

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011



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## BRIMBANK

### **ABORIGINES TO FOCUS ON WELLNESS, IN ST ALBANS**

*Brimbank Leader– 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/aborigines-to-focus-on-wellness-in-st-albans-fbready/>

An Aboriginal Health Day will take place at Victoria University's St Albans campus today.

Mumgu-Dhal TAFE students have organised the event.

It will provide information on Indigenous health issues including diabetes, cancer, mental health and sexual health.

The day will also include a welcome by a Wurundjeri elder, native plant talks, food, and a special guest performance by The Kutcha Edwards Trio. Organisers received \$6000 from the Brimbank Council to host the event.

The Aboriginal Health Day will be held at 11am outside Moondani Balluk Building 1F.

### **LAND SALE FIGHT LOOMS IN SUNSHINE**

*Brimbank Leader– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/land-sale-fight-looms-in-sunshine-fbready/>

A plan to rezone a reserve near Kororoit Creek, Sunshine will be fought, residents say.

Melbourne Water has applied to Brimbank Council for a parcel of land in Fraser St to be rezoned and sold for development.

Melbourne Water says the 3034sq m block is no longer required.

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But Beverley Aird, who has lived in the area for 35 years, said residents wanted the land kept “as is”.

“It’s a nice little spot, with open space and trees,” Ms Aird said.

More than 20 residents are campaigning for the land to be kept as a reserve, and last week they were joined by Greens MP Colleen Hartland, who said the land was flood-prone.

Ms Hartland said she did not believe the creek reserve was a safe area on which to build new houses.

“If Melbourne Water thinks this area doesn’t flood, they should come down here and look at the height of litter left by the floods in the trees,” she said.

“If Melbourne Water doesn’t need it any more, they should give it to City of Brimbank to manage as a reserve.”

But a Melbourne Water spokesperson said the area in question was not subject to flooding.

“The boundary of the site to be rezoned is set back from the Kororoit Creek and its flood plain,” she said.

“If it’s not being used it makes sense to sell it and use those funds for projects that benefit local residents.”

Melbourne Water said as part of the preparations for rezoning the area assessments and investigations had been undertaken, as well meetings with council officers and the Friends of Kororoit Creek.

### **OPEN SPACES TO STAY IN BRIMBANK**

*Brimbank Leader– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/open-spaces-to-stay-in-brimbank-fbready/>

Brimbank Council has responded to community opposition and withdrawn its proposal to sell 12 parcels of land.

But the decision may come at a cost, with the chairman of Brimbank’s administrators, Peter Lewinsky, saying the decision meant the council would have to reassess how quickly it could roll out its Creating Better Parks Policy and Plan improvements to parks.

At a council meeting last Tuesday, the administrators announced the council would no longer sell 12 of the 14 parcels - many of them being used as parks - proposed for sale. The two remaining are 21-29 Trickey Ave, Sydenham, and 31 Driscolls Rd, Kealba, a former preschool.

On May 17 a council report was tabled identifying the land proposed for sale, causing outrage in the community. More than 700 submissions were made opposing the sales.

Our Parks Not for Sale chairwoman Virginia Tachos said: “This is a victory for the people of Brimbank who fought hard ... prov Leg 2 ing that people power prevailed, and that these open spaces are viable, and valuable to be retained in our community.”

Administrator Meredith Sussex said it was a “very difficult decision ... The community has strongly told us they value these sites and we acknowledge this. We are completely committed to what the community has to say; it’s what we’ve been asked to do as administrators and it is what we intend to do”.

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Former Brimbank mayor Margaret Giudice said she was not surprised at the back down.

"I expected that kind of backlash. Open space means a lot to the community," she said. "All the angst could have been avoided if there was wider community consultation."

Keilor state Labor MP Natalie Hutchins said the community "fought hard".

"This was a genuine hard-fought local issue that brought many people together over the commitment they have to their local parks and open spaces," she said.

"Hopefully there is a lesson for all on the importance of community consultation."

### **HEROIN HIGH IN BRIMBANK**

*Brimbank Star— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/310/story/139001.html>

The number of heroin call-outs recorded by Ambulance Victoria within Brimbank has skyrocketed to more than 160 over 12 months.

In the area, paramedics attended 169 heroin emergencies within the 2009/2010 financial year, compared to 128 during the previous year.

Brimbank recorded the fourth-highest rate of heroin cases in Melbourne, and the third-highest rate of heroin overdoses.

There were 111 overdoses during 2009/2010, compared to 87 in the previous financial year.

The alarming data was included in the annual 'Alcohol and Drug Related Ambulance Attendances' report, which was released last week.

The study was put together by the Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre and Ambulance Victoria, and funded by the Department of Health.

The report also showed ambulance officers attended a total of more than 1000 drug and ambulance related calls in Brimbank, making the area the eighth-highest in the state.

There were almost 200 alcohol-related cases during the 2009/2010 financial year, down from 235 in the previous year.

The rate of cannabis and amphetamine occurrences in Brimbank also fell from the previous 12 months, but crystal methamphetamine and benzodiazepine-related attendances rose.

There were 134 benzodiazepine incidents, 55 antidepressant cases and 35 antipsychotic emergencies.

