division Sen.-Sgt Tony Henry said Operation Omni, carried out during the day last week, had been a success and commuters and station staff had appreciated the police presence.

He said while the imitation gun was "particularly worrying", it was clear the message was getting out about not carrying weapons.

At a similar operation last year, after the search powers were first introduced, 12 weapons were found, including knuckledusters, a machete and knives after just 182 people were searched.

Anti-knife campaigner and western suburbs social worker Les Twentyman said he would like to say the problem with weapons was getting better, but evidence was to the contrary. "Every day we hear of stabbings," Mr Twentyman said.

He said the search was a small component of the fight against knife crime and education was needed to address the fear that made people feel the need to carry weapons.

Last week's operation was part of a three-week blitz around public transport running until September 2. Anyone caught carrying a prohibited weapon in a public place faces a \$1000 fine.

ON A KNIFE EDGE

Maribyrnong Weekly— 25th August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/on-a-knife-edge/2270440.aspx>

In the wake of England's worst riots in decades, are there lessons to be learned about engaging with our own disenfranchised youth? How do we deal with a growing weapons and gang culture in Melbourne's west, and are ethnic gangs the elephant in the room? There are no black and white answers, as Goya Dmytryshchak discovers.

The splattered blood looks like a Rorschach test — you know, those ink blots used by psychologists to analyse people's perceptions.

Looking at the rust-coloured splotch at Sunshine station, youth worker Les Twentyman sees the result of poverty, disadvantage and desperation.

Les's childhood home stands unchanged in Braybrook — one of Australia's most disadvantaged suburbs. At a shopping strip nearby, where some kids had a shootout and someone was killed, Les's father had a shop when Les was in grade 3. Not much has changed.

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"Why the bloody hell they don't pull the bloody crap down, because it's ugly," Les says, looking at the shopping centre.

"I had a visiting police officer from South Carolina ... and he couldn't believe it. He said, 'In my town that would be knocked down within hours.'

"Why do you have these sort of eyesores there? It doesn't give any self-esteem to the kids that live in the area."

Les recalls with dismay the words of a shopkeeper who has since left.

"He said, 'Braybrook is shit and the kids are like flies.' What a thing to say to a young person."

Driving alongside the railway line, Les spots a woman sitting near a tree which has bags hanging by string from the branches. It looks like a hobo's Christmas tree.

"Homeless people sleep in those trees over there; all the food's tied up in the tree so the dogs don't get to it," Les says. "Now, this is Melbourne, the place to be."

Approaching Sunshine, he notes a primary school where 78 per cent of the families are on welfare. Then there's 50,000 students expelled or suspended from Victorian schools last year.

"Poverty is an ugly, ugly situation because with that comes crimes, gangs, drugs — it's the same the whole world over," Les says.

"What you've seen is the creation of, sadly, sort of 'ghettos' in various parts of Melbourne, where the youth are really battling to be connected in any way."

Some kids who have nothing have reclaimed their suburb and postcode as "gang" names. Or gang identities are forged along ethnic lines.

Les says the authorities are finally acknowledging the existence of gangs, with a local 13-year-old ward of the state recently granted bail on the condition he wouldn't hang around a gang.

Les said the police had also been forced to address the escalating problem of kids carrying knives.

Twice he's been stabbed, first by a woman, then by a stranger who slashed Les's neck through an open car window.

But even fines up to \$12,000 were not deterring the majority.

"There's kids that said we couldn't care if it's a million dollars," he said.

"Kids aren't feeling safe and that's why they're arming themselves."

Feeling threatened by a person with dark skin is a form of racism, says Victoria University associate professor Michele Grossman.

As co-author of a study into young people's perceptions of safety and policing in Brimbank, she found Sudanese and Pacific islanders especially resented being viewed as gangs.

Released last year, the report is the first commissioned by Victoria Police into gangs in Melbourne's west.

"In my view, there's only one possibility about why we find somebody with dark skin menacing and that is because we have some form of racism in our own perception," Michele says.

"I mean, I feel more frightened if I see a man in a deserted space than if I see a woman. Is that sexism — I don't know?"

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Her study suggests that police consider acknowledging the existence of gangs instead of “continuing a strategy of downplaying their existence and operation”.

Ms Grossman says three-quarters of the 558 participants, aged 15-19, thought there were gangs in their local area.

“But they were also very clear in their description between what a group is and what a gang is and one young person summed it up in a very pithy way: ‘Gangs give you the glare and groups give you the smile.’

“There’s not a lot of agreement in the literature about what constitutes a gang. There’s still a lot of debate about that.”

Her report suggests that instead of referring to a “gang”, alternative terminology could be used such as “crews, alliances or street groups.”

She said poles and bats — weapons of opportunity — were used more than knives. But convincing young people that carrying a knife would not make them safer remained the single biggest challenge.

Sunshine station was perceived as the No.1 hot spot for conflict and the place young people felt least safe in Brimbank.

Senior Sergeant Tim Hardiman says the underpass would not be built under today’s crime-prevention design guidelines.

“You can’t see the end so you don’t know what’s in there; it’s a bit like walking into a cave.

“If you change the perception of the space, you change the perception of the individual walking into that space. You don’t feel like you’re walking into a trap.”

He said youths needed to be taught how to de-escalate violence and assess their options in a potentially violent situation.

“Can I remove myself, can I talk my way out of it, can I deflect these people, can I distract them and then remove myself?

“There’s a number of skills which I think young people don’t have, which we used to have, and we almost have a built-in ability these days to jump from contact to a high escalation of large violence.”

Daniel says he will no longer talk about his attack.

Asked if he thinks about it much, he exhales one long breath. “Every day.”

Last month, at Altona, he was surrounded by about five assailants, robbed, punched up to 60 times and stabbed twice in the stomach.

Only after a king-hit laid him out did the youths leave, stepping on his back as they went.

The youth worker in Moonee Valley, Hobsons Bay and Brimbank said his attackers were of Islander appearance and their accents sounded Maori.

Alicia Matene, of the Te Roopu Atawhai local Maori group, says the community was horrified at the stabbing, but she had been annoyed by the attackers’ description.

“Polynesians are born, brought up and educated in New Zealand, therefore, they have the same accent.

Their appearance is Polynesian whether they are Maori, Samoan or Pacific Islanders.

“[I] felt ashamed when the perpetrator was described as Maori. A statement like that serves only to scare the wider community from associating with Maoris.”

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Daniel, who works with youths of Maori and other backgrounds, says he believes it was a random assault.

“I was at the wrong place at the wrong time, it was a random thing.

“People stuff up, people make mistakes. Obviously to go beyond graffiti and chroming and actually stab people, that’s going beyond the limit.

“But I’m also Catholic, too, so I believe in forgiveness.”

To date, police have not identified any suspects. Nor have they released any descriptions.

Daniel says early intervention, education and youth workers in schools could turn lives around.

“I’ve seen a lot of disadvantage growing up, a lot of mean things going on, that happen, that people don’t realise in the community. Behind closed doors, it happens.

“A lot of violent things, like what happened to me in the stabbing.

“There’s student welfare co-ordinators, but how many classes get taught about drugs and alcohol, carrying knives, the causes of violence?

“They teach sex ed at school — why not learn about the effects violence has on people, not only the individual, but the family as well.

“We need more youth workers out on the street, outreach workers. Youth workers in schools would be amazing.”

His gaze drops to his heavily inked hands. A tattoo across the knuckles of one reads HOPE. It may have faded, but it’s there forever.

MELTON

MELTON MP'S CALL FOR STATION CAMERAS IS TOO LATE

Melton Leader— 1st September 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-mps-call-for-station-cameras-is-too-late/>

Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella’s call for security cameras to be installed at Melton railway station has come too late, a Melton councillor says.

Deputy mayor Broden Borg said he supported the push for increased security at the station, but demanded to know why Mr Nardella did not act when Labor was in government.

“I support the need for increased safety measures at the station,” Cr Borg said.

“But it would have been good if he (Mr Nardella) supported my call a year ago and raised it in Parliament while he was in government.

“The issues around safety, car parking and increased services should have been addressed many years ago.”

Cr Borg, Melton Council’s delegate on a nine-person transport advisory group, has previously labelled the Melton railway station as unsafe after an incident where he and his sister were attacked on a platform in 2009.

Mr Nardella said security cameras needed to be installed in the station’s car park after a recent spate of attacks on cars.

The most recent attack was between 10pm on August 20 and 11am on August 21 when a Toyota was keyed and a dint was put in its back bumper.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



"Several cars were left suspended after having their wheels removed while another had its back window smashed - all this occurring over the space of two days," Mr Nardella said.

"I have written to the Minister for Transport urging that immediate action be taken to upgrade security at the car park and in particular that security cameras be installed to make the car park more secure, especially at night.

"An upgraded security package of \$800,000 for the car park and station was ready to go as a high priority for the previous Labor government."

"I ask the Baillieu government to act quickly to redress this urgent matter."

MELTON SHIRE'S KINDER CRISIS

Melton Leader – 31st August 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/meltons-kinder-crisis/>

More centres will be built and weekend sessions considered to cope with the demands on Melton shire's stretched kindergarten services.

Council-run four-year-old kinder placements are quickly filling for next year, and there is pressure to provide enough placements to meet demand after next year.

From 2013, a Council of Australian Governments' agreement will see children required to have access to 15 hours of four-year-old kindergarten 12 months before school, up from 10 hours.

In addition, population growth figures suggest there will be a further 69 enrolments in Melton shire in 2012, a 5.7 per cent increase.

Enrolment rates will have surged 31.9 per cent since 2008, up from 1114 placements to 1501.

Council's general manager community services Maurie Heaney said the council was working on strategies to cope with the demand.

"We believe we're OK for next year, but the real test will be 2013," Mr Heaney said. "Based on the percentage of enrolments according to our growth, we've delivered enough to cope with that for next year."

Mr Heaney said there was still space in 2012 at the Arnold's Creek centre, Melton South's D.J. Cunningham facility and a kinder in Melton West if needed.

He said designs would begin on a kindergarten site at the corner of Clarkes and Brooklyn roads in the Botanica Springs Estate, and a site in the shire's east had also been earmarked for a new one.

A kindergarten is also planned in the Eynesbury town centre and the council has options to extend the present centre.

Mr Heaney said while the council had not rejected any families yet, not all parents would receive their first preference. "We haven't knocked back anyone as yet, but we won't hide the fact that it's been very close," he said.

