

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

30th September 2011



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BRIMBANK

CONCERN OVER YOUTH FUNDING IN BRIMBANK

Brimbank Leader– 30th September 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/concern-over-youth-funding-in-brimbank/>

Changes to government funding mean Brimbank youths face longer waits for mentoring programs.

Funding for youth mentoring programs across the state established by the previous government will stop at the end of the year and will not be renewed by the State Government.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Victoria executive officer Trisha Ciampa said funding from the Mentoring and Capacity Building program allowed the organisation to give priority to people from Brimbank.

“The funding we were receiving was to link young people with mentors and this was mainly for matches in the Brimbank and Moonee Valley municipal areas,” Ms Ciampa said.

She said many young people were still being referred to the program and of the 110 young people on the waiting list, about 50 per cent were from the western suburbs. “This is an area that tends to require more support,” Ms Ciampa said.

A spokeswoman for Youth Affairs Minister Ryan Smith said the Labor government funding was provided only until the end of the year.

She encouraged organisations to apply for funding under the new \$12.3 million Engage program.

Ms Ciampa said while she was disappointed the funding had ceased under the previous scheme, her organisation would apply for funding under the new scheme.

“It isn’t a great way for us to be spending our time (but) we are used to having to apply for funding,” she said.

Opposition youth affairs spokeswoman Jenny Mikakos said 12 programs including Big Brothers Big Sisters would be affected.

“This is a low-cost program that has a high impact,” she said. “It helps hundreds of at-risk young Victorians every year.”

SEDDON GROWERS VEG OUT AT SWAP MEET

Brimbank Leader– 30th September 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/seddon-growers-veg-out-at-swap-meet/>

Backyard fruit and vegie growers have been coming together in Seddon to swap produce for the past three years.

Neesh Wray, co-ordinator of the monthly Western Urban Harvest Swap Meet, said up to 30 people with excess food come together to swap for the fruit and vegetables they are lacking.

On Saturday, October 1 the swap meet will be celebrating its third birthday.

Ms Wray said they not only swapped fruit, veggies, eggs, bread, jam and coffee grinds but also gardening tips, stories and recipes.

“It’s a great way to engage with your community, with your neighbours and with people who share the same kind of passions and values about growing food.”

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BRIMBANK SPARED MAJOR STORM DAMAGE

Brimbank Weekly– 29th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-spared-major-storm-damage/2307990.aspx>

Brimbank has emerged largely unscathed from the wild storm that lashed Melbourne and much of the state yesterday.

As Melbourne experienced its wettest September day since 1916, the north-west was the most heavily hit area.

Melbourne Airport recorded 51.6 millimetres of rain – almost the entire September rainfall average.

But Brimbank SES unit controller Brad Dalglish said despite the wild winds, hail and torrential rain, only three calls for help were made in the area.

Keilor was the area hardest hit as the SES attended one fallen tree, one flooding incident and one case of building damage.

Havoc has continued today across the rail and tram network and there have been lengthy delays to flights in and out of Melbourne.

Mr Dalglish said the area is not out of the woods yet as further heavy rain is predicted until the weekend.

SUNSHINE REFUGE OFFERS HOPE FOR YOUTH IN CRISIS

Brimbank Leader– 29th September 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/sunshine-refuge-offers-hope-for-youth-in-crisis-fbready/>

A refuge for young people in crisis has been given a makeover.

Sunshine's Western Region Accommodation Program, one of three youth refuges run by Melbourne Citymission, has offered short-term accommodation since 1994, for people aged 16 to 25.

At any one time, WRAP can accommodate up to eight young people for an average of six weeks.

Since it first opened, more than 1400 young people and more than 260 accompanying children have walked through its doors, hoping for another chance to get their lives back on track.

In the past three months, Melbourne Citymission has invested \$106,000 to refurbish the refuge, with new carpet, kitchenettes and storage areas, all to help these youth find their feet.

Newport resident Joal Presincola said the refuge gave her stability.

After being evicted from her property three years ago, the young mother had exhausted all options for herself and her daughter Rial, 3.

"I'd applied for over 30 properties and had nowhere else to go, but I felt so welcomed here," she said.

"It was my first stable home for months, and a good environment for kids."

Staff offer support during their stay and help with housing options.

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Youth worker Les Twentyman said refugees gave young people a chance to “get on with their lives”.

SLITHERERS COME HITHER IN BRIMBANK

Brimbank Leader– 28th September 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/slitherers-come-hither-in-brimbank-fbready/>

A busy snake season has been predicted after a spate of recent snake sightings.

Snake-catcher Jarrod Bingham said Brimbank residents needed to be vigilant after an early start to the snake season, which he attributes to recent sunshine and warmer temperatures.

Mr Bingham said he had removed 10 snakes from Brimbank parks and backyards over the past two weeks. He said while he had removed 20 snakes from the western Melbourne area, Brimbank had the most sightings.

“It’s been pretty crazy lately,” he said. “The snake season has started a lot earlier than normal.”

Mr Bingham said snakes usually appeared around mid-October, but this year he had been removing snakes since August.

He said the mouse plague during winter had contributed to the number of snakes in the area.

But Mr Bingham said residents could make their homes less inviting for snakes by keeping their backyards tidy and lawns mowed.

“The three main reasons snakes come to your home are food, shelter and water,” he said.

Brimbank Council advises residents to stay calm if they see a snake and contact the council on 9249 4000.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Brimbank Star– 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/315/story/141219.html>

A St Albans school is feeding students with breakfast as well as knowledge.

Holy Eucharist School started their breakfast program in July with grants of \$5000 from Brimbank City Council and \$1000 from the Catholic Education Office, and food donations from Victorian Food Bank.

Catholic Education Family School Partnership convenor Cindy Bohan said around 25 kids turned up each morning before school to feast on cereal, toast and milk around a kitchen table, with numbers swelling to up to 40 students.

“It’s a cheery, friendly place full of warm, toasty smells and the kids love it,” Ms Bohan said.

“Families at the school suggested the breakfast program as some students were going to school on empty stomachs.

“It’s open to all 450 students and teachers are really noticing the difference – the kids are more focused in class and seem happier.”

Although the program is scheduled to finish in 2012, Ms Bohan is hoping to make it a permanent part of the school’s curriculum.

“With one in four kids in Victoria going to school without breakfast for a variety of reasons, there’s a real need for a breakfast program, particularly when it’s catering to such a sizeable number,” she said.

In the meantime the school is looking for more volunteers to help with the program.

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Chairman of Brimbank City Council's administrators Peter Lewinsky said the council was proud to help the breakfast program.

"Children are this community's future," Mr Lewinsky said.

"Eating breakfast before school sets them up for better health and better educational outcomes and, we hope, healthy eating habits which will last a lifetime."

KINDER CALL TO HONOUR KELLIE

Brimbank Star—27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/315/story/141204.html>

Once in a lifetime you may meet someone who makes you feel like the most special, important person in the world.

For many people, Kellie O'Connell was that person.

The kindergarten campaigner, who was passionate about improving services across Brimbank and the western suburbs, passed away on 8 December last year after a five-year battle with breast cancer.

Now the kindergarten community she loved so much wants to make a lasting tribute to Kellie, by renaming the Ridgeway Parade Kindergarten, where she once taught, in her name.

Brimbank Preschool Association (BPA) colleague and friend Deborah Briggs said Kellie's passion was to make sure there was equality and no cultural bias for children and she would "go above and beyond" for staff.

"She was one of those people who made everybody feel like they were special," Deborah said.

"She was just a super lovely person. I can't put into words what she meant to people.

"We knew there was something we needed to do to acknowledge her and keep her legacy going."

Support for the renaming has flooded in from government and community organisations, teachers and parents.

Jodie Knox from Early Childhood wrote that Kellie had continued to fight for the best interests of children, families and services despite her own fight with cancer.

"Kellie inspired everyone around her, the children who she cared for and educated every day, the families who she embraced and provided ongoing support to and all the services and community groups she connected with to ensure the best outcomes for the children and families in her services," Jodie's letter said.

Brimbank City Council will consider the renaming, which the kindergarten community hopes will be completed in time for the one-year anniversary of Kellie's passing in December.

Whatever the outcome, it seems the work of the remarkable young woman will live on.

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COUNCIL CALL FOR ACTION

Brimbank Star– 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/315/story/141210.html>

Brimbank City Council is lobbying for a meeting with Health Minister Nicola Roxon in an effort to secure funding for health promotion programs.

The council has applied for a \$750,000 grant to establish a project called 'Live Well, Eat Well, Be Well', which aimed to increase awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity.

The project is a partnership with the Western Region Health Centre, Health West and Western Health, which would also try to address the high instances of type 2 diabetes among residents.

Diabetes Australia Victoria research has found that one in five Brimbank residents aged 55 and over had type 2 diabetes.

Ardeer has the highest prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the western suburbs, with one in seven affected.

Of these Ardeer residents, one in three aged 55 and over had the disease.

Administrator Meredith Sussex said Ms Roxon, who is the Member for Gellibrand, should be paying attention as a recent redistribution of electorate boundaries will mean Brimbank residents will decide Ms Roxon's future at the next election.

Ms Sussex said the project was a high priority for council.

"It is absolutely incumbent on us to bring to the attention... the importance of health promotion in the community," Ms Sussex said.

She said a snub by the State Government, which funded chronic disease prevention in 14 municipalities, was "astounding" given the number of Brimbank residents with diabetes.

The State Government chronic disease prevention project will run in neighbouring council Wyndham, as well as Central Goldfields, Bendigo, Geelong and Latrobe over the next three years.

RENOVATED REFUGE TRUMPS LIFE ON THE STREETS

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/renovated-refuge-trumps-life-on-the-streets/2304224.aspx>

Refurbishments to a Sunshine youth refuge are making life a little brighter for young people in the west at risk of becoming homeless.

Melbourne Citymission has overhauled its Western Region Accommodation Program (WRAP) youth refuge, which accommodates up to eight young people at a time.

CEO Ric Holland said Melbourne Citymission had spent just over \$100,000 to build a new lounge area and kitchenettes, put in new carpet and carry out landscaping.

WRAP team leader Jodie Brown said it was important young people felt safe and had a comfortable place in which to work out their next step.

"We're creating an environment that's not chaotic, where they can reflect on what their options are," Ms Brown said.

The Parsons Street youth refuge was purpose-built in 1994 as a partnership of Melbourne Citymission, the Twentieth Man Fund and philanthropic donors including the Smorgon family.

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It offers short-term crisis accommodation and support for people aged 16-25. The average stay is six weeks.

"Young people leave when they achieve an appropriate outcome and have somewhere to move on to," Ms Brown said.

Melbourne Citymission's director of homelessness and justice, Sherri Bruinhout, said it was important to connect with at-risk youth as soon as possible.

"It can be a slippery slope in those first six months when they're out of home," she said.

"When young people have somewhere like this we can hopefully work with them on a good outcome."

Touring the refurbished facility last Wednesday, Housing Minister Wendy Lovell said the right environment was crucial for giving youths a chance to secure accommodation or rebuild bridges for a return to the family home.

INTRIGUING ART

Brimbank Star— 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/315/story/141211.html>

Derrimut will be the next suburb to receive a facelift, courtesy of Brimbank City Council's public art project.

The council will commission artist Martin Moore to create a sculpture at the Derrimut Community Hub featuring the moire effect.

The effect creates geometric patterns by superimposing a set of lines or dots on another set of lines or dots which are different sizes or spaces apart.

General manager of Community Wellbeing Kelly Grigsby said in her council report that this effect would give "intrigue and playfulness" to the area.

"The work is also highly functional and can be used as a gathering or seating place," the report said.

The total budget for the project is \$68,255, which has been provided through the Federal Government's Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

Brimbank administrator Meredith Sussex said public art installation were "the norm" in new suburbs and would begin to become "the practice" in Brimbank.

"It adds quiriness and difference in our community," Ms Sussex said.

The design was chosen from four proposals, which included a wall sculpture featuring birds, a stylised palm tree with a sound element and a bus shelter with images created by local students.

The decision was made as the council opened the Seeds of Hopes and Dreams exhibition in St Albans Square.

Created by Andrea Tomaselli and Dianne Beavers, the project celebrates cultural diversity by fusing elements of Indigenous and migrant cultures with the heritage flavours of St Albans.

Mr Tomaselli previously told Star the two-year project, which cost around \$250,000, would be something for the community to take ownership of and would beautify the area (Culture built in to art, 2 August, St Albans Star).

Seeds of Hopes and Dreams is comprised of four sculptures with one at the corner of Main Rd West and Mitchell St, two on Alfrieda St traffic islands, and one in the square, which contains a community time capsule.

To submit your hopes and dreams to the capsule, contact the Hunt Club Community Arts Centre on 9249 4600 or visit St Albans Connect at 10C East Esplanade in St Albans.

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RIDLEY'S SPRING CLEAN

Brimbank Star – 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/315/story/141208.html>

Brimbank Council recently made a concerted effort to clean up one of Brimbank's most dilapidated streets.

Ridley St in Albion has been a contentious issue among local residents for a number of years and has been the focus of an intensive clean-up effort, including a graffiti removal program trial and footpath maintenance work.

"Brimbank's Resident Support Program – Graffiti, which was launched in March this year to support residents to enhance the appearance of their local area, was trialled within Ridley St and nearby Albion streets," Kelly Grigsby, general manager for community wellbeing, said.

"The program has since been expanded to all Brimbank residents and offers vouchers for graffiti removal supplies at no charge, to assist eligible residents to remove graffiti from their private property."

Ms Grigsby said the council recently followed up on amenity issues residents had raised in August last year to help keep the street tidy. She said this included clearing dumped rubbish and overgrown foliage.

She said the council had also addressed the need for some more positive partnerships with key service providers in the area which include Wombat Housing and Women's Housing Limited.

"There has been strong support for more activities to further strengthen the Ridley St community.

"During 2011, council is planning to hold a community lunch with local service agencies and the Ridley St neighbourhood, to build on community connections in the area."

NOT GETTING THE POINT IN ALBION

Brimbank Leader – 27th September 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/not-getting-the-point-in-albion-fbready/>

An Albion laneway adjoining a primary school and in regular use as a "shooting gallery" by drug users is to remain open despite residents' objections.

The laneway, between Derrimut St and the corner of Wyalong and Albion streets, is next to Albion Primary School and used as a walkway by parents and children.

Brimbank Council has increased inspections from weekly to daily, and collects on average five syringes a day - but will not close the laneway, which is used by about 100 people daily.

The issue was first brought to the Leader's attention in February this year, and residents said the situation had since worsened.

Resident Mark Bissett lives five minutes from the school. He said he saw a "huge number" of syringes daily.

"We are seeing them every day, and it seems to be getting worse," Mr Bissett said. "We want the laneway shut, get rid of it."

Albion Primary School had educated the children on the hazards of the lane, Ardeer parent Melissa Callaway said.

"There are people that use the lane that want it to be shut, too," Ms Callaway said.

Council infrastructure and environment general manager Paul Younis said residents were right to be concerned.

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“Council has been in contact with the Albion Primary School in relation to their concerns about syringe litter and graffiti in the Albion laneway in the past week,” Mr Younis said.

“A thorough investigation was conducted earlier this year into the issues raised by the school but council found it would be inappropriate to discontinue the laneway.”

Mr Younis said closing it off would have a negative impact on general pedestrian access and connectivity in the local area.

Residents claim to have sent a petition with about 300 signatures to the council in June, but it was not received. A new petition with 172 signatures was handed to the council last week, and will be tabled at the next council meeting in October.

BRIMBANK PIT BULL ATTACK: COUNCIL WORKER HURT

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-pit-bull-attack-council-worker-hurt/2305345.aspx>

Another pit bull attack in Brimbank has left a council officer suffering wounds to his hand and chest.

General manager of city development Stephen Sully has confirmed the officer was attacked about 2pm yesterday as he collected the dog from a Sydenham property.

The pit bull was being surrendered by owners in response to new regulations relating to dangerous and restricted-breed dogs.

The officer was treated by paramedics at the scene for bites to his hand and chest.

He is believed to have been returning from a Municipal Association of Victoria meeting held to discuss the new dangerous dog legislation.

Under the legislation, any dangerous or restricted breed dog not registered by this Friday may be put down.

The amnesty was brought forward in the wake of the fatal attack on four-year-old Ayen Chol by a pit bull in St Albans last month.

Only one new registration has been recorded in Brimbank since the new deadline was declared.

SENIORS RIDE FOR FREE

Brimbank Star– 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/315/story/141215.html>

Brimbank seniors will be given an unlimited ticket to ride early next month.

Public transport in zones 1 and 2, including V/Line trains to and from Melton and Sunbury will be free from Sunday 2 October to Sunday 9 October as part of Senior's Week.