In Brimbank, paramedic crews also attended 30 cannabis cases, 18 of amphetamines, 11 of opioid analgesics, seven of ecstasy, eight of crystal methamphetamines and five of GHB.

Victoria Police acting Brimbank local area commander, Inspector Paul Allinson, said the high rate of drug and alcohol-related calls to Ambulance Victoria were encouraging.

He said it reflected the community's confidence in emergency services and helped to refer users onto medical help and rehabilitation.

"The Brimbank Police Service Area is also highly represented in domestic violence calls and we see that as a positive in many ways, because it enables us to step in and take action on breaking the cycle," he said.

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### WAITING YEARS FOR A HOME

#### *Brimbank Star – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/310/story/138999.html>

Thousands of disadvantaged and low-income residents, desperate for a home, are on public housing waiting lists in Sunshine and Footscray – some for up to a decade.

Last week, the number of applicants listed at the Office of Housing's Sunshine and Footscray/Flemington branches was released.

At June this year, there were 3786 people waiting for a home listed at the Sunshine office and 1284 at the Footscray/Flemington office – up from the March quarter figures.

Public housing lists are broken up into two sections, one for those classified as requiring early housing, like the homeless and disabled.

Everyone else with a low income is listed on the 'wait turn' list.

In Sunshine, there were 2800 people on the 'wait turn' list and almost 1000 requiring early housing.

In Footscray, there were more than 860 on the 'wait turn' list and 417 needing early housing.

The Office of Housing's Sunshine branch includes families waiting for homes in all of Brimbank, plus parts of Maribyrnong and Wyndham.

The Footscray/Flemington office has the waiting list for parts of Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay.

At the Braybrook and Maidstone Neighbourhood House, an advocacy and advice service for public housing tenants is available, called the Braybrook Maidstone Sunshine Public Tenants Association.

Chairwoman Vivienne Conn said "with waiting lists, there's not much you can do, they are so huge it's just terrible".

"Generally, on the waiting list, you can wait 10 years in this area," she said.

"It's not someone saying, 'I don't want that, I'll wait,' it's the first offer."

Ms Conn said the early housing applicants wait on "very long lists too" and depending on their circumstances some waited two years for a home.

Ms Conn said many people waiting for public housing were paying high rents in Braybrook and Maidstone.

"A lot of people in this area are going to Melton, where the rent is lower," she said.

Ms Conn said after years of various governments selling public housing land to private developers, there was a lack of homes.

"The Office of Housing does everything they can and do a very good job, but they can only do what they can with the stock they've got," she said.

The State Government recently announced 89 new public housing properties would be allocated in Brimbank, Wyndham, Melton and Hume by June next year, plus 51 in Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay.

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### OUT OF SPACE

*Brimbank Star– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/310/story/138995.html>

More than 720 residents have signed a petition calling for more car parking spaces to be provided along a St Albans shopping strip.

The petition, asking for more car parks near the Conrad St shopping area, was received by the Brimbank City Council last week.

Food Works supermarket owner Ali Khala said his family business had been operating for 15 years, and they had also began the neighbouring fruit shop two years ago.

He began the petition, which 723 people signed in just three weeks.

“We started the petition because we’ve already spoken to the council and nothing was done,” Mr Khala said.

“We get customer feedback, they complained they would have to go somewhere else and we were losing business, so we decided to start a petition to get the council to do something about it.”

Mr Khala said the supermarket served around 1000 people per day and the fruit shop was visited by 500-600 customers.

The shopping strip also features a busy butcher, barber, pizza shop and a fashion outlet.

Mr Khala said it was important for the council to support the area’s small businesses and he would like “some more car parking spaces ... not just for us and the other businesses but for the customers”.

He said there was a car accident in the street last Thursday and he has footage of several similar incidents to show the council.

“Every week we have an accident here, people are waiting in line and smack into each other as they reverse,” he said.

A Conrad St Resident, Brian Briffa, said the businesses were “a great set of shops run by great people” but he and his family did not sign the petition, because extending the car park could impact on a nearby park.

“Trees have just been planted and upgraded, which me and many locals have waited for about 15 years to see, the park upgraded and trees finally planted in area,” he said.

Mr Briffa said he also asked the council for “new footpaths and roads” in the area as “the footpaths are a health hazard for the elderly and disabled using the footpaths to get to the shop precinct”.

The council administrators resolved to investigate the car parking issue and report the findings at the next meeting.

### HELPERS DELIVER

*Brimbank Star– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/310/story/139006.html>

Sunshine Hospital now boasts four more much-needed incubators, thanks to the hard and tireless work of volunteers.

Over the past two years, volunteers from the Sunshine Hospital Auxiliary have worked hard to raise a staggering \$106,000.

The money was used to purchase incubators for the hospital’s Special Care Nursery, which cares for some of Brimbank’s smallest and most vulnerable babies.

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The incubators will help babies requiring close observation and monitoring for a number of reasons including phototherapy for jaundice, maintaining their own body temperature, premature babies and infants that need respiratory support.