Mr Heaney said one option to relieve the pressure on placements was out-of-hours Saturday morning kinder sessions, which have been tried with "a lot of interest".

Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella said he was confident the council had planned appropriately to meet growing kindergarten needs.

"However, should there be any shortages of kinder positions, I will, as I have always done, work with Melton Council to raise their concerns with the Government and in the Parliament," he said.

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WORKSHOP ON RIGHTS

Melton Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/workshop-on-rights/2275128.aspx>

A human rights workshop will be held at Melton's civic centre next Wednesday.

It's free and is part of a series of workshops being held across Victoria aimed at representatives of vulnerable communities and local government.

The workshops are being organised by the Australian Centre of Human Rights Education at RMIT University, the Victorian Local Government Association and the Victorian Council of Social Services.

An event spokesman said too many Australians were not aware of their human rights.

"They need and want education," he said. "[The workshop will] create a better culture of human rights in those organisations that deliver public services to the community."

The workshop will include case studies designed to show ways to improve the achievement of human rights for people in Melton.

It will be held from 1-4pm on September 7. Registrations: <http://humanrightsmelton.eventbrite.com/>

NOT A DROP WASTED IN NEWEST SUBURB TOOLERN

Melton Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/not-a-drop-wasted-in-newest-suburb-toolern/2275122.aspx>

Melton's newest suburb will be Australia's first water-neutral postcode, the local water authority has confirmed.

Water recycling projects and infrastructure upgrades will ensure that the Toolern development, on 381 hectares south of Melton, recycles and harvests more water than its residents use.

As reported by the Weekly, the state government has given final approval for the Toolern project, a joint development of Melton Council and Lend Lease.

Construction is scheduled to begin by the end of the year and Toolern is expected to have 50,000 residents by 2030.

Residents of Melton's recent Eynesbury development are already using recycled water, but planning for Toolern takes sustainability a step further.

Western Water's managing director, John Wilkinson, said Toolern would produce about the same amount of water that it uses.

"The reason it is water-neutral and not water self-efficient is that the stormwater harvested will not be re-used within Toolern," he said.

"Some will be probably be used for irrigation around the region."

Recycled water can be used for toilets, gardens, washing cars, public open spaces and firefighting. It is not used for drinking, cooking, bathing or showering, laundry or swimming pools.

Melton Environment Group spokesman Daryl Akers said Toolern was an example of how future developments should proceed.

"Water is becoming too precious a resource to be wasted and we can no longer afford to use our water only once," he said.

"Re-use of our waste water is becoming a necessity. We can't afford to continue to flush drinking water down the toilet."

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Council general manager for planning and development Luke Shannon said Toolern's water-neutral status was a great result.

"It is really good to have recycled water for toilets, washing cars and large ovals because it means there will be less reliance on drinking water and the alternative water supply means there will be less restriction with irrigation. Areas will be greener."

Mr Shannon said recycled water from Toolern and Eynesbury would help authorities cater for Melton Shire's continued growth.

Eynesbury resident Narelle Pritchard said having access to recycled water made gardening and washing cars "guilt free".

"In our neighbourhood, all the gardens are really nice; people still have lawns and garden strips," she said.

"It is good to have a nice garden and not feel guilty. We are still vigilant with our drinking water, but it is much more convenient."

Visiting Toolern and Eynesbury last week, Water Minister Peter Walsh said such developments were the way of the future.

He said the self-sustaining nature of Toolern was important as it was one of the state's lower rainfall areas.

With the population of its service area projected to grow from 150,000 to 450,000 by 2030, Western Water has planned more than \$200 million in infrastructure upgrades in the next five years.

They include a \$3.1 million upgrade of the Bacchus Marsh recycled water plant, \$2.8 million on the Exford Road water mains in Melton, and \$4.3 million for a recycled water scheme in Gisborne.

COAL SEARCH: PROTESTERS RALLY AS ANGER GROWS

Melton Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/coal-search-protesters-rally-as-anger-grows/2275115.aspx>

Objectors to Mantle Mining's coal exploration plans in Moorabool will turn up the heat on the state government this week at a rally in Melbourne, demanding the licence be scrapped.

On Thursday, Moorabool residents will join statewide environmental lobby groups Friends of the Earth and Environment Victoria to protest against a licence for exploring brown coal in a 38,000-hectare area between Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.

The rally will be held at 1pm at City Square on the corner of Collins and Swanston streets in Melbourne's CBD.

Friends of the Earth spokesman Shaun Murray said the rally would voice residents' anger about their land rights and opposition to the prospect of open-cut coal mining.

He said Mantle's mining plans could potentially destroy prime farmland, strain water supplies, result in open-cut mines near residential communities, and open a new coal-export industry.

"I hope the government takes notice because I feel like the public consultation about this whole project has been virtually non-existent, so it needs real public scrutiny," Mr Murray said.

As the protests against coal exploration continue to grow, an email campaign to Mantle's underwriter, Intersuisse, urges it to stop raising equity for the Bacchus Marsh-Ballan mining project.

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The email, with more than 140 names attached, asks Intersuisse to use an exit clause in its contract with Mantle and withdraw from the "controversial project".

Mr Murray said about 50 people, who had emailed Intersuisse, received a "bizarre" email from an unknown account, CoalLuva@gmail.com saying: "Social causes are admirable but spam is illegal".

"I can't see any explanation other than it's someone from Intersuisse," Mr Murray said.

David Pryles, corporate finance manager for Intersuisse's local associate Phillip Capital, denied the company had any involvement in the email response.

He said Phillip Capital would not reply to objectors forwarding the email.

"We give them no credibility and don't take them into account," he said.

But Mr Pryles remained unclear about whether the company would terminate funding if a community backlash continued.

"We haven't decided our position on this yet," he said.

Moorabool Environment Group secretary Deborah Porter, who will attend Thursday's rally, hopes it will help raise community awareness about the coal exploration project.

NEW RESERVES 'POSE FIRE RISK'

Melton Weekly— 30th August 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-reserves-pose-fire-risk/2275120.aspx>

A group of Mount Cottrell landowners who fear the creation of 15,000 hectares of new grassland reserves will dramatically increase the risk of fire will take their concerns to the steps of State Parliament today.

The state government wants to establish two new grassland reserves in Melbourne's west through compulsory land acquisition.

Landholder Dominique Morizzi believes land close to residential properties near Mount Cottrell should not be under consideration.

She said the reserves should instead be located in an area with a lower fire risk, such as the plains south of Werribee.

"I don't think the lessons of the past have been learnt," she said, adding she feared scenes of devastation like the Lara and Ash Wednesday fires.

Fellow Mount Cottrell resident Corey Bugeja fears any grasslands managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) would become "overgrown" and lead to "another Black Saturday".

Ms Morizzi said a safer option would be to put the grassland reserves 10 kilometres south of the Werribee River, closer to the You Yangs.

"With the proposed grasslands in Mount Cottrell, who will be responsible in the event of a grasslands fire? Will it be the local fire brigade or the DSE? Is there a fire contingency plan for the 15,000 hectares of grasslands?"

A DSE spokesman said that the department and CFA worked in partnership on public and private land throughout Victoria.

"The land surrounding Mout Cottrell is still privately owned and any fire response would be the responsibility of CFA. When the land becomes protected public land, fire suppression on that land will become DSE responsibility."

University of Melbourne senior research fellow Dr Kirsten Parris organised a meeting of 30 scientists from the university, RMIT and La Trobe to plan two submissions to the government on the proposed expansion of Melbourne.

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Dr Parris said the expected development of Melbourne's west was likely to destroy more than 8000 hectares of critically endangered vegetation communities.

"To compensate for this, the Victorian government is proposing to establish two new grassland reserves in Melbourne's west, through compulsory acquisition of private land," she said.

"This offsetting approach does not really compensate for the loss of 8000 hectares of grassland."

CFA regional manager of community safety, David Allen, said no matter where developments were proposed, each site had to be judged on its own characters with a detailed fire plan.

"CFA would be involved with discussions. We would want to ensure a management regime would be developed to address any fire danger with such things as buffers, access tracks or breaks in vegetation."

WEST'S SCHOOLS LOSE KEY FUNDING

Melton Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wests-schools-lose-key-funding/2275121.aspx>

Western suburbs high school principals have slammed the state government's decision to slash \$12 million a year from a vocational education program for years 11 and 12 students.

They say the cuts to co-ordination funding could mean parents will have to pay more money to cover course and equipment costs, while the budgets of other school programs may have to be trimmed.

More than 425 high schools and TAFE colleges with students enrolled in the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) will each lose up to \$126,000 from their budgets next year.

VCAL has been offered in Victoria since 2003 and is designed to keep young people in school by combining industry experience with their education.

Higher Education and Skills Minister Peter Hall claimed the cuts would have no real impact on students.

He said the \$12 million funding allocated to schools to co-ordinate the program each year was no longer needed as it was now well established in schools and local communities.

But Copperfield College principal Tony Simpson said the cuts would impact on what the school was able to deliver to its 150 VCAL students.

Its Delahey campus will be among the hardest hit, losing about \$105,000 a year in co-ordination funding.

"We use the funding to allow the teachers time to publish curriculum for the program and we use it to develop work placement contacts in the community," he said.

"We may have to reduce the amount of VCAL places we can provide so we can still run it successfully."

Caroline Springs College student Sarah-May Dykes, who in May was named an outstanding VCAL student by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, also criticised the decision.

Ms Dykes, 18, said she had struggled to concentrate in school until she enrolled in the VCAL program at the start of last year.

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As part of her studies she has become an Auskick coach and runs football clinics at primary schools and the Newport Auskick Centre.

She also co-ordinates clinics at Sunshine-Albion Football Club and is an assistant coach for Newport's under-6 side.

"The VCAL program is very important for a lot of students because it gives you another way to finish high school and you get industry-based experience along the way," she said.

MELTON BLOCKS RULED OUT OF BOUNDS

Melton Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/melton-blocks-ruled-out-of-bounds/2275123.aspx>

A proposal for a 42-lot subdivision adjoining the Melton Valley Golf Club has been rejected by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Melton Council had earlier rejected an application for the 2.23-hectare Moninbri development, which was to be on the south-east side of Yuille Street.

Council acting planning manager Steve Finlay said it was opposed to the application because there was no attempt to retain features of the site.

"The subdivision had a poor interface with the Melton Valley golf course," he said.

"It was poorly orientated from a solar access point of view, was inconsistent with neighbourhood character, which is generally of a lower-density nature, and it was considered that the subdivision would represent an overdevelopment of the site."