Seniors will also be able to travel free on buses in regional towns and cities from Sunday 2 October to Sunday 9 October.

On V/Line train and coach services, free economy class travel is available on Sunday 2, Tuesday 4 to Thursday 6 and on Saturday 8 October.

Seniors need to carry their Victorian Seniors Card with them while travelling to be eligible for free travel and present it to public transport staff on request.

Victorian seniors who have a senior's myki card should continue to touch on and off as they travel and will automatically be charged \$0.00.

Metlink spokesperson David Klotz said Senior's Week provided a great opportunity for seniors to get out and enjoy themselves.

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"Public transport is the most convenient and inexpensive way for seniors to get to festival events and activities in Melbourne and regional Victoria," Mr Klotz said.

Reservations are required on all long distance V/Line services and seniors are advised to call 136 196 early to book their seat.

Passengers can use the Metlink online journey planner to plan ahead and ensure a comfortable journey.

It may be difficult to get a seat during peak periods therefore seniors are encouraged to avoid travelling in peak times.

For train, tram and bus information or to plan your journey, visit metlinkmelbourne.com.au or call 131 638.

PROPERTY STILL ON THE BOIL

Brimbank Star— 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/315/story/141205.html>

Real estate insiders say Caroline Springs is still hot property, despite having 1055 unsold homes on the market.

Lobby group Prosper Australia claims several growth suburbs, including Caroline Springs, Wyndham Vale, Tarneit, Truganina, Point Cook, Werribee, Craigieburn, Melton, Mernda and Doreen, have had 45,499 "stale" properties in the past five months.

Prosper Australia spokesperson David Collyer said the properties had been sitting on the market for more than 60 days after being offered in July.

"We repeat and confirm our warning to homebuyers to stand aside from buying," Mr Collyer said.

"These figures make a mockery of claims by the property industry of a housing shortage.

"Buyers are telling sellers to 'keep it' as the monopoly practices that drove up prices spin out of control."

But Raine and Horne real estate agent Kelvin Singh, who is based in Caroline Springs, said the market was "unpredictable".

He said any homes in good condition that were under the median price of \$440,000 were still being snapped up quickly.

"You just have to get the right buyer at the right time," Mr Singh said.

"What I always say is, a good time is when you're ready.

"If you really want to sell there's no good or bad time to go on the market."

Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) spokesperson Robert Larocca said the belief in a house shortage came from figures provided by the National Housing Supply Council.

Mr Larocca said there were no "failed home sales".

"A house sells only when a buyer offers a price the vendor is willing to accept," Mr Larocca said.

"For some sellers that can happen quickly and for some it takes a bit longer."

He said the property market was "calmer" this year in comparison to last year, but said prices had not changed by much.

"The local real estate market does have a history of moving in cycles, but right now the current balance of demand and supply is providing good opportunities to buyers."

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BLUE RIBBON DAY: SON'S LOSS STILL A PAINFUL MEMORY

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/blue-ribbon-day-sons-loss-still-a-painful-memory/2304226.aspx>

There isn't a day that goes by that Dot and Richard Lewczuk don't think about their son Tim.

But with Blue Ribbon Day this Thursday, the memory of the son they lost will be at the very forefront of their minds.

Senior Constable Tim Lewczuk was struck and killed after pulling over a car on the Western Ring Road at Ardeer in 1997.

The Newport officer was thrown 15 metres over a bridge railing after being hit by a passing car.

The 30-year-old had previously been stationed at St Albans, Brunswick, Moonee Ponds and Flemington and his photo still hangs in Sunshine police station.

On Blue Ribbon Day, the community is being urged to pay tribute to the 157 members of Victoria Police who have been killed in the line of duty.

"It does mean a lot for everyone, especially to other police officers and their parents, and there's a lot of them," Mr Lewczuk said.

"They're all doing a job to help us and to help society and they don't get enough appreciation and thanks for that sort of stuff."

Other officers killed in the line of duty in Brimbank include constables John McDonald (1966) and Clare Bourke (1983).

A memorial service will be held at Whitten Oval in Footscray from 1.40pm on Thursday.

IN A SPIN FOR FITNESS SAKE

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/in-a-spin-for-fitness-sake/2304234.aspx>

People with a disability in Brimbank can pedal their way into shape following the donation of a new spin bike to a disability support group in St Albans.

The operators of Deer Park gym Obsessed With Fitness donated the exercise bike to Scope St Albans Lifestyle Centre last week as part of its community engagement program.

This month Scope is running a campaign, See Me in September, to encourage communities to see what people living with a disability are capable of.

The spin bike will add to Scope's gym facilities, all of which can also be used by able-bodied members. Scope's Katie Marx says physical fitness is important for people with a disability.

"Nancy [pictured] was the first to try the bike and was thrilled because it was the first time in her life she'd got to use one," Ms Marx said.

"Having the fitness equipment allows people with a disability to be supported to try new things."

Obsessed with Fitness will hold training sessions for people with a disability taking part in the North West Balloon Football League from October 3.

"We have a great partnership with the gym which is fully supporting people with a disability," Ms Marx said.

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FEARS OVER NEEDLES: ALBION PRIMARY WANTS LANE CLOSED

Brimbank Weekly – 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fears-over-needles-albion-primary-wants-lane-closed/2304223.aspx>

There are fears for the safety of Albion Primary School pupils following an alarming rise in the number of syringes and beer bottles being thrown onto school grounds from a nearby laneway.

About five syringes were found at the school last week, while residents spotted between 15 and 20 in the lane behind the school each day. The lane is used daily by residents, schoolchildren and parents.

The school's vice-principal, Adrienne Williamson, is urging Brimbank Council to close the lane to prevent pupils from being harmed.

"This has been a problem for many years and just last year a relative of a student was pricked with a needle by someone walking down the laneway," she said.

"It becomes an even bigger issue if the syringes end up in the grass where students can't see them. We're now getting beer bottles thrown over which hasn't happened before."

Residents and members of the school's parents group raised the matter at last week's council meeting, calling on it to resolve the issue.

Albion resident Gantcho Taskov, who lives near the lane on Wyalong Street, said he could be forced to move if the council didn't act soon.

"I've lived in Albion for 30 years and I don't want to move, but it's becoming more dangerous to live on my street because of the laneway," he said.

"There are always people drinking, taking drugs and vandalising fences. My steel fence has been vandalised and will cost me \$12,000 to repair which I can't afford."

Parent's group member Paula Bissett fears her child, who has an autism spectrum disorder, might pick up a syringe out of curiosity.

"Autistic children often have a fixation with certain things so I'm worried my child will pick a needle up and play with it," she said.

Speaking at last week's council meeting, general manager of infrastructure and environment Paul Younis said there was a need for the council to work with police to create preventive measures.

"Since the school called us last week we have increased our clean up of the laneway from once a week to once a day. We're trying to respond as quickly as we can when issues arise, but these are reactive responses and they won't address the overall issues."

Mr Younis later told the Weekly that council investigations found that it would be inappropriate to discontinue the laneway because it was "highly utilised" as a pedestrian link.

"Our investigations have revealed that approximately 100 pedestrians utilise it on a daily basis," he said.

Mr Younis said council would continue to work with police and the school to stop the illegal disposal of syringes.

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BRIMBANK COUNCIL TO SELL OFF LAND

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-council-to-sell-off-land/2304292.aspx>

Brimbank Council is poised to sell off an open space in Trickey Avenue, Sydenham.

The council has agreed to give formal notice of its intention to sell the piece of land, which can only be accessed through private land and has no public access.

The council last week determined the land was not suitable for development as open space.

It will be offered for sale by tender to adjoining owners.

In July, residents reacted angrily at council's decision to earmark 14 sites across Brimbank for sale to fund its multimillion-dollar parks upgrade plan.

BRIMBANK COUNCIL WORKERS OPPOSE OUTSOURCING

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-council-workers-oppose-outsourcing/2304230.aspx>

Brimbank Council workers have vowed to fight any attempt to outsource work to contractors at the expense of jobs.

About 200 workers met in front of the council's Sunshine offices last Wednesday and voted unanimously to demand it back down on any plans to contract out any further in-house services.

Australian Services Union organiser Russell McGregor told gathered workers that council management was wasting "rivers of money" on external consultants to carry out reviews designed to smooth the way for outsourcing.

ASU state secretary Brian Parkinson said Brimbank was one of the only councils in the state going down this path.

"Management are taking advantage of a small window of opportunity while under administration to force this through," he said.

"They say they are testing the market, but all that does is lead to staff reductions and driving down standards."

Mr Parkinson said the council had a moral obligation in an area of high unemployment to ensure local jobs were created and protected.

Council's general manager of governance and community relations, Helen Morrissey, said the "best value" process was about improving services to the community.

"The assertion that it is being undertaken to cut jobs is wrong."

Ms Morrissey said service delivery reviews could mean a change in the way the service was delivered, pointing to a review that led to youth services moving from a contractor back to council.

She said nine new employees would be added to the parks maintenance team to improve community satisfaction with parks and open spaces.

A worker who asked not to be named said job security and the standard of service were the main issues.

"They start looking at these small areas like the [Keilor] golf course. If they bring those guys into another team, then that takes jobs that would otherwise be there for others. If they start looking for contractors who will cut corners, the area will go downhill."

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QUICK THINKING SAVES WOMAN'S LIFE

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/quick-thinking-saves-womans-life/2304308.aspx>

Two lives have been saved in Brimbank in the past fortnight, highlighting the importance of first-aid skills.

On September 18, a woman at the Samoan Assembly of God church in Braybrook was treated by a parishioner after she collapsed in cardiac arrest.

Paramedics called to the scene found a congregation member doing CPR.

Intensive care paramedic Jon Hinton said the quick thinking may have saved the 57-year-old woman's life.

In Deer Park, a man driving through the area about 8.30am on September 20 was suffering from distress.

He pulled over at the Deer Park fire station and collapsed.

Station officer Rod O'Sullivan said firefighters provided oxygen for the man until paramedics arrived.

He was taken to hospital in a stable condition.

BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/breakfast-of-champions/2304225.aspx>

A new breakfast program is giving St Albans pupils like Kartik (pictured) an appetite for learning.

Holy Eucharist School began the program in July, giving its 450 students the chance to get the best possible start to their day.

Each morning before school up to 40 children enjoy cereal, toast and milk around a kitchen table.

The initiative was started with a \$5000 grant from Brimbank Council through St Albans Connect and \$1000 from the Catholic Education Office.

The office's family school partnership convener, Cindy Bohan, says pupils enjoy the chance to catch up before class and eat food donated by Foodbank Victoria.

"It's a cheery, friendly place full of warm, toasty smells and the kids love it."

The program came about due to a number of pupils coming to school on empty stomachs.

Ms Bohan says teachers are noticing a difference in the classroom.

"The kids are more focused in class and seem happier." Ms Bohan wants more volunteers to come on board in the hope the program can continue.

ST ALBANS EMBRACES YAM DAISY AND TIME CAPSULE

Brimbank Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/st-albans-embraces-yam-daisy-and-time-capsule/2304228.aspx>

St Albans has proudly welcomed its first major public artwork, Seeds of Hopes and Dreams.

Artists Andrea Tomaselli and Dianne Beevers have worked on the project over a number of months, aiming to celebrate the diverse community of St Albans and the shared migration experience.

Unveiled in St Albans Square last Thursday were four permanent artworks combining sculpture, lighting, paving and seating in key public places.

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The main sculpture (pictured) was inspired by the indigenous yam daisy and includes a community time capsule.

Residents have shared their hopes and dreams for the future of St Albans, and these will be placed inside the time capsule.

Gateway sculptures have also been placed at the corner of Main Road West and Mitchell Street and there is a new sculpture on the Alfrieda Street traffic island.

Brimbank Council chairman Peter Lewinsky said the project was central to a \$1million upgrade of the St Albans Town Centre.

HOBSONS BAY

HOBSONS BAY'S ROOMING HOUSES GO UNCHECKED

Hobsons Bay Leader – 30th September 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/hobsons-bays-rooming-houses-go-unchecked/>

Hobsons Bay's 15 registered rooming houses are operating above board, the council has said.

But community service workers said they feared dozens of unregistered homes were operating unchecked.

Hobsons Bay Council's business and finance director Glenn O'Sullivan said all registered rooming houses were inspected last financial year and no infringement notices were issued.

Mr O'Sullivan said the council was re-inspecting the registered rooming houses again this year.

But the chief executives of two community service organisations said they suspected illegal rooming houses were slipping through the cracks.

Laverton Community Centre chief executive Michael Pernar said unregistered rooming houses were becoming more prevalent because of the lack of housing affordability.

And Victorian Council of Social Service chief executive Cath Smith said illegal rooming houses were springing up in areas that would not have had any a decade ago.

"Hobsons Bay, because it's a relatively large council area, I'm sure there would be quite a big increase in informal as well as formal rooming houses because of what's happened," Ms Smith said.

"For people on really low incomes, rooming houses are suddenly becoming the affordable option."

Mr O'Sullivan said the council had not received any reports of illegal rooming houses since new legislation came into effect on September 1, requiring real estate agents and landlords to tell the council if they suspected properties were being used as an unregistered rooming house.

But Mr Pernar said there were holes in the laws.

"What happens if it's a landlord who's doing it and they're not registered with an agent?" he said.

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FEED MELBOURNE: CASH GRANT SERVES UP AN EXTRA HELPING IN NEWPORT

Hobsons Bay Leader— 29th September 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/feed-melbourne-cash-grant-serves-up-an-extra-helping-in-newport/>

A Newport church will get a sparkling new kitchen to help feed the poor, thanks in part to the Feed Melbourne campaign.

Hobsons Bay Christian Church is the recipient of a \$10,000 Feed Melbourne grant, which will help the church refurbish its kitchen.

Minister Len Hawes said the money would help pay for new stainless-steel bench tops.

The church dishes up lunch for about 50 people once a week and is about to expand the lunch program to twice weekly.

Mr Hawes said the need for meal programs was far greater in Hobsons Bay than many people realised.

“People think the community is very affluent, but there’s a whole section of people who are doing it a bit tough,” Mr Hawes said. “I really want the place to be serving the community and its needs, from the rich to the poor.”

The church has recently opened an op shop and has established a partnership with a job training agency to help unemployed people learn kitchen, customer service, graphics and retail skills.

Mr Hawes said Feed Melbourne helped local organisations continue their work in the community.

“When I looked at Feed Melbourne, it’s very much along the lines of what our passion is and what our aim is,” he said.

RIFT OVER DOUBLED RENT IN WILLIAMSTOWN

Hobsons Bay Leader— 28th September 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/rift-over-doubled-rent-in-williamstown/>

A Hobsons Bay councillor has labelled a 105 per cent rent increase for the building used by a Williamstown community centre as a “straight-out money grab”.

Cr Angela Altair made the comments after the state Department of Treasury and Finance hit the council with a massive rent rise for Joan Kirner House on Thompson St.

The rent, which was \$21,000 for 2010-11, is \$43,000 for 2011-12.

The former Williamstown court house’s rent has increased 860 per cent since the council took over the lease in 2001.

The council is in the final year of a 10-year lease for the property and is currently in negotiations with the government to assume management of the building.

If an agreement is reached, the council could use the building rent-free from July 2012.

Cr Altair said the government got “a bit cheeky because they can”.

“It’s just a straight-out money grab because they won’t be able to do it anymore,” she said. A council officer’s report presented on the issue last week also states that the council was given no notice of the increase and wasn’t told about the rise until after the start of this financial year.

Council community services director Peter Hunt appealed to the department about the rent increase but last month the appeal was denied.

The department instead offered to let the council pay the rent in two payments but a report issued by Mr Hunt’s department said that would still leave the council

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\$22,000 over budget for 2011-12, which would mean reducing council community development activities and programs.

A government spokeswoman said the Valuer General Victoria had carried out a rent review for Joan Kirner House in July this year and determined that the annual rent should increase.

"In assessing the revised rental the valuer had regard to comparable properties," the spokeswoman said.

UP IN SMOKE

Hobsons Bay Star – 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/315/story/141195.html>

Hobsons Bay City Council could be the first municipality in Victoria to ban smoking outside schools, kindergartens and hospitals.

Star can confirm Councillor Luba Grigorovitch will call on council officers to formulate a report on the feasibility of the ban in Hobsons Bay.

The call for the report follows a Hobsons Bay decision last week, to ban smoking on beaches and children's playgrounds throughout the city.

Cr Grigorovitch who originally brought the motion to the council said she was proud that Hobsons Bay was leading the way in the West by amending its local laws.

"It's not just about children, it's about the entire community," she said.

