

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011



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## BRIMBANK

### GREEN LIGHT FOR A SAFER KINGS PARK JUNCTION

*Brimbank Leader—22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/green-light-for-a-safer-kings-park-junction/>

A roundabout will be removed and traffic lights installed at a Kings Park intersection to help improve safety and traffic flow.

Brimbank Council has approved the installation of lights at the Taylors and Braeswood roads intersection after residents submitted a petition last month highlighting their safety concerns along the busy arterial.

The works will be included as part of the \$2.2 million joint council and VicRoads project to widen Taylors Rd, and will cost \$200,000.

Residents also wanted a second roundabout at the Kings Rd intersection removed, two pedestrian crossings installed, and a ban on trucks between 9pm and 5am.

But the council's infrastructure and environment general manager, Paul Younis, said the road was a major arterial and the proposal to ban trucks was not supported.

Mr Younis said the council had decided the other proposals would form part of future works.

The removal of the roundabout at Kings Rd was a matter for VicRoads, he said, and the council would continue to lobby the State Government for funding.

Council administrator Meredith Sussex said the road must be "very difficult to live on" and hoped council's action would help.

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Residents demanded a full revision of the council's plans to widen Taylors Rd between Kings Rd and Kurung Drive after receiving a letter in August.

### **PRAISE FOR BRIMBANL'S VOLUNTEER ABUNDANCE**

*Brimbank Leader—22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/praise-for-brimbans-volunteer-abundance/>

Brimbank Council chairman Peter Lewinsky has paid tribute to 113 volunteers at a ceremony.

He said volunteering was widespread in the municipality.

"In an age where too many people know the price of everything, but the value of nothing, volunteering stands as a beacon for a different sort of society, one where helping each other out is the rule rather than an exception," he said.

One program that relies on volunteers is the Brimbank Community Register.

Each week 25 volunteers with 20 different languages between them, phone more than 300 residents who are either older or experiencing a form of disability and isolated at home.

The youngest client on the register is 32, and the oldest 96.

Anne Donald, an 80-year-old pensioner living alone said she appreciated the weekly call.

"I'm pretty active, but it's good to have someone ringing to check I haven't fallen," she said.

"It's nice to hear some- one's voice."

An online register for volunteers will be set up next year.

To volunteer in Brimbank contact Christine Bell on 9249 4000 or [christineb@brimbank.vic.gov.au](mailto:christineb@brimbank.vic.gov.au)

### **BRIMBANK HEALTH INITIATIVE FAILS**

*Brimbank Leader—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/brimbank-health-initiative-fails/>

The Federal Government's rejection of Brimbank Council's application for more than \$500,000 to promote healthy living is a "disgrace" an administrator says.

Brimbank Council applied for \$566,042 for its Healthy Communities Project under the Government's Healthy Communities Initiative.

The program is aimed at disadvantaged communities and funding would help local councils employ a Healthy Communities co-ordinator to run a program to help residents seeking employment, as well as integrating health and wellbeing activities.

Brimbank has the third most disadvantaged people in Victoria, according to a 2006 measure of disadvantage.

Administrator Meredith Sussex said the funding rejection was "a disgrace".

"It is completely inexplicable that the Commonwealth has ignored the health needs of this very important community," she said.

Brimbank Council will lobby Maribyrnong Federal MP Bill Shorten and Gorton MP Brendan O'Connor to have the funding decision reversed.

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### **BLOCK ROAD: ALBION RESIDENTS**

*Brimbank Leader—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/your-say-block-road-albion-residents/>

Albion residents say proposed measures to stop motorists speeding through their street will do little to curb safety fears.

The Stop Adelaide St Speeding and Rat-Running group is calling for tougher traffic measures in a petition to Brimbank Council.

At a meeting last week, the council said it would install up to six speed humps, if residents wanted them, and would issue a questionnaire to gauge opinion. Surveys in October found traffic volumes had increased by 400 cars a day since 2008, with the average speed 46km/h.

The street, which has two primary schools, is a permanent 40km/h zone.

Have council measures helped slow down traffic in your street? Tell us below.

“The speeds are still an issue, and it is proposed we consult with landowners to determine their support,” Infrastructure and Environment general manager Paul Younis conceded.

But group member Frank Reinthaler said while speed humps would have some effect, they were a “noisy option.”

“It is also an option that does not cost the council much money, nor one that we think a lot of thought or imagination was put into.”

Resident Olly Harris said after more than three years of road noise and safety fears, he decided to move.

“It happens at all times of night and day, and putting speed humps in will not stop this.”

Both men said the simplest solution would be to block off Adelaide St from Ballarat Rd.

“This would stop all rat-running as Adelaide St could no longer be used as a through-road,” Mr Harris said.

### **CCTV THE ANSWER IN ALBION**

*Brimbank Leader—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/cctv-the-answer-in-albion/>

Closed-circuit surveillance cameras will be tested in an Albion laneway notorious for anti-social behaviour and littered with syringes.

Brimbank Council will trial the cameras at a cost of \$2000 in the thoroughfare between Derrimut St and the corner of Wyalong and Albion streets - which is used by about 100 people a day - after residents petitioned for the laneway to be closed.

The council inspects the laneway, adjacent to Albion Primary school, daily and collects about five syringes a time.

Cameras are also on trial at Buckingham Reserve and the council says since their inception there had been a decrease in anti-social behaviour.

Are CCTV cameras the answer? Tell us what you think below.

Infrastructure and environment general manager Paul Younis said cameras were the “preferred option” to closing the laneway, which would see pedestrians having to walk an extra 350m to get from one end to another using the shortest route.

“Council has experienced issues in the past, where a laneway has been gated off, but people still gain access to it despite the installation of the gates and barricades,” he said.

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"The closure of the laneway may not necessarily solve the drug usage issues and syringes being found in the area."

If the cameras did not deter drug use, Mr Younis said consideration would be given to closing the laneway.

The issue was first brought to the Leader's attention in February this year. A petition containing 172 signatures requesting the closure was tabled at a council meeting in October.

### **HAMPSHIRE SQUARE WORKS END ON SCHEDULE**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/hampshire-square-works-end-on-schedule/2394729.aspx>

Sunshine's \$3.2 million Hampshire Square redevelopment has wrapped up just in time for Christmas.

Workers put the final touches on the construction site last week to ensure a smooth unveiling right on schedule.

Brimbank chairman Peter Lewinsky said the council wanted to make sure access was returned in time for the Christmas trading period.

He conceded the seven-month construction had inconvenienced businesses and the public.

"We did our best to keep the inconvenience to shoppers, shop owners and the Sunshine Plaza centre management to the minimum, with some work being done overnight, but I think everyone is in agreement that it's all been worth it."

New pedestrian crossings, SmartBus stops, ramps and terraced steps are now in place.

Mr Lewinsky said the area had been made more inviting by the Sunshine Rising project.

"The terraced steps and wooden seats offer the perfect vantage spot to sit and watch the world go by, or to meet up with friends and family or simply rest weary limbs."

An official opening will be held in February.

### **TACKLING VIOLENCE FROM MANY ANGLES**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/tackling-violence-from-many-angles/2394714.aspx>

A program helping to cut family violence in the Vietnamese community could be rolled out across other cultural groups.

The Vietnamese-speaking men and family violence group was run over 15 weeks by Relationships Australia Victoria through its Sunshine centre.

It involved men aged 22-43 who were referred by courts or government agencies.

Centre manager Robyn McIvor (pictured) said the program showed there were benefits in running behavioural change programs for specific cultural groups in their own language.

"Government bodies that fund family violence work need to recognise that specific language speaking groups would enable men from other cultures to embrace behavioural change and move towards non-violent behaviour," she said.

The program was run in partnership with a reference group including Kildonan UnitingCare, Djerriwarrh Health Services, inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence and the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association.

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Ms McIvor said the success of the program had led to plans to develop groups for Indian, Arabic-speaking and African men.

The Weekly recently revealed domestic assault reports in Brimbank jumped 43 per cent from 498 to 710 over the past 12 months.

### CALL TO USE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/call-to-use-pedestrian-crossings/2394733.aspx>

Police are urging Brimbank residents to always use pedestrian crossings after a girl was hit by a car while crossing Sunshine Avenue last Monday.

The Keilor Views Primary School pupil, 11, suffered a cracked pelvis and was taken to the Royal Children's Hospital in a stable condition.

She was discharged from hospital on Thursday and is expected to make a full recovery.

Keilor Downs' Senior Sergeant Grant Kelly said: "It's important people use crossings to get around especially around busy areas near schools."

### BEST IN THE WEST

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/best-in-the-west/>

Keilor Downs Secondary College students were among many throughout Brimbank celebrating exceptional VCE results last week.

Of the 234 students who undertook VCE at Keilor Downs, 99 per cent completed it, with 19 students receiving Australian Tertiary Admission Rank scores over 90. Nhat-Nam Tonthat was dux with 99.05.

"Due to sustained focus upon structured achievement and expectation at our college, we have again seen profound improvement at all levels of student achievement," Keilor Downs Secondary College principal Stuart Andrews said.

In a first for St Albans Secondary College, one student, Joanne Ha, received a perfect ATAR score of 99.95. Two others, Wayne Thai and Giang Tung Nguyen, received 99.50 and 99.35 respectively.

Principal Kerrie Dowsley said the school was "very proud".

"It now sets the bar very high, and it does inspire and motivate future students," Ms Dowsley said.

"It just shows that with expert teachers and good support and guidance, students can achieve really good results at schools anywhere."

Education Minister Martin Dixon said he was particularly pleased St Albans was among a handful of state schools to achieve top results.

"Government schools in Melbourne's west are brimming with success stories, and this is certainly one of them," he said.

Victoria University Secondary College's Brimbank campus was also celebrating the success of Kevin Lam, 18, of Deer Park who became dux of the school with a score of 99.25.

Eight others at the school scored above 90, with Tom Bogusiak managing perfect scores of 50 for two subjects.

Copperfield College Community Partnerships leader Stuart Dale said 15 students at its Delahey campus received scores above 90, with "a big increase" in study scores over 40. One student received a perfect score of 50 for Geography.

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More than 82,000 Victorian students received exam results on Friday, with 49,000 graduating with the VCE and 10,000 students completing VCAL studies. The minister congratulated students who had completed their studies.

"Once again students at our selective-entry government schools have performed well, but students at a whole range of local neighbourhood schools, both in the city and the country, have also achieved outstanding success," Mr Dixon said.

### **ALCOHOL Poured INTO POOR AREAS**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/alcohol-poured-into-poor-areas/2394716.aspx>

Poorer suburbs such as Sunshine and Footscray are saturated with booze outlets compared to their wealthier neighbours, new research by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre shows.

The study compared the levels of social disadvantage - low income, lower level of education and high unemployment - with the number of licensed venues, including pubs, restaurants, bottle shops and sporting clubs.

It found Victoria's poorest areas have up to six times more bottle shops in their neighbourhoods than those that are well-off.

Study author Michael Livingston found that based on the number of alcohol licences per person, people in disadvantaged suburbs had access to twice as many bottle shops as those in the wealthiest areas.

Melbourne CBD has the most takeaway booze, followed by Melton and Sunshine.

Brimbank and Maribyrnong have the second and third highest rates of disadvantage in Melbourne, according to an index based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data.

"The link between the number of bottle shops and alcohol-related harm such as liver cirrhosis, domestic violence and high levels of drinking among young people is well established," Mr Livingston said.

VicHealth alcohol manager Brian Vandenberg said that because takeaway liquor was cheap, it was often bought in bulk and consumed at home.

"We can begin to address these problems with more stringent licensing laws, earlier pub and club closing times and by taxing alcohol with common sense so that it's no longer cheaper than bottled water."

### **PETITIONERS STILL AT A CROSSROADS ON TRAFFIC LIGHTS**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/petitioners-still-at-a-crossroads-on-traffic-lights/2394731.aspx>

Residents are pleased that traffic lights will be installed at a busy north-west intersection but want the same outcome for a dangerous junction further along Taylors Road.

Brimbank Council last week approved the removal of a roundabout at the intersection of Taylors and Braeswood roads following a petition from residents concerned about its plans to widen the major thoroughfare.

The council last month awarded the contract for widening works on Taylors Road.

The proposed three-lane treatment is being partly funded by the council and VicRoads, with work to start early next year.

But the residents' petition called for a full revision of the plans and for traffic lights at the intersections of Taylors and Braeswood roads and Taylors and Kings roads. They also want trucks banned from using Taylors Road from 9pm-5am and called for more pedestrian crossings.

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St Albans resident Judy Ingram said she was delighted that lights would be installed at one of the intersections but said the widening project would only lead to more traffic problems.

"There is no such thing as a peak period for the two intersections because it is busy all the time.

"Widening will lead to more traffic, so if they don't put lights it will get out of control."

Delahey resident David Anderson hopes lights at the intersection of Taylors and Braeswood roads will put pressure on VicRoads to agree to fund the removal of the roundabout at the Taylors-Kings roads intersection.

"Traffic lights will at least make it easier for buses to get across the intersection," he said.

Council's infrastructure and environment manager, Paul Younis, said putting traffic lights at the Taylors-Kings road intersection was part of a long-term plan.

He said that ultimate responsibility for that junction lay with VicRoads.

VicRoads regional director Nial Finegan said it was developing a funding proposal for consideration in a future program.

### **GROWTH SPURT FOR SUNSHINE LIBRARY**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/growth-spurt-for-sunshine-library/2394723.aspx>

A new chapter will be written in the tale of Sunshine library when a \$2.5 million redevelopment begins next year.

Stage one works incorporate a new learning centre across an extra 500 square metres and will relocate the entrance to face the new Hampshire Square.

Facilities will include reading and study rooms, children's area, teenage zone and computer rooms. Brimbank Council will spend \$1.25 million to match state government funding announced last Monday.

Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell said the project would make a real difference to one of the busiest libraries in Victoria.

"It's going to have something for young and older people and will meet the needs of a really diverse community," she said.

"It's going to be for the whole community for generations to come."

The redevelopment will receive \$750,000 via the 'living libraries' infrastructure program and \$500,000 from the community support grants program.

Brimbank Council chairman Peter Lewinsky said it was good to see some of the \$140 million lost to pokies in Brimbank last financial year come back to the community through the grant.

The project would help revitalise the Sunshine town centre and "bring this area up to the standard enjoyed by other areas of Melbourne".

The Weekly reported in October that Sunshine library had become a victim of its own popularity, driving the need to expand.

Council's general manager of community well-being, Kelly Grigsby, said the redevelopment would be welcomed by the library's many users.

"If you see it here after school, people are really packed in and there are lots of different uses in the same space," she said.

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The council has applied for a further \$4 million from the federal government to build two extra levels above the library. They would house maternity and child health services, a learning centre and community hub.

### **ALBION LANEWAY: CAMERAS TO KEEP CLOSE WATCH**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/albion-laneway-cameras-to-keep-close-watch/2394725.aspx>

Brimbank Council has rejected calls to close a troubled Albion laneway and will instead trial live closed-circuit television surveillance to deter drug use in the area.

As reported by the Weekly, up to 20 syringes and beer bottles are being found each day in the laneway, which is on the western boundary of Albion Primary School.

Residents and school staff have repeatedly called for it to be shut to prevent pupils and residents from being harmed.

A petition with 172 signatures requesting the laneway's closure was tabled on at a meeting of the council on October 18.

But the council last week opted to install CCTV cameras in the laneway to assess their impact on drug use in the area.

The trial is for one month and is expected to cost about \$2000.

In a report presented to administrators, council officers said the closure of the laneway would require pedestrians to walk an additional 350 metres to get from one end to the other using the shortest alternative route.