VCAT received six objections from nearby residents.

VCAT senior member Margaret Baird said she took into consideration that the lots were said to be inconsistent with larger lots opposite the site.

She said the proposed development also failed to retain an existing dwelling and cypress trees.

Melton Valley Golf Club secretary manager David Alton said he was pleased the subdivision would not be going ahead.

The applicant could not be reached for comment.

AUTISM PROGRAM: MP SLAMS 'BOFFINS'

Melton Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/autism-program-mp-slams-boffins/2275130.aspx>

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn has used Parliament to criticise bureaucratic "boffins" in the Education Department for not funding an autism program in mainstream schools.

Innovative Developments in the Education of children with Autism (IDEA) provides individualised support for children with autism.

Mr Finn this month said there was no funding for the program next year.

"Families are devastated, but that seems to mean nothing to those in department back rooms wielding the axe."

CAROLINE SPRINGS POLICE IN MAJOR CRACKDOWN

Melton Leader– 29th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/caroline-springs-police-in-major-crackdown/>

Police are expected to flood Caroline Springs over the next fortnight in a major crackdown on misbehaving drivers.

Melton Highway Patrol says it will take a zero-tolerance approach to road offenders during the two-week blitz.

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Operation Sprung will run in and around the suburb from this Sunday (August 28) until September 10, targeting speed, seatbelt infringements and mobile phone use.

Leading Sen.-Constable Allan Edwards from the Melton Highway Patrol said the operation was about changing drivers' behaviour.

"Every Highway Patrol unit working during this period will spend at least four hours of the shift concentrating on the Caroline Springs area, including the main shopping areas, car parks, and around schools at pick-up and drop-off times," he said.

Leading Sen.-Constable Edwards said the Melton Shire eastern suburb was being targeted because it had a high collision rate.

"Collision data has been analysed and indicates the Caroline Springs area has a higher-than-average rate of rear-end collisions and contributing factors are believed to be speed and loss of concentration due to mobile phone use," he said.

"In the event of a collision, injuries are much greater if occupants are not restrained."

A recent Leader investigation in Caroline Springs unearthed 20 drivers using mobile phones in 20 minutes.

CAROLINE SPRINGS YOUTHS UNITE TO EXAMINE REFUGEE SOLUTIONS

Melton Leader– 29th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/caroline-springs-youths-unite-to-examine-refugee-solutions/>

Almost 100 students from across Melton Shire banded together last week to discuss the plight of refugees at a Model United Nations Conference.

Hosted at Taylors Lakes Reception Centre, students were allocated a country and then researched its stance on the issue of refugees.

Each school looked specifically at the UN Resolution regarding refugees and developed a speech to deliver at the conference.

They then had the opportunity to put forward amendments or changes they would like to see to the resolution.

Caroline Springs College teacher Megan Dreyer said the day was a great success.

"Teachers of the students commented on the opportunity this gave their students to develop their confidence and leadership skills, she said.

"By the end of the day students were able to talk seriously about the issue and develop amendments to the UN Resolution.

The United Nations Association of Australia ran the conference and provided the General Secretary, who mediated the proceedings

MELTON COUNCIL TAKES A BOOK LOSS

Melton Leader– 29th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melton-council-takes-a-book-loss/>

Library funding for Melton shire this year has fallen \$42,000 short of the amount expected, says Melton council.

The State Government had announced funding for libraries across the state would be cut, but later decided councils would at least receive the same amount of funding as last year.

Melton council's funding increased \$4000 from \$614,155 to \$618,407.

But council thinks it should be receiving \$660,000 a year.

Mayor Justin Mammarella said this was not good enough for a growth area such as Melton shire.

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"The recurrent funding being proposed is dramatically lower than was estimated in our budget and does not provide for growth within the service and the municipality," Cr Mammarella said.

At council's August 11 meeting, community services general manager Maurie Heaney said the \$4000 increase should have been \$40,000 to \$50,000 to cater for the shire's growing population.

Mr Heaney said the lack of funding could impact on some services, starting with a reduction in the number of books bought.

Cr Mammarella said public libraries were a universal service and their popularity continued to grow as they were increasingly relied on as a gateway to online services and resources.

"The State Government should be contributing its fair share, rather than relying on local government to make up the shortfall all the time," he said.

The council will write to the Minister for Local Government and Premier expressing its concern over the impact of the state's contribution to recurrent funding for Melton libraries.

Melton shire has two public libraries in Melton and Caroline Springs.

WATER FIGHT SPRAY IN MELTON

Melton Leader— 25th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/water-fight-spray-in-melton/>

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella has sparked a war of words after criticising a report highlighting the lack of community access to Melton Weir.

The report was commissioned by Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella.

Cr Mammarella said the report contained "many inaccuracies".

"The report quoted a survey stating 56.7 per cent of residents surveyed knew the reservoir's location, but only 30 residents were surveyed in total, which is not a meaningful size to base a report on," Cr Mammarella said.

"Such limited research and small survey diminishes the value of the report."

Mr Nardella stood by the report.

"My intern's report was prepared in response to numerous inquiries over many years from my constituents asking why continued delays in the reservoir's development had occurred, especially given Melton's rapid growth," he said.

He said current recreational access to the reservoir was severely limited, under-resourced and poorly maintained.

"Residents deserve far better from this community resource."

The mayor also took a pot-shot at former Melton councillor Chris Papas, who described the council's failure to implement the Melton Reservoir Development Strategy as a "slap in the face".

"We are concerned that a former councillor, who now works for Don Nardella, made comments in a local newspaper regarding the \$6.6 million being allocated to the Melton Weir," Cr Mammarella said.

"Chris Papas was part of council's budget deliberations at the time and there were never any funds allocated to the Melton Weir, except \$100,000 for roadwork's at the end of Clarkes Rd for safety reasons."

Mr Papas said the mayor had resorted to "spin" and that the council's commitments in the strategy were \$405,000 in 2005-2008, \$3,680,000 in 2009-2014 and \$2,490,000 after 2015.

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“To say council has never committed funding for \$6.6 million in capital works means the mayor has not read the strategy, simply doesn’t understand it, failed to oversee its implementation and has turned his back on the Melton township again,” he said.

“I remind him that he represents all of Melton Shire and not just the eastern corridor.”

NEW SPEED LIMIT DELAYED ON WESTERN HIGHWAY

Melton Leader– 26th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/new-speed-limit-delayed-on-western-highway/>

Vicroads says it is unsure when speed limits on the Western Highway realignment at Anthony’s Cutting will increase to 110km/h.

The \$200 million redevelopment of the Western Highway between Melton and Bacchus Marsh opened on June 26, nine months ahead of schedule.

A temporary limit of 80km/h was to increase to 110km/h four to seven days later.

But extra repairs and bad weather mean the speed restriction is still in force nearly two months later.

VicRoads told the Melton Leader earlier this month that speed limits, weather permitting, and would increase by August 13.

But the 80 km/h limit was still in force late last week to the bemusement of many drivers

VicRoads acting project director Mark Koliba apologised to motorists. “VicRoads and the Western Highway Anthony’s Cutting Realignment Project apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and encourage road users to follow message-board signs,” he said.

Mr Koliba said despite the road opening ahead of schedule, works were continuing including landscaping, installation of safety barriers and pavement works to tie-in the existing highway to the new freeway.

“The speed limit on the new Western Freeway is currently 80km/h and cannot be raised to 110km/h until the tie-in works are completed,” he said.

“These works have been delayed due to the recent poor weather.

“Every effort is being made to complete these works as soon as possible.”

The works are scheduled to begin this week, again subject to weather conditions.

PLAN LINKS BUILDERS TO JOB SEEKERS

Melton Leader– 26th August 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/plan-links-builders-to-job-seekers/>

Skill shortages in Melton Shire’s building industry will be tackled as part of a new Building Melton Together initiative.

The program, initiated by Melton Council in response to the rapid growth in housing development, aims to link up 150 pre-screened Melton Shire job-seekers with employers.

It is a “one stop shop” that links and supports developers, builders, sub-contractors, job services, education and training providers and job seekers.

Building Industry Liaison Consultant Joanne Mikhael said more than 50 job-seekers had already registered for the program and were set to be pre-screened and given career counselling before being recommended to employers.

She said Building Melton Together was for everyone looking for work or employees in any trade associated with the building industry in the shire.

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"We will be linking quality job seekers with employers to make sure this is a positive experience for everyone," she said.

Ms Mikhael said if successful, the pilot project could be expanded to other industries such as hospitality in the future.

Employers and job seekers can register at [Melton construction jobs.com.au](http://Melton.constructionjobs.com.au) or 1300 003 337.

MOONEE VALLEY

ABORIGINES AND JUSTICE INITIATIVES ON THE MARIBYRNONG

Moonee Valley Leader— 30th August 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/aborigines-discuss-justice-initiatives-fbready/>

Wurundjeri elder Margaret Gardiner gave a welcome to country at the Aboriginal Community Justice Forum at the Living Museum of the West last Wednesday.

The forums, held three times a year in regional and metropolitan locations, allow Aborigines to hear about local justice initiatives and to present problems and to express concerns to senior members of the Department of Justice, courts and Victoria Police.

Organisers said about 160 people attended last week's forum, including department and Victoria Police representatives.

Helen Rzesniowiecki, a committee member at the Maribyrnong museum, said the forum was the first public event held in the Bluestone Building since it became available recently.

She said one of the original purposes of the museum, started 25 years ago, was to develop a greater understanding of the history and culture of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples and the environment of Melbourne's Western Region.

She said museum's significance to the western suburbs extended beyond its Pipemakers Park site.

"It offers ways to build connectedness and belonging within Western Region communities," Ms Rzesniowiecki said.

At the conclusion of the forum, traditional Wurundjeri Dancers performed in the parkland.

MOONEE VALLEY'S INCINERATOR TO HELP STAKE ARTISTIC CLAIM

Moonee Valley Weekly— 30th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valleys-incinerator-to-help-stake-artistic-claim/2273674.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council is on a mission to stamp its authority as the arts capital of Melbourne - at least on this side of the city.

The council has renamed the Incinerator Arts Complex the Incinerator Gallery and appointed a full-time curator to attract touring exhibitions.

Richard Ennis, a former art specialist at an auction house, will curate all the council's own exhibitions and identify and secure touring exhibitions.

One of Mr Ennis's first jobs in his new role is to put the council's own art collection on public display.

