

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

21st October 2011



For past editions please visit www.leadwest.com.au

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BRIMBANK

BOOST FOR CANCER THERAPY AT ST ALBANS

Brimbank Leader– 19th October 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/boost-for-therapy-at-st-albans-fbready/>

Cancer treatment options in the west have opened up with the addition of new equipment at Sunshine Hospital's radiation therapy centre in St Albans.

The centre has doubled its capacity, thanks to a new linear accelerator, or linac, which delivers radiation therapy to tumours.

Cheryl McGregor travels from Hoppers Crossing to receive radiation therapy for breast cancer at the St Albans centre.

Mrs McGregor attends the centre five days a week.

She said she was sometimes on her way home post-treatment after just 20 minutes. "It's so organised here and the staff are amazing," Mrs McGregor said. "The facility is so uplifting and there's nothing depressing about it at all."

She will finish her radiation therapy treatment early next month. "I'm hoping that because it was detected early the outlook will be good," Mrs McGregor said.

Site director John Violet said the new equipment improved access for cancer patients in the western suburbs by increasing capacity - from 450 to 900 new patients each year - and improving service reliability.

"Since opening our doors in March, more than 200 people have been referred to the centre for treatment and with one linac we were operating close to capacity," Dr Violet said.

"The launch of the second linac enables us to treat twice the number of public cancer patients, closer to where they live."

The new machine will treat patients with cancers including breast, bowel, prostate and lung cancer.

Director of cancer services at Western Health, Prof Michael Green, said patients were travelling to the city or to Geelong for treatment before the centre opened.

"With more than 4000 people from within our region diagnosed with cancer in the past five years and a course of radiation therapy taking up to eight weeks, greater capacity and, therefore, ready access to local treatment becomes very important," Prof Green said.

In April, Prof Green said the centre had been "future-proofed" to include capacity for additional accelerators as the need became greater.

BRIMBANK'S HOON PROBLEM

Brimbank Star– 19th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/318/story/142550.html>

Brimbank hooners are some of the worst in the state, with police impounding 772 vehicles since hoon laws began.

Brimbank Police Service Area (PSA) has one of the highest vehicle impoundments in the state, only coming second to Hume PSA which impounded 875.

Brimbank PSA have impounded more vehicles than any other PSA, with 86 vehicles since the new hoon laws, which allow police to immediately confiscate vehicles for 30 days, came into effect on 1 July this year.

Data also shows that males accounted for 974 of the 1038 hoon drivers caught in this period across Victoria.

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More 18-21 year olds had their vehicles impounded, with 322, followed by 22-25 year old drivers with 283.

Learner drivers made up 49 of the drivers caught, while 283 P-platers had their vehicles impounded and 430 full-licensed drivers were caught hooning.

The 1038 vehicles include a 2009 Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle impounded on 16 September on the Calder Freeway in Niddrie after the 21-year-old Hillside driver was found driving while disqualified.

Driving with a disqualified or suspended licence was the top offence for impoundments with 310, while 240 impounds were for excessive speeding more than 45 kilometres and 239 impounds were for improper use of a motor vehicle.

Head of Road Policing Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe said the results should send a strong message to would-be dangerous drivers.

"This should serve as a warning that police are 100 per cent committed to getting hoon and dangerous drivers off the road," Mr Walshe said.

"This is outrageous behaviour on the state's roads and places not only these motorists at risk, but other innocent road users."

He said the youngest motorist to have their car impounded in the past three months was 14-years-old, while the oldest driver was 85.

"It doesn't matter if you are a newly licensed probationary driver or a grandparent - these important laws apply to you and will be enforced," Mr Walshe said.

Roads Minister Terry Mulder said the data had proved new hoon laws were "highly successful".

"My message to hoons is simple: this will hurt," Mr Mulder said.

"You'll lose your car, pay fines and impoundment costs, and will be walking for at least a month.

"What will this mean for your job? What will this mean for your bank balance? Hooning is a very expensive exercise."

He said the work is underway to develop a compulsory safe driver education program targeting hoons and legislation will be introduced to Parliament in 2012.

STUDIO ALL ABOUT DIVERSITY

Brimbank Star – 19th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/318/story/142558.html>

Museum Victoria's Talking Difference Portable Studio will be coming to Sydenham Library, offering young people in Brimbank another opportunity to share ideas and dialogue about cultural identity and tolerance.

Talking Difference is an online media project aimed at promoting diversity and challenging discrimination by encouraging young people to create new works in film, sound, images and text.

The project was launched at the Sunshine Library in September and proved popular, with youngsters making almost a hundred responses in text, video and audio that ranged from beat boxing, to Auslan signing, singing and couples reminiscing.

The portable studio is currently touring Brimbank libraries until November. The project is expected to help strengthen the community further by widening understanding and acceptance of cultural differences.

David Henry, senior programs officer of Immigration Museum, said he was impressed with the ideas and creativity expressed by community-members when the Portable Studio was in Sunshine.

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“People really engaged with each other’s work and clearly have a lot to say about cultural diversity and racism,” Mr Henry said.

“Our goal is that people not only become new media makers through the project but also become champions for sharing ideas and dialogue about cultural diversity and intercultural understanding”.

FAST-PACED ACTION

Brimbank Star– 19th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/318/story/142572.html>

Get ready Brimbank residents ... something big is coming.

Global Action Sports has announced that the supercross series, Monster Energy Super X, will hold the opening round of this year’s series at the Melbourne Knights Stadium on Saturday October 22.

This will be the first time the series has held an event in Brimbank.

Global Action Sports managing director Michael Porra said he was excited to finally secure a venue in Melbourne after four years of negotiations with a number of venues.

“We have wanted to bring Super X to Melbourne ever since its inception in 2008 and I am so pleased we have finally secured a location for all of our fans there,” Porra said.

“Victoria has a huge fan base for all dirt-bike sports and of course sport in general so it’s going to be the perfect place to kick off this year’s series.

“We have been working incredibly hard on this year’s championship and we are looking forward to once again delivering a world-class series to Australian supercross fans with exhilarating formats, international-standard supercross tracks

and high quality television coverage, which will be replayed one week after every round.

Porra said the Melbourne Knights Stadium would be an excellent venue.

“Melbourne Knights stadium is an intimate venue with fans right on top of the action so the atmosphere will be electric. However with a capacity of just under 9,000, I would encourage fans to get in early when tickets go on sale as we expect the event to sell out pretty quickly,” he said.

Monster Energy Super X is expected to inject almost \$1.5 million into the area by attracting fans from all over Victoria as well as Super X personnel, teams, riders, families, sponsors and manufacturers.

The Melbourne round will feature an exciting and unique Super X final format as well as exhibition races for fans at the track and a Monster Energy FMX demo with some of Australia’s best riders performing some of the biggest freestyle tricks in the world.

Tickets are on sale from Sunday August 14. Visit www.superx.com.au for all ticketing information and outlets.

ARDEER INVADED

Brimbank Star– 19th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/318/story/142555.html>

Ardeer is the top spot for burglaries in Victoria, with one in 15 homes burgled in the past 12 months.

An RACV study found Ardeer had a massive increase in burglaries, with one in 42 homes burgled last year.

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Deer Park was also in the top 10 with one in 30 homes burgled while western suburbs such as Footscray, Braybrook and Hoppers Crossing also featured on the list.

Eastern and south eastern suburbs reported a decrease in burglary rates according to the RACV study.

Brimbank Burglary Unit Sergeant Andrew Button said burglaries were a problem across Brimbank.

"It's an ongoing concern," Sgt Button said.

"Unfortunately there's a number each day that occur, mostly residential."

Sgt Button said perpetrators were usually looking for electrical goods and jewellery.

He warned residents to look out for any strange cars or people, anything out of place and even door-to-door salespeople who don't seem to be legitimate.

Meanwhile, RACV General Manager of Home Services Peter Brindley said burglary rates had declined in the eastern and south eastern suburbs over the past decade.

He said the figures were a "timely reminder" for people to safeguard their homes.

"Installing a burglar alarm and connecting a professional home security monitoring service to an existing or new burglar alarm, is one of the most effective ways to deter thieves," Mr Brindley said.

"You should always lock your doors and windows before you leave, even if it is just a quick trip, and ensure your mail is collected and papers are cancelled if you are on holidays."

MARY'S ALL FOR OTHERS

Brimbank Star— 19th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/318/story/142560.html>

When Mary Vella began volunteering her time to the Maltese Senior Citizens Club as a young mother, she never thought that 30 years on she would still be devoted to the club.

The Sunshine West resident, who was born in Malta, said she first decided to volunteer with the group when her children were in school and she had some free time.

And it grew from there.

Now, Mrs Vella is the president of the Multicultural Senior Citizens Group also and spends countless hours a week organising functions and weekends away for Brimbank's elderly residents.

"I like to see people happy," the 68-year-old said.

"My husband says I have three children, plus all the members of the senior citizens group.

"It's really important that the elderly people have something to do. Something to look forward to."

The grandmother of four said juggling home and voluntary duties was simple if you were organised, and the benefits were enormous.

"If I can make someone happy, then I'm happy. It's the best part of my life."

She said it was important that retirees and particularly those who didn't drive were still given the opportunity to get out of the house and have something to do.

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And she said it was especially gratifying to see members of many cultures gathering and enjoying one another's company.

"All the communities get together and have a good time. I thank the Lord every day that he helps me to do this."

Mary Vella is the subject of this week's Pride in Brimbank – a series launched by Star to recognise the work of everyday heroes. If you know someone that fits the bill, contact Star on 9933 4814.

YOUNG AND HAPPY YOUTHS

Brimbank Star– 19th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/318/story/142557.html>

Quynh and Mariah were among 150 young people from across Brimbank who gathered at St Albans Square earlier this month to attend a youth forum. The centre stage showcased talented young locals singing, rapping and dancing while the day also included a barbecue, face painting and health promoting activities. The forum also offered youngsters a chance to discuss what they would like to see in St Albans to enhance friendly attitudes and pride.

TAKING A STRETCH

Brimbank Star– 19th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/318/story/142562.html>

A 24-year-old cyclist was treated for facial injuries after he collided with a car in Maribyrnong last week. The accident happened just before 8am on Wednesday at the corner of Cumberland Rd and Bracken St.

CYCLIST CRASH

Brimbank Star– 18th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/318/story/142491.html>

A 24-year-old cyclist was treated for facial injuries after he collided with a car in Maribyrnong last week. The accident happened just before 8am on Wednesday at the corner of Cumberland Rd and Bracken St.

Advanced life support paramedics from Sunshine and a single responder intensive care paramedic from Footscray attended the scene, where they found the cyclist conscious but confused.

"He told us that he was riding his bike and thinks that after braking suddenly that he went over the top of his handlebars and crashed into the rear of a car in front of him," paramedic Sophie Faulkner said.

"Thankfully he was wearing a helmet, but it's believed that his face hit the windscreen, shattering the glass."

The man had grazing to his left arm and cuts to his face. He was given some anti-nausea medication and taken to Western Hospital in a stable condition.

DEVELOPMENT UNDER FIRE

Brimbank Star– 18th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/317/story/142482.html>

Brimbank City Council is defending a decision to allow additions to a controversial multi-storey development in Sunshine despite claims the move contravenes planning laws.

The \$175 million Metro west development will see three towers up to nine storeys high, allowing for offices, retail and residential use, built on Harvester Rd.

The project has been met with strong opposition since it was put to council in 2005, with more than 130 objections lodged to council.

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At a recent planning meeting, Administrators allowed a one year extension to the permit, so that works must begin before 27 April 2013.

The council also approved the addition of 35 apartments and the removal of a podium linking two of the towers, which was to have contained a communal lounge and café.

Chair of Brimbank Administrators Peter Lewinsky said the issue had been inherited from the previous councillors and said Administrators had thought "long and hard" about the outcome.

"It was a difficult decision because this is a large development compared to what we already have in Sunshine; however it is consistent with planning for town activity centres and with good design will provide much needed housing variety in the area," Mr Lewinsky said.

But Sunshine Residents and Ratepayers Association (SunRRA) president Darlene Reilly said the group would be seeking legal advice on whether the Planning Act had been breached in allowing changes to be made to the permit.

"It just goes to show, does council know what they're doing?" Ms Reilly said.

"On face value, it looks like they're in breach of the Planning Act, because they've changed the preamble.

"In the original plans there's the third-level podium. In the changes they've deleted it."

SunRRA members are also angry the council has not increased the developer contribution of \$950,000 to support more roads, parks and services for the residents that will occupy the 35 extra apartments.

"There's a real concern about packing this many people into these small apartments in a high traffic area with no additional infrastructure," Ms Reilly said.

"No playground equipment, it's surrounded by busy roads, the park across the road is not a park, it is a rose garden. Where do you walk your dog? Where do you take your children to play?"

But Mr Lewinsky claimed the council would be "abandoning our responsibility to work with the developer" by referring the case to VCAT.

He said council is also attempting to have the nearby former Sunvale Primary School site converted into open space.

TRAGIC LOSS

Brimbank Star– 18th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/318/story/142488.html>

The death of 15-year-old Teresa Ho touched the Brimbank community last week. Friends and family mourned the loss of the Cairnlea teen at Ginifer Station on Tuesday, while community leaders and angry residents renewed calls for the State Government to upgrade level crossings in St Albans.

TIME TO HELP

Brimbank Star– 18th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/318/story/142490.html>

Sydenham Community Centre is hosting a non-perishable food drive this month as part of Anti-Poverty Week Poverty. During Anti-Poverty Week Brimbank residents are being urged to help fight poverty and hardship by donating tinned food and other non-perishable items. Residents can donate at any of the Neighbourhood Houses in Brimbank, including Sydenham Community Centre where Jane Allen, pictured, displayed some donated goods. The food will be given to the Tin Shed in St Albans which operates a food drop-in for local residents.

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ENDLESS BATTLE

Brimbank Star – 18th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/318/story/142489.html>

A Brimbank resident has taken the Sunshine Housing Office to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) twice in the past five years, over ongoing inadequate property repairs.

The tenant, who has a physical disability, said a door with a large gap underneath it was fixed with a step, which imposed on her disability.

A depression in the concrete in an outside area caused a large pool of water, but the works carried out at the request of the office have not fixed the problem.

This is despite the contractor being warned by the Department of Human Services that "it is essential that the finish is non-slip... there be no pooling of water and all falls are towards the drain in the middle of the yard" because of the tenant's disability.

But documents obtained by the tenant under Freedom of Information and seen by Star found the office had blamed the botched works on "tenant interference" rather than the contractor.

The tenant said she was inside while the works were being carried out and spoke very little with the concreter. "They put the blame on a tenant to cover-up their incompetency," the tenant told Star.

"They appear more concerned about their perceived power over one of its constituents rather than their fundamental responsibilities as public servants to the community."

The tenant said her doctors had approached the office about the need to properly repair the property because of the tenant's disability, but she said this had made no difference.

She said she felt uncomfortable communicating with particular members of staff at the office, claiming she felt bullied by them.

"It is their decisions and actions that cause the continuing victimisation and harassment I have been subjected to," she said.

"My finances have suffered because of the costs involved in bringing matters to VCAT all of the time. My health has suffered."

VCAT has ruled in favour of the tenant each time, demanding the office carry out the works again.

But the problems still exist.

The tenant has taken her complaints to the Ombudsman but said "time will tell" if this action will bring an end to the ongoing dispute.

Sunshine Housing Office spokesperson Brendan Ryan said he was unaware of any investigation of the office.

He said repairs and modifications were completed to Australian Standards to ensure the health and safety of tenants and that staff were expected to treat clients with respect and courtesy.

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LIQUID LARYNXES

Brimbank Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/liquid-larynxes/2326382.aspx>

Taylor's Lakes Primary School pupils like Charmaine and Selma (pictured) showed how passionate they are about water conservation at a Water Week Idol singing contest at Federation Square on October 13.

The annual event is organised by City West Water to celebrate National Water Week (October 16 to 22).

Pupils in Taylor's Lakes Primary's samba band performed a song and dance routine about the water cycle.

Principal Chris Sevier says it's important for younger generations to learn about water conservation.

AXED DEGREE TO BE REINSTATED

Brimbank Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/axed-degree-to-be-reinstated/2326381.aspx>

A Victorian university has backed down from its decision to cut the only disability-specific degree offered in the state following heavy protest from students.

In August, RMIT University indicated it would not offer its bachelor of applied sciences (disability) program beyond this year.

About 235 students enrolled in the course reacted angrily to the decision, holding a rally on August 29. About 2000 people signed a petition against the course's axing.

However, RMIT has announced it will continue to offer a double degree in education and disability.

Taylor's Lakes' Alicia Spurr is enrolled in the double degree and said she was thrilled the course would continue.

"I'm pleased to know that future students will still have the opportunity to enrol in this program," she said.

"I really enjoy the environment, atmosphere and interactive components of the program; there's nothing else like it."

The degree is designed to educate graduates to offer leadership, innovation and quality service to groups which support people with disabilities.

RMIT pro vice-chancellor, Professor Colin Fudge, said the program met a specific need for teachers in special-education settings and for primary school teachers working with students with special needs.

"There are considerable shortages of qualified, special-education teachers and we are pleased to continue to offer this program at RMIT in 2012 and beyond."

Although the double degree will continue, the single degree will not run next year.

VICROADS VOWS TO IMPROVE SAFETY

Brimbank Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/vicroads-vows-to-improve-safety/2326377.aspx>

Vicroads regional director Nial Finegan said it was developing a plan for safety improvements along 19 kilometres of the Melton Highway between Sunshine Avenue and the Western Freeway.

But it has no plans to rebuild the highway.

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"These improvements will aim to address the 22 run-off-road casualty crashes that have occurred in the past five years to June 30 resulting in three fatalities and 11 serious injury crashes," he said.

Upgrades being considered are minor road widening and asphalt resurfacing works in selected areas, installation of safety barriers, hazard removal, new signs and improved delineation.