The council gave public notice of its intent to ban smoking in May this year, during this time it only received one objection to the proposal.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has also jumped on the no-smoking bandwagon calling on the State Government for a state-wide framework for

smoking in outdoor public places, including bans in alfresco dining areas and children's playgrounds.

Brimbank City Council's city development general manager Stephen Sully said the council would monitor the steps being taken by Hobsons Bay, but wasn't considering a similar ban in Brimbank.

Williamstown MP Wade Noonan supported the ban.

"Smoking is a very substantial public health issue," he said.

"I applaud the Hobsons Bay City Council for their willingness to lead the way on this issue."

This decision follows that of other Victorian councils including Frankston City Council and the City of Port Phillip.

Hobsons Bay resident John Sagona told Star he would welcome further bans to smoking in Hobsons Bay.

Mr Sagona said he would like to see smoking banned not just in outdoor dining areas but outdoor shopping precincts such as Pier St.

"I think council should look at this very seriously," he said.

"While they are concerned for kids' health there are other people concerned by this – it's very intrusive."

Mr Sagona also raised concerns about the number of cigarette butts on the streets of Hobsons Bay and said further bans would help alleviate this problem.

The ban will be introduced on 1 November and could see offenders whacked with a \$200 on-the-spot fine.

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GP SHORTAGE CONCERNS

Hobsons Bay Star – 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/315/story/141266.html>

Access to GPs in Hobsons Bay needs to dramatically improve, according to a new report.

In 2009 there was just one general practitioner per 1683 people living in Hobsons Bay.

Last week, the council received a report on Health Services Planning for Hobsons Bay and the Western Metropolitan Region which noted the municipality needed to improve its access to GPs.

With many of Hobsons Bay's GPs at retirement or pre-retirement age in 2007 and three quarters of practices having GP vacancies, residents in Hobsons Bay have a harder time getting in to see a doctor than other parts of the state.

In order to meet the Federal Government's benchmark and to replace GPs planning to retire, medical practices in Hobsons Bay would need to recruit and attract an additional 10 to 17 GPs by 2015.

The report noted cardiovascular disease, mental disorders and diabetes to be among the top seven disease burdens for the Hobsons Bay population.

It suggested good access to primary health services such as GPs was important for reducing the prevalence and onset of these illnesses.

Upon receiving the report, Cr Peter Hemphill said access to GPs in Hobsons Bay was well below the state average.

"I know when my family's had to go the GP it's difficult to get in – it just reflects the difficulties right across the region," he said.

Cr Hemphill also noted a property on Hall St Spotswood which the council approved to be used for the development of a medical centre and pharmacy in August.

The property now appears to be up for sale and will be auctioned in October, dashing resident's hopes of a medical centre.

Director Planning and Environment Peter Gaschk said the permit for the medical centre (office) and pharmacy is attached to the land and would be sold with the site.

"If a new owner is found, they can either develop a medical centre or submit an alternative application."

EARLY INPUT TO HELP PLAN SPENDING

Hobsons Bay Leader – 27th September 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-early-input-to-help-plan-spending/>

Residents and community groups will have an early chance to have their say on the 2012-13 Hobsons Bay budget.

A new process allows people the opportunity to provide input into what's needed in the next budget in October this year rather than waiting for the traditional consultation period around May.

Cr Peter Hemphill said the new timeline was a much fairer process.

"People have all these expectations and we can't accommodate them," Cr Hemphill said.

"There's a greater chance of community projects getting funded this way. If they want something awarded in the 2012-13 budget, now is the time to put your bid in."

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Cr Angela Altair said the council would work more closely with the community on the budget.

“We will make sure the budget and particularly the capital works program reflects much more closely the aspirations of our citizens,” Cr Altair said.

“Each councillor has committed to talk to their own constituents just to find out and make sure that any bid that we put in, particularly for each individual ward, is very closely aligned to the aspirations ... of the people that it represents.”

HOBSONS BAY'S LIGHT-HANDED SMOKING BAN

Hobsons Bay Leader – 27th September 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-hobsons-bays-light-handed-smoking-ban/>

Hobsons Bay Council will depend on the goodwill of smokers to butt out at beaches and playgrounds after revealing it will not employ extra officers to enforce a new ban.

Smoking will be banned on beaches and near children's playgrounds from November 1.

Smokers found flouting the law face an on-the-spot fine of \$200.

Business and finance director Glenn O'Sullivan said the council expected the public to take on a “self-enforcement” role.

“We're not going to go out there and employ extra local laws officers. It will be more of an education process,” Mr O'Sullivan said.

And smokers may soon find themselves with even fewer places to go after Cr Luba Grigorovitch revealed she would push to have the ban extended to prohibit smoking outside schools, kindergartens, hospitals and medical centres.

The council is Victoria's third municipality to ban smoking on beaches and the fifth to restrict it in playgrounds.

Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club president Iain Dickson said the ban would be hard to enforce.

He hoped to see councillors at the beach educating people about the new rules.

“It would certainly make for a tidier beach,” Mr Dickson said.

Williamstown Labor MP Wade Noonan, who is a strong supporter of the ban, also applauded the council's action.

“As a parent of two young children, I can tell you that this decision has received a big tick in my household,” he said.

Smoking will be banned 24 hours a day at playgrounds and beaches, though the ban's boundaries have not yet been determined.

OPERATION JAWBONE: TRAFFIC COPS TARGET WESTERN SUBURBS

Hobsons Bay Leader – 25th September 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/operation-jawbone-traffic-cops-target-western-suburbs/>

A crackdown on drink driving and hoons in the western suburbs has detected 121 traffic offences.

Highway Patrol Hobson's Bay, Wyndham and Maribyrnong joined forces this weekend as part of Operation Jawbone.

Over Friday and Saturday night, 121 traffic offences were detected around Spotswood, Newport, Altona, Williamstown, Laverton and Point Cook.

Offences included:

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- 65 speeding drivers
- 7 drink drivers
- 8 unlicensed drivers
- 2 seat belt offences
- 3 unregistered vehicles
- 4 cars impounded

A 23-year-old Altona Meadows man who was clocked at 164km/h on the Princes Highway in Altona was the highest speed recorded during the blitz.

The man's car was impounded for 30 days under hoon laws.

Sgt Jason Van Doren said he was shocked at the speeds recorded, despite repeated warnings from police.

"It really surprises and shocks me that people are still hitting our roads at such high speeds, we will continue to pay attention to this high risk behaviour and take appropriate action" he said.

Sgt Van Doren warned motorist's police would continue to be out in force on local roads over the coming weeks.

"Police will be out in force conducting speed checks and drink driving throughout the Hobson's Bay area not only in the lead up to the grand final but well into the summer period."

MARIBRYNONG

PAID PARKING MOVE FOR YARRAVILLE?

Maribyrnong Star – 29th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/315/story/141448.html>

Paid parking could be making its way to Yarraville.

Maribyrnong City Council has commissioned a report that will look at the possible expansion of paid parking in other shopping centres across the City of Maribyrnong, including Anderson St in Yarraville.

The report, which will be tabled at a council meeting next year, is likely to appease Footscray traders who don't understand why paid parking is only being rolled out across Footscray's CBD and not other busy shopping precincts like Yarraville or Highpoint.

A council report concedes: "It is noted that while Yarraville is a much smaller centre and catchment area with a different mix of business and parking requirements, it does at times experience high parking demand and traffic congestion."

But not all councillors are convinced that paid parking is needed across the municipality.

"Yarraville definitely isn't a Central Activities Area, Footscray is one of those six within Victoria," Cr Sel Sanli said.

"We're not just talking about a shopping strip here, the State Government has recognised it as something big. There, we're not comparing apples with apples."

Mayor Sarah Carter agreed.

"The scope of this study was for Footscray, and Footscray is uniquely different to the rest of those activities areas.

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"I don't believe you can compare the two, but that's not to say there's not a case for paid parking in Yarraville."

Cr Dina Lynch pointed out that the council could not introduce paid parking in the Highpoint Shopping Centre car parks, because they were privately owned by GPT.

OVERDUE ACTION

Maribyrnong Star – 29th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/315/story/141446.html>

Maribyrnong City Council has hired a specialist consultancy to retrieve long-overdue library books.

More than 2000 long overdue items are considered lost each year from the Maribyrnong, Footscray, West Footscray and Yarraville Libraries, with the majority of these the most popular titles.

Mayor Sarah Carter said loss of library resources disadvantaged other members, prevented libraries from offering their full catalogue to members and diverted valuable library funds from purchasing new titles to replace ones that had been lost.

The council has appointed Unique Management Services to retrieve items that are considered lost. People holding overdue books will be fined \$15 plus any outstanding fines already incurred on the items.

Items are considered lost once members have been contacted numerous times via phone, email and letter by the Maribyrnong Library Service over a period of 35 days and the item has still not been returned.

Unique Management Services currently work with more than 1000 libraries in Australia, the UK, US and Canada.

More than 800,000 items are borrowed each year from the Maribyrnong, Footscray, West Footscray and Yarraville libraries by approximately 28,000 current registered members.

MAJOR PARKS UPGRADE

Maribyrnong Star – 29th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/315/story/141450.html>

A \$440,000 cash injection will give 13 parks and reserves across the City of Maribyrnong a much-needed facelift.

Maribyrnong City Council will spend between \$10,000 and \$50,000 at each reserve fixing up plants, putting up fencing and replacing furniture to enhance the safety, security and amenity of each location.

The council will also spend \$150,000 adding signage to sport grounds, so that sporting clubs can advertise their home grounds and contact details.

Ash Reserve, Bell St Reserve, Bellairs Reserve, Burton Reserve, Cambridge Reserve, Costello Reserve, Harris Reserve, Hyde St Reserve, McNabb Reserve, Munroe Square, Rogers Reserve, Ruby Square and Swaby Square were selected for the works from ratepayer feedback.

The council has not detailed when the works will be carried out.

The works are in addition to the \$1.19 million allocated to parks and recreation upgrades in the council's 2011-12 budget.

Mayor Sarah Carter was thrilled with the planned works, saying the funding provided small changes that would make vast improvements to existing parks and reserves in the municipality.

"This is the stuff that means something to people, it's so important," Cr Carter said.

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Fellow councillor Michael Clarke added: "This \$440,000 gives us far greater return than what the dollar value represents."

EDGEWATER GREEN LIGHT

Maribyrnong Star – 29th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/315/story/141449.html>

Pre-building works are underway for the Western Bulldogs Club Edgewater development after Maribyrnong City Council approved its plan to relocate poker machines.

A Bulldogs club spokesperson told Star construction will commence later this year with the venue forecast to be open in late 2012.

The development received the green light to commence works after Maribyrnong City Council approved the Electronic Gaming Machine Relocation Plan, which formed the last part of the planning permit approvals issued to the developer, Prizac Investments.

The plan provides for a reduction in electronic gaming machines in the municipality from 511 to 500 prior to the opening of Club Edgewater.

The council originally opposed the Bulldogs' relocation plan, with a Victoria Civil and Administrative Tribunal appeal date in August.

But General Manager Sustainable Development Nigel Higgins told Star that the Bulldogs submitted a revised and improved relocation plan prior to the hearing, which was later cancelled.

The \$25 Club Edgewater development will include a 52-room hotel, gaming venue, dining and bistro areas, a members' bar and function room that caters for 300 people.

"The club will keep the community up-to-date as construction progresses," a Bulldogs spokesperson said. "The Western Bulldogs continues its strong commitment to the community, including alcohol and gaming related awareness programs, and will work with the Maribyrnong City Council as part of the club's ongoing work."

COUNCIL SUPPORTS SMOKING BAN

Maribyrnong Star – 29th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/315/story/141459.html>

Maribyrnong City Council will look into banning smoking in outdoor public places after a neighbouring council took the lead last week.

Maribyrnong CEO Vince Haining has told Star the council supported "the broad intent of the framework to reduce the incidence of smoking and the related harms associated with 'second hand' smoke".

"Council would need to determine the costs associated with this approach and community views about smoking in outdoor areas if considering the proposal," he said.

The City of Hobsons Bay could be the first municipality in Victoria to ban smoking outside schools, kindergartens and hospitals after last week voting to ban smoking on beaches and children's playgrounds throughout the city from 1 November.

Monash, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Frankston, Port Phillip and the Surf Coast municipalities have already employed outdoor smoke-free areas on beaches, children's playgrounds and outdoor shopping centres.

One in five Maribyrnong adults are smokers, according to the Victorian Population Health Survey report 2008, while 24.1 per cent of residents have kicked the habit.

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The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has also jumped on the no-smoking bandwagon calling on the State Government for a statewide framework for smoking in outdoor public places, including bans in alfresco dining areas and children's playgrounds.

"While the MAV believes councils are best placed to determine local smoke-free policies for council-owned buildings and land, Victorians could also benefit from consistent laws for some common outdoor areas," MAV president Bill McArthur said.

Member for Williamstown Wade Noonan also supported the ban.

"Smoking is a very substantial public health issue," he said.

FUTURE HOUSING STRATEGY

Maribyrnong Star – 29th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/315/story/141454.html>

Maribyrnong City Council has released a draft housing strategy to guide future housing development over the next two decades.

The draft Maribyrnong Housing Strategy will also ensure that projected demand for more housing will be met in the appropriate suburbs and areas, and addresses sustainable design, affordability and neighbourhood character.

Maribyrnong's existing housing strategy is more than a decade old and predates demographic changes, the State Government's Melbourne 2030 plan and Melbourne @ 5 million.

The municipality has more than 73,620 residents living in 31,424 homes, units and apartments across the municipality.

From that, around 67 per cent of people live in detached housing, 20 per cent in apartments and the rest in semi-detached housing.

Approximately seven per cent of Maribyrnong residents live in public housing, with the bulk of public housing in Braybrook – one in four Braybrook homes are State Government owned and run.

The council report notes that housing affordability is an increasingly important issue for both tenants and aspiring home owners in the municipality.

Population projections forecast an extra 30,783 residents in Maribyrnong in the next 20 years, with nearly 16,000 new homes needed to meet the demand.

From this, it has been predicted that apartments will account for almost half of the housing demand.

It is expected that little change will take place within the council's nominated residential heritage and neighbourhood character precincts, but areas like Footscray and Highpoint will experience a growth in mixed-density housing.

Councillor Michael Clarke said the draft strategy was vital to cater for the exponential growth occurring within the municipality.

Cr Clarke believes the growth estimates were conservative when taking into account semi-established and up-and-coming housing estates like Edgewater Estate, Banbury Village, the Maribyrnong Defence Site, and the Bradmill development.

"We need a diverse range of housing for what is going to be a changing set of needs," Cr Clarke said.

The draft Maribyrnong Housing Strategy is currently out for public consultation.

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MARIBYRNONG COUNCIL FAVOURS SEVEN WARDS

Maribyrnong Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/maribyrnong-council-favours-seven-wards/2306857.aspx>

Maribyrnong Council will support retaining seven wards with one councillor in each, as proposed by the Victorian Electoral Commission.

The VEC review of representation put forward three options in a recent report. It preferred keeping the current structure of one councillor per ward with minor boundary changes in Yarraville and Kingsville.

Councillors voted to make a submission in support of the VEC's preferred option.

A public hearing will be held in the Maribyrnong Council chambers, Footscray, at 6.30pm on Wednesday, October 5.

A final report will be presented to Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell on October 26.

HOSPITAL BEDS CAN'T MATCH WEST'S PROGNOSIS

Maribyrnong Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/hospital-beds-cant-match-wests-prognosis/2306325.aspx>

Hobsons Bay Council has called for more hospital services in Melbourne's west in the wake of a report showing that cardiovascular disease, mental health issues, diabetes and male obesity rates in the area are higher than the state average.

According to a report tabled at last Tuesday's meeting, Hobsons Bay residents are less likely to go to a GP than other Victorians but more likely to go to a hospital emergency department than residents from any other metropolitan area.

Another 600 more hospital beds will be needed in the west in the next decade, according to the state government's Victorian Health Priorities Framework.

It states that only 20per cent of people live within 10 kilometres of the city, yet 40per cent of public and private hospitals fall in this radius.

The framework warns that shortages will worsen between now and 2022 as populations increase and residents suffer more chronic and complex conditions.

Hobsons Bay deputy mayor Tony Briffa said despite the higher prevalence of chronic diseases in the west, there was just one hospital with four campuses run by Western Health. The only other hospital was the Mercy at Werribee.

"If you look at the other side of Melbourne you've got everything from The Northern Hospital, Austin Hospital, Maroondah Hospital, Box Hill Hospital, Monash Medical Centre at Clayton and Moorabin, the Sandringham and District Hospital, Dandenong Hospital, Casey Hospital, Frankston Hospital ... and the list continues," Cr Briffa said.