He has already discovered a number of "hidden gems" bought by former councils through the 1960s, '70s and '80s.

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One of those works is an oil painting of the Maribyrnong River from 1894 by artist John Thallon.

Thallon was better known for making the frames for iconic paintings like Tom Roberts' *Shearing the Rams*, but he was an artist in his own right.

Mr Ennis said it was "one of the highlights of the council collection".

He said the Incinerator was a venue worth showing off.

Designed by renowned architect Walter Burley Griffin and built in 1929, it was one of 13 incinerators made across Australia.

Only six remain and Moonee Valley is home to the only one in Victoria.

The building is listed with the National Trust of Australia, Australian Heritage Commission and Heritage Victoria.

Mr Ennis said he was excited by the new direction of the gallery.

"We can really have a high-standard program here, we can swap and lend [artwork] with other public galleries.

There are plenty of great exhibitions that go out to Geelong and Ballarat we can start putting our hand up for."

ESSENDON KEILOR COLLEGE PLEA SIGNED, SEALED

Moonee Valley Weekly— 30th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/essendon-keilor-college-plea-signed-sealed/2273671.aspx>

Essendon Keilor College Principal David Adamson is hoping a petition signed by 1400 people will prompt Education Minister Martin Dixon out of his office and onto the school grounds.

For nine months, Mr Adamson has tried to get Mr Dixon to see first-hand the school's dilapidated Niddrie campus and to secure funding.

Mr Adamson likened the continued campaign to have something done at the school to "chipping away at an iceberg".

The school was promised \$10 million by Niddrie Labor MP Rob Hulls before the November 27 state election.

But since Labor lost the election the school has been left in limbo.

While it remains open, Mr Adamson says there's an urgent need of maintenance. For its long-term future it needs an entire rebuild, he adds.

"There is a lot of structural work that needs to be done and rebuilding is the best way to do it.

"In the short term, there is significant maintenance that can be done to at least keep it in a reasonable standard."

In March Mr Adamson went public with his campaign to get Mr Dixon to the school.

Mr Adamson and Mr Hulls started a petition calling for Premier Ted Baillieu to honour the former government's commitment.

Mr Hulls will present a 1400-signature petition to Mr Baillieu in State Parliament.

"We are very hopeful the petition will make a difference," Mr Adamson said.

"We got some money and there are workers on site now, but we need a lot more money still."

In June, the school was granted \$640,000 for urgent repair to its drainage system and for restumping.

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Mr Hulls said Mr Dixon needed to listen.

"The fact that more than 1400 people have signed the petition should be enough to show Mr Dixon that he can't just keep his head in the sand.

"The school is literally falling down around students, yet Mr Dixon cannot even be bothered to go out and see for himself the dilapidated buildings students are being forced to work in."

A spokesman for Mr Dixon, James Martin, said the minister planned to visit the school by October.

"He's keen to get out there. He has had a huge number of school visits on the go but he is hoping to get out there in the next month or so."

IN MOONEE VALLEY, IT'S TIME FOR SOME RESPECT

Moonee Valley Weekly— 30th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/in-moonee-valley-its-time-for-some-respect/2273675.aspx>

An advocacy group is hoping a Moonee Valley campaign will become a statewide catchcry for respect in the workplace.

The 'Total Respect' workplace philosophy was developed by Business and Professional Women of Melbourne (BPW), North-West.

Group president and Essendon resident Dr June Kane said the campaign was designed to help small and medium-sized businesses understand the problem of workplace bullying, in light of the recently adopted Brodie's Law in Victoria.

Brodie Panlock was a 19-year-old who killed herself in 2006 after suffering constant bullying at the Hawthorn cafe where she worked.

Brodie's Law changed stalking laws so that workplace and online bullies can be sentenced to up to 10 years' jail.

BPW's campaign asks businesses to sign up to the Total Respect philosophy and treat all workers with respect regardless of age, sex, race, religion, sexual identity or ability.

Workers are also encouraged to watch out for each other, especially protecting young or inexperienced workers who may be vulnerable.

"People have to realise that bullying and harassment are just not on," Ms Kane said.

"If you ask people who suffer this kind of treatment, they tell you that they dread going to work in the morning.

"The constant, repetitive nature of workplace bullying is damaging to workers' health and well-being."

The office of Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten has become the first Total Respect Workplace in Moonee Valley.

The group has plans to take the campaign statewide.

AUTISM LOBBYISTS SAY 'KENNETT-STYLE GAG' FINE WITH US

Moonee Valley Weekly— 30th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/autism-lobbyists-say-kennettstyle-gag-fine-with-us/2273679.aspx>

An autism lobby group in Melbourne's west says an alleged "gag order" placed on a special-school principal by the Liberal Party is "fair enough".

Education Minister Martin Dixon has been accused of applying a "Kennett-style gag" to Western Autistic School principal Val Gill.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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In an email obtained under Freedom of Information, Mr Dixon says it was brought to his attention by concerned parents and local Liberal MP Bernie Finn that some staff had suggested the government's commitment to establishing a P-12 autistic school in the west could not be realised.

"I believe making such comments is unhelpful and pre-empts the feasibility and planning process our government intends to undertake," Mr Dixon wrote.

"I would also ask that your staff consider the confusion and anxiety they may create among parents by making such comments."

Autism Schools Action, headed by Altona Meadows couple Liz and Mark Websdale, has issued a press release titled, Gag order? Fair enough.

"The current administration of Western Autistic School has always opposed not just extending WAS into later primary and secondary school years but even the establishment of another school or other education options on what they see as their patch," the release stated.

Ms Websdale also posted on her Facebook page: "About time someone gagged her... "

Opposition education spokesman Rob Hulls, who also came under fire for defending Ms Gill, said he wouldn't stand by and let school principals be gagged.

"That's what happened under the Kennett regime and the same thing is happening under the Baillieu regime."

Before last November's state election, at the Liberal Party's western metropolitan region campaign launch at Whitten Oval, Mr Finn declared a Liberal Government would establish a P-12 autism specific school at the Laverton campus of Western Autistic School.

In May, Ms Gill told the Weekly there was physically no room to expand the school at either the Laverton or Niddrie campus.

ACCESS TO WINDY HILL

Moonee Valley Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/murphys-lore-holmes-road-incinerator-gains-a-curator/2273682.aspx>

If the council has plans to redevelop Windy Hill when the football club moves out, it certainly is not sharing them. The Bombers will retain their lease of the venue and the council says it will work with the club to generate community access.

That's a start, but the potential is so much greater.

The retail outlet and the Hall of Fame are two major facilities that should be available for the community by the end of next year when the Bombers will be established at their new Tullamarine complex.

Then there are the training and medical rooms, offices and players' recreation areas, and surely we can find new uses for the arena and Cookson stand.

MURPHY'S LORE: HOLMES ROAD INCINERATOR GAINS A CURATOR

Moonee Valley Weekly– 30th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/murphys-lore-holmes-road-incinerator-gains-a-curator/2273682.aspx>

Quite a smart initiative by Moonee Valley Council to better use the Holmes Road Incinerator Complex through the appointment of a full-time curator.

Rarely do we see much of the council's valuable art collection, but the new curator's brief is to ensure regular exhibitions of the works owned by the municipality, as well as asking major touring attractions to exhibit in the heritage-listed complex.

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Cr Jan Chantry sparked the initiative following the council's decision to restore the unused building as an arts complex in 2004.

But it was former local MP Judy Maddigan who first began the restoration campaign more than 25 years ago, securing a \$25,000 state government grant to refurbish the historic building.

This is the only Victorian-built incinerator left, and only six of the 13 incinerators designed by renowned architect Walter Burley Griffin in the 1930s remain.

MOONEE VALLEY SCHOOLS HIT BY VCAL CASH CUTS

Moonee Valley Weekly— 30th August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-schools-hit-by-vcal-cash-cuts/2273672.aspx>

Schools in Moonee Valley have vowed to continue to offer a Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning program despite a state government plan to scrap \$12 million in funding.

The cuts will mean schools will lose VCAL co-ordinators, who are largely responsible for the program which offers a path for students wanting to enter a trade rather than go on to tertiary education.

Essendon Keilor College and Rosehill Secondary in Niddrie both have more than 30 students enrolled in VCAL programs.

Rosehill principal Peter Rouse said the cuts would "hurt", but the school would maintain the program.

Mr Rouse said the state government had underrated the role of a VCAL co-ordinator.

"They do a massive amount of work.

"The government has said that now the VCAL program is in place it doesn't need a co-ordinator; that's totally wrong."

Mr Rouse said co-ordinators presented information to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and managed the work placements of each student.

Essendon Keilor College principal David Adams agreed it was "a bad decision".

"We are effectively losing between \$35,000 and \$50,000 that we put into staffing.

"So we either cut the program, which we have no intention of doing, or find the \$50,000 somewhere else."

Education Department spokesman James Martin said there "should be no impact on students".

"Changes to the funding arrangements purely relate to the co-ordination of the program and not the actual funding for students.

"The program has been running effectively for the past eight years and as a result of additional support provided by workplace learning co-ordinators and local learning and employment networks, there should be no impact on students."

BLUE BREWS ON PRECINCT REZONE PLAN

Moonee Valley Leader— 29th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/blue-brews-on-precinct-rezone-plan/>

Essendon's Winifred St will be filled with shop-top housing, multi-level and basement parking in 19 years, according to a council blueprint.

Moonee Valley council's North Essendon Activity Centre Structure Plan identifies the area as a "vibrant" activity centre with a high residential interface along Winifred St in 2030.

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But this has led residents to ask where the grand plan fits in with what is only a small area.

The plan, adopted in March 2008, hopes to rezone every property along the west-side of the street into commercial use and "reinforce retail use at ground floor or shop-top housing above".

Some properties on the west-side and all properties on the east-side are under residential zoning.

Centre visitors are directed to park in "multi-level and basement parking near Woodlands Park, along Winifred St and Lincoln Rd".

Residents lobbied to have the structure plan reviewed following a spate of multi-storey development proposals in the street this year.

Resident Walter Groves said parking was already "impossible" in the "narrow street".

"There is barely any room to park and if all of these plans go ahead there will be no room to move," Mr Groves said.

"Even if it is basement or multi-level parking, think of the traffic."

Debbie Domas said residents felt the street was changing and there was nothing they could do.

Cr Jan Chantry said the council needed to take formal action in placing a buffer down Winifred St to define development on the west-side and protect residential amenity on the east-side.