Mr Finegan said upgrades to the highway in recent years included a roundabout at the intersection of Plumpton Road, Plumpton; widening the eastbound and westbound shoulders at the intersection of Mount Cottrell Road; and installation of a raised traffic island and dedicated U-turn area at the intersection of Banchory Avenue, Hillside.

NEW HOON LAWS 'SINKING IN'

Brimbank Weekly— 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-hoon-laws-sinking-in/2326374.aspx>

Brimbank remains the state's hoon capital, accounting for one in every 12 car impoundments by police.

Eighty-six Brimbank drivers had their cars impounded for 30 days within the first three months of enactment of new legislation aimed at keeping hoons off the roads.

The 86 impoundments place Brimbank well ahead of other hoon hot spots: Hume (47), Casey (44), Monash (40) and Bendigo (39).

Since July 1, police have banished 1038 vehicles from the roads in Victoria, including a 2009 Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle impounded on the Calder Freeway last month when a 21-year-old Hillside rider was caught driving while disqualified.

Drivers aged 18-21 were most likely to be caught out by the laws, with 322 impoundments statewide.

The youngest motorist to have his car impounded was 14, while the oldest driver was 85.

Male drivers were by far the worst offenders, at 974. Driving while disqualified or suspended was the leading cause of impoundments, at 310.

This was followed by exceeding the speed limit by more than 45km/h (240) and improper use of a motor vehicle (239).

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LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

21st October 2011



PITFALLS FOR WEST'S CYCLISTS

Brimbank Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/pitfalls-for-wests-cyclists/2326366.aspx>

A vital cycling link from the city to the western suburbs could be severed as the state government wavers on commitments to bike paths.

The Weekly understands there are no commitments to fund missing links in the bike network from Deer Park to Footscray along the rail corridor and at Shepherd Bridge on Footscray Road.

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Maribyrnong councillor Catherine Cumming said major works at West Footscray and Footscray railway stations needed development plans and planning approval from Planning Minister Matthew Guy before major work could begin.

She called on Mr Guy to consult the community once the station's designs were complete to ensure they met expectations, including provision for cyclists.

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"That's what they [state government] told us and we'll hold them to that," he said.

"It should be a no-brainer. You've got to have these facilities so people can cycle into town or to a rail head."

RRL spokeswoman Kate Eskdale said 'parkiteer' bike cages would be built at stations including Footscray and Sunshine.

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A Brimbank Council spokesman said Maribyrnong, Brimbank and the Transport Department had prepared a concept plan for an off-road link from West Footscray to Sunshine station.

Brimbank and VicRoads have also prepared a plan for a bike path to follow the Sydenham line from Sunshine to Watergardens.

WESTERN HEALTH 'AGREES TO TERMS'

Brimbank Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/western-health-agrees-to-terms/2326365.aspx>

Western Health has moved to quell concerns over possible strike action by emergency department doctors.

Fair Work Australia has granted doctors at Sunshine, Footscray and Williamstown the right to vote by November 2 on whether they will take industrial action over pay and conditions.

The three emergency departments treat more than 100,000 patients a year.

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21st October 2011



The Weekly recently highlighted the pressures on the under-resourced departments.

But Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said no industrial bans were yet in place and physicians had not launched any industrial action.

"Western Health has now agreed new terms and conditions with its emergency department physicians and all that remains is to document that agreement in a form agreeable to both parties," she said.

"We are optimistic that these matters will be finalised in the very near future."

She said Western Health was committed to providing a safe and high-quality service across its three emergency department sites.

SUNSHINE HOSPITAL: BIRTHING AN 'EMERGENCY' EVENT

Brimbank Weekly— 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/sunshine-hospital-birthing-an-emergency-event/2326364.aspx>

More than 200 women have been forced to give birth in Sunshine Hospital's emergency ward over the past five years due to an unprecedented demand on maternity services.

The Auditor-General's Maternity Services: Capacity report, tabled in State Parliament this week, revealed 219 babies have been born in Sunshine's emergency department since 2006.

Des Pearson's report found the Health Department was informed last October of a dangerous increase in the number of emergency department births.

Compounding the issue is the hospital's role as a major maternity service for the fastest-growing areas of Australia: Melton and Wyndham.

The department has known about the increasing pressure on Sunshine Hospital's maternity services since as early as April 2005.

"A clinical assessment covered in an internal audit by the health service identified high clinical, financial and organisational risks due to the increased demand," the report found.

About 4400 babies were born at Sunshine Hospital in the 12 months to June, making it the third-busiest service in the state.

This was a 10 per cent hike on the previous year and equates to 434 births per labour ward bed.

The hospital's 2011 service plan forecast demand to increase to more than 5500 births by 2015-16.

Despite a 2009 maternity service plan showing capacity would be reached at 4500 births, capital works have focused on clinical services such as cancer treatment and dialysis and have failed to address the increasing maternity demand.

The report noted that an acute services building expected to open in 2013 includes an extended special care nursery.

"However, expansion of the maternity service is not included in the planned works."

Two additional birthing rooms are being considered by the Health Department, but no new maternity facilities are likely in the short-term.

Mr Pearson said there was a failure by Western Health to "communicate the problems experienced in its maternity service in a timely way" and the department had failed to pick up the issues through its own planning activities and system knowledge.

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Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said it was working with the department to create extra birthing services.

"Maternity services in Sunshine Hospital are facing the greatest pressures of any metropolitan maternity service," she said.

Health Minister David Davis said a new advisory committee would be established early next year to advise on ways to improve healthcare for women and newborns.

His spokeswoman said capacity at Sunshine had grown to meet demand, pointing to eight maternity beds and two birthing rooms added in 2009 and a pregnancy assessment centre added last year.

She said a Western Health \$17 million budget increase could be used towards maternity services.

REMEDY URGED FOR 'HORROR ROAD'

Brimbank Weekly— 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/remedy-urged-for-horror-road/2326376.aspx>

A Sydenham doctor who says he's lucky to be alive after being involved in a smash on the Melton Highway is calling for it to be upgraded.

Dr Michael Saeed was involved in a head-on collision on a notoriously hazardous dip over Kororoit Creek in March last year.

He said he believed the other vehicle was travelling at 100-110km/h around a blind bend when they collided.

Dr Saeed had his sternum broken in two, ribs broken and believes a later heart attack was due to a blood clot caused by the crash.

"Something needs to be done ... a bridge or another way to divert traffic to Melton in a separate lane and an overhead lane to Melbourne," he said.

A Facebook group, Duplicate Melton Highway Now, where family and friends speak of people who have died on the highway, has more than 500 members.

Narelle Bowden, who lost a young relative in a collision on the highway last year, said she had gathered more than 2000 signatures on a petition calling for the highway to be duplicated.

"Too many people are dying," she said. "Unfortunately, more people will die until the duplication is done. It is a terrible road."

Melton's Inspector Mario Fiorentino said the highway itself was not to blame for the number of fatalities.

He cited a combination of driver behaviour and other factors.

"Drivers are not appreciating the risk of the road. The volume of traffic unfortunately sees inattentive, impatient risk takers overtaking on double lines."

Inspector Fiorentino said duplication was an option to be considered, but in the interim drivers should drive to the conditions.

"One impatient driver puts themselves and other drivers at risk ... there'll be no tolerance for drivers flouting the law on that road; it is too high a risk."

Melton CFA station officer, Jayson Hirt, said the highway was one of several local roadways that presented the brigade with significant incidents.

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DOUGIE'S IMPRESSED WITH NEW CENTRE

Brimbank Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/dougies-impressed-with-new-centre/2326354.aspx>

AFL legend Doug Hawkins says the new Derrimut Health and Aquatic Centre will help more local residents become fitter and healthier.

Hawkins and YMCA Victoria CEO Peter Burns (pictured) visited the centre last Tuesday.

Hawkins says the YMCA centre, expected to open early next month, is a great investment in the community.

"As a big supporter of the west I can't wait to try out these new facilities."

ART CLASS OPENS UP

Brimbank Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/art-class-opens-up/2326357.aspx>

Brimbank residents can view the artistic talents of Catholic Regional College St Albans students like Dani, Lysa and Camilla (pictured) at their annual exhibition on Wednesday.

The Image 2011 expo will showcase the work of year 7-10 students enrolled in the college's visual arts course.

Paintings, portraits and sculptures will be displayed from 6.30-8pm and there will be a performance by a year 10 dance class.

Year 10 student Camilla says she's looking forward to people seeing her sculpture.

"I decided to make a 3D clay model from a painting and it was very challenging."

College spokeswoman Angela Robinson says: "The students and staff worked hard to turn the school hall into an art gallery."

BARBS FLY OVER RAIL CROSSING RESPONSIBILITY

Brimbank Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/barbs-fly-over-rail-crossing-responsibility/2326369.aspx>

Teresa Ho's death has sparked bitter fighting over the removal of dangerous railway crossings.

The Catholic Regional College St Albans student, 15, was struck and killed as she crossed the tracks at Ginifer railway station on October 10.

Although the fatality occurred at a pedestrian crossing between the two road crossings, level crossing opponent and St Albans Traders Association secretary Asip Demiri said it would never have happened if the government had heeded calls for the track to be lowered from Furlong Road to beyond Main Road and for a pedestrian overpass to be created.

"I urge people to write to state and federal MPs, the minister, the Premier, until something is done."

Opposition public transport spokeswoman Fiona Richardson said government promises to upgrade the Main Road level crossing had not been matched with funds.

Kororoit MP Marlene Kairouz told State Parliament that St Albans' Main Road and Furlong Road crossings were numbers three and four on the Transport Department's priority list.

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"This government, however, has chosen to ignore the western suburbs and its own departmental priority list in order to pork barrel and please its constituency in leafy eastern suburbs."

But Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder defended the decision to fast-track a new Brighton underpass in the electorate of deputy Liberal leader Louise Asher that is ranked 223rd on the priority list, and assured that the Main Road separation would occur.

His promise was backed by Western Metropolitan MP Andrew Elsbury.

Mr Demiri said Brimbank residents were sick of politicians treating the issue as a political football.

"This community has been fighting for this to be fixed for years. Now we have another young life cut short, another family whose life has been torn apart."

Delahey Action Group spokesman David Anderson said the government must look at extending fencing along the railway network.

"Once you get past West Footscray, the fences just run out," he said.

"It's no wonder you have people taking their lives in their own hands, crossing these lines."

Lobby group Committee for Melbourne warned that commuter safety would continue to be risked unless rail level crossings were removed.

PITFALLS FOR WEST'S CYCLISTS

Brimbank Weekly— 18th October 2011

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NEW HOON LAWS 'SINKING IN'

Brimbank Weekly— 18th October 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-hoon-laws-sinking-in/2326374.aspx>

Brimbank remains the state's hoon capital, accounting for one in every 12 car impoundments by police.

Eighty-six Brimbank drivers had their cars impounded for 30 days within the first three months of enactment of new legislation aimed at keeping hoons off the roads.

The 86 impoundments place Brimbank well ahead of other hoon hot spots: Hume (47), Casey (44), Monash (40) and Bendigo (39).

Since July 1, police have banished 1038 vehicles from the roads in Victoria, including a 2009 Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle impounded on the Calder Freeway last month when a 21-year-old Hillside rider was caught driving while disqualified.

Drivers aged 18-21 were most likely to be caught out by the laws, with 322 impoundments statewide.

The youngest motorist to have his car impounded was 14, while the oldest driver was 85.

Male drivers were by far the worst offenders, at 974. Driving while disqualified or suspended was the leading cause of impoundments, at 310.

This was followed by exceeding the speed limit by more than 45km/h (240) and improper use of a motor vehicle (239).

Brimbank's Sergeant Rod Stein said police had already impounded 210 cars this year, compared to 193 for all of 2010.

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"We know the areas where these kids are and we know the nights they are in these areas," Sergeant Stein said.

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ROO HOO, IT'S FESTIVAL FUN FOR BRIMBANK

Brimbank Leader– 16th October 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/lifestyle/story/roo-hoo-its-festival-fun-for-brimbank-fbready/>

Ranger Roo from Parks Victoria will be among the many characters helping to put the fun into the FUNtasia Children's Festival in Taylors Lakes on October 23.

The festival program, to be included in the Brimbank Leader next week, is crammed with activities to stimulate, activate, educate and entertain children from one to 12 years old.

Face painting and free carnival rides are back in the third FUNtasia festival.

For the very young there will be a Teddy Bear's Picnic, Fairytale Puppet Theatre shows, magic and spellbinding storytelling at the Brimbank Leader Storytelling Pavilion.

The more adventurous can run the obstacle course in Race Against Time, become intrepid Spud Hunters or prepare healthy snacks at the Kid's Kitchen.

Ranger Roo will be joined by Balloonaversal, Squeek!, Tubby the Robot and Lil' Tub, Ranger Roo and Watergardens' D'Frog, to ensure young visitors are kept entertained or enter the FUNtasia costume competition for great prizes and lots of fun.

Performances by the Jitterbugs and appearances from the Saturday Disney Team round off a jam-packed day.

FUNtasia is presented by Brimbank Council and supported by the Seven Network, Watergardens Town Centre, Brimbank Leader, Parks Victoria, City West Water and The SITA Group. The fun runs from 10am-4pm, Sunday, October 23, at The Lakes Reserve, Chichester Drive, Taylors Lakes.

HOBSONS BAY

IN THE NAME OF VALOUR AT ALTONA NORTH

Hobsons Bay Leader– 21st October 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/in-the-name-of-valour-at-altona-north/>

A new honour board at Altona North police station that commemorates the courage of local police has been set up just metres from where two officers performed the act of bravery that won them a Valour Award.

On August 7, 1984, then-senior-constables Wayne Oakes and Jim Barry had finished their shift and were leaving the station when they heard a woman's cries for help.

The officers saw a man running down McArthurs Rd and pursued him. He stopped and aimed a firearm.

"He pulled out a loaded rifle and tried to shoot us," Sgt Oakes recalled.

"Jim was a few steps ahead of me and he tripped him.

"As he hit the ground, I grabbed his arm and twisted it over his head so he couldn't fire the gun."

Sgt Oakes, who is now based at Colac, left Altona North in 1986 and had not been back until last week's commemoration.

"It's a weird feeling, especially since it occurred right out there," he said.

Other recipients of Valour Awards on the board are Sgt Noel Greig and Sgt Jim Thwaites.

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Sen-Constable Matthew Flood, who received a Valour Award in April this year, will be added.

Sen-Sergeant Geoff Morphett is honoured for brave conduct, Constable Jason Psaila is recognised for receiving a bronze medal from the Royal Humane Society, and Sen-Constable Tim Lewczuk is listed after receiving a posthumous Victoria Police Star.

Hobsons Bay's Inspector Bill Mathers unveiled the plaque in front of recipients and the families of the late Sgt Greig, Sgt Thwaites and Sen-Constable Lewczuk.

Insp Mathers said the officers had exhibited "courage, bravery and leadership" in reacting to situations "above the call of duty".

"These names have been around a long time," he said.

"It's good for the younger officers to understand what's gone on before them."

BRING THE KIDS

Hobsons Bay Star – 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/318/story/142748.html>

Pack your picnic, bring a blanket and make sure you have the most important guests of all when Hobsons Bay celebrates Children's Week.

The annual Hobsons Bay City Council Children's Week Picnic will be held on Wednesday 26 October from 10am to 1pm at Commonwealth Reserve, Nelson Place, Williamstown.

Hobsons Bay Mayor Councillor Michael Raffoul said the day was a celebration of children for children.

"All children are invited to bring their friends, pack a picnic and join the fun and free activities," Cr Raffoul said.

Some activities will include performances from the Royal Australian Air Force Band, face painting, an animal farm, craft activities, African drumming, badge-making, fire engine rides, rockin' Russell's story time, SES, jumping castles, Edgars Mission and giant chess.

Cr Raffoul said the council would also partner with the Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens to bring the first of the summer series of Story Time under the Golden Elm Tree on Friday 28 October at 10.30am.

HOONS IN THEIR SIGHTS

Hobsons Bay Star – 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/318/story/142751.html>

Twenty-one vehicles from Hobsons Bay have been impounded in the first three months of tough new hoon laws in Victoria.

The new laws have given police the power to immediately impound hoon vehicles for 30 days – a significant increase on the previous two-day period.

Hobsons Bay tied for 13th place, with Geelong and Benalla on the list of top Police Service Areas (PSA) for hoon impoundments.

Hobsons Bay Inspector Bill Mathers said the number was disappointing because it meant people were not getting the message that hoon driving was dangerous.

"With summer coming we'll be stepping up policing the issue and utilising the new laws," he said.

"Two messages come from this, one to the people driving – you will get caught and the second message is to the rest of the community – police will be active to make the area safer."

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Insp Mathers said Hobsons Bay had gone 12 months without a fatality and police were committed to reducing serious injuries and fatalities in the area.

The new laws saw more than 1000 vehicles impounded in the first three months.

The top hoon PSA in Victoria was Brimbank, with 86 vehicles being impounded, followed by Hume with 47.

Wyndham also featured on the list, with 32 vehicles impounded and Melton with 28.

Minister for Roads Terry Mulder said more hoons than ever were off Victoria's roads.

"The police have achieved outstanding enforcement results, with 1038 cars impounded for the new 30-day period," he said.

"Of these, 310 were impounded for unlicensed driving, 240 for speeding in excess of 45km per hour over the limit and 239 for using the vehicle improperly."

Mr Mulder said the State Government had zero tolerance for dangerous driving.

"As more and more hoons are forced off the roads, we hope they'll start getting the message."

MOVING TO SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES IN HOBSONS BAY

Hobsons Bay Leader – 19th October 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/moving-to-sustainable-lifestyles-in-hobsons-bay/>

Residents have been given the chance to help inform the council's new Environmental Engagement Strategy.

The survey, which closed on Friday, will help the council create a strategy to "motivate the community to live in ways that are more environmentally sustainable".