First time mum Samjhena Kc knows all too well the importance of the nursery. Ms Kc's daughter, Kripa, was born at 37 weeks and only weighed 1.5kg. The tiny infant has spent the last six weeks in an incubator while her mother has watched on.

"They're very helpful and caring (special care nursery staff)," she said.

"I have no words to thank them."

She said it was important that money was raised so the hospital could continue to provide the best facilities for babies at risk.

One of Sunshine Hospital's leading neonatologists Dr Thao Lu said the new editions to the nursery were extremely important, particularly as Brimbank and surrounding municipalities continued to grow at a rapid pace, therefore more babies were being born at the hospital each year.

The hospital is the third largest maternity site in Victoria and has up to 800 babies being cared for in the Special Care Nursery each year. The nursery cares for babies from 32 weeks onwards.

"Babies born preterm don't have a lot of fat and they need the warmth of an incubator.

"The nursery also cares for babies born full term, but sick from any sort of congenital problem."

Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said the hospital couldn't do what they did without the auxiliary.

"Western Health is enormously grateful for the fundraising efforts of these wonderful volunteers. As the population of the west continues to grow at an unprecedented rate, so too does the demand on our services."

Head of the auxiliary Pauline Murphy said it was good to see all their hard work put into action.

"When we're out in the wind doing the sausage sizzle, we remember it's all worth it," Ms Murphy said.

### **CRACKDOWN ON CRIME**

*Brimbank Star* – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/310/story/138993.html>

Drugs and alcohol, residential burglaries and robberies will be targeted by the newly-formed Divisional Crime Tasking Unit in Brimbank.

The squad, which will have about 25 permanent members, will be based at the Keilor Downs police station.

The area will not receive any new police, but the unit will be staffed on a rotating basis by officers from Sunshine and Keilor Downs.

The Acting Brimbank Local Area Commander, Inspector Paul Allinson, said Monday's official launch of the Divisional Crime Tasking Unit was exciting and "something which has been considered for several years".

"The real reason we moved to amalgamate was to achieve the efficiencies in the way we operate and focus on our priorities," Insp Allinson said.

He said there would be a "focus on residential burglaries, drugs and alcohol, robbery and a human-source management team" within the new taskforce.

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Insp Allinson said the “human-source management team” would focus on “enhancing capability to manage informants” and cultivating informants effectively.

“It’s an ongoing focus for us to enhance the flow of information about illicit crime activity, in part, and other areas like hoons, one avenue of information for us on that is the anonymous Crime Stoppers line which has been a huge success,” he said.

Insp Allinson said the detectives, sergeants and uniform members who made up the new strike force would be a flexible working team, able to concentrate an issue such as drugs one day, and then all collaborate on a burglary operation the next day.

“That’s not to say drugs won’t be the focus of police and officers on foot patrol and on highway patrol, they’re just as likely to find people in possession of drugs,” he said.

“This team will focus on the more serious aspects of drug activity, which is manufacturing and production.”

Insp Allinson said this would include heroin-trafficking, cannabis and amphetamines.

“We believe our ability to task to identify priorities will be improved and obviously the expertise and efficiency of those teams will be quickly built up over time,” he said.

“The community can be more confident we will have a sharper focus and alignment of expertise on areas I’ve mentioned.”

### **MORE ONUS ON OWNERS**

*Brimbank Star– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/sunshne-ardeer-albion/310/story/138990.html>

Brimbank Council has vowed to work closely with the State Government as it looked to toughen penalties for owners of dangerous dogs, after the tragic death of four-year-old Ayen Chol.

Less than 24 hours after the St Albans child was mauled to death by a pit-bull, Premier Ted Baillieu expressed his condolences to the family and pledged to toughen the crimes act to impose criminal penalties and possible jail terms to the owners of dangerous dogs, as well as arming councils with resources to track down unregistered animals.

Under current legislation dog owners can only be hit with a \$4500 penalty, regardless of the severity of the case.

Brimbank Council CEO Nick Foa welcomed the proposal to review State legislation and said the circumstances surrounding the preschooler’s death could only be described as “absolutely tragic”.

Mr Foa said the council was working closely with Victoria Police and liaising with the Department of Human Services to provide any support to the family during this terrible time.

He confirmed that Victoria Police would determine what charges they will lay against the owner of the dog once they completed their investigation.

The dog was handed over to the council last Thursday and euthanized less than 24 hours after the attack.

It was not registered with the council and records indicate that no complaints had been received about the animal.

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In Victoria, a pit-bull cross is not considered a restricted breed and further testing is required to determine the exact breed of the dog.

However the Government is considering changes reversing the onus of proof of a dangerous dog breed onto the animal's owners.

Currently, under the domestic animals act the onus is on authorities to prove a dog is a certain breed.

The Government will also introduce a 'dob in a dangerous dog' hotline, to enable the public to alert the council if there is a suspect dog in their neighbourhood.

Mr Foa dismissed claims that Brimbank was a hotspot for the dangerous breeds, saying the council had strong local laws forcing pet owners to register their animals and even held an annual doorknock campaign to find any unregistered dogs.

Brimbank has 13,355 dogs registered, including 50 of the 243 dangerous dogs that are on the State's dangerous dog register. According to the council, most are guard dogs patrolling the large number of factories and industrial estates in the area.