"We created this problem so we need to fix it by removing this unwarranted and unpopular transition zone from our structure plan," Cr Chantry said.

Council chief executive Neville Smith said the structure plan was still under review and would formally go to council on September 6, before going to community consultation.

COOLEST BIG KID IN SCHOOL

Moonee Valley Leader – 29th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/coolest-kid-in-school/>

Councillor James Rankin realised how much he had grown up when he went back to primary school for a day.

The Moonee Valley Deputy Mayor, who graduated from grade six in 1996, was a "principal for a day" in Ascot Vale last Wednesday, as part of a national initiative to expose local leaders to life in the classroom.

He took charge of students at Ascot Vale Primary School, replacing regular principal Joanne Roberts.

"Everything is just so small. The chairs are small, the pencils are small, the tables are small everything is just small," Cr Rankin said.

"I have gained so much respect and admiration for what teachers and principals go through as educators. It's a very demanding role."

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) program was established in 2000 and allows the community leaders to shadow a school principal for the day.

Students took Cr Rankin - Moonee Valley's youngest councillor - on a school tour before he gave grade 4, 5 and 6 students a presentation about how local government works.

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Visiting every classroom and chatting to students, Cr Rankin said he'd be very interested in looking into a career in working with young people to foster community spirit.

About 100 community and business leaders took the reins at Victorian state schools as part of the annual Principal for a Day program.

NEW LAW TO KEEP BARS DRUNK-FREE

Moonee Valley Leader— 29th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/new-law-to-keep-bars-drunk-free/>

Moonee Valley bar owners will have more power to eject troublesome drunks under new liquor laws.

The changes will mean police and licensees can now not only boot out anti-social or troublesome patrons but stop them lingering within 20 metres of the licensed venues.

Once a person is served a barring order, they must leave the vicinity until the order expires or be issued an on-the-spot fine or be charged.

Deluxe Bar owner Blair McFarlane said the changes were welcome.

"We think anything that goes towards reducing public drunkenness and having greater powers to reduce it is a good thing," he said.

Mr McFarlane said crowd control was in place to deal with anti-social behaviour within venues but it was good to now have increased powers outside.

Vinyl Lounge owner Lou Petreska also supported the changes.

He said other news laws had cut alcohol-related problems in the area.

"I haven't had any trouble for a while, probably because people are more aware of it now," he said.

Flemington Police Sen.-Sgt Tim Douglas said the laws would be another "tool in the trade" to help local licensees.

While alcohol-related violence was not a big problem in Moonee Valley, it was something police had to deal with from time to time.

The new laws could especially come into play during the Spring Racing Carnival.

"It certainly will go a long way in assisting licensees in mitigating risk in their venues," he said.

Consumer Affairs Minister Michael O'Brien said the tougher penalties sent a message that drunkenness and anti-social behaviour was not accepted.

The penalty for refusing to leave a venue has also increased from \$2442 to more than \$5900.

BLITZ ON PEDESTRIANS

Moonee Valley Leader— 29th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/blitz-on-pedestrians/>

Sometimes not even a swarm of police in high-vision vests is enough to discourage pedestrians from risking serious injury.

The local constabulary was out in force for Operation Walk This Way last Wednesday, targeting poor and dangerous pedestrian behaviour around Puckle St, Moonee Ponds.

A number of people were caught taking their chances with the traffic, in full view of the police and media.

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And drivers doing the wrong thing in areas where there are pedestrians were targeted.

One motorcyclist ignored traffic lights at a pedestrian crossing and drove off - but not before being seen by police.

Moonee Valley has recorded four pedestrian deaths in the past 12 months, prompting the latest awareness campaign.

The victims have been mainly elderly, as highlighted by the story of 92-year-old Ascot Vale man Norman Ewin who was hit by a car in July. He died from his injuries.

Days later, a woman, 89, was taken to hospital in a serious condition after being hit by a tram in Ascot Vale.

Moonee Ponds acting Sgt Lisa Prentice-Evans said the day-long operation would target poor and dangerous pedestrian behaviour.

"Pedestrians are some of our most vulnerable road users but too often we see pedestrians choosing to disobey laws and pedestrian signals," she said.

Pedestrians who fail to obey traffic lights and cross within 20m of a pedestrian crossing (but not on the crossing), will be fined \$61.

PHOTOS A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Moonee Valley Leader— 27th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/lifestyle/story/photos-blast-from-the-past/>

Lloyd Shield has spent hours looking at western suburbs' history through different eyes.

The series of 30 prints taken on old-style cameras in the exhibition Cathedrals of Industry took him at least 30 minutes each to set up and hours to develop by hand.

The Moonee Valley resident hopes the exhibition, at the Incinerator Gallery, will make people think differently about scenes they see every day.

"The older style is a more contemplative way of photographing. It's about the journey," he said.

"I've progressively had an interest in architecture, heritage and industry and there's a synergy in using old cameras to take pictures of old things."

By using black-and-white film and large-format film, Shields tries to capture details and tonal variations.

The exhibition is supported by Maribyrnong Council and the Living Museum of the West and runs until September 23. For more information, phone 8325 1750.

WINERY OFFERS A TASTE OF ITALY IN KEILOR EAST

Moonee Valley Leader— 25th August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/winery-offers-a-taste-of-italy-in-keilor-east/>

Starting with a small olive tree and a few chickens, the Sicilianos have created a taste of Italy in the middle of Moonee Valley.

The Rose Street Estate can lay claim to being the area's only local commercial vineyard, producing 10,000 litres of chardonnay, Shiraz, cabernet, merlot and zibibbo every year.

Owners Lena, 63, and Tony Siciliano, 69, moved to a 3ha block in Keilor East 30 years ago to relive their village life in Italy. "Before we built the house, we planted the olive tree," Mrs Siciliano said.

"Now we've got a vineyard with 3000 vines; fruit and vegetable crops; more than 300 olive trees and a small winemaker."

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Rose Creek Estate took out gold and silver medals for its fine olive oil at the recent Royal Hobart Fine Food Awards.

"There were more than 1000 entries from all around Australia and our boutique-style vineyard won. We're very proud of our work," Mrs Siciliano said.

The Sicilianos have also won more than 40 awards for their wine.

As part of the Sunbury Wine Region Wine Festival, the winemakers will host a free open day this weekend at 2 Craig St, Keilor East, Sunday, August 28, 11am-5pm.

WYNDHAM

FIRE PLAN A SAVIOUR, SAYS CFA

Wyndham Weekly— 1st September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fire-plan-a-saviour-says-cfa/2275491.aspx>

A spate of house fires should provide residents with a timely reminder not to be complacent about fire awareness, according to Werribee CFA captain Michael Wells.

Mr Wells has renewed calls for Wyndham residents to formulate a fire plan after his team was called out to a number of fires recently.

"It is just a reminder for people not to become complacent about the danger of fire, especially on the outskirts of Werribee, where the extra rainfall has provided for thick growth which we haven't seen for a while," he said.

Mr Wells had reason to be heartened by the efforts of a family at Dixon Avenue, Werribee, who followed their fire plan accurately, ensuring everyone remained safe.

"The family were brilliant, they followed their fire plan to the letter and everyone was accounted for. They were very well prepared and that is what every family should be doing."

WYNDHAM POLICE PUT HOONS OFF OUR ROADS

Wyndham Leader— 1st September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/wyndham-police-put-hoons-off-our-roads/>

Dangerous drivers have been taken off Wyndham's roads for speeding, hooning and leading police on a car chase.

On Saturday, August 20, Wyndham Highway Patrol officers pursued a speeding driver at 137km/h in a 60 km/h zone on Dunnings Rd, Point Cook, at 8.37pm.

The driver, a Williamstown man, 21, driving on a suspended licence, did a U-turn near Point Cook Town Centre where police attempted to stop him, then accelerated east along Dunnings Rd before the pursuit ended.

The driver, who had three passengers, will be charged on summons with dangerous driving, speeding, evading police and driving while suspended and his car was impounded for 30 days.

The same night a Werribee man, 28, also lost his car for 30 days after doing a fishtail burnout turning right from South Ring Rd into Duncans Rd, Werribee, at 7.45pm and speeding at 77 km/h in a 60km/h zone.

The man, who told police he was showing off to his mate in the passenger seat, will appear in Werribee Court.

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The same man was stopped and fined two hours earlier on Jamieson Way, Point Cook, for not wearing a seatbelt.

Acting Sgt Graeme Crouch said on the night of August 20 alone another seven were booked for not wearing seatbelts.

The following day, two motorcyclists' licences were suspended for speeding; a Deer Park man, 19, travelling at 125 km/h in a 80 km/h zone on Palmers Rd, Truganina was fined \$519 and lost his licence for six months, and a Sunshine West man, 29, doing 130km/h in a 70km/h zone on Leakes Rd, Laverton North, was fined \$611 and lost his licence for a year.

POLICE BLITZ WYNDHAM TRAILS

Wyndham Leader— 1st September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/police-blitz-wyndham-trails/>

There was nowhere for dangerous drivers to hide last week when Werribee police and members of the Victoria Police Operations Response Unit took to quad bikes for a traffic blitz.

The unit's bikes and all-terrain vehicle were used in a three-day operation with local police, which Werribee Senior Sergeant Jim Mulholland said was part of a bigger plan to increase the visible presence of police as well as tackling road trauma and dangerous driving.

Sen.-Sgt Mulholland said the quad bikes enabled police to move quickly into areas police cars couldn't, such as along the Werribee River, Skeleton Creek, in parkland and along trails.

Police handed out 40 penalty notices and made two arrests during the operation and Sen.-Sgt Mulholland said they would continue to crack down on anti-social driving.

"We're hoping to have these out a little bit more as well as more traffic operations," Sen. Sgt Mulholland said.

The blitz follows a Road Trauma and Hoon Forum organised by police earlier this month from which a four-part action plan was devised to tackle dangerous driving and road trauma through education, engagement, environment and enforcement.

"The people of Wyndham are going to find there are a lot more police out," Sen.-Sgt Mulholland said

"We're going to be running a lot of traffic operations targeting anti-social driving."

LOCK THE DOORS, WYNDHAM CRIME STATS SAY

Wyndham Weekly— 31st August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/lock-the-doors-wyndham-crime-stats-say/2275489.aspx>

Increases in assaults and robberies in Wyndham continue to be the major concerns following the release of the latest crime statistics.

While assaults have risen by 8per cent in the past 12 months, robberies have soared by more than 65 per cent.

