

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

22nd JULY 2011



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BRIMBANK

CHANCE TO EAT, DRINK AND RAISE MONEY

Brimbank Leader– 20th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/chance-to-eat-drink-and-raise-money-fbready/>

Brimbank residents are invited to kick up their heels for a good cause.

The third Autism Angels Dinner Dance will be held next month to raise awareness of autism and money for the Keilor-based group. It is the only autism dinner dance in Victoria.

The dinner dance is on August 6 at the Luxor Reception Centre.

The cost is \$80 for adults and \$40 for children, which includes a three-course meal, drinks, band and children's entertainment.

Bookings are required by Friday, July 22 on 9362 1000 or autism_angels@yahoo.com

BOUNDARY SHAKE-UP: IS BRIMBANK ON THE BRINK?

Brimbank Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/boundary-shakeup-is-brimbank-on-the-brink/2231634.aspx>

The state government is rumoured to be drawing up plans for a massive shake-up of local government boundaries in the west.

A source close to the issue told the Weekly: "There's a strong push within the Coalition government to review municipal boundaries and reduce the number of councils out there."

The comment follows rumours circulating in another council that Brimbank faces being absorbed by its neighbours.

Maribyrnong Council has asked Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell to review municipal boundaries in Melbourne's west.

Cr Dina Lynch suggested the state government could consider three options: create a Greater Melbourne Council, similar to Brisbane City Council, taking in much of the inner suburbs; expand Maribyrnong to take in parts of Brimbank and/or Hobsons Bay; or merge Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Brimbank and Hobsons Bay.

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury didn't see the need for "wholesale changes" through amalgamations, but he didn't rule out "tinkering around the edges". "If there's some logical movement of boundaries to take in feelings of local communities that would be taken into account."

Municipal Association of Victoria president Bill McArthur said: "We're not encouraging the [state] government to consider any reviews of the boundaries. It's a period of consolidation for all councils after the amalgamations in the Kennett era."

The realignment rumours coincide with a Victorian Electoral Commission review of Brimbank's electoral structure.

Brimbank Council's general manager of governance and community relations, Helen Morrissey, said the government had not approached it in relation to any boundary review. She said the electoral representation review did not include a review of a municipality's external boundaries.

A public information session will be held at Errington Community Centre, St Albans, from 7pm on Monday, July 25. Submissions must be lodged by August 9 ahead of a preliminary report on August 30. More details: vec.vic.gov.au

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ST ALBANS SAFETY FIGHT STEPS UP

Brimbank Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/st-albans-safety-fight-steps-up/2231635.aspx>

Police and Brimbank Council have taken their fight to improve safety in St Albans to the streets.

Joint foot patrols by Brimbank police and council city compliance officers in the St Albans business area began last month in response to recent findings that safety was the key concern of residents living in the area.

Acting Inspector Chris Gilbert expects the patrols will continue to target the business precinct every week.

"There has been a very positive response from the general public and local traders," he said. "The joint action initiatives we had agreed to earlier this year included a proposal for council and the police to work more closely with local trader associations on safety issues in Brimbank town centres. We believe the joint patrols will contribute to public safety and awareness."

Council administrator Joanne Anderson said the council was dedicated to improving safety in Brimbank. She said a wide range of initiatives had been discussed in an April meeting with police and further action could be expected.

"Council is very much aware that our community sees a need for change in matters of safety in the municipality," Ms Anderson said.

"We expect these foot patrols to help create a safer environment for the community and traders in and around this important town centre."

St Albans Traders Association secretary Asip Demiri said police and the community needed to work together on all levels to really make a difference.

"We have been working closely with police on any issues that seem to be on the rise in the area," he said. "When they have got the manpower to be out here like this and people can see them, they definitely feel safer."

Council and police are also working together on youth programs and initiatives aimed at controlling hooning and family violence.

FASHIONING BETTER FACADES

Brimbank Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fashioning-better-facades/2231636.aspx>

St Albans businesses are being offered up to \$1000 to improve their shopfronts.

Brimbank Council and St Albans Connect are offering the one-off grants to businesses and commercial property owners in the hope of enhancing the streetscape and attracting more people to shop in the area.

The \$30,000 program will provide 80per cent funding, with applicants expected to cover at least 20per cent of the total cost of works. A bonus \$800 will be offered for the removal of existing steel roller shutters.

St Albans Traders Association secretary Asip Demiri hopes businesses will make the most of the initiative. He said the recent attention on improving St Albans was the best thing that had happened to the area for many years.

"We have finally got a vision for the future of this area. This has the potential to create a lot of jobs, a lot of investment in the area, and it's long overdue."

Applications close August 30.

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DUST-UP OVER KEALBA TIP PERMIT TAKEN TO COURT

Brimbank Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/dustup-over-kealba-tip-permit-taken-to-court/2231638.aspx>

The fight to stop a rubbish tip being built near homes in Kealba is heating up again.

The Barro Group has launched a Supreme Court appeal against the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decision to uphold Brimbank Council's refusal of a permit to establish a solid inert waste landfill at the site of the former Sunshine-Kealba quarry. The Sunshine Avenue site is owned by Barro, which runs a concrete mixing and rock-crushing plant.

The Residents against Sunshine Kealba Quarry (RASKQ) group and the council successfully argued at VCAT that the landfill would cause dust pollution, noise emissions and increased traffic on local roads.

Following a 10-day hearing, VCAT decided last month the proposal did not provide a net community benefit and sustainable development for present and future generations.

A preliminary hearing is listed for the Supreme Court on September 30. If the challenge is successful, the proceeding will be sent back to VCAT to be heard before different tribunal members.

Acting council CEO Paul Younis said he was disappointed VCAT's decision had not been accepted considering the significant time, resources and hard work put in by residents and the council.

RASKQ spokeswoman Marilyn Canet is urging the state government to step in.

"The residents can no longer afford to appear in future proceedings and Barro wants the council to pay its costs if it is successful with its appeal," she said.

CARBON TAX TO HIT BRIMBANK BUSINESSES

Brimbank Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/thousands-left-in-limbo-as-public-housing-dwindles/2231642.aspx>

Thousands of people will be left languishing on the public housing waiting list in Brimbank this year with only a handful of new properties allocated to the area for the next 12 months.

Housing Minister Wendy Lovell says 89 properties will be allocated across Brimbank, Wyndham, Hume and Melton by June 2012.

A total of 432 new social and public housing properties will be allocated in the north and west metro region, with about 700 other properties to be refurbished.

The state and federal governments will spend \$528million in social and public housing across the state.

Opposition housing spokesman Richard Wynne claimed the government had been caught out claiming credit for federal government investments.

"Many Victorian families are doing it tough and the government needs to provide its own substantial investment in building and acquiring new housing instead of claiming credit for Commonwealth projects."

Mr Wynne said the government had set the lowest targets for upgrading public housing and assisting families at risk of homelessness in a decade.

Ms Lovell hit back, claiming \$289million of the funds was from the state government, "so more than half". She said the 432 new properties in the north-west appeared dwarfed by the previous government's 1600 properties because of the federal government's "once-in-a-generation housing injection" as part of its economic stimulus.

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"North-west metro area is getting nearly a quarter of all new stock to be acquired this year and that's recognition of the need for affordable housing in the north-west metro area."

Brimbank Council's acting general manager of city development, Stuart Menzies, said about 3600 people were on the waiting list for housing in Brimbank. "It should also be noted that between 2001 and 2010, Brimbank had the lowest share in the western region of dwelling approvals related to social housing with 9per cent, compared to the highest share which was in the City of Maribyrnong with 56per cent." According to the last census, only 2.2 per cent of Brimbank residents are in public housing, compared to the western region average of 3.2per cent.

CARBON TAX TO HIT BRIMBANK BUSINESSES

Brimbank Weekly— 19th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/carbon-tax-to-hit-brimbank-businesses/2231658.aspx>

Transport businesses in Brimbank will be hit with soaring fuel costs under the federal government's carbon tax.

Under the terms of the new tax, the trucking industry, a major employer in the west, will face an effective hike in fuel tax of almost 7 cents a litre.

The changes will come into effect from July 1, 2014.

Just Fuel Petroleum managing director Mario Gaffiero said his Sunshine-based family business faced a hike of more than \$5000 a month.

"We use about 80,000 litres of fuel a month, so it's going to put a pretty dramatic hit on us."

Mr Gaffiero said the competitive trucking industry worked on low margins, meaning companies would have to pass on nearly all the cost blowout.

"It snowballs down the line. It will have an impact on everybody and everything."

The independent fuel distribution and freight company operates 12 trucks and produces biodiesel other transport operator's use.

Mr Gaffiero said if the government was serious about cutting emissions it would cut the fuel excise on biofuels.

"We pay the same excise even though biodiesel has lower carbon emissions. Where is the incentive there?"

The government will allocate about 40per cent of carbon price revenue to help businesses switch to cleaner methods of production. This includes \$800million to help manufacturers invest in low-pollution technologies and \$500million for steel manufacturers, food processors and metal foundries.

Brimbank Council acting chief executive Paul Younis said councils were examining the implications of the carbon price.

"All available information is being considered and once findings are made available Brimbank City Council will use these findings to inform its position on and response to the carbon price," he said.

Compensation will be available for street lighting and energy efficiency upgrades in council buildings, as well as reducing energy costs and future effects of the carbon price on low-income households.

Meanwhile, Western Metropolitan MLC Bernie Finn is feeling the heat over his claim the carbon tax will bring the western suburbs their worst recession since the 1930s.

But Western Metropolitan Greens MP Colleen Hartland dismissed Mr Finn as a climate change denier.

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A spokeswoman for Prime Minister Julia Gillard said Mr Finn needed to be reminded that his leader, Ted Baillieu, had publicly supported an emissions trading scheme.

TAYLORS HILL PARENTS SCARED CHILDREN WILL BE HIT

Brimbank Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/taylors-hill-parents-scared-children-will-be-hit/2231639.aspx>

Taylors Hill residents fear a child could be killed if speed humps aren't installed on Royal Crescent, which they say is being used as a drag strip by hoons.

Mother-of-two Colleen Duerkop says she has seen many accidents in the 12 years she has lived in the street and is shocked Melton Council hasn't acted to improve safety.

"Someone hit a street lamp pole only three weeks ago," Mrs Duerkop said.

"I see it happen all the time and hoons just keep speeding from one roundabout to the next. I'm scared someone will end up smashing into our home."

Sharryn Hili says she moved from Royal Crescent because she knew it was going to get busier and she was concerned for the safety of her children.

"There are issues with safety, especially with the number of kids walking up and down Royal Crescent each day."

Parents Carly and Rob, who did not want their family name used, said they were worried about the safety of children, including their own, who walk to schools in the area.

Katrina Bachnik said she had sent four letters to the council requesting speed humps but never received a response. "Council narrowed the road by painting parking lanes, but it hasn't made the road any safer," she said.

"It's a 50km/h zone, but people drive well over the limit. We pay high rates so you'd think they'd give something back by at least putting in speed humps."

However, Melton's Leading Senior Constable Allan Edwards said Royal Crescent was not on the high-priority list as police crackdown on hooning in Melton Shire.

"It's an area we're aware of, but there are a number of areas with higher rates of accidents and more reported incidents of hooning," he said.

Council's manager of engineering services, Les Stokes, said there were no plans to install road humps.

He said a local area traffic management study in 2009 recommended line-marked parking bays along Royal Crescent.

"This treatment visually reduces the traffic lane width and discourages drivers from speeding."

Mr Stokes said the lines had been successful in reducing traffic speeds, with a speed count last month showing speeds within the acceptable standard.

BRIMBANK LIBRARIES: CASH CUTS MAKE BOOKS HARDER TO BALANCE

Brimbank Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-libraries-cash-cuts-make-books-harder-to-balance/2231640.aspx?storypage=0>

Events at Brimbank libraries face an uncertain future in the wake of funding cuts by the state government.

More than \$5million in state library funding during the next four years was quietly pulled this month.

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Brimbank Council is now negotiating over its library funding agreement for 2011-12, with the state committing just over \$1.2million under the agreement and in additional grants.

The council's general manager of community wellbeing, Kelly Grigsby, said any cut to library funding was a blow.

"Brimbank is one of the most disadvantaged municipalities with more and more residents relying on our libraries for access to the internet, to study, to borrow resources, to socialise and to attend one of the many programs that are offered at no charge," she said.

Ms Grigsby said state funding of public library services had fallen from 20.1per cent of expenditure in the past three years to 19.2per cent.

"This has put more pressure on local government to fund the shortfall. Furthermore, this recurrent funding is not indexed, which compounds the cuts."

The council may have to reconsider the programming of events to promote reading and literacy during next year's National Year of Reading, but has ruled out closing any of its five libraries or reducing opening hours.

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson said the cuts would leave a massive hole in council budgets.

She was highly critical of the timing of the decision, relayed to councils via a recent letter from the Planning and Community Development Department.

"Most councils already have their budgets in place. Now they have to turn around and find savings."

Ms Jackson said libraries had once been funded on a 50-50 basis between state and local government.

She pointed to the Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries report released this year, a landmark study that showed every dollar invested in public libraries returned \$3.56 in community benefits.

Brimbank's community return was valued at \$4.20 per dollar.

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) president Bill McArthur said councils were shocked to discover the cuts had been made without warning or explanation.

"It's inconceivable why the state would withhold this information until after council budgets were set. And it's absurd to blame the cut on the former government when the Coalition delivered its first budget in May."

The MAV has written to Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell demanding a reversal of the funding cut and an urgent review of funding arrangements.

It is urging councils not to sign the funding agreement.

Derrimut MP Telmo Languiller said libraries were often used by residents on very low incomes, including pensioners and students, who could not afford to buy books or computers.

He said Victorians were visiting libraries in record numbers, with more than 33million visits each year and more than 48million items borrowed.

Mrs Powell said a cut of more than \$2million to the public libraries grants program was inherited from the former government.

Councils will meet on Friday to discuss plans to fight the cuts.

Brimbank's libraries

Number of books: 260,321

Items borrowed last financial year: 1,636,878

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Visits made to libraries: 1,114,580

Active library members: 92,430

New members each month: about 1100

Public access computers: 151

Staff: 58.9 equivalent full-time staff

Hits on library website: 1,011,000

CAMERAS TO HUNT DUMPERS

Brimbank Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/stalbans-deer-park-caroline-springs/305/story/137188.html>

CCTV cameras could be installed at a Sunshine shopping centre to deter rogue rubbish dumpers in the area.

A spokeswoman for Centro Properties Group, which owns the Sunshine Marketplace in Harvester Rd, said they were considering a range of options to crackdown on illegal rubbish dumping, as talks between staff and Brimbank City Council continue.