Kidsafe, an organisation dedicated to the prevention of unintentional death and injury to children, said the tragedy was a timely reminder about the potential dangers of dogs and young children.

Melanie Water, state manager of Kidsafe Victoria, also welcomed the State Government's announcement.

"A line has to be drawn in the sand somewhere, and there is no place for such animals in areas where children are located," Ms Water said.

Research from Monash University Accident Research Centre revealed that on average in Victoria, one child is taken to the hospital as a result of an injury from a dog attack each day.

DOGS Victoria president Peter Frost called on dog owners to educate themselves on their responsibilities not only to their own family but the community.

"DOGS Victoria does not believe in judging a dog based on its breed alone. However, just as when an individual person commits a crime and goes to jail, when an individual dog displays aggressive behaviour it should be dealt with immediately," Mr Frost said.

### **RATES RELIEF**

#### *Brimbank Star– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/310/story/138996.html>

Brimbank residents suffering from financial hardship, who have interest building up on their council rates debt, will soon be offered some respite.

The Brimbank City Council administrators last week voted to adopt a hardship policy, to consider applications from residents to waive interest on rates and charges.

The policy will apply to owners and occupiers of residential properties faced with unemployment, sickness or injury, family dissolution and low incomes.

The council administrators, including Joanne Anderson, said they were keen to improve infrastructure within the municipality but also wanted to keep rates as low as possible for those "doing it tough".

"It's clearly very important for this sort of policy to come forward in the chamber," Ms Anderson said.

"This type of policy is very real and very needed in our community."

The council's report into the hardship policy said "from time to time the council will receive requests to waive interest charges".

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"In developing this policy Brimbank City Council considered the demographic makeup of the municipality and took to consideration that almost 25 per cent of residential properties receive a government rebate on their rates and charges," the report said.

"Brimbank City Council recognises there are cases of genuine financial hardship requiring respect and compassion in special circumstances."

Under the hardship policy the council will consider "applications for waiving or suspending interest on debts on rates and charges" on a case-by-case basis, but will not consider cancelling the amount owed.

If the council accepts a resident's hardship application, they will be required to agree to a payment plan and keep to it.

The report predicted the council could lose about \$7000 in revenue per year as a result of the decision.

### **PARKING NEEDED IN ST ALBANS NORTH**

*Brimbank Leader— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/parking-needed-in-st-albans-north-fbready/>

Shopkeepers in St Albans North say they need more car parks to keep up the trade.

Business is booming on the busy Conrad St shopping strip, with the recent addition of a butcher.

The Brimbank Butcher and Seafood Supply is the latest shop on the strip. It joins a fruit market, barber, tailor and Foodworks supermarket.

Khala Fruit Market shopkeeper Ali Kahla said his customers were restricted by a lack of parking. There are already 24 angle car parks on Conrad St, with a further eight around the corner in Walter St.

"We are very busy from Wednesday to Saturday, and at all times of the day," Mr Kahla said. "We want to keep the locals happy, but when we are busy there are not enough parks. The street becomes chaotic."

Mr Kahla hoped a further 30 parking lots could be added.

A petition has been sent to Brimbank Council with 723 signatures.

Mr Kahla said he had an extra petition with about 800 more signatures.

St Albans Traders Association spokesman Asip Demiri said sufficient car parking was important to the local economy.

Without enough spaces, shoppers could take their business elsewhere, he said.

The council will investigate and report the findings at its meeting next month.

### **SUNSHINE STATION RANKED FIFTH WORST**

*Brimbank Leader— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/sunshine-rail-station-fifth-worst-fbready/>

Sunshine railway station has been rated among Melbourne's worst.

Data released from the pt4me2 Better Stations Survey placed the busy station as the fifth worst in Melbourne, behind Tottenham, Ringwood, West Footscray, and Hallam.

A total 1868 commuters completed the survey via the internet and mobile phones over the past month.

Safety and security were the two most frequently mentioned concerns from Sunshine commuters.

Brimbank Council submitted ideas to improve stations in the municipality, which will be available when the final report is tabled.

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Infrastructure and Environment general manager Paul Younis said public infrastructure in the west was inadequate.

"Council, like commuters, is concerned about Sunshine station, which is a degraded, uninviting and unsafe place that is poorly connected to the town centre," he said.

Results from the initiative with the Metropolitan Transport Forum will be used to lobby the State Government to improve stations.

### **DOG ATTACK: PRESSURE BUILDS FOR LAW CHANGES**

*Brimbank Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/dog-attack-pressure-builds-for-law-changes/2266086.aspx>

Pressure is mounting on the state government to fast-track law changes to remove dangerous dogs from Victorian streets and make their owners accountable for their actions.

The dog attack that killed Ayen Chol was one of almost three dozen attacks on people in Brimbank in the past 12 months.

Derrimut MP Telmo Languiller said the attack on Ayen and her family had to be the last of its type.

"What we have seen here cannot happen again and we will be working with the government to ensure these dogs are off our streets."

Brimbank Council chief executive Nick Foa said the death was a wake-up call that dangerous dogs should be better handled.