"One can see where the funding is going and the disparity of services despite the western suburbs containing the largest population growth area in Victoria and a higher prevalence of chronic disease compared to the rest of the state."

Western Health chief executive Kath Cook said while the state budget had not provided additional capital funding, the government recognised the dearth of hospital infrastructure in Melbourne's west. "The hospitals in the west only meet 50-60 per cent of the needs of the population. Residents are frequently required to travel outside the area for their health care."

Kathryn McFarlane, a spokeswoman for Health Minister David Davis, said that in the past 11 years Victoria's health system had not been properly planned.

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The framework's aim was a health system that was both clinically effective and cost-effective.

TLC FOR CITY OF MARIBYRNONG PARKS

Maribyrnong Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/tlc-for-city-of-maribyrnong-parks/2306331.aspx>

Thirteen parks will be given a much-needed facelift after Maribyrnong Council approved \$440,000 for upgrades.

The work, approved last week, will include planting trees and installing paths, seats and signs.

The money will come from developer contributions to the open space reserve fund, which has collected \$664,000 more than budgeted.

Spending ranges from \$10,000 for Ruby Square in Braybrook to \$50,000 for Harris Reserve in Seddon. The total of \$440,00 includes \$150,000 for signs at sports grounds.

Cr Sel Sanli said it was a case of the council getting "back to basics" and looking after parks.

"We want to make sure we get parks above the standard they're in. We understand they haven't had TLC [tender loving care] for a while."

COUNCIL REBELS AGAINST BEING 'COLLECTION AGENCY' FOR STATE

Maribyrnong Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/council-rebels-against-being-collection-agency-for-state/2306323.aspx>

Hobsons Bay Council has expressed strong opposition to collecting a fire services property levy on behalf of the state.

A report tabled at last week's council meeting stated that the move was another example of cost-shifting that would tax the council's rates base.

"It would be extremely difficult for the council's ratepayers to accept that this is not another council charge," the report said.

Victoria's fire services are funded mainly by financial contributions from insurance companies, the state government and metropolitan councils. Insurance companies recover their contributions by imposing a fire service levy on premiums.

After the 2009 bushfires, the bushfires royal commission recommended that the state replace the levy "with a property-based levy and introduce concessions for low-income earners".

Former fire fighter and Spotswood ward councillor Bill Tehan said he objected to the council becoming a "collection agency" for the state, as prescribed by the Department of Treasury and Finance's fire services options paper.

"We're not in the business of collecting on behalf of the state," Cr Tehan said. "You have only got to look at the GST and the flaws in that.

"The amount of work that would be involved in this - in examining the fire services levy, determining the concessions that we would have to give, the additional rate notices - it would be a nightmare for the council and an added expense we don't

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need." Williamstown North ward councillor Peter Hemphill said the council supported a "more equitable" property-based levy.

"I think it needs to be made clear that we're not knocking the proposal that there be a better way to collect a levy because it is quite discriminatory and unfair that it is levied on those who take out insurance, whereas those who may not don't have to pay it."

VACANT-LAND OWNERS 'HIT GOLD'

Maribyrnong Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/vacantland-owners-hit-gold/2306322.aspx>

About 200 landholders could form a consortium to develop a 40-hectare "commercial gold mine" on the Burns Road estate in Altona.

Spearheading the plan is Laverton North businessman Michael Sergi, who says he has spent more than \$1.3million battling Hobsons Bay Council.

Mr Sergi says he is going to be the people's "saviour", allowing them to cash in on their investment.

In 1927, the land was zoned residential and subdivided into more than 550 600-square-metre lots. It remained undeveloped before being rezoned light industrial in 1954. A caveat was put in place that the minimum land size to be developed was two hectares.

In 2005, Mr Sergi bought two hectares, establishing the only parcel big enough to develop.

Problem was, his land was designated as a reserve and the council believed that it had vested the land back to itself.

Mr Sergi's attempt to rezone the land for development was opposed by the council all the way to the Supreme Court, before the parties settled recently.

In a letter to fellow landowners this month, Mr Sergi said he and the council had resolved their dispute and he would lodge another request to rezone the reserve as a special-use zone.

He hopes to develop a "super wash" for trucks, including a service station, restaurant and parking for 21 B-doubles.

Mr Sergi has formed a company called Burns Road Pty Ltd and hopes to form a consortium with other landowners. He has invited them to sell their land or become part-owners in the new entity.

"We've broken the mould and we've set up our own presidency here," Mr Sergi said. "If we can consolidate the land, all those blocks of land will disappear - it will be one block of land."

It's not the first time Mr Sergi has tried to consolidate the estate.

In 2006, a similar bid failed.

He said that around that time the council had engaged a developer, who offered landholders \$12,000 for each 600-square-metre block.

"Everybody refused because the land is worth gold," Mr Sergi said.

"That's what its worth."

Hobsons Bay mayor Michael Raffoul did not respond before the Weekly was printed.

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TRAFFIC 'A ROADBLOCK FOR DEVELOPMENT'

Maribyrnong Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/traffic-a-roadblock-for-development/2306333.aspx>

Residents in northern Maribyrnong will face continual gridlock, while investment in new commercial and residential development will be undermined without a major transport overhaul, a draft strategy has found.

Maribyrnong Council has put its Northern Maribyrnong Integrated Transport Strategy out for public comment. It recommends long- and short-term changes to transport to cope with looming development. "The long-term viability of significantly developing the activity centre, particularly with increased residential land uses ... will be dependent on notably improving public transport accessibility to the Melbourne CBD," the report says.

More than 3000 homes will be built at the Maribyrnong Defence site sometime after 2014 and a recently announced \$300million expansion of Highpoint shopping centre will increase retail space by more than 30,000 square metres to 156,000 square metres.

The transport study shows almost nine in 10 trips (88per cent) in the north of the municipality are made by car, compared to 59per cent in the rest of Maribyrnong.

Short-term recommendations include building a tram and bus interchange at the shopping centre and creating more tram reserves to separate them from traffic.

Improvements to foot and bike paths and a Highpoint "ring road" linking Van Ness Avenue and Rosamond Road were also suggested. Long-term proposals include extending tram route 82 north in to the defence site and close to Highpoint; a heavy rail link and an additional north-south crossing of the Maribyrnong River; and closing lanes on Rosamond Road.

Cr Dina Lynch said the road network, built in the 1950s, couldn't cope with the amount of traffic. "Moving around Highpoint you take your life in your own hands."

Highpoint's Mark Pheely said the GPT Group, co-owner and development manager of Highpoint, supported council efforts to enhance regional transport infrastructure.

APARTMENT BOOM TO KNOCK BLOCKS OFF IN CITY OF MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/apartment-boom-to-knock-blocks-off-in-city-of-maribyrnong/2306330.aspx>

The traditional home with a generous backyard will become increasingly uncommon in Maribyrnong as an expected population boom drives a need for more apartments.

Maribyrnong will need more than 15,000 dwellings in the next 20 years and almost half will be apartments, according to a council report.

A draft housing strategy, approved by the council last week, will guide the location and type of housing development that will occur in the next 20 years with the municipality's population forecast to increase by more than 30,000 to 104,400.

The strategy says the municipality will need an additional 15,800 homes by 2031 - equal to building two new dwellings a day.

The growing pains are made more severe in light of rising house prices, a need for affordable and public housing and a desire to protect suburban heritage.

To cope with those competing needs the strategy proposes dividing the municipality into zones for "limited, incremental and substantial" residential development.

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At the same time, the council is seeking public comment next month on changes to its planning scheme that are meant to protect the character and heritage of five neighbourhoods, meaning the "substantial" development will be concentrated in Footscray and in Maribyrnong at places like the former Defence site.

Already this year, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal has overruled residents' objections to multi-unit developments in Footscray, Yarraville and Maidstone.

Since January 2009, more than 65 development applications for buildings higher than three storeys have been lodged with the council.

Median house prices in Maribyrnong have increased by an average of 11.2 per cent a year since 2000.

Further increases will push up demand for affordable rental properties, the strategy predicts.

MAIDSTONE PARK DESERVING MORE

Maribyrnong Leader– 27th September 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/maidstone-park-deserving-more-fbready/>

Costello Reserve is among 13 Maribyrnong parks to benefit from a \$440,000 boost.

Maidstone's Costello Reserve, which the Leader reported last week was a rundown park being used as a dumping ground, is in line to have \$25,000 of planting and furniture under Maribyrnong Council's new parks improvement program.

But Maidstone's Michelle Spence said that, while the upgrade was a good start, the park needed a lot more because it lacked footpaths, bins, lighting and a play area.

Ms Spence said many of the parks allocated more than Costello Reserve were already much "nicer parks".

The Hyde St Reserve in Yarraville will receive \$40,000 for fencing, while Harris Reserve in Seddon will have \$50,000 spent on planting, furniture and paths.

The council started the parks program to enhance their safety and security as well as increasing use of them, with feedback from residents helping to form the upgrade plans.

"This program will go a long way towards increasing the enjoyment of local parks for residents and ratepayers," Mayor Sarah Carter said.

Cr Carter said the new program was an addition to the regular council-run parks maintenance program.

As part of the program, \$150,000 has been set aside to improve signs at sports grounds.

Other parks getting a makeover are Ash Reserve and Ruby Square in Braybrook; Bell Street Reserve, Kingsville; Bellairs Reserve, Yarraville; Burton Reserve, Maribyrnong; Cambridge and Rogers reserves, Maidstone; McNabb Reserve, West Footscray; and Munroe and Swaby squares, Footscray.

Work on paths and fencing will begin early next year, with the planting to occur from April to June.

LOWERING BARRIERS IN MAIDSTONE AND BEYOND

Maribyrnong Leader– 25th September 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/lowering-barriers-in-maidstone-and-beyond/>

Since migrating from Poland 29 years ago, Maidstone resident Elizabeth Drozd has worked to help others, a quality that has led to her reappointment for the third time as a Victorian Multicultural Commission Commissioner.

Ms Drozd, 51, arrived in Australia from Poland in 1982.

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After spending her first night in a midway hostel in Maribyrnong, with no English, she worked stints in a factory.

Now the dedicated community worker has come full circle.

The chief executive officer of Australian Multicultural Services in Maidstone, Ms Drozd devotes her time to helping new arrivals.

“There are times in people’s lives where they are not able to do everything themselves, either because of health or language barriers,” Ms Drozd said.

She said the AMS helped people through 11 government-funded programs, including English and computer classes.

Ms Drozd said she had a particular interest in providing support for older immigrants and assistance to refugees.

As one of 12 VMC commissioners, Ms Drozd said she provided independent advice to the State Government and helped implement the Multicultural Victoria Act.

Ms Drozd said during her new four-year term she hoped to reverse the trend whereby migrants and refugees with professional qualifications struggled to find work.

MELTON

RECREATIONAL HUB A HANG-OUT FOR MELTON MINORS

Melton Leader– 30th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/recreational-hub-a-hang-out-for-melton-minors/>

Welcome to Melton’s newest youth hang-out.

The Gap, a supervised youth centre in Graham St, recently opened its doors.

With a boxing ring, gym, TVs, video games, and table tennis, pool, air hockey and foosball tables, the free youth centre is proving a hit with youngsters.

It also features meeting rooms, a community office, a stage, computers and kitchen.

It’s the brainchild of Councillor Bob Turner, who said years of hard work had gone into converting the old factory into the colourful youth hub.

“We don’t know yet what it’s going to develop into,” he said.

“We’ll develop it as the kids want it developed.”

Cr Turner said The Gap gave youths a much-needed recreational outlet.

“We’ve just created a space (and) put in some stuff that we think they’d want and then after that it’s up to them what they do with it,” he said.

The centre has between 20 and 30 youths visit on Friday nights.

It hosts boxing on Monday and Wednesday nights (5.15pm-7.15pm) and a Girl’s Night on Wednesdays (7pm-9pm).

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HERITAGE BID WIDENS

Melton Leader– 28th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/heritage-bid-widens/>

In a last-ditch effort to save Bacchus Marsh's Avenue of Honour, a 4000-signature petition was presented to State Parliament.

The petition comes as the community continues to wait for a decision from Planning Minister Matthew Guy on a report compiled from a three-day Heritage Council hearing on the proposed Woolpack Rd extension, which was completed on June 24.

Avenue Preservation Group member Damien Strangio said the petition joined an earlier 2000-signature petition presented to the previous State Government in mid-2010.

Presented to Parliament by Liberal Lower House member David Koch, Dr Strangio said it had been circulating for the past two weeks and was aimed at additional demographics, not only the Bacchus Marsh area.

"There has been a lot of support from Ballarat," Dr Strangio said.

"What we are hearing is Ballarat regrets what happened to its Avenue of Honour, they look at ours and say it mustn't happen again.

"There has also been a lot of support from Melbourne and the feedback we are getting is that more than 6000 signatures is a very significant petition."

Dr Strangio said that another 500 signatures received in the past week would be added to the petition.

He said the petition aimed to reinforce how important the avenue was as a war memorial and elm avenue.

"We wanted to show there is a lot of opposition to this plan because it has become very clear since the end of the hearing that there are very viable alternatives that could spare the avenue and we continue to present those alternatives to Moorabool Council, VicRoads and the government," Dr Strangio said.

"The petition is one of our final acts to show Parliament how precious an intact avenue is."

POPULAR PLATFORMS

Melton Leader– 28th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/popular-platforms/>

The Ballarat rail line, including services to Melton and Bacchus Marsh, is the fastest-growing in Victoria.

V/Line's 2010-11 annual report, tabled in State Parliament last week, showed all lines experienced boosts in patronage last financial year, with Ballarat recording the highest increase, up 10 per cent.

Patronage on the line has skyrocketed 126 per cent since 2005 from 1.37 million passengers to 3.10 million. But punctuality remains an issue, with the number of on-time trains declining from 96.1 per cent in 2009-10 to 93.5 per cent last financial year.

The number of services has continued to grow since 2005, up 10 per cent from 274 to 302.

The report reveals Bacchus Marsh station was a popular stop in the past financial year with 924,901 people buying a ticket to the town, up 11.3 per cent.

And in good news for commuters, the cost of a return trip to Melbourne dropped 8 per cent since 2005, from \$33.60 to \$30.80.

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Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder said V/Line played an important role for people who live in regional Victoria and work in Melbourne.

V/Line CEO Rob Barnett said the results were a testament to new trains, better frequency and competitive prices.

"In just six years we have completely transformed as a business and the role we play in Victoria."

Victorian seniors are reminded that public transport in Zones 1 and 2 is free during Seniors Week from October 2-9, including V/Line trains to and from Melton and Sunbury.

PUSH TO BRING BRUTAL BALL GAME TO MELTON

Melton Leader – 28th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/brutal-ball-game-push/>

A British councillor wants to bring a brutal 800-year-old ball game to Melton South's largest housing development.

Cr Richard Freer from England's Atherstone Town Council hopes to play a traditional ball game at the Toolern development, where the only rule is that players are not allowed to kill one another.

The 4500-home estate recently formed ties with Cr Freer's hometown when it was rebranded Atherstone.

The English Atherstone is a small rural fox-hunting town close to Melton Mowbray, of which the name Melton was derived.

The name was chosen for Toolern to pay tribute to the area's rich pastoral history.

Atherstone's annual game, known as Shrovetide Ball Game, is played on religious celebration Shrove Tuesday, when a celebrity throws a ball from the window of a bank.

Hundreds of men then battle free-for-all along the streets trying to catch it.

The ball is decorated with red, white and blue ribbons and is made of thick leather.

The town's shop windows are boarded up and traffic is diverted while the game progresses down the main street.

Cr Freer said he was "very proud" to hear his town's name was being borrowed.

"Perhaps we could arrange for a ball to be sent over and they (Melton) could initiate a ball game all of their own," Cr Freer said.

Cr Freer said it was "interesting" that a development would be named after his home town.

Scottish-born Melton councillor Bob Turner said a version of the game could be a way to form a bond with the sister city.

"It would be great to import the game when we have a main street built," Cr Turner said.

"It could be a good way to launch the main street and the development. But we would probably have to find out the rules involved first"

Melton Shire general manager planning and development Luke Shannon said council would await contact from the UK council.

"Although we were not aware of the specifics about the ball game that they play, we welcome the interest," Mr Shannon said.

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Lend Lease project director Sean Pinan said he was keen to form a relationship with Atherstone in the UK.

"We welcome their interest in our new community and we look forward to developing a relationship in the future," Mr Pinan said.

"We will look to explore opportunities with Melton Shire Council of how we can cultivate this unique partnership."

COAL SEARCH: CONCERN PREMATURE, SAYS DRILLER

Melton Leader— 27th September 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/coal-search-concern-premature-says-driller/2305336.aspx>

Mantle Mining will forge ahead with its search for coal in Moorabool, despite public protests.