The council is working with the owners of private car parks within the municipality, such as the Sunshine Marketplace, on issues including residents dumping waste in unauthorised areas.

The Sunshine Marketplace is also considering installing cages around their car park bins to deal with the problem.

Brimbank's general manager of city development, Stephen Sully, said although the council was not responsible for clearing rubbish on private land, last year they did a "one off" clean-up at the Marketplace as part of rejuvenating the Sunshine Town

Centre.

"Council is aware that at times the bins and the area around the bins outside the Village Cinemas become untidy with excessive rubbish being placed or dumped in the area," he said.

"On these occasions council has notified, or when required, issued a compliance notice on the Marketplace Shopping Centre management to have the area cleaned up."

He said "council is keen to open channels of communication and put in place processes that will enable us to work in partnership with Marketplace management to stop the practice of littering and illegal rubbish dumping, and to improve the safety and amenity of the area."

Mr Sully said in the three years from January 2008-December 2010, the council issued 228 infringements for littering within the municipality.

"Dumped rubbish is a significant problem throughout the municipality and imposes a substantial cost on council and subsequently on every resident," he said.

Sunshine Residents and Ratepayers Association president Darlene Reilly said installing CCTV and bin cages at the Marketplace was a welcome idea.

"CCTV in the car park as well as in the dumping bin area would make people feel a lot safer and make people think twice before committing crimes," she said.

COUNCIL LENDS EAR

Brimbank Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137196.html>

Future plans for the Ballarat Rd shopping strip, park upgrades and a leadership training program were among the topics discussed at a recent Brimbank City Council listening post in Deer Park.

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The listening posts were created for council administrators and staff to meet with residents, to talk about community issues.

On 9 June, the Deer Park session was attended by council administrators Joanne Anderson and Meredith Sussex, the council's general managers of governance, community relations and corporate services and other employees.

The council's community wellbeing general manager Kelly Grigsby said residents at the event had some positive feedback regarding council initiatives, particularly park upgrades.

Ms Grigsby said plans for the Ballarat Rd shopping area, park upgrades in the area and the Deer Park Leadership group, a training program for residents, were among the popular topics of the day.

Deer Park Residents and Traders Association spokesman Les Tarczon said it was positive to see the council "out there and being transparent" in the community.

He said residents have been encouraged by seeing the council's youth workers and police working with the area's teenagers, after some of the Ballarat Rd business owners voiced concerns about violence, drug abuse, gangs and prostitution in the area last year.

The traders, police and council joined together to combat the crimes, which have reportedly decreased since 2010.

APPEAL OVER QUARRY SITE

Brimbank Star – 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137181.html>

Brimbank residents have yet another battle on their hands after the Barro Group last week lodged an appeal with the Supreme Court against the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal's refusal to grant a planning permit for a landfill at the former Sunshine Quarry site.

The appeal comes only weeks after VCAT handed down its decision at the end of a 10-day hearing where evidence was given by a range of environmental, planning and engineering experts, along with residents regarding dust and noise emissions from the site, in Sunshine Ave, Kealba.

VCAT concluded that the proposal to build a solid inert waste landfill would not provide a benefit to the community and was not an acceptable planning outcome.

Community activist and member of Residents against Sunshine Kealba Quarry, Marilyn Canet, told Star she was not surprised the Barro Group had decided to appeal, but she was disappointed.

Ms Canet said the appeal would give the company the upper hand because of its "bottomless money pit" and said it was unfair Brimbank ratepayers would be forced to foot the bill.

"I'm confident that if it does go back to VCAT, the decision will be upheld," she said.

"It was always going to be a long battle."

Ms Canet said she believed the State Government should fund any further expenses incurred and called for a full examination of all prior permits granted to the Barro

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Group. She said the only suitable outcome for the site was full rehabilitation with a possible residential development.

Brimbank Council administrator and chairwoman of the Sunshine Quarry Community Liaison Committee, Jo Anderson, said the council would continue to work with the Barro Group and residents, to find the most appropriate outcome for the site.

Ms Anderson said the committee would provide the community voice for promoting and exchanging information and provide input into the ongoing management and rehabilitation of the site.

Speaking to Star after the original decision was handed down Peter Barro, executive director of the Barro Group, said the company had plans to build a golf course on the site, with the landfill only being for medium-term use.

If the challenge is successful, the proceedings will be sent back to VCAT to be heard again before different tribunal members.

CAR CRIME CRACKDOWN

Brimbank Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137205.html>

More than 100 motorists were caught out in a four-hour Deer Park police operation on Sunday 10 July.

Brimbank Highway Patrol Sergeant Rod Stein said police conducted the operation during the evening and detected 105 possible offences using an “automatic number plate recognition unit”.

The ANPR machine is used to check vehicle registration plates against the Victoria Police and VicRoads' databases. Sgt Stein said police caught 24 drivers with expired

registration, 29 driving on possible suspended licences and 22 on expired licences, along Ballarat Rd.

“It's an extremely good result but it's a little bit concerning for us when we get 105 possible offences in four hours,” he said.

FINES FOR BUS BLOCKERS

Brimbank Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137193.html>

MORE than 150 motorists have been penalised for driving along a Sunshine road lane which was reserved for buses, during construction on the Regional Rail Link.

A section of Ballarat Rd, between Anderson Rd and Ashley St, was closed to regular drivers during the school holidays, which ended last week.

Train services were suspended for the fortnight and VicRoads officers patrolled the area to ensure express buses, carrying commuters from Albion and Sunshine Railway Stations to Flemington, were not hindered by other cars.

VicRoads' Nial Finegan said officers booked 149 people for unlawfully driving in a bus lane between Monday 4 July and last Wednesday, plus another eight motorists for stopping in a bus lane.

“Traffic on the bus replacement route is operating well despite the changed conditions and additional buses,” he said.

Brimbank Highway Patrol Sergeant Rod Stein said police were also enforcing the ban, to ensure the lane stayed clear for buses during morning and afternoon peak times.

Sgt Stein said there were several signs to let drivers know the temporary bus lane was in place.

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“There is no excuse for driving in it,” he said.

“We don't issue warnings; we have been booking people for it.”

The Regional Rail Link Authority CEO, Corey Hannett, was not able to say when the Sydenham train line would close for more RRL works in the future.

“Constructing the Regional Rail Link will involve temporary rail network shutdowns so that works can be carried out safely within the rail corridor,” he said.

“While it is anticipated that future Regional Rail Link works may take place over the summer and school holiday periods in coming years, the timing and frequency of these will be determined when our construction partners are on board in 2012.”

Keilor MP Natalie Hutchins said the State Government should have timetabled the RRL construction works on weekends and evenings so fewer travellers were disrupted during the school holidays.

“I would say two third of the people who catch the train were driving to the city,” she said.

“At 6.30am on the Melton Highway, the traffic was bumper to bumper. Cars weren't moving.”

HELPING YOUTH

Brimbank Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137179.html>

HELPING young people feel better about themselves, make an important decision or deal with a tough issue is all in a day's work for Belinda Calello.

As a member of Brimbank City Council's youth counselling and support team, Ms Calello and her colleagues Travis Walton and Amanda Rigby “provide a range of support options to young people aged 12-25 who live, work, or study in Brimbank”.

Ms Calello said one of the rewards of her job is “seeing young people in Brimbank making positive contributions within their community” and becoming role models.

“Working with young people gives our team hope for the future,” Ms Calello said.

“We hear many negative stories about young people in the media but they are often misunderstood.”

Before she joined the Brimbank team in January this year, Ms Calello worked across the West in community health and at a secondary school.

“During the last eight years I have volunteered and worked in a variety of roles within the welfare sector,” she said.

“I love so many things about my job. Working with young people aged 12 to 25 is definitely the biggest highlight.

“Young people have a lot of energy, innovative ideas and are really funny; they are honest and extremely resilient.

“I also love working in a team who are so passionate about supporting young people in the West.

Issues young people discuss with her include worries about friendships and relationships, confusion about sexuality and sexual health, troubles communicating with parents, schoolyard and online bullying, family violence, body image and finding employment.

Ms Calello said “unfortunately it is not uncommon for young people to experience more than one of these problems”.

However, she has plenty of experience in dealing with many types of situations, after volunteering at Lifeline.

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"I love learning and studying which lead me to complete a range of tertiary studies ranging from a Bachelor of Arts: Youth Work, a Master of Counselling and a Graduate Diploma in Behavioural Science," Ms Calello said.

"I am currently completing an honours program in psychology at RMIT with a dream of becoming a psychologist specialising in adolescent health."

For more information about Brimbank City Council's youth services team see www.brimbankouth.com or contact 9091 8229.

Belinda Calello is the subject of this week's Pride in Brimbank, a series Star launched to highlight the remarkable stories of everyday heroes who take pride in their community. If you know someone who fits the bill, contact Star on 9933 4814 or email natalie.gallenti@starnewsgroup.com.au.

COUNCIL REVIEW

Brimbank Star— 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137198.html>

The Victorian Electoral Commission has announced a review of Brimbank's boundaries and councillor numbers.

When the 11 elected Brimbank councillors were sacked in 2009, the State Government installed three administrators, who have overseen the municipality since then.

But they are set to farewell Brimbank in 2012 after the next round of council elections.

The reports into the former Brimbank councillors chronicled serious allegations against some of them, including challenging a parking fine, leaking confidential information and attempting to unduly influence an outside organisation.

However, as next year's council elections approach, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) has announced "an electoral representation review" of Brimbank.

The review will consider the appropriate number of councillors for the municipality, how many wards there should be, the number of councillors per ward and the ward boundaries.

Maribyrnong councillor Dina Lynch said the VEC should consider re-classifying some of Brimbank's boundaries to become part of her council's area.

Cr Lynch said with Maribyrnong's small size, ageing infrastructure and proximity to the city, gaining more ratepayers could help the area in many ways.

"Brimbank's pretty massive and Wyndham is pretty massive as well," Cr Lynch said.

"They're getting about \$100 million in rates whereas ours is around \$60 million.

"There's quite a bit of discrepancy there which needs to be looked at.

"I think the whole thing is about economics and equality as well."

Some Brimbank community representatives said that while they would like the administrators to stay on for another term, others said that the VEC needed to consider different matters.

Jason Rooth from the Cairnlea Residents Association said he would like future council candidates who all lived in Brimbank.

"It's not the numbers of councillors I suppose, it's how they engage the community," he said.

"If they come from Brimbank that would be a better reason for them to fight for Brimbank."

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Albanvale Residents Association spokeswoman Clare Brennan said she believed having wards was a good system as “all little areas have their own wants and needs”.

“Brimbank's gotten so big now with all the new shopping centres and developments, it's getting bigger every day so they've got to sort out the wards, such as where Derrimut is all built up where there used to be paddocks,” she said.

Susan Jennison from the Keilor Residents and Ratepayers Association said last time the council area was reviewed, a model was adopted which had not been presented for residents to comment on first.

“Can we be protected from what happened last time?” she said.

There will be a public information session about the review on 25 July, at 7pm at the Errington Community Centre in St Albans.

See www.vec.vic.gov.au for more information.

FINN RALLIES THE WEST

Brimbank Leader– 19th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/finn-rallies-the-west-fbready/>

State Liberal MP Bernie Finn is calling on councils to put politics aside and join his West against Carbon Tax group in what he says is a bid to protect industry, jobs and families.

Mr Finn said the tax had the potential to destroy the west and push companies overseas or into bankruptcy.

His call came in the same week the majority of economists at an Australian Conference of Economists backed the Federal Government’s carbon tax as sound economic policy.

But Mr Finn said a chief executive of a large company in the western suburbs had told him 800 jobs would be lost at its business alone if the carbon tax was passed.

In his letter to western mayors, Mr Finn implored councils to indicate their “preparedness to go into battle”.

Brimbank acting chief executive Paul Younis said the council had not yet formed its position on the tax.

Advocacy group LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer said the tax wasn’t all the “doom and gloom” Mr Finn claimed.

“There’s a fair amount of focus on the big emitters but the vast amount of workers in the west are employed in small to medium businesses and it’s still a bit of an unknown as to how they’ll be affected,” Mr Mayer said.

“The easy thing to say is the sky is falling. Industry is trying to respond, they’re already running pretty lean and doing (sustainable) things - that wasn’t a focus five years ago. Competition from lower cost producers like China and a high Australian dollar are probably having a greater impact (on industry) than the debate about carbon.”

Mr Mayer said the push to reduce carbon pollution would be an opportunity to create new industries and businesses.

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BRIMBANK PLAY TIME

Brimbank Star – 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137180.html>

Brimbank tiny tots showed off their athletic abilities last week as the council Gymbus hit town. Children from all across the city met at the Keilor Library and jumped onto the mobile bus, which is transformed into a mini-gymnasium for the school holiday program. And while little Vincent, right, looked a tad wary about climbing up the ladder, it was a great day enjoyed by youngsters – much to the delight of parents who were happy to see their little ones expend their energy.

HOBSONS BAY

WEST DIVIDED ON CARBON TAX

Hobsons Bay Leader – 19th July 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/west-divided-on-carbon-tax/>

Hobsons Bay Mayor Michael Raffoul has shot down a request by Liberal MP Bernie Finn to support an anti-carbon tax group in Melbourne's west.

In a letter sent to all western mayors last week, Mr Finn called on the majority ALP councils to put politics aside and join his West Against Carbon Tax (WACT) group to protect industry, jobs and families in the area.

But Cr Raffoul told the Leader he agreed with Prime Minister Julia Gillard's carbon tax and would not support a carbon tax protest group.

Mr Finn said the chief executive of a large company in the western suburbs had told him 800 jobs would be lost at their business alone if the tax was passed.

"Manufacturing and heavy industry is going to be wiped out," he said. "There'll be mass unemployment and spiralling cost of living."

But Cr Raffoul said the carbon tax was not a tax on households.

"Fifty per cent will go back to assisting households whilst the other 50 per cent will go into creating cleaner energy concepts," he said.

Advocacy group LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer said he was most concerned about the future of some small to medium businesses and industry.

"There's a fair amount of focus on the big emitters but the vast amount of workers in the west are employed in small to medium businesses and it's still a bit of an unknown as to how they'll be affected," he said.

"Competition from lower cost producers like China and a high Australian dollar are probably having a greater impact (on industry) than the debate about carbon."

ExxonMobil, which has a refinery in Altona, said a well-designed carbon tax could play a significant role in addressing the challenge of rising emissions but it could also put pressure on jobs.

Mobil spokesman Alan Bailey said Mobil hoped the carbon tax would have "minimal impact" on jobs at the Altona refinery but admitted there was still uncertainty about the long-term cost of the policy.