Closing the laneway might also fail to solve drug usage issues or reduce the number of syringes being found.

Council's infrastructure and environment manager, Paul Younis, said the advantage of using CCTV surveillance was that police and council workers could engage and monitor the laneway closely.

He said council had not ruled out the option of closing the lane.

Albion Primary School principal Matt Coughlan said he was willing to give it a chance.

"We haven't turned away from the idea to close the laneway, but we will let the trial take place and see what kind of effect it has on the amount of syringes and bottles in the area."

### **TIME FOR SANTA'S LITTLE HELPERS**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/time-for-santas-little-helpers/2394730.aspx>

Sadly, many people will spend this Christmas alone, but elderly Brimbank residents will at least have someone to talk to during the festive season.

For nearly two years, a group of 25 local volunteers has been making phone calls to elderly residents or those with a disability to check they are OK and to have a friendly chat.

Brimbank Council's community register was set up to ensure residents who are isolated at home have some form of regular social contact.

There are 300 clients on the register; the youngest is 32 and the eldest 96.

St Albans resident Mary, who did not want her surname revealed, said the calls she received from volunteers were a pleasant break in what was often a lonely day.

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"They call me at the start of the week and remind me about any upcoming appointments or events and we have a nice conversation," the 91-year-old said.

"I'm lucky I can still get around by the bus, but many others can't and this service is important for them."

Volunteer caller Judy Ingram, 57, said it was sad to think many people would be sitting at home alone at Christmas.

"We will be doing extra shifts to ensure everyone on our lists gets spoken to over the next few weeks," Mrs Ingram said.

"When I'm sitting with my big family over Christmas I'll definitely be thinking about the people sitting at home by themselves. It gives me a lot of joy to know I've cheered up someone's life with a five-minute phone call."

Mrs Ingram said volunteer callers received extensive training before they started making calls.

"We are trained to deal with people who might be struggling and we never actually meet the client, so it remains confidential and we make sure they feel safe," she said.

"If they have any issues it's our job to go away and find someone who can help them."

Speaking at a dinner dance organised by council to celebrate the work of its volunteers, chairman Peter Lewinsky praised their efforts.

"Brimbank is rich in human capital," he said.

"The number of volunteers registered with the council has more than trebled from 2004 to 319 this year - well ahead of the 12 per cent increase in volunteers across Australia in the past 15 years as reported by the federal government last month."

Other volunteer-run services include a home library service which has been running for about 12 months.

Its 28 volunteers are matched with people in 13 different nursing homes and 86 individuals who deliver a package of specially selected books, DVDs and other materials each month.

Mrs Ingram urged anyone who felt isolated to sign up for the many support services on offer locally.

To inquire about becoming a volunteer, phone Christine Bell on 92494000.

### **GROUNDS FOR CELEBRATION**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/grounds-for-celebration/2394732.aspx>

Sydenham-Hillside Primary School pupils will be itching to get out of the classroom when an artificial multi-sport pitch is completed next year.

Work on the \$500,000 Sydenham campus field started last weekend.

It will include a four-lane running track, long jump pit, four tennis courts, a soccer field, softball and volleyball areas and an Aussie rules oval.

Principal Glenn McGarigle says having an artificial pitch means pupils will have a good surface to play on all year.

"In the past 10 years we went through a really dry period and our grass oval became really difficult to maintain," he said.

"We're getting more rain now but the new surface will allow us to run many different sports to give variety to our pupils. It will improve safety at our school and will enhance our attractiveness which could bring more enrolments."

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There are 816 pupils at the Sydenham campus but Mr McGarigle says the school's 568 Hillside students will also use the pitch for intra-school sport days.

"We may have some local athletics clubs using the facility but we will discuss different options when the pitch is ready."

Grade 6 pupil Cameron Rayner can't wait to try different sports.

"I think it is great my school has decided to get an area for all kids.

"This will benefit the school and if other kids hear that we have all these new upgrades I think they'll want to come to our school."

The project is fully funded by the school.

### **PLAN NOW FOR BRIMBANK ON PARADE**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/plan-now-for-brimbank-on-parade/2394727.aspx>

Community groups are being given the chance to shine as part of next year's Brimbank on Parade.

Groups, organisations and clubs can promote their work to an expected audience of 20,000 people by joining the colourful Brimbank Festival event (pictured).

The March 24 festa will highlight Cultural Diversity Week and International Year of Co-operatives. Entry is free.

More details: email [festivals@brimbank.vic.gov.au](mailto:festivals@brimbank.vic.gov.au) or phone 92494600.

### **SUNSHINE STATION LINED UP FOR UPGRADE**

*Brimbank Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/sunshine-station-lined-up-for-upgrade/2394726.aspx>

Sunshine railway station may finally shake its tag as one of Melbourne's worst as details emerge of a major facelift slated for next year.

Under plans released last week, a new pedestrian overpass will be built to provide ramp, lift and stair access to all platforms.

New facilities, including a ticket office and waiting area, will be built into the overpass as part of the Regional Rail Link project.

Changes will also be made to the station's forecourt and bus interchange.

The redevelopment has been spurred by the need to make way for two new lines of the \$5 billion RRL project.

Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder said works would complement revitalisation of Sunshine and breathe new life into the area.

"Sunshine railway station was recently rated one of the worst in Melbourne, with passengers describing it as 'depressing', 'dingy' and 'rundown'," he said.

Mr Mulder said the station design addressed community concerns about safety and amenity and paved the way for future upgrades, including electrification to Melton.

The RRL authority is working on the plans with Brimbank Council, VicRoads and bus operators, and it hosted a display at the station on Friday.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011



Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said a construction contract for the package of works from Footscray to Sunshine should be signed by early 2012.

The station redevelopment will coincide with the Anderson Road grade separation detailed earlier this month.

Friction remains over the proposal to acquire a section of the heritage-protected McKay Gardens to create a shared pedestrian and cycle path as part of the level crossing removal.

A meeting between RRL representatives and the Friends of McKay Gardens last Friday left Friends president Catherine McDonald worried about the loss of part of the gardens and removal of a heritage railway footbridge.

Construction manager Adam Maguire said the extent of encroachment into the gardens could only be discussed once detailed design work was complete.

### **SQUARE OPEN FOR HOLIDAYS**

*Brimbank Star—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/327/story/146284.html>

Sunshine received an early Christmas present last week with the opening of Hampshire Square.

The site has undergone a \$3.2 million makeover as part of the Sunshine Rising program, which aims to revitalise the town centre.

The square opened on Thursday 15 December after seven months of works that included ramps, pedestrian crossing and seating.

Although Chair of Brimbank City Council's Administrators Peter Lewinsky said the council would hold an official opening in February next year, he said he wanted the works to be finished before Christmas.

"Christmas trading is the busiest time of the year for retail businesses and restaurants and we wanted to make sure that Hampshire Square was open so businesses and shoppers could take full advantage of the new and inviting space in front of Sunshine Plaza," Mr Lewinsky said.

He said the months of construction had caused some inconvenience to residents and businesses but that it had all been "worth it".

"Previously, it wasn't all that easy for shoppers to enter Sunshine Plaza from Hampshire Road on foot – the steep steps and ramps were off-putting, especially for older folk and or people with prams and shopping carts," Mr Lewinsky said.

"Now, the whole area has been opened up, thanks to easily accessible ramps and terraced steps.

"We hope that retail sales over the holiday period go some way to making up for the disruption to normal trading."

He said the steps and wooden seats were perfect for rest and meeting spots, while the decorative paving, light poles, balustrades and plant life had livened the look of the place.

The square also has new pedestrian crossings and SmartBus stops.

"We're already 'walkin' on Sunshine', as the song goes," Mr Lewinsky said.

Hampshire Square was funded by the council with the Department of Planning and Community Development and Sunshine Plaza.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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### **PUSH TO IMPROVE THE WEST'S LOT**

*Brimbank Star—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/327/story/146285.html>

Brimbank Council has called on the State Government to increase transport and infrastructure in the area as part of its plan for the West.

In a submission to the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) proposed Melbourne West Growth Corridor Plan, Brimbank CEO Nick Foa highlighted seven issues, including regional centres, urban redevelopment, transport services and community facilities.

Although there is no land in Brimbank included in the GAA's plan, council general manager of City Development Stephen Sully said the corridor and issues of growth were of the "most relevance".

"This submission seeks to make a constructive contribution," Mr Sully said.

"The West is the fastest growing area in Australia."

In his letter, Mr Foa said it was "unnecessary and inefficient" for the defined growth areas, which include Melton, Wyndham and Hume, to try to accommodate all future residents within their boundaries.

"The growth corridor plan should be considered as part of an overall strategy for the western region, not simply as a plan for the growth corridors 'bolted on' to the existing urban area," Mr Foa said.

"The existing activity areas, employment areas and infrastructure in the established urban areas should be used to full efficiency rather than potentially duplicating provision in the growth areas."

Mr Foa said Brimbank had "underutilised" land that could be used for housing, business, services and facilities and thanked the GAA for recognising Sunshine and Sydenham as regional centres in the West.

However, he said more information about the role each suburb would play in the growth plan would enable council to make long-term decisions about transport, urban design and land-use.

"The Deer Park railway line should be electrified as a priority, providing better metropolitan train services to Brimbank residents," Mr Foa said.

He also highlighted the need for grade separations at Melton Highway, Main Rd and Furlong Rd for community safety as well as to provide better access to Sunshine Hospital.

### **HATING HOONS**

*Brimbank Star—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/327/story/146273.html>

A community survey has revealed 80 per cent of people identify hoons as the biggest neighbourhood problem in Brimbank.

Drugs (67 per cent), vandalism (56 per cent) and gangs (49 per cent) are also identified as major problems in the Brimbank Police Service Area (PSA) Summary, released exclusively to Star under Freedom of Information.

The results of the survey, which measures community satisfaction with policing between July 2011 and September 2011, also shows only 65 per cent of the community believes Brimbank police to be fair and 64 per cent think Brimbank police are honest.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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At home, only 74 per cent of people feel safe at night, while 91 per cent feel safe at home during the day and 39 per cent feel safe walking around Brimbank at night, while 78 per cent feel safe during the day.

In Brimbank, 68 per cent of people are concerned about becoming a victim of burglary, 56 per cent of physical assault, 53 per cent are concerned about their vehicle being stolen, 48 per cent are concerned about becoming victims of fraud and 27 per cent are concerned about terrorism.

Meanwhile, respondents to the survey admitted to being tired (21 per cent), speeding (15 per cent) and talking on the phone (14 per cent) while driving in the past six months.

Brimbank PSA Inspector Mick Grainger said it was “ironic” that people’s biggest concern was hoons, but that they sped anyway.

“I think that’s partly about the society we live in, and the fast pace we live at,” Insp Grainger said.

“Built in to some people, I suppose, is an expectation that police will be tolerant at low speeds, if they’re five or six or 10 kilometres over (the speed limit).

“But in reality that (speed) increases the chances of a vehicle collision.”

He admitted hoons were an issue in Brimbank, with the area having seized more vehicles than any other PSA since the hoon laws began (Brimbank’s hoon problem, 19 October, Star).

Insp Grainger said drugs, on the other hand, were a “significant” issue all around the country.

“Brimbank is no different to anywhere else in Australia, or the world for that matter. Drugs are a scourge,” he said.

He said he was unsurprised people were scared of being physically assaulted, especially due to the high occurrence of family violence in the area.

But he said police were running regular operations around the streets and transport hubs in Brimbank and encouraging people to report any incident in the home to police.

Insp Grainger said summer could lead to a spike in crime, but warned would-be crims that Brimbank police will be patrolling regularly.

### **BOOST FOR BOOKS**

*Brimbank Star—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/327/story/146272.html>

Sunshine Library is set for a \$2.5 million expansion after an announcement in Brimbank last week.

Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell met with Brimbank City Council CEO Nick Foa and Chair of Administrator’s Peter Lewinsky to announce \$1.25 million for the Sunshine Library.

The council matched the funds with their own \$1.25 million contribution.

The funding will be used to expand the floor space by 500 square metres, with quiet reading and study rooms, a children’s room with touchscreen computers, a teenage zone, computer training room, wireless room and community learning and meeting spaces.

Ms Powell said the library was one of the busiest in Victoria, with more than 200 people visiting every hour.

“Libraries are the hub of so many communities, they’ve become community learning centres as well as just a place for books,” Ms Powell said.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"It's like a big lounge room, it's the communities big lounge room."

Mr Lewinsky said the redevelopment would "fit beautifully" with Hampshire Square, which was completed last week.

"This will develop and extend the existing library for lifelong learning," he said.

"We are actively working to create a large, integrated community precinct, located within the heart of the Sunshine Town Centre that meets the needs of the community.

"Council's vision is that in 2030, the Sunshine Town Centre will be one of Melbourne's premier multi-functional activity centres."

Stage one of the project is expected to begin in November 2012 and open in 2013.

The council also plans to develop maternal and child health and create an additional community space above the library, subject to future funding.

Sunshine Library was one of 10 libraries to receive Government funding, with Melton Library also receiving a \$1.25 million share. Melton will use the funding boost to create an integrated learning space with training areas, a divisible activity room, a theatre-style seminar space and audio-visual recording facilities to develop digital content and local history.

### **BRIMBANK ADMINISTRATORS' FINAL COUNTDOWN?**

*Brimbank Leader—17<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/brimbank-administrators-final-countdown-fbready/>

As municipalities around the state welcomed new mayors for the next 12 months, Brimbank Council's administrators are preparing for what could be their final year in the job.

"Everything we do is for the right reasons, to make Brimbank a better place to live," Chairman Peter Lewinsky said.

"I reckon we've done the best we can, but it's up to other people to rate our performance.

"We've been told we've treated the whole community with fairness and dignity, and our approach has been appropriate."

Mr Lewinsky said the first year was about setting the tone and identifying issues, while the second was about rolling out solutions and improvements.

"We identified areas that really needed to be caught up, in particular, parks, gardens, bike paths," Mr Lewinsky said.

"We've been concentrating on redressing a lot of the shortcomings in infrastructure and we've also made a lot of effort to get around and be seen in the community."

He said the council's decision to sell 14 parcels of land in June - and then withdraw it - was probably the biggest issue of the year.

"There was an orchestrated and organised reaction to it," he said.

"We still believe the decision was right, and if we go forward with a decision that turns out to be unpopular, at the end of the day the community makes their own decisions. It's not our money, it's the community's.

"Sometimes you don't come up with the decision that everyone likes, you can't win them all."

Mr Lewinsky acknowledged 2012 was going to be a busy year.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011



"There are parks, gardens, road developments, recreation areas, we are setting ourselves a very high bar on that," he said.

"There might be a number of powers out there that might be working to undermine and discredit us, but most of those people will do that for self-interest, so, I really and sincerely hope that the community delivers 11 really good councillors."

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## HOBSONS BAY

### POSTCODE PETITION

*Hobson Bay Star—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/327/story/146371.html>

Hobsons Bay City Council received a petition with 73 signatures from Brooklyn residents wishing to have their postcode changed from 3012 to 3025.

The suburb crosses into Hobsons Bay and Brimbank with the 3012 postcode also incorporating sections of Kingsville, Maidstone, Tottenham and West Footscray.

Australia Post changed the Brooklyn postcode to 3012 in 1997 and despite supporting residents in their plight to have the decision reversed, many councillors were not convinced Australia Post could be influenced.

Cr Michael Raffoul said some Brooklyn residents were forced to travel to Tottenham to pick up their post.

"It's very inconvenient they have to go that far when they can just go to Altona Gate," he said.

Cr Raffoul said in 2002 correspondence with Australia Post they said they would not reverse their operational decision "based on outside influences".