But Wyndham's Inspector Bill Weatherly was confident measures were already in place to halt the worrying trends.

"The Wyndham burglary unit has made some excellent arrests and I am convinced that in time we can get on top of this problem.

"The unit is now targeting our recidivist offenders and officers' strike rate is good."

Inspector Weatherly said the data, released yesterday, also showed the family violence unit had increased the number of assault charges it laid as a result of domestic violence issues.

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"The unit is also very proactive in working with local agencies to break the cycle of violence in the home."

Residential burglaries also continued to be a problem with an 11per cent rise, while motor vehicle theft dropped 19per cent in the last 12 months.

Aggravated burglaries were down more than 36per cent.

Inspector Weatherly expressed his continued dismay about the "horror run" of fatal accidents.

Three people were killed on Wyndham roads last month alone.

"The operation response unit, transit safety police and state highway patrol are assisting local police in our fight against crime and road safety issues," he said.

\$60,000 CAT GETS JUST A WHISKER OF DISCONTENT

Wyndham Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/60000-cat-gets-just-a-whisker-of-discontent/2275490.aspx>

Wyndham Council's decision to spend \$60,000 on a bronze sculpture to be placed outside the Wyndham Vale Community Centre has drawn mixed reactions.

The three-metre sculpture of a cat, designed by Melbourne artist Dean Bowen, will be placed at the centre's entrance after gaining the support of the council's public arts advisory group and most councillors.

A report to the last council meeting said the cat represented "family" and "domesticity" and had the potential to become a mascot for children, family and friends of the Wyndham Vale community.

However, it failed to impress Cr Adele De Crescenzo, who refused to endorse the sculpture.

"I cannot support spending public money on something that represents a warthog rather than a cat," she said.

Crs Shane Bourke and Cynthia Manson were more supportive of the sculpture, with Cr Manson describing it as a talking point.

"I think it is a beautiful representation of home. I think it is a great piece," she said.

The sculpture will be installed at the community centre early next year.

TARNEIT POOL GETS LUKEWARM RESPONSE

Wyndham Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/tarneit-pool-gets-lukewarm-response/2275478.aspx>

Residents have slammed Wyndham Council's plan to build the city's next pool in Tarneit, claiming there is greater need for one in Point Cook.

The council flagged its intention to build a public pool in Tarneit in the next decade in its recent draft aquatic strategy.

The decision is based on population projections to 2031 which suggest more people will move into the Tarneit area than Point Cook in the next 20 years.

But that decision does not sit well with Point Cook residents who question the need for a new pool so close to the existing Hoppers Crossing centre.

Resident Louise Shaw has taken the campaign to Facebook, creating a page titled 'We Want a Pool in Point Cook'.

Mrs Shaw said a pool needed to be built in Point Cook with residents having to make a 22-kilometre round trip to use the Wyndham Leisure Centre, which was preventing people from accessing facilities.

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"By the time I have tackled that dreadful journey home from my work in the city, the last thing I want to do is climb back in the car and travel another 11 kilometres to Hoppers Crossing. I'm time-poor enough as it is," she said.

"We don't have a pool on this side of the freeway and for older kids to get to Hoppers Crossing on their own is simply too far to travel. We already have graffiti coming out of our ears as kids are bored."

Mayor John Menegazzo stands by the council's plan to build its next pool in Tarneit, saying major upgrades planned for the Hoppers Crossing pool would accommodate Point Cook residents.

"The financial reality is you can't set up these facilities in every suburb ... you can't please everyone so we have to accommodate everyone the best we can."

More than 200 people, including representatives of the Australian Leisure Facilities Association, have shown their support for the Facebook page. ALFA executive officer and Point Cook resident Loren Bartley said about 30 per cent of Wyndham Leisure Centre customers were from Point Cook, proving there was a market for a pool in the suburb.

"Point Cook needs a community hub. The council talks about providing a community hub through the football ovals ...but a leisure facility provides so much more."

The draft aquatic strategy is expected to be presented to councillors on September 26.

DOHERTYS ROAD: MULDER PRESSED ON DUPLICATION

Wyndham Weekly– 31st August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/dohertys-road-mulder-pressed-on-duplication/2275481.aspx>

Laverton North businesses have sent a DVD to Roads Minister Terry Mulder calling for an urgent upgrade of Dohertys Road.

Members of the Wyndham Industrial and Liaison Development (WILD) committee have been campaigning for the road to be upgraded between Fitzgerald Road and Grieve Parade for close to 10 years, believing it is only a matter of time before someone is killed.

WILD claims about 18,000 vehicles use the road daily, 26per cent of which are heavy trucks.

The committee also believes that between 400 and 500 turns are made along the road every hour during peak times.

WILD member and DVD maker Mick O'Donnell said Dohertys Road was an accident waiting to happen, especially at intersections like Hume Road.

As operations manager at Nufarm, which is off Hume Road, Mr O'Donnell knows all too well the danger facing people trying to turn on to Dohertys Road from side roads.

"Staff hate having to travel through the intersection ... people do silly things," he said.

The DVD was shown at a Wyndham Council meeting last week, with councillors voting to lobby the government to duplicate the road and install traffic signals at the intersection of Dohertys and Hume roads.

Cr Kim McAliney, a member of the RoadSafe Westgate community road safety committee, said the duplication of Dohertys Road had always been put on the backburner by the state government.

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"There has been a fair few accidents at the intersection in a five-year period, one fatal, and it will not be long before there is another one. It is Russian roulette."

Altona MP Jill Hennessy backed calls for the road to be duplicated.

While VicRoads has carried out preliminary planning for the duplication, acting project director of western projects, Mark Koliba, could not say when the duplication would be funded, but confirmed it would be considered for future funding.

Mr Mulder did not respond to requests for comment.

VCAL: \$12M SCHOOL FUNDING CUT 'LACKS FORESIGHT'

Wyndham Weekly— 31st August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/vcal-12m-school-funding-cut-lacks-foresight/2275500.aspx>

Staff and students across the west have reacted with dismay at the the decision to slash \$12million in funding for Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning co-ordinators.

The hands-on, work-related alternative to VCE is offered by schools and education organisations across Wyndham such as Werribee Secondary College and the Wyndham Community and Education Centre.

While the Education Department has denied the funding cuts will directly affect VCAL students and organisations offering the program, Victorian Applied Learning Association project manager Jan Hagston said there was a fundamental lack of understanding about the role of VCAL co-ordinators by those controlling the purse strings.

"The decision shows a real lack of foresight," she said.

"These co-ordinators aren't your typical teachers, they are really experienced people with links to the community and to business.

"Without these experienced co-ordinators the VCAL program will suffer greatly."

Wyndham Community and Education Centre VCAL co-ordinator Teresa Vizintin has thrived in the role after a 27-year teaching career in Catholic schools.

"If it wasn't for some of the work we do here, some of these young people who have been caught up in a cycle of failure would miss out on the multiple opportunities for success in the process of re-engaging with education," she said. "We must be doing something right."

Mrs Hagston said the efforts of the Wyndham Community and Education Centre were an ideal example of the possibilities of the VCAL program.

"It gives kids more time to figure out what they want to do, they might find a pathway they may not have originally envisaged."

Wyndham Community and Education Centre CEO Jennie Barrera said young people who had become disengaged from mainstream education needed a lot of nurturing and support to complete their secondary schooling.

"That's why we have a dedicated, full-time VCAL co-ordinator working with the young people who enrol with us.

"The loss of VCAL co-ordination funding will have a significant impact."

A statement released by the Education Department said the changes in funding should not impact on teachers' jobs and should have no impact on students undertaking VCAL.

But Mrs Hagston is aware a number of schools could have their programs halved or scrapped altogether.

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Werribee Secondary College principal Steve Butyn said the VCAL program was still a major priority alongside VCE and the International Baccalaureate program, while deputy vice-chancellor at Victoria University, Professor Anne Jones, said the changed government funding arrangements would not affect VU's commitment to the VCAL program.

WALLS ROAD SUBDIVISION APPROVAL ENDS A LONG BATTLE

Wyndham Weekly— 31st August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/walls-road-subdivision-approval-ends-a-long-battle/2275503.aspx>

Wyndham Council's decision to approve a high-density development at Walls Road in Werribee has received a mixed reaction from residents who fought against the proposal.

Nine months after residents celebrated a Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal decision which knocked back the 71-lot subdivision between the St Andrews and Thoroughbred estates, the development's revised plans have gained a safe passage through the council to seemingly end the long battle.

The decision by VCAT in December to rule against the applicant, Shaheen Holdings, on the grounds that the subdivision would disrupt the area's existing neighbourhood character prompted a rethink by the developer, with the revised plans passed by the council last week.

Resident Debbie Armstrong described the decision as a bitter blow. She said she was reconsidering her family's future in Werribee.

"We feel hugely let down by our councillors to be honest," she said.

"I'm born and bred in Werribee, my family has over 100 years of history here, but we are bitterly disappointed about this. It seems they have just been money hungry."

Mrs Armstrong was deeply concerned about the influx of traffic the development would bring in her street and the lack of space provided in the new houses, which she described as "dog boxes".

St Andrews estate resident Alex Hodge was more circumspect about the outcome and was pleased residents were able to hold the developer accountable on a number of issues.

"It was a mixed bag, although we still managed to win a lot," he said.

"We nearly doubled the size of the blocks on the left side and the backyards now must be six metres deep at least."

But Mr Hughes echoed the disappointment of Mrs Armstrong about provisions for open space in the new development.

"We wanted them to centralise the open space. They have it at the far end of the development, and to me that is totally useless. Kids only travel around 50 metres to play, they like to keep close to home.

"It's an example of the council's short-sightedness when it comes to planning for open space."

While Cr Heather Marcus voted against the development, she was pleased with a number of the changes.

"There were some wins for residents," she said. "But I still decided to vote against it because I'm concerned about the planning for this city. I will continue [to] look at every planning application that is lodged to see if they are appropriate."

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



CALL FOR URGENT ROAD UPGRADE

Wyndham Star– 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/311/story/139472.html>

One of the West's most notorious intersections is the focus of a new campaign from the council after statistics revealed there have been 30 accidents on the road over the past five years, including one fatality.

The Wyndham Council has created a DVD and sent letters to Ted Baillieu, Transport Minister Terry Mulder and VicRoads, asking them to duplicate Dohertys Rd between Grieve Parade and Fitzgerald Rd.

They are also asking for signals to be installed at the intersection of Hume Drive and Dohertys Rd.