He said the Gillard Government's plan offered a level of support for domestic refineries which were subject to competition from overseas plants, but the remaining carbon costs still put local industry at a disadvantage.

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TWO TEATREES ARE ONE TOO MANY IN THE WEST

Hobsons Bay Leader– 18th July 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/two-teatrees-are-one-too-many-in-the-west/>

Hobsons Bay Council is expected to decline a request by Wyndham Council to rename Teatree Place in Seabrook.

As reported in the Leader last year, a resident of Teatree Place complained to Wyndham Council about confusion with nearby Teatree Terrace in Point Cook which is just 2.7km away.

Despite an indication from Wyndham's Council that it was considering renaming Point Cook's Teatree Terrace, the council has made a formal request to Hobsons Bay Council to rename Teatree Place in Seabrook because it has fewer residents.

Teatree Place, was named in 1997 while Teatree Terrace was named in 2003.

Hobsons Bay councillors will vote on a council officers' recommendation to refuse the request at tomorrow night's (Tuesday) council meeting.

MARIBRYNONG

SOCIAL MEDIA TO COMBAT HOMOPHOBIA IN SCHOOLS

Maribyrnong Leader– 22nd July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/social-media-to-combat-homophobia-in-schools/>

Social media is at the centre of a new government-backed campaign to stamp out homophobia in Victoria's schools.

The Stand Out! campaign will be launched today by government group the Safe Schools Coalition, will use online resources to share stories of how students have dealt with homophobia.

Coordinator of Safe Schools Coalition Victoria Roz Ward said young people can play an important role as positive role models.

"There are young people across Victoria who are making a real difference by challenging homophobia in their schools.

"This resource brings together some of those stories and advice so other students can do the same," Ms Ward said.

Online videos and social media, as well as information booklets, are some of the resources to be given to high schools across the state.

The campaign follows research from La Trobe University that shows 75 per cent of same-sex attracted young people have experienced some form of homophobic abuse.

Verbal abuse has been encountered by 61 per cent of those bullied, while 18 per cent have experienced physical homophobic abuse.

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Around 80 per cent of these homophobic incidents take place in schools, making it the least safe place for these young people to be.

Education Minister Martin Dixon said the Safe Schools Coalition would help schools explore the impact of homophobia on young people.

"It's an important step in ensuring school communities have the resources and confidence to challenge homophobia and respect diversity," Mr Dixon said.

Some of the online resources and further information on the Stand Out! campaign can be found on the Safe School Coalition website.

MUMS RALLY FOR DYSLEXIA RECOGNITION

Maribyrnong Leader— 22nd July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/mums-rally-for-dyslexia-recognition/>

Two concerned western suburbs mums are banding together to get the Baillieu Government to recognise dyslexia as a learning disability.

The condition, which makes it difficult to read and interpret words, is not recognised as a specific learning disability in Victorian schools.

With an estimated 10 per cent of the population on the dyslexia spectrum, Yarraville mum Rebecca Cleaver said it was "madness" that it still wasn't recognised.

"We understand teachers are stretched and schools don't have resources," she said.

"If we got our government to support this, then our schools would be able to do a lot more."

Altona North mother Julie Martin realised something was wrong when her six-year-old son couldn't write his name or the alphabet.

"The other kids in kinder were doing their ABCs and he couldn't," she said. "Getting him to read was like pulling teeth."

But without automatic testing for dyslexia in schools, Mrs Martin had to go outside the education system to have Ollie, now seven, diagnosed.

Mrs Martin and Ms Cleaver, whose nine-year-old daughter Milly also has dyslexia, are calling on other parents in the west to join them in their fight to have the State Government recognise dyslexia as a learning disability and have help funded in schools.

"These kids are great, bright and wonderful and we need to educate schools on how to recognise it and how to help them," Mrs Martin said.

She said Victoria was "way behind" NSW, where dyslexia was recognised, and overseas, where children were automatically assessed for the condition.

An Education Department spokeswoman said the department recognised "the need to continue to strengthen support for students with learning difficulties" and teachers were provided with "in-depth" support.

In mid-2010, the department hosted a forum on strengthening resources and practices to support students with learning difficulties, including dyslexia, and was now working to deliver on the key actions from that forum, including improving the initial identification, teaching and monitoring of students with learning difficulties and dyslexia.

Dyslexia Support Group West will hold an information night at Williamstown Primary School, 5pm, August 1 with guest speaker Dr Nola Firth from the Royal Children's Hospital.

Bookings are essential by emailing dyslexiasupportgroup-west@hotmail.com or calling Julie 0418 657 749 or Rebecca 0425 771 357.

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MERGERS COULD MEAN END OF BRIMBANK

Maribyrnong Leader– 21st July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/mergers-could-mean-end-of-brimbank/2233744.aspx>

The state government is understood to be drawing up plans for a massive shake-up of local government boundaries in the west.

A source close to the issue told the Weekly: "There's a strong push within the Coalition government to review municipal boundaries and reduce the number of councils out there."

The comment follows rumours that Brimbank Council faces being divided among neighbouring local government areas.

Maribyrnong Council early this year wrote to Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell calling for a meeting to review municipal boundaries in Melbourne's west.

That was prompted by Maribyrnong's smaller rate base and increasing infrastructure costs compared to the rapidly growing outer west.

More than 140,000 people have made the six western suburbs council areas their new home in the past decade.

Maribyrnong Council did not put forward a preferred model, but Cr Dina Lynch has suggested three options: create a Greater Melbourne Council similar to Brisbane City Council, which would take in much of the inner suburbs; expand Maribyrnong to take in parts of Brimbank and/or Hobsons Bay, or merge Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Brimbank and Hobsons Bay.

Liberal upper house member for Western Metropolitan Andrew Elsbury didn't see the need for "wholesale changes" through mergers but did not rule out "tinkering around the edges".

"If there's some logical movement of boundaries to take in feelings of local communities, I think that would be taken into consideration."

Municipal Association of Victoria president Bill McArthur said the move was not supported at this year's MAV state conference.

"We're not encouraging or asking the [state] government to consider any reviews of the boundaries. It's a period of consolidation for all councils after the initial round of amalgamations in the Kennett era."

Ms Powell's office was asked if there were plans for a review, but it did not respond.

Maribyrnong Mayor Sarah Carter said the council recognised substantial population growth was occurring across the western region and was "keen to discuss a review of municipal boundaries".

"Council wrote to the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Jeanette Powell MP, in March to request a meeting to talk about a boundary review. As yet, council has not received a response.

"Council is keen to engage with the state government to determine how any prospective changes to municipal boundaries can be introduced to provide the best outcomes for citizens and ratepayers."

MORE PUBLIC HOUSING PLANNED, BUT HUNDREDS LEFT WAITING

Maribyrnong Weekly– 21st July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/more-public-housing-planned-but-hundreds-left-waiting/2233736.aspx>

Footscray and Hobsons Bay will share in 51 new public houses, but more than 1200 of the west's most vulnerable people are still on housing waiting lists.

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Housing Minister Wendy Lovell announced last week 1600 new properties would be added to public housing stock, of which 428 would be in the north-west metropolitan area.

But the state government has been accused of slashing the housing budget.

Opposition housing spokesman Richard Wynne said the Office of Housing's allocation was half what it was under Labor.

"In north and west Melbourne, Wendy Lovell has slashed housing's allocation program by 75per cent," he said. "As a consequence, pressure will mount on the housing network in the area and recent improvements to the waiting list across Victoria will be a thing of the past."

In the March quarter, 1275 vulnerable people were on the waiting list for public housing at the Footscray office.

Ms Lovell rejected the claim and said the federal government's economic stimulus package delivered a "once-in-a-generation housing injection" of about 4500 properties in Victoria. As a result, Labor's figure of 1600 public houses for 2010-11 was "artificially inflated".

She said much of Labor's money had come out of the Victorian Property Fund, comprising fees paid by real estate agents, and from the sale of 1200 older public housing properties.

"The north-west metro area is getting nearly a quarter of all new stock (428 out of 1600) to be acquired this year and that's a recognition for the need for affordable housing in [this] area."

Mr Wynne said it was a "fanciful" attempt by Ms Lovell to take credit for the federal government-funded housing construction.

He called on her to release the housing budget.

TAX FIGHT HEADS WEST

Maribyrnong Leader– 20th July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-tax-fight-heads-west/>

Liberal MP Bernie Finn is calling on councils to put politics aside and join his West Against Carbon Tax (WACT) group in what he says is a bid to protect industry and jobs.

The Western Metropolitan Region MP said the tax could destroy the west and push companies overseas or into bankruptcy.

He said a chief executive of a large company in the western suburbs had told him 800 jobs would be lost at their business alone.

"Manufacturing and heavy industry is going to be wiped out," Mr Finn said. "There'll be mass unemployment and spiralling cost of living at the same time."

In his letter to western mayors, Mr Finn implored councils to indicate their "preparedness to go into battle" as soon as possible.

Advocacy group LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer said he was most concerned about some small to medium businesses. But he said the tax wasn't all "doom and gloom" as Mr Finn claimed.

"There's a fair amount of focus on the big emitters, but the vast amount of workers in the west are employed in small to medium businesses and it's still a bit of an unknown as to how they'll be affected," Mr Mayer said.

"At the moment, the debate is filled with half-truths. The easy thing to say is the sky is falling. Industry is trying to respond, they're already running pretty lean and doing (sustainable) things that wasn't a focus five years ago."

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He said competition from lower cost producers like China and the high Australian dollar were probably having a greater impact (on industry) than the carbon debate.

Maribyrnong mayor Sarah Carter said the council had not formed a position on the tax but would discuss Mr Finn's letter.

She acknowledged the Municipal Association of Victoria was developing a stance, but said Maribyrnong would decide for itself.

The Federal Government's Small Area Labour Market figures for March revealed unemployment in Maribyrnong had continued to drop, falling 0.2 per cent since the December quarter to 6.2, almost 2 per cent lower than the same time last year.

'STICK TO YOUR PLEDGE' ON FEES

Maribyrnong Weekly— 20th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/stick-to-your-pledge-on-fees/2232592.aspx>

Footscray traders are calling on councillors to honour their election pledges after plans were revealed to more than double the amount of paid parking in central Footscray.

The council is seeking feedback on plans to install 69 multi-bay parking machines, which would expand paid parking by 700 car spaces. That's on top of the 42 machines that now regulate 650 car spaces.

Traders have questioned why Footscray is being targeted with paid parking when traffic problems exist in shopping precincts in Yarraville and Maribyrnong.

The Footscray Asian Business Association polled candidates in the lead-up to the November 2008 council elections on their views on paid, or "metered" parking, in Footscray.

Of those elected in 2008, mayor Sarah Carter and councillors John Cumming and Michael Clarke answered "strongly no" to having paid parking. Others cited a need for a review or did not respond.

Cr Carter said this week her stance was based on information she had at the time and on popular opinion.

"I'm quite comfortable saying sometimes things do change when you have better information available.

"Having all the information available helped me understand that paid parking, especially at a nominal fee as it is in Footscray ... increases parking turnover and encourages greater patronage to local businesses."

Cr Clarke said he was not happy with Footscray bearing the brunt of paid parking and there needed to be a review of the council's parking strategy. He echoed the view of traders that it was not fair that other parts of the municipality had parking issues but were not being targeted. "I want to see a strategy that ensures Footscray can generate a strong financial competitive advantage for the traders."

Cr John Cumming said his position had not changed. "I opposed it when it came to council last time and at the moment it seems grossly unfair [on Footscray]. It's hard for the city to say it's reasonable [to increase paid parking] in Footscray when it's not even considering it in Yarraville."

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MARIBYRNONG MAYOR OFFERS OLIVE BRANCH IN BOYCOTT ROW

Maribyrnong Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/maribyrnong-mayor-offers-olive-branch-in-boycott-row/2232591.aspx>

Maribyrnong mayor Sarah Carter will meet Gathering Place's chief executive soon to try to repair the fractured relationship with the organisation following the NAIDOC Week boycott.

A disagreement about the personnel involved in the flag-raising ceremony resulted in a no-show from the indigenous health service and the withdrawal of its chief executive Colleen Marion, who was scheduled to give a keynote address.

Cr Carter blamed a breakdown in communication for the boycott. "I wasn't aware that they weren't attending until it was too late."

She said it was important for the two sides to be on the same page as Maribyrnong was to host the coming indigenous justice forum.

LIBRARIES LOSE \$5M, SO CUTS LOOM

Maribyrnong Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/libraries-lose-5m-so-cuts-loom/2232589.aspx>

Maribyrnong's libraries face reduced opening hours, book purchases and activities in the wake of funding cuts by the state government.

The state's libraries will lose more than \$5million over the next four years after the funding was quietly pulled this month.

Maribyrnong mayor Sarah Carter said the council's library services could be forced to drop some programs, which would hurt many in the community who relied on the free computer access and numerous language programs.

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson said the cuts would leave a massive hole in council budgets.

She was critical of the timing of the decision, which was relayed to councils in a recent letter from the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Ms Jackson said libraries had once been funded on a 50-50 basis between state and local governments but state funding had now fallen to less than 20per cent.

"For the past few years funding has progressed in line with the CPI," she said. "Libraries are going to have to work out where to make these cuts. It's going to have an obvious impact."

Ms Jackson pointed to the Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries report released this year, a landmark study that showed every dollar invested in public libraries returned \$3.56 in community benefits.

"In 2006, the Liberal Party promised more funds for libraries, but it seems to have dropped that promise this election when it looked like they might actually win."

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) president Bill McArthur said councils were shocked to discover the cuts had been made without warning or explanation.

"It's inconceivable that the state would withhold this information until after council budgets were set. And it's absurd to blame the cut on the former government when the Coalition delivered its first budget in May."

The MAV has written to Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell demanding a reversal of the funding cut and an urgent review of funding arrangements.

It is urging councils not to sign the funding agreement.

Councils will meet on Friday to discuss their plans to fight the cuts.

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Ms Powell said a cut of more than \$2million in grants was inherited from the Labor government.

She said the state government had offered to pay recurrent library funding to councils in a lump sum as soon as a funding agreement was signed so they could earn interest. The government had also spent \$17.2million on the libraries' capital works program and \$4.5million for the Premier's reading challenge book fund.

FOOTSCRAY STATION FOOTBRIDGE SLAMMED AS TRAIN PAIN RATED

Maribyrnong Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/footscray-station-footbridge-slammed-as-train-pain-rated/2232593.aspx>

Commuters are being asked to rate their local railway station and suggest improvements via their mobile phones.