Residents were asked to rate how important environment issues such as climate change, pollution, litter, car use, recycling and coastal habitats are to them.

It was part of a larger research project the council is conducting in order to develop the five-year strategy.

Director of planning and environment Peter Gaschk said the survey would help the council understand the environmental issues that are important to the local community.

"The findings of the survey will form the background to the strategy and may be made public when the strategy is released," Mr Gaschk said.

The council has pledged to reach carbon neutral status by 2020 and wants the community to follow suite by 2030. "Actions identified in the Environmental Engagement Strategy will help make this goal a reality," Mr Gaschk said.

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NO GATES, SAFETY ONUS ON ROAD USERS

Hobsons Bay Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-no-gates-safety-onus-on-road-users/>

Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder has ruled out installing automatic safety gates at Williamstown North railway station this year, telling road users to “ditch their iPods and switch off their mobiles”.

The news comes just days after a 15-year-old girl was killed at Ginifer station in St Albans when she ran across the tracks. Police said they believed Teresa Ho of Cairnlea was wearing earphones and did not hear bystanders shouting for her to stop.

A 27-year-old male cyclist was hit by a train at Williamstown North on September 28, prompting Hobsons Bay Council to re-issue a plea, first raised in 2008, to prioritise the installation of safety gates at the northern side of the crossing. But Mr Mulder confirmed to the Leader last week that the crossing would not be upgraded this financial year.

“The recent Williamstown North level crossing incident highlights the need for all road users - pedestrians, motorists, motorcyclists, cyclists and heavy vehicle drivers - to take extreme care around rail lines,” Mr Mulder said.

“It is especially important that community members crossing railway lines ditch their iPods and switch off their mobiles.”

Mr Mulder said the Government had determined its level and pedestrian crossing upgrade program for 2011-12 and Williamstown North was not included.

VicTrack has denounced responsibility for the crossing. It previously suggested the council consider funding the upgrade, which angered Williamstown North

councillor Peter Hemphill, who raised the issue. “It’s not our land and it’s not our responsibility, but we’re advocating for our community,” Cr Hemphill said.

Mr Mulder said there was not enough space on the northern side for an automated crossing. He said the subway underpass would need to be filled in.

Williamstown Labor MP Wade Noonan said any decision to fill in the underpass should only be done after public consultation.

Mr Noonan has written to Mr Mulder to request a meeting between the Department of Transport and Hobsons Bay Council.

HOBSONS BAY HOONS GETTING WORSE

Hobsons Bay Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/hobsons-bay-hoons-getting-worse/>

Hobsons Bay police are impounding one hoon driver’s car every four days, figures show.

A total of 21 cars have been impounded on local roads since new hoon laws giving police the power to impound cars for 30 days came into effect on July 1.

Hobsons Bay is 19th on the list of Victorian hoon hot spots, but Williamstown highway patrol chief, Sgt Jason Van Doren, said the 30-day impoundment was failing to stop hoons in their tracks.

“Two days (impoundment) was a badge of honour for some people, but we expected to see, on July 1, a change, in that people would try not to have their cars impounded for 30 days,” Sgt Van Doren said.

“We haven’t seen that though.

“If anything, we’ve probably seen a little spike and that’s really surprising.”

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Sgt Van Doren said although police now had the power to impound cars for a larger range of offences, most hooners were being caught for typical ones.

"It's not like we've got these new offences and that's what's caused the spike," he said. "It's still the old offences like repeated disqualification, suspension and speed."

Sgt Van Doren said highway patrol routinely clocked cars travelling between 160km/h and 180km/h on the freeways, but industrial estates, particularly around Altona, were another hoon hot spot.

"That's just disastrous," he said.

"If something goes wrong at that speed, you've got two concrete walls on either side of you welcoming you with open arms."

Sgt Van Doren said the most common offender remained a "young male in a Falcon or a Commodore".

He urged parents to join the fight against hooners by forcing offenders to catch the bus or ride their bike.

More than 1030 vehicles were impounded in Victoria in the three months from July 1st, with 94 per cent driven by men.

Brimbank recording the largest number of hooners with 86 impoundments.

The top reason for impoundment was driving on a disqualified or suspended license, followed by excessive speed over 45km/h.

ON THE NOSE

Hobsons Bay Star – 18th September 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/317/story/142485.html>

Could dust and odour issues in Hobsons Bay be on the improve?

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) received 335 dust and odour complaints from Hobsons Bay in the last financial year – down from 680 complaints being made in the previous financial year.

With complaints down by more than half in 2011 – the question is: have issues improved or are residents just reporting to the EPA less?

In the Brooklyn industrial precinct of Altona North and Brooklyn reports to the EPA are down from 546 to 244.

Brooklyn Residents Action Group member Brian Long said the figures were down not because the issue had improved but because of the heavy rain.

"We have had a very wet year and the moisture has kept the dust down," he said.

"The smells have only gotten worse."

In the last two financial year's businesses in Hobsons Bay have been fined more than \$80,000 for breaching environmental laws and ordered to pay almost \$300,000 to community projects.

Most recently in August this year the Australian Tallow Producers in Brooklyn were fined \$20,000 and ordered to pay \$13,300 in EPA costs for allowing offensive odours beyond the boundary of its premises – the odours were believed to be that of a dead carcass.

A spokesperson for the EPA said the authority had been focussing heavily on the Brooklyn industrial precinct over the last 18 months.

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21st October 2011



The spokesperson also said it was important to note that some of the reports received by the EPA could be for the same issue and should not be considered separate incidents.

Mr Long said he understood the EPA was doing its job but believed a lot of people were not reporting issues as often because they couldn't be bothered.

"The figures will spike again," he said.

"I'm still cleaning my air-conditioning and my car just as often – the dust is just settling during the night."

NO GATES, SAFETY ONUS ON ROAD USERS

Hobsons Bay Leader – 18th October 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-no-gates-safety-onus-on-road-users/>

Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder has ruled out installing automatic safety gates at Williamstown North railway station this year, telling road users to "ditch their iPods and switch off their mobiles".

The news comes just days after a 15-year-old girl was killed at Ginifer station in St Albans when she ran across the tracks. Police said they believed Teresa Ho of Cairnlea was wearing earphones and did not hear bystanders shouting for her to stop.

A 27-year-old male cyclist was hit by a train at Williamstown North on September 28, prompting Hobsons Bay Council to re-issue a plea, first raised in 2008, to prioritise the installation of safety gates at the northern side of the crossing. But Mr Mulder confirmed to the Leader last week that the crossing would not be upgraded this financial year.

"The recent Williamstown North level crossing incident highlights the need for all road users - pedestrians, motorists, motorcyclists, cyclists and heavy vehicle drivers - to take extreme care around rail lines," Mr Mulder said.

"It is especially important that community members crossing railway lines ditch their iPods and switch off their mobiles."

Mr Mulder said the Government had determined its level and pedestrian crossing upgrade program for 2011-12 and Williamstown North was not included.

VicTrack has denounced responsibility for the crossing. It previously suggested the council consider funding the upgrade, which angered Williamstown North councillor Peter Hemphill, who raised the issue. "It's not our land and it's not our responsibility, but we're advocating for our community," Cr Hemphill said.

Mr Mulder said there was not enough space on the northern side for an automated crossing. He said the subway underpass would need to be filled in.

Williamstown Labor MP Wade Noonan said any decision to fill in the underpass should only be done after public consultation.

Mr Noonan has written to Mr Mulder to request a meeting between the Department of Transport and Hobsons Bay Council.

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MARIBRYNONG

BOG IN TO THIS BLOG

Maribyrnong Star– 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/318/story/142682.html>

Lauren Wambach is the ultimate Footscray foodie.

Ms Wambach is the face (and mouth) behind the Footscray Food Blog, an online offering that has attracted 130 members and nearly 600 Facebook fans.

The blog takes its followers on a mouth-watering tour of all the cuisine the City of Maribyrnong has to offer, complete with photos of the food, the restaurants and the menu.

It focuses on Footscray's Vietnamese offering but also includes blogs on the Pound Café, Cupcakes by Paolo and other restaurants.

The mother of three started the blog at the beginning of 2009 and gave up after only a few posts.

Months later, she accidentally came across one of her posts online and saw that a lot of people had commented on what she wrote, and so, the Footscray Food Blog was re-born.

"I used to read food blogs and no-one ever went to the Western Suburbs. Also, very few had kids and the posts were all about fine dining," she said.

"I really didn't want the Western Suburbs to be a dormitory suburb where people worked and socialised elsewhere."

Ms Wambach is no stranger to tasting different foods, indulging in yum cha with her dad Mike since the age of eight.

"We were always adventurous, because we were always taken to these exotic places. I want to do the same for my kids, so this food is seen as normal.

"Most places have a similar menu but for one or two things and that's what attracts me.

"I'm adventurous, but I draw the line at offal – there's something about it (I don't like)."

Ms Wambach cites the Croatian Club, Phong Dinh and the Nhu Lan Bakery as some of her favourite haunts.

Her dad still accompanies her on some of her restaurants jaunts, as do other family and friends.

"Everyone knows the rule: you don't touch the food until I've taken a pic!

"If there's a pic with blood or guts on the blog, it's because my dad's there with me."

FREE HOME SAFETY CHECKS FOR SENIORS

Maribyrnong Star– 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/318/story/142710.html>

The Department of Human Services is offering free home safety checks for Maribyrnong's elderly residents.

Archicentre is offering the checks on behalf of the DHS to identify any hazards around the home, particularly those that could cause a fall.

Falls account for the majority of home injuries by Victorian elders.

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"The safety of our seniors is a high priority for our community," Maribyrnong Mayor Sarah Carter said.

"People visiting elderly relatives or friends should keep an eye out for safety issues, many of which are easy and simple to fix."

David Hallett from Archicentre said a flat, accessible site was ideal for older residents, who gradually lose mobility or balance and risk injury while attempting to negotiate uneven paving or steps.

Other tips for safe-proofing the home include weather protection between the garage and house to reduce the risk of slipping; level-entry showers; grab rails in bathrooms; and impact-absorbent floor surfaces to help reduce potential falls.

Call Archicentre on 9815 1900 or 1300 136 513 to access the service.

SCRIMPING A LIFE ON THE PENSION

Maribyrnong Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/scrimping-a-life-on-the-pension/2329059.aspx>

Most nights, pensioner Rita Hercelinskyj sees by the glow from her TV.

The widow, a volunteer with Gateway Social Support Options in South Kingsville, says it's hard for people living on the age pension.

Hobsons Bay Council is publicising poverty and hardship in its own backyard during Anti-Poverty Week, which ends on Saturday.

Ms Hercelinskyj, 82, says it's especially hard when big bills arrive.

"Sometimes it's very hard when you get the bigger bills like car registration, car insurance, council rates and, of course, electricity and gas.

"You get a little bit of a discount, but you still have a bill of \$280 or \$300. I save. I put this door in [between the lounge room and kitchen] because before it was open and it never got warm in winter.

"I switch off the light at night-time. I sit in the dark because I've got the television on and that gives me a little bit of light. And if I have the television on I don't read, so I save there. But you can't save in winter with heating and you need the gas heater all the time."

Mayor Michael Raffoul will volunteer with the Laverton soup van, while the council prepares for its Food for Fines program where people clear their library fines by donating food.

Cr Raffoul said many people were experiencing hardship because of lack of affordable housing and access to nutritious food.

"Some residents rely on a soup van for a meal," he said. "We all need to take ownership of this issue ... I encourage the community to get involved in local activities by speaking out, taking action, volunteering or donating."

To volunteer with Gateway, helping people in the west, visit gatewaysupport.org.au or phone 93993511.

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MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

Maribyrnong Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/magical-mystery-tour/2329066.aspx>

Children's Week, running from this Saturday until October 29, is being celebrated in Hobsons Bay with a picnic, botanic garden story time and exhibitions for youngsters.

The annual picnic is from 10am-1pm next Wednesday, October 26, at Commonwealth Reserve in Williamstown.

The first story of the summer series of Story Time Under the Golden Elm Tree will be told in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens at 10.30am on October 28. Children are being encouraged to dress as a magical creature.

Those from Laverton Children's Early Learning Centre were among the first to visit Scienceworks' Nitty Gritty Super City exhibition as part of a partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

WILLIAMSTOWN RESIDENTS DEMAND LIGHTHOUSE BACK

Maribyrnong Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/williamstown-residents-demand-lighthouse-back/2329052.aspx>

Williamstown residents are rallying against the National Trust's plans to put the Gellibrand lighthouse outside the Melbourne Convention Centre.

Built in 1906, the Gellibrand pile light marked the reef a kilometre off Williamstown. The pile light was struck by the ship Melbourne Trader in 1976. The top section survived and was donated to the trust by the Victorian Public Works Department in 1978.

Until 2006, it was displayed at the Melbourne Maritime Museum alongside the Polly Woodside but has been in storage for the past five years.

Trust information officer Ann Gibson said the lighthouse would be installed in the same area where it had been on display to the public for the past 33 years.

"With the redevelopment of the South Wharf precinct, including the relaunch of Polly Woodside, this location is set to be a major tourist destination, allowing members of the public to enjoy the rescued portion of the lighthouse as well as other items of significance from Melbourne's rich maritime history."

But Williamstown historians, residents and politicians say the light belongs in its "spiritual home" of Williamstown.

Williamstown Maritime Association president Patsy Toop said the trust did not respect Australia's maritime heritage.

"I don't know how many times we have asked the National Trust to return the Gellibrand lighthouse to Williamstown.

"This is its home and rightfully it should be returned to its heritage place. Using our iconic lighthouse as a tourist stunt is totally out of context and totally inappropriate."

Seaworks chief executive Rennis Witham said the light was a very sentimental structure for Williamstown.

"Most people in Williamstown will know of it and [its] pictures sit in many pubs and homes. And, most importantly, there is now a place to install, exhibit, care for and love it - Seaworks."

Williamstown Historical Society member Brian Haynes said instead of being hemmed in by massive buildings on the Yarra River, the light should come home.

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"I'd much prefer the light structure to return to Williamstown, its original home, and be set up either at Seaworks, possibly on one of its piers, or reassembled at its original site on Gellibrand reef."

Seaworks site manager Geoff Dougall said the "grand old lady" should return to Williamstown's shores. "For it now to be again moved and placed in what is a commercial precinct on the banks of the Yarra River, is another slap in the face to the people of Williamstown by its guardians, the National Trust."

Cr Angela Altair was expected to move an urgent motion at last night's Hobsons Bay Council meeting calling on the Trust to immediately return the light. "History dictates that the Gellibrand pile light returns to its rightful home," she said. "The original structure was fashioned on Nelson Place. You had the lighthouse keeper's family attending the local school and, of course, it was located off Point Gellibrand.

"It would be a marvellous addition to Seaworks' newly unveiled collection."

Williamstown MP Wade Noonan said the trust just wanted the lighthouse to complement its landscape design at Southbank.

"I don't think there's any doubt that Williamstown is the spiritual home of this lighthouse," he said.

"[The trust] never argued that this lighthouse did not have a very strong attachment to Williamstown. It was all about aesthetics."

REGIONAL RAIL LINK: BUREAUCRATS TIP-TOE FOR SLEEP-DEPRIVED

Maribyrnong Weekly— 19th October 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/regional-rail-link-bureaucrats-tiptoe-for-sleepdeprived/2329062.aspx>

The din made by residents about extra noise from new passenger train projects is pushing the state government towards a policy to reduce the problem.

The Department of Planning has released a draft framework that will lead to a noise policy for new passenger rail projects.

The draft acknowledges that "making decisions about noise from future passenger rail investments is complex, needs to have regard to a range of factors, and has significant consequences. For these reasons, more detailed guidance would aid decision-making about noise emissions from new passenger rail proposals."

Noise from freight trains is not considered because they often use the same tracks, the draft says.

But it's cold comfort for residents in Footscray who will live close to the two new tracks that will be built as part of the \$5 billion Regional Rail Link after an Environment Protection Authority report released early this year found noise from extra rail traffic could cause chronic sleep disturbance.

A further noise assessment has been conducted, but Planning Minister Matthew Guy has not yet released it.

Fair Go for Footscray Rail Residents spokesman Nick Fahey said while the draft was a positive step, it was a "limp attempt".

"We can't see why they need a flexible principles-based approach. We want a more effective standards-based approach like every other state and jurisdiction has adopted," Mr Fahey said.

"It's unusual that the Department of Transport is writing its own regulations. We'd have a lot more trust if they were written by an impartial agency."

RRL spokeswoman Kate Eskdale said: "The Regional Rail Link Authority has included consideration of the draft principles in formulating the Noise Impact Assessment

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Report. The authority will incorporate the outcomes of further policy development by the Department of Transport into the Regional Rail Link project."

FOOTSCRAY TARGETED BY BURGLARS: RACV

Maribyrnong Leader– 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/318/story/142674.html>

Footscray residents are being warned to beef up their home security after an RACV report found it was the second most burgled suburb in the state.

The research revealed one in 20 Footscray homes were broken into in the past 12 months, while nearby suburb Ardeer took top spot with one in 15 homes.

Five suburbs in the West made the top 10, including Braybrook, Wyndham Vale and Hoppers Crossing.

Recent Victoria Police figures show a 46.5 per cent spike in residential burglaries across Maribyrnong over the 2010-11 financial year, with 876 offences recorded.

"The top three suburbs recorded rates of between one in 15 and one in 25 homes. These are significantly higher than last year's top three most burgled suburbs, which recorded burglary rates of between one in 26 and one in 28," RACV Home Services general manager Peter Brindley said.

Mr Brindley said the figures should serve as a timely reminder for people to take the necessary precautions to ensure their homes are secure.

"Installing a burglar alarm and connecting a professional home security monitoring service to an existing or new burglar alarm, is one of the most effective ways to deter thieves," he said.