He said the dog, put down on Thursday, was not registered with the council.

### **'FLOODS' SPILL INTO HOUSING ARGUMENT**

*Brimbank Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/floods-spill-into-housing-argument/2266072.aspx>

Opposition is mounting against a proposal for housing on a stretch of Kororoit Creek in Sunshine.

Residents campaigning against rezoning and sale of the Melbourne Water-owned land at the end of Fraser Street want to see it kept as open space.

The 3000-square-metre parcel is in a public park and recreation zone, but Melbourne Water applied last February to rezone the land to residential.

Brimbank Council's general manager of city development, Stephen Sully, said the council had not determined whether the land would be suitable for rezoning.

"A decision will be made after public exhibition of the amendment and any submissions and/or feedback received have been fully considered."

Information supplied by Melbourne Water states the area is not subject to flooding.

But Greens Western Metropolitan MP Colleen Hartland said some residents had seen floods rising above the boundary of the area that Melbourne Water wanted to sell for housing.

"I don't think the creek reserve is a safe area to build new houses," she said.

"If Melbourne Water thinks this area doesn't flood, they should come down here and look at the height of litter left by the floods in the trees."

Melbourne Water spokesman Nicolas McGay said the land was not needed for current or future operations.

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"This land was bought with funds collected through Melburnians' bills for water, sewerage and drainage services," he said.

"It's only right to use the funds from the sale of the land for services we're responsible for providing to ratepayers."

Mr McGay said various investigations were undertaken as part of the preparations for rezoning, including cultural heritage, ecological and environmental assessments.

Ms Hartland is calling on Melbourne Water to give the land to council to manage as a reserve.

Mr Sully said the council would consider maintaining the land if Melbourne Water was to donate it.

### **DAY OF RECKONING FOR ROOMING HOUSE SHONKS**

*Brimbank Weekly*— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/day-of-reckoning-for-rooming-house-shonks/2266075.aspx>

Rooming houses are set for a shake-up with the state government planning stricter regulations.

The government last week released an impact statement outlining four options to tighten regulation of rooming houses.

They range from incentives and self-regulation to the introduction of 11 minimum standards.

Many rooming houses in the western suburbs, including some visited by the Weekly earlier this year, are overcrowded, dirty and unsafe.

Housing Minister Wendy Lovell said the Department of Human Services favoured introducing minimum standards, including fire-safe locks on bedroom doors, lockable main entrances, and provision of kitchen facilities.

Brimbank Council's general manager of city development, Stephen Sully, said inspectors had inspected 120 rooming houses in the municipality in the past two years. He expected a number of houses to revert back to normal dwellings under the proposals.

"The Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission has identified that as a result of the proposed changes it is expected there will be increased costs to rooming house operators of approximately \$9 million over 10 years," he said.

"With illegal rooming houses, the changes that are required to bring the building to the required standard will most likely result in the building reverting back to a normal dwelling due to extensive renovations required."

Western Region Health Centre's Bernadette McCartney welcomed the proposed regulations but said they didn't go far enough.

"WRHS absolutely welcomes the review and is very much in favour of [the government's preferred option]," she said.

"The department is saying they prefer 11 standards and I don't disagree ... it's similar to the supported residential services model they did 10 years ago. They need to introduce option one and be prepared to offer a subsidy, to get them [rooming houses] up to scratch."

Ms McCartney said the preferred option would work well in conjunction with a subsidy option, which the department is also considering.

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Under the subsidy option, rooming house owners would receive funds to encourage them to make improvements to their dwellings in order to meet a range of standards.

Submissions about the proposals can be made until October 14.

Visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

### **PARKING NEEDED IN ST ALBANS NORTH**

*Brimbank Leader– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/parking-needed-in-st-albans-north-fbready/>

Shopkeepers in St Albans North say they need more car parks to keep up the trade.

Business is booming on the busy Conrad St shopping strip, with the recent addition of a butcher.

The Brimbank Butcher and Seafood Supply is the latest shop on the strip. It joins a fruit market, barber, tailor and Foodworks supermarket.

Khala Fruit Market shopkeeper Ali Kahla said his customers were restricted by a lack of parking. There are already 24 angle car parks on Conrad St, with a further eight around the corner in Walter St.

"We are very busy from Wednesday to Saturday, and at all times of the day," Mr Kahla said. "We want to keep the locals happy, but when we are busy there are not enough parks. The street becomes chaotic."

Mr Kahla hoped a further 30 parking lots could be added.

A petition has been sent to Brimbank Council with 723 signatures.

Mr Kahla said he had an extra petition with about 800 more signatures.

St Albans Traders Association spokesman Asip Demiri said sufficient car parking was important to the local economy.

Without enough spaces, shoppers could take their business elsewhere, he said.

The council will investigate and report the findings at its meeting next month.

### **PARKS SELL-OFF: WIN FOR RESIDENTS**

*Brimbank Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/parks-selloff-win-for-residents/2266088.aspx>

Residents who successfully fought Brimbank Council's proposed parks sell-off are vowing to end - permanently - the threat of losing the land.

The administrators told last week's council meeting they would no longer consider offloading 12 of the 14 parcels of land flagged for sale after receiving more than 700 submissions against the proposal.