However, after an activist chained himself to the top of a rig at the Parwan-Exford Road site last week, the company says it will not disclose the locations of drill sites on private property "out of concern that activists may harass landowners".

Mantle's exploration manager for Moorabool, Callum Lamont, said drilling had begun at a new site in Moorabool, the first on private land.

He said the company would protect the privacy of the landowner.

"I'm loathed to mention landowners now, but we do have very good relationships with the people whose land we intend to work on."

The caution comes after environmental activist Shaun Murray, of the Switch Off Coal group, delayed a day of drilling on September 19 when he chained himself to a rig for five hours before being cut down and told by police to move on.

Mr Lamont said the miners were unfazed by the protest, using the opportunity to "catch up on paperwork", but he criticised Mr Murray for "jeopardising workplace safety".

Mr Murray said his protest was "just the beginning" of a public campaign against the project.

"There's definitely potential for the community to mobilise and significantly set the drilling back, so we intend to start working more closely with residents."

Moorabool Environment Group secretary Deb Porter said campaigners from the area would likely take on quieter ways to protest against the coal exploration.

"At the request of the community, we're preparing a flyer to be mailed out, explaining some of the issues about Mantle's project and providing a list of ministers to write to or call so residents can voice their concerns," she said.

A 124-signature petition was presented to State Parliament last week, calling for the government to halt Mantle's exploratory drilling program.

Mr Lamont called the escalating community concerns "premature" because Mantle had not yet determined if the coal in the area meets its needs.

He stressed that the project was simply scientific testing of coal samples.

"It's hard to say 'don't be concerned', but there's no need to be at the moment.

"Those affected by drilling are being spoken to directly and then we'll certainly be letting people know what the results of the coal tests are when they come in, to see if they are suitable for us and whether or not we'll continue in Moorabool."

Mr Lamont said the exploratory drilling would also bolster residents' understanding of the area's geology, water flow and subsurface structures, which could benefit farmers.

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CONCERTED SMOKING BAN PUSH

Melton Leader– 27th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/concerted-smoking-ban-push/>

Melton Council has backed a push for smoking to be banned in public outdoor areas.

Victorian councils have formally demanded the State Government ban smoking in alfresco dining areas, playgrounds, beaches, school entrances and sports grounds.

The Municipal Association of Victoria says co-ordinated action must be taken on health grounds and to eliminate confusion.

According to Cancer Council Victoria's The Big Kill website, Melton has the third highest amount of deaths from smoking in the state with 14.1 per cent.

Melton Shire acting manager of compliance John Russell said the council expected the community to also support the proposed ban.

"Council supports the notion and the MAV initiative for a statewide framework for a ban on smoking in certain designated public environments," he said. "While we think that there would be significant support from the community with such a ban, council sees that there may be a number of issues still to be addressed and worked through, such as the matter of enforcement in crowded areas."

MAV president Bill McArthur said consultation with councils had confirmed support for uniform smoking bans. "Smoke-free alfresco dining and playgrounds already exist or are proposed by state governments in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania," he said.

"While the MAV believes councils are best placed to determine local smoke-free policies for council-owned buildings and land, Victorians could also benefit from consistent laws for some common outdoor areas.

"In addition to proposing state smoking bans for alfresco dining and playgrounds, the MAV is asking the Government to investigate and test community support for bans in other public places such as beaches, sports grounds and facilities, and outside school entrances."

THREE FRENZIED DOGS ATTACK COUPLE

Melton Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/three-frenzied-dogs-attack-couple/2305326.aspx>

A Melton couple whose small beagle was viciously attacked by three dogs have called on owners of restricted-breed dogs to register them before this week's deadline.

Stephen and Melva Hirt was a couple of hundred metres from their Melton home when two dogs, believed to be pit bull-crosses, and one Rottweiler-cross attacked them and their five-year-old beagle, Oscar.

"They came at us like racing dogs out of their blocks ... if it was a young child that had taken Oscar for a walk, they'd both be dead," Mr Hirt said.

The couple said the September 18 attack lasted four to five minutes, but it felt like "forever" as they desperately tried to protect Oscar.

They were bitten on the hands and legs more than 25 times when they had tried to defend their dog.

"A lady helped us; she used shopping bags to get the dogs away - that's what saved us," Mr Hirt said.

"Those dogs were out to kill."

Mr and Mrs Hirt said they fully supported the new state dog laws and believed dangerous dogs had no place in residential areas.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

30th September 2011



"I've been through the Ash Wednesday fires, fires in Melton and Black Saturday," Mr Hirt, a long-time CFA volunteer, said.

"It was nothing like this attack ... this was ferocious."

Dr Paul Clarke, of the Bacchus Marsh Veterinary Centre, said Oscar was doing well despite being bitten many times.

Owners of restricted-breed dogs have until Thursday to register their animals or face having them destroyed.

State Parliament has fast-tracked new laws that will crack down on dangerous and restricted dogs such as American pit bulls, in the wake of a fatal attack on a four-year-old girl in St Albans last month.

Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh called on owners of restricted-breed dogs to do the right thing.

"Your dog must be registered and its breed specified before the amnesty ends," he said.

Mr Walsh said he was concerned by reports of restricted-breed dogs being abandoned by owners. He said anyone who abandoned dogs, particularly those known to be dangerous or restricted, could face jail terms of up to 12 months or fines of more than \$14,000.

But Lost Dogs' Home director Dr Graeme Smith said there had not been a considerable increase in the number of animals being abandoned.

"I suspect that since the government altered the laws, there will be relatively few people who declare their dogs. The unfortunate thing is some people who have cross-breeds that don't even look like pit bulls are worried."

Last month, Karen Seidel-Davies was taken to hospital with chin and scalp cuts, puncture wounds to her arms and legs and grazes after a vicious dog attack while collecting census forms in Melton.

MELTON COUNCIL DESTROYS TWO PETS

Melton Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/melton-council-destroys-two-pets/2305327.aspx>

Melton Council has destroyed two animals voluntarily surrendered in the past week as part of the amnesty on restricted-breed dogs.

Acting manager for local laws John Russell said three restricted-breed dogs had so far been registered during the amnesty period.

Before the amnesty, there were eight restricted-breed dogs registered in Melton.

The three dogs that attacked the Hirts and their beagle are still unaccounted for.

"The council's officers are patrolling the area on an ongoing basis looking for any dogs matching the descriptions," Mr Russell said.

He said the council had received 78 reports of dog attacks last year.

"Once investigated, the majority are not actually attacks on persons or animals but dogs acting aggressively." Anyone with information on people who own an unregistered restricted-breed dog can phone the 'dangerous dog hotline' on 1300101080, which is open between 8am and 6pm daily.

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JOBS PROGRAM FACES THE AXE

Melton Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/jobs-program-faces-the-axe/2305331.aspx>

The possible axing of a national jobs program could deny some unemployed young people the chance to get their lives back on track, according to local youth employment agencies.

The National Green Jobs Corps, which has been running since January last year, is a 26-week environmental training program designed to give people aged 17-24 a combination of work experience, skill development and accredited training.

About 120 NGJC projects are run by employment training providers across Australia, but federal government funding of \$79.6 million will expire at the end of this financial year.

Central Victorian Group Trainers team leader Suzette Rodoreda is disappointed a replacement program has not been announced.

"I'm working with 10 young people on an NGJC park management project at Organ Pipes National Park in Keilor North and if they didn't have the project they'd probably be sitting at home waiting for an employer to give them a call," she said.

Rockbank resident Nathan Wise, 23, is part of the Organ Pipes team.

Mr Wise, who came to Melbourne from South Australia about seven months ago, has turned his life around since getting in trouble with police in Mildura, where he grew up.

"I've been doing odd jobs since I left high school in year 11, but I've struggled to stay in work because of some problems I had," Mr Wise said.

"I've always wanted to get into landscaping and I feel reborn in this program."

The Organ Pipes project, which began in July, was officially launched last Wednesday, with about 30 people enjoying a free barbecue lunch.

Members of the team, which includes four young people from Melton Shire and residents of Broadmeadows and Sunbury, are building fences, removing weeds, landscaping and tree planting.

Gorton MP Brendan O'Connor said NGJC was always planned as a two-year program, implemented as a short-term response to the global financial crisis.

He said the government funded other programs for providing work experience, training and skills development.

MELTON HOSPITAL CAMPAIGN 'POLITICISED'

Melton Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/melton-hospital-campaign-politicised/2305325.aspx>

One resident who has spearheaded a push for a public hospital in Melton says he's disappointed the campaign has become politicised.

"I tried to keep the politics out of it. I had hoped the issue was not going to be used for political gain," John Southall said.

Mr Southall, who with Carl Zach and Matthew Gavin last year started a petition which garnered 3000 signatures, is also frustrated by the lack of support shown by Moorabool Council, which prefers an upgrade of Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital rather than a new hospital.

The campaign for a new public hospital, however, has the backing of Melton Council whose mayor, Justin Mammarella, has secured the support of Maribyrnong, Wyndham and Moonee Valley councils. Cr Mammarella hopes to convince the state government of the need for a new hospital in Melton.

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Mr Southall said: "The mayor can certainly back the campaign, but he should be giving credit to those running around getting signatures."

While not totally opposed to a hospital for Melton, Moorabool mayor Pat Griffin said the council's first priority was upgrading its existing health services.

"Instead of jeopardising \$1billion for a new hospital, our five-year strategic plan for a \$70 million upgrade is what we are focused on."

But Cr Mammarella said he would continue to advocate for a 24-hour public hospital in Melton.

"Although I am disappointed in Moorabool Shire Council's decision not to join the specific campaign for a public hospital in Melton, I welcome their support for our call for increased health care and health-related services to the region and their commitment to further advocate to the state government."

Melton Residents Association president Peter Rowan said he supported any campaign to improve medical treatment.

He agreed the campaign had been politicised.

"I find it ironic that since the change of government, with the Liberals in power, there has been an obvious increase in the push for a hospital from council. We can't even get a decent railway station car park costing around \$1million," Mr Rowan said, "yet Cr Mammarella wants to put pressure on the government to spend hundreds of millions for a hospital."

Djerriwarrh Health chief executive Bruce Marshall was unavailable for comment

RESIDENTS HANG UP ON PHONE TOWER BID

Melton Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/residents-hang-up-on-phone-tower-bid/2305337.aspx>

Billboards and mandatory mail-outs about Moorabool projects could become the norm as the council tries to improve its community consultation process.

Mayor Pat Griffin and councillors discussed ways to better inform residents about applications for planning permits or lease agreements following an uproar over plans for an Optus transmission tower on the sidelines of a sports ground at Darley Park.

The application for the 30-metre tower, to improve mobile phone coverage in the Bacchus Marsh and Darley areas, was knocked back last week.

It had been conditionally approved on August 3, pending feedback from the community.

Cr Griffin said while the council had listened to the "widespread community concern", there was room for improvement in how it informed residents about applications in time to lodge objections.

"What we did was follow the process, the legislative process, but it may be that [what] we need to do is have a look at what else we need to do. The system works, but there's clearly a bit of angst."

He said the council had received a 1400-signature petition, a separate letter with 75 signatures and up to six other submissions calling for the tower proposal to be turned down because of potential health risks from radiation emitted.

Following the in-principle approval for a lease agreement with Optus, residents were invited to lodge objections to the plans before September 5.

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But Darley resident Tony Pinder, who organised the petition, said residents were unaware of the proposal and the objection process.

"It's obvious from the work we had done and discussions we had with residents and signatories to the petition that about 90 per cent of people had no knowledge of the pending lease agreement."

Mr Pinder praised the council for rejecting the application and acting on the community's wishes.

MELTON COUNCIL DESTROYS TWO PETS

Melton Weekly– 27th September 2011

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COUNCIL HUNTS DOGS AFTER ATTACK

Melton Leader– 27th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/council-hunts-dogs-after-attack/>

Two dogs remain on the loose after a reported dog-on-dog attack in Melton.

Melton Council and police are continuing investigations after two dogs, whose breeds remain unknown, reportedly attacked a beagle in Church St on September 18.

Melton shire's acting manager of compliance John Russell said patrols would be increased in the area in an effort to locate the dogs.

"Council's officers are patrolling on an ongoing basis looking for any dogs matching the descriptions, whether at large or accompanied by an owner," Mr Russell said.

The council was notified by Melton police of the incident the next day.

"Council was not called out at the time of the incident (Sunday)," he said. "Council's officers have since spoken with police, (the beagle's owner) Stephen and the owner of one of the dogs alleged to have been involved."

Mr Russell said the council had requested vet reports and statements from police and the dog owners involved as part of its investigation.

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MELBOURNE'S HOTTEST SUBURBS

Melton Leader– 27th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melbournes-hottest-suburbs/>

Rockbank has topped a thrifty list of Melbourne's top bargain suburbs.

Your Investment Property has compiled a list of Australia's hottest suburbs to snag a bargain, with properties under \$500,000.

Houses in Rockbank, with a median price of \$249,500, topped the list of cheap suburbs within 30km of the CBD. Units in Caroline Springs, with a median price of \$338,750, also made the cut.

Melton Council economic development and tourism co-ordinator Joseph Tabacco said the inclusion of Rockbank within the revised UGB had paved the way for development in the area. "Since Rockbank became included within the revised UGB interest in the area has spiked," he said.

Mr Tabacco said being located at the centre of the Melton growth corridor and within the vicinity of the proposed outer metropolitan ring road, Rockbank's potential had been identified by developers.

He said a range of developments would eventuate (in time) within the UGB - between what is now Caroline Springs, Rockbank and Melton.

"Investors and developers clearly consider the opportunities surrounding the area and its high development potential, as favourable," he said.

YIP editor Nila Sweeney said Rockbank was a desirable area for owner-occupiers.

She said for investors, the main drawcards were affordability and Rockbank's zero vacancy rate.

ROUNDAABOUT RUN-AROUND

Melton Leader– 26th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/roundabout-run-around/>

A Melton resident says he's getting the run-a-round trying to fix a black spot roundabout.

Unit St resident Charles Lyle said he had seen several close calls near a roundabout at Unitt and Palmerston streets.

Mr Lyle claims drivers' vision is impaired from vehicles parking illegally on a nature strip near Mac's Hotel back car park.

Mr Lyle said he saw trucks, vans, 4WDs and trailers parked on the nature strip at least four times a week.

"When you come out of the Mac's Hotel car park you can't see the corner of the roundabout and cars come around there pretty fast at times, I've seen some very close calls," he said.

"People just park there all the time, which is illegal.

"It's very dangerous, there have already been a couple of accidents there."

Mr Lyle suggested a bollard or a chain be installed to deter drivers from flouting the law.

"There's not even a No Standing sign or anything there," he said.

VicRoads regional director metropolitan northwest Nial Finegan said it was illegal for people to park on the nature strip.

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“Motorists who disobey this rule restrict access for pedestrians, wheelchair or pram users and emergency vehicles while causing damage to grass, kerbs and paved areas and buried services,” he said.

“Unitt and Palmerston streets are the responsibility of Melton Shire Council and their local laws officers and Victoria Police have the authority to enforce these rules.”

Melton council’s acting manager compliance John Russell said local laws officers would patrol the area.

“Council has no record of parking issues at this location in the last year to eighteen months,” he said.

“However, local laws officers will monitor the area and assess the conditions.”

Leading Sen-Constable Allan Edwards from Melton’s high- way patrol said police would increase reconnaissance in the area to catch drivers.

“Now that we have been informed, we’ll be looking at taking action,” he said.

“Parking on any nature strip is illegal, and parking here certainly could restrict the vision of drivers.”

TRACKS IN THE CLEAR

Melton Leader– 25th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/tracks-in-the-clear/>

Moorabool and Melton shires could be linked by a walking track if the Melton reservoir development strategy is implemented.

The strategy, adopted by Melton Council in 2005, includes plans for two small picnic areas on the Moorabool side of the reservoir - one in a reserve and the other near Hopetoun Park Rd.

The strategy proposes the areas be linked to Clarkes Rd with walking tracks.

Southern Rural Water, water supply general manager John Tesoriero said the section of the reservoir that sat within Moorabool was at the top end.

“A narrow strip of land between the reservoir and private property is a reserve owned by SRW,” he said.

“Members of the public can legally access this reserve on foot and make use of the tracks through the area.”

He said while there were no purpose-built recreational facilities in this area, SRW allowed public access for walking and fishing.

Mr Tesoriero said while public phone calls and on-site discussions had focused on increasing boat and power-ski access, the top end of the reservoir, above the railway line, had been deemed unsafe for power boating by Transport Safety Victoria.