"Another easy way to improve home security and reduce the risk of a burglary is to ensure doors and windows are secured by quality locks which are made to Australian standards.

"One more simple measure to deter burglars is to keep your garden well-trimmed to remove potential hiding spots for burglars."

CALLING ALL KIDS

Maribyrnong Star– 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/318/story/142673.html>

IT'S all about the kids this week as Maribyrnong City Council celebrates Children's Week. The council has put on a range of events to celebrate the week, including story times, music at the library and making cupcakes and pizza Tubby the robot, pictured with Maribyrnong councillor Martin Zakharov, will entertain the little ones in a picnic at Yarraville Gardens on 25 October.

NEW LAWS BRAKES ON MARIBRYNONG HOONS

Maribyrnong Leader– 20th October 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/new-laws-brakes-on-maribrynong-hoons-fbready/>

In the first three months of tougher hoon laws one car a week has been impounded in Maribyrnong, police statistics show.

From July 1 to September 30, 19 vehicles have been impounded in the Maribyrnong Police Service Area, making a total of 137 since the hoon laws were introduced in 2006.

Since July 1 police have had the power to immediately impound hoon vehicles for 30 days, a significant increase on the previous two-day period.

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Inspector Tony Long said Maribyrnong had not had a particularly high number of hoon drivers.

He said one of the reasons for this was that Maribyrnong had no roads with a 100km/hr speed limit.

Sergeant Trevor Poulton of the Highway Patrol unit said the new laws were making an impact. "The seizures are having an effect (because) at the very least we are getting vehicles out of the hands of people who are demonstrating irresponsible driving," he said.

"At this stage I don't think we're seeing a great deal of repeat business from offenders."

Sgt Poulton said this indicated that the initial seizure was enough to deter people.

Despite Maribyrnong not having any 100km/hr zones, Sgt Poulton said most impoundments were still speed related with most offences committed in 60km/h zones.

"Some people still think it's OK to (drive) 45km over in a 60km/h zone," he said.

Currently in the Footscray impoundment yard is a 1991 Holden Statesman, seized after being driven by a 16-year-old Yarraville boy in Blenheim Rd, Newport, on August 29.

WEST'S EXPANSION OUTSTRIPS TRANSPORT

Maribyrnong Weekly— 19th October 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wests-expansion-outstrips-transport/2329054.aspx>

Close to a decade has passed since the last major changes to tram routes in the west were considered and shelved.

Yet future investment in new commercial and residential development in Maribyrnong - such as the 3000-home Defence site and the \$300million Highpoint expansion - will be undermined without a major transport overhaul, the recently released Maribyrnong Council northern Maribyrnong integrated transport strategy warns.

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

In 2002, the Department of Transport investigated a number of options for new or extended tram routes.

A copy of the 'tram plan', obtained by Greens MLC Greg Barber, shows several options for the west were ranked as "best" and "average" performing projects, based on cost to implement and run, weighed against the benefits to the community such as decongestion, urban renewal, job and business opportunities and environmental improvements.

Tram routes studied included:

Linking Altona to Footscray; Altona to Maribyrnong; an extension into the Maribyrnong Defence site; and Maribyrnong to Sunshine railway station. The council's draft strategy calls for a public transport interchange on the western side of Highpoint to connect trams and buses.

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Route 57 is in the only direct route to the city, while route 82 connects Maribyrnong with Footscray station.

Annual patronage on route 57 has grown 15per cent from 5.3million per year to 6.1million, while route 82 has grown by 7per cent from 1.4million to 1.5 million.

RMIT transport academic Paul Mees said patronage was low because service didn't go to Highpoint and service levels were worse than on any other tram line in Melbourne. "The re-routing to Highpoint should have happened 35 years ago when the centre opened. It's disgraceful that it hasn't been done ages ago," Dr Mees said.

He said best overseas cities provided "first-rate bus networks, and then the routes that should be upgraded to trams 'pick themselves' by their high, and rising, patronage".

The exception was obvious network gaps like the route 82 not going directly to Highpoint, he said.

Yarra Trams last year increased frequency in peak hours on routes 57 and extended tram services in route 82 to match first and last trains at Footscray station on the Sydenham line.

A Department of Transport spokeswoman said it had no plans to extend the tram network in Maribyrnong.

CALLING ALL KIDS

Maribyrnong Star– 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/318/story/142673.html>

IT'S all about the kids this week as Maribyrnong City Council celebrates Children's Week. The council has put on a range of events to celebrate the week, including story times, music at the library and making cupcakes and pizza Tubby the robot,

pictured with Maribyrnong councillor Martin Zakharov, will entertain the little ones in a picnic at Yarraville Gardens on 25 October.

WEST GATE PUNT WEEKDAY SERVICES BACK ON

Maribyrnong Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/west-gate-punt-weekday-services-back-on/2329061.aspx>

The West Gate Punt has resumed weekday services earlier than expected.

The punt, which has continued to run on weekends, had its weekday service cancelled in 2006 because of a lack of commuters. The weekday service was expected to resume next year after receiving \$1.4million funding in the state government budget.

The punt ferries cyclists and pedestrians across the Yarra from Spotswood to Lorimer Street in Port Melbourne.

Punt owner Rob Horner said it had resumed its services for seven days a week from last Wednesday.

He said he always believed the weekday service would resume this year. "We were confident it would start following the Ride to Work Day [held last Wednesday]. We're very happy ... over the moon."

Mr Horner said the punt would run services in mornings and afternoons to begin with. "We're hoping the [client] numbers increase once everyone knows we're running. We'll see how the cyclists react. We are hoping to eventually run 12 hours, seven days a week."

Greens MLC and punt campaigner Colleen Hartland said the community wanted the punt weekday service to resume. "The community in the west has been campaigning for years to have the government fund the punt as a public transport

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and cycling link," she said. "Cyclists and pedestrians can now catch the punt directly across the Yarra River, reducing the city ride by 10 kilometres."

Mr Horner said he was expecting a route change for next year.

Liberal Western Metropolitan MLC Andrew Elsbury has confirmed there will be a new route for the punt.

However, a spokesman for the Department of Transport said there were no plans to change the route and the punt would continue using the same boat.

The punt's weekday services will be free until November 4.

BURGLARIES UP IN FOOTSCRAY

Maribyrnong Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/burglaries-up-in-footscray-fbready/>

Footscray has the state's second-highest rate of burglaries, an RACV report shows.

Its analysis of Victorian crime statistics reveals that one in 20 homes in Footscray has been burgled in the past financial year, a significant increase from one in 34 in the previous year.

Braybrook was fifth on the list with one in 28 homes burgled, up from one in 60 the previous year.

The statistics showed the Maribyrnong police service area recorded 876 house burglaries, a 46.5 per cent rise from the previous year. But Maribyrnong's Inspector Tony Long remains positive things are turning around.

Insp Long said that since July residential burglaries had dropped 10 per cent over the same three-month period last year.

Burglary investigation and prevention has been a priority for police.

He said that along with the financial cost they caused, house burglaries also took a psychological toll on the victims.

Since CCTV cameras were installed in Footscray, Insp Long said a number of drug offenders had been arrested and charged.

He said this would help reduce the incidence of burglaries committed to support drug habits.

And what will ease concerns for western and northern communities, a "prolific burglar" was detained on Tuesday, October 11.

Maribyrnong detective Sen-Sgt Greg Hewitt said the 30-year-old man had allegedly burgled houses across Maribyrnong, Brimbank, Hobson's Bay and Fawkner over the past few months.

Sen-Sgt Hewitt said after being a suspect for some time, the North Melbourne man was seen in Sunshine by police and arrested without incident.

The accused appeared in court on Wednesday, October 12 and was remanded in custody.

FOOTSCRAY ARTS SCENE TO BELIEVE

Maribyrnong Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/footscray-arts-scene-to-believe-fbready/>

Footscray's Fringe Festival showcases have been a big hit.

The 2011 Melbourne Fringe Festival finished on October 9 and featured plenty of live performances west of the Maribyrnong River.

The Footscray Community Arts Centre came out on top at the awards night winning the Best Original Australian Work for The Waiting Place.

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FCAC director and chief executive Jennifer Barry said the show “was always going to be a winner”.

Ms Barry said the show was dedicated to one of the cast members, and 20-year FCAC member Enza Pratico, who died before the show’s season began.

FCAC also hosted Mia Stanford’s successful one-woman show, *Unclassifiable*.

The Footscray Town Hall was transformed into a theatre for a variety of shows, which Dog Theatre’s Peta Hanrahan said worked “brilliantly”, with a number of full houses.

Ms Hanrahan said the town hall’s transformation had taken Footscray to a new level in the arts world.

“The arts in the west is going to be taken a lot more seriously (now),” she said.

Mayor Sarah Carter said hosting shows at the town hall had been a major success.

“Feedback from patrons has been positive and we’d be keen to look at hosting similar events in the years to come as part of our Festival City program,” Cr Carter said.

MELTON

KURUNJANG IS MELTON'S SHIRE'S BOOM SUBURB

Melton Leader– 20th October 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/kurunjang-is-king/>

Kurunjang is Melton Shire’s biggest boom suburb, new data shows.

Median house prices in the suburb surged 13.8 per cent from \$279,500 to \$318,000 in the September quarter, bucking the statewide trend.

The latest REIV figures show the median price of a house in metropolitan Melbourne fell 2.8 per cent to \$551,000 in the quarter, while regional prices dropped 3.1 per cent to \$310,000.

Kurunjang has also grown 7.6 per cent in the past year, up from \$295,500 in September, 2010.

Also surviving the statewide real estate slump was Burnside Heights (up 5.4 per cent to \$402,500), Tarneit (up 2.1 per cent to \$370,000), Hillside (up 3.1 per cent to \$335,000) and Melton South (up 1 per cent to \$242,500).

Melton still remains Melbourne’s most affordable place to live as prices in the suburb tumbled in the last quarter.

The median house price in Melton township is \$300,000, down 4.8 per cent from \$315,000 in the July quarter.

Melton beat Werribee (\$300,200) and Cranbourne (\$317,500) as the city’s cheapest suburb.

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But despite the quarterly price drop, Melton still recorded an annual price hike, up 5.3 per cent from \$285,000 in September 2010.

Prices in Taylors Hill (down 5.6 per cent to \$480,000), Hillside (down 1.8 per cent to \$432,000) and Caroline Springs (down 0.3 per cent to \$443,500) all decreased in the September quarter.

Median unit prices also decreased across the state in the quarter, but were up 3.1 per cent in Hillside from \$324,000 to \$335,000.

MELTON MP SEES RED OVER BLACK SPOT FUNDING

Melton Leader– 20th October 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melton-mp-sees-red-over-black-spot-funding/>

Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella has slammed the State Government for claiming the credit for his Government's work.

Mr Nardella said the new government was taking the glory for a series of road improvements in the western and northern suburbs, including a \$68,000 upgrade at the intersection of Moodie and Station streets in Melton South.

In two press releases issued by Roads Minister Terry Mulder on October 5, the Government announced \$3.3 million to upgrade black spot sites in the west and north. But a day later the releases were taken down from the Premier's website.

Mr Nardella said the projects had been funded by the Federal Labor Government and the State Government was deceiving the public.

"The Baillieu Government has again tried to deceive residents in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs by claiming this was new funding, when in fact the Government has nothing to do with the project funding at all," he said.

"Less than 24 hours after the government put the media releases out they were pulled down from the Premier's website in embarrassment.

"Rather than spin, Mr Mulder should be explaining why the Government isn't delivering vital funding for a range of projects in the Melton electorate."

Mr Mulder's media adviser Larissa Garvin admitted the press releases were incorrect.

"The two releases stated a total of \$3.3 million of funding was provided by the Victorian Government, this is incorrect," she said.

"The funding is provided by the Federal Government under the Black Spot Program.

"This was a genuine mistake and the Minister for Roads Terry Mulder accepts that responsibility lies with him."

MELTON'S TABCORP PARK SHINES AT AWARDS

Harness Link– 19th October 2011

<http://www.harnesslink.com/www/Article.cgi?ID=93294>

Harness Racing Victoria congratulates Tabcorp Park on their success at last night's Community Clubs Association of Victoria (CCAV) Awards held at the RACV Club in Melbourne. Adjudged as having the Best Website and Best Training Initiative and acknowledged as the Best Community Organisation, Tabcorp Park once again confirmed their revered standing among Victorian Community Clubs.

As the CCAV's defending Club of the Year, the Melton entertainment complex and home of Victorian harness racing were pipped this year by the RACV Club.

Nevertheless, congratulations go to all those involved in contributing to our success in several categories of what are extremely competitive awards.

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STRATEGIC PLAN RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC

Harness Racing Victoria has today publicly released its new Strategic Plan in full. The release follows Industry Forums conducted on the nights of 17 and 18 October at Bendigo and Ballarat respectively.

A combined total of 100 participants attended the Forums where Chairman Ken Latta, CEO John Anderson and COO Brant Dunshea presented the Strategic Plan and took questions from the floor.

The Strategic Plan is now available for viewing on the Victorian Industry Pages of the website at <http://www.hrv.org.au/vic-industry>.

ONE FOR THE KIDS

Melton Star– 19th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/318/story/142561.html>

Melton Shire residents can keep their children entertained next week as the community celebrates Children's Week.

Children's Week will be celebrated nationally from 22–30 October and coincides with Universal Children's Day on Wednesday 26 October.

To mark the special week, Melton Shire Council has organised free community events to celebrate the important role children play within families, their communities and within society.

Mayor Justin Mammarella encouraged all families to take part in the free activities and spend time with their family.

"It is a time to recognise and celebrate the importance of children in our community," Cr Mammarella said.

Families are invited to take part in the "Let's Move" Family Day at Melton Community Hall on Wednesday 26 October from 12–2pm.

The event will include free activities for families and children aged up to six years old including face painting, fun and games, a sausage sizzle, African drumming and arts and crafts.

Other events happening across the shire include fairies and arts and crafts activities. For more information residents can contact on 9747 7200.

MELTON HIGHWAY CAMPAIGN GATHERS SUPPORT

Melton Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melton-highway-campaign-gathers-support/>

Community heavyweights have thrown their support behind the Melton Leader's campaign to duplicate the Melton Highway.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella and Melton police Inspector Mario Fiorentino have both backed the call.

Cr Mammarella said Melton Council "wholeheartedly supports" a campaign for duplication of the road and would continue to lobby the State Government about transport issues in the municipality.

"Council has been strongly advocating for duplication of the Melton Highway for years," Cr Mammarella said. "The State Government needs to provide infrastructure that matches our continuous fast growth. Every accident on this road is one too many and I urge everyone to drive safely and don't speed or drink drive."

Insp Fiorentino said the road was one of its "highest road safety priorities".

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

21st October 2011



"We have been working hard with our various partners in shire and government to look at ways to mitigate those risks," he said. "Duplication of the Melton Highway would alleviate many of those risks and concerns."

VicRoads last week said duplication of the highway was not on its agenda, but safety improvements were being investigated.

Angela Scothern told Leader's Campaign to duplicate the Melton Highway Facebook page she was still suffering the physical and mental effects of an accident on the highway in 2005. "How many more people have to have severe injuries or worse, lose their life?" she wrote. "It's been almost six years since my accident and yet people have died there recently. Why the hell isn't something being done?"

CALL FOR CALM OVER BACCHUS MARSH MINE

Melton Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/call-for-calm-over-bacchus-marsh-mine/2329445.aspx>

The mining company searching for coal in Bacchus Marsh has called for calm among worried residents, saying the better-than-expected results announced on Monday don't mean a mine will be built, and any application to develop a mine would be more than five years away.

In a statement to the stock exchange, Mantle Mining announced that preliminary results of the coal properties had exceeded expectations.

But Mantle's exploration manager, Callum Lamont told the Moorabool Weekly that samples from the first two bore holes alone could not indicate if the coal met the company's needs.

"We need to complete all 15 bore holes to be in a position to report on the resource to the standard required," he said. "Anything before that is speculation."

The company has drilled four holes around Parwan, Rowsley and Maddingley as part of a 15-hole exploration program.

The total cumulative coal thickness of 146 metres found in the first two holes was a 25 per cent jump on the 116 metres initially expected.

Mr Lamont said geologists were testing the coal for moisture, sulphur, and chlorine and burn ability to determine if it was suitable for its intended coal-drying technique.

But Mantle may still scrap its plans in the region if the coal is found to be unsuitable, he said.

Mantle Mining is in the early stages of exploration in the area and eventually plans to begin an open-cut mine to export the coal to India.

Last night, environmental lawyer Nick Croggan met with up to 150 worried Bacchus Marsh residents to help them thwart plans to start open-cut coal mining in the area.

Mr Croggan, a solicitor at the Environment Defenders Office, explained the fine print about exploration leases and how residents can object if Mantle applies for a mining licence.

While the Mining Act does not specify grounds on which people can object, Mr Croggan said concerns often related to effects on the environment and farmland.

"There are serious planning issues about mining where land would be better used for agricultural purposes, and landowners can seek that their land be exempt.

"Many of the good areas for mining line up with the food-bowl areas and some of the prime farming land in the state."

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But Mr Lamont said the escalating community campaign against its drilling program was “premature”.

Drawing up a mining plan or applying for a licence would be more than five years away, he said.

“We’re only looking to see what sort of coal is there and once we find out we’ll report to the community and expect to go into discussions about how to go forward,” he said.

“Even at the end of the 15 bore holes, we’re still at an ‘inferred resource status’, which simply suggests the resource might be there, and no one will take notice of that in terms of financing or planning a coal mine.”

He said it would take at least three years for Mantle to reach the next stage.

Environment Victoria safe climate co-ordinator Victoria McKenzie-McHarg said Mantle’s exploration lease was typical of exploration and mining projects across the state that “slip under the radar” every year, and community concern was justified.

“Nobody goes around spending millions of dollars drilling holes in the ground for fun. They’ve got an expectation that if they find something, mining permits will follow,” she said.