"Hopefully we can persuade Australia Post to revisit the request based on this petition ... hopefully they (residents) can walk across to Altona Gate rather than drive to Tottenham or Kingsville."

Cr John Hogg said he wished the petitioners well.

"They're (Australia Post) always watching their bottom line but it never hurts to agitate – you never know what will happen."

### SALVOS BUSY SEASON

*Hobson Bay Star—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/327/story/146348.html>

Salvation Army Minister Matt Kean knows all too well what a difficult time Christmas can be for some people.

The Altona based minister and his wife Fiona have been kept busy this season attending to Hobsons Bay's most vulnerable citizens.

"Loneliness is one of the biggest issues," he said.

"Extreme, desperate loneliness."

Mr Kean said despite being in need people are often unwilling to accept charity.

"We'll find people are very reluctant – especially around Christmas, to be a person who needs the Salvation Army."

"But then because it's Christmas they do come – people who are usually able to keep themselves afloat but have recently lost their jobs."

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Mr Kean said he understood how it may hit people's pride to accept help but that's what the Salvation Army was there for.

"I personally pride myself that we're not like other churches," he said.

"If we ever became just like any church we couldn't do what we're chosen and called to do."

Despite only being new to Altona, Mr Kean said they loved it.

"The people of Altona are kind and respectful."

"We could stay here for 15 years."

For those wanting to make a small difference this Christmas, Mr Kean and his wife are encouraging residents to make monetary donations to the Hobsons Bay Salvation Army.

"We can make \$5 explode."

"We appreciate all toys donated to us but we get hundreds."

### **REVAMPED HOBSONS BAY WARD PLAN HAS BACKING**

*Hobsons Bay Leader— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/revamped-ward-plan-has-backing/>

Residents would be represented by multiple councillors in bigger wards from 2013 under a Hobsons Bay Council proposal.

The council voted at December's council meeting to make a submission to the Victorian Electoral Commission's electoral representation review advocating multi-member wards as well as a review of ward boundaries and new ward names.

But the plan, raised by Altona North Ward councillor Michael Raffoul surprised some councillors who said it was the first time the idea had been raised with them.

Cr Raffoul said the proposal would help alleviate confusion in suburbs that were split between two or more wards and move away from wards named after individual suburbs.

Cr Peter Hemphill said he "had sympathy" with parts of the recommendation but didn't want a submission turned into a "political exercise that ... muddies the process".

"I just think that the panel should make this decision without any influence from council," Cr Hemphill said.

Cr Angela Altair agreed that the ward boundaries needed to be improved but said the single-councillor ward system had worked well so far.

"People get used to the ward they live in and, to some extent, who they can ring if they have a problem.

"So I think we're asking a lot of people to come to terms with a whole shift," she said.

The vote to enter the submission passed five to two, with Crs Altair and Hemphill voting against the plan.

### **NEW BROOKLYN POSTCODE CHANGE BID**

*Hobsons Bay Leader— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-new-brooklyn-postcode-change-bid/>

Hobsons Bay Council will take up the cause of Brooklyn residents fed up with living with a Maribyrnong postcode.

The residential section of Brooklyn is officially part of Hobsons Bay but borders Maribyrnong and Brimbank and has a 3012 postcode, which it shares with Kingsville, Maidstone, Tottenham and West Footscray.

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Residents want their postcode changed back to the Altona North code of 3025, and have collected a petition of 73 signatures.

Altona North Ward councillor Michael Raffoul said residents had to drive to Tottenham or Kingsville to collect mail rather than nearby Altona Gate.

The council will write to Australia Post to request the change, despite being advised years previously that Australia Post would not consider it.

“Basically, they made it clear that Australia Post would not reverse an operation decision based on outside influences,” Cr Raffoul said at last week’s council meeting.

“Nearly 10 years after the event that we received this letter, as things change, hopefully we could persuade Australia Post to revisit the request based on this petition we’ve received from the residents of Brooklyn.”

Some Brooklyn residents want their postcode changed.

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## MARIBRYNONG

### **CASH SPENT, BUT YARRAVILLE TRUCK PLAN 'UNDER REVIEW'**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/cash-spent-but-yarraville-truck-plan-under-review/2396718.aspx>

The state government has spent close to \$6million on a plan to take trucks off residential streets in Yarraville and there's enough money in the kitty to complete the first stage of the project.

A VicRoads briefing to Roads Minister Terry Mulder obtained under freedom of information laws by Williamstown MP Wade Noonan and seen by the Weekly, shows that by the end of April this year \$5.8million had been spent on the Truck Action Plan.

A total of \$7.6million would complete planning and design for the entire \$380million project, including buying a service station on Francis Street for \$1.05million.

That would leave \$32.4million of the \$40million already allocated, "sufficient to undertake construction of the northern section of the project".

Truck traffic is predicted to increase as container movements at the Port of Melbourne continue to rise.

The VicRoads briefing does not suggest that completing the northern section - widening Moreland Street and reconfiguring Whitehall Street - would increase traffic in residential areas, as Mr Mulder has previously cited as a reason for not proceeding.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Mr Noonan said the state government had inherited a good plan and funding but still wouldn't commit to it.

"Given the Truck Action Plan has been under review since last year, the Baillieu government should reveal whether it has spent \$600,000 on a planning amendment for this project.

"We all know about the port's phenomenal growth, so it beggars belief that the government has never written to the Commonwealth to seek support for this project.

"It's now revealed that Victorian Roads Minister Terry Mulder made a cabinet submission concerning the Truck Action Plan, but his government failed to back it. Ted Baillieu was elected on a promise to fix the problems, but rather than fixing this problem he seems all too willing to let the truck issues in Melbourne's west get worse."

### **LAST IN LINE, BUT FIRST FOR SANTA'S HELPERS**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/last-in-line-but-first-for-santas-helpers/2396722.aspx>

Smiles will be brought to the faces of women and children in refuges across the western suburbs with the donation of toys and toiletries from Wyndham and Hobsons Bay residents.

Women's Health West and Bendigo Bank banded together to collect more than 150 gifts.

The Melton-based Partners of Veterans Association also collected items to put together in toiletry bags. Women's Health West family violence program manager Jacky Tucker said Christmas was a difficult time for women and children in refuges.

"They normally just come to refuges with what they've got on their backs and are often in financial distress. Often [children] have to leave most of their toys behind and have nothing."

### **LIQUOR FLOWS WEST IN TORRENT OF MISFORTUNE**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/liquor-flows-west-in-torrent-of-misfortune/2396721.aspx>

Poorer suburbs such as Footscray and Sunshine are saturated with more booze outlets than their wealthier neighbours, new research by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre reveals.

The study compared the levels of social disadvantage - low income, low education and high unemployment - with the number of licensed venues, including pubs, restaurants bottle shops and sporting clubs.

It found the poorest areas of Victoria have up to six times more bottle shops in their neighbourhoods than those which are well-off.

Study author Michael Livingston found that based on the number of alcohol licences per person, people in disadvantaged suburbs had access to twice as many bottle shops than those in the wealthiest areas.

The study also revealed more than three times as many bottle shops concentrated in disadvantaged areas per kilometre than in wealthier postcodes.

Melbourne CBD has the most takeaway booze, followed by Melton and Sunshine. The City of Maribyrnong has 238 licensed venues, including 31 bottle shops, yet Brimbank and Maribyrnong have the second- and third-highest rates of disadvantage in Melbourne.

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Hobsons Bay was ranked ninth, according to the index based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data.

"The link between the number of bottle shops and alcohol-related harm, such as liver cirrhosis, domestic violence and high levels of drinking among young people is well established," Mr Livingston said.

"In an ideal world, it's time [for] government to start restricting the number bottle shops [in some areas]."

VicHealth alcohol manager Brian Vandenberg said that because takeaway liquor was cheap, it was often bought in bulk and consumed at home.

"We can begin to address these problems with more stringent licensing laws, earlier pub and club closing times and by taxing alcohol with common sense so that it's no longer cheaper than bottled water."

### **ROOKIES NOT SO GREEN**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/rookies-not-so-green/2396713.aspx>

Unemployed young people have been busy giving Maidstone Community Centre a makeover while learning skills to help them find work.

Over six months, Westgate Community Initiative Group's 'green jobs corp' program trains people aged 17-24 in a range of skills.

At the community centre, they've built 10 new garden beds with watering systems, installed a water tank, designed and built outdoor garden furniture, installed pathways and built a barbecue and a pergola.

The gardens will be used by residents to grow vegetables. The renovated community centre will be opened during the 2012 Harmony Feast on March 25.

### **WAITING FOR SANTA IN BRAYBROOK**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/waiting-for-santa-in-braybrook/2396717.aspx>

Santa will arrive early in Braybrook to visit a free community barbecue on Christmas Eve.

Neighbourhood Watch's Ormond Butler, resident Kelly Linnell, Maribyrnong councillor Sel Sanli and Sergeant Ian Brown, of Footscray police (pictured), are among those looking forward to the sleigh's arrival. The barbecue is from 2 to 5pm on Christmas Eve at the children's playground at Skinner Reserve, Churchill Avenue, Braybrook.

The get-together is being hosted by Braybrook Neighbourhood Watch, Maribyrnong Council and Footscray police.

### **BRUSCHETTA OVER BITUMEN IN YARRAVILLE**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/bruschetta-over-bitumen-in-yarraville/2396715.aspx>

It's one of the inner west's most popular shopping and dining precincts and soon cars will make way for even more tables, chairs and grass.

Maribyrnong Council has approved a "pop-up" park in Yarraville Village, which will mean closing Ballarat Street between Murray and Canterbury streets for up to three months from January.

A report to the council said the location was chosen because "the area to the north [of Anderson Street] outside the Sun Theatre is not a central traffic route".

Ballarat Street will be transformed into a park with tables, chairs, umbrellas, plants and synthetic turf.

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The temporary works will cost about \$50,000.

Cr Martin Zakharov said it was following an urban trend to find creative ways of making more green space in cities across the world.

"I think it will give people a place where they can congregate like a little village square in one of the busiest parts to Yarraville Village where they can relax, play with their kids or have a coffee with friends.

"The biggest concern will be if it really upsets traffic."

President of the newly re-born Yarraville Traders Association, Alexis Ensor, said it was one step in a plan to make the village more pedestrian friendly.

"We're trying to send the message that if you come to Yarraville Village, be prepared to park a small distance from the shops and walk in."

But one trader, who wanted to remain anonymous, said the park could create an unfair advantage for cafes in Ballarat Street to the detriment of others in the village.

"I sympathise with those cafes not getting \$50,000 spent on beautification on their doorstep."

The pop-up park idea is based on similar concepts around the world and a variation of a pop-up park appeared earlier this year outside the Dandenong railway station on land that will eventually be redeveloped. The Dandenong park has two synthetic soccer pitches, a barbecue and picnic area, and community garden. It cost \$1million.

A similar movement began in 2005 in San Francisco where car park spaces in the business district were reclaimed as temporary parks. The annual Park(ing) Day has

since spread to more than 180 cities worldwide. Other ideas for Yarraville include 'pedestrian priority' on parts of Anderson Street.

### **CITY SWIM CENTRE LINKED TO CHILD PORN CASE**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/city-swim-centre-linked-to-child-porn-case/2396712.aspx>

Maribyrnong Council is threatening to permanently shut down a regular, night-time nudist swimming session at a public pool, after a couple who attended were later found in possession of child pornography.

Langwarrin couple Craig Stanley, 28, and Rebecca Michels, 25, face charges relating to possessing child pornography, producing child porn and performing an indecent act with a child.

Court documents from Michels' bail hearing revealed the couple appeared in dozens of photos posing semi-naked and naked with a 10-year-old girl.

The parents of the 10-year-old - who cannot be identified for legal reasons - also appear in the photos. Both couples are believed to have attended Solar West naturist club's fortnightly swimming nights at Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre. A club spokesman, who declined to be named, confirmed Stanley had been a member of the club "years previously" and attended a swim night once in May this year.

One of the parents was also believed to have attended that night session. It was not known whether the child was also present.

After the allegations emerged, the council met with the club, the spokesman said.

Earlier this month, the council informed the club its night sessions were "suspended indefinitely" until the court case had been resolved, a club spokesman said.

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Solar West naturist club had been running regular nudist swim nights every second Saturday at the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre for over 20 years "without incident", he said.

The spokesman said the club had no knowledge or involvement, and police had not contacted them.

He said Solar West had been unfairly implicated. "Like any social or sports club, we are not responsible for our members. What they do in their own time is nothing to do with us," the spokesman said.

He maintained "nothing untoward or suspicious" took place in May. "There is nothing sexual about [the naturist] lifestyle," he added.

It is not known whether the two couples met at the swim night or previously knew each other.

Court documents revealed the parents had "made admissions" relating to taking photographs with their daughter.

Michels and Stanley were arrested in Dimboola in November. They had gone missing after being linked to an FBI child porn investigation.

Police found the photos of the girl along with 40,000 images alleged to be child pornography when they seized computers and cameras in October.

The parents of the child are yet to be formally charged but were expected to be charged on summons.

### **CASH SMOOTHES PATH TO LEARNING**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/cash-smoothes-path-to-learning/2396716.aspx>

Adult education in Maribyrnong has received a boost of \$150,000 in funding for Learn Local organisation Thinkwest.

Victoria's 320 Learn Local organisations provide vocational, language, literacy, numeracy and work-skill courses to more than 100,000 people each year.

The cash will help students at Angliss Neighbourhood House, which provides a range of programs, classes and activities for local residents.

The funding will be shared with similar facilities in the west including Williamstown Education Centre and Sunshine's Duke Street Community House.

Western Metropolitan MP Andrew Elsbury says the funding will be used to draw more people into the popular programs. "As Victoria grows we are becoming a knowledge-driven economy, which means we need a workforce of higher education and skills. By taking advantage of grants like these, regional Learn Local organisations can become part of achieving this."

More than 80 organisations across Victoria received grants totalling \$3.8million.

Thinkwest runs eight of these facilities across the western suburbs.

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### **AT 86, A HEART FILLED WITH CHARITY**

*Maribyrnong Weekly*– 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/at-86-a-heart-filled-with-charity/2396707.aspx>

Spotswood's Roy Shearer says it's the young ones who get to him most.

The 86-year-old has been named Gellibrand's 'volunteer of the year' for 23 years of voluntary work in palliative care.

Mr Shearer was among 10 volunteers honoured in an awards ceremony hosted by Gellibrand MP and Australia's first female Attorney-General Nicola Roxon last Friday.

Mr Shearer said he started out using his Morris truck to deliver hospital beds for Mercy Palliative Care.

For 40 years, he has volunteered daily at StVinnie's in Newport, and he does general maintenance at churches in Newport and Spotswood.

Seared in his memory are the patients he has encountered over the years. "I remember one - I remember hundreds of them - but I can remember one who was a young lass.

"We went in with a bed ... [but] it was impossible to get the hospital bed over the porch into the doorway, so we went around the back. Here's us thinking there was noone there and we were yakking away and then we saw this young lass. She was only 15 or 16. They're the ones that really get to you."

Ms Roxon said she was humbled by Mr Shearer's selflessness. "For 23 years, he has been using his own vehicle to deliver necessities to those in need and helping families in crisis."

■ Weekly reporter Goya Dmytryshchak was on the awards' judging panel, as were Volunteer West general manager Emma Sharp and LeadWest CEO Anton Mayer.

### **NEW GROWTH COMMITTEES**

*Maribyrnong Star*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/327/story/146367.html>

Maribyrnong City Council has set up two new special committees to deal with the growth of the municipality.