“The escarpment down to the reservoir in this area is steep and rocky, and nearly 20 metres above water height when the reservoir is full,” he said.

“However, many boat and jet-ski owners have used the reserve to illegally access the reservoir via a steep, unmade track.”

He said for safety reasons, there were no plans for boat launching facilities on this top end of the reservoir and SRW was investigating ways to prevent illegal access.

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OH MAN, YOU'RE SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON FOOD

Melton Leader– 25th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/oh-man-youre-shedding-some-light-on-food/>

The Melton Men's Shed has been serving up some unique dishes.

The shed was recently given the most innovative program award at the National Men's Shed conference in Brisbane for its Tuesday cooking program.

The program brings sheddies together to cook an affordable and nutritious lunch. Led by a qualified instructor, the program gives participants the chance to make a group decision about what to cook each week.

They then buy ingredients or pick them from the shed's garden and work with their mates to prepare a two-course meal.

Melton mayor Justin Mammarella said the program was an important resource for the community.

"This award is much-deserved recognition of the role the Melton Men's Shed plays in our community and is particularly rewarding for members of the cooking program."

MELTON HOSPITAL BID FAILS TO FIND BACKERS

Melton Leader– 24th September 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/hospital-fails-to-find-backers/>

Moorabool Council has thrown its support behind calls for increased health care in the north-west, but fallen short of supporting a public hospital in Melton.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella has been lobbying neighbouring councils for a public hospital to be built in Melton to service the growing population.

In response to a letter from Cr Mammarella seeking Moorabool Council's support, Moorabool Mayor Pat Griffin was non-committal.

"You will appreciate the issue of a new hospital to be built in the Shire of Melton has possible negative consequences for the Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital, so we need to make a well-considered decision," Cr Griffin wrote.

The letter goes on to say that Moorabool Council supports calls for increased health care and health-related services in the region; actively advocates for the major upgrade of Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital; and supports Melton Council's calls for more health-care services.

Djerriwarrh Health Services chief executive Bruce Marshall also failed to support a public hospital in Melton when asked.

Mr Marshall said Western Health's Sunshine Hospital was recognised as the tertiary hospital for the community it served.

He said the significant population growth was placing increased service pressure on the Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital, and Western Health facilities.

"We need to work closely with the Health Department and Western Health to ensure that we can deliver the most optimal local access to appropriate health care services," he said.

Cr Mammarella said he was "very disappointed" in Moorabool Council's response, but said the council had received support from Hume, Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay councils.

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MELTON POLICE CHIEF SUPPORTS ARMED GUARDS FOR STATIONS

Melton Leader– 23rd September 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melton-police-chief-supports-armed-guards-for-stations/>

Melton police Inspector Mario Fiorentino has backed a plan to recruit hundreds of armed guards for Victorian train stations.

The State Government will employ 940 protective services officers by 2014 in a major crackdown on rail safety. Melton Railway Station was recently identified by police as a “hot spot” - a new focus for police after a spate of crimes.

Insp Fiorentino said the recruits would help improve commuter safety.

“I’m much in favour of this initiative as it will greatly improve safety and perceptions of safety on our public transport system,” he said.

“It will also reduce the incidence of crime and unruly behaviour on the train services as well as in and around transport hubs.”

Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella recently called for improved safety measures at Melton station, including the installation of extra cameras.

Meanwhile, Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said at the last council meeting that more police generally were needed in the area.

“Every week I think it becomes more obvious that we need more police on the beat in our municipality,” he said.

“We will continue to lobby the State Government for more police numbers.”

MOONEE VALLEY

DOG AMNESTY ENDS TODAY

Moonee Valley Leader– 29th September 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/dog-amnesty-ends-today/>

Time to register dangerous dogs is running out, with the amnesty finishing today.

New laws, which mean restricted dogs can be seized and destroyed, come into effect tomorrow.

The laws come after the tragic death of four-year-old Ayen Chol, who was mauled by a pit bull cross in her St Albans home.

She was laid to rest on August 26, with hundreds of mourners gathering to farewell her.

On August 30, State Parliament brought in the new legislation, which requires any dog identified as a pitbull not on the register can be seized and destroyed.

A dangerous dog hotline, where people can report suspected dangerous dogs, has also been set up on 1300 101 080.

Minister for Agriculture and Food Security Peter Walsh warned owners not to abandon dogs, as they can face fail for up to 12 months, or fines of more than \$14,000.

“I strongly discourage people from abandoning their pitbull terriers out of concern for being held responsible if their dog injures or kills someone,” he said.

Owners of dangerous dogs can now serve up to 10 years in jail if their dog kills another person.

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IN MOONEE VALLEY, NO EASY FIX FOR GRIDLOCK

Moonee Valley Weekly— 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/in-moonee-valley-no-easy-fix-for-gridlock/2303965.aspx>

Our nine elected councillors have finally recognised there are huge traffic and parking issues in and around Keilor Road, North Essendon and Niddrie.

That's because of the huge multi-unit developments approved by or imposed on the council by hungry developers.

The beautiful amenity we have enjoyed is no longer there. And we won't get it back. The chaos will only get worse.

Belatedly the council now recognises the monster which has been created and has turned to the officers to find answers.

It is charged with addressing traffic and parking issues in streets next to Keilor Road, including Dudley, Birdwood and Ross and, more importantly, how to fix it.

We are supposedly "a city in transition" committed to higher-density living, more people, more houses, more cars.

Few in the community approve of the changes. But we can do very little about it.

MOONEE VALLEY COUNCIL INVITATION: BE A TOWN PLANNER

Moonee Valley Weekly— 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-council-invitation-be-a-town-planner/2303959.aspx>

Residents are being urged to make their opinions count if they care about the future 'liveability' of Moonee Valley.

As well as a draft municipal parking strategy, the council will soon exhibit planning scheme amendment C102, which refers to urban design guidelines for Mt Alexander Road.

The guidelines will act as planning tools to guide development along the 10 precincts of Mt Alexander Road.

A similar planning scheme amendment for height and setback controls and neighbourhood character for Military Road, Avondale Heights, will also be completed after a consultation program is developed for residents.

At their most recent meeting, all councillors agreed that the policies were much stronger if residents helped to develop them.

Myrnong ward's Cr Miriam Gillis said that when she became a councillor, she promised to listen to residents; she just needed them to speak out first.

"Please, community, if you don't get involved it's a waste of time. I can't listen to you if you don't speak to me."

Rosehill ward's Cr Ange Kenos echoed the comments.

"If you're against the parking strategy tell us why," he said.

"Tell us how we can make it better - it's very important to the future of the municipality," Cr Kenos added.

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Referring to the Military Road neighbourhood character controls, Rosehill ward's Cr Shirley Cornish said the council and residents needed to work together to create "a vision" for Avondale Heights.

Cr Cornish said that when VicUrban released plans for a 270-unit development on Military Road last year, residents reacted strongly to a lack of consultation.

She said she wanted those residents to be proactive now to help decide the suburb's future.

"I'd like us to be more proactive than reactive. [Let's] look at areas that haven't been developed, consult and come back with a vision."

CUP CARNIVAL RETURNS

Moonee Valley Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/cup-carnival-returns/2303956.aspx>

Group 1 racing returns to Flemington with the Melbourne Cup Carnival Preview Day on Sunday.

The feature race will be the \$502,500 Group 1 Turnbull Stakes.

Some of the racing schedule has been changed because the AFL grand final and the Royal Melbourne Show are on the same weekend.

VRC chief executive Dale Monteith said the first race would be brought forward to 10.30am.

He said the changes would ensure peak arrival and departure times to and from Flemington Racecourse and Melbourne Showgrounds did not cause commuter bottlenecks.

The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria will also delay the show's gate opening time to 10.30am.

Metro will run extra train services to Flemington Racecourse and Melbourne Showgrounds.

"We need to ensure that we can effectively manage traffic around Flemington.

"But this is something we have experience doing each spring," Mr Monteith said

FLEMINGTON FUN DAY TO LAUNCH PROJECTS

Moonee Valley Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/flemington-fun-day-to-launch-projects/2304064.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council will use its community fun day at Debney Park Flemington next week to launch a number of community projects.

The Community Support Fund will give money to the Flemington Community Gathering and Play Space Project while the Neighbourhood Renewal Project has been funded by the Department of Human Services and Office of Housing.

The Debney Park and Moonee Ponds Creek Transformation Project has secured funding from the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

Moonee Valley acting mayor and Flemington Neighbourhood Renewal board member James Rankin invited residents to join in the fun day.

"Over the past 12 months residents, community groups and all levels of government have worked hard to develop projects to make Flemington a more welcoming, inclusive and vibrant place," he said.

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ESSENDON FIELDS POSTIES OUT AS NEW SYSTEM GETS SORTED

Moonee Valley Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/essendon-fields-posties-out-as-new-system-gets-sorted/2303955.aspx>

More than 30 workers at the Essendon Fields Australia Post mail delivery centre have been sent home without pay for refusing to use a new delivery and sorting system.

The 33 workers, with support from the Communication Workers Union, have sent letters to their manager indicating that the new delivery system they are being asked to use is in breach of the organisation's occupational health and safety guidelines.

The new protocol known as the separate bundle delivery system, requires posties to deliver mail from two bundles on their rounds rather than one.

It's the belief of workers and the CWU that the new method will keep workers on their bikes for longer, increasing an existing health and safety risk.

CWU branch organiser Chris Spindler said the new system left posties on their bikes near letter-boxes and driveways for longer while they arranged mail.

He said the most common injuries to posties came from being backed into while at letter boxes.

Comcare, the agency responsible for workplace safety in the Australian Commonwealth, has approved the new system but has never seen it in operation and acknowledges it could pose risks.

Australia Post hopes to introduce the system nationally.

Mr Spindler said Australia Post was "jumping the gun" by introducing the separate bundle delivery system to the Essendon Fields Centre considering Fair Work Australia had not yet determined whether it was safe.

Australia Post spokesman Jeff Mollet confirmed that a number of staff had refused to undertake separate bundle delivery work as requested.

"We hope these staff reconsider their decision. Australia Post is committed to operating in accordance with our enterprise agreement."

Mr Mollet refused to answer questions about Australia Post introducing the system before Fair Work Australia had made a decision about its safety.

He said the standing down of staff was having "minimal impact on our services at Airport West".

However, the Weekly understands that mail is being delivered only to some suburbs, including East Keilor, Strathmore, Essendon and other parts of Moonee Valley's north-west, every second day.

MOONEE VALLEY CALL FOR HERITAGE PROTECTION

Moonee Valley Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-call-for-heritage-protection/2303958.aspx>

Moonee Valley residents are calling for heritage protection on two buildings earmarked for demolition.

The council has asked Planning Minister Matthew Guy to step in and approve urgent interim protection on the buildings at 255 and 257 Union Road.

It is believed they may be part of a Moonee Ponds dairy that existed in the early 1900s.

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30th September 2011



An application to demolish the buildings to make way for a four-storey, 24-unit development is to be heard by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal on October 17.

Resident Jan Shield says if it is proven the buildings are part of the former dairy they should be protected and incorporated into any redevelopment of the site.

"What everybody would be seeking is a development that is sympathetic to the site.

"The [existing] building should be the signature style for the development. It's an attractive Victorian style with an original slate roof."

Myrnong ward's Cr Miriam Gillis said time was needed to establish the significance of the Union Road buildings.

"If the property was integral to the original dairy we have to do something to preserve it.

"We knocked it back [the original application] but now it's at VCAT. If it gets approved we will lose it forever."

Mrs Shield said she had asked the Essendon Historical Society to investigate the site and its links to the Moonee Ponds dairy.

The council received 145 objections to the original proposal for the Union Road site.

CONSULTATIONS STALL PARKING PLAN

Moonee Valley Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/in-moonee-valley-no-easy-fix-for-gridlock/2303965.aspx>

There are times when our civic leaders spend too much time on the consultation process which, while having some impact on the end result, leads to huge delays before policies are implemented.

Our council is very big on consultation but can be criticised for taking too long simply to get on with the job.

The draft municipal parking strategy went to the people last year for their input.

The council says it listened to the ratepayers and has strengthened the document incorporating the public's concerns and suggestions.

Instead of adopting the revised policy and proceeding with its implementation, the council has decided to send the plan back to the community for more consultation.

SIGNS A HAZARD BUT STILL THERE

Moonee Valley Weekly– 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/in-moonee-valley-no-easy-fix-for-gridlock/2303965.aspx>

St Peters Bears Basketball Club must have good contacts at the council given its illegally erected recruiting signs continue to be a traffic hazard in Buckley Street, East Keilor, and Canning Street, Avondale Heights.

The signs have been on display for more than two months.

Apart from not showing a council permit, they break many of the guidelines established and subsequently reviewed by the council two years ago.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

30th September 2011



How lucky they are at St Peters that the officers are either turning a blind eye to the signs or, worse still, haven't noticed them.

BLUE RIBBON DAY SALUTE TO COMRADES

Moonee Valley Weekly— 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/blue-ribbon-day-salute-to-comrades/2303957.aspx>

Acting Moonee Valley Inspector David Byrt reckons Blue Ribbon Day means "a hell of a lot" to police.

Inspector Byrt was a close mate of Sergeant Gary Silk who was gunned down with Senior Constable Rodney Miller during a stakeout in 1998.

Inspector Byrt said that at times police could feel very disliked by the public.

He said they were constantly dealing with people who had been caught out doing the wrong thing.

But Blue Ribbon Day, this Thursday, was an occasion where the "silent majority" came to the fore.

"Blue Ribbon Day reminds all of us just how much support we have out there in the community," he said.

On Blue Ribbon Day Victorians are asked to spare a thought for the friends and family of police who have been killed while on duty.

A total 157 Victoria Police members have been killed in the line of duty since the force was established in 1853. Of them, 30 were murdered.

The Police Blue Ribbon Foundation promotes awareness and provides funding for emergency equipment in public hospitals named in memory of fallen officers.

MOONEE PONDS APARTMENT BUILDING APPROVED

Moonee Valley Weekly— 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-ponds-apartment-building-approved/2303963.aspx>

A ten-storey, 32-apartment building that provides just 12 car parking spaces has been unanimously approved by Moonee Valley Council.

The building, proposed for 19 and 19A Hall Street, Moonee Ponds, was given the green light despite concerns from the Moonee Ponds Chamber of Commerce.

Buckley ward's Cr Paul Giuliano said if the development was anywhere but Hall Street the lack of parking would be a concern.

"Had this been 300 metres in either direction it would be totally different, but it's right in the core of the business district, right near light rail, heavy rail and buses - you can exempt parking," Cr Giuliano said.

"This has been sold and marketed on the transport network that surrounds it. The more people who reside within an activity centre, the more sustainable it becomes."

Buckley ward's Cr Jan Chantry said the style of the development would add much-needed vibrancy to Moonee Ponds.

While not normally in support of such developments in other areas, she believed it would attract people who didn't own cars.

"Build it and they will come."

There were nine objections to the application, with the lack of parking a common concern.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Chamber of Commerce president Olga Kenny said she hoped to have further discussion with the developer about provision for parking.

"The Moonee Ponds Chamber of Commerce welcomes the development, but we are very concerned about the lack of car parks being provided by the developer and approved by the council."

DOUTTA GALLA HEALTH BACK IN FESTIVAL MODE

Moonee Valley Weekly— 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/doutta-galla-health-back-in-festival-mode/2303961.aspx>

Ten-year festival veterans The Young Odd bods will headline the Streets ahead Festival this year as part of Mental Health Week.

Moonee Valley's Doutta Galla Community Health (DGCH) will continue its involvement with the annual festival, which is used to raise the profile of mental health and reduce associated stigma.

Artwork created by Doutta Galla clients will be on show and available to purchase.

DGCH chief executive Caz Healy says her organisation has been involved with the festival for 15 years.

"We've seen it grow from a small event for clients of mental health services to a socially inclusive community festival."

The festival will be held at the Commonwealth Reserve, Williamstown, from 10am on October 15.

MOONEE VALLEY MAY RATION PARKING PERMITS

Moonee Valley Weekly— 27th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-may-ration-parking-permits/2303960.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council has conducted almost 30 traffic and parking studies in the past 10 years and has released the results of yet another survey.

A draft municipal parking strategy will be available for public consultation for a month.

The strategy is aimed at addressing existing parking issues in Moonee Valley and plans for future demands.

Included in the strategy is a proposal to reduce resident parking permits.

The number of resident and visitor parking permits issued by the council increased more than 80 per cent between 2008 and 2010.

Under the proposed changes, resident permits would be reduced from four to two per house and if a house has a driveway the owners would get only one permit.

No permits will be issued to properties that were subdivided after January 2006.

Traffic and transportation councillor Narelle Sharpe said the strategy needed to be a bold document that looked years into the future.