MELTON SHIRE'S BRIGHT OUTLOOK

Melton Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-shires-bright-outlook/>

A boom in the rental and real estate industry helped Melton Shire businesses net \$3.2 billion last year.

There was a \$7.7 million increase in the amount of revenue made by Melton Shire businesses from January 2010 to January 2011, the council’s economic strategy shows.

While manufacturing and construction continued to feature high on the list of the shire’s top earning industries, rental, hiring and real estate services were the second highest in 2010, contributing \$584.3 million to the economy.

About \$608.7 million in goods and services were exported by Melton Shire businesses in the year.

The manufacturing industry led the way, accounting for more than \$300 million of regional exports.

Some of the shire’s top manufacturers included MHG Plastic Industries, Abey Australia, Saizeriya Australia and Airport Doors.

The report showed there were 6662 businesses registered for GST in the shire last year, up from 3912 in 2006. The building industry boomed, with total investment across the shire reaching \$576.9 million, accounting for 3.6 per cent of Melbourne’s residential building activity.

Melton Council planning and development general manager Luke Shannon said new estates like Atherstone would see continued growth over the next 12 months.

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"It is anticipated that Melton Shire's percentage of total Melbourne construction activity will increase markedly over the coming years as the shire accommodates Melbourne's population growth," Mr Shannon said.

The report showed the shire had an annual growth rate of 7.4 per cent from 2005 to 2010, making it Australia's fastest growing region. The shire's present population is 118,000, 8000 more than the same time last year.

"In light of the revised Urban Growth Boundary, it is expected the shire will continue to maintain exceptional population growth over the next 20 years, with significant residential, commercial and industrial Greenfield development to follow," Mr Shannon said. "This will increase consumer and commercial demand, resulting in jobs creation and increased economic self sufficiency for the region."

PET ADOPTION RATES DOGGONE GREAT

Melton Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/pet-adoption-rates-doggone-great/2327377.aspx>

Animal rescue networks have praised Moorabool pound as a "model" centre.

The pound, which has a low euthanasia rate, promotes animal adoption through a Facebook page and rescue website Pet rescue, and was featured in the Pedigree Pal Adoption Drive video Underdogs.

"They have a really good save rate," Jyl Hershman-Ross, an animal behaviourist with rescue group Forever Friends, says in the video.

Compliance officer Kassie Loader said the pound had acquired its good reputation by being proactive.

"Nearly all of our dogs are listed up for adoption early on. It's also about using networks. If we get really full we use other animal rescue groups to assist. Social

networking is incredible; people share pages and links and the amount of people it reaches is great."

The pound uses local vets to adopt out kittens and utilises foster carers and behaviour training for animals taking longer to re-house.

All animals are de-sexed, micro-chipped and have their temperament assessed.

A spokeswoman from Pet rescue said they were proud to be associated with the pound.

"The staff are amazing and really care for the animals that come into care."

Trish Burke, of animal shelter Pet's Haven, said staff at the pound "knew their animals and their history well".

"They brought in a ginger cat once and he was really, really timid. Usually a pound would euthanize that animal. But they [knowing cat's history] said pat him and he purrs. He ended up being a great cat."

Council spokesman Phil Weir said people travelled from across the state to adopt from the pound.

According to the Department of Primary Industries, an estimated 50,000 dogs and 35,000 cats are killed each year in Victoria.

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FRINGE-DWELLING PROBLEMS NOT PERIPHERAL

Melton Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fringedwelling-problems-not-peripheral/2327370.aspx>

Residents in outer growth towns from Bacchus Marsh to Ballan face a shortage of nearby jobs and services, prompting calls for the state government to inject more money into the area.

Moorabool mayor Pat Griffin said the Lerderderg library had been the first new public building in Bacchus Marsh for more than 50 years, and he feared government investment was not keeping pace with the shire's population boom.

He said investment in local jobs and services was essential for the growing number of poorer families looking for affordable home-ownership in Moorabool and for people from metropolitan areas making a tree-change to quieter communities.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Moorabool's population continues to grow by nearly 3 per cent a year.

But more than 55 per cent of the working population is employed outside the shire, mostly in Melbourne or Ballarat.

Cr Griffin said more than 300 local jobs could be created and access to healthcare boosted if the state government chose to fund a \$70 million upgrade of the Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital instead of a \$1billion new hospital in Melton.

To ensure healthcare, jobs and education were not stretched even further, Cr Griffin suggested Bacchus Marsh's growth boundaries be capped, preventing new housing estate "ghettos" on the outskirts.

The mayor was speaking after a report prepared for the National Growth Areas Alliance of Councils (NGAAC) found outer growth areas rated poorly in local employment rates, job opportunities and access to health and education compared to inner-metropolitan suburbs.

Residents were also generally younger, employed in relatively "low-value" service industries like retail and construction, earned lower incomes and were highly dependent on private transport.

Report authors Andrew McDougall and Vigneshwar Maharaj concluded that the benefits of creating jobs and improving infrastructure in fringe areas dramatically outweighed the costs, which they acknowledged would be considerable.

Mr McDougall said the inequities were similar across Australia's capital cities.

The report was commissioned by the NGAAC to help its campaign for increased funding for jobs and infrastructure.

Moorabool's Centre for Families and Children manager, Paul Huggett, said family support services were strained and falling short of demand as the area's population grew.

He said problems such as unemployment, family breakdown, domestic violence and drug abuse would rise as younger, poorer families were drawn to the area.

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REGIONAL HOSPITAL BUCKS BABY BOOM

Melton Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/regional-hospital-bucks-baby-boom/2327362.aspx>

Maternity services in growth areas such as Bacchus Marsh, Melton and Brimbank are under increasing pressure, an Auditor-General's report has revealed.

More than 200 women have been forced to give birth in Sunshine Hospital's emergency ward in the past five years due to an unprecedented demand on maternity services.

The Maternity Services: Capacity Report, tabled in State Parliament last week, revealed 219 babies had been born in the hospital's emergency department since 2006.

The report found the Health Department was told last October of a dangerous increase in the number of emergency department births.

However, the CEO of Djerriwarrh Health Services, which runs Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital, said it was bucking the trends noted in the report.

Bruce Marshall said it would be some time before the hospital would reach capacity.

While there had been a significant increase in the number of births, with 850 births expected in 2011-12, the hospital had "recognised the population growth" and recently recruited an extra obstetrician to support midwives and other medical staff.

Mr Marshall said the maternity ward was a "sought-after" place to give birth, with mothers travelling from Melton, Werribee and Sunbury.

However, he stressed that Djerriwarrh dealt only with non-complicated births.

Higher-risk births were referred to Sunshine or Ballarat hospitals.

Hospital chairman and Moorabool councillor Michael Tudball said rather than having women giving birth in emergency rooms, the hospital was delivering in specialist suites.

He said the hospital could double the number of births each year if recurrent funding was provided.

"The infrastructure is there; we just need more funding for resources."

The Auditor-General's report, which recommended six ways to improve services, found the Health Department had known about the increasing pressure on Sunshine Hospital's maternity services since as early as April 2005.

Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said it was working with the department to create extra birthing services.

"Maternity services within Sunshine Hospital are facing the greatest pressures of any metropolitan maternity service," she said.

BACCHUS MARSH AVENUE ALL IN GUY'S HANDS

Melton Leader– 18th October 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/bacchus-marsh-avenue-all-in-guys-hands/>

The fate of the Bacchus Marsh Avenue of Honour now lies in the hands of Victorian Planning Minister Matthew Guy.

Heritage Victoria says a Heritage Council report on the future of the avenue was set to be sent to Mr Guy by the end of last week.

The Heritage Council advises the Minister on cultural heritage matters.

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Mr Guy will now make the final decision on a proposed roundabout and the loss of nine trees on the historic Avenue of Honour, regarded as one of Victoria's most significant avenues.

Each elm tree is dedicated to a soldier who served in World War I. It's claimed many of the trees are in poor health due to the amount of heavy vehicle traffic using the avenue.

VicRoads and Moorabool Council both appealed Heritage Victoria's earlier ruling to reject plans for a roundabout diverting traffic from the Avenue of Honour/Woolpack Rd intersection to the Western Highway.

A three-day Heritage Council appeal hearing concluded on June 24. However, it has taken almost four months for the final report to be submitted to the minister.

Heritage Victoria said the hearing had raised many complex issues which had contributed to the delay.

Moorabool Mayor Pat Griffin said he was relieved to hear that the report was finally being sent to the Minister. "Let's hope this will bring this matter to a conclusion one way or the other, but hopefully in our favour," Mr Griffin said.

"Four months is a long time to wait, even though I agree that it is a complex issue.

"It took less time to split the atom, but let's hope that the Minister will now make a speedy decision."

Dr Damien Strangio from the Avenue of Honour Preservation Group said he hoped the long delay in submitting the report might work in its favour.

"We did present a lot of evidence so I hope they don't see it as a clear-cut case," Dr Strangio said. "Hopefully, the Minister will now do the right thing and rule in our favour.

"This was always about trying to maintain an intact Avenue of Honour for our children and our grandchildren."

BALLARAT MP DEFIES CARBON TAX ATTACKS

Melton Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/ballar-at-mp-defies-tax-attacks/>

BALLARAT federal Labor MP Catherine King has hailed the passage of the carbon tax legislation through the House of Representatives.

But Nationals Leader Warren Truss publicly "named and shamed" Ms King as one of 74 MPs who voted for the carbon tax and deserved to be held to account for their actions.

A proud Ms King said the Government's plan included a household assistance package that will deliver pension and family payment increases and tax cuts to assist households with the modest cost of living impact of a carbon price.

"A family with two children with a total annual income of \$85,000 is expected to face average price increases of \$570 per year due to the carbon price," she said.

"They will receive assistance of around \$948 per year through tax cuts and increased family assistance payments."

Out of 56,000 taxpayers in the Ballarat region, Ms King said about 48,000 will receive a tax cut.

"Tony Abbott and the Coalition have voted to try and stop households from getting this financial assistance and if he becomes prime minister, Mr Abbott has confirmed that he will claw back these payment increases and tax cuts," she said.

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Mr Truss released his "roll call of shame" saying the Government was deliberately setting this nation on a course to weaken our economy, strip it of its competitive edge and shed tens of thousands of Australian jobs.

MOORABOOL RESIDENTS GET HELP TO SHAFT MINE

Melton Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moorabool-residents-get-help-to-shaft-mine/2327373.aspx>

A Melbourne environmental lawyer will meet with worried Moorabool residents tonight to help them thwart plans to start open-cut coal mining in the area.

Up to 150 people are expected to hear Nick Croggan, of the non-profit Environment

Defenders Office, explain the fine print about exploration licences, mining licences and the objection process.

Moorabool Environment Group secretary Deb Porter said she had organised the meeting after being flooded with phone calls from residents, asking about their rights and how they could prevent coal mining on their doorstep.

For two months, Mantle Mining has been drilling at four sites around Rowsley, Parwan and Maddingley in search of brown coal.

The Department of Primary Industries approved Mantle's exploration licence, covering a 38,000-hectare area across eastern Moorabool, but residents had not been aware of a public notice seeking community objections.

The exploration licence permits the company to search the area, but it would not be able to extract coal without applying for a mining licence.

Mr Croggan said the laws surrounding exploration licence applications were slack, and permits could often go unnoticed.

"There's very little requirement to advertise. The only requirement is to put a small notice in the newspaper, which passes people by very easily," he said.

But applications for mining licences had "slightly tighter" regulations, giving people greater opportunity to object.

While the Mining Act does not specify grounds on which people can object, Mr Croggan said concerns often related to effects on the environment and farmland.

"There are serious planning issues about mining where land would be better used for agricultural purposes, and landowners can seek that their land be exempt.

"Many of the good areas for mining line up with the food-bowl areas and some of the prime farming land in the state."

FRINGE-DWELLING PROBLEMS NOT PERIPHERAL

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HOONS DEFIANT AS CARS SEIZED

Melton Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/hoons-defiant-as-cars-seized/2327364.aspx>

The message about responsible driving is still not getting through to Melton's hoon drivers, despite the introduction of tougher penalties in July, police say.

Under the legislation, vehicles can be seized for 30 days for a first offence.

So far this year police have seized 77 vehicles, compared to 72 in all of last year.

Melton highway patrol Constable Jamie Jordan said police continued to impound cars at a high rate, with eight cars in the first 10 days of October including four last weekend.

Four people were charged with drink-driving offences in five days.

A Melton South man had his car impounded for a third time on October 1 when he was caught "drifting" around a roundabout at the intersection of Bulmans Road and Centenary Avenue in wet conditions.

Police chased the driver at speeds of more than 120km/h in a 60km/h zone in Bulmans Road.

They caught him when he tried to drive off the road and into a reserve along Arnolds Creek but lost control in muddy conditions.

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The man's car was impounded for 30 days. Police will apply to the court for the car to be forfeited and crushed due to its condition.

The man will be charged on summons with offences including driving while suspended, speeding, evading police, driving an unregistered car, improper use of a car and using false numberplates.

A Melton resident, Tony (not his real name) said he had not seen a change in driver behaviour since the introduction of the new laws.

He said hoon behaviour in Navan Park had stopped since gates were installed.

"But the gate has recently broken and last Saturday we were kept awake until four in the morning."

"Last week one afternoon there were a couple of hoons doing burnouts. One of them smashed his car after doing burnouts."

Tony, who said he had seriously considered moving away from the area, plans to install surveillance cameras.

REGIONAL HOSPITAL BUCKS BABY BOOM

Melton Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/regional-hospital-bucks-baby-boom/2327362.aspx>

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Bruce Marshall said it would be some time before the hospital would reach capacity.

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Hospital chairman and Moorabool councillor Michael Tudball said rather than having women giving birth in emergency rooms, the hospital was delivering in specialist suites.

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"The infrastructure is there; we just need more funding for resources."

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The Auditor-General's report, which recommended six ways to improve services, found the Health Department had known about the increasing pressure on Sunshine Hospital's maternity services since as early as April 2005.

Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said it was working with the department to create extra birthing services.

"Maternity services within Sunshine Hospital are facing the greatest pressures of any metropolitan maternity service," she said.

FRESHNESS KEY TO A BETTER KIND OF HOSPITAL FOOD

Melton Leader – 15th October 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/freshness-key-to-a-better-kind-of-hospital-food/>

Djerriwarrh Health Services is a cut above the rest when it comes to hospital food.

With 23 staff, including a full-time cook, Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital cooks 7500 fresh meals a month.

They are distributed to patients, Grant Lodge residents, Moorabool Shire's meals-on-wheels customers and two senior citizens groups.

Food services manager Archie Small said the hospital was one of a few to buck the growing trend of cook-chill food.

Instead, it opted to source local produce and make freshly cooked meals each day.

He said the fresh food provided people with a better tasting and higher quality meal. Cooking from fresh also meant staff knew what was going into each meal.

Mr Small said the menu, which is being overhauled with input from dieticians, focuses mainly on the likes and dislikes of Grant Lodge residents.

"This is their home, they are residents and we need to make sure they enjoy what they are eating and have variety," Mr Small said.

He said all the vegetables used at the hospital were locally produced and 60 per cent of meat used came from local producers. Mr Smith said in the 16 years he had been with DjHS, there had only been four minor complaints about the food.

The kitchen also has seven audits each year.

"Food safety is very important and strict to us," he said.

"There are no grey areas, only black and white in, food safety."

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MOONEE VALLEY

PRINCIPALS PLEAD FOR VCAL FUNDING RESTORATION

Moonee Valley Leader– 19th October 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/principals-plea-for-vcal-funding-restoration/>

Concerned school principals and community organisations have published an open letter to Premier Ted Baillieu urging the Government to reinstate the \$48 million cut from the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program.

Australian Education Union (AEU) branch president, Mary Bluett said more 130 public, secondary and special school principals and community organisations had signed the letter in a bid to protect the futures of 20,000 Victorian students who undertake VCAL programs every year.

"Following last week's announcement that the State Government has a surplus of \$571 million and reports that senior State Government bureaucrats received \$4 million in bonuses last financial year, the Premier has no excuse but to act quickly to restore funding to this critical program," she said.

"This is a strong show of unity from principals and community leaders from across the State who understand that VCAL is crucial in keeping disengaged students who may otherwise abandon their education, in school."

The AEU held urgent talks with the Premier's office last week but said the Government showed no willingness to change its mind.

Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) chief executive Cath Smith said VCOSS was concerned that the cuts to VCAL would undermine the Government's election

commitment to improve school retention rates, particularly in rural and regional areas, where retention rates already lag behind the city.

"Most VCAL students would not continue their learning in the VCE stream; a vocational option is critical to keeping them engaged. VCAL has demonstrated its success at improving retention among this group," Ms Smith said.

The letter, published in a number of newspapers, is entitled 'hands off our hands-on learning' and states "This hands-on program gives our students the skills employers are looking for - practical work-related experience and literacy, numeracy and personal skills essential for life and work. It has been proven to keep kids in school and other learning institutions.

"Your decision to cut \$12m per year will force many of us to make the hard decision to cut back or discontinue VCAL programs or cut other programs."

Leader has sought a response from the Education Minister's office.

MOONEE VALLEY'S GREEN REGISTER

Moonee Valley Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valleys-green-register/2326226.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council has compiled a list of local businesses providing 'green' products and services.

The aim of the list is to help residents and businesses to travel, build, live and work more sustainably.

Mayor John Sipek said the council had so far found more than 50 businesses in Moonee Valley providing different goods or services to help people protect the environment.

"These businesses provide all different 'green' goods and services," he said.

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"For example, some products may be made with less water, materials or chemicals, and some services may help to reduce the energy use in the home or workplace."

JOBS 101: CHEFS GET WORK ON A PLATE

Moonee Valley Leader– 18th October 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/chefs-get-work-on-a-plate/>

AFTER a successful cook-off, WPC Group will place 20 apprentice chefs in some of Melbourne's best restaurants during the next six months.