The council has established a City Development special committee and a Community and Services special committee, which will meet on the second and fourth Tuesday's of the month respectively, to streamline council processes and maximise time for debate and deliberation.

The two committees will have decision making powers over community and infrastructure services and city development and planning.

They take the place of the existing Community Access and Strategic Planning committee.

The meetings will be open to the general public and media.

The council is also combining the existing Planning Forums and Planning Consultation Meetings into one Planning Forum, which will hear any applications with more than five objections.

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### POP UP PARK IN PLACE

*Maribyrnong Star*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/327/story/146360.html>

Residents will literally be able to dance in the street next year when Yarraville's Ballarat St is transformed into a pop-up park during the summer months.

Maribyrnong City Council will close off Ballarat St between Murray and Canterbury streets to traffic between January and April next year and roll out the synthetic turf, large planters, tables, chairs and umbrellas to create a temporary piece of public open space that will be used for events and activities.

The idea was inspired by similar projects across London and New York and came about after a study identified a lack of open space in the Yarraville village, with narrow footpaths causing pedestrian congestion.

Cr Martin Zakharov said the park would offer a space for people to come to together, relax and enjoy the outdoors in the heart of an urban environment.

"It's taking a small stretch of a Yarraville street – probably the busiest street – and creating public open space," he said.

"I think it's going to be an interesting experiment."

Sun Theatre owner Michael Smith praised the council's proactiveness.

"I'm absolutely ecstatic. It's great to see the council doing something interesting and different that's been successful in places like London and New York," Mr Smith said.

"It just confirms that Yarraville is one of the world's great villages.

"Normally we all sit around and complain that our council doesn't do anything... I've been really impressed. (They've) had a vision about how to make Yarraville interesting and have put an enormous amount of work into it."

### KINGSVILLE RESIDENTS FIGHT FOR TREES

*Maribyrnong Leader*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/kingsville-residents-fight-for-trees/>

The removal of 23 trees in a quiet Kingsville street has been delayed with residents hopeful of saving some of those earmarked for the chop.

Queensville St residents received a letter from the council in November, following a meeting on October 20, informing them that 23 trees would be removed due to the impact of excavation works on the root zones during stage three of road improvement works.

Trees have been removed from Queensville, Coronation, Chirnside, Empress and Wales streets in the past few years as part of stages one and two of the road-works.

The current removals were initially expected to take place early this month but community uproar caused a second meeting to be held last Thursday.

Queensville St resident Kylie McIntosh said she feared the street would "end up being a naked street".

She said some of the trees had been there for a long time and removing them would result in the loss of habitat for local birds.

Ms McIntosh was hopeful the meeting would result in some of the trees being saved.

"I find it surprising all 23 need to be removed," she said.

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Wattle Ward Councillor Michael Clarke said while the roadworks were necessary, the council would try and preserve as many trees as it could.

"If we can save one additional tree, that's one for us," he said.

Cr Clarke said each removed tree would be replaced with a tree of "significant size", between two and three metres tall.

### **PROBE ON PUP DEATH IN FOOTSCRAY**

*Maribyrnong Leader*— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/probe-on-pup-death-in-footscray/>

Police are investigating the death of a husky pup, allegedly left unattended in a parked car in a Footscray street this month.

The dehydrated pup was treated by the Lort Smith Animal Hospital, but needed to be put down, according to Footscray police.

Footscray resident Ruth, who did not want her last name published, said she was alerted to the plight of the dog in a car in Pickett St by a "distressed woman" about 3pm on Saturday, December 10.

"By the time I got to it, it was screaming in agony," Ruth said.

Ruth said she went to get help and was told by the woman looking after the dog that it had been in the car for two days.

But Footscray police Sen-Sgt Damien Jones said the dog had only been locked in the car that day. Sen-Sgt Jones said the dog's owners were away and it was with their friends.

He said police had sought RSPCA advice on relevant animal cruelty offences and would be interviewing the two people responsible.

Sen-Sgt Jones said they would be charged if there was sufficient evidence to prove animal cruelty.

Lort Smith Animal Hospital head veterinarian Andrew Kapsis would not comment on the case due to the continuing police investigation. He said that on a hot summer day, it took less than six minutes for an animal to suffer brain damage or death from heat stroke inside a car.

"Even when it's not hot, the car will still actually rise to a dangerously hot level ... and if it's too hot, the animal won't be able to control its body temperature by panting," Dr Kapsis said. "Animals should not be left unattended in a car even for a couple minutes."

In a separate incident on Friday, December 9, Sen-Sgt Jones said he attended a callout to a two-year-old child who had been "accidentally locked in the car".

He said the keys were in the car when it automatically locked itself.

When the child was freed after 15 minutes, he said that she was extremely dehydrated and wet from sweat.

"If we come across someone who has just through pure neglect left their child in the car, they will be prosecuted, no doubt about it," Sen-Sgt Jones said.

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### DRIVERS SNARED

*Maribyrnong Star*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/327/story/146361.html>

Maribyrnong drivers have been put on notice ahead of the silly season after a recent three-day traffic and crime operation detected nearly 80 road offences.

Using Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), Operation Babels (III) ran from 8 to 10 December and saw police use the technology to target unlicensed, suspended and disqualified drivers as well as unregistered and stolen vehicles.

The operation uncovered 19 unlicensed, suspended and disqualified drivers behind the wheel, including a 24-year-old Point Cook man who had his vehicle impounded after he was detected driving while suspended.

Meanwhile, a 20-year-old Brunswick man was detected driving an unregistered vehicle while his license was suspended.

He was later arrested for evading police, refusing to state his name and address to police and resisting arrest.

The man's car was one of 55 unregistered vehicles exposed in the operation. One L-plater was fined for failing to have a qualified driver accompany him and failing to display L plates.

Police breath-tested a total 303 drivers and uncovered a man and a woman who were driving in breach of their interlock device condition. They are expected to receive a summons at a later date.

Footscray Police Sergeant Dean Waters said police would continue to target high-risk drivers as the festive season continued.

"ANPR technology allows us to target motorists who should not be on the road," Sgt Waters said.

### NIGHT STREET CONCERNS

*Maribyrnong Star*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/327/story/146363.html>

More than half of all City of Maribyrnong residents do not feel safe walking around the municipality at night, according to exclusive Victoria Police statistics.

Figures obtained by Star through Freedom of Information revealed that only 43 per cent of people feel safe walking through the streets of Maribyrnong at night. During the day, the figure jumps to 91 per cent.

The statistics were replicated on a smaller scale at home, with 95 per cent of residents feeling safe at home during the day, and 78 per cent at night.

The statistics were included in the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing, which covered the 12 months until September this year.

The figures come after a Star report last week that revealed almost three quarters of commuters who use Maribyrnong's public transport system feel unsafe at night.

"Unfortunately, it's obviously a reflection of how the community feels, and I guess we need to better communicate what we're actually trying to do, or what we are doing, to hopefully provide some reassurance about our targeting the particular hot spots and danger times," Footscray Police Acting Inspector Steve Reynolds said.

Acting Insp Reynolds said exercising common sense was an important tool in preventing crime, and urged residents to be careful of what personal information they put online, and make sure their homes were properly locked up and secure over the Christmas period.

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"If you're going to go away, arrange for someone to collect your mail, get someone to mow your lawn – these simple things can reduce your risk of being burgled," he said.

Acting Insp Reynolds also said drivers should not leave any valuables in their cars.

In other numbers, two per cent of respondents admitted to driving while under the influence of drugs, 14 per cent used their mobile phones behind the wheel, 13 per cent admitted to speeding and 18 per cent drove while tired.

### **DRAINAGE COMING FOR FOOTSCRAY PLAYGROUND**

*Maribyrnong Leader– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/drainage-coming-for-playground/>

A new Footscray playground's design is under question after heavy spring rain caused serious flooding at the site.

The Jensen Reserve playground equipment, installed in July, was surrounded by a pool of water after heavy rainfall.

Maribyrnong Council officers said the flooding had only occurred in the past two months.

"Council officers are aware of the flooded playground at Jensen Reserve and are installing a drainage system to ensure the community is able to use the playground equipment," council general manager of community wellbeing Arden Joseph said.

He said the work was expected to be completed in a few weeks.

The flooding came as the recently released 2010/11 Victorian Drowning Report, by Life Saving Victoria, reported a 58 per cent increase in drowning among children aged five-14 years.

Cr Catherine Cumming, a mother of five, said the playground area should not have areas where it could easily be flooded.

Cr Cumming said as a mother, she was constantly vigilant of any safety concern or danger but "you obviously don't expect that in a playground setting".

She said the community should feel free to contact the council if they saw something unsafe, including flooded playgrounds.

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## MELTON

### **MELBOURNE AIRPORT OPENS PICK-UP WAITING ZONE**

*Melton Leader–21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melbourne-airport-opens-pick-up-waiting-zone/>

Melbourne Airport has introduced new free waiting zones for vehicles waiting to pick up loved ones today.

The new "Ring & Ride" waiting zones will allow people to wait for up to 20 minutes free while friends or family disembark planes.

The designated areas have been set up in the existing long term parking area.

Melbourne Airport chief executive Chris Woodruff said the pre-Christmas initiative was introduced in response to customer feedback over concerns that vehicles were pulling over illegally to wait on the Tullamarine Freeway or in other areas of the airport.

There has also been an observed increase in congestion at pick up zones with many drivers continuing to drive laps as they waited, he said.

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"Now, drivers can use the Ring & Ride waiting zone until their passenger calls to say they are ready to be picked up from the front of the terminal," Mr Woodruff said.

Drivers waiting between 20 minutes and 40 minutes will pay \$2 under the provisions and drivers waiting between 40 minutes and an hour will fork out \$4 at nearby pay stations.

If a driver waits more than an hour normal long-term parking rates apply.

Two entries into the long term car park on Terminal Drive and Centre Rd have been provided and signage put up to direct drivers to the Ring & Ride zone.

Ten extra one-minute pick up bays have also been provided.

### **MAKING A LIVING OUT OF CHRISTMAS**

*Melton Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/making-a-living-out-of-christmas/2394547.aspx?storypage=0>

With the average Australian family expected to spend more than \$500 on festive trimmings, Sarah Harris discovers it's Claus and effect in the very merry retail sector where all the business comes at once.

Christmas is a time when going on the beat takes on a whole new meaning for policeman Laurie Carter.

Every year since he was 13 Laurie has rejoined the team at Ray's Traditional Home-Made Plum Puddings factory in Essendon North for a seasonal labour of love.

It's 61 years since Ray Carter (no relation to Laurie) and his wife Norma established the family pudding business, now run by son Ross.

Over three intense months, Ross, who works as a veterinarian the rest of the year, oversees production of between 45,000 and 50,000 Christmas puddings using a total of 27 tonnes of sun muscats, raisins and currants as well as three tonnes of mixed peel.

"We use premium ingredients and it's still 100 per cent handmade," Ross Carter says.

"It's a real family business and that's how I want to keep it. That is what's made it successful. I would have rocks in my head to change it.

"This is the first year Dad hasn't been involved. He's 83 and unfortunately he broke his neck in May. He had four or five months of rehabilitation before getting into a wheelchair and is now walking five to 10 metres.

"He's itching to get back to work so we have ordered a wheelchair-access car, then he can start coming in again."

This Christmas Day, the extended Carter family, like tens of thousands of others, will sit down to a Ray's pud with a special addition.

"Dad has a supply of threepences and sixpences which he has used since I was a kid," Ross says. "He makes sure he hangs on to them by buying them back at a dollar and two dollars a pop," he adds with a laugh.

It's the part the pudding plays in tradition that's magical.

"Christmas Day is the one day where we try to sit back and do stuff we were doing 40 years ago exactly the same way. Christmas never ages."

With the pud on the table comes the towering pine in the lounge, many of which will come from the Melton Christmas Tree Farm — the largest plantation of its kind in Victoria, if not Australia, with 28 hectares of trees.

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The business, started by Michael Luele in 1987 and now run by his sons, Fabian and Paul, has grown, so to speak, to the extent where between 5000 and 10,000 trees will be cut on the property this year.

“When we first started out we used to grow our trees naturally,” Fabian says. “They were never trimmed and weren’t that uniform. But we noticed a change in the demand for the shape of trees copied from trends in the United States.

“People want the perfect trimmed six-foot Christmas tree,” Fabian adds.

Each tree is drip-irrigated using recycled water and, with trimming, takes four years to grow to the desired height and shape.

A number of the pines will go to wholesalers, but many will be cut by the families who have selected their own “perfect” tree from rows of beautifully symmetrical specimens.

“We price-tag every tree on the place,” Fabian says, “and we give people a bow-saw and they bring the kids out and choose whatever tree they want and they know what they are spending, so everyone is happy.”

Fabian’s tree maintenance advice is to make sure it has plenty of water with a few teaspoons of sugar added, and keep it out of direct sunlight.

Another more important tip comes from Cohn, of Aussie Claus, a lighting specialist whose renowned annual Christmas display at Plumpton drew 57,000 spectators last year.

“DO NOT use indoor lights on your tree,” he warns. “They must be outdoor and low voltage so it doesn’t run hot. People’s trees ignite more than you think and the fire is invariably caused by cheap, indoor lights.”

Cohn used to work in demolition and earthworks. He saw the light at the end of his last big job on the Jacana tunnel about 15 years ago.

He’s now responsible for lighting some of Australia’s best-loved TV shows, including Neighbours and Kath and Kim, and dressing up such icons as the Sydney Harbour Bridge for special occasions, which included providing 10,000 metres of rope lights for the 2000 Olympic rings.

But Christmas is his staple.

“You’d be shocked what some people spend on this stuff. You know how women fib about the price of clothes and shoes? Well, I have blokes buy up in here and then ask me to change the price on lights,” Cohn laughs.

“People come in and say it’s just for the kids, but I’ve never had a kid give me a dollar yet.”

Perhaps surprisingly when it comes to Christmas decorating, he’s a fan of the less-is-more school. “Really, I like a nice twinkle and a few bows — it looks classier. JC had none of this stuff — it’s all luxuries.”

The development of LED lights and lasers has made a huge difference to the home decorator. “Take this candle set,” Cohn says. “You can run 30 of these for the cost of one of the old incandescents.

“With mini-lasers you can light up your roof for a couple of hundred dollars versus one or two thousand. You get a better effect and no one has to risk breaking their neck.”

Of course, climbing on the roof is especially unsafe in the ... snow!

For the ultimate accessory for the traditional Christmas, people count on the delightfully named Dean Sunshine, the master of snow.

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The name is real. "My parents escaped out of Poland and translated their name from Sonnenschein, which literally means sunshine," Dean says.

The snow comes in three varieties: dry, theatre (both made of different densities of shredded recycled plastic) and faux (made from a powdered polymer to which water is added to grow it to 100 times its original size).

But you'd hardly guess it was anything artificial from the squeals of delight as the flakes from one of Dean's 50 snow machines drift down upon an enchanted crowd.

"Making snow while the sun shines," Dean laughs. "I've been doing this for 10 years now. It's such a fun product. The minute you turn the machines on, kids just go mad.

"Initially, it was only for Christmas, but over the years it turned into a winter market as well, with winter fashion week, winter launches, the ski season, and then on to window displays.

"We do a lot of private house parties and corporate events. We did the big MTV party recently where we filled a whole warehouse full of snow, which was unbelievable. It took 25 11-kilogram cartons of theatre snow."

Snow scenes in the Australian action film *Killer Elite*, starring Robert de Niro, and Willem Dafoe's *The Hunter*, shot in Tasmania, were created using SnowMasters Australia snow-making machines.

"To be able to make it snow in the city is special; I love it," Dean says standing in his Brunswick warehouse surrounded by boxes containing thousands of kilos of as yet undriven snow.