The pt4me2 Better Stations survey is being run by the Metropolitan Transport Forum, which is a local government organisation with members from metropolitan Melbourne, including Maribyrnong Council.

The survey closes this month and the results will be used in a bid to persuade the state government to improve railway stations.

Interim survey results show commuters are unhappy with the Footscray station footbridge.

Maribyrnong Council's forum representative, Cr Martin Zakharov, said the top five areas for improvement were shelter, toilets, car parking, cleaning and staff.

The survey had been customised for use on mobile phones.

TAKE A BREAK: MUMS IN MIDDLE AS PARTIES ROW

Maribyrnong Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/take-a-break-mums-in-middle-as-parties-row/2232587.aspx>

THE continual tit-for-tat between state and federal governments over funding cuts to the occasional childcare program Take a Break is alienating families, according to West Footscray Neighbourhood House general manager Sharee Grinter.

Following a rally outside Parliament House and presentation of a 3000-signature petition earlier this month, state Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development Wendy Lovell blamed her federal counterpart Kate Ellis for "shirking her responsibilities".

"It is the federal government that ripped its funding from the Take a Break program in last year's federal budget, leaving the state government to pick up the shortfall," Mrs Lovell said in a letter to the Weekly. "The only person stopping Take a Break from continuing is Kate Ellis."

Ms Ellis responded this week with her own denial of responsibility for the program's possible demise. "The suggestion of minister Lovell that child care is solely a federal government responsibility is dishonest, particularly when other states including NSW, WA and SA are all providing ongoing funding for these kinds of childcare services," she said.

"The Commonwealth has never had a direct funding relationship with Neighbourhood Model Occasional Care Services."

Mrs Grinter said the reluctance of either side to take responsibility for the funding of the program was frustrating for families that would be affected by the cuts. "When it comes down to it, the families caught in the middle don't really care who's fault it is," she said. "It really is such a small amount of money that it's hard

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to see the motivation, other than two opposite sides finding ways of getting back at each other."

CLAIMS FLY IN WEST OVER CARBON DEBATE

Maribyrnong Leader— 20th July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/claims-fly-as-debate-over-carbon-tax-heats-up/>

Liberal MPs including Bernie Finn are "saying no" to a lower pollution future and devaluing firms' creativity, Maribyrnong federal Labor MP Bill Shorten says.

Mr Shorten, responding to Mr Finn's claims that the Federal Government's carbon tax would create "mass unemployment and spiralling cost of living", said State Government modelling had ignored industry compensation measures.

"Modelling that ignores that emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries (such as aluminium, cement and steel manufacturers) will receive 94.5 per cent of their permits free of charge and ignores other compensation measures is just plain wrong," Mr Shorten said.

He said businesses in the western suburbs and nationwide would be supported through the transition to a low-carbon economy. Industry could draw on a \$9.2 billion Jobs and Competitiveness package.

"For small business not directly affected by the carbon price, the Gillard Government will establish a \$40 million program to provide information ... on practical measures they can take to reduce their energy costs," he said.

Small businesses' "instant asset write-off threshold" would increase to \$6500 and food processing, metal forging and foundry industries could apply for the \$200 million Clean Technology Food and Foundries Investment Program grants.

ExxonMobil, with an Altona refinery, supports the concept of a "well-designed carbon tax" which it says "could play a significant role in addressing the challenge of rising emissions".

Mobil's Alan Bailey said it was hoped the tax would have "minimal impact" on Altona jobs at the Altona refinery but said there was uncertainty about the policy's long-term cost.

He said the Gillard Government's plan offered a "level of support" for domestic refineries subject to competition from overseas refineries but the remaining carbon costs still put local industry at a disadvantage.

TRUCKIES STILL PLAY CHICKEN WITH FOOTSCRAY BRIDGE

Maribyrnong Leader— 19th July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/truckies-still-play-chicken-with-footscray-bridge-fbready/>

A woman whose car was crushed after a container fell from the back of a truck at the Napier St bridge is shocked drivers still fail to take note of the bridge height, with chaotic and potentially deadly results.

Kingsville's Leanne Mackrill was lucky to escape with minor injuries after an empty container not properly latched on to its rig hit her car in 2007.

She could not believe two more incidents had occurred recently at the same bridge.

On June 3, a shipping container fell on to Napier St after hitting the rail bridge. The road was closed for two hours while the container was loaded on to another truck.

On July 7, a truck was wedged under the same bridge and the truck's container swung across the street after the driver "misjudged" the height.

Ms Mackrill said truck drivers needed to stop using Napier St as a short cut.

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22nd JULY 2011



"It's easy - if your truck is 2.4m it won't go under a 2.1m bridge and it's not like drivers don't know the height of their trucks," she said.

"The driver in my case was fined \$500 and it has cost me so much time and pain.

"A lot of people walk along Napier St, it's an access point for so many places, a container could so easily injure someone, it happens so suddenly."

Ms Mackrill said she hadn't driven under the bridge since and does not like to drive behind container trucks.

VicRoads Metropolitan North West acting regional director John Moylan said since January 2010 the bridge had been hit five times, but more may not have been reported. A Bridge Strike Prevention group including VicRoads, Victoria Police, Department of Transport, Metro Trams, Yarra Trams and Victoria Transport Association was developing a strategy on driver and compliance. He reminded drivers to know the height of their vehicles and load and plan their route in advance.

A recent Auspoll survey found 50 per cent of Australians want large trucks banned from cities.

MP: TRUCK PLAN NOT ON FOR MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Leader— 19th July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/mp-truck-plan-not-on-for-maribyrnong-fbready/>

Vicroads has bought two Yarraville properties potentially affected by the Truck Action Plan, despite the State Government's disinterest in the project.

The \$380 million-plus Truck Action Plan was proposed by the former government following the 2008 Eddington Report into congestion and future transport needs of the city.

It included on and off ramps for the West Gate Freeway and the widening of Hyde and Whitehall streets to take up to 5000 trucks a day off residential roads.

But Liberal MP Bernie Finn has told Maribyrnong Leader that Roads Minister Terry Mulder was not committed to the plan.

When asked if an alternative plan would be in place by 2016 - when more than 13,000 car movements were expected to be added to Francis St through the Bradmill development - Mr Finn said it was unlikely.

Mr Mulder's spokesman said he understood the plan alone would not have reduced truck numbers and that the federal and state governments had no money to fund it or any additional works.

VicRoads Western Projects acting project director Mark Koliba confirmed the government authority had bought a residential property on Hyde St and a commercial property on Francis St.

Mr Koliba said the sales came at the request of owners.

He said despite the acquisitions, the TAP was still under review and would be assessed in the context of "three key strategies which will guide future transport infrastructure planning and investment".

Those yet-to-be-finalised strategies are: the Metropolitan Planning Strategy, looking at the impact of population growth; Transport Solutions, aiming to reduce bottlenecks in road, rail and port; and, Growing Freight on Rail.

Francis St resident Will Todd, a front man at last November's protest over the project, said he was unaware of acquisitions but was sure other homeowners would want to be bought out.

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"We're waiting for the review but everyone just wants out now. It's hanging over us constantly, you have to maintain the house but you know you can't stay and more and more people want to sell," Mr Todd said.

MELTON

BETTER BUS SIGNAGE CATCHES ON IN MELTON SHIRE

Melton Leader– 21st July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/better-bus-signage-catches-on-in-melton-shire/>

Catching the bus in Melton Shire is now much easier with new and improved signage at the shire's 400 bus stops.

Every stop now has its own number plus the Metlink call centre number.

The numbers are also printed in raised numerals and Braille to aid visually impaired people.

Metlink communications adviser Donna Watson said it was hoped the improvements would encourage more people in Melton to catch the bus.

"We have improved the information so all passengers have the details they need to use buses as often and as easily as they need them," she said.

"The new signs also remove barriers that have previously prevented people who are visually impaired from catching buses."

Ms Watson said the new bus stop numbers allowed passengers to clearly identify what stop they were at when requesting service information.

"They also make it easier for people to report maintenance issues such as damaged signs or missing timetables, as the exact stop can be identified, making our response time faster," she said.

For more information, phone 131 638 or visit [metlinkmelbourne .com.au](http://metlinkmelbourne.com.au).

WEBSITE TO HELP CARBON TAX QUERIES, SAYS GILLARD

Melton Leader– 20th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/website-to-help-carbon-tax-queries-says-gillard/>

Lalor Federal Labor MP and Prime Minister Julia Gillard has outlined an easy way for Melton households to understand the assistance provided for the cost of living impacts of the carbon price.

The online household assistance estimator is a guide to help Melton families understand the impact a carbon price is expected to have on their budgets, as well as the assistance being provided.

"All a householder will need to do is visit the Clean Energy Future website at www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au, answer a few simple questions and they will see an estimate of the amount of assistance a household like theirs is likely to receive," she said.

"The assistance estimator uses a set of typical household types to provide an indication of the assistance different households will receive from May or June next year.

"It doesn't give an exact result given everyone's circumstances are unique, but it provides a good guide to help households understand what the carbon price will mean for them.

"The assistance estimator is secure and will not retain any personal details."

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Ms Gillard said more than half of the revenue raised through a carbon price will go to households in the form of tax cuts and increases in pensions, allowances and family payments.

"This means Australians can do their bit for climate change and look after their household budgets," she said. "Nine out of ten households will receive assistance through tax cuts and/or payment increases under the carbon price plan.

"On average, the carbon price will cost households \$9.90 per week, but they get \$10.10 per week in assistance. This assistance is permanent and will increase."

Ms Gillard said in most of cases, households will not need to apply for assistance as it will be automatically delivered to them through the personal income tax and Government payment systems.

Under the package, more than one million Australians will no longer need to lodge a tax return.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott warned Labor he was about to unbottle a "storm of protest" in Labor seats.

"There is no such thing as a tax that doesn't hurt people and you can't trust the Prime Minister when she says that there is," he said.

CARBON TAX WILL BENEFIT US ALL: BALLARAT MP

Melton Leader— 19th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/carbon-tax-will-benefit-us-all-ballarat-mp/>

Ballarat federal Labor MP Catherine King says the Federal Government was right to act on climate change despite Labor's primary vote plunging to unprecedented lows.

Despite Prime Minister Julia Gillard's personal ratings collapsing to levels not seen for a prime minister since John Howard introduced the GST more than 10 years ago, Ms King said the Government was right to act on climate change now.

"The scientific evidence has confirmed our planet is warming," she said.

"And after years of debate and deliberation I am sure that most people in the region will understand the time to act is now.

"Australians want to do the right thing by the environment.

"I am confident the people of the region are up to the challenge of tackling climate change and I look forward to working with you all to see this through."

The Ballarat MP said she is confident that the majority of Moorabool residents will be better off after putting a price on carbon. Ms King said pensioners, nine out of 10 households and those on the lowest incomes will be assisted under the Clean Energy Future program.

Ms King said all pensioners relying on the full rate pension will benefit from a buffer of at least 20 per cent over and above their expected average price impact from the carbon price.

"I am sure pensioners across the region will welcome these initiatives, which are all part of an important economic restructuring as well as climate reform," she said.

"For instance the household assistance in the package combines tax cuts to help household budgets with significant tax reform that will simplify the tax system and free over one million Australians from having to lodge a return.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott warned Labor he was about to unbottle a "storm of protest" in Labor seats. "There is no such thing as a tax that doesn't hurt people and you can't trust the Prime Minister when she says that there is," he said.

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SPRUIKER NEWS FOR MELTON SHIRE

Melton Leader– 19th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/spruiker-news-for-melton-shire/>

Melton Shire business owners are invited to register their interest in the 'Melton think local ... buy local' campaign.

It is designed to create promotional opportunities, training and mentoring for Melton-based businesses.

Benefits include broad media promotion; a Secret Shopper Program; training for owners and managers as well as signage and branding. Expressions of interest close on July 29.

Details: Esther Clark on 9747 7200 or email: estherc@melton.vic.gov.au.

Small business training workshops are being run by Melton Council in July and August.

Tomorrow (Wednesday), from 6-9.30pm, there is a 'Starting Your Business' workshop in Melton. Details/bookings: Rose Romeo, 9747 7200 or rosar@melton.vic.gov.au.

THE Small Business Victoria Mobile Business Centre will be at the Melton Council offices in High St from 10am to 4pm tomorrow (Wednesday).

The Mobile Business Centre provides access to business advice, resources and information at no cost and in convenient locations for small businesses.

To book a session phone 132 215.

BRANDED! Melton's Small Business Professional Development Day, will be held on August 11.

Keynote speaker is John D Anderson, founder of vacation juggernaut Contiki Holidays.

It also offers workshops led by four of Australia's best known marketing gurus.

Tickets cost \$65 for the morning or \$95 for the full day and bookings are essential.

MUCH TO DO IN CLOSING THE 'GAP'

Melton Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/much-to-do-in-closing-the-gap/2230976.aspx>

More needs to be done to improve awareness and access to services for Melton's growing African community, a new report has found.

Prepared on behalf of Melton MP Don Nardella and the Friends of Melton's African Communities Coalition (FMACC), Bridging The Gap found communication and employment difficulties were also faced by many residents.

Melton police's Inspector Mario Fiorentino said both the report and an African community forum held last month identified areas of improvement.

The report found positive events such as the police-organised forum had been well received and membership for the FMACC was seen to be bridging the cultural gap.

"We have a bit of work to do, but the report had a number of positive responses, not only Victoria Police but other programs providing good service," Inspector Fiorentino said.

He said there was a good relationship between police and the area's African residents.

Seventeen people were surveyed for Bridging The Gap, while more than 200 attended last month's forum.

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COSTS OUTSTRIP CARBON CONCERN

Melton Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/costs-outstrip-carbon-concern/2230968.aspx?storypage=0>

Melton Environment Group has welcomed the federal government's carbon tax, but the controversial impost continues to divide the community.

Group president Daryl Akers said it was about time Australia took measures to combat climate change.

The government will place a \$23 a tonne price on carbon emissions from July 1 next year and has announced a range of compensation measures for low-income earners.

But Diggers Rest businessman Karl Webster claims the tax will not address environmental concerns and is merely a way to help put the government's budget back in the black.

"Where does it start and where will it finish? God only knows what we are going to end up paying."

Mr Webster fears the increase will have a flow-on effect for his takeaway business.

"It won't just be my electricity; my supplier's bills are going to go up, my fish supplier's bills will do the same. Your margins are too small to keep absorbing everything."

He said a forecast 5 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions paled in comparison to emissions from the rest of the world's major polluters.

"It's about the same as if I were to have a pee in Port Phillip Bay."

Transport businesses will also be hit with rising fuel costs under the tax.