Campaigners say they will continue pursuing the formal naming and rezoning of the sites as parkland to ensure they never come under threat again.

Council remains committed to its multimillion-dollar parks upgrade program, but concedes it may not be able to fast-track the program as hoped.

Our Parks Not for Sale chairwoman Virginia Tachos said the decision followed a hard-fought community campaign.

"I think it's fantastic that there was so much community support for holding onto these precious parks," she said.

Brimbank chairman Peter Lewinsky said the council had always been interested in hearing community views on the sell-off.

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"Our intent has always been to understand how the community uses these spaces, to understand their value to our residents, and to make decisions alongside our community reflective of their needs."

The council is still considering the sale of land in Trickey Avenue, Sydenham, and the former Kealba Preschool site on Driscolls Road.

"While 12 of the parcels of land have been identified as being of high value to the community, we believe that the Trickey Avenue and Driscolls Road properties should be treated differently and our intention is to continue with the process," Mr Lewinsky said.

Ms Tachos said the council still had a fight on its hands if it hoped to sell the two parcels to developers.

Western Metropolitan MP Andrew Elsbury said: "I congratulate those involved in the community campaign to retain their beloved parks as without their passion and voice the council would not have been aware of the community's desire to keep these reserves."

Gorton MP Brendan O'Connor suggested the administrators were "not sensitive to local concerns" and added that he had written to the council expressing strong reservations about the sell-off proposal.

### **SUNSHINE STATION RANKED FIFTH WORST**

*Brimbank Leader– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/sunshine-rail-station-fifth-worst-fbready/>

Sunshine railway station has been rated among Melbourne's worst.

Data released from the pt4me2 Better Stations Survey placed the busy station as the fifth worst in Melbourne, behind Tottenham, Ringwood, West Footscray, and Hallam.

A total 1868 commuters completed the survey via the internet and mobile phones over the past month.

Safety and security were the two most frequently mentioned concerns from Sunshine commuters.

Brimbank Council submitted ideas to improve stations in the municipality, which will be available when the final report is tabled.

Infrastructure and Environment general manager Paul Younis said public infrastructure in the west was inadequate.

"Council, like commuters, is concerned about Sunshine station, which is a degraded, uninviting and unsafe place that is poorly connected to the town centre," he said.

Results from the initiative with the Metropolitan Transport Forum will be used to lobby the State Government to improve stations.

### **CHILDCARE GROUP TOSSED A LIFELINE**

*Brimbank Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/childcare-group-tossed-a-lifeline/2266069.aspx>

Duke Street Neighbourhood House's occasional childcare (OCC) service has received a stay of execution thanks to a \$25,000 injection from Brimbank Council.

Families facing the prospect of the service closing while state and federal governments bicker about funding will now be able to use the service until June.

Duke Street's service is one of seven in Brimbank and the only one funded under the Take-a-Break program axed by the state government.

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The council spends more than \$190,000 on occasional care in Brimbank, supporting 115 places.

At last week's council meeting, it committed to providing a further \$25,000 to keep the 15 places at Duke Street open and to develop a long-term funding and delivery plan for occasional childcare in Brimbank.

General Manager of community well-being Kelly Grigsby said the council planned to transfer management of all services in Brimbank to its community care department.

She said the arrangements would enable central co-ordination of funding and services, and a better link to users and other services.

"The review of OCC services will focus on the need to ensure that OCC services are accessible, well utilised and meet community need. We intend to retain all existing OCC places," Ms Grigsby said.

Duke Street manager Bronwen Merrigan said she was grateful for the council stepping in but frustrated that the state and federal governments were still holding out.

"At least it gives us a little breathing space. But it's not fair that it's another cost being passed along to local government."

Hundreds of childcare providers, families and supporters rallied on the steps of State Parliament on Thursday to call for an end to the political stalemate on funding.

Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres executive officer Angela Savage said more than one in three services was at risk of closing by the end of the year.

"[Children and Early Childhood Development] Minister Wendy Lovell has said the state government will put its share of the funding back on the table if the federal government reinstates its share.

"But we can't see why the funding should be conditional when it could be used now to keep services open."

Ms Savage said the council's support was fantastic.

"We just wish it hadn't come to this," she said.

"Even if the state government could put up their \$900,000 share of funding, it could stop a number of these centres having to close their services."

### **INDIAN STUDENTS REMAIN FEARFUL: REPORT**

*Brimbank Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/indian-students-remain-fearful-report/2266073.aspx>

Indian students are more likely to be robbed than their Victorian counterparts, particularly in service stations and train stations, according to a report by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC).

The report examined almost 15,000 crimes against international students between 2005 and 2009 and found Indian students were more likely to be assaulted than other international student groups, though at rates lower than those of the general Australian population.

A spate of attacks on Indian students in Brimbank in recent years left many fearful for their safety. Bad publicity about the attacks has been cited as a reason for the drop in enrolment in Victorian universities by international students.

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The most common places for international students to be robbed in Victoria were on the street, at commercial locations such as shops, restaurants and service stations, and on public transport.

Most of the assaults against male students occurred between 8pm and 4am.