Councillor Kim McAliney said it was vital that the road be improved.

"This road is not an accident waiting to happen, it is an accident happening over and over again," Cr McAliney said.

"The DVD really highlights the treacherous nature of the intersection and the increasingly dangerous situation motorists face each day, particularly during peak hour."

Cr McAliney said that in 2010, 17,700 vehicles used the stretch of road every day, up from 15,150 per day in 2003.

The council has been lobbying the State Government and VicRoads to fund the improvements since 1995.

"Wyndham City has been lobbying the State Government and VicRoads for improvements to this road for a number of years without result," Cr McAliney said.

"It's time the State Government stepped up to the plate and agreed to fund these improvement works urgently to make Wyndham's roads safer for all motorists."

\$60K CAT CONTROVERSY

Wyndham Star– 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/311/story/139426.html>

Wyndham Council will spend \$60,000 to install a new piece of community artwork in Wyndham Vale that residents have described as "revolting".

The sculpture, entitled Bronze Cat, by artist Dean Bowen, courted controversy as all but one councillor voted in favour of having it installed in front of the Wyndham Vale Community Centre.

Cr Adele De Crescenzo said the artwork was not worth the \$60,000 being paid for it.

"Whilst I have great respect for artists and their work, I cannot in good conscience and in decent taste support paying public money on something which in my opinion, its appearance resembles a warthog and not a cat," Cr De Crescenzo said.

"I find the work to be ugly, hideous and grotesque and cannot justify \$60,000 to be spent on this work."

The cat will be 78 cm tall and 300 cm long.

Star showed the design for the bronze cat to residents and most of them agreed with Cr De Crescenzo.

"I think it's disgusting," Werribee's Anna Mazaros said.

"They could be spending our money on better things than that."

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



"If I had a cat that looked like that, I'd have it put down," Cheryl from Werribee said.

But other councillors said the piece would spark public conversation.

"It is a talking point, a giant cat, and I think that's a great thing about art that people will talk about it," Cr Cynthia Manson said.

"Some people will think it's cute, some people well might think it's huge. I think it's a beautiful representation of home and heart."

The artist did not respond to Star's request for comments.

MORE FUNDING NEEDED

Wyndham Star– 30th August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/311/story/139422.html>

Possibly the most expensive project ever undertaken by Wyndham City Council relies on the State and Federal Governments committing \$10 million each.

The design for a new recreation and community hub at the site of the Wyndham Leisure and Events Centre in Hoppers Crossing was revealed last week.

The plans include an extended and renovated Aquatics Centre, Events Centre, relocated Library and open space.

The cost of the project is estimated at almost \$61 million and the council is calling on the State and Federal Governments to contribute around a third of that amount.

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo said the design shows that the council is making the most of every last square inch of land out of the existing infrastructure on the site.

"These upgrades and additions will optimise the sites potential and create a cohesive community precinct," Cr Menegazzo said.

"As the fastest growing municipality in the state, it's vital that we receive our share of funding to provide the necessary infrastructure for our residents. External funding from the State and Federal Governments is crucial to the success of this project."

Cr Menegazzo said the Wyndham community needed the project to go ahead. "The Leisure and Events Centre and Plaza Library are fast outgrowing their current space, as our population continues at a rate, making this expansion and redevelopment an absolute necessity," he said.

"As this project continues to progress over the next five years, residents will be asked for their feedback and can monitor the development of the site as they drive past Derrimut Rd."

CALL FOR URGENT ROAD UPGRADE

Wyndham Star– 30th August 2011

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LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



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HOPPERS CROSSING HUB HUBBUB

Wyndham Leader— 30th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/hoppers-crossing-hub-hubbub/>

Designs for a \$61 million recreation and community hub on the site of the Wyndham Leisure and Function centres in Derrimut Rd, Hoppers Crossing, were unveiled last week.

But the implementation hinges on state and federal government funding.

Plans for the revamp include the renovation and extension of the Wyndham Aquatic Centre and the events centre, and the relocation of the library from Werribee Plaza to the Derrimut Rd site.

The aquatic centre will get new water slides, a warm-water pool, spa, sauna and steam room, a gym, creche and kiosk.

The project will include a new public piazza.

Cr Bob Fairclough told last week's council meeting that the project would be among the biggest ever undertaken in Wyndham.

"The aquatic centre is close to capacity due to the fact that we have a very large number of people coming into this community," Cr Fairclough said.

"The events centre needs improved acoustics and we need to expand its capacity; we need to improve lighting and the foyer.

"e are also looking at a new library that at 3000sq m will probably be the second-biggest library in Melbourne."

He said the work would not be possible without at least \$20 million of state and federal funding.

The council voted to seek major financial contributions from the federal and state governments.

Mayor John Menegazzo said the site was a perfect location, next to the youth resource centre, opposite Werribee Plaza, near schools and an aged-care facility.

"As this project continues to progress over the next five years, residents will be asked for their feedback and can monitor the development as they drive past Derrimut Rd," Cr Menegazzo said.

"This project will be staged in order to minimise disruption and maintain the services currently available."

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



A PURR-FECT SCULPTURE FOR WYNDHAM VALE

Wyndham Leader– 30th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-a-purr-fect-sculpture-for-wyndham-vale/>

A giant bronze cat described by a Wyndham councillor as “grotesque” will greet visitors to Wyndham Vale Community Learning Centre from next year.

Wyndham Council agreed last week to allocate \$60,000 for the 3m-long cat by sculptor Dean Bowen.

The work was selected by the council’s Public Arts Advisory Group, made up of two community representatives, two councillors and four council staff.

Other works considered included a diving board installation and collection of abstract animals of varied sizes and shapes.

The cat sculpture will stand on a sandstone plinth.

What do you think of the cat sculpture? Tell us below.

Bowen said he took into account the fact the centre, with its kindergarten and maternal and child health centre, would be visited by many children.

“In the suburbs, cats are everywhere and many children are familiar with cats, it’s also an image I have been working with for a number of years,” he said.

Cr Cynthia Manson told last week’s council meeting she couldn’t help but smile when she looked at a photograph of a model of the sculpture.

“It’s about our houses and our homes and our pets,” she said. “I think it’s a beautiful representation of home and art.”

But Cr Adele Crescenzo described the sculpture as resembling a warthog rather than a cat.

“I think this work is ugly and grotesque,” she said.

Her fellow councillors disagreed and voted to commission the sculpture.

Bowen said he was surprised by Cr Crescenzo’s comments.

“Usually I get a very positive reaction to my work, however, art is very controversial ... some people have a particular aversion to cats.”

PUSH TO SHOVE ON WYNDHAM VALE ROAD

Wyndham Leader– 30th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/push-to-shove-on-wyndham-vale-road/>

A campaign to resurface Ballan Rd, Wyndham Vale, is gaining momentum thanks to the efforts of truck driver and Manor Lakes estate resident Greg Byrne.

The Facebook campaign, with the title “Fix Ballan Road Wyndham Vale Now Before Someone Is Killed There”, has attracted nearly 150 supporters since it began three weeks ago.

The page links to a petition urging VicRoads and Wyndham Council to fix the road, which is the main road into Werribee, for residents of a rapidly expanding Manor Lakes.

The petition had 30 signatures as of yesterday.

Mr Byrne said the road surface was rough and uneven and poorly-lit at night, particularly at a bend near the Hobbs Rd intersection.

“There is also no footpath there and quite often there will be people walking on the road,” he said.

“I have seen many near-misses with vehicles and pedestrians.”

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



He said the road surface was not coping with increased residential traffic from Manor Lakes and heavy trucks.

“It’s only a matter of time before a vehicle hits the rough patches and undulating surface, veers on to the other side of the road and we have a major accident,” he said.

VicRoads regional director Nial Finegan said VicRoads was aware of the condition of Ballan Rd and was scheduled to resurface it at six places this year.

Wyndham Council chief executive Kerry Thompson said a footpath was not deemed necessary as there were no housing or other developments abutting that section of the road.

A man remains in hospital after a south-bound truck’s trailer came loose and careered into his car on Ballan Rd, travelling north near the intersection of Macquarie Drive, last Tuesday.

WERRIBEE SOUTH BOATSHED REBUILD VOW

Wyndham Leader– 29th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/werribee-south-boatshed-rebuild-vow/>

The owner of one of four Werribee South boatsheds destroyed by fire last week has vowed to rebuild.

Fire-fighters from Point Cook, Hoppers Crossing, Werribee and Truganina were called to Campbells Cove on the foreshore just before 8pm on Monday, August 22, to put out a fire engulfing a row of six boathouses. They saved two.

Crews had to ferry water to the boatsheds from a nearby dam to extinguish the fire as there was no mains water available.

Fire fighters’ gear was sent off to be tested for possible asbestos contamination.

Altona Meadows’ Jason Becroft, who owned one of the gutted boatsheds, said he never even had the opportunity to use it.

He bought the boatshed six years ago and was permitted by Wyndham Council to demolish and rebuild it because it was in such poor condition.

“It had just been finished before it burnt down,” Mr Becroft said.

Nothing was inside the boatshed as it had just been finished and, fortunately, Mr Becroft’s father’s hand-made wooden boat had not yet been stored there.

Mr Becroft said he didn’t insure his boatshed because insurance fees were “phenomenal” as it was on Crown land, so he would have to pay to rebuild it.

CFA spokesman Hugo Zoller said police were investigating the cause of the fire, which they are treating as suspicious.

Wyndham Council chief executive Kerry Thompson said the council had informed three boatshed owners and was trying to contact the fourth, all of whom could rebuild their boathouses.

The Werribee South foreshore has 144 boatsheds, first built at Bailey’s Beach in the 1920s.

TASTY, BUT ADD A PINCH OF FINANCE IN WYNDHAM

Wyndham Leader– 28th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/tasty-but-add-a-pinch-of-finance-in-wyndham/>

Meals delivered to Wyndham residents as part of Meals on Wheels are going down well.

Residents rate the packaged food highly, a Wyndham Council survey has found.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



More than 400 elderly and disabled residents who are unable to prepare their own food, but want to remain living independently at home, receive the subsidised meals.

The council, which delivers the service with the help of volunteers and some government funding, said a survey of clients last year found 95 per cent were satisfied with meal choices and happy with serving sizes.

More than 100 clients responded to the survey last August and September.

The council decided last month to sign a new, three-year contract with the company it pays to make the food.

Cr Kim McAliney backed the survey findings, saying she had sampled the meals.