For the razzle-dazzle of Christmas, year-round, it seems there's no business like snow business.

### **BACCHUS MARSH LIBRARY AWAITS NEW LIFE**

*Melton Weekly*—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/bacchus-marsh-library-awaits-new-life/2395704.aspx>

Community groups are rallying to save Bacchus Marsh's former library building and convert it into an art and historical exhibition space.

A \$3.2 million development of the Main Street site was initially proposed by Moorabool Council and included a cinema and shopping centre, but the plan was abandoned last year after community opposition.

Former IT worker and Bacchus Marsh Community Land Group spokesman John Spain said one of its major proposals was to revamp the older building into an art space.

He said local curator Lou Callow's recent exhibition of the shire's art highlighted a lack of space to house collections that were important to tourism.

Ms Callow echoed the sentiment, saying Moorabool's biggest town was ready for a public exhibition space.

"It would be wonderful, showing off the area's history and art and a celebration of our community and our achievements," she said.

The shire's collection of art, spanning 50 years, is now in storage without a permanent home.

"It's up to the Bacchus Marsh people to be vocal about it so there's a resolution that suits everyone; there needs to be an open process."

However, Mayor Pat Griffin said the building was an "eyesore" that should be pulled down and replaced.

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"I'd rip it down in a flash, it's a poorly designed 1960s building. The cooling and air-conditioning are poor. It costs a lot in maintenance and has a rabbit warren design," he said.

Cr Griffin said the building's fate depended on what the community wanted and funding requirements.

The Young Street kindergarten will move into the site temporarily while its own building is renovated.

Mr Spain argued that if the building was retained for community use, it would "be money well spent".

"The council subsidises the old swimming pool by about \$90,000 so why not do the same here?"

He said it would be cheaper than demolishing and creating a new public space.

"A lick of paint would freshen things up. If it's good enough for the kinder, it's good enough for other community groups."

Bacchus Marsh Historical Society president Marlene Spurr said she would be upset to see the building pulled down.

"It definitely should be left standing. It's only 40 years old and the foundations are strong enough for a second storey."

### **NEW ESTATES IN FIRE DANGER ZONE: CFA**

*Melton Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-estates-in-fire-danger-zone-cfa/2395701.aspx>

Fire restrictions will begin across Melton on Boxing Day.

CFA region 14 operations manager John Deering said residents, especially those living in high-risk areas, needed to be fire ready heading into summer. He said Melton was one of the areas most at risk.

"Particularly those areas where new estates have been built near grassland areas," he said.

"In some parts of the region there is abundant grass and crop growth. It only takes two weeks of hot, dry and windy weather to create dangerous fire conditions."

Mr Deering said favourable growing conditions meant there was an above-average grassfire risk this year.

"Grassfires should not be underestimated; they can be extremely dangerous and cause death, trauma or serious injury."

As part of the fire danger period, a written permit must be obtained to burn off grass, undergrowth, weeds or other vegetation, while lighting an open fire without a permit can attract a penalty of more than \$6000 or 12 months jail. All burn-offs should be registered on 1800668511.

Mr Deering urged residents to act now to protect their homes by slashing, mowing and creating fuel breaks and preparing a bushfire survival plan.

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### **DIGITAL AGE TURNS DIFFERENT PAGE**

*Melton Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/digital-age-turns-different-page/2395698.aspx>

Melton's new library can't come soon enough, according to a key user group.

Speaking after the state government announced \$1.2 million for the project, on which demolition work started last month, Melton Writers Group's Frank Ince said the new hub would take services into the modern era.

"Our old library was cramped and old fashioned. I don't like to make comparisons but the library in Caroline Springs, well, there isn't even a comparison," he said.

The new library and learning hub on McKenzie Street will feature three training spaces, a large activity room, a theatre seating up to 80 people and audiovisual facilities to develop digital content and local history.

Mr Ince said he was looking forward to being able to hold conferences in the centre.

"A library is a very important place for a community, not only for education purposes. I think a lot of people think it is just a place to hire a book and bring it back, but it goes much further than that."

Visiting the work site last week, Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell said modern libraries offered so much more than the traditional book lending services.

"The new facility will provide a suite of services and facilities for the local community," she said.

Melton mayor Justin Mammarella said the council was extremely pleased with funding and said the site would act as the "lounge room" of the Melton township, offering access to education, training, children's services, employment and

business opportunities.

Library services will be located at Victoria University's Melton campus until construction is complete.

### **CENTENARY AVENUE TURNED INTO RACEWAY**

*Melton Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/centenary-avenue-turned-into-raceway/2395695.aspx>

Residents of Centenary Avenue, Melton say hoons are using a new traffic island as a launching pad, and they want speed humps installed before someone is killed.

Barry, who did not want his surname revealed, said he and his wife were woken up about 3am on December 8 after a car lost control and crashed into a street sign opposite Navan Park.

"Next time it won't be a street sign, it'll be someone's house," he said.

Barry said hoon behaviour had increased since a traffic island was installed by Melton Council earlier this year.

"[It's] given them a starting point for a raceway. I know the council has tried to help, but it has created even more problems when it's wet. They use the rubber as a launch pad for fish tails."

Resident James Micallef said the council should install speed humps that would not interrupt trucks and buses but still slow cars down, as Hume Council had done in Mitchells Lane, Sunbury.

He feared a pedestrian could be the next victim of the "crazy behaviour".

But council's engineering services manager, Les Stokes, said that since Centenary Avenue was a major bus route, options were limited.

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"Council commonly uses rubber modular units called 'speed cushions' on bus routes.

These cushions have gaps spaced at intervals that allow bus tyres to avoid the cushions but still affect cars because of their narrower wheel base.

The treatment in Centenary Avenue has resulted in a reduction of vehicle speed and is therefore an effective treatment."

Melton's Leading Senior Constable Allan Edwards said that if drivers travelled at an appropriate speed, there was no problem with the traffic island in Centenary Avenue.

"I know some cars use it as a bit of a challenge ... we're always going to get those idiots. We are aware of the issues in this area and we patrol there on a regular basis."

### **SURVIVING CHRISTMAS AS A SINGLE PARENT**

*Melton Weekly—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/surviving-christmas-as-a-single-parent/2395703.aspx>

For single parents, Christmas can often be as challenging emotionally as it is financially.

But there is help.

Melton's Parents Without Partners group knows the unique difficulties single parents face and its members meet regularly to support each other.

Melton resident Vanessa Redgen said Christmas was the hardest time of year as a single parent.

But she said that unless they were in dire straits, there was often little assistance, financial or otherwise, available to them.

She said the PWP group offered valuable understanding and support, especially at this time of year.

"We get together and can support each other through tough times. The club also subsidises some trips and activities through the membership, it is very positive in that sense," she said.

Melton PWP President Simon Ellis said there was often confusion about the group's focus, with people mistaking it for a dating service.

"We are all about social interaction for parents and socialise every couple of weeks, with events for the children as well as parents," he said.

Mr Ellis said single parents were at risk of feeling isolated and alone. He said that when he became a single parent, he approached a mother's group but was sent away.

But PWP does not discriminate between mothers and fathers, or on the basis of age.

"It doesn't matter whether you are sharing custody or if you're a parent and your child has grown up, or if you're a grandparent taking care of a child," he said.

Mr Ellis said members came to the group after a variety of experiences including divorce, separation and death of a partner.

Secretary Kellie McInerney said the family-oriented group always welcomed new members.

The group meets on Wednesday nights at 7pm for a coffee and a chat.

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"We also have impromptu events, we might take our kids to the park or one of the members might invite everyone over for a barbecue," she said.

The group is holding a barbecue fund-raiser on Christmas Eve at Bunnings Melton from 9am-4pm.

### **PAY ATTENTION THESE HOLIDAYS**

*Melton Leader—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/drivers-pay-attention-these-holidays/>

Police have pleaded with Melton Shire motorists not to be turkeys on the roads this festive season.

The timely warning comes after seven deaths on Melton Shire roads this year. There have also been 177 collisions involving injury.

Melton's acting Inspector Ross Burbidge urged motorists to arrive home alive this holiday period.

"I am truly concerned for the welfare of our community and their families during this busy period on our roads," he said. "With the lead-up to Christmas there is a tendency for us all to rush.

"This often results in local police observing distracted drivers - either rushing, lapses in concentration or general disregard for road laws as they drive.

"This lack of concentration results in collisions that can kill and seriously injure people."

Acting Insp Burbidge said a high percentage of collisions involved single vehicles running off straight roads, mainly rural roads and the Western and Melton highways.

He also named and shamed two intersections - Coburns and Barries roads in Melton and the Western Highway and Westwood Drive in Burnside - as crash hotspots.

"We have also experienced an unusually high number of collisions on minor arterials such as Taylors Rd, Caroline Springs Blvd and Centenary Ave," he said. "A large number of these collisions are occurring ... by people failing to obey traffic lights or failing to obey traffic signs in a rush to perform whatever task the driver may be committed to."

Common causes of driver distraction included using mobile phones, reading maps and even drinking coffee and doing make-up on the run.

Victoria Police will conduct a statewide enforcement campaign called Summer Stay in a bid to combat road trauma.

"If detected speeding, using a mobile phone, drink-driving, or all other offences, drivers may lose licence demerit points, receive a fine, suffer suspension of their driver's licence and may even face court," Acting Insp Burbidge said.

"The worst-case scenario is that one of our families may suffer an injury, be killed or kill while driving on our roads in the next few months."

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### MELTON'S BOTTLE SHOP BOOM

*Melton Leader—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/your-say-bottle-shop-boom/>

Melton has more bottle shops than any other Melbourne suburb, it has been revealed.

There are 21 takeaway alcohol stores in the suburb, just nine behind the Melbourne CBD.

It comes as a VicHealth and Turning Point study showed bottle shops are booming in Melbourne's poorer suburbs.

Sunshine (20 shops); Richmond, Dandenong and Frankston (18); and Preston (16) were next, with Caroline Springs having 13 bottle shops.

The damning figures come just months after Melton Council approved a planning application for a 1st Choice liquor shop to be built at the ex-Melton Bowling Centre site, outraging residents.

The study used census data to rank 10 rural and regional and 10 metropolitan areas by level of social disadvantage, and compared those areas with liquor licensing data from 1991 to 2008.

The researchers included general licences (pubs, hotels, taverns), on-premise licences (restaurants, bars and nightclubs), packaged licences (bottle shops, grocery stores) and club licences (RSLs, sporting clubs).

Melton Residents' Association president Peter Rowan said an "irresponsible" council was to blame for the number of bottle shops in Melton.

"It's a very sad reflection on the council that they have allowed this to happen," he said.

VicHealth alcohol manager Brian Vandenberg said the figures were a cause for concern.

"There is very clear evidence that the more bottle shops there are in one area, the more problems that area has with alcohol-related violence, accidents and youth binge drinking," he said.

### POSTS SPARK MELTON COUNCILLOR CONDUCT CODE

*Melton Leader—19<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/posts-spark-melton-councillor-conduct-code/>

A Melton councillor has devised a code of conduct for his Facebook page after complaints from followers.

Deputy mayor Broden Borg's Deputy Mayor Cr Broden Borg - Councillor of the people for Melton Shire page now has a three-point code of conduct to "protect members".

The code instructs any personal details, such as names or addresses, are to be sent in a private message to Cr Borg, rather than posted on the page's wall.

It also outlines there is to be no swearing, defamatory or discriminatory posts.

The page, which has almost 2500 members, was created as a "place to network and residents can work together solving issues in our community".

The call for regulation followed a post by member Christopher Calleja.

"In all honesty, mate, I think you should get out of the social media scene," he posted.

"It's becoming a place to complain and point fingers - not good for anyone."

Fellow follower Shiree Azzopardi agreed.

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"I deeply believe using Facebook is a fantastic way to get into contact but the downside is everyone can read each others posts, some of which may be accusing," she wrote.

"All members should have the courtesy and common sense to have discretion in their writings and use the more confidential method of personal messages."

Cr Borg said he understood his followers concerns, but "we live in a democracy and people can have different opinions".

He encouraged members to have input into the regulation but said, "I did not want it too onerous, people should be free to express themselves".

He told the page "so far there has been no individual names or properties identified" and "if you think there is a post that is inappropriate, please let me know and I will look at it and have it removed".

Cr Borg said on occasions he had had to remove a comment, he had messaged the user and informed them as to why their post was deleted.

### **HELPING KIDS IN THE PENTLAND KITCHEN**

*Melton Leader—18<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/helping-kids-in-the-pentland-kitchen/>

Volunteers are needed to run youth workshops and classes from Pentland's revamped community shed.

The Shed, an old building at Pentland Primary School, has been home to Pentland's youth group for the past year. But it was in desperate need of an upgrade to make it more user friendly.

Melton's Bunnings came to the rescue, donating an \$8500 kitchen, which was installed last month.

Moorabool Police Youth Resource Officer Sen-Constable Jim Ross said the support from Bunnings was fantastic.

"Youth group is a place for teenagers to come together," Sen-Constable Ross said. "We can hang out and organise school holiday camping events, but we really want to give kids the opportunity to gain new skills."

Sen-Constable Ross said the addition of the kitchen was a vital part of his overall plan.

"We want volunteers to come in and provide classes, and workshops for the kids in particular, similar to The Shed in Melton with trade workshops, cooking classes, ecetera," he said.

The youth group caters to teenagers aged 13-18. Anyone interested in joining or volunteering can phone Sen-Constable Ross on 5366 4500.

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## MOONEE VALLEY

### HOPES HIGH FOR SCHEME

*Moonee Valley Weekly*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/hopes-high-for-scheme/>

Some families are hoping that a national disability insurance scheme will help improve a “broken system”.

The Federal Government recently pledged \$10 million to examine how to deliver individual and personal disability care across the nation.

An agency has also been set up to determine how the scheme should work.

Essendon parent Nada Marusiv said she hoped it would mean her son Tomislav, who has moderate autism, would have better access to activities and opportunities.

“Ideally I’d like him to have a totally full life outside in the community, doing activities but still being well supported,” Ms Marusiv said. “I think as a young adult, it’s important for everyone to have their own life.”

Ms Marusiv said her focus has been on finding activities and volunteer opportunities for Tomislav, who attends adult day care Milparinka in Brunswick.

Moonee Ponds resident Ruth Kyne said she hoped her daughter Meghan, who has an intellectual disability, would be able to access a more equitable system.

The Valley Carers member said there were many older parents who were worried about getting to a point of crisis and wondering what would happen to their children once they were too old to care for them.

Milparinka’s Escapade Respite Services program manager David Keir said the scheme was long overdue and hoped it would provide a way to give families more control and individual services.

Niddrie’s Western Autistic School principal Val Gill said it was wonderful to have recognition for those who often felt they were the “hidden people”.

Ms Gill said they hoped the scheme would address a lack of financial security, accommodation issues, employment opportunities and pathways for young adults.

Maribyrnong federal MP Bill Shorten has backed the scheme strongly, saying it was needed because: “people with disabilities live in exile in their own country”.

### AUTISM BATTLE: A 'TSUNAMI' ON THE WAY

*Moonee Valley Weekly*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/autism-battle-a-tsunami-on-the-way/2396684.aspx>

State Parliament last week heard Melbourne's west faces "a tsunami of autistic students".

The claim by Keilor MP Natalie Hutchins follows a report into P-12 education for children with autism across the region. Politicians and parents are calling on Education Minister Martin Dixon to release the full Grant Thornton report, not just the 26 pages made public last Tuesday.

Ms Hutchins said two significant companion reports were missing - the first looking at supply and demand, the second containing details of community consultation.