But report co-author and AIC director Dr Adam Tomison stopped short of saying race was a factor.

"The nature of the data did not allow the AIC to engage in specific analysis of racial motivation. That said "there was nothing in the overall findings that lends support to the view that Indian students have been singled out primarily for racial reasons."

Last year, there were 5013 international students enrolled in Victoria University and TAFE, with China, Vietnam and India the top three countries of origin.

At least 35,000 of the 48,000 Indian students studying in Victoria are reported to be living and studying in Brimbank and Maribyrnong.

A Victoria University study released last year found 78per cent of international students in Melbourne believed it to be a safe place.

Mohammad Sadid Reza, owner of Sunshine Indian supermarket Deshi Hut, said the situation had improved since the height of the violence in 2009.

But there was still a level of fear in the Indian community, he said.

Brimbank's Acting Inspector Paul Allinson said street robberies remained an ongoing focus in Brimbank.

"We are focused on the high-risk locations in and around transport hubs."

He suggested people travelling late should avoid walking alone wherever possible.

### **NEVER AGAIN IN BRIMBANK**

*Brimbank Leader– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/never-again-1-fbready/>

A move to change regulations on dangerous dogs following the death of a child in St Albans has been welcomed by Brimbank Council.

Four-year-old Ayen Chol died after a pit bull cross escaped from its yard in a neighbouring house and attacked her in the living room of the house she was staying last Wednesday night.

The dog was not registered and has since been put down.

Another small child and adult who were injured during the attack were released from the Sunshine Hospital on the weekend.

There was bipartisan local support for immediate action following the tragedy, with both Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn and Derrimut state Labor MP Telmo Languiller saying all parties would do "whatever it takes" to make sure it did not happen again.

"We are very supportive of the government to work with the minister to see that we can do better," Mr Languiller said.

"These dogs are dangerous weapons. The dogs won't take responsibility for themselves, it's up to the owners," Mr Finn said.

"As of today, we should all declare war on these dogs and continue the war until there is not one left in Brimbank."

With 82 pit bulls and pit bull cross dogs and 50 dangerous dogs registered, Brimbank is the state capital for savage dogs.

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In neighbouring Maribyrnong there were just 10 pit bulls registered and six in Moonee Valley on the 2010 State Government Declared Dog Registry.

Brimbank chief executive Nick Foa said the current fine of \$4500 - the maximum allowable - was completely inadequate when it came to protecting the community.

"We hope the review of current legislation and suggested new powers will make our efforts rather more effective," he said.

The Baillieu Government intends to increase criminal penalties for dog owners and end the current amnesty against dangerous dogs.

This would allow unregistered dogs to be seized by local councils and destroyed.

Under current laws, some breeds such as American pit bulls are restricted and dogs of any breed that have attacked or threatened people or animals must be registered with a council as dangerous dogs.

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

Report dangerous dogs that worry you to 9226 9338 or email [brimbank@leadernewspapers.com.au](mailto:brimbank@leadernewspapers.com.au) and we will pass the details onto the council.

### **DOG KILLS GIRL IN ST ALBANS**

*Brimbank Leader – 18<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/dog-kills-girl-in-st-albans/>

Police are investigating how a pit bull escaped its yard and mauled a four-year-old to death in St Albans yesterday.

Four-year-old Ayen Chol died following the attack, which happened about 8.10pm yesterday.

Police have been told the dog escaped from a neighbouring Lahy St property, before it entered the house and attacked Ayan and two other people.

Ambulance Victoria team manager Brett Parker said the first paramedics arrived seven minutes after the 000 call to find a distressing and chaotic scene.

"A four year-old girl was in the house and had suffered extensive injuries," Mr Parker said.

"Paramedics treated to resuscitate the girl but unfortunately she died at the scene."

"A five-year-old girl suffered injuries to the head and a 30-year-old woman has bites to the arm.

"Both were taken to Sunshine Hospital in a stable condition."

Responding in Parliament this morning, Western Metropolitan MP Bernie Finn expressed his "horror and deep sadness."

"What could be safer than to have your four-year-old in your home...the horror of what occurred next is beyond belief," he said.

Mr Finn called on the Brimbank Council to launch a crackdown on dangerous dogs.

"These people who own these dogs should care, and respond and get rid of them," he said.

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## HOBSONS BAY

### MP'S PUSH FOR AUTISM SERVICES IN THE WEST

*Hobsons Bay Leader – 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/mps-push-for-autism-services-in-the-west/>

A support program for children with autism in mainstream schools should be extended to the western suburbs, a local MP has said.

State Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn said the Innovative Developments in the Education of children with Autism (IDEA) program was currently in six Victorian schools and needed to be extended into the west.

But he said if the program was introduced, it would run in conjunction with the P-12 autism school promised to the west by the State Government.

Despite rumours to the contrary, Mr Finn said he was adamant the new school was “going ahead”.

“I want both (the school and IDEA) because I think the IDEA program is something that’s pretty sensational,” he said.

“As announced in the Budget, the school will go ahead. I’m very hopeful we could get it sorted in the next few months so we can start building.” Mr Finn said the location of the P-12 school had not yet been confirmed but the Leader understands the State Government could be considering a new, stand-alone school away from the existing Western Autistic School campuses at Niddrie and Laverton.