But she said the council needed more government funding for the service, expected to cost the council about \$329,000 in 2011-12.

The council will get \$70,000 from the State Government.

Wyndham chief executive Kerry Thompson said the council was pushing for increased funding for various services helping elderly and disabled people, including delivered meals.

People interested in volunteering with Meals on Wheels should phone 9742 0812.

People needing the service should phone 8734 0774.

NEW CHAPTER OPENS FOR WYNDHAM

Wyndham Leader— 26th August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/new-chapter-opens-for-wyndham/>

Residents are checking out Wyndham Vale's new public library, and items from it.

Wyndham Council figures show 5358 items were checked out of the library in its opening week this year, an average of one for every three Wyndham Vale residents.

The 1040sq m library opened with 38,000 items during the July school holidays.

The suburb has a population of 16,199.

The library is expected to loan 20,000 items a month.

It signed up 156 members in its first week.

While meeting council expectations, the borrowing rates and new memberships were short of those at Point Cook's new library during its opening week, when 13,233 items were checked out, and more than 1000 people signed up as members.

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo said some residents might have been away on holidays when the Wyndham Vale library opened.

Point Cook also had a bigger population and was more established.

“The library was extremely busy in its first week, with all programs at capacity,” he said

“This is a fantastic result and demonstrates how the community have embraced this state-of-the-art new facility.”

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



Point Cook's library opened with 42,000 items the week before the school holidays in September 2009, for a local population of 23,700.

The Wyndham Vale library is the city's fourth.

The council said Tarneit would be the next suburb to get a library.

ACROSS THE REGION

COUNCILS TO CRACK DOWN ON PIT BULLS

The Sydney Morning Herald – 31st August 2011

<http://www.smh.com.au/victoria/councils-to-crack-down-on-pit-bulls-20110830-1jk6i.html>

Councils will doorknock homes in targeted suburbs across Melbourne, warning dangerous dogs such as pit bulls not registered by the end of September could be seized and destroyed.

All dangerous restricted-breed dogs will need to be registered in Victoria by September 29 or council officers will have the power to seize and destroy the dog, under changes announced by the Baillieu government.

Four councils are believed to be in line for the doorknock campaign funding and include Brimbank, Dandenong and Wyndham.

Advertisement: Story continues below

Dangerous dogs such as pit bulls not registered by the end of September could be seized and destroyed.

Dangerous dogs such as pit bulls not registered by the end of September could be seized and destroyed. Photo: Justin McManus

"The areas where we have got the highest concentrations of restricted breeds are around outer Melbourne, Dandenong and Brimbank," Rob Spence, from the Municipal Association of Victoria, said.

"Some councils have run programs where they have doorknocked areas to inquire about whether there's any dogs on the premises and whether they're registered, but also picking up intelligence of other things around the street." He said council inspectors would not have the power to demand to see someone's dog to check if it was an unregistered restricted breed.

New regulations to be released tomorrow by the Baillieu government will also mean dogs that meet the description of a pit bull but who are described as American Staffordshire terriers by their owners, will need certificate of pedigree evidence to prove the dog is an American Staffordshire terrier.

A telephone hotline has been opened to allow people to report dangerous dogs. In its first day of operation 122 calls were received and 37 problem dogs were reported to councils for action.

The RSPCA has received dozens of calls from frightened pet owners who fear their dogs will be mistakenly killed under the government's new law.

American Staffordshire owner Donna Burns said she had owned her certified American Staffordshire terrier "Harlow" for two years and said they were a very friendly breed.

"She has the best temperament, she is fabulous around children."

In addition to the new breed rules, Minister for Agriculture and Food Security Peter Walsh said there would soon be tough new laws for dog owners. "There will be amendments in there where owners of restricted breed type dogs and dangerous dogs will be held accountable for the actions of their dog," Mr Walsh said.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



"If that dog commits an offence where it injures or in the worst case actually kills someone, they will have a charge against them similar to the charge of dangerous driving and culpable driving."

He said the penalty could be 15 years' jail.

Animal experts have applauded the government's pledge to rid Victoria of thousands of pit bull terriers, but say owners should have to cop penalties as well.

The Lost Dogs' Home in North Melbourne receives about 200 stray dogs each week, of which only a couple are pit bulls - a percentage that hasn't changed for a number of years, said managing director Graeme Smith.

Pit bulls are an "aloof" and untrustworthy breed, Dr Smith said.

UNION TAKES RAIL LINK PARTIES TO FAIR WORK TRIBUNAL BECAUSE \$95 AN HOUR NOT ENOUGH

The Herald Sun— 31st August 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/union-takes-rail-link-parties-to-fair-work-tribunal-because-95-an-hour-not-enough/story-fn7x8me2-1226125829289>

Workers on the regional rail link are set to earn \$150,000 a year, but a union is heading to Fair Work Australia to fight for more pay.

Joint bidder AbiGroup and Thiess have agreed to pay Australian Workers' Union members up to \$95.23 an hour for work on the \$4.3 billion rail line, according to a copy of the agreement seen by the Herald Sun.

But the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union have so far been locked out of negotiations with builders short-listed to work on dedicated VLine tracks between Southern Cross station and Werribee.

The CFMEU, fined \$560,000 in June for an illegal blockade, will head to Fair Work Australia on Friday to fight to be included in the project and seek a more lucrative deal.

The Herald Sun understands builders preferred to work with the AWU because it was more reasonable in its demands for pay and conditions.

Start of sidebar. Skip to end of sidebar.

Related Coverage

CFMEU warns of more industrial action Perth Now, 29 Jul 2011

Building unions face fines over strikes The Australian, 23 Jun 2011

Desalination workers ordered back to work Herald Sun, 20 Jun 2011

Flying a rebel flag The Australian, 17 Jun 2011

Unions back in the Pilbara Perth Now, 10 Jun 2011

End of sidebar. Return to start of sidebar.

CFMEU secretary Bill Oliver confirmed the union was taking the dispute to Fair Work Australia. It was taking both the AWU and the contractors to the tribunal.

The AWU has signed a similar agreement with Fulton Hogan and John Holland and was expected to sign another deal next week with the final short-listed bidder Leighton Baulderstone JV.

All three consortiums are bidding to build the link between Deer Park and West Werribee.

AWU secretary Cesar Melhem, who brokered the deals, said it was at the "top end" of civil construction pay rates in Victoria.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



"The money is good. I'm happy with that," he said.

"The average wage will be around \$150,000. People might think that's a lot of money, but we are talking about a 56-hour week."

Mr Melhem declined to comment on the CFMEU's bid at Fair Work Australia.

Corey Hannett, chief executive of the Regional Rail Link Authority, said the contract for the Deer Park to West Werribee section of the project would be awarded early next year.

DETAINEE ESCAPES FROM MARIBYRNONG DETENTION CENTRE

The Herald Sun– 30th August 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/detainee-escapes-from-maribyrnong-detention-centre/story-fn7x8me2-1226125789629>

Police are hunting an escaped detainee who managed to scale the perimeter fence at Maribyrnong detention centre this afternoon.

Three Vietnamese nationals attempted to escape the complex just after 5pm, an Immigration spokesman confirmed.

Immigration staff and police caught one man inside the perimeter and apprehended another a short distance away.

The third man remains at large.

Further details of the man's age and immigration status are not yet known.

Immigration officials do not consider him dangerous.

All three men did not arrive by boat, the spokesman said.

PLEASE DON'T KILL MY DOG, CONFUSED OWNERS BEG

The Herald Sun– 30th August 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/environment/animals/please-dont-kill-my-dog-confused-owners-beg-20110830-1jjch.html>

The RSPCA has received dozens of calls from frightened pet owners who fear their dogs will be mistakenly killed under the Victorian government's new law.

The government will on Tuesday introduce the law ending the amnesty on registering restricted dog breeds following the death of four-year-old Ayen Chol, who was mauled to death by a neighbour's pit bull mastiff in her home two weeks ago at St Albans.

The legislation will also make pit bull crosses a restricted breed. Under the new rules, any pit bulls not registered after August 29 can be destroyed.

Advertisement: Story continues below

A standard for identifying pit bull terriers will also be released to prevent dogs escaping because of uncertainty over their breed.

RSPCA Victoria chief executive Maria Mercurio said that while she welcomed the government's move to protect the community from dangerous dogs, it was extremely difficult to identify dog breeds by sight and mistakes could be made.

"It's a very dangerous way to be going about this," she said.

"Even so-called experts have difficulty determining exact breeds, particularly with cross breeds.

"Unless you do DNA testing, even then it's very difficult if you have a number of breeds that have been crossed. 'She said the organisation had received dozens of calls from worried pet owners.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

2nd September 2011



“People are frightened that their dogs will be mistaken for a pit bull or for a dangerous breed when in fact they’re not,” she said.

Ms Mercurio said there should be incentives such as registration discounts for people who train and socialise their dogs.

“While legislation is important and we support the government in that, we would like to see an equal emphasis on educating our community so that we have good, responsible pet owners,” she said.

A dangerous dog hotline has opened for people to report dogs they believe to be restricted.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/environment/animals/please-dont-kill-my-dog-confused-owners-beg-20110830-1jjch.html#ixzz1WUF0tVaJ>

BUILDERS SHORTLISTED FOR SECOND STAGE OF RRL

Construction connection– 29th August 2011

<http://www.constructionconnection.com.au/blog/builders-shortlisted-for-second-stage-of-rrl.html>

Two consortiums have been named in the final round of the tender for stage 2 of Victoria’s Regional Rail Link project – Southern Cross Station to Footscray.

Integrate Rail, a joint venture between John Holland, Abigroup, Coleman Rail, AECOM & GHD, and the consortium of Leighton Contractors, Downer EDI, SMEC & Mott MacDonald, were shortlisted in the final round of the tendering process.

The two consortiums will now be invited to develop and submit fully costed proposals, with the final contract expected to be awarded next year.

The Regional Rail Link is a jointly funded project, with the federal government contributing \$3.2 billion and the balance coming from the Victorian government.

Works will include realigning and upgrading the existing track and building two lines, modifying the bridges at Dynon Road, Moonee Ponds Creek and Lloyd Street, constructing a 1.1 kilometre viaduct structure between South Kensington and Hopkins Street (Footscray) and erecting a rail bridge across the Maribyrnong River on the south side of the existing heritage rail bridge.

The Regional Rail Link is a jointly funded project, with the federal government contributing \$3.2 billion and the balance coming from the Victorian government.

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