"We have an average that's 50per cent higher than the national estimated average of autistic students, and the need for services is real," Ms Hutchins told Parliament.

The report found 75per cent of students with an autism spectrum disorder in the west lived in Brimbank, Wyndham and Melton. Brimbank had the highest

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percentage at 32, followed by Wyndham (24), Melton (19), Hobsons Bay (9), Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley (both 7).

### **TRAVANCORE CYCLISTS, DOG-WALKERS ON COLLISION COURSE**

*Moonee Valley Weekly— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/travancore-cyclists-dogwalkers-on-collision-course/2396680.aspx>

Dog-walkers who use an off-leash park in Travancore fear speeding cyclists are a threat to their safety.

Residents Michael and Lois Adams, who walk their two terrier crosses through Travancore Park every day, say pedestrians and cyclists often clashed when sharing the path, particularly during the peak-hour commute.

Mr Adams said up to 15 people walked their dogs through the park at any given time, and many were worried they could be clipped by speeding cyclists.

"There's a number of near-misses all the time," he said.

Mrs Adams said: "I'm concerned for kids - I've seen the bikes going so fast right next to the kids' playground. On weekends, lots of families come down so that's particularly alarming."

Mr Adams is calling on Moonee Valley Council to take steps to curb cyclists' speed.

"At the very least, they could paint a speed limit of five kilometres an hour along the path," he said.

Other suggestions included surfacing a separate path flanking the Moonee Ponds Creek to bypass Travancore Park, and a more regular maintenance program for the grass so dog-walkers could walk in the middle of the park.

Cr Paul Giuliano said paths shared between cyclists and pedestrians posed safety risks. He met with residents in Travancore Park last week to discuss their worries.

"Any time you get bike riders and walkers using the same track, they're at different speeds and it's dangerous," he said.

"I don't see it as being much different to pedestrians walking on the road."

Cr Giuliano agreed with the suggestion of surfacing an extension of the cycling path to flank the creek, but said it was not council-owned land.

He successfully moved to amend the council's walking and cycling strategy at a planning meeting on December 6 to encourage it to lobby authorities like Melbourne Water, which owns the land beside Moonee Ponds creek, for use of its land as designated bike paths.

Flemington resident Neil Collum, a cyclist and dog-walker, said speeding bikes posed a safety risk in the park, but there was no alternative track. "Riders are fanging it so they get more momentum for coming up the hill [to the north of the park], which is deceptively nasty on a bike."

### **NIDDRIE ELECTORATE THE LOUDEST VOICE IN VCAL PROTEST**

*Moonee Valley Weekly— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/niddrie-electorate-the-loudest-voice-in-vc-al-protest/2396676.aspx>

Almost 1000 people from the Niddrie electorate have signed a petition calling for the state government to reinstate funding for vocational education.

The Baillieu government announced in August it would no longer fund co-ordinator positions for the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning program at secondary schools, slashing \$48million over four years.

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Niddrie MP Rob Hulls presented the petition in Parliament last week in a bid to keep the heat on the government to overturn the decision.

Mr Hulls said the Niddrie petition was among the biggest in the state, with almost 9000 people statewide signing similar petitions to save VCAL.

"People in our region understand the importance of alternative education pathways for kids who don't do VCE, and it's [the funding cut] hurting schools in our community," he said.

Rosehill Secondary, which has more than 40 students enrolled in its VCAL program next year, will maintain the program and fund the shortfall itself.

Principal Peter Rouse said the state government had underrated the role of the VCAL co-ordinator.

He said co-ordinators prepared and presented all the paperwork to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and managed the work placements of each student.

Mr Rouse said the cuts meant the school would be down \$45,000 and other areas of its curriculum would suffer.

"It's a loss of money we really didn't need at this stage, but we're going to keep it [VCAL] because not all students are suited to VCE. Our VCAL kids are successfully getting apprenticeships throughout year 11 and year 12."

Mr Hulls said a number of schools in the area were planning to cut programs like literacy and numeracy or trim the number of students who could take part in the VCAL stream.

Education Minister Martin Dixon's spokesman James Martin said the government's policy to cut VCAL funding remained unchanged.

Mr Martin said support would be provided for schools introducing the VCAL program.

### **INACTION A POOR OPTION FOR ELDERLY'S SAFETY**

*Moonee Valley Weekly*— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/inaction-a-poor-option-for-elderlys-safety/2396677.aspx>

More than 50 East Keilor residents blocked peak-hour traffic on Milleara Road on Wednesday morning to renew a push for a pedestrian crossing.

Residents groups say the area's large number of elderly residents, who live on the west side of Milleara Road, cannot safely access the Centreway shopping centre.

East Keilor's Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator Trevor Sinclair said the nearest crossing was too far away for elderly residents.

Installing a new pedestrian crossing to access the Centreway shops was a "matter of safety".

"There are so many elderly people, partially disabled people, people with wheelchairs, walking sticks and walking frames who can't cross the road safely," he said.

"The old folks up this side are being severely disadvantaged; they're just the forgotten no-one cares about."

Mr Sinclair said the former Labor state government had promised to fund a \$300,000 crossing on Milleara Road if re-elected last November. Niddrie MP Rob Hulls has since written to Roads Minister Terry Mulder asking for a pedestrian crossing to be a priority.

But Mr Mulder has rejected the calls, saying there hadn't been any pedestrian-related casualties or injuries at the site since 2005.

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Mr Hulls, who attended the protest, slammed the government's failure to fund the crossing. "A crossing is about being proactive to ensure injuries and accidents don't happen, not waiting for them to occur."

VicRoads metro north-west regional director Nial Finegan said community support was taken into account when considering the need for pedestrian crossings. Other factors considered included the type of road, abutting land use, crash history and travel time for users.

Centreway Traders Association president Joe Lo Giudice said the 55 stores on the strip were disappointed the government had still not funded a crossing. "With so many older customers, it'd make it much easier for them to get here."

### **MP A TRAFFIC STOPPER**

*Moonee Valley Leader*— 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/mp-a-traffic-stopper/>

Traffic was stopped on a busy East Keilor road as protesters stepped up their push for a safe pedestrian crossing.

Up to 30 people attended the rally last Wednesday to lobby for traffic lights to be installed at Milleara Rd, opposite Centreway shopping centre.

The rally - organised by Niddrie MP Rob Hulls and East Keilor Neighbourhood Watch members - drew criticism from the Coalition Government, with one upper house MP saying it as a "political stunt".

Among the attendees was East Keilor resident Catherine Ferbrache and two of her children.

"I've got three kids and trying to cross with three kids, a pram and two bikes is really hard," she said.

Resident Lynda Morris said her vehicle nearly collided with a young girl crossing the road recently, prompting her to protest.

"She stopped and hesitated. I saw her, so I started to slow down and she just ran. I'd die if I hit someone's child," Ms Morris said.

East Keilor Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator Trevor Sinclair said the group had been calling for the crossing for years, because it was needed by elderly people with walking frames and wheelchairs.

A couple of the protesters, including Mr Hulls, wore high-visibility vests and held up "stop" signs to allow the group to cross the road several times.

Victoria Police spokesman Marty Beveridge said only an authorised officer should stop traffic and encouraged any protesters to contact their local police before any future protests.

Western Metropolitan state Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury said it was outrageous Mr Hulls was using a Neighbourhood Watch group for a "political stunt" and that he had received a letter of complaint about the protest.

Mr Hulls said he had pledged \$300,000 to install a crossing with traffic lights before the last election.

VicRoads metropolitan regional director Nial Finegan said community support was one factor they considered when examining the need for a crossing.

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### WYNDHAM

#### ROAD TO DANGER IN POINT COOK

*Wyndham Leader– 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011*

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-road-to-danger-in-point-cook/>

A Point Cook grandmother wants Wyndham Council to explain why it didn't finish sealing Hacketts Rd.

Barbara Bushell said council workers took months to seal the road but stopped about six metres short of the intersection with Sneydes Rd.

"It's extremely dangerous. It's potholed. Every time it rains, it gets worse," she said. "It's going to cost the taxpayer quite a lot of money to get all that machinery out again to do a little section and they are building new houses on the other side of Sneydes Rd."

Mrs Bushell said her granddaughter attended a busy childcare centre on Hacketts Rd and its condition made it very dangerous for parents picking up and dropping off children.

"It's not a good situation at all. Do we have to wait until something major happens? These potholes are really bad."

Wyndham Mayor Kim McAliney said the sealing of the remainder of Hacketts Rd was delayed to coincide with an upgrade to Sneydes Rd.

The section would be completed in the next nine months.

#### CHRISTMAS WRAPPED UP IN WERRIBEE

*Wyndham Leader– 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011*

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/christmas-wrapped-up-in-werribee/>

Volunteers from Wyndham City Salvation Army have Christmas all wrapped up.

They are wrapping gifts for a small fee until Christmas Eve at Werribee Plaza, with funds raised going back to local Salvation Army projects. Supplies, including wrapping paper, have been donated by the plaza.

The plaza is open Thursday, from 9am-10pm; Friday, 9am-midnight; and Saturday, 8am-6pm.

#### DISTRIBUTING MORE JOBS IN TRUGANINA

*Wyndham Leader– 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/distributing-more-jobs-in-truganina/>

A Coles distribution centre being built at Truganina will create 200 new jobs, the company announced last week.

The supermarket chain's managing director, Ian McLeod, said 550 staff would also transfer from Coles' distribution centre at Altona.

Mr McLeod said hundreds of people would help build the \$80 million centre on Dohertys Rd.

Work started earlier this year and should be completed in May. More than 1500 tonnes of steel and 20,000cu m of concrete will be used in construction.

Wyndham Mayor Kim McAliney welcomed the jobs announcement.

Cr McAliney said the council would monitor impacts on traffic along Dohertys Rd, used by 17,770 vehicles a day last year.

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The council earlier this year asked the State Government for funds to duplicate Dohertys Rd at Laverton North between Fitzgerald Rd and Grieve Pde, including traffic lights at Hume Drive, but had not yet received a response.

Mr McLeod said the distribution centre would operate around the clock, handling more than 1.5 million cartons of product a week.

"This new site at Truganina will service all of our stores across Victoria providing a vital service for our customers as well as much needed employment for Victorians in this part of the state," he said.

Premier Ted Baillieu said it was a significant investment.

"Not only will the Truganina facility deliver hundreds of new job opportunities during the construction phase and through ongoing roles, it will also provide a welcome boost to the Victorian economy and the local region for years to come," Mr Baillieu said.

### **AGENCIES SEEK RELIEF TO HELP SPREAD CHEER**

*Wyndham Weekly– 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/agencies-seek-relief-to-help-spread-cheer/2399172.aspx>

Wyndham's welfare agencies are struggling to meet the demand for help as rising rent and fuel prices force more families to seek assistance this festive season.

Just days before Christmas, agencies are reporting shortages of toys and food parcels as they try to help an increasing number of people.

As reported in the Weekly in July, extra federal funding given to welfare agencies during the global financial crisis ended on July 1, leaving them short of emergency relief funding.

Salvation Army operations manager Terry Brookshaw said it was trying to help as many people as possible but resources were limited. The charity only has appointments available for emergencies, having filled up its schedule last week.

"It's difficult to turn people away," Mr Brookshaw said.

Community support services manager Sue Brookshaw said there had been an increase in people seeking help to ensure their children received Christmas presents.

UnitingCare Werribee Support and Housing was also experiencing a surge in demand for help, chief executive Carol Muir said.

She said it was still taking appointments and had begun distributing presents.

Werribee Support and Housing is able to provide parents with presents for children aged 18 and under. Ms Muir said the presents made a real difference to families in need.

"It is just wonderful to be able to [give them presents]. Many of our clients are sole parent families and their income is less than their expenditure," she said.

Mrs Brookshaw said the Salvation Army was able to provide food vouchers and presents. It's also holding a community Christmas lunch tomorrow.

For help, visit Werribee Support and Housing at 19 Duncans Road or the Salvation Army at 211 Watton Street, Werribee.

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### **DOG FORCES FAMILY INTO HIDING**

*Wyndham Weekly– 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/dog-forces-family-into-hiding/2399184.aspx>

A Hoppers Crossing mother who claims she is being terrorised by a neighbour's dog has vented her frustration at Wyndham Council over its handling of the issue.

Single parent Nicole Morton said her two young children had been scared to play in their backyard since a large, aggressive dog started to jump over the fence and attack their dog.

After originally confronting the neighbour, who she said claimed the dog was a pit bull cross, Ms Morton contacted the council to help her deal with the issue. Ms Morton said she had been frustrated at a lack of assistance.

"The ranger told me there was nothing they can do unless they have a photo [of the dog in our yard] and if I was concerned for my children's safety we should stay indoors," she said.

Ms Morton said the council also suggested she would have to foot the bill for any lattice work that had to be done to prevent the dog entering her yard.

"I felt embarrassed that I needed to tell the council that I am a single mother of two and I am currently living off the single parent pension ... I can't afford to hire someone to come put up a lattice.

"I was also told that it is my responsibility to stop the dog from jumping into my property."

Her first contact with the council was on August 7, just a few weeks before the horrific death of St Albans four-year old Ayen Chol at the hands of a pit bull cross.

The toddler's death sparked outrage across the state and resulted in tougher laws governing restricted breed dogs.

"That little girl's death happened just a few weeks after the dog began entering our yard and attacked our dog, yet nothing has been done to stop it. I fear for my children's safety."

She had taken a number of photos of the dog in the yard as instructed by the council and had written to chief executive Kerry Thompson on November 27 for help. She said no response had been forthcoming and no action taken.

Following a request for comment from the Weekly, Ms Thompson said the dog's owners had been issued a fine for having a dog at large.

"Officers are currently investigating another incident with the same dog, which may result in a summons being issued," she said.

### **CITY STATUS QUO 'UNFAIR' TO VOTERS**

*Wyndham Weekly– 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/city-status-quo-unfair-to-voters/2399173.aspx>

The Wyndham branch of the Greens is calling on the Victorian Electoral Commission to increase the number of councillors in the city from nine to 11.

In a preliminary submission to the VEC's electoral representation review, the Greens said it was time Wyndham had the same number of councillors as similar-sized municipalities such as Brimbank and Casey.

Secretary Beck Sheffield-Brotherton said maintaining the current number of wards and having nine councillors representing the city would mean residents would not be fairly represented.

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"Looking at the growth and the other councils that have 11 councillors, it seems ridiculous we could still be planning to stay the same. Wyndham is a big area geographically, it is one of the largest municipalities."

The VEC review will determine how many councillors should represent Wyndham and the number of wards it should be divided into.

Ms Sheffield-Brotherton said the Greens would be happy if Wyndham remained divided into three wards. "I know there are people who would say let's have Point Cook in a ward on its own but [I] wonder if that would be equitable for the rest of Wyndham."

The Proportional Representation Society of Australia's state branch recommends the current system, saying it was consistent with good electoral arrangements and was fair to all voters.

In its submission, Mayor Kim McAliney and CEO Kerry Thompson said the council would be happy with nine councillors, but advised the VEC to take population growth over the next nine years into consideration.

The VEC will release its preliminary recommendations on February 7.

### **WINNERS ALL ROUND AT SALTWATER RESERVE**

*Wyndham Weekly– 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/winners-all-round-at-saltwater-reserve/2399169.aspx>

Sports Minister Hugh Delahunty showed off his football skills in front of Lumen Christi Primary School pupils at the opening of Saltwater Reserve's new oval last week.

The full-sized synthetic cricket and football oval is an Australian first. The \$2.1 million oval was funded by Wyndham Council, the AFL, Sports and Recreation Victoria, Cricket Australia and Cricket Victoria.