The trucking industry, a major employer in the west, will face an effective hike in fuel tax of almost 7 cents a litre under changes that will come into effect from July 1, 2014.

Just Fuel Petroleum managing director Mario Gaffiero said his Sunshine-based family business faced a hike of more than \$5000 a month.

"We use about 80,000 litres of fuel a month so it's going to put a pretty dramatic hit on us."

However, Mr Akers said the tax was necessary to comply with the rest of the world.

"Other countries have chosen to take decisive action, but we have lagged behind for too long. Most advanced countries have applied carbon taxes as a direct means to reduce carbon emissions," he said.

Mr Akers said future generations would pay the price of previous inaction.

"Most of our generation won't be around to see the consequences of climate change, but our children and grandchildren won't forgive us if we fail to act now."

While he welcomed the tax, Mr Akers said there was more to be done.

"Our governments should be doing more to encourage alternate means of producing energy. With as much sunlight as Australia, we should be encouraging solar energy. We should be in the forefront of researching and developing non-polluting forms of energy. We can't just rely on a carbon tax as a magic bullet."

Melton mayor Justin Mammarella also supports the tax.

"Council this year adopted our greenhouse action plan which outlines a range of actions council will take to reduce our emissions and consequently our impact on the environment," he said.

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"We understand that many in our community are vulnerable to increases in costs associated with living expenses and we hope the package as outlined by the Australian government will adequately compensate for the expected increases."

LIBRARY FUNDING CUTS DISAPPOINT MELTON

Melton Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/library-funding-cuts-disappoint-melton/2230969.aspx>

Melton libraries' events face an uncertain future in the wake of funding cuts by the state government.

More than \$5 million in state library funding during the next four years was quietly pulled this month.

Melton library acting manager Michael Scholtes said he was disappointed that despite the area's rapid population growth, funding had decreased.

"Public libraries are an iconic, universal service and their popularity continues to grow, being relied upon as a gateway to online services and resources and as learning centres and social hubs," he said.

Mr Scholtes said Melton Council would consider its options before responding to the cuts, with a report to be tabled at the council's August meeting.

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) president Bill McArthur said councils were shocked by the decision.

"It is inconceivable that the state would withhold this information until after council budgets were set," he said. "And it's absurd to blame the cut on the former government when the Coalition delivered its first budget in May."

He said libraries were the most-used community facilities in Victoria with 2.6 million members making more than 28 million visits a year.

"Local government remains deeply committed to providing a high-quality public library service for communities, but the widening gap between running costs and grants has placed a huge financial burden on ratepayers."

The MAV has written to Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell demanding a reversal of the funding cut and an urgent review of funding arrangements.

It is urging councils not to sign the funding agreement.

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson was highly critical of the timing of the decision, which was relayed to councils via a recent letter from the Department of Planning and Community Development.

"Most councils already have their budgets in place. Now they have to turn around and find savings."

RESIDENT'S BID TO EASE HOUSING SHORTAGE

Melton Weekly– 18th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/residents-bid-to-ease-housing-shortage/2230973.aspx>

Thousands of people waiting for housing will continue to do so, despite an announcement for social and public projects across Melton, Wyndham, Hume and Brimbank.

Housing Minister Wendy Lovell said 89 new properties had been allocated for the four municipalities.

Mrs Lovell announced last week a total of 432 new public houses, down from more than 1600 new properties funded by state and federal governments last year.

Opposition housing spokesman Richard Wynne said the sharp drop meant pressure would mount on the housing network in Melbourne's north and west.

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But Ms Lovell said the high number of houses acquired last year was due to the federal government's stimulus measures, providing a "once-in-a-generation housing injection", which could not be matched again.

Last week, Rockbank resident Mario Cachia met with Melton Council chief executive Kel Tori and general manager for planning and development Luke Shannon over his plans to help tackle the public housing shortage.

Mr Cachia wants council's help as he seeks permits for community housing on 10 hectares of his own land at Rockbank.

"I would like to subdivide and sell some land. If all goes to plan I would like to help young families with affordable community houses, to offer it to them at a quarter of their income."

Mr Cachia also hopes to keep land in reserve and set up a trust account for families saving for their first deposit. "I believe we can build a two-bedroom townhouse ourselves but work under a registered builder," he said.

Mr Tori expects talks on Mr Cachia's plans to continue.

He said Mr Cachia had given council officers a tour of the property, during which areas needing improvement were identified.

MELTON SHIRE GETS TICK FROM RATEPAYERS

Melton Leader— 18th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melton-shire-gets-tick-from-ratepayers/>

Melton Shire residents are more than satisfied with the work of their local council, according to a new survey.

The 2011 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey shows increased satisfaction levels for Melton Council in seven of the 13 categories.

The biggest increase in satisfaction came in economic development (from 60 to 65), while overall performance, advocacy, community engagement, appearance of public areas, traffic management and parking and town-planning policy and approvals all recorded increases.

The level of satisfaction for local roads and footpaths, recreational facilities, waste management and enforcement of local laws did not change.

The only category to record a drop in satisfaction levels was health and human services, which fell from 74 to 72.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said he was pleased the council performed well compared with nearby councils.

"The data indicates the council exceeds the median result for councils in its group in several areas," he said. "This is extremely encouraging given the high levels of growth being experienced in the municipality."

Cr Mammarella said the council was looking at continuous improvement in service and infrastructure.

The survey was prepared by Wallis Consulting and gauged the views of about 350 residents.

MELTON COUNCIL RATE PLAN ALTERED

Melton Leader— 18th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melton-council-rate-plan-altered/>

An influx of public submissions has swayed Melton Council to make several late changes to its 2011-12 budget.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the council had received 166 submissions on its draft budget.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Residents were given the chance to speak about their submissions at a meeting on June 16.

Cr Mammarella said the council considered submissions over the proposed introduction of a new differential rate category for development land.

The proposal was opposed by several residents who attended council's June 2 meeting.

Cr Mammarella said amendments were made, under which the development land differential rating category now applied only to land within the Urban Growth Boundary that had a detailed Precinct Structure Plan.

He said land within the boundary that did not have approved plans would change from rural land to residential land.

Other variations to the budget included \$20,000 for a pathway between two ovals in the Caroline Springs Town Centre; \$27,000 to fence two tennis courts and netball/basketball courts at Arnolds Creek; and \$130,000 to provide toilet facilities at the Melton Botanic Gardens.

The proposed 3 per cent rate rise remained unchanged.

The 2011-12 budget is available on council's website at melton.vic.gov.au.

MELTON NEWS IN BRIEF

Melton Leader— 17th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-briefs/>

Young people and job seekers are invited to attend the free Melton Shire Careers Expo this month.

Participants will have the opportunity to meet employers, career representatives and training providers and learn more about universities, educational institutes and apprenticeships.

The annual event, to be held at the Melton Community Hall on July 27 from 6-8.30pm, provides school leavers, students, graduates, job seekers and those considering a career change with a range of career and further education information.

It also provides parents, guardians and carers with information to support young people as they consider study and career options.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella encouraged young people and job seekers to attend.

For more information, phone 9747 7200.

Meanwhile, a Victoria University engineering lecturer from Caroline Springs has received a \$10,000 Australian Learning and Teaching Council award.

Dr Srikanth Venkatesan, a senior lecturer in structural engineering since 2007 and an expert in earthquake-resistant building designs, was given the award for his inspired teaching that reduces the gap between theory and practice.

He said he aims to offer his students authentic projects as soon as they start their studies to show them how theory works in real life.

Dr Venkatesan said he planned to use part of the money to develop a software program to check students' knowledge of concepts.

Small Business Victoria's Mobile Business Centre program is to visit Melton and Caroline Springs soon.

It is to be in Melton on July 20 and Caroline Springs on September 7 and 8.

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MOONEE VALLEY

ESSENDON AIRPORT CLOSURE GROUP SLAMS UPGRADE

Moonee Valley Weekly— 19th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/essendon-airport-closure-group-slams-upgrade/2230016.aspx>

Residents who have long campaigned for the closure of Essendon Airport have been angered by a decision to relocate and expand the Victoria Police training facility on the site.

Close Essendon Airport Committee spokeswoman Helen van den Berg said the investment at the site contradicted a promise by the state government and airport management that activity at the airport would be decreased, not increased.

Mrs van den Berg said the announcement made without consulting the community was an insult.

She said the plan to move the training base from the airport's western side to its east would impact greatly on residents of Strathaird Street.

She said police helicopter noise was already a major source of angst for residents living around the airport and increasing police training would only add to the problem.

"Honest to God, people are so angry. What are they going to do to block the noise to Strathaird Street? We are seeking a meeting with Police Minister Peter Ryan to discuss this decision."

Mr Ryan and Western Metropolitan MP Andrew Elsbury announced that \$3million would be used to relocate and upgrade the Victoria Police operational tactics and safety training facility at the airport.

The existing lease at Essendon Fields expires in January 2014.

The funding will allow the facility to provide defensive tactics training, including a variety of self-defence techniques, scenario-based training conducted in a "village"-type environment using a range of equipment, classroom-based presentations and workshops, firearms training, including coaching, and accuracy and tactical assessments.

Mr Elsbury said the government wanted to ensure police had the resources needed to be world-class.

"This Coalition government is committed to having 940 protective service officers and 1700 more police on the frontline in Victoria by November 2014," he said.

UNEXPECTED TURN IN FUNDING STORY

Moonee Valley Leader— 19th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/unexpected-turn-in-funding-story/>

Funding for Victorian public libraries has been slashed by the Baillieu Government.

The Municipal Association of Victoria, the peak body for Victorian councils, says all public libraries will feel the pinch of a \$5 million cut over the next four years.

The State Government will not increase funding in line with inflation and has also cut the actual amount it provides.

This year the cut will be \$130,000, which is effectively a cut of \$800,000 when failure to keep up with inflation is taken into account, the MAV says.

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Moonee Valley Mayor John Sipek said the council was still assessing the possible implications for its library services.

“We support the (MAV) call for a review of the proposed changes,” Cr Sipek said. “(They) would leave council approximately \$11,000 short of what was budgeted for in 2011-12.”

MAV president Bill McArthur said local governments, operating most Victorian libraries, had not been consulted on the move.

“The timing of this couldn’t be worse because all councils have recently adopted their budget and then suddenly we’ve been hit with this,” Cr McArthur said.

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson said cost savings would be up to each library.

“It may mean they can’t buy as many books and other resources, run the programs they wanted to or they may have to cut back on opening hours, particularly on weekends, which will have a direct impact on the public,” Ms Jackson said.

Cr McArthur accused the Government of looking to shift library running costs to councils.

Australian Services Union branch secretary Brian Parkinson said library workers’ jobs statewide were in jeopardy after the Baillieu Government’s decision.

The State Government did not answer the Leader’s questions about why the funding had been cut, or offer a response to the suggestion it was cost-shifting.

But it did say it would spend more than \$55 million in funding in the 2011-12 Budget for library upgrades, continuing funding and key programs such as the Premiers’ Reading Challenge.

PLANNERS, STEP UP!

Moonee Valley Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-group-striving-for-harmony/2230026.aspx>

The public submission process on ways to improve the planning system in Victoria is now open.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy said this was a chance for all Victorians to make their views known about what works and what does not work with the system and how it could be shaped for the future.

The Victorian Planning System Ministerial Advisory Committee, announced last month, is calling for comments about improving the Victoria Planning Provisions, planning schemes and the planning system generally.

Submissions close on August 31. Details: www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/systemreview or 1300 366 356.

MARIBYRNONG STAB VICTIM VOWS TO KEEP UP YOUTH WORKE

Moonee Valley Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/maribyrnong-stab-victim-vows-to-keep-up-youth-work/2230025.aspx>

A Maribyrnong youth worker who was bashed, stabbed and left for dead says he cannot decide if his attackers should be jailed.

Daniel - who works with Les Twentyman's 20th Man Fund and asked that his family name not be used - was stabbed twice in the stomach and punched up to 60 times after being robbed by about five males at Altona on July 2.

Daniel, 29, said the attack had given him more incentive to get back to work on the streets of Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley.

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"My work is my life; it's working with disadvantaged young people and young people with drug issues. I am all for young people and my job is to divert them from entering the juvenile justice system and prison."

Daniel, who grew up in Altona, said the attack was the last thing he expected to happen in an area where he felt safe.

He was looking across the water towards St Kilda, having a cigarette and listening to his iPod, when a tall male asked him for a light.

As he searched for a lighter, someone from behind held a knife to his throat before he was surrounded by about five males who demanded his wallet.

Daniel said his assailants, whom he described as Maori from their appearance and accent, became "pissed off" because he didn't have enough money.

"I copped about 50 or 60 punches. I was getting punched from every single angle. Finally, one of them king-hit me and I fell to the ground.

"While I was getting punched I got stabbed twice in the abdomen. If it was a couple more centimetres, I would be dead. As they left, they stood on my back.

"As soon as I got up, I felt my T-shirt was wet and my pants were wet.

"I was wearing a white top and the top was full of blood.

"The blood [stain] kept getting bigger and that's when I knew it was a stab wound."

Daniel said knives and gangs were a problem not specific to any ethnic group or suburb.

"Knives are the most used weapon in a crime, particularly in gang crime, particularly at parties when you get gatecrashers.

"Young people, they don't know the damage that knives can do and young people carry knives because they're easy to hide.

"Altona is a beautiful place and this is the last thing I expected to happen.

"I've always felt safe in Altona, but at the moment things are really nasty in the streets and in the suburbs of Melbourne.

"It's not a safe place and things are going to get worse unless we tackle this issue with early intervention programs for young people, and in schools especially."

MOONEE VALLEY GROUP STRIVING FOR HARMONY

Moonee Valley Weekly– 19th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-group-striving-for-harmony/2230026.aspx>

The Moonee Valley Intercultural and Interfaith Community Advisory Committee is one of the groups in Melbourne's west sharing \$60,000 from the state government.

Western Metropolitan Region MP Andrew Elsbury said the funding would help faith-based and community organisations to generate understanding between all faiths and build on the unity of Victorians.

Moonee Valley Council will aid the development of an Interfaith Network and work on projects aimed at bringing together people from different faiths and cultures.

Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Minister Nicholas Kotsiras has also announced \$365,000 in grant funding for projects which strive to promote harmony. Details: contact 9331 7644.

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DOG LAWS UNLEASHED

Moonee Valley Leader– 18th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/dog-laws-unleashed/>

New laws that will stop off-leash dogs from being a nuisance at the local park have come into force.

Moonee Valley Council officers now have greater powers to enforce dogs-on-leash rules requiring all owners to keep their pooches under control by means of a chain, cord or leash when not at off-leash parks.