"As Moonee Valley's population increases we will experience more medium to higher-density housing in and around our busy activity centres.

"We need to be strategic in our planning to ensure we don't end up with a city that's a traffic nightmare in response to this growth."

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Copies of the revised draft strategy and information sheets are available on the council website, the online forum, the Civic Centre and all municipality libraries and neighbourhood centres.

PUSH FOR HISTORIC DAIRY PROTECTION IN ASCOT VALE

Moonee Valley Leader – 27th September 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/push-for-historic-dairy-protection-in-ascot-vale-1/>

A historic dairy has been flagged as a key reason to prevent “inappropriate” development in a prominent Ascot Vale street.

Moonee Valley Council has written to Planning Minister Matthew Guy asking for interim heritage controls on properties along Union Rd believed to be of historical significance. Among these sites is a 19th century, defunct dairy due to be demolished.

Residents raised the significance of the dairy, which is still intact and located at number 255, with councillors prior to last week’s council meeting.

Lorne St resident Suzanne Russo said the dairy’s historical value needed to be looked at before any decision to demolish and develop the site into multi-level apartments was made.

Cr Miriam Gillis also said action needed to be taken urgently before the proposal goes before VCAT, on October 17 and 18.

“The property is an integral part of Moonee Ponds. We have to do something to preserve it,” she said. “We knocked back the development. If we don’t do this now, it’ll be lost forever.”

Essendon Historical Society member Bob Chalmers said records show 255 Union Rd started operating as a dairy from 1880. The council rejected a 22-apartment development proposal on the property in June.

The demolition consent was issued in April 2010 by Stonnington Council but Moonee Valley councillors have said they would continue to push for heritage controls on the properties of 251, 253, 255 and 257.

State Government spokes woman Bronwyn Perry said the planning department had advised the council that interim heritage controls were unlikely, because consent for demolition had already been issued.

CONSTANT FLIGHTS BLIGHT KEILOR EAST RESIDENT

Moonee Valley Leader – 26th September 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-constant-flights-blight-resident/>

Aircraft noise is the first thing Lyn Wickham hears when she wakes up each morning and the last thing she hears at night.

Planes taking off and landing at Melbourne Airport have been driving the Keilor East resident crazy since runway works started last year.

Ms Wickham said she now heard between 150 and 300 planes a day and blames that on the changed flight paths caused by the runway works and a general increase in traffic.

She had called Air services Australia “hundreds of times” to complain, but there had been no improvement.

“Some days I make 20 calls, but when there are 200 planes going over I think that’s moderate,” she said. “It’s accumulative wear and tear on my nerves.”

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Ms Wickham uses a noise monitor to gauge the impact and found levels ranged from 60 to 80 decibels, depending on whether planes were taking off or landing.

Friends of Steele Creek member Helen van den Berg said the World Health Organisation found noise at night should not be louder than 45 decibels.

"In particular that's important for vulnerable people like children as the noise affects the quality of their sleep, their growth and their ability to concentrate," she said.

Ms van den Berg said the group had recently requested to be involved in noise meetings with Melbourne Airport and would attend a meeting on October 12.

Air services Australia spokesman Matt Wardell said there had been more traffic on some flight paths, due to the unavailability of runways during works. He said there was not a legal limit for aircraft noise in Australia but the industry worked with the community to minimise the impact, when possible.

Melbourne Airport spokeswoman Anna Gillett said the runway works were due to be completed next month.

She said residents in neighbourhoods adjacent to the airport had been informed and there was a Moonee Valley Council representative on the airport's Noise Abatement Committee.

Residents with concerns can phone Air services Australia on 1800 802 584 to make noise complaints.

FLEMINGTON FUN DAY TO LAUNCH PROJECTS

Moonee Valley Leader – 26th September 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/flemington-fun-day-to-launch-projects/2304064.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council will use its community fun day at Debney Park Flemington next week to launch a number of community projects.

The Community Support Fund will give money to the Flemington Community Gathering and Play Space Project while the Neighbourhood Renewal Project has been funded by the Department of Human Services and Office of Housing.

The Debney Park and Moonee Ponds Creek Transformation Project has secured funding from the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

Moonee Valley acting mayor and Flemington Neighbourhood Renewal board member James Rankin invited residents to join in the fun day.

"Over the past 12 months residents, community groups and all levels of government have worked hard to develop projects to make Flemington a more welcoming, inclusive and vibrant place," he said.

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WYNDHAM

MIGRANTS SHARE CULTURAL JOYS IN WERRIBEE

Wyndham Leader– 30th September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/migrants-share-cultural-joys-in-werribee/>

Multicultural Week was celebrated at Victoria University's Werribee campus last Thursday.

Students from a program providing free English language courses to eligible migrants and refugees donned clothes from their birth countries and shared traditional foods.

The celebrations included music, dancing and games.

University English language senior educator Greg Thom said the event was a great chance for the students to share their pride in their cultural traditions.

AFRICANS HELP FAMINE VICTIMS BACK HOME

Wyndham Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/africans-help-famine-victims-back-home/2306240.aspx>

Wyndham and Hobsons Bay's African communities have united to raise money for famine victims in the Horn of Africa.

Point Cook resident Edward Okuoga helped organise the fund-raiser in Altona on Saturday.

Mr Okuoga, who arrived from Kenya eight years ago, says he felt the need to help after seeing media coverage of the famine and suffering in Africa.

"I have a passion for assisting the community and since there is a huge population of Australians of African descendants living in Melbourne, we decided to come together and assist where we can," he said.

Special guests at the fund-raiser included Hobsons Bay mayor Michael Raffoul and Kenya's high commissioner to Australia, Stephen Tarus.

Representatives from World Vision and Oxfam spoke about the work they were doing in Africa.

Mr Okuoga hopes the collection will reach about \$5000.

"People are always looking for a way to help out wherever they can and hunger is a big issue. We need to remember those that are suffering.

"The African community rarely gets to come together so this was a good opportunity."

TRUGANINA MANUFACTURING PLANT TO DELIVER JOBS

Wyndham Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/truganina-manufacturing-plant-to-deliver-jobs/2306238.aspx>

Fifty jobs will be created in Wyndham following the opening last week of a new manufacturing plant in Truganina.

The \$11.5million plant, built by Extrusions Australia, is expected to double the company's existing workforce to 100.

The plant will be used to design and manufacture aluminium extrusion profiles used to build commercial and residential windows and doors.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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There to officially open the plant last Thursday, Manufacturing Minister Richard Dalla-Riva said the new facility showed a major commitment to the local economy and workforce by Extrusions Australia.

"The plant is a third larger than Extrusions Australia's old Laverton North operation and includes a new state-of-the-art extrusion press."

WYNDHAM COUNCIL STAFF UP ANTE ON PAY ROW

Wyndham Weekly— 28th September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-council-staff-up-ante-on-pay-row/2306233.aspx>

Staff at Wyndham Council have upped the ante, agreeing to walk off the job early next week following management's refusal to budge on a fairer pay deal.

Further negotiations between the two parties on a new enterprise bargaining agreement reached an impasse last Friday.

Members of the Australian Services Union will meet outside the civic centre at lunchtime today to formalise the work bans.

It comes after 400 workers last week voted to take part in work stoppages. ASU Wyndham organiser Dave Beckley said the industrial action was likely to begin next Tuesday, with the union needing to provide council with adequate notice.

Work bans will include:

- Indefinite bans on patrols of selected shopping centres by outdoor cleaning crews.
- Refusal to process bank cheques, infringements or accept rate payments.
- Indefinite bans on issuing infringement notices in selected areas.

Mr Beckley said strike action was designed to have minimal impact on the community.

"We don't want to impact on the community. We want the community to be behind us."

Union members have rejected the council's offer of a 4 per cent pay increase each year for three years, claiming the offer is lower than what neighbouring councils have awarded their staff.

Council's corporate services director, Steve Lambert, said it would seek to minimise the impact of industrial action on services. Management would continue negotiations to reach an acceptable agreement, he said.

NINE EXTRA WYNDHAM POLICE 'WON'T FIX SHORTAGE'

Wyndham Weekly— 28th September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/nine-extra-wyndham-police-wont-fix-shortage/2306229.aspx>

Police shortages in Wyndham remain the worst in the state despite the announcement of a new batch of officers, according to the Police Association.

Secretary Greg Davies welcomed the decision to provide nine new members by December but maintained Wyndham remained chronically understaffed.

"Given its rapidly growing population, the problems associated with police shortages at Wyndham are the most pronounced in the state."

As part of the latest rollout, Brimbank will receive 13 new officers and Frankston 11.

Mr Davies said the nine new members in Wyndham were the result of intense lobbying to bring forward a planned allocation than would ordinarily be the case.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"We are pleased that force command has responded to this request by bringing forward an allocation of nine police to Wyndham.

"That said, this allocation by no means fixes the police shortage problem at Wyndham as many more are required. But this is at least a start."

Werribee's Inspector Bill Weatherly was pleased with news of extra officers, which he said was sure to have a positive effect for all staff.

"New people always breed a better working environment, it helps to ease some of the stresses on existing members," he said. "It [new members] will also provide for a lot more flexibility for us, we can focus more on intelligence-based operations that we may not have had the manpower to undertake in the past."

While welcoming the allocation, Wyndham mayor John Menegazzo said there remained a glaring disparity between the population of Wyndham and police numbers.

"We just have to keep on advocating for more numbers. It's not going to be solved overnight, but the new members are at least a step in the right direction."

THOMPSON COURT RESIDENTS WIN ON QUIET

Wyndham Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/thompson-court-residents-win-on-quiet/2306247.aspx>

A group of Werribee residents are celebrating an unlikely victory after the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal ruled a development approved by Wyndham Council was "far too ambitious" for their street.

VCAT member Dalia Cook found in favour of Thompson Court residents who appealed against a council-approved 10-townhouse development in their quiet cul-de-sac.

Resident Paul Rankin spearheaded the VCAT appeal after 12 objections from fellow residents were overlooked by the council.

"We are just rapt that VCAT used common sense in coming to this decision," he said.

"We were very disappointed that council didn't see the same issues as we did, and the fact that there were 12 objections didn't seem to make any difference at all.

"It just shows you that residents can actually win these appeals if they are willing to give it a go."

Mr Rankin and his wife Gillian moved into Thompson Court in December and were shocked to find out about the development, as council papers outlining the plans were sent only to the previous occupiers of their house.

"We had absolutely no idea about the whole thing until one of our neighbours let us know," Mr Rankin said.

"We were immediately concerned about the denseness of the development and the resulting traffic that would come along with it."

Ms Cook overturned the council's decision to approve the 10 double-storey townhouses, along with alterations to the existing dwelling at 24 Thompson Court, on the grounds that a "comprehensive redesign" was required.

"A reasonable starting point could be the retention of the existing dwelling on No.24 with the addition of, say, four or five units," she said.

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EXPLORE WONDERS OF WYNDHAM

Wyndham Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/explore-wonders-of-wyndham/2306245.aspx>

Ask Wyndham John Menegazzo where he would take visitors on a day out in the municipality and he can reel off an itinerary to pique the curiosity of even the most experienced travellers.

Born in Werribee, his family moved to the eastern suburbs when he was five, but he returned to the area in 1980 and he's been here ever since.

"Our must-see destinations include the tourism precinct, including Werribee Park Mansion and the heritage orchard, the Victorian State Rose Garden, Shadowfax Winery, Werribee Open Range Zoo.

"I would then recommend a stroll along Werribee South beach at the mouth of the river, Point Cook Coastal Park, the new Werribee River Regional Park and along the K-Road Cliffs."

For fans of Australia's wartime history, Cr Menegazzo says a visit to the B-24 Liberator memorial restoration hangar in Farm Road, Werribee is a must.

"For a quiet coffee, I would recommend a visit to Werribee Cache Cafe in K Road."

Wyndham Council has joined a campaign called 'Discover Your Own Backyard', which is all about telling locals and visitors the great things there are to see in their suburbs.

"This municipality truly encompasses what its slogan promotes - city, coast, country. We have a vibrant city with a river running through its heart, we're surrounded by grasslands to our west and market gardens to the south and a popular coastline that offers fantastic recreational opportunities.

"Best of all, we have a long history, a diverse multicultural community and great people who help to make it a caring, proud and harmonious place to live, work and play."

ALERT ON GRASSLAND FIRES IN WYNDHAM

Wyndham Leader– 28th September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/alert-on-grassland-fires-in-wyndham/>

Wyndham's environmentally significant and protected native grasslands mean that much of its fringes and almost all of Point Cook have been designated bushfire-prone areas.

The State Government recently released new maps showing almost 85 per cent of Victoria had been designated bushfire-prone.

The maps identify land requiring bushfire attack assessment before a building permit can be issued.

Homes built in these areas will require minimum building standards to protect against bushfires.

The maps also show that most of the rapidly developing suburb of Point Cook is bushfire-prone.

A Planning and Community Development Department spokeswoman said large areas of surrounding grasslands were the main reasons most of Point Cook and the fringes of other Wyndham suburbs were designated bushfire-prone areas.

"Consistent with the findings of the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission, the risk posed by grassland, scrub and heath has been taken into account for the first time in the designation of bushfire-prone areas," she said.

"Grasslands are a bushfire risk as they dry out quickly in warm weather.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"The Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre recently reported that grassland bushfires posed a real threat this fire season.

"Grasslands are capable of carrying embers and in windy conditions, these embers can be transported to built-up areas. The 1969 Lara fire was a grassland fire, which claimed 18 lives."

Wyndham's volcanic plains grasslands are considered a threatened ecosystem protected under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Damaging or destroying grasslands may be subject to significant fines or prosecution.

TIPPING SCALES OF JUSTICE FOR YOUTH

Wyndham Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/tipping-scales-of-justice-for-youth/2306237.aspx>

While Wyndham Legal Service has good reason to celebrate its 25th year, there are plans for a new direction that will focus on legal issues faced by western suburbs youth.

As local dignitaries and powerbrokers gathered to celebrate a quarter of a century of service to the Wyndham community last week, a talking point was the WLS new youth-led direction that will look at how better to deal with legal issues faced by the west's young people.

Lawyer Shorna Moore said offering advice to youth about the legal issues unique to them was an area that had in the past been neglected.

"We want to gain an understanding of the legal issues that are faced by our youth in Wyndham, and from that we can provide comprehensive education programs," she said.

Ms Moore has been visiting with key youth outreach services such as the Youth Resource Centre to begin discussions about the possibility of community legal education (CLE).

"Until now no one has ever looked at youth CLE in the western region, so it is a very exciting initiative. An example of something we could implement would be educating young people about the legal obligations following a car accident," Ms Moore said.

Since it began in 1986, Wyndham Legal Service has been providing free legal advice, including clinics to help refugees, youth, the elderly and people with special circumstances.

POINT COOK FIRE RULES SET STREETS AT ODDS

Wyndham Weekly– 28th September 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/point-cook-fire-rules-set-streets-at-odds/2306231.aspx>

Neighbours in parts of Point Cook will be required to build their houses to different standards after changes to bushfire maps.

People building new houses in sections of Dunnings and Point Cook roads and Saltwater Promenade which have been declared bushfire-prone areas will have to comply with stringent regulations to ensure homes can withstand ember attacks during a bushfire.

But neighbours building houses on land outside the danger zone are not bound by the same regulations.

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The divergence is the result of a state government move this month to amend Victoria's bushfire-prone areas.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Planning and Community Development said the changes were necessary because for the past two years the entire state had been declared bushfire prone.

She said the changes reflected the actual risk to homes and had been decided by the government, CFA, Bushfires Royal Commission and the Building Commission using the best available science.

The spokeswoman said the primary reason sections of Point Cook were considered bushfire prone was the large areas of grassland surrounding the suburb.

"The designation of parts of streets has been determined based on the bushfire hazards that pose a risk to homes. These can vary within a street.

"Grasslands are a bushfire risk as they dry out quickly in warm weather. The Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre recently reported that grassland bushfires posed a real threat this fire season."

VICTORIA COUNCILS GEAR UP TO IMPOSE SMOKING BAN

Top News— 27th September 2011

<http://topnews.us/content/243711-victoria-councils-gear-impose-smoking-ban>

Wyndham council has supported the effort of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), which has urged the government to apply smoking ban for alfresco dining areas and playgrounds.

Earlier, Hobsons Bay City Council (HBCC) had urged the MAV to put smoking ban outside hospitals and schools.

Soon the Hobsons Bay Councillor Luba Grigorovitch will be asking the council to initiate a report that would provide the basic information about the places where the ban should be implemented and the reason behind the decision.