Mr Delahunty was joined by Western Bulldogs players, who held skills sessions for the pupils and representatives from Cricket Victoria and Cricket Australia.

The oval will provide Point Cook with a 22-hectare regional sports precinct featuring three sports pavilions, AFL, cricket and soccer fields and tennis and basketball half courts.

The reserve is expected to be completed by late 2012.

### **POLICE STEP UP TRAIN SAFETY**

*Wyndham Weekly– 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/police-step-up-train-safety/2399171.aspx>

Transit safety police were out in force across Wyndham last week in a bid to ease commuters' concerns.

Acting Senior Sergeant Arthur Secoulidis said police had made considerable gains in improving public transport safety in the Wyndham area.

The main concern for police over the Christmas period is antisocial behaviour stemming from excessive alcohol consumption.

"We know that there can be groups of young people who sometimes hang out in this area as a bit of a public lounge room," he said.

"Police continue to have a presence at this station and others across the area to ensure there aren't issues with consumption of alcohol, inappropriate behaviour or other crime."

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Acting Senior Sergeant Secoulidis said the Werribee line was patrolled by dedicated crews who spent time travelling on trains and visiting stations.

"We are constantly monitoring crime data, as well as information from our public transport providers and the public to address issues as soon as they arise.

"This information assists us in where we need to place our police and at what times."

He said transit safety police were working in tandem with local officers to ensure residents enjoyed a safe public transport system.

### **FINN'S LIGHT FIGHT**

*Wyndham Leader*— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/327/story/146349.html>

Member for Western Metropolitan Region Bernie Finn has jumped on the Point Gellibrand pile light bandwagon, raising the issue in Parliament earlier this month.

The National Trust has decided to place the iconic lighthouse outside the Melbourne Convention Centre in South Yarra, despite strong objections from Hobsons Bay City Council and the Williamstown community.

The council has been in a battle with the National Trust for several years over the light, which was manufactured on Nelson Place in the 1860s.

It graced Williamstown's skyline for almost 120 years until June 1976, when it was hit by the Melbourne Trader, a vessel of 7000 tonnes.

It was set alight on 23 June 1976 but not before the lantern and dome of the light were salvaged.

Mr Finn raised the matter in Parliament this month calling on the Planning Minister, Matthew Guy to "talk some sense" into the National Trust and have the pile light returned to Williamstown.

"I do not understand why the National Trust would want to take the Gellibrand pile light, which should be in Gellibrand, and place it outside the Melbourne Convention Centre, which is some considerable way from where historically the pile light should be," he said. "I ask the Minister to take that appropriate action, to negotiate with the National Trust, with Heritage Victoria, and do what he must to ensure that the Gellibrand pile light is returned to where it belongs."

### **SAFER STREETS**

*Wyndham Star*— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/327/story/146312.html>

Almost half of Wyndham's residents feel unsafe when walking the area's streets at night, according to a police survey.

A copy of the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing (NSCSP) – which was carried out in Police Service Areas between July-September this year – was obtained by Star through a Freedom of Information request.

The survey showed 46 per cent of respondents reported feeling unsafe while walking around Wyndham at night compared to the 86 per cent who felt secure while walking around in daylight.

The NSCSP also showed many residents of the Wyndham community trust police, with 77 per cent of those surveyed saying they have confidence in police.

The NSCSP asked Wyndham residents about their driving behaviour within the past six months.

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Sixteen per cent admitted to driving while on the phone and 15 per cent admitted to speeding.

Driver behaviour was also seen as the biggest problem in Wyndham's neighbourhoods, with 83 per cent of residents reporting it caused trouble in their area.

Wyndham's Police Inspector Bill Weatherly said driver distraction was increasingly becoming a problem on the area's roads.

"Driving while using a mobile phone is a significant distraction, it can impair a driver's reaction time, ability to maintain speed and position on the road and general awareness of other traffic," he said.

"Speed was the major contributing factor in about 30 per cent of fatal collisions last year. Our local Highway Patrol Units actively target speeding and mobile phone use on our roads.

"Our Highway Patrol Unit, along with general duties members, run many traffic operations throughout the year to address road safety issues."

In addition, 52 per cent of people said drugs were an issue in their Wyndham neighbourhood, but Insp Weatherly said the latest crime statistics in Wyndham indicated drug offences have decreased 8.6 per cent per 100, 000 population.

"Detectives from Wyndham Crime Investigation Unit and general duties members have a dedicated drug tasking team that gather intelligence and investigate drug-related crime," he said.

Just under half of the surveyed residents said gangs were an issue in their area.

However, Insp Weatherly said gangs were not a significant problem within Wyndham.

"No, our intelligence suggests it is more the actions of individuals in a group that sometimes engage in an anti-social behaviour, at times committing graffiti or other public nuisance activities rather than serious crime," he said.

### **MINISTER ANNOUNCES LAVERTON AUTISM SCHOOL**

*Wyndham Leader*— 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/minister-announces-laverton-autism-school/>

Parents have welcomed a State Government plan to build an autism-specific P-12 school in Laverton.

Education Minister Martin Dixon last week announced Laverton P-12 college was the preferred site to establish a stand-alone autism school alongside the existing school.

But Mr Dixon said the timing of the construction would be subject to "future budget deliberations".

Autism Schools Action spokesman Mark Websdale said the group welcomed the school.

"We feel, given the numbers in the region, an additional school is entirely justified," Mr Websdale said. "We're looking forward to finding out more information as to when things will get rolling."

Action for Autism Education spokesman Danny Sorbello said his group also welcomed the decision.

"It's been a long time coming, but parents now have some certainty that we will get a P-12 autism school and we also know where it will be located," Mr Sorbello said.

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"It's somewhat disappointing, though, after so long, that we still lack some details ... like the expected cost and it is concerning that budgetary considerations will govern the construction timetable."

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn said \$4 million had been set aside for the first stage of the project and he would continue to push for further funding.

"I'm doing it because I want to see kids in the west have that education and a good start in life," Mr Finn said.

### **POLICE BLITZ TRAIN SAFETY IN WERRIBEE**

*Wyndham Leader*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/police-blitz-train-safety-in-werribee/>

Police from the transit safety division were out in force at Werribee station last Wednesday.

Acting Sen-Sgt Arthur Secoulidis said police regularly patrolled stations and trains on the Werribee line and welcomed feedback from commuters on transport safety issues.

"If anyone has information about public transport safety in the Wyndham area, I would encourage them to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or 000 in an emergency," Sen-Sgt Secoulidis said.

Police have also warned people to be careful with leaving valuables in cars. Leading Sen-Constable Lisa Irving said thefts were often opportunistic and happened when people left valuables exposed.

"Having your car broken into and your privacy violated is quite upsetting for most people," she said.

How safe do you feel on the Werribee train line? Tell us below.

Sen-Constable Irving suggested that people lock their cars and remove loose change and all valuables, including items that may store valuables, such as GPS cradles and bags.

### **OFFENDED BY BLACK CHRISTMAS TREE IN WERRIBEE**

*Wyndham Leader*– 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/offended-by-black-xmas-tree-in-werribee/>

A black Christmas tree, decorations and presents at the Wyndham Cultural Centre in Werribee have raised the ire of some residents.

They have contacted the Leader about the tree and decorations in the centre foyer, saying they were "offended" and "appalled" at the colour choice.

The tree, which is draped in black tulle, with black decorations and presents beneath it, is part of an art exhibition in which 10 artists were asked to create a piece using a traditional Christmas tree as a base.

Wyndham Council's new arts curator and Werribee resident Megan Evans created the tree and decorations, titled "Carbon Christmas", to encourage residents to consider their carbon footprint at Christmas.

Is the black Christmas tree art with a conscience or offensive? Tell us below.

But readers who contacted the Leader were not impressed.

Jennifer Dean wrote in a letter saying that she and visiting friends were offended at the colour of the tree and decorations.

"Why is it draped in black? It is disgusting and what does it have to do with Christmas?" she wrote.

Dawn Richardson, wrote that as a practising Christian, she was offended.

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"Christmas is a time of joy, not a time for some radical to make a political statement," she wrote.

Another wrote an anonymous letter to Mayor Kim McAliney and sent a copy to the Leader, stating that it should not have been used to make a political statement.

"Christmas should be portrayed in bright colours and bring life. Black is not a colour. It represents death, depression and morbidity. The current display should be pulled down as I find it offensive," the letter said.

Ms McAliney said the council acknowledged there had been a small number of concerns.

But the tree would remain in the arts centre until January 6 as part of the wider exhibition, she said.

"Wyndham City is adorned with traditional decorations at gateway sites and other locations throughout the municipality," Ms McAliney said.

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## ACROSS THE REGION

### **BUSINESSES ON BOARD FOR RAIL LINK**

*The Herald Sun—22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/business/businesses-on-board-for-rail-link/story-fn7j19iv-1226227973858>

It is all aboard Victoria's regional rail link as nearly a dozen companies are splashed with \$1.6 billion in government contracts to get the project rolling.

Premier Ted Baillieu yesterday announced the contractors for half of the six packages to be awarded.

"The work is under contract and under way," Mr Baillieu said.

Eleven companies were successful bidders for the three major sections of the project that will include building stations at West Footscray, Wyndham Vale and Tarneit. A Lend Lease and Leighton Holdings joint venture will carry out \$505 million worth of work.

The work includes the construction of about 25km of railway track and stations between Deer Park and West Werribee Junction.

Other companies involved include Thiess, Balfour Beatty, UGL and Baulderstone. One contract has already been announced this year and two more contracts are yet to be signed.

The rail link is considered to be Australia's largest public transport project, and is due to be completed in early 2016.

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### **LEIGHTON CONTRACTORS PART OF JOINT VENTURE TO DELIVER MAJOR REGIONAL RAIL LINK WORK PACKAGE**

*Leighton Holdings—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

[http://www.leighton.com.au/verve/\\_resources/211211\\_mr.pdf](http://www.leighton.com.au/verve/_resources/211211_mr.pdf)

The Victorian Government's Regional Rail Link Authority has awarded Leighton Contractors, in a joint venture with Boulderstone, a contract of about \$505 million to design and construct as part of the Regional Rail Link project.

Regional Rail Link is a major new rail line that will run from West Werribee to Deer Park and through Melbourne's western suburbs to Southern Cross Station. By separating regional trains from metropolitan trains, Regional Rail Link will give Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat trains their own dedicated tracks through the metropolitan rail system, freeing up space for additional suburban services.

The Boulderstone Leighton joint venture will deliver the greenfield segment that runs between Deer Park and West Werribee Junction. The works include 25 kilometres of new broad gauge double railway track with a design speed of 160km/h and two new railway stations at Tarneit and Wyndham Vale. Also included in the project are a number of grade separations and new rail bridges.

Peter Ryan, Leighton Contractors' General Manager of Construction in Victoria, said "this new contract strengthens our relationship with the Department of Transport and extends our capability in the rail sector".

"Leighton Contractors has significant experience in the delivery of major infrastructure projects and we are excited by the opportunity to work with our joint venture partners to deliver an outstanding project for the people of Victoria".

Design work will commence in January 2012.

This contract builds on Leighton Contractors' existing national rail capability which includes projects such as the Westall Rail Upgrade project as well as the Kingsgrove to Revesby Quadruplication and Richmond Line Alliance in Sydney.

Thiess awarded Victorian regional rail link alliance contract

Thiess has been awarded an \$835 million contract for works on the Footscray to Deer Park section of Regional Rail Link Project, jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments.

In an Alliance with construction partners Balfour Beatty and design partners Parsons Brinckerhoff and Sinclair Knight Merz, Thiess will join with the Regional Rail Link Authority, Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) and V/Line to design and construct a key section of the first major new rail line for metropolitan Melbourne in 80 years.

Considered a critical component of Melbourne's rail network, the Regional Rail Link will separate regional trains from metropolitan trains for the first time giving Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat trains their own dedicated tracks - increasing capacity and reliability.

Thiess Managing Director, Bruce Munro, said the company was ideally placed to deliver the project which will provide improved connectivity and greater flexibility for the community.

"We are excited about the opportunity in this historic investment in Victorian rail which will bring significant benefits to the western suburbs and to regional Victorian communities both socially and economically," he said.

Key features of the Footscray to Deer Park section include:

- Construction of 7.5 kilometres of new regional track

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- New rail bridges
- Two road / rail separations at level crossings on Anderson Road, Sunshine
- New station at West Footscray featuring a pedestrian overpass and increased car parking
- Station upgrades at Footscray and Sunshine, including new platforms and new station forecourts
- Improvements to Tottenham station, including additional car parking
- Design and construction of train control systems (TCS) for the metropolitan lines
- Improvement works to level crossings at Fitzgerald Road, Ardeer and Mt Derrimut Road, Deer Park.

General Manager Vic/SA/Tas/NZ, Rod Heale, said the alliance delivery model would provide the client with an optimal solution drawing on the skills and expertise of local and worldwide rail specialists.

“We have worked closely with our Alliance partners through the selection process to develop a program of works that addresses engineering challenges, community expectations and that will be experienced on a complex project like this,” he said.

“We are confident that our team has the right skills, experience and innovative thinking to successfully deliver the project, while minimising disruption to rail services and ensuring the safety of everybody.”

The team has already commenced mobilisation with major works between Hopkins Street, Footscray and Anderson Road, Sunshine expected to commence in early 2012.

### **RRL: AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROJECT LEAPS AHEAD**

*AFR—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

[http://afr.com/rw/2009-2014/AFR/2011/12/21/Photos/2c7abeb6-2b76-11e1-8d63-cda11eaed121\\_111221%20Mulder-O%27Connor%20-%20RRL%20Australias%20largest%20public%20transport%20project%20leaps%20ahead.pdf](http://afr.com/rw/2009-2014/AFR/2011/12/21/Photos/2c7abeb6-2b76-11e1-8d63-cda11eaed121_111221%20Mulder-O%27Connor%20-%20RRL%20Australias%20largest%20public%20transport%20project%20leaps%20ahead.pdf)

Work on the Regional Rail Link – Australia’s largest public transport infrastructure project will ramp-up in the New Year following the selection of contractors to build its two longest sections as well as install the technology which will manage the flow of trains along this new line and provide ‘real-time’ information to those using it.

Gorton MP Brendan O’Connor – representing the Commonwealth Government – and Victorian Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder today announced contracts worth more than \$1.6 billion have been awarded to:

- Thiess, Balfour Beatty, Parsons Brinckerhoff and SKM, the consortium tasked with laying 7.5 kilometres of new track between Footscray and Deer Park as well as building a new station at West Footscray and upgrading the existing stations at Footscray, Sunshine and Tottenham. Work is expected to start in early 2012.
- Boulderstone/ Leighton Joint Venture which will lay 25 kilometres of new track between Deer Park and West Werribee as well as build new stations at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit. Work is expected to start in mid-2012.
- UGL and Manidis Roberts, the consortium which from mid-2012 will install the fibre optics network that will support the train control systems, the signals along the corridor and provide information to the passengers waiting at the new and upgraded stations.

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Mr O'Connor said after more than three years of planning work, community consultations and preconstruction activities, it's now full steam ahead on a project which will give Melbourne its first new major rail line in some 80 years.

"All up, the contracts awarded today will put over 500 Victorians – including more than 50 apprentices – to work laying 32.5 kilometres of new track, building three new stations, upgrading two existing stations and removing two level crossings," Mr O'Connor said.

"In partnership with Victoria, the Federal Labor Government is building the new, modern rail infrastructure that will make Melbourne as well as regional centres such Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo even better places to live, work and raise a family," Mr O'Connor said.

"Without a doubt, the Regional Rail Link project ticks all the right boxes.