And the order, which came into effect last Wednesday, also prohibits dogs from being within 15m of any children's playground, public barbecue or exercise equipment area.

Mayor John Sipek said the order was necessary after community feedback showed unruly dogs had become an issue.

"In the past 12 months, complaints associated with unleashed dogs have increased.

"This includes in our streets and on leash parks, as well as dogs reported rushing or attacking people and animals," Cr Sipek said.

"The purpose of this order is to encourage responsible pet ownership, which will lead to a safer, happier community.

"However, I know that dogs love to run and play, therefore council has allocated off-leash areas.

"In these areas dogs can exercise without a lead if they are in view of their owner and under effective control, by returning when called."

Flemington dog walker Tom Mullin said most dog walkers were responsible and able to control their dogs should they encroach on playgrounds or picnic areas.

Aberfeldie dog walker Vivian Kassis said most dogs were well controlled, but agreed there should be measures in place.

"You can walk down Puckle St and see dogs off leashes and they are well behaved," she said.

"But they are a dog. And you never know."

COUNCIL LEADERS QUIZ PM

Moonee Valley Leader– 18th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/council-leaders-quiz-pm-fbready/>

Moonee Valley Council's top decision-makers have pressed Prime Minister Julia Gillard on local government issues in a rare meeting.

Mayor John Sipek and chief executive Neville Smith raised a number of matters with the Prime Minister, Health Minister Nicola Roxon and Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten on July 1.

The meeting was organised by regional lobby group LeadWest and gave local councils the opportunity to discuss key issues with the Prime Minister.

"We raised significant issues such as improved transport, employment opportunities, health, education and skills and training," Mr Smith said.

Council representatives will now visit Canberra on August 17 to discuss initiatives raised at the meeting, including funding for its award-winning youth employment project.

"Council representatives will go to Canberra to discuss future funding of its Sustainable Employment and Economic Development (SEED) Youth Project, which

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recently won a national local government award and is now intended to be extended across a number of council areas in the western region,” Cr Sipek said.

The project, which helps young people find work through placements, preparation and service referrals, won the Youth Engagement category of the National Awards for Local Government in May.

END TERRIBLE TOLL

Moonee Valley Leader– 18th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/end-terrible-toll/>

A family has spoken of its grief at losing a beloved great-grandfather to Moonee Valley’s growing pedestrian road toll.

Norman Ewin was crossing a road in Moonee Ponds during his weekly trip to the shops when he was hit by a car.

Mr Ewin, 92, suffered serious injuries and died later in hospital.

His death is among several fatal or serious accidents to involve pedestrians across the city this year.

Mr Ewin’s granddaughter Kim Walker said the family was still trying to make sense of their loss.

“There are so many ways you can die when you are 92 years old. And then he gets hit by a car - you feel ripped off, really,” Ms Walker said.

“He was still teaching us things. It seems like a senseless thing to happen. If some people realise and slow down, or take more care crossing the road, then there was a bit of a meaning to the end.”

Mr Ewin’s death on July 4 was followed by an 89-year-old woman being hit by a tram in Ascot Vale last week. She was taken to hospital with serious injuries.

In April a boy, 12, was hit by a tram walking to school.

In March this year, a four-year-old boy died after he allegedly ran on to Epsom Rd in Kensington and in the same month a 43-year-old woman was seriously injured in a hit-run accident in Flemington.

A 28-year-old man was also seriously injured in the same suburb in February when he walked into the path of an oncoming car.

Moonee Ponds Sen-Sgt Ian Jones said reducing road trauma was a core priority and police were considering starting an awareness campaign soon. “We are committed to reducing road trauma and pedestrians do make up a percentage of that,” Sen-Sgt Jones said.

“One death is one too many.”

Norm Ewin was farewelled at his funeral at St Brendan’s Church last Friday. His late wife Jeane passed away in 2004. He is survived by his 94-year-old sister Evelyn, three children, nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

SOUPER-DOOPER MEAL SERVICE TO OPEN

Moonee Valley Weekly– 15th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/sport/basketball/souperdooper-meal-service-to-open/2228068.aspx>

A soup kitchen will open in Airport West on Friday to help meet a growing demand from families struggling to make ends meet.

Co-ordinated by the Moonee Valley Christian Church, the soup kitchen will provide a range of hot meals thanks to gifts of money and goods from a number of local businesses.

The church runs a food parcel and meal service every Tuesday at its Gladstone Street headquarters in Moonee Ponds.

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But organiser Jim Mangioros said demand was far outweighing supply.

“Things have really picked up in the past six months — there’s a huge demand for meals. Obviously people just have a lack of funds. We have people who have gone through a divorce, people who have lost businesses, families, everything.”

Mr Mangioros expects many of the people who attend the Outreach program in Moonee Ponds to come to Airport West, but he believes there will also be many new faces. “We expect 100-plus people [a day] and when word gets out most likely more.” The first soup kitchen opens Friday at 11am. It will open once a month though if more sponsors can be attracted it will be weekly.

The soup kitchen will be at the Bowes Avenue Community Centre, Airport West. Details: 1300722333 or 0433302790.

A HANDY GUIDE TO PLANNING

Moonee Valley Leader— 17th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/a-handy-guide-to-planning/>

A NEW and simple Smartphone app will help residents become more planning-savvy.

The PlanningVIC application provides a basic planning report for any property or site, including information on zoning, planning overlays and history of any given site.

Moonee Valley Council’s planning portfolio spokesman Cr Paul Giuliano said. “It’s going to be a very handy tool for all residents and I can see planners reverting to this tool too.”

To download the application search for PlanningVIC in the Apple iTunes store.

Those without an iPhone can log on to dpcd.vic.gov.au

WYNDHAM

DUMP THE TAX: MP

Wyndham Leader— 22th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/dump-the-tax-mp/>

Liberal MP Bernie Finn is urging councils to join his West Against Carbon Tax (WACT) group to protect industry, jobs and families in the west.

The state politician said the tax had the potential to destroy the west and push companies overseas or into bankruptcy.

He said a chief executive of a large western suburbs company had told him 800 jobs would be lost at their business alone if the carbon tax was passed.

“Manufacturing and heavy industry is going to be wiped out,” Mr Finn said.

“There’ll be mass unemployment and spiralling cost of living at the same time.”

In his letter to western mayors, he implored councils to indicate their “preparedness to go into battle” as soon as possible because carbon tax legislation was due to be tabled later this year.

But advocacy group LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer said he was most concerned about the future of some small to medium businesses.

He also believed the tax wasn’t all the “doom and gloom” that Mr Finn claimed.

“There’s a fair amount of focus on the big emitters, but the vast amount of workers in the west are employed in small to medium businesses and it’s still a bit of an unknown as to how they’ll be affected,” Mr Mayer said.

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"Industry is trying to respond, they're already running pretty lean and doing (sustainable) things that wasn't a focus five years ago," he said.

"Competition from lower-cost producers like China and a high Australian dollar are probably having a greater impact (on industry) than the debate about carbon."

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo said the council would not enter into a debate without more information.

WYNDHAM RAIL STOPS DRAW COMPLAINTS

Wyndham Leader— 21st July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/wyndham-rail-stops-draw-complaints/>

Hoppers Crossing and Werribee train stations feature strongly in a new survey revealing commuters' biggest concerns about their local stations.

Parking, cleanliness, a lack of benches and adequate shelter and lighting were the main gripes levelled at the stations in the pt4me2 Better Stations survey run by council-backed lobby group the Metropolitan Transport Forum.

Traffic delays at the Hoppers Crossing level crossing and the co-ordination of bus and train services also featured.

Wyndham Council only recently joined the forum, which represents 22 municipalities on transport issues.

Forum chairwoman Jackie Fristacky said the survey findings would be presented to the State Government.

About 800 responses had been received since the survey opened at the beginning of this month.

Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the Government would accept the submissions but said there were already monthly public transport surveys measuring commuters' satisfaction.

"These surveys help determine station designs and upgrades, and are available to see on www.transport.vic.gov.au," he said.

SALTWATER RESERVE A BOON FOR POINT COOK SPORTS

Wyndham Weekly— 20th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/saltwater-reserve-a-boon-for-point-cook-sports/2232059.aspx>

Point Cook residents are soon to benefit from the introduction of one of the largest sporting facilities in Wyndham.

Due for completion next year, the newly named Saltwater Reserve will consist of three Aussie rules and cricket ovals, eight tennis courts and three soccer fields to cater for the area's growing population.

Soon-to-be Saltwater Coast resident Rupesh Kapadia said he and his wife Leanne believed the imminent construction of the reserve would make the estate more attractive, especially for families.

"You can take the dog for a walk and let the kids run around, which is great for young families who move to the area," he said.

Local sporting clubs will be quick to put the new reserve to use.

Point Cook Football Club will call Saltwater Reserve home once facilities are complete.

President Steve Ward said the reserve would give the club more flexibility and could lead to it having more players on its lists.

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"We have multiple teams that play at our Dunnings Road ground at the moment, so to move to a facility that offers two grounds will be great for us."

The reserve's sporting facilities will complement a lifestyle centre at Saltwater Coast. Opening later this year, the centre will include a gym, two tennis courts and separate indoor, children's and outdoor pools.

Executive general manager of developer FKP, Evian Delfabbro, said the estate would become a sporting and recreational hub for people of all ages. "With almost 35 per cent of Point Cook's population aged under 19, these new recreation facilities will provide terrific facilities for our growing community," Mr Delfabbro said.

Once complete, Saltwater Coast will feature about 2300 homes, open space, wetlands and parklands.

COALITION IN BAD BOOKS AS WYNDHAM LIBRARY FUNDS CUT

Wyndham Weekly— 20th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/coalition-in-bad-books-as-wyndham-library-funds-cut/2232064.aspx>

Wyndham's libraries are facing reduced opening hours, book purchases and activities in the wake of state government funding cuts.

The state's libraries face more than \$5million in cuts over the next four years after the funding was quietly pulled earlier this month.

Public Libraries Victoria Network executive officer Elisabeth Jackson said the cuts would leave a massive hole in council budgets.

She was highly critical of the timing of the decision, relayed to councils via a recent letter from the Department of Planning and Community Development.

"Most councils already have their budgets in place, now they have to turn around and find savings."

Ms Jackson said libraries had once been funded on a 50-50 basis by state and local governments, but the state funding had fallen to less than 20per cent.

"For the past few years funding has progressed in line with the CPI [Consumer Price Index]. Libraries are going to have to work out where to make these cuts, it's going to have to have an obvious impact."

She pointed to the Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries report released earlier this year, a landmark study that showed every dollar invested in public libraries returned \$3.56 in community benefits.

"In 2006 the Liberal Party promised more funds for libraries but seem to have dropped that promise this election when it looked like they might actually win."

Municipal Association of Victoria president Bill McArthur said councils were shocked to discover the cuts had been made without warning or explanation.

"It's inconceivable why the state would withhold this information until after council budgets were set. And it's absurd to blame the cut on the former government when the Coalition delivered its first budget in May."

Cr McArthur said state grants for libraries had been declining for decades, threatening their viability.

The MAV has written to Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell demanding a reversal of the funding cut and an urgent review of funding arrangements.

It is urging councils not to sign the funding agreement.

Councils will meet on Friday to discuss their plans to fight the cuts.

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Tarneit MP Tim Pallas said in government Labor had upgraded, built or replaced 66 libraries, funded major refurbishments to another 58, and either replaced or upgraded 14 mobile libraries for remote communities.

"As a visit to any one of the existing four libraries in Wyndham will show, public libraries are vital information and social hubs within our community," he said.

"For a growing community, investment in services like libraries is necessary for the promotion of social well-being and to ensure a strong sense of community."

WYNDHAM TOPS SHAME LIST

Wyndham Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-tops-shame-list/2232062.aspx>

Wyndham is Victoria's home of speeding and drink-drivers, new police figures reveal.

It's also in the top five places for drivers caught using mobile phones.

On Monday, police released lists of the top 20 suburbs showing where Victoria's drink-drivers, speeding motorists and those using mobile phones while driving live.

The lists reveal 1686 speeding offences for residents in the 3030 postcode, which includes Werribee and Point Cook, in the 2009-10 financial year, and 1392 for postcode 3029, which covers Hoppers Crossing.

Hoppers Crossing was ranked third for drink-drivers and Werribee and Point Cook fifth. Werribee and Point Cook were also home to most drivers caught using their mobile phones.

Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe said it was frustrating to see so many areas feature on all three lists.

He said motorists in these areas were on notice.

"It's simply not acceptable to speed, not acceptable to use a mobile phone while driving, and it's never OK to drink and drive.

"The message from us today is that people in these areas need to change their attitude and change their behaviour."

On July 1, new anti-hoon laws came into force in Victoria. Drivers caught for a first offence now immediately lose their cars for 30 days, up from 48 hours.

Impoundment and immobilisations are being broadened to apply to repeat offenders who drive unlicensed or while affected by alcohol or drugs.

Figures released last year ranked Werribee and Hoppers Crossing as the second and third-worst areas for hoons.

One of the worst incidents recorded by police since hoon legislation was introduced happened in June 2007, when a Werribee motorcyclist had his bike impounded after being caught travelling at 220km/h.

The new laws also include an extension of the period, from three to six years, in which prior offences can be taken into account to determine if a breach is a second or subsequent offence.

For the first time, police are able to carry out roadworthy inspections on impounded cars, issue defect notices, stipulate conditions about the use of the vehicle, or ban its use.

Wyndham's Sergeant Kevin Hickson said police would keep running operations targeting speeding and drink-driving offences across the police service area (PSA). "We'll continue to catch those who show a wilful disregard for the law," he said.

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A fixed speed camera on the Princes Freeway at the Forsyth Road bridge caught more than 19,000 drivers last year.

SHADES OF BRILLIANCE AS DANCERS EXPLORE INFINITY

Wyndham Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/shades-of-brilliance-as-dancers-explore-infinity/2232066.aspx>

Some of Australia's leading ballet performers are coming to Werribee for a special performance this Saturday.

The Melbourne Ballet Company will present Infinite Space, a breathtaking, four-part example of classical dance reinterpreted to be relevant and inspiring for new and loyal lovers of the genre.

While In One Day, set to the music of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, is a stunning display of sheer physicality and athleticism, Dark Before Daylight, provides an interpretation of the classic story of Swan Lake to the music of Elgar.

Choreographer Simon Hoy said the show was an uplifting work of celebration and beauty.

Other elements include Phrased Without Word, with the title piece, Infinite Space, set to Mozart.

"Our team of dancers have performed with some of the world's major ballet companies," he said.

"It's a classically based work with an accent towards contemporary style - it's very athletic and physical and it's musically accessible."