Inspired by Leader Newspapers' Jobs 101 campaign, to create 101 jobs in 101 days, wannabe chefs from across Melbourne were given a taste of life in a commercial kitchen when they battled it out at the recent Culinary Cook-Off at William Angliss.

Under the watchful eye of State Skills Minister Peter Hall, participants were given 90 minutes to present a perfectly roasted chicken breast on couscous with a salad of julienne vegetables, mixed herbs and pomegranate molasses.

Judge Simon Keel, from RACV City Club, said there was a huge variety of culinary skills on show and he was very impressed.

"There are a couple of people that I would give an apprenticeship in my kitchen any day," he said.

Participants were scored out of 25 on hygiene, preparation, knife skills, presentation and, most importantly, taste.

Somalian-born Hilule Osman, 21, was hand-picked on the day and offered an apprenticeship at the Hotel Grand Chancellor.

Ten more have been in meetings with WPC Group - Leader's partner in the Jobs 101 campaign - and are expected to start their chef apprenticeships this week.

Another nine are still completing their VCE and will start next year.

WPC Group chief Nicholas Wyman said there was a huge demand for chefs in Melbourne.

ORMOND PARK MASTER PLAN WELCOMED

Moonee Valley Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/ormond-park-master-plan-welcomed/2326036.aspx>

Tenants at sports precinct Ormond Park have welcomed Moonee Valley Council's draft master plan for the site.

The master plan has been released for public comment and outlines a long-term vision for the park.

The Essendon Royals Junior Soccer Club, Moonee Valley Cricket Club and Moonee Valley Football were consulted about the plan, as were public users and neighbouring residents.

Soccer club president Maurice Muccio, who feared playing space at the park would be reduced, is pleased the two ovals will remain.

Mr Muccio said his club had more than 500 registered players and needed all the playing space possible.

"We spend \$30,000 on our outside grounds, it's a big operation."

Included in the draft are plans to upgrade the park entrances and public toilets, improve access to the Moonee Ponds Creek trail and surrounding open space, adding new circuit paths and exercise stations around the ovals and increasing collecting water for sports field irrigation.

Moonee Valley Cricket Club spokesman Charlie Walker said he was pleased to see investment in the park.

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"It probably doesn't need anything radical but generally we are supportive of anything that improves that facility, not just for cricket but for other sports clubs as well - it's something we are pleased to see."

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said the council was still keen to receive feedback from park users.

The draft master plan is available at Moonee Valley Council and can also be viewed at the Civic Centre, 9 Kellaway Avenue, Moonee Ponds.

CARBON TAX LAW 'A GREAT FIRST STEP'

Moonee Valley Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/carbon-tax-law-a-great-first-step/2326035.aspx>

The passing of the carbon tax bills last week is a "great first step", according to Moonee Valley Climate Action group spokesman Richard Keech.

The 18 bills were narrowly passed in the lower house in Canberra last Wednesday, paving the way for a price on carbon from July 1.

Moonee Valley Climate Action Group has played an active role recently, campaigning for residents to accept the realities of climate change.

Mr Keech predicted that much of the opposition to the carbon tax would now die down.

"My attitude is the carbon price measures don't actually go far enough but this is a good first step.

"Once the scheme is up and running people will wonder what all the fuss was about."

Mr Keech said Australia had a responsibility to get serious about climate change because it had fallen behind other countries.

"[With the carbon tax] there will be a small increase in electricity bills, less than 10 per cent, but even if they [bills] do go up it's a small incentive then to help focus people's minds on the need to be more sustainable."

Moonee Valley environment and conservation portfolio holder Cr Shirley Cornish had mixed feelings about the carbon tax.

She expected the tax would have its greatest impact on older and disabled residents.

"The emphasis of the new policy should be on education not penalties."

Western Region Environment Centre director Harry van Moorst said there had been plenty of local support for putting a price on carbon.

"The reality is we can't keep living the way we are and save the planet at the same time; it's a total contradiction."

The carbon tax bill is likely to be voted on in the Senate next month where Labor and the Greens have the numbers to assure its passage.

CUP CARNIVAL SELLERS WANTED

Moonee Valley Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/cup-carnival-sellers-wanted/2326034.aspx>

Vision Australia's Seeing Eye Dogs are this year's Melbourne Cup carnival charity partner.

Seeing Eye Dogs Australia lapel pins will be available to buy on each day of the carnival.

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Funds raised will go towards the \$5.5 million redevelopment of SEDA's breeding and training centre in Kensington.

SEDA is looking for volunteers to work as pin sellers on race day mornings.

To register your interest or to buy a lapel pin, visit visionaustralia.org

COX PLATE MAY ATTRACT TOWER PROTESTERS

Moonee Valley Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/cox-plate-may-attract-tower-protesters/2326032.aspx>

Moonee Valley racecourse chief executive Michael Browell is expecting objectors to a multimillion-dollar redevelopment of the course to take action at Saturday's Cox Plate meeting.

Moonee Valley residents are ramping up their opposition to the controversial proposal which includes transforming the car park into four 20-storey residential towers and relocating the grandstand.

A small but vocal group of residents protested against the proposal on the steps of State Parliament last week.

Many householders around the racecourse, including those in Thomas, McPherson and Watson streets, have put up anti-development signs in their front yards.

The Essendon Historical Society has asked that a heritage order be placed on the racecourse so that a full study of its significance can be undertaken before any plans are approved.

McPherson Street resident Helene Robson said the scale, size and design of what the racing club was proposing was incongruous with the surrounding area.

"What are proposed points to the heart of the problems with our planning system," she said.

"If you redesign a city it should be with concern for the welfare of all.

"That's what these inner city suburbs should exemplify; this development does not.

"This is development out of control, it's greed and the pursuit of money becoming the God we worship rather than pursuing a cohesive society."

John Westwood also objects to the proposal.

He said there were many historical aspects of the racecourse site that needed preservation, including an garden designed by Edna Walling, who was one of Australia's most influential landscape gardeners.

"It seems they [racecourse management] have no respect even for what they have themselves."

A master plan of the controversial development is expected to be lodged with Moonee Valley Council next month.

VISION AUSTRALIA EXPANDS IN KENSINGTON

Moonee Valley Weekly– 18th October 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/vision-australia-expands-in-kensington/2326031.aspx>

A \$5.5 million redevelopment of Vision Australia's Kensington headquarters will triple the organisation's ability to meet a growing need for its services.

The organisation expects to release final designs of the redevelopment next month.

It plans to call for tenders immediately so it can start building in January.

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The organisation's Macaulay Road building is the national base of Seeing Eye Dogs Australia and is becoming increasingly inadequate because of a rising demand for guide dogs.

Vision Australia general manager Leigh Garwood said there was a two-year waiting list for a Seeing Eye dog.

The new facilities would be three times the size of its current building and would allow the organisation to breed and train three times more dogs to help reduce that waiting list.

Mr Garwood said Vision Australia did not receive government funding and was relying on donations and fund-raising to pay for the project.

He said despite the project being in its early days it was "full steam ahead".

"Our organisation is so committed if we had no further funds we would still go ahead. We rely on special charities, philanthropic trusts and donations.

"We are very committed; the need is so high and so great that we will go ahead with it."

Mr Garwood said the Centre for Eye Research recently predicted that the number of blind people living in Australia would double to 600,000 in the next nine years because of an increasing diabetes epidemic, people living longer and increased rates of macular degeneration.

Vision Australia's redeveloped Kensington base will include accommodation for the blind while they train to handle guide dogs.

There will also be a Braille training program and a children's section.

"Demand for our services is incredible and this facility will give us all these options - it will be open to the public and a bit of a showpiece to the community to see what we can do," Mr Garwood said.

MOONEE VALLEY SPORTS CLUBS IN THE MONEY

Moonee Valley Weekly – 18th October 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-sports-clubs-in-the-money/2326229.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council has approved \$60,000 funding to three sports clubs.

The grants were made as part of the council's recreation capital works funding scheme.

Doutta Stars Cricket Club will receive \$29,000 to build a storage area; North West Rugby League Club gets \$26,000 to build a retaining wall and improve entry to the ground; and Strathmore Tennis Club will receive \$5000 to upgrade its kitchen.

Mayor John Sipek said the grants were great news for the three clubs and for the many other clubs that used their facilities.

MOONEE VALLEY TOY LIBRARY READY TO OPEN

Moonee Valley Weekly – 18th October 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-toy-library-ready-to-open/2326042.aspx>

After 12 months of hard work, the dream of a small group of parents will be realised when the Moonee Valley Toy Library opens its doors on November 16.

More than 800 toys have been collected and catalogued for all Moonee Valley families to share.

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Toy library secretary Fiona Ward says enthusiasm for the concept has steadily grown with a significant number of people signing up as members and a 10 per cent surge in "friends" on the library Facebook page.

"We have a great age range of toys, from rattles for newborns and tiny babies to mega Lego and Meccano for 5-6-year-olds. We are certainly pleased; we've been waiting 12 months for this."

The toy library is at 129 Lincoln Road, Essendon.

VCAT APPROVES GLASS ST DEVELOPMENT

Moonee Valley Leader— 17th October 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/residents-cant-stop-three-storey-development/>

Essendon residents are disappointed they were unable to overturn a council decision for a three-storey development near Glenbervie station.

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal last month upheld the decision of Moonee Valley Council to grant a permit for the development at 1-5 Glass St.

VicTrack was given approval in March for the proposed building.

The plans show shops at ground level and six flats above.

Hesseldon St Residents Margurite Saw said the proposal was "out of character" and unsympathetic with the streetscape.

The building will have no on-site parking, with occupants encouraged to use public transport. Ms Saw said the lack of parking would bring more traffic into surrounding streets, which were already busy with railway commuters.

VicTrack general manager of property Tania Orr said 10 new parking spaces would be built on railway land on the eastern side of the station. "The development will

improve public safety in the railway station precinct and provide affordable apartments right on the doorstep of public transport," Ms Orr said.

VicTrack is expected to advertise later this month for expressions of interest to develop the site.

HOON FIGURES REVEALED

Moonee Valley Leader— 17th October 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-hoon-figures-revealed/>

Moonee Valley police impound at least one hoon vehicle every five days, police figures reveal.

The city had 17 vehicles impounded after three months of new hoon laws, putting it outside the state's top 20.

The hot spots were Brimbank and Hume, which topped the list with 86 and 47 vehicles seized.

Fawkner highway patrol Leading Sen-Constable Charie Cockroft-Basham said the problem was not as big in Moonee Valley as neighbouring municipalities.

"There are certainly always going to be issues in Moonee Valley - however it's not a huge, huge problem," Sen-Constable Cockroft-Basham said. "It's not that we aren't patrolling or catching them."

She said drag racing was more common in industrial areas in Hume and Brimbank. But highway patrol officers were as focused on Moonee Valley streets despite its low numbers.

"We're always out there watching and if you decide to drive in this way, you will be caught," Sen-Constable Cockroft-Basham said.

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She said issues such as drink-driving were more significant in Moonee Valley and Moreland.

Legislation applied in July enables police to impound vehicles for 30 days.

In three months since, police impounded 1038 vehicles statewide.

Since the first hoon laws started in 2006, 238 vehicles have been impounded in Moonee Valley.

2012 PLATES TO HAVE SAFETY THEME

Moonee Valley Leader— 17th October 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/2012-plates-to-have-safety-theme/>

Want to see your number plate idea all over the road? Now is the time.

Premier Ted Baillieu announced yesterday that the new plates, to roll out next year, will have a safety theme.

“What better place to reinforce road safety messages than on number plates,” he said.

Mr Baillieu said he wanted suggestions from everyone, including drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and children.

You can submit your ideas at the Premier’s website.

GARDENING GROUP PUSHES AHEAD

Moonee Valley Leader— 15th October 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/gardening-group-pushes-ahead/>

The Strathmore Community Garden group will forge ahead with plans to start planting despite failing to gain permission to do so at its preferred location.

The proposal to plant at a section of Boeing Reserve near De Havilland Ave was rejected by Moonee Valley Council last week because of objections from neighbours.

But because the council had previously approved the group’s earlier proposal to plant at another site at the reserve, near the car park and rotunda, the garden can be planted there instead.

Strathmore Community Garden secretary Chris Waltrowicz said they opted for the site at De Havilland Ave because the other site was too exposed to walking tracks.

She said the car park site wasn’t perfect, but would rather “wear it” than plant near unhappy residents.

Some of the objectors to the De Havilland Avenue block were concerned about vandalism, noise, odour, security and the impact on the natural habitat.

One objection summarised the garden as “obstructive, an eyesore, inconvenient and a target for strangers, vandals and stray animals”.

Cr Paul Giuliano said he was “perplexed” at some of the comments made objecting to the garden.

“It’s not an act of vandalism or anything other than a passionate use of the land,” Cr Giuliano said.

Ms Waltrowicz said the community garden would welcome residents and allow them to grow their own produce and share it.

The garden plan is open for community comment.

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WYNDHAM

FUN IN THE SUN FOR THE FAMILY AT WERRIBEE

Wyndham Leader– 21st October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/fun-in-the-sun-for-the-family-at-werribee/>

Youngsters have only five more sleeps until the Children's Week Picnic at Werribee Park.

The free annual Wyndham Council-funded picnic is on from 10am-4pm this Sunday.

A new event this year is a toy swap, in which children drop off up to three toys at the park for tokens, between 10am and noon, and exchange these for toys, from 1pm.

There will also be stage performances by Kung Fu Panda; roving characters, including a giant butterfly; live music; animal presentations; arts and crafts; Bollywood dancing; bowls; an over-sized snakes and ladders board game; and more.

Two years ago the picnic attracted 7000 people. It was washed out last year.

Shuttle buses will run from Werribee and Hoppers Crossing train stations every 20 minutes. Visitors can bring a picnic or buy food and drinks at the park. The picnic is expected to cost the council more than \$45,000.

The park, off K-Rd, will host Wyndham Carols by Candlelight in December.

CAMPAIGN LIGHTS UP IN WYNDHAM VALE

Wyndham Leader– 21st October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/campaign-lights-up-in-wyndham-vale/>

The campaign to improve Ballan Rd, Wyndham Vale, is now up in lights.

A flashing road sign has been erected on a private property near the road's intersection with Wollahra Rise

The sign flashes the words "Please help us fix Ballan Rd" and "Ballan Rd needs fixing now".

It also directs people to the online petition at the Facebook page "Fix Ballan Rd Now Before Someone is Killed There".

The petition now has more than 900 signatures.

Manor Lakes resident Greg Byrne kicked off the campaign two months ago.

He said the road's surface was rough and uneven, poorly lit at night and was not coping with increased residential traffic and heavy trucks.

Concerns about the safety of the road were compounded recently with news that the Barro Group had applied for Wyndham Council permission to open two new quarries in the area, potentially greatly increasing heavy vehicle traffic on Ballan Rd.

VicRoads regional director Nial Finegan told the Leader in August that VicRoads was aware of the condition of Ballan Rd and was scheduled to resurface it at six places this year.

Mr Byrne said this was not enough and that the road also needed to be widened, right-hand turning lanes and traffic lights installed at McGrath Rd, and footpaths, lighting and signs put in, particularly at the Hobbs Rd bend.

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WYNDHAM'S HOONS

Wyndham Star– 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/318/story/142714.html>

Wyndham continues to be a haven for hoons with new laws enabling police to impound cars for 30 days still not deterring dangerous driving in the area.

The Wyndham Police Service Area had 32 cars impounded under the tougher laws between July and September this year, which gave it the dubious honour of making the top 10 for impoundments in the State, according to recently released Victoria Police statistics.

Since hoon laws began 434 cars have been locked up in Wyndham, again making it number 10 on the list.

Head of Road Policing Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe said the results should send a strong message to would-be dangerous drivers.

“More than 1000 motorists have already felt the impact of tough new impoundment laws, losing their vehicle for a minimum 30 days,” Mr Walshe said.

“This should serve as a warning that police are 100 per cent committed to getting hoon and dangerous drivers off the road.”

Chairperson of the Westgate Community Road Safety Council Jim Giddings said it was up to the courts and the community to work together in order to halt hoon driving.

“It’s merely up to the courts to enforce the harsher penalties, and this is done by allowing more cars to be crushed,” Mr Giddings said.

“The community also needs to report this outrageous behaviour.

“There is an increasing number of drivers undertaking hoon driving in Wyndham and people need to be aware that reporting of hoon behaviour through Crime Stoppers is taken in confidence.”

Mr Giddings said he expected more drivers would be caught and have their cars impounded.

“I’m surprised that there are not more impounded because there is still a lot of hoon activity in Wyndham,” he said.

“The police are doing a good job but they are under resourced and a lot of hoon drivers go unreported by the community.”

HOON IMPOUNDED AGAIN AFTER JUST FIVE DAYS

Wyndham Star– 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/318/story/142718.html>

Wyndham police have impounded the car of a disqualified driver caught recklessly speeding at more than 40 kilometres over the limit in Point Cook.

At 8.25pm on 10 October, the 32-year-old was detected doing 113km in a 70 zone along Hacketts Rd.

Along with having his vehicle impounded for 30 days for driving while disqualified and facing a \$711 fee to get his car out of police custody, the man will be summoned to court for driving while suspended and exceeding the speed limit.

Wyndham Highway Patrol’s Unit Acting Sergeant Commander Graeme Crouch said the driver was caught speeding after collecting his car from “a previous 30 day impound only five days earlier”.

Acting Sgt Crouch said there was only a “small minority” of drivers in Wyndham whose vehicles have been impounded more than twice but it had happened.

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"We have had people on their third impound and have lost their vehicle for good," he said.

Acting Sgt Crouch said many drivers learned not to engage in hoon behaviour after their car was impounded for the first time, especially since the State Government amended legislation to seize their vehicles for 30 days.