"And unlike our predecessors we recognise the task of modernising and expanding the infrastructure within and between our major cities is too big for any one level of government. That's why we have already allocated more to public transport projects, like Regional Rail Link, than all our predecessors since Federation combined."

The Regional Rail Link project is being built with funding from by both the federal and Victorian governments, with the former contributing \$3.2 billion.

Victorian Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder said once completed in early 2016, the new Regional Rail Link will remove major bottlenecks from the state's public transport system by separating regional and metropolitan trains.

"With major construction activity now on track to progressively kick-off in the west from early 2012, this is without a doubt an exciting time," Mr Mulder said.

"This multi-billion project will revitalise our State's public transport system and in doing so, better connect our growing communities to each other as well as to jobs, education, recreation and other vital services.

"Footscray Station will be upgraded to a major country interchange with new platforms and escalators. The new line will allow country trains to run express from Footscray to Southern Cross Station.

"Regional commuters who currently experience lengthy delays waiting near North Melbourne will enjoy a faster, smoother journey into Southern Cross Station once the Regional Rail Link is completed.

"Importantly, by adding in two major grade separations at Anderson Road Sunshine, we will help alleviate congestion and remove level crossings to make it safer. This is an important part of Victorian Coalition Government's unprecedented investment in removing level crossings.

"The Regional Rail Link Authority will continue to engage with stakeholders and communities to further develop project design solutions as construction progresses."

Delivery of the Regional Rail Link project will involve a total of six major packages of work, with the remaining two contracts – Southern Cross Station to Footscray and at West Werribee Junction – expected to be awarded next year.

The contract for track and civil works from Southern Cross Station to Moonee

Ponds Creek was awarded earlier this year to Activate, a joint venture between John Holland and Coleman Rail.

More information on the project can be found at [www.regionalrailink.vic.gov.au](http://www.regionalrailink.vic.gov.au)

Media contacts

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For Mr Albanese: Jeff Singleton 0410 476 890

For Mr Mulder: Larissa Garvin 0427 669 628

Key features of the three major contracts

Footscray to deer park

The following works will be delivered by Thies, Balfour Beatty, Parsons Brinckerhoff and

SKM as well as Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line and the Regional Rail Link Authority:

- 7.5 kilometres of new dedicated Regional Rail Link tracks from Footscray to Sunshine.
- A new West Footscray station with a pedestrian overpass and ramps to provide cross-corridor access, and increased car parking.
- A significant upgrade to Footscray station, including new platforms, escalators, ramps (subject to heritage approval) to provide cross-corridor access, and a new station forecourt.
- A significant upgrade to Sunshine station, including a new pedestrian overpass with ramps to provide cross-corridor access, new platforms and a new station forecourt.
- Improvements to the entrance and forecourt at Tottenham station, and an upgraded car park on the north side of the station.
- Removing two level crossings on Anderson Road, Sunshine.

- Improvement works to level crossings at Fitzgerald Road, Ardeer, and Mt Derrimut Road, Deer Park.

Deer Park to west of Werribee

The following works will be delivered by the Boulderstone/ Leighton Joint Venture:

- Approximately 25 kilometres of two new regional railway tracks from Deer Park to West Werribee Junction.
- Two new stations at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit with ramp access to provide crosscorridor access, car parking and forecourts.
- A full depth cutting through Manor Lakes, maintaining connectivity on both sides of Manor Lakes Boulevard.
- No new level crossings with 12 road over rail bridges.
- Four new waterway crossings.

Train control and systems

The following works will be delivered by UGL and Manidis Roberts as well as Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line and the Regional Rail Link Authority:

- Modification to existing train control systems, the creation of a new train control system and a new generation computer based signalling system for the Regional Rail Link corridor.
- Installation of approximately 45 kilometres of fibre optic cable to support the new train control systems.

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- Installation of new passenger information systems to new stations and upgrade of existing systems at existing stations that are being modified by the project.

### **THIESS AWARD VICTORIAN REGIONAL RAIL LINK ALLIANCE CONTRACT**

*THIESS—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.thiess.com.au/news/2011/thiess-awarded-victorian-regional-rail-link-alliance-contract>

In an Alliance with construction partners Balfour Beatty and design partners Parsons Brinckerhoff and Sinclair Knight Merz, Thiess will join with the Regional Rail Link Authority, Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) and V/Line to design and construct a key section of the first major new rail line for metropolitan Melbourne in 80 years.

Considered a critical component of Melbourne's rail network, the Regional Rail Link will separate regional trains from metropolitan trains for the first time giving Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat trains their own dedicated tracks - increasing capacity and reliability.

Thiess Managing Director, Bruce Munro, said the company was ideally placed to deliver the project which will provide improved connectivity and greater flexibility for the community.

"We are excited about the opportunity in this historic investment in Victorian rail which will bring significant benefits to the western suburbs and to regional Victorian communities both socially and economically," he said.

Key features of the Footscray to Deer Park section include:

- Construction of 7.5 kilometres of new regional track
- New rail bridges

- Two road / rail separations at level crossings on Anderson Road, Sunshine
- New station at West Footscray featuring a pedestrian overpass and increased car parking
- Station upgrades at Footscray and Sunshine, including new platforms and new station forecourts
- Improvements to Tottenham station, including additional car parking
- Design and construction of train control systems (TCS) for the metropolitan lines
- Improvement works to level crossings at Fitzgerald Road, Ardeer and Mt Derrimut Road, Deer Park.

General Manager Vic/SA/Tas/NZ, Rod Heale, said the alliance delivery model would provide the client with an optimal solution drawing on the skills and expertise of local and worldwide rail specialists.

"We have worked closely with our Alliance partners through the selection process to develop a program of works that addresses engineering challenges, community expectations and that will be experienced on a complex project like this," he said.

"We are confident that our team has the right skills, experience and innovative thinking to successfully deliver the project, while minimising disruption to rail services and ensuring the safety of everybody."

The team has already commenced mobilisation with major works between Hopkins Street, Footscray and Anderson Road, Sunshine expected to commence in early 2012.

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### NEW TRAIN OF THOUGHT FOR DEAKIN

*Geelong Advertiser—21<sup>st</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/327/story/146281.html>

Geelong would become a true university town if V/Line's ambitious plan to triple the number of off-peak train services between Geelong and Melbourne can gather steam.

As revealed by the Geelong Advertiser yesterday, V/Line plans to run an extra 24 services on the Geelong line each weekday, or one every 20 minutes between 9am and 4.30pm.

Deakin University has hailed the \$6 million plan as a breakthrough for the city that would accelerate the university's growth predictions.

"For Deakin, having this kind of regularity is absolutely the best kind of Christmas present we could have," vice-chancellor Professor Jane den Hollander said.

"It's an outstanding solution for Deakin, outstanding solution for western Victoria."

Deakin has predicted a doubling of its students in Geelong to 20,000 by the end of the decade, including 10,000 at the waterfront campus.

"You'd have a robust, busy city which would be a university town and having a sustainable, frequent, reliable public transport is just the icing on the cake in terms of enabling those projections," Prof den Hollander said.

But the plan may be stuck on the tracks, with Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder effectively ruling it out.

"The Coalition Government is prioritising its 2010 election commitments, which did not include additional off-peak trains on the Marshall line," Mr Mulder said.

"However, when Regional Rail Link opens in 2016, the Government expects to be able to provide extra peak-hour trains and in the meantime, V/Line continues to adjust its timetables to meet demand. Government.

"The Government is always considering ways to improve Geelong's trains but if Labor had successfully contained costs on the Regional Rail Link, the Coalition Government would far more easily be able to offer increased off-peak frequency on the Marshall line."

Opposition public transport spokeswoman Fiona Richardson said increased off-peak services wouldn't fix the commuter cram during peak times.

"Anyone who travels to and from Geelong knows that additional services are desperately needed for the peak hour rush," Ms Richardson said.

Geelong mayor John Mitchell said the city supported V/Line's plan and would continue talks with the State Government.

Member for South Barwon Andrew Katos said any proposal that looked to increase the level of service on the Geelong-Melbourne line should be investigated.

Prof den Hollander said the increased services would also have an economic benefit for Geelong, with commuters coming from Melbourne and also the Armstrong Creek growth corridor.

"I think it will really open up Geelong. It's a good day out and you can go any time of the day because you're only 20 minutes from a train," she said.

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### HEADING BACK TO SCHOOL MIXED REVIEWS OVER DECISION TO BUILD AUTISM FACILITY IN LAVERTON

*Star News Group—20<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/327/story/146281.html>

Desperate families have given mixed reviews after the State Government last week finally announced a P-12 autism school would be built in Laverton.

Education Minister Martin Dixon said the proposed stand-alone school would be located alongside the Laverton P-12 College and less than one kilometre from the Western Autistic P-3 school.

“Identifying the eventual location of the new school will provide the community with a sense of certainty and will allow long-term planning to commence,” Mr Dixon said.

Mr Dixon, who last week released the final report of the P-12 Autism Spectrum Disorder Education Provision Review Proposed Options Paper, acknowledged the growing need for autistic education provision in Melbourne’s West.

“Western Melbourne is the only metropolitan region that doesn’t have a stand-alone P-12 autism school.

“Once completed, the school will bring autism education in Melbourne’s West into line with other metropolitan areas.”

However anxious Brimbank parents have questioned the decision to locate the school in Laverton and have also called for the Government to offer a definite timeline.

President of Autism Angels Dina Tamburro said she was disappointed with the announcement.

“I’m gutted. We’ve been waiting so long and now they’ve announced it in Laverton of all places,” Ms Tamburro said.

The Taylors Hill resident said she, and many other parents, had hoped for a school in Brimbank and Melton and were left bewildered by the Government’s announcement.

“They have really let Brimbank and Melton residents down.

“They seem to build these kind of schools in remote areas. I still feel like they are trying to isolate our kids.”

Keilor MP Natalie Hutchins said while she welcomed the school, she was amazed to hear the intended location.

Ms Hutchins said a report released by the Baillieu Government in August this year revealed 75 per cent of children with autism lived in Brimbank, Melton or Wyndham.

St Albans resident Annette Allan welcomed the announcement.

Ms Allan, whose son Corey has Asperger’s, said she would be forced to put her son in a mainstream school when he turns nine if there is no P-12 school available.

“I don’t like the thought of putting him into mainstream school,” she said.

Member for Western Metropolitan Region Bernie Finn said the Government was fully committed to building the school and said parents can now relax over Christmas knowing they will have a school for their children.

Mr Finn said \$4 million was committed to the construction of a school and he would be pushing for the further \$10 million required to be allocated in the next budget.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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### **VILLAGE CHOICE: YARRAVILLE TAKES ROAD LESS TRAVELLED IN POP-UP PARK**

*The Age*—19<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/village-choice-yarraville-takes-road-less-travelled-in-popup-park-20111218-1p0uh.html>

It's one of the inner west's most popular shopping and dining precincts and soon cars will make way for even more tables, chairs and grass.

Maribyrnong Council has approved a "pop-up" park in Yarraville village, which will mean closing Ballarat Street between Murray and Canterbury streets for up to three months from January.

The village's popularity has also been its curse, with parking and traffic issues vexing traders, residents and shoppers.

A report to the council said the location was chosen because "the area to the north [of Anderson Street] outside the Sun Theatre is not a central traffic route". Ballarat Street will be transformed into a temporary park with tables, chairs, umbrellas, plants and synthetic turf at a cost of about \$50,000. Cr Martin Zakharov said it was following a global urban trend to find creative ways of making more green space in cities.

"I think it will give people a place where they can congregate like a little village square in one of the busiest parts of Yarraville village where they can relax, play with their kids or have a coffee with friends.

"The biggest concern will be if it really upsets traffic."

Yarraville Traders Association president Alexis Ensor said it was one step in a plan to make the village more pedestrian friendly.

"We're trying to send the message that if you come to Yarraville village, be prepared to park a small distance from the shops and walk in."

But one trader, who wanted to remain anonymous, said the park could create an unfair advantage for cafes in Ballarat Street to the detriment of others in the village. "I sympathise with those cafes not getting \$50,000 spent on beautification on their doorstep."

The pop-up park idea is based on similar concepts around the world. A variation of a pop-up park appeared earlier this year outside the Dandenong railway station on land that will eventually be redeveloped. The Dandenong park has two synthetic soccer pitches, a barbecue and picnic area, and community garden. It cost \$1 million.

A similar movement began in 2005 in San Francisco where car park spaces in the business district were reclaimed as temporary parks. The yearly PARK(ing) Day has since spread to more than 180 cities worldwide.

Other ideas for Yarraville include "pedestrian priority" on parts of Anderson Street.

### **SUNSHINE STATION**

*Department of Transport*—18<sup>th</sup> December 2011

<http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/projects/pt/rrl/station-designs/sunshine-station>

Sunshine is strategically positioned as an important regional centre for Melbourne's growing west. We will breathe new life into the Sunshine railway station precinct, supporting plans to revitalise the town centre.

We will also construct two new Regional Rail Link tracks through Sunshine and a new platform on the south side of the station.

These improvements will address community concerns about the safety and appearance of the station.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011



Sunshine station - preliminary design only

We will improve the station precinct by:

- Constructing a new pedestrian overpass which will be open and well lit, providing a safe connection across the rail corridor for pedestrians and cyclists
- Configuring the bus interchange to create a friendly, landscaped transport hub and a link to the Sunshine retail district
- Providing stairs, lifts and ramps from the overpass to all platforms and the station entrances
- Building new canopies above the station entrances, stairs and platforms to provide increased shelter
- Making all platforms accessible and usable for people with disabilities

- Providing new station facilities on the overpass, including a new ticket office, waiting area and restrooms
- Increasing the number of myki readers to improve the flow of passengers on and off trains
- Improving safety and security by minimising hidden spaces, increasing passive surveillance and providing for extensive CCTV coverage throughout the station and bus interchange area
- Improving the car parks at City Place and off Monash Street and upgrading lighting and security
- Providing secure bicycle parking

Work at the station is expected to start in 2012 and access to the station will be maintained throughout construction.

Your feedback will help us to develop our preliminary designs further and plan construction to minimise impacts.

Further information will be available when our alliance partners are on board in early 2012.

### **CALL FOR ACTION ON TAX EVASION**

*Leader– 17<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

<http://bayside-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/call-for-action-on-tax-evasion/>

Churches across the western suburbs have called on the Federal Government to do more to crack down on global tax evasion.

Representatives from the Uniting Churches presented petitions from 180 members to Maribyrnong federal Labor MP Bill Shorten's electorate office on Thursday.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011



The signatories came from members of Essendon Uniting Church, St Albans Uniting Church and Sunshine Uniting Church and Holy Apostles Anglican Parish Braybrook.

Essendon's St John's Uniting Church Reverend Mark Dunn said they wanted to advocate a message based on justice.

"I fully believe that our democracy runs on the basis that we all pay our fair share," he said.

"It continues to disappoint and frustrate me that it seems clear (that) people are out there who are able to manipulate the system.

"This is a plea to government to say 'let's do more'."

Uniting Church of Australia director Mark Zirnsak said there was a need for more transparency to prevent corporations from dodging taxes by making profits in countries considered to be "tax havens".

He said these companies made massive amounts of profit and contributed to corruption and crime in developing countries.

Mr Zirnsak said the Australian Government should work on a multi-national level and have easier ways of tracking money movements.

"It is (about) having agreements in place and authorities will know where money is going," Mr Zirnsak said.

Mr Shorten, who was previously assistant treasurer, is now the new federal industrial relations minister.

The petitions will be passed onto federal minister Mark Arbib, who has become the new Assistant Treasurer.

LeadWest Ltd PO Box 2382 FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011 Tel: +61 3 9317 5794 Fax: +61 3 9317 0721



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