Cr. Grigorovitch is quite contended with the Hobsons Bay's decision for putting an injunction on smoking in the areas. She said it's just not about the children but the entire community is affected by it and it is the duty of the government to ensure no negative impact is around to encourage the erroneous habits.

The council had issued a public notice in May and only one objection came which indicated the support of a large number of people who were happy about the implementation of the ban.

The ban will be initiated from November 1 and the ones found guilty will have to pay a high penalty of around \$200.

After HBCC it is the turn of Frankston City Council and The City of Port Phillip to follow its footsteps and put an injunction on the areas like kinder gardens, outside schools and hospitals.

WYNDHAM SUPPORTS NEW SMOKING BAN

Wyndham Star— 27th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/315/story/141238.html>

Smoking in some outdoor areas could soon be a thing of the past in Wyndham with the council stating they support the Municipal Association of Victoria's push to ban smoking at playgrounds and outdoor public places.

A Council spokesperson told Star last week that the council would support the motion to make alfresco dining areas, playgrounds and other areas smoke-free.

It comes as Hobsons Bay City Council looked likely to be the first municipality in Victoria to ban smoking outside schools, kindergartens and hospitals.

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Star can confirm Hobsons Bay councillor Luba Grigorovitch will call on the council's officers to formulate a report on the feasibility of extending the ban.

It follows Hobsons Bay's decision last week to ban smoking on beaches and children's playgrounds throughout the city.

Cr Grigorovitch, who originally brought the motion to the council, said she was proud that Hobsons Bay was leading the way in the West by amending its local law.

"It's not just about children, it's about the entire community," she said.

The council gave public notice of their intent to ban smoking in May this year, during this time they only received one objection to the proposal.

Member for Williamstown Wade Noonan also supported the ban.

"Smoking is a very substantial public health issue," he said.

"I applaud the Hobsons Bay City Council for their willingness to lead the way on this issue."

This decision follows that of other Victorian councils including Frankston City Council and the City of Port Phillip.

THIEVES WIRED UP FOR COPPER IN WERRIBEE

Wyndham Leader— 27th September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/thieves-wired-up-for-copper-in-werribee/>

Security has been hired to watch a new community centre being built at Werribee after a recent costly break-in.

Police said thieves stripped copper wire and more from the centre.

Wyndham Council, behind the \$3.4 million project, estimated it would cost more than \$50,000 to repair the damage.

Council chief executive Kerry Thompson said security guards would patrol the site to prevent further break-ins.

She said repairs would delay the project by five weeks.

A final completion date was not known last week.

Ms Thompson described the break-in and damage as disappointing and unacceptable.

"The Heathdale Community Hub is an extremely important project for the Heathdale community and the delay to the project is very disappointing," she said.

"Delays will occur from time to time due to weather and availability of contractors but when delays occur due to wilful damage being caused, it is completely unacceptable."

The council believed the site was broken into at night on Sunday, September 18.

Police said copper wires and pipes, electrical wires, mains power and phone lines and security infrastructure cables were stolen. The hub is located at the corner of Kookaburra Ave and Nightingale Drive.

The council said the damage would be covered by site insurance.

COMMUTERS COP FINES AT HOPPERS CROSSING

Wyndham Leader— 27th September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/commuters-cop-fines-at-hoppers-crossing/>

More than 1000 motorists have been fined for parking illegally around Hoppers Crossing train station in the past year, costing them a total of more than \$60,000.

Most of those fined by Wyndham Council would have been commuters squeezed out of the station's car park.

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The fines were issued in a shopping centre car park next to the station as well as streets surrounding the station.

The shopping centre includes Woolworths and Target. Parking outside Woolworths has been restricted to four hours for more than 10 years. In August last year, four-hour parking signs also went up outside Target and started being enforced by the council from September last year.

Since then, the council has issued 948 infringement notices for illegal parking outside the stores. The fine is \$61, making the total fines \$57,828.

It has also issued 112 infringement notices for people parking illegally in streets around the station this year, with total fines of \$6832.

The council said the shopping centre's landowner introduced parking restrictions after it discovered customer parking was largely being taken up by train commuters.

It said the landowner asked it to enforce the restrictions.

Large areas of the shopping centre car park were empty during a recent visit by the Leader.

The station car park was full, with many cars parked illegally outside designated parking bays.

The State Government, responsible for station car parks, said no fines for illegal parking at the station had been issued this year.

HOPPERS CROSSING PARKING CROSSED OUT

Wyndham Leader – 27th September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/hoppers-crossing-parking-crossed-out/>

Commuters squeezed out of Hoppers Crossing train station's car park will soon have fewer places to park in surrounding streets.

Wyndham Council is expanding two-hour parking restrictions in streets around the station.

While it is a win for residents whose streets are being clogged with cars, it is a loss for commuters, who have already been forced out of a shopping centre car park near the station by four-hour parking limits.

The State Government, responsible for upgrading station car parks, could not say when Hoppers Crossing would get more parking spaces.

The council is introducing two-hour parking at:

- The eastern side of Baden Drive, from Powell Drive to Third Ave;
- The northern side of First Ave at the western end, making all of this side of the street two-hour parking;
- The southern side of Second Ave at the western end, making all of this side of the street two-hour parking;
- The southern sides of Third and Fourth avenues, at the eastern ends; and,
- Top and bottom of Powell Drive, making all of the north-west side two-hour parking.

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Council chief executive Kerry Thompson said the decision followed it surveying streets around the station and speaking to residents. The new signs had been ordered and should go up within months.

She said there was no need for residents near the two-hour parking areas to be given permits to park longer as they also had access to unrestricted parking.

Ms Thompson said the State Government's Department of Transport and VicTrack had told the council an area on the north side of the station would be sealed for commuter parking in future. The department did not respond to questions about this, including when the car park would open and how many spaces it would have.

WYNDHAM SCHOOL FIRED UP FOR SCIENCE

Wyndham Leader– 27th September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/wyndham-school-fired-up-for-science/>

Science was a hot topic at Baden Powell College when students took part in activities to celebrate National Science Week.

Students were visited by Professor Bunsen, who showed them this flame-filled experiment, did science experiments of their own as well as taking part in science quizzes, colouring in and technology competitions, and a family science night.

Teachers also got involved with a quiz and a chemical morning tea for staff, with food labelled with its chemical description.

WERRIBEE CHILDREN'S WEEK PICNIC BACK

Wyndham Leader– 23rd September 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/werribee-childrens-week-picnic-back/>

After being washed out last year, the popular Children's Week Picnic is returning to Werribee Park.

The free annual Wyndham Council-funded picnic has attracted thousands of youngsters and their families, and it's on next month.

The cancellation of the picnic because of extreme wet weather last year cost ratepayers more than \$24,000.

The council's chief executive, Kerry Thompson, said \$45,661 was allocated for the picnic in 2010.

The October 23 picnic is expected to cost the council more than \$45,000.

"The loss to the council as a result of the cancellation of the picnic was \$24,500," she said.

"While the cost of last year's cancelled event is disappointing, I am confident that the thousands of children who attend the Children's Week Picnic are keen for the event to continue."

The council did not respond to a query on whether the picnic could be insured in case of bad weather.

Shuttle buses for the picnic, which runs from 10am-4pm, will run from Werribee and Hoppers Crossing train stations every 20 minutes.

Cartoon favourite Kung Fu Panda will perform two stage shows.

Children will also be able to take part in a toy swap.

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"This year we will be introducing a toy swap, which enables children to bring along three toys and swap them for others in the afternoon," Ms Thompson said.

She said there would be roving characters, a performance by Force 10 RAAF Band, Werribee Open Range Zoo animal presentations, art-and-craft activities, dancing and sports.

Visitors can bring a picnic or buy food and drinks at the park.

The picnic has been held annually in Wyndham for more than 20 years.

The last picnic in 2009 attracted a crowd of 7000.

Werribee Park is off K-Rd in Werribee South.

ACROSS THE REGION

COUNCIL OFFICERS ATTACKED BY DANGEROUS DOGS

The Herald Sun – 28th September 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/council-officers-attacked-by-dangerous-dogs/story-fn7x8me2-1226148603613>

Council officers are being threatened by dog owners, with one already bitten, as a state-wide crackdown on restricted breeds gets under way.

Municipal Association of Victoria chief executive Rob Spence said some inspectors would need police support to seize American pit bulls, with councils inundated by reports of dangerous dogs.

"There have been some comments coming back to officers that have been threatening if they went into locations they wouldn't be safe," Mr Spence said.

He said staff had reported physical threats after trying to enter properties in outer Melbourne to confirm reports of restricted breed dogs.

A pit bull attacked a Brimbank Council officer in Sydenham on Monday as he attempted to collect it to put it down.

He suffered hand and chest wounds but paramedics said the 36-year-old wasn't seriously injured.

From Friday, any unregistered pit bull, pit bull cross or other restricted breed dog found will be destroyed under a crackdown on dangerous dogs, after the tragic death of Ayeen Chol, 4, in St Albans last month.

Mr Spence said he had met with Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh's advisors to help secure police support for council officers who had an obligation to seize dangerous dogs after Friday.

"You wouldn't expect council officers to go into environments where it's potentially not safe," he said.

He said uniform guidelines needed to be developed to help council officers identify the restricted breed.

"I suspect a lot of people don't know whether they've got American Staffies or pit bulls and it's up to council officers to identify them," he said.

Some councils are overloaded with reports of restricted breeds with 270 people in Hume queuing to have their dogs assessed.

Mr Spence said people were ringing councils directly rather using the State Government hotline to report dangerous dogs.

He urged owners to register their pets before the amnesty on registering dangerous dogs ended on September 29.

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"I'd suggest anyone who hasn't had their dog registered pull your finger out and register it," he said.

REGIONAL RAIL LINK UPDATE PREPARATORY WORKS: SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2011

September 2011

Two new tracks and platforms will be built at Footscray as part of the Regional Rail Link project. To make room for the new tracks, some shops on Irving Street need to be removed.

This demolition work, in the area marked on the map below, will begin in late September 2011 and will take several weeks to complete.

We will endeavour to ensure that Footscray remains active and is accessible to everyone. However there will be some changes around the demolition area on Irving Street, including:

- a short term closure of the car park behind the Irving Street shops
- temporary relocation of the bus stop on the south side of Irving Street
- Short term footpath closures in front of the Irving Street shops.

We will notify the community about the exact details of these changes with localised signs and posters, windscreen notices and conversations with local businesses when the timing is confirmed.

Demolition work will generally be carried out on weekdays between 7am and 6pm, with some weekend work expected.

There will be noise associated with this work from equipment such as excavators, chainsaws and jack hammers. Trucks will also be entering and leaving the demolition area with the assistance of traffic controllers.

We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause and appreciate your understanding while major improvements are made to Victoria's rail network.

If you would like more information, please contact the project team on 1800 107 925, or for further information visit www.transport.vic.gov.au/rrl



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JOBS 101: CAMPAIGN PUTS 31 IN WORK AND COUNTING

Moonee Valley Leader – 26th September 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/jobs-101-campaign-puts-31-in-work-and-counting/>

Our jobs 101 employment tally continues to grow, with 31 young people now in jobs created by the campaign.

Jobs 101 partner, recruitment agency WPC Group, said the campaign was on track to achieve its goal of creating 101 jobs in 101 days.

Chief executive Nicholas Wyman said calls were still flooding in from jobseekers and employers across Melbourne, as well as parents looking for career guidance for their children.

Many people aged 25 and over have expressed interested in apprenticeships, and this age group will become a focus for the campaign in coming weeks.

Mr Wyman said Jobs 101 had also highlighted a desperate need for hospitality apprentices.

“Industry is crying out for more budding chefs and there are many cookery jobs available that can’t seem to be filled,” he said.

Potential chefs will have the chance to pursue their dream job during cook-off events next week, held to coincide with National Skills Week (October 1-8).

The cook-offs at Box Hill Institute will allow aspiring chefs to impress executive chefs from top Melbourne venues and win an apprenticeship and other prizes.

MP SAYS TULLAMARINE AIRPORT LINK A TOP PRIORITY

The Age – 23rd September 2011

<http://hume-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/your-say-tullamarine-airport-link-a-top-priority/>

A Melbourne Airport rail link tops the list of key infrastructure projects Broadmeadows state Labor MP Frank McGuire is fighting for.

Mr McGuire raised his plan in parliament earlier this month.

All states are currently identifying key projects to be considered for Federal Government infrastructure funding and Mr McGuire believes investment in Melbourne’s north will create jobs.

His list includes the Melbourne Airport Rail Link, an upgrade of Somerton Rd, an aviation academy, an expansion of the Tullamarine Freeway and funding to relocate the Essendon Football Club.

“If we do not have a list of state significant projects, billions of dollars will go to other states,” Mr McGuire said.

Kate Walshe, spokeswoman for state Treasurer Kim Wells, said their priority was to deliver on election commitments.

“The Coalition Government is fixing the major problems inherited in projects such as the Melbourne Markets Redevelopment and Regional Rail Link projects that were not properly planned or costed,” Ms Walshe said.

Mr McGuire said Melbourne Airport should be seen as a priority to develop “one of our biggest competitive advantages”.

“It will create extra jobs, it has that multiplier effect to help people get to the city faster and allow for greater production of goods coming out of this area.”

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Infrastructure Australia spokesman Michael Deegan said all states were at the same point and still have time to submit.

"We've written to the Victorian State Government seeking an update by November 11 this year," Mr Deegan said. "We've set out a timeline and they're working to that."

BURLEY GRIFFIN CREATION FIRES UP

The Age – 23rd September 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/burley-griffin-creation-fires-up-20110922-1kn0m.html>

During the Great Depression of the 1930s the architect of our national capital and Melbourne's Capitol Theatre, Walter Burley Griffin, developed a lucrative line in, of all things, rubbish incinerators.

In 1929, the Reverberatory Incinerator and Engineering Company (RIECo) developed a device that transformed household rubbish into clinker ash for bricks and roads.

Desperate to replace its notoriously noxious tip by the Maribyrnong River, Essendon council (now Moonee Valley) placed the first order. But as keen as the councillors were to solve the toxic problem, they had a proviso. Just because the building processed rubbish, it didn't mean it could look like it.

The mayor at the time, Arthur Fenton, wanted a building "in keeping with the tone of the locality".

If the building was to have architectural merit, it made sense to RIECo that Griffin be commissioned. Not only did their offices share the same building, Leonard House, but Griffin had designed it. Philosophically, too, he was a perfect fit. Griffin was equally averse to unnecessary industrial ugliness.

The result: a giant gabled-roof incinerator with decorative, diamond-shaped grilles and windows that resemble a monumental temple to trash.

Over the next decade the partnership of Griffin and Nicholls designed 13 incinerators around Australia for RIECo. As incongruous as it may seem amid Griffin's grand output, that "trash work" essentially kept the practice afloat during those lean years.

As the first and only Victorian incinerator, the Moonee Ponds building has been recognised with heritage status. But it was a long time coming. By 1985 the building was virtually derelict and lay dormant until 2004. Then, like the existing half-dozen surviving incinerators around the country, it was, fittingly, recycled.

After seven years as a community hub for largely theatre performances, the complex is undergoing rebranding, redirection and further redevelopment.

"The unique setting makes it ideal to look at industry, our society and the environment," says Maria Tence, Moonee Valley Council's arts and culture manager, of the remonikered Incinerator Gallery.

Three main galleries for exhibiting art and design are planned as well as a permanent space dedicated to telling Griffin's story and contextualising the building.

The grand design includes gaining accreditation as a public gallery. This paves the way for touring exhibitions to be brought in. But it requires increasing security, installing stable climate control and raising the professionalism of the team. A new curator, Richard Ennis, has already been appointed.

Over the next two years these ambitions will be addressed as heritage architects are commissioned through a tender process. Redevelopment estimates are \$2 million.

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"We don't want to turn it into a pristine white gallery," Tence says.

"We want to accentuate the rawness of it. For architects who have studied Burley Griffin this is an exciting project. Those that I have spoken with are all excited about the prospect of working on it."

Still, Tence's optimism for the future is tinged with concern when it comes to maintaining the building.

"The council has been left with this legacy, but they are receiving no help with costs and maintenance," she says.

"The reason it fell apart in the first place is that the dollars required to maintain a heritage building are huge.

"What makes me angry is that we fall between the gaps because Arts Victoria doesn't have any grants that we are eligible for."

A former curator with the Immigration Museum, Tence appreciates the importance of engaging the community. The ambition is to make the Incinerator Gallery an arts hub for the people of Melbourne's west.

Increasing the gallery's profile through a more valuable art prize, establishing a volunteer program and using one of the galleries for community arts programs are part of the agenda to make the gallery relevant to locals while attracting a wider audience.

"Having a heritage building is pointless if no one comes to visit it," Tence says.

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