"Wyndham Highway Patrol will continue to enforce road laws. We have some pretty major operations coming up, where the chances have never been so high, that if you speed, drive dangerously, recklessly, drink drive, we will get you," he said.

"There is always going to be that certain element of society who will not get the message.

"It's pleasing to see many do, but for the ones that thing they are above the law, our message is to you, as long as you choose to break the law, we will be there to enforce it. You will get caught."

Sgt Crouch said the highway patrol officers have caught drivers in Wyndham travelling at above 200km per hour, but this was not a frequent occurrence.

BACKYARD DUMPERS

Wyndham Star– 20th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/318/story/142737.html>

Wyndham's Mayor has encouraged residents to stop making a mess of their own backyards and endangering other residents by dumping rubbish throughout the municipality.

Councillor John Menegazzo said that depending on the nature of the incident, every time people dumped rubbish in Wyndham it would take Council several days to have it removed.

It comes as a shocked resident supplied photos to Star showing the extent of rubbish dumping in Wyndham Vale.

Cr Menegazzo said if the property was a vacant block owned by a resident they would be told to clean it up before the Council would take further action.

"That's the only approach to take really because otherwise people would just be dumping stuff on their blocks all the time and expecting us to clean it up for them," Cr Menegazzo said.

"If they don't conform with the notification to clean it up then Council will remove it and there would be some cost associated with that."

Cr Menegazzo said if the property was owned by the Council then it would be removed after residents notified them.

Cr Menegazzo also reminded residents of the need to keep their vacant blocks clean and the grass mowed.

Local laws require grass to be no more than a height of 150 millimetres all year round.

"These laws aim to improve the visual amenity of Wyndham, reduce fire and health hazards and improve public safety," Cr Menegazzo said.

"Unkempt vacant blocks can also become a haven for snakes, particularly in the warmer months."

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CALL FOR ALL-DAY KINDER SESSIONS IN POINT COOK

Wyndham Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/call-for-all-day-kinder-sessions-in-point-cook/2328660.aspx>

A Point Cook mother has called on Wyndham Council to consider all-day kindergarten sessions as it looks for ways to provide children with 15 hours of kindergarten each week.

From 2013, all Australian children will be required to take part in 15 hours of kindergarten a week in the year before they attend school.

Council-run kindergartens in Wyndham currently offer programs of 12 hours or 10 hours and 45 minutes a week.

To work out how to best increase kindergarten hours, the council is funding a 15-hour pilot program at Heathdale kindergarten. The state government will also fund a pilot program at Werribee's College Road Kindergarten to trial different models.

The pilots will see the 15 hours offered as three days of five hours and five days of three hours.

But Point Cook's Liz Mumby wants the council to consider two days of 7.5 hours.

While her daughter will go to four-year-old kinder next year, she will not be able to attend a council-run kindergarten because Mrs Mumby works full-time. Instead she will have to attend kindergarten at her local ABC Learning Centre which offers all-day childcare.

"I feel council should consider the demographics of the area when setting the kinder hours because a lot of people that have moved here work full-time and don't have family nearby that could take their children to kinder."

She would prefer her daughter to attend a council-operated kindergarten because it was likely she would then go to school with the same children, making the transition to school easier.

Mayor John Menegazzo said the implementation of 15-hour programs had presented challenges for the council in terms of funding, staffing, timetabling and infrastructure. This was why it was seeking feedback. "It is vital that we hear from families to ensure this transition is as smooth as possible."

Information sessions about the pilot programs will be held at the Point Cook Community Learning Centre on November 9 from 7pm and at the Youth Resource Centre in Hoppers Crossing on November 10 from 7pm. The council will also hold focus group sessions next week. Bookings: 97438122.

HOUSING ONLY OPTION FOR POINT COOK LAND, SAYS FARMER

Wyndham Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/housing-only-option-for-point-cook-land-says-farmer/2328687.aspx>

Landowners in Point Cook's green wedge have defended plans to rezone the land for housing.

The 443-hectare site between Point Cook, Hacketts and Aviation roads is the subject of a Logical Inclusions Advisory Committee investigation after being recommended for inclusion in the urban growth boundary by the state government's Growth Areas Authority.

The land, which includes Cunningham Swamp, was recommended to the GAA by Wyndham Council, which felt it was losing its environmental value.

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Point Cook residents have voiced their opposition to the proposed rezoning, believing the council should try and remediate the land. However, some landowners along Aviation Road agree the land is degraded.

Vegetable farmer Tony Miletic believes the only appropriate use for the land was housing.

"None of the land is being utilised in a productive way. No one is farming on it apart from myself. It is not viable farmland," Mr Miletic said.

WERRIBEE STREET CROSSING'S HERE TO STAY

Wyndham Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/werribee-street-crossings-here-to-stay/2328685.aspx>

The state government says it has no immediate plans to upgrade the notorious Werribee Street level crossing in Werribee, despite it being identified as one of Victoria's top priorities by the Transport Department.

While the department's list of recommended level crossing upgrade rates Werribee Street as its sixth-highest priority, it fails to rate a mention in the government's top 10, which is led by crossings in Brighton and Polwarth.

These crossings were ranked 223rd and 394th respectively by the department and are located in electorates held by Tourism and Major Events Minister Louise Asher and Roads and Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder.

In July last year, the former government opened \$3million of improvements to the Werribee and Cottrell streets intersection, with additional lanes, road resurfacing and enhanced traffic lights, signage and crossing signals.

For years, drivers have battled gridlock at the intersection with long delays caused by boom gates being down for up to 15 minutes at a time, effectively splitting the city down the middle.

Last June, Wyndham mayor John Menegazzo again called on the government to fund westerly ramps at the Duncans Road interchange to ease pressure on the intersection.

Advocacy group Committee for Wyndham has been at the forefront of a push to have level crossings replaced with grade separations.

Earlier this year, executive director Nik Tsardakis told the Weekly the city's crossings were a "disaster".

"If we're serious about safety and separation of pedestrians and vehicles from trains we've got to have proper grade separations.

"The Werribee CBD is on the south side of the railway and the growth corridor is on the north side and that's a disaster."

Opposition public transport spokeswoman Fiona Richardson accused the government of playing politics with the safety of drivers and commuters by failing to upgrade the state's busiest and most dangerous level crossings.

"Of the 10 most dangerous level crossings in Melbourne, only two have been provided with planning money in the budget. The remaining \$16.5million of planning money is being spent on crossings in Liberal-held seats, ignoring the department's independently ranked list."

However, Edmund Carew, a spokesman for Mr Mulder, reaffirmed the government's \$379million commitment to abolish Melbourne's level crossings in its first term and said its list took into account safety and congestion issues.

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A department spokesman said its list was a dynamic document. "The comparative risk of crossings will change as improvements are introduced and risks mitigated."

WYNDHAM TRAFFIC BLITZ A WAY OF KEEPING SAFE

Wyndham Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-traffic-blitz-a-way-of-keeping-safe/2328673.aspx>

Dangerous drivers will be targeted as part of a co-ordinated traffic blitz across Wyndham this weekend.

As part of Operation Crackdown, police will be on the lookout for offences including speeding, running a red light, using a mobile phone and driving without a seatbelt.

The offensive has been launched for Community Safety Month, an annual statewide event during October aimed at publicising crime prevention, personal and work safety and staying safe during an emergency.

Roadsafe Westgate community road safety council member and Wyndham councillor Kim McAliney said the council would provide support to police.

"The council's website will include details on Operation Crackdown and feature a link to Crime Stoppers to encourage residents to report any instances of antisocial driving they witness."

Community Safety Month features programs for people of all ages and interests, including a seniors' drivers' expo on October 29 from 10am–2.30pm at Victoria University's Werribee campus.

BIRTHING TREATED AS 'EMERGENCY' EVENT

Wyndham Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/birthing-treated-as-emergency-event/2328686.aspx>

Maternity services in growth areas such as Wyndham, Melton and Brimbank are under increasing pressure, an auditor-general's report has revealed.

More than 200 women have been forced to give birth in Sunshine Hospital's emergency ward in the past five years due to an unprecedented demand on maternity services.

The figures were released in the Maternity Services: Capacity report, which was tabled in State Parliament last week. It found the Health Department was informed last October of a dangerous increase in the number of emergency department births. Compounding the issue was the hospital's role as a major maternity service for two of Australia's fastest-growing municipalities, Melton and Wyndham.

Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said it was working with the department to create extra birthing services.

The auditor-general's report included a range of recommendations, including routinely monitoring capacity and a concerted focus on improving access to services in growth areas.

However, Mercy Health executive director Richard Ainley said Werribee Mercy Hospital was well-equipped to cope with the city's baby boom.

In the 12 months to July, 2065 babies were born at Werribee, 10 fewer than during 2009-10, but still nearly 300 more than 2008-09.

"The new 32-bed maternity services unit is now open and has eight more beds than the previous unit," Mr Ainley said.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"Our expanded special care nursery will open in early 2012, increasing capacity from 12 to 16 cots to care for sick and premature newborn babies."

Mr Ainley said no women had been forced to give birth in the hospital's emergency department.

A spokeswoman for Health Minister David Davis said capacity at Sunshine had grown to meet demand, pointing to eight maternity beds and the addition of two birthing rooms in 2009 and a pregnancy assessment centre last year.

SNAKES MAKE EARLY ENTRANCE IN WYNDHAM

Wyndham Leader– 19th October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/snakes-make-early-entrance-in-wyndham/>

Snake catchers already have received several calls from Wyndham residents and summer is not yet upon us.

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo said the council already had received calls reporting snakes and warned residents to be on the lookout.

Wyndham is home to tiger, eastern brown and little whip snakes.

Residents are advised to keep aviaries and other mice-attracting areas clean; check windows and door screens are secure to discourage snakes entering homes; keep grass mowed and wear shoes and gloves while gardening; remove snake hiding spots such as wood piles and old corrugated tin; stick to paths in bush or coastal areas and avoid long grass or undergrowth and be vigilant when walking dogs in such areas.

If bitten by a snake, remain calm, apply pressure, limit movement and phone 000 for urgent attention.

MAGGIE MCINNES: GONG FOR WETLAND WARRIOR

Wyndham Leader– 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/maggie-mcinnis-gong-for-wetland-warrior/2328683.aspx>

When Maggie McInnes casts her eyes over the Heathdale Glen Orden Wetlands, she does so with a sense of pride.

It's easy to understand why. The Werribee resident has played an integral role in the revitalisation of the landmark since she first arrived in the city 16 years ago.

Back then, she had been run off her feet working 12-hour days, before a visit to a friend at Heathdale Retirement Village changed the course of her life.

Although she hadn't yet reached retirement age, she knew this was where she wanted to be.

She resigned from her job, sold her house and moved to Wyndham.

Initially keen to work as a volunteer at Werribee Open Range Zoo, she was introduced to the wetlands by former mayor Karen Roberts.

"She was concerned they were going to rack and ruin," Ms McInnes says.

"It had been neglected and only had a few sad looking fences around it, so Karen came up with the idea of forming Friends of Heathdale Glen Orden Wetlands.

"I fell in love with the wetlands. It was beautiful, unusual and endangered."

At the group's first clean-up of the wetlands 14 years ago, members collected more than seven tonnes of rubbish.

"When you stood and looked out over the wetlands you could see the broken glass glittering. At our most recent clean up we collected only half a truck of rubbish," she says.

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Last week, Ms McInnes' tireless work to clean up and redesign the wetlands, and her efforts with the Heathdale Neighbourhood Association and The Smith Family, were recognised when she was named Wyndham's Citizen of the Year.

Ms McInnes, 75, says her passion for volunteering started from a young age. As a teenager in the mid-1950s, she taught craft to disadvantaged youth at the Brotherhood of St Laurence in East Melbourne.

"It was the early days of rock 'n' roll and while I was teaching them craft, they taught me how to dance. They mostly came from families with no money and it was a drop-in centre and one of the few places they could go in winter to keep warm. It gave them a real kick to be able to pass on one of their skills to somebody else."

Born in Richmond, Ms McInnes grew up in the small inner-city suburb of Hartwell and attended Methodist Ladies College in Kew.

An amateur actor and costume designer, her first foray onto the stage was in a production of the classic fairytale Puss in Boots at the age of seven.

Ms McInnes was among the first people on television when it was first broadcast into Melbourne in 1956, appearing in advertisements and a two-hour broadcast of charades on Channel Seven with her amateur theatre company.

Her involvement with the Williamstown Little Theatre started in 1970 and continues to this day.

However, her greatest passion is Heathdale.

Through her involvement with the friends group, she was asked to take part in a neighbourhood renewal program which focused on improving the estate.

"We've achieved so many things, but it wouldn't have been possible without people power."

Ms McInnes will be presented with her award at a volunteer appreciation evening next month.

However, she doesn't believe she's anything special. "Doing something for somebody else makes you feel good," she says.

WYNDHAM HOON LIST HITS 86 AND COUNTING

Wyndham Weekly— 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-hoon-list-hits-86-and-counting/2328674.aspx>

Eighty-six drivers have had their vehicles impounded for hoon offences in Wyndham since January, including two caught more than 70km/h above the speed limit.

Wyndham's Senior Constable Lawrie Carver said that of those caught, 31 were aged 21 or under, 29 were probationary drivers, 10 were disqualified and six were learners. Forty-four drivers were nabbed for speeding.

Under tougher anti-hoon laws introduced in July, vehicles can be seized for 30 days, instead of the previous 48 hours.

Repeat offenders also face court where they risk losing their vehicle for a further three months, or permanently.

The range of hoon offences has been increased to include repeat drink, drug and unlicensed driving, as well as overloading a vehicle with passengers.

Figures released last week by police revealed more than 1038 vehicles were impounded across the state during the first three months of the new laws, including 32 in Wyndham.

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Statewide, 974 were driven by men and nearly a third of drivers were aged between 18 and 21. The youngest was 14 and the oldest 85.

Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe said 294 vehicles were impounded for speeding, including 54 for travelling more than 70km/h over the limit.

The top-five regions for hoon impoundments from July to September 30 were Brimbank with 86 followed by Hume, Casey,

Monash and Bendigo, with Wyndham equal ninth with Greater Dandenong (32).

WYNDHAM VALE HOUSE PRICES BUCK TREND

Wyndham Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-vale-house-prices-buck-trend/2328684.aspx>

Wyndham Vale was among a select group of suburbs to buck the trend as house prices plummeted across Melbourne in the three months to September, new figures reveal.

Data from the Real Estate Institute of Victoria shows the average house price increased 6.1per cent to \$350,000 to be placed sixth on the list of top 10 growth suburbs for the quarter.

Both Truganina (up to 4.3per cent to \$365,000) and Tarneit (up 2.1per cent to \$370,000) recorded strong growth, along with Hoppers Crossing (up 2.1per cent to \$337,000).

In Werribee, house prices dropped 6.8per cent to \$300,200, and by 2per cent in Point Cook to \$490,000. Across Melbourne, major falls occurred in Elwood (31.8per cent), Malvern (28. 1per cent) and Cairnlea (24.7per cent).

The value of property sold in Victoria in the past financial year has declined almost 20 per cent, the largest drop in a decade. Melbourne's median house price is now \$567,500.

A Commonwealth Bank-RP Data report named the Melton and Wyndham corridors as among the best areas to sell property.

REIV chief executive Enzo Raimondo said global economic uncertainty and negative consumer sentiment had resulted in reduced demand for properties. However, the effects of surging population growth were still bolstering demand in more affordable suburbs.

"The list of suburbs recording positive growth over the quarter and on an annual basis is dominated by those priced at or below the median," he said.

LJ Hooker Werribee and Hoppers Crossing director Adrian McEvoy said many buyers were attracted to Wyndham because it offered outstanding value for money.

"In Werribee, you can get a three-bedroom house, with a double garage, two living areas on 500 square metres [for about \$300,000].

"Last year, the prices around Wyndham increased and first-home buyers started to drift to Melton and Bacchus Marsh but they're now starting to come back into the market."

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CARBON TAX MAY LIFT COUNCIL RATES

Wyndham Weekly– 19th October 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/carbon-tax-may-lift-council-rates/2328672.aspx>

While the passing of the controversial carbon tax was welcomed by environmental groups across the west, the Municipal Association of Victoria believes it's likely to force up council expenses and rates.

The 18 bills narrowly went through the lower house of Federal Parliament last Wednesday, paving the way for a price on carbon from July 1 next year.

An average household is expected to pay about \$9.90 a week in extra living costs, including \$3.30 on electricity. This will be offset by an estimated \$10.10 in extra benefits and tax breaks to about 90 per cent of households.

The bills will go to the Senate for debate but are expected to pass with help from the Greens, most likely next month.

Western Region Environment Centre director Harry van Moorst said there had been plenty of local support for putting a price on carbon. "The reality is we can't keep living the way we are and save the planet at the same time; it's a total contradiction."

A Werribee Plains Energy Research Study, completed last year, shows industry produces almost half of the 15 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted in Melbourne's west each year.

LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer warned of short-term adjustment issues but said a clean-energy economy offered long-term opportunity. "Over the years, businesses in our region have had to respond to significant fluctuations in the

Australian dollar, the global financial crisis, fringe benefits tax and the growth of China, and they've come through it remarkably well."

A spokesman for Prime Minister and Lalor MP Julia Gillard said every taxpayer earning less than \$80,000 a year would receive a tax cut, while nobody would pay more tax as a result of the new legislation.

MAGGIE MAKES MAGIC IN WERRIBEE MAGGIE MAKES MAGIC IN WERRIBEE

Wyndham Leader– 19th October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/maggie-makes-magic-in-werribee/>

A tireless volunteer for Werribee's Heathdale community has taken out the city's top honour.

Maggie McInnes, 75, was last week named Wyndham's Citizen of the Year for helping transform Heathdale's wetlands - and more.

She was a founding member of the Friends of Heathdale Glen Orden Wetlands.

The group took more than seven truckloads of rubbish from the wetlands at its first clean-up in 2000, down to half a truckload this year.