Mr Hoy, who graduated from the Australian Ballet School in 1998, has danced across Europe and the US and now acts as the company's resident choreographer.

"With this show, our aim is to bring world-class classically based dance to regional audiences in an affordable way."

Infinite Space will be performed at the Wyndham Cultural Centre, Watton Street, Werribee at 8pm. Tickets are adults \$45, concession \$39, pensioners and under 23s \$27. Bookings: 97419500.

WYNDHAM CONSTRUCTION SITES A HOT SPOT FOR THIEVES

Wyndham Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-construction-sites-a-hot-spot-for-thieves/2232071.aspx>

Police are appealing for information about two burglaries on construction sites in Wyndham earlier this month.

The first occurred between 6pm on July 7 and 6am the following day at a site on Duncans Road, Werribee South.

Police said the offenders gained entry to the property by cutting through a barbed wire fence before driving a vehicle inside and hooking up a tandem trailer.

They broke into several portable buildings, stealing a modem from one office and a digital camera, wireless mouse, radios, GPS battery and charger, water testing case, printer and laminator, and a water cooler from others. A set of car keys was also taken and a container opened.

Between 1.20am and 2am on July 8, the site office of the proposed Wyndham Park pedestrian bridge in Werribee was burgled. Two security cameras were stolen.

The bandits broke into the office and searched through drawers. A number of shipping containers were also forced open with a large quantity of tools, valued at about \$20,000, taken from inside.

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TRICKS OF THE TRADE TRIP OFF THE TONGUE

Wyndham Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/tricks-of-the-trade-trip-off-the-tongue/2232067.aspx>

Developing migrants' English skills while teaching them a trade to help gain employment are the aims of a new free project at the Heathdale and Neighbours Community Shed.

Initial courses are English for bicycle safety and maintenance and English for construction.

Project manager Reno Demicoli said the six-week courses were designed to provide basic language and practical skills to instil confidence and ultimately, encourage them to pursue further education in these fields.

It's anticipated the skills they learn will help them find jobs or even start a business.

"The response from the community has been overwhelming, making it necessary to run the courses up to three times," Mr Demicoli said.

"Although the courses are open to everybody, they include many people from migrant and refugee communities.

"They are aimed not only at furthering their learning, but getting them out of their shells and broadening their social networks.

"We have two tutors, one who was a mechanic in the Navy and the other who is a semi-retired woodwork teacher."

Mr Demicoli said there were so many applicants; a waiting list had to be created.

"Depending on the availability of funds and resources, similar courses are planned, with a focus on other industries such as bricklaying, concreting, painting, tiling and hospitality."

Funded by the Adult Community and Education Board Victoria and run by the shed and the Wyndham Community and Education Centre, the courses are supported by Victoria Police, Spirit West Services and Wyndham's Karen and Sudanese communities.

RED TAPE CUT ON HOME OWNERSHIP

Wyndham Weekly– 20th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/red-tape-cut-on-home-ownership/2232070.aspx>

Planning permits would no longer be required for housing blocks of less than 300 square metres, providing they meet the minimum building standards, under changes announced by the state government last week.

The move has been designed to eliminate red tape and encourage construction on smaller lots in Melbourne's growth areas, including Wyndham.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy said it would make home ownership more accessible.

"It will cut \$40,000 to \$50,000 off the cost of a new home for those smaller homes in our growth areas and hopefully give people who can't afford to build or buy a bigger house the chance to buy a smaller one," Mr Guy said.

"It's an incentive for people to get into home ownership, whether they're in a smaller or larger home."

Mr Guy said the move would give people the chance to own a home in a growth area much sooner than would have been the case.

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MERCY GETS TRAINING BOOST

Wyndham Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/305/story/137215.html>

Wyndham's ailing health care system has been given a boost, with the Prime Minister announcing an investment to improve clinical education and training at Werribee Mercy Hospital.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard last week promised \$2.01 million to develop a capital project, in collaboration with Werribee Mercy and Victoria University, to build a “multidisciplinary clinical learning centre and student accommodation”.

With Wyndham growing faster than any other area in Australia, industry professionals and local government have been calling for greater access to doctors.

“The Government's infrastructure projects are enabling us to train more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals in Wyndham, where we need them,” Ms Gillard said.

Executive Director of Mercy Health, Richard Ainley, said that a hospital must not only focus on providing direct care to patients today, but it must also focus on developing a sustainable, skilled and caring workforce for the future.

“This is why Werribee Mercy Hospital's partnerships with Victoria University, the Australian Catholic University, Deakin University and Charles Sturt University are so important,” Mr Ainley said.

“They allow us to establish a more comprehensive clinical learning environment at the Hospital for students from Melbourne and beyond.

“It will also create opportunities for those living in and around Wyndham to build a career in an outstanding local hospital, wholly committed to the community it serves.”

The new clinical placements will be in addition to the undergraduate and post graduate education already provided at Werribee Mercy Hospital in medicine, nursing and allied health services.

THE WORM IS DEFINITELY TURNING

Wyndham Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/305/story/137219.html>

The humble garden worm is making a big difference in Wyndham resident's backyards, garnering Wyndham City Council a nomination for a prestigious environmentalist award.

Worm Farming Wyndham was announced as a finalist for the Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria awards last week.

The program, now in its second year, was nominated in the Towards Zero Waste category.

“The KABV Awards are about celebrating and recognising the wonderful effort communities put into sustaining their local environments,” Sustainability Victoria CEO Anita Roper said.

“The high level of participation and support for the KABV Awards program highlights how committed Victorians are to forging a more sustainable future for our State.”

A Wyndham Council spokesperson said the program was another way residents could reduce their carbon footprint.

“The program is aimed at providing Wyndham City residents the opportunity to learn about and embrace more sustainable waste management practices at home through worm farming,” the spokesperson said.

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“By participating in this program you will help to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, gain high quality fertilisers for your garden, reduce the amount of waste in your garbage bin and save some money in the process.”

By taking part in the program residents will save 50 per cent of the cost of setting up a worm farm on their own.

DIABETES RATES SOAR

Wyndham Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/305/story/137231.html>

Diabetes has become one of the biggest health issues facing Wyndham residents, with the rate of the disease in the municipality going up by 137 per cent in just seven years.

As part of Diabetes Awareness Week, Councillor Glenn Goodfellow is spreading the message of the importance of residents being able to recognise, and respect, the symptoms of the disease.

Mr Goodfellow, a cancer survivor and sufferer of Type 2 Diabetes, has been named a Diabetes Australia Victorian Champion.

The role will see him raise awareness of the sixth leading cause of death in Australia.

Mr Goodfellow said one in seven people in Wyndham have diabetes compared to the Victorian average of one in 30.

“The problem is we tend to have a 'she'll be right' attitude towards our health,” Mr Goodfellow said.

“I know for me, I acted like a guy. I thought that diabetes was an old person disease and I kept putting off going to the doctor.

“It really hit me a few months ago when I went to the doctor and I thought I was doing really well, and the doctor said that I need to lower my blood sugar or I'll have 10 years to live.”

Mr Goodfellow said it was time for the government to start paying greater attention to the health of people in the western suburbs and specifically Wyndham.

“Diabetes Australia should look at opening a regional office here in Wyndham for diabetes education and prevention,” he said.

“There are still 1.7 million people in Australia living with diabetes that don't even know it.

“I'll be pushing to make sure that we can get some kind of diabetes shop front in Wyndham where people can go to find out the facts.”

BUDGET GETS GREEN LIGHT

Wyndham Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/305/story/137222.html>

Wyndham City Council has adopted its budget for the next financial year, meaning that its record capital works program will go ahead.

The budget was approved at last week's council meeting and it includes a rate rise of 5.5 per cent and an increase in the charge for garbage collection.

The budget received 11 submissions, with most of them being approved or already covered in the upcoming budget.

“While not all submissions could be funded, we have also offered to advocate to the State and Federal Governments for the Wyndham Branch of the Salvation Army and Uniting Care Werribee Support and Housing, who are seeking further

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funding to provide housing and support for Wyndham residents," Mayor John Menegazzo said.

"As the fastest growing municipality in the state, Wyndham City has to ensure that our budget allows us to fund vital infrastructure, while maintaining financial stability."

FUNDING FIX FOR DANGER ROADS

Wyndham Star– 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/305/story/137210.html>

Two of Wyndham's most dangerous roads will be upgraded as part of a Federal Government plan to slash the number of serious car accidents in Australia.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced that two "road black spots" in Wyndham would receive almost \$1.8 million to improve their safety.

The intersection of Tarneit and Doherty roads in Tarneit will receive \$1.74 million to construct a roundabout, upgrade street lighting and install a guard rail, while the intersection of Dunning's Rd and Boardwalk Blvd in Point Cook will get \$51,000 for the installation of a fully controlled right turn option in both directions.

The projects were recommended by a panel of independent road safety experts and will be delivered during the course of the new financial year.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard said that since Labor was elected in 2007 the Federal Government had allocated over \$4.4 million to fix 15 black spots across the Lalor electorate.

"This investment is helping to make our local roads even safer for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, with nine of these projects already completed," Ms Gillard said.

"Moreover, the good thing about our Black Spot program is that anyone can suggest an intersection or section of road that they believe should be considered for a safety upgrade".

But chairperson of the Wyndham Transport Advisory Committee (WTAC) Jim Giddings said more still needed to be done.

"WTAC supports the funding from the Federal Government to fix these two intersections," Mr Giddings said.

"However this is only just the tip of the iceberg of the real funding that Wyndham requires to make it a safe place to drive around in."

HORROR YEAR ON WYNDHAM ROADS

Wyndham Leader– 19th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/horror-year-on-wyndham-roads/>

A young woman killed in a horror car crash at Werribee South last week was the seventh person to die on Wyndham's roads this year.

The city's road toll for all of last year was five people.

Police said the Hoppers Crossing woman, 19, was one of seven people in a hatchback that slammed into a tree at the corner of Diggers and Whites roads last Thursday at 11.20pm.

Two men in the car, including the driver, were flown to hospital in a critical condition.

The 27-year-old was discharged and the 19-year-old listed as stable yesterday morning.

Four others, two men and two women, were taken by ambulance to hospital in serious but stable conditions.

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Police believed the girl who died had been in the back seat, with investigations continuing.

The fatality came just weeks after a woman in her early 60s was hit by a car as she tried to cross Tarneit Rd.

She died at the scene.

Also in June a young Werribee man died in hospital following a single-car collision on Heaths Rd at Hoppers Crossing.

In March at Werribee, an elderly man died in a two-car collision at the corner of Georgia Crescent and Princes Highway, and days later, three young people died after their car hit a power pole at the Bulban Rd and Thoroughbred Ave corner.

Werribee Sen-Sgt Jim Mulholland said each road death touched many people, and he urged motorists to drive safely.

"You need to take care, you need to slow down, and you need to do everything possible to ensure you get home safely."

\$25,000 FOR NO SHOW IN WERRIBEE

Wyndham Leader— 19th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/25-000-for-no-show-in-werribee/>

A costly public art project in Wyndham is dragging on, with nothing to show for it.

Plans to install an artistic feature at a major gateway to the city - the western interchange of the Princess Freeway at Werribee - have been on Wyndham Council's agenda for the past five years, and cost ratepayers more than \$25,000.

But the council is yet to even decide on a design for the feature and has described the delays as "unfortunate".

The public art project started in 2006.

The council hired a consulting firm that developed a grasslands-themed design, but found it could not be completed within the \$180,000 budget at the time.

After further work on the design by council officers, councillors in late 2007 accepted the design.

However, officers reviewing the project years later in 2010 found it did not have enough "wow" factor.

In May last year, councillors agreed to scrap the grasslands-themed design and shortlist up to three artists and pay them up to \$5000 each to prepare new design concepts.

The council said the chosen designs would be selected by a panel by last November.

However, the council is only this month opening expressions of interest for the project.

It now expects to choose a design by September and install it between March and June next year.

A total of \$25,200 has already been spent on the project, mostly consulting fees.

The council's budget for 2011-12 includes another \$274,000 for it.

In response to whether the repeated delays were acceptable, Wyndham chief executive Kerry Thompson said: "It is unfortunate that the project has been postponed; however, as with any creative projects, there can be the possibility of delays."

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WERRIBEE SCHOOL PROBE

Wyndham Leader— 19th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-werribee-school-probe-fbready/>

An investigation into why students' and teachers' confidential documents were left in a vacant public school at Werribee will consider if any of the documents were stolen during break-ins.

The Leader found the documents, including students' behavioural and medical reports and teachers' tax file declaration forms, inside open buildings at Glen Devon Primary School this month.

The school has been repeatedly broken into and extensively vandalised since it closed at the end of last year.

The Education Department has removed the documents and is investigating why they were left there, including if any were stolen.

The site has been resecured.

The department could not say last week how long its investigation would take, or if findings would be made public.

It said people affected would be told.

Kareen Jones, whose four sons attended the school, said the public needed answers.

"My boys' personal information was out there for anyone to see," Ms Jones said.

"Someone's got to answer to that and we all need assurances this won't happen to any school that closes down."

Western Metropolitan state Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury said he felt "upset" and "sorry" for anyone affected.

"I understand the department is investigating how sensitive materials were left at the school site in order to make sure this is not repeated," Mr Elsbury said.

Meanwhile, the department hoped to reach a decision soon about how the site would be used.

Tarneit state Labor MP Tim Pallas said Werribee Community and Education Centre was interested in using the site.

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo said: "If a decision is not made soon, it's going to be left in such a state of disrepair that it will be unrecoverable".

Former Glen Devon principal Lloyd Campbell would not comment.

NATIONAL TREE DAY AND INTERNATIONAL RANGER DAY

Wyndham Leader— 18th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/events/story/national-tree-day-and-international-ranger-day/>

When: 31 Jul 11 @ 10:00 am

Venue: Werribee River Park

Where: Enter via old farm Road, Werribee, VIC, 3030

Contact: Parks Victoria

inquiries@parks.vic.gov.au

131963

Web: www.parks.vic.gov.au

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Come and celebrate National Tree Day and International Park Ranger Day at the opening of the Werribee River Regional Park.

From 10 am - 2pm people can take part in tree planting, talk with local Parks Victoria Rangers and friends groups. There will also be a barbecue lunch provided.

This event is also supported by Wyndham City Council and Melbourne Water.

WANT TO DINE WITH THE PM?

Wyndham Leader – 17th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-briefs/>

Fancy dining with Australia's Prime Minister at her Canberra residence?

A dinner for two with Julia Gillard and her partner, Tim Mathieson, at The Lodge, will be auctioned at a mayoral charity dinner dance in Wyndham this month.