In 2003, Ms McInnes was invited to join a project to improve the disadvantaged area.

It led to the formation of the Heathdale Neighbourhood Association.

The association, representing Heathdale's 6800-plus residents, was the driving force behind Heathdale Hub.

A \$3.4 million community centre is now going up at the hub site.

The association also has campaigned against the opening of more bottle shops in the area and organises carols and festivals.

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Ms McInnes has taught English to refugees, through the Smith Family.

She also volunteers at Williamstown Little Theatre and writes newsletters for St Thomas' Anglican Church in Werribee.

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo described Ms McInnes' contribution as invaluable.

"The projects Maggie volunteers for have enormous benefits for Wyndham, as witnessed by the large volume of people that visit the wetlands each day," he said.

Ms McInnes did not know who nominated her, but was "very flattered and highly honoured".

She will be presented with a trophy next month.

WERRIBEE FIRM FIGHTS DEMAND FOR \$150,000

Wyndham Leader— 19th October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/werribee-firm-fights-demand-for-150-000/>

The company behind plans for a medical centre is fighting a requirement it pay \$150,000 for traffic measures.

The \$150,000 payment for traffic management measures either at the intersection or on the highway between Sneydes Rd and Cherry St was a condition of the Wyndham Council's approval of centre plans for the corner of the highway and Wattle Ave in August.

The company, Wyndham Property Holdings, is directed by Rosa DiNatale, wife of prominent Werribee businessman and convicted paedophile Aldo DiNatale.

DiNatale claims he cannot pay court-ordered compensation to his two victims as he is only worth \$19,900 and has many debts, including owing his own family trust \$1.3 million.

The company is fighting the \$150,000 demanded of it at the state planning tribunal, claiming it is beyond the power of the council to enforce such a condition.

The council received 80 objections to the original plans for the centre.

The company is also seeking to remove the requirement the centre be for medical and dental surgeries, including a pharmacy.

Objector Paul Doolan said he and his neighbours felt "duped" and would make submissions to the tribunal opposing the company's attempt to change the conditions of its planning permit.

"There was no mention ever of it being anything other than a medical centre," he said.

"That's why we feel absolutely duped to think that they are trying to move the goal posts."

Council chief executive Kerry Thompson said the council would defend all the conditions of the permit at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

CRIME STOP

Wyndham Star— 18th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/317/story/142484.html>

Werribee is the most dangerous out of all train stations in Wyndham and Hobsons Bay, according to crime figures from Victoria Police.

There were 113 crimes recorded at Werribee Railway Station this financial year, a large increase from the 63 offences reported in the previous 12 month period.

Statistics released to Star show there were more than 380 crimes committed between Werribee and Spotswood stations throughout 12 months.

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The offences, which police record by postcode, have Altona Meadows, Laverton and Aircraft stations at the second-highest crime rate, with 93 crimes between them.

Next were Newport and Spotswood stations on 79 offences and Hoppers Crossing with 62 crimes, lower than its 2009-2010 figure of 74.

Altona, Seaholme and Westona stations recorded 21 crimes between them, with Williamstown and Williamstown North at 18 incidents.

The safest station on the line seemed to be Altona North, with no crimes reported.

Star requested to find out the types of crimes which occurred across the railway line but was told by Victoria Police "given the low number of incidents" reasons of privacy and confidentiality prevented this.

Wyndham Police Inspector Bill Weatherly said the crimes at stations were mainly thefts from cars, "a few assaults and a number of calls for youths causing trouble".

"We have had several incidents at the railway stations where assaults have taken place, some of these are still being investigated, minor assaults mainly," he said.

Tarneit MP Tim Pallas said he was disappointed the Liberal State Government has reneged on Labor's promise to upgrade Hoppers Crossing to a premium station, staffed from first train to last.

"Not only is Hoppers Crossing a real issue, but Werribee is also now a significant issue as these figures show a substantial spike over 12 months," Mr Pallas said.

The State Government has promised to allocate Protective Services Officers (PSOs) to all Metro stations by 2014, but police command said this would not include stations without public toilets.

Wyndham Transport Advisory Committee chairman Jim Giddings there were toilets at the Hoppers Crossing station "but they are locked most of the time and only open when a staff member is there for a couple of hours during the morning".

"Hoppers Crossing unfortunately won't be upgraded to a premium station, therefore toilets will not be available and hence PSOs would more than likely not be in attendance there, so commuters are again disadvantaged with a lack of safety provisions," he said.

HIGH NOON ON STRIKE AT WYNDHAM COUNCIL

Wyndham Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/high-noon-on-strike-at-wyndham-council/>

Hundreds of Wyndham Council employees will vote at noon today on whether to stop work for eight hours.

Residents dumping rubbish at Werribee tip last Saturday were to be allowed to do so for free by council workers as part of continuing industrial action that has now plagued the council for weeks.

About 450 council employees stopped work last Thursday to attend a lunchtime protest outside the Wyndham Civic Centre.

The staff, including 36 maternal and child health nurses and 400 other workers and members of the Australian Services Union (ASU), about 50 council engineers and kindergarten teachers, have imposed work bans and held regular stop work meetings in recent weeks.

They want an annual pay rise of 4.4 per cent over four years or \$44 a week, whichever is greater.

Nurses have refused to see children aged over one year old and are asking for an increase in annual leave from four to five weeks.

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Union members have instigated work bans, including not cleaning public toilets, emptying bins or mowing parks and reserves.

ASU organiser David Beckley said council chief executive Kerry Thompson refused to attend negotiations with union representatives.

"The council has refused to include a lot of what most local government organisations would have in their agreements," Mr Beckley said.

He said this included an up-to-date dispute resolution process, clear career progression and bonuses for length of service.

"I understand a lot of the employees are also ratepayers in the community, but haven't had pay increases for years," Mr Beckley said.

Ms Thompson said the offer of a 4 per cent increase each year for three years was reasonable, taking into consideration the economic climate and the need to ensure money was spent responsibly.

"The offer is consistent with what is being offered at other councils," Ms Thompson said.

RUBBISH ACTS IN WYNDHAM VALE

Wyndham Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/rubbish-acts-in-wyndham-vale/>

Vacant blocks near a newly occupied part of Wyndham Vale are being turned into rubbish dumps.

There are piles of rubbish on two opposite blocks in Mermaid Cres.

They include mattresses, bed frames, glass, wood, boxes, clothes, furniture and TVs.

The blocks are next to new houses, either recently occupied or for rent.

There is a tip nearby.

Residents said the blocks had been used as dumps for months and that they had complained to Wyndham Council.

The council said it removed rubbish from a Mermaid Cres nature strip in June following a complaint.

It was unable to identify who dumped the items.

Last month it found rubbish dumped on private vacant land in Mermaid Cres.

The council said it was writing to the landowner asking that the land be cleaned up and was also pursuing a person alleged to be responsible for some of the dumping.

People can be fined for illegally dumping rubbish.

The council has budgeted almost \$225,000 to remove illegally dumped rubbish from council property this financial year.

WERRIBEE TODDLER HOSPITALISED AFTER DOG ATTACK

Wyndham Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/werribee-toddler-hospitalised-after-dog-attack/>

A toddler attacked by her family's pet dog in Werribee last week has been discharged from hospital.

The dog, an Alaskan malamute, has been put down.

Ambulance Victoria paramedic Michael Garland said the girl, aged 16 months, suffered a 5cm long laceration to the top of her head and a smaller one under her eye but "it could have been a lot worse".

He said the girl had not been left alone with the dog.

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Her mother was with her when the attack happened and used face washers to stem the bleeding until help arrived.

The girl was taken to the Royal Children's Hospital after the attack last Thursday just before 5.30pm.

She was discharged the next day.

Wyndham Council chief executive Kerry Thompson said council officers went to the house in Coventry Drive soon after the attack.

She said the dog was surrendered to the council by its owners and had been put down.

WELLBEING IN THE WEST

Wyndham Leader – 15th October 2011

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

Mental Health Week for the western region will take place over the next week, with events in Werribee and Point Cook.

EACH, a wellbeing and health organisation that helps people find employment, Wyndham Council and Western Region Health will host a string of events including workshops, movies, guest speakers, Thai chi and yoga.

"We hope this will create more awareness, more openness and for people to realise how common it is and how easy it is to get support," said EACH employment services regional manager Kelli Farrow.

A message board at the Point Cook Town Centre will list the week's events.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE: FREE WERRIBEE TIP ENTRY

Wyndham Leader – 14th October 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/free-entry-to-werribee-tip/>

Wyndham residents can dump rubbish at Werribee tip for free tomorrow thanks to irate council workers.

As part of the industrial action that has plagued Wyndham Council for weeks, Australian Services Union members will not charge people entry to Werribee tip tomorrow.

Hundreds of council employees will vote at noon on Tuesday on whether to stop work completely for eight hours.

About 450 council employees, including engineers, kindergarten teachers and maternal and child health nurses, stopped work yesterday to attend a lunchtime protest outside the Wyndham Civic Centre.

They want an annual pay rise of 4.4 per cent over four years or \$44 a week, whichever is the greater amount, clear career progression, more staff to be employed, long service bonuses, increased annual leave and an up-to-date dispute resolution process.

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ACROSS THE REGION

TRANSPORT FARES FACE BIG RISE

The Age— 20th October 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/transport-fares-face-big-rise-20111019-1m85f.html>

THE state government is considering a big rise in public transport fares in a move that could result in Melbourne passengers paying about \$100 million more over the next two years alone.

The price rise was originally promised by the previous Labor government to help fund its \$38 billion Victorian Transport Plan, which has been virtually scrapped by the new government.

Transport Minister Terry Mulder and the Department of Transport declined to answer questions from *The Age* about how much extra revenue the rises might generate.

Mr Mulder also refused to rule out introducing the fare increases.

In 2008 the Brumby government said it would increase the cost of public transport tickets by 5 per cent plus inflation in both 2012 and 2013 to fund its ground-breaking plan.

If implemented, this could see a zone 1 weekly myki pass rise from \$30.20 to around \$34.90 by 2013 and an equivalent zone 1 and 2 pass rise from \$51 to \$58.95.

Using Metlink's 2010 figure for ticket revenue across all metropolitan trains, trams and buses of \$615 million and the government's projected inflation figure of 2.5

per cent for 2012, Melbourne passengers will pay at least \$46.13 million more next year if the proposed price rise proceeds.

In 2013 that figure will be \$49.58 million, or more than \$95 million over two years.

But that figure is likely to be significantly higher once a fare rise introduced this year and increased patronage is taken into account.

Public Transport Users Association president Daniel Bowen said any price rise would be unfair given rising levels of patronage means services are generating more money than ever. "Melbourne commuters already pay some of the highest fares in the country," he said.

Opposition transport spokeswoman Fiona Richardson said it was unreasonable for the government to expect passengers to pay for a plan that it had scrapped.

V/LINE'S GEELONG SERVICES LATE 14 PER CENT OF THE TIME

Geelong Advertiser— 18th October 2011

http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/article/2011/10/18/286151_news.html

Passenger trains on the Geelong line continue to run late, with the latest figures showing more than one in 10 services is later than six minutes.

The September performance figures showed that only the Gippsland line, which notoriously has problems with Melbourne train congestion, performed worse than the Geelong line.

V/Line said congestion in Melbourne was again the major cause of late trains, but public transport users group Geelong spokesman Paul Westcott accused V/Line of "fudging" the figures after a recent change to the timetable.

"They slowed the timetable down to match what trains were actually doing it wasn't really slowing them down it was just slowing them down on paper," he said.

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"What that's meant is that they are able to meet their on-time running a little better, although remembering that they are still given a six-minute leeway to be on time."

Asked if he had seen figures for trains that were late but less than six minutes late, Mr Westcott said he was told there were no figures available.

V/Line spokeswoman Clare Steele said a breakdown of the figures showed trains slowed down once they reached Werribee.

"I just did the figures for our trains up to the metro boundary and we are 90 per cent on time up to the boundary, and then we lose time from there," she said.

"The second reason (for late trains) is track works that both Metro and V/Line have been doing. We have been doing sleeper replacement between Geelong and Warrnambool and that has impacted especially on Warrnambool trains that we count from Geelong into Melbourne.

"And also Metro are doing track works around Altona and Laverton, and that's slowing is down a bit in that middle section."

Ms Steele said the rest of the delays were caused by things like train faults.

The September figure of 13.6 per cent of Geelong trains later than six minutes was not helped when trains to and from Melbourne were delayed by almost three hours on September 17 due to a power failure.

V/Line again highlighted the likely benefits of having its own dedicated line into Southern Cross courtesy of the \$5 billion Regional Rail Link project, expected for completion in 2016.

The public transport users group also welcomed a call this week from the Liberal Party conference in Bendigo to have "quiet carriages" where audible speaking and loud music are banned on selected carriages.

Mr Westcott said the group had suggested the quiet carriages in the past, and although it was only a call at this stage it was a move in the right direction.

RISK OF ATTACK RISE IN NEW DOG LAWS

The Leader— 18th October 2011

<http://pakenham-cardinia-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/asu-warns-of-risk-rise-in-dog-laws/>

Residents and council workers will be at greater risk of dog attacks under new laws, the Australian Services Union warns.

Secretary Igor Grattan said new legislation allowing councils to seek out and destroy unregistered pit bulls and other restricted breeds from this week would put those who enforced it into more dangerous situations, increasing the risk of injury from dogs and their owners.

Owners unwilling to register dangerous breeds could simply "open the gate" and let "dangerous strays" on to the street, he said.

"This is an environment where members are often subject to physical and verbal assaults and even death threats," Mr Grattan said of enforcement officers.

"There have been occasions where owners have threatened to actually set their dogs on officers."

The concerns come after a Brimbank council officer was bitten on the chest and hand by a pit bull he was trying to collect from a property in Sydenham earlier this month.

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Under the new laws any dog seized that is a restricted breed will be destroyed. The union also fears councils could open themselves up to possible litigation if a dog was misidentified as a dangerous breed and destroyed.

Casey Council community safety acting manager Richard Maugueret did not answer whether it shared the union's views but said the council was participating in discussions with the Department of Primary Industries and the Municipal Association of Victoria to determine the impact of the new laws.

Mr Maugueret said the council would ask the DPI for advice and relied on DNA testing to ensure it identified dog breeds correctly.

Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh said the new laws did not change officers' risk.

HOONS PARKED

Star News Group– 18th October 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/hume/317/story/142486.html>

More than 30 cars have been impounded in the Whittlesea Police Service Area since tougher hoon laws came in to effect.

The Whittlesea PSA featured in the top 10 PSAs across the state with 33 car impoundments since July.

More than 1000 cars and motorcycles have been impounded for 30 days, as opposed to the previous 48 hour period.

The Brimbank PSA had the most impoundments with 86, followed by 47 for Hume, with the Whittlesea PSA in equal seventh place with Stonnington.

Epping Highway Patrol Acting Sergeant Matthew Bui agreed that hoon behaviour was still an ongoing issue in the area.

"Every attempt is being made to police this as much as possible, however we still rely heavily on the community being proactive with contacting crime stoppers to provide us with information," he said.

"Yes P platers are an issue but full license holders don't do the right thing either.

"All license holders should be more accountable about their driving."

In addition to the 30 day impoundment period Sergeant Bui said applications to the court can also be made for further impound periods of up to another three months.

Full license holders had the most vehicles impounded with 430 followed by probationary drivers with 283.

The age group with the most impounds was the 18 to 21 category with 322, with 974 of the total impounded vehicles driven by males compared to 64 driven by females.

Driving on a disqualified or suspended license was the top offence for impoundments followed by excessive speed of more than 45kms and improper use of a motor vehicle.

A total of 54 vehicles were impounded for speeds of more than 70kms over the limit.

The owner of one of the vehicles, a late model Mercedes, was a 35-year-old Epping man who was caught travelling at more than 100kms over the speed limit on the Western Ring Road in Thomastown late last month.

Head of Road Policing Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe said the results should send a strong message to dangerous drivers.

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“This should serve as a warning that police are 100 per cent committed to getting hoon and dangerous drivers off the road,” he said.

Mr Walshe said that speed remains the strongest focus for police, which is attributed to 30 per cent of fatal collisions on Victorian roads.

He also highlighted concerns with the 310 vehicles impounded for unlicensed driving.

“If you have been suspended or disqualified from driving it’s for a good reason.

“You will be held to account, your vehicle will be impounded, you will be summons to court and it will be expensive.”

BALLARAT COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR RAIL LINE DUPLICATION

The Herald Sun— 17th October 2011

<http://www.thecourier.com.au/news/local/news/general/ballarat-councillor-calls-for-rail-line-duplication/2326749.aspx>

A possible Melbourne to Ballarat railway line duplication will be the focus of a new Ballarat City Council report.

Councillor Noel Perry, who is on the Regional Rail Link Committee reference group, recently called for the review.

He said the upcoming electrification of the Melton railway line and the planned Regional Rail Link — which will give Ballarat trains a dedicated line into Southern Cross station — had raised new possibilities.

“Where does Ballarat fit into all this?” Cr Perry said.

“Has the city got a position on future rail usage, not only of passenger trains but freight trains as well?”

The council’s destinations and connection director, Jeff Pulford, said the report — to be developed in conjunction with the Transport Department — would also look at how Ballarat’s current system could be enhanced to meet growing demand.

“With Ballarat’s expanding population, it is critical that council forms a view as to what measures will be required to ensure access to effective commuter options,” Mr Pulford said.

“The report will focus on the possible total duplication of the Melbourne to Ballarat line, allowing more services in both directions, rather than the current situation where trains need to be scheduled around the limited number of passing loops.

“This would build on the significant enhancements expected through the Regional Rail Link.”

Cr Perry also called for Ballarat to work with Melton City Council on the issue.

“We need to justify a dual line. We need to start lobbying for it,” Cr Perry said.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

21st October 2011



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