The dinner dance is a fundraiser for a local program reducing youth homelessness.

Ms Gillard, also Wyndham's federal MP, said: "I'm happy to host a dinner at The Lodge to raise money for charity and I look forward to dining with the successful bidder and their guest."

Mayor John Menegazzo, hosting the event, said Ms Gillard made the offer while visiting Wyndham on July 1.

She was invited to the dinner dance but could not attend, he said.

The dinner does not include transport to or accommodation in Canberra.

A date for the dinner had not been set.

The council said only people at the dinner dance could bid.

Up to 240 people are expected.

There were still tickets available last week.

All proceeds from the night, including raffles, will go to the Uniting Care Werribee Support and Housing Youth Reconnect program.

Tickets cost \$75 including a five-course dinner, beer, wine, soft drink and live music.

It is on Saturday, July 23, 6.30pm, at the Italian Sports Club of Werribee.

Bookings, phone 9741 1225.

ACROSS THE REGION

TAXING TIME ALL ROUND

Star – 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137195.html>

The manager of a Sunshine West transport business believes the Federal Government's new carbon tax could have a significant impact on his business.

Alex, who asked for his last name to be withheld, said the much-publicised tax would impact heavily on his industry. He runs a company which employs up to 45 people and delivers food to major supermarkets.

The proposed carbon tax will reduce fuel tax credits for heavy vehicles by almost seven cents per litre from July 2014.

"We anticipate it will be a fairly large impact because everything you do will attract a carbon tax, directly and indirectly," Alex said.

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"Everything we purchase will include the carbon tax, it will affect everyone who uses electricity.

"The transport business won't be compensated as far as I know, but that could change.

"We're disappointed because now we have to go back to our customers and ask for more money

"If it works out to seven cents per litre on fuel, it could be a couple of hundred thousand dollars per year.

"We'll try and cope the best we can and just have to put it onto customers."

However, St Albans Traders Group president Sebastian Agricola, said the effect of the carbon tax was "difficult to predict" this early in its conception.

He said the tax "should not have much of an impact on the area as long as compensation is enough to cover price rises," but added that supermarket prices could increase.

Under the tax, Australia's top 500 carbon emitters will have to pay \$23 per tonne from 1 July next year, which will rise 2.5 per cent per annum above inflation.

From 1 July 2015 onwards, the carbon price will be set by the market.

CLOSE TRANSPORT GAP

Star – 19th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/305/story/137185.html>

Delahey Action Group's David Anderson is once again calling on the State Government to provide adequate transport for Brimbank residents.

The community activist scoffed at a recent comment made by a State Government spokesperson that there was sufficient public transport in the area.

Mr Anderson's suggestion that the residents of Brimbank were being treated unfairly came just as a state-wide council-led initiative was introduced last week, which will see commuters rate their local train stations.

The pt4me2 Better Stations survey will be used to press the Baillieu Government for improvements to train stations.

Commuters are being asked to rate their transport system via their mobile phones.

The Metropolitan Transport Forum will compile the survey results and through responses already provided, have identified that there is already strong support for more shelter, better cleaning and toilets on stations.

Brimbank Council's acting chief executive officer Paul Younis believes the survey fits well with the Brimbank Integrated Transport Strategy.

"As part of our integrated transport strategy we see the need for a number of improvements at train stations within Brimbank. These improvements focus on safety, upgrades to facilities and better access for commuters," Mr Younis said.

Mr Anderson said it was time the government took action.

He said despite the Brimbank Melton Bus Service Review being made public last year, no improvements had been made.

The review, which took almost two years to complete, collated community concerns and concluded that six new bus routes needed to be established within the area.

"Commuters of Brimbank need to get the same go. We need equity."

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ROOKIE COPS MAKE \$44M DRUG BUST IN FOOTSCRAY

The Herald Sun— 19th July 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/rookie-cops-make-44m-drug-bust-in-footscray/story-fn7x8me2-1226097234207>

The diligence of two rookie cops working overtime in Footscray has led to what may be one of Victoria's biggest drug busts.

Constables Daniel Richmond and Mei Ong, yet to complete their two years of probationary training, were patrolling in Cumberland Drive, Maribyrnong, at 4.30am last Wednesday when into their 11th hour on the shift, they saw two vehicles stopped on the side of the road and decided to search them, Maribyrnong Leader reports.

What happened next made the two rookies celebrities at the station.

"They searched the vehicles and allegedly found \$44 million in drugs and \$160,000 in cash," Inspector Tony Long said.

"They're very diligent and enthusiastic members. Good luck puts you in the spot, but police instinct makes you stop and think twice."

Insp Long said it would be a story the officers would be able to tell for the next 30 years.

RAIL BACK ON TRACK

Weekly times— 18th July 2011

http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2011/07/18/358205_latest-news.html

The first steps of the \$5.3 billion Regional Rail Link project have been completed, allowing 24,000 travellers to get back on trains today.

The Sydenham, Ballarat and Bendigo rail lines will reopen after a two-week closure to allow railway tracks between Sunshine and Tottenham stations to be moved so new country tracks can be laid down, the Herald Sun reports.

Transport Minister Terry Mulder thanked commuters for their patience during the closure.

Almost 800m of track has been moved to prepare for Regional Rail Link tracks to be laid.

Train speed restrictions will be lifted in the next few weeks, providing a noticeably faster journey for V/Line passengers, under the joint state and federal government project.

POLICE NAME CITY'S 20 WORST ROAD SUBURBS

Sky News— 18th July 2011

<http://www.skynews.com.au/local/article.aspx?id=639321&vld=>

Police today have released the top 20 suburbs showing where Victoria's drink drivers, speeding motorists and mobile phone offenders live.

They say that topping the list of where speeding drivers reside was Cranbourne, followed by Narre Warren, Werribee and Berwick.

'Werribee was the suburb where the most drivers who used their mobile phone live, followed by Deer Park, Craigieburn and Cranbourne,' police said.

'When it came to drink drivers, Frankston came in first, followed by Cranbourne, Hoppers Crossing and St Albans.'

The Head of Road Policing, Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe, said in a statement that it was frustrating to see so many areas feature in all three lists.

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'Today I have a strong message for people living in the areas we are releasing today - you're on notice,' Mr Walshe said.

'Cranbourne features in the top four of each of these lists and this absolutely unacceptable.

'The wider Casey area is the number two area most at risk for road trauma and these results prove that a lot of this has to do with the attitude of drivers in this area.

'It is simply not acceptable to speed, not acceptable to use a mobile phone while driving and it is never okay to drink and drive.

'Yet some people living in these areas seem to think it is okay to do so.

'The message from us today is that people in these areas need to change their attitude and change their behaviour.

'Police have a number of large scale blitz operations planned over coming months - and listed areas should expect to be targeted.'

The Victoria Police top nine at risk areas for road trauma are Brimbank, Casey, Geelong, Dandenong, Hume, Melbourne, Monash, Mornington Peninsula and Yarra Ranges.

It wasn't just metropolitan areas that featured on the top road offending lists, with Ballarat, Bendigo, Warrnambool and Shepparton all listed.

TRAIN SERVICES RETURN TO NORMAL AFTER WORKS

ABC News— 18th July 2011

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-07-18/train-services-return-to-normal-after-works/2798310>

Three Melbourne train lines are returning to normal services today, after preparatory works for the Regional Rail Link were completed.

Passengers had to make do with replacement buses on the Sydenham, Ballarat and Bendigo lines for the past fortnight.

More disruptions are expected later in the year as works continue.

V/Line spokesman, Daniel Moloney says they are impressed with the way the public has coped.

"Having so many buses coming in and out of Southern Cross Station's been a massive undertaking over the past couple of weeks," he said.

"Even though passenger numbers have dropped off a bit, it's actually been quite surprising how many people have still stuck with it and continued to get the buses over those big journeys between places like Ballarat and Bendigo, through to Melbourne.

"We've been really grateful to what people have had to do."

He says more works will be scheduled in the summer holidays.

"There'll be no works in the September school holidays, but it's quite possible there'll be some over the summer period," he said.

"We'll need these chunks of time to allow for massive reconstruction of the railway lines throughout the western suburbs and Melbourne."

PREPARATORY WORKS FOR REGIONAL RAIL LINK COMPLETE

The Premier of Victoria website— 17th July 2011

<http://premier.vic.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/1463-preparatory-works-for-regional-rail-link-complete.html>

Preparatory work for the Regional Rail Link project will be completed on schedule, with train services on the Sydenham, Ballarat and Bendigo lines set to return to normal tomorrow.

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Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder today thanked commuters for their patience during the two-week temporary closure, which also enabled Metro Trains, V/Line and the Sunbury Electrification Project to carry out important construction and maintenance work.

"Closing the lines for two weeks has enabled work to be completed that would otherwise have had to happen over numerous weekend or overnight occupations," Mr Mulder said.

"The replacement bus services have operated very smoothly, however we recognise that these works have caused significant disruptions and we are grateful to commuters and the community for their patience as we work to improve Victoria's public transport system."

"I would also like to thank the hundreds of customer service staff from Metro and V/Line who worked tirelessly throughout the two-week closure to keep their customers informed about the disruption and assist commuters along their journey."

Almost 800 metres of track between Tottenham and Sunshine stations has now been realigned to make way for new Regional Rail Link tracks to be laid when main works on the project begin next year.

Mr Mulder said the Regional Rail Link Authority had worked closely with Metro Trains, V/Line and the Sunbury Electrification Project to minimise the disruption for passengers while undertaking as much work as possible.

"Metro Trains has used the two-week shutdown to carry out essential maintenance works such as sleeper renewal, track maintenance and works to overhead wiring, platforms and bridges, with more than 100 separate pieces of work taking place on the Sydenham line alone," he said.

Work carried out by V/Line on the Ballarat and Bendigo lines has included track resurfacing, drainage upgrades and the removal of mudholes which had appeared because of heavy rain.

Mr Mulder said speed restrictions that had been introduced for safety reasons would be lifted in the next few weeks and V/Line passengers should notice a slightly faster travel time and a more reliable service.

The temporary closure has also enabled the Sunbury Electrification project to make substantial progress on improvements to Diggers Rest and Sunbury stations, including re-levelling and asphaltting of the station platforms to improve safety and installation of steel frames for new platform shelters.

Significant stabling track work was completed at Sunbury which will allow more trains to start their journey there and Mr Mulder said the installation of a new turnout at Watergardens, in addition to extensive signalling and rail crossing works, would provide greater flexibility for train movements and faster turnaround for V/Line services once commissioned.

Regional Rail Link is a major new rail line running from west of Werribee to Deer Park and along the existing rail corridor through suburbs including Sunshine and Footscray to Southern Cross Station.

Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said the Regional Rail Link project would provide critically needed capacity for extra trains on the Werribee, Sunbury and Craigieburn lines.

"It will also give V/Line's country trains their own tracks between Sunshine and Southern Cross station, improving reliability and capacity on the Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo lines," he said.

The project is jointly funded by the Victorian and Australian Governments.

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Facts and figures

1364 V/Line trains were replaced by 8186 special bus services

The Rotary Club of Flemington served about 350kg of sausages at the free breakfast hosted each day by Metro Trains at Flemington Racecourse

More than 10,000 flyers explaining the bus replacement services were handed out at coffee mornings at stations on the Sydenham line, with more than 3300 free cups of coffee served

Information was provided in nine languages • Metro Trains replaced more than 17,500 timber sleepers with concrete sleepers between Sunshine and Watergardens

About 2,600 sleepers were laid for the Regional Rail Link works at Tottenham, 6000 lineal metres of soil nails were drilled and more than 100 different machines were used on the site

At Sunbury, 500 new concrete sleepers were laid, 1500 tonnes of new ballast material was installed and 200 tonnes of asphalt was used for platform surfacing.

8km of overhead wire was tensioned on the Sydenham-Sunbury corridor

SAVED BY THE BELL: COMMUNITY'S FIGHTING SPIRIT REVIVES SCHOOL

The Age – 16th July 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/saved-by-the-bell-communitys-fighting-spirit-revives-school-20110715-1hi3k.html>

When six-year-old Isabella White learnt her school was going to close she took her dismay straight to the top. "Dear Prime Minister," she wrote in an email. "My school is ICA Melton College and I think it is a very good school."

Principal Andrew Ponsford said there were some "mean people fighting over the school like boys fighting over a Tonka truck", Isabella explained to the PM. "Can you get that truck and give it to me and my friends, Athena, Paris and Savannah?"

Isabella was not the only activist to take the fight to save the secular independent school in Caroline Springs to some high places. On November 1 last year, parents were dumbfounded to learn Melton College and its sister school Casey College in Narre Warren South were for sale after parent company Independent Colleges Australia went into voluntary administration. Independent Colleges Australia was established by defunct childcare leader ABC Learning, which collapsed in late 2008, owing creditors \$2.7 billion.

Parents at Melton College were so shocked by the news the school was facing closure they thought it was a hoax. Enrolments at Melton College, located in Melbourne's growing north-western corridor, had been booming, with 100 new students due to start the following year. "There was no rumbling, no symptoms of dysfunction, nothing like that," says parent Mandi Loyal. "There was a really happy buzz in the school because our children were achieving their potential and all of a sudden the pin was pulled."

Within three days, parents and teachers had formed an action group to save the school. They wrote to everyone from Prime Minister Julia Gillard to US talk show host Oprah Winfrey and media mogul Rupert Murdoch (both Ms Gillard and Murdoch responded). They raised \$350,000 in start-up capital. And finally they found a white knight, in the form of diversified investment business Zig Inge Group, which saved the day by buying the school property and all its equipment. Director Peter Inge said he was moved to help after bumping into Mr Ponsford at a 50th birthday party. "Andrew had taken a massive chance in the twilight of his career to start a school for aspirational western suburban parents," Mr Inge said. "It had

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been incredibly successful and then for no reason within his control, this school fails."

Thanks to the benevolence of the Zig Inge Group and the activism of the community, a new school - Southern Cross Grammar - will open at the Caroline Springs site on Monday.

Zig Inge will lease the property for no charge until the school gets on its feet. Eventually, it is hoped Southern Cross Grammar will buy the property back and it will be completed owned by the community. The prep to year 5 school, which hopes to expand to year 12 within seven years, will retain many of the staff from Melton College.

At Monday's opening, the school bell will be rung by the youngest and oldest students at Southern Cross Grammar, Mr Inge and some of the parents who battled to save their school.

Mr Ponsford says he feels incredibly humbled. "On the last day of school last year, the deputy principal gave me the old school bell with the inscription 'Just ring the bell and we will be there'," he says. "This is just an incredible story about the tenacity of a community." Finally Isabella and her friends will get their Tonka truck back.

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