The State Government allocated \$4m in this year’s state budget for stage one of the new P-12 school.

The Western Autistic School in Laverton currently caters for students from prep to grade three.

### DRUGS OF CHOICE

*Wyndham Star – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/310/story/139090.html>

Alcohol is the most common substance abuse related call out that Ambulance Victoria attended in Hobsons Bay in 2009/2010 – with 110 call outs to the area.

Despite the figure Hobsons Bay came 25th out of 31 local government areas in Victoria for alcohol related attendances – down by 30 when compared to 2008/2009.

Though this figure may not seem surprising to some, the second most common call out might.

Benzodiazepine – sometimes colloquially know as ‘benzo’ – which often used for treating anxiety, insomnia, agitation, seizures, muscle spasms and alcohol withdrawal, was the second most common drug that saw 67 ambulances attend Hobsons Bay in 2009/2010 and 79 in 2008/2009.

Antipsychotics were next on the list according to the Ambo Project: Alcohol and Drug related Ambulance Attendances – 2009/2010 Annual Report.

The report, which part of an ongoing project undertaken by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, commenced in 1998 and is funded by State Government.

For both periods there were no incidences involving crystal methamphetamines and in 2009/2010 also none involving amphetamines.

Ecstasy was another drug that did not cause too much trouble in Hobsons Bay with no ambulance call outs in 2008/2009 and only five between 2009/2010.

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Antidepressants however saw 29 ambulances called out in 2009/2010 down by five when compared with 2008/2009.

### **CRASH STATS SHOCKING**

*Wyndham Star*– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/310/story/139088.html>

Accidents in Hobsons Bay have cost tax-payers, rate-payers and the community a whopping \$166 million between 2005 and 2010.

At last week's council meeting, councillors voted to release the draft Road Safety Strategy 2011/2013 for public comment, which revealed the staggering figure.

Councillor Peter Hemphill told the council this figure shocked him.

"It just shows there are a lot of things that we don't think about as far as the real costs," he said.

The draft also revealed on average, every four months on Hobsons Bay roads, one person was killed, 28 people were hospitalised and 45 people received injuries requiring treatment.

According to the Bureau of Transport Economics the total cost of each person killed in a crash has been estimated at \$1.5 million.

The draft states, "For each person seriously injured the total cost is \$325,000."

Despite these figures there has been an overall decline in road casualties in Hobsons Bay.

According to the Transport Accident Commission, the Victorian road toll has more than halved since 1989.

Despite this, more than 8,500 people have been killed on Victorian roads.

As of Monday, the 2011 Victorian road toll stood at 192 deaths – two per cent higher than last year's toll.

The council's draft Road Safety Strategy 2011/2013 is now open for public comment.

The community can comment on the strategy until Wednesday 14 September. It can be viewed at Hobsons Bay Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona, Hobsons Bay Libraries or [www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au).

### **GRAFFITI GRIND**

*Wyndham Star*– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/310/story/139045.html>

HOBSONS Bay Councillor Angela Altair has called on the State Government to follow in the footsteps of the South Australian Government by introducing tougher anti-graffiti laws.

The new laws, which were announced this month, could see vandals lose their driver's licence if caught defacing public or private property.

Cr Altair told last week's council meeting she hoped the State Government would consider adopting similar penalties in Victoria.

As reported by Star in February, Hobsons Bay City Council spends more than \$180,000 per year removing illegal graffiti from surfaces across the municipality.

Though graffiti affects the entire municipality, some of the smaller shopping centres such as Harrington Square and Laverton, are affected more often.

However Cr Altair said there had been a recent spate of graffiti tags in Williamstown as well, claiming the issue was only going to get worse if something is not done soon.

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"I think this is a really good sanction – if you're caught defacing a public building or private property, you can have your driving licence suspended or your L or P plates extended – I think that's a terrific initiative," she said.

South Australian Attorney-General John Rau, who announced the new laws, said they were the result of extensive consultation with the community.

"Graffiti vandalism causes great distress in the community: it costs businesses, individuals and government a great deal of time and money to clean it up, and it creates negative perceptions in areas targeted by vandals."

The new laws will also see the maximum penalties for graffiti vandalism doubled to \$5000 or imprisonment for 12 months.

### **RELIGIOUS HARMONY IN HOBSONS BAY**

*Hobsons Bay Leader* – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/religious-harmony-in-hobsons-bay/>

A visiting expert in sharia law has praised the relationship between police and the local Islamic community.

Dr Mahmoud Ismail, a Lebanese professor, and local Islamic leaders met police at Altona North police station last Wednesday to discuss issues affecting the local community.

Speaking through a translator, Dr Ismail said he encouraged local Muslims to abide by the law and to co-operate with police in order to preserve the relationship. He said the local Islamic community should be good citizens as well as good Muslims and he thanked police and the government for taking Muslims in and giving them a home and equality.

Hobsons Bay police Inspector Bill Mathers said local police were "very fortunate" to have built up a good relationship with the Newport mosque and its community.

"It works well in good times but during the bad times, it makes the bond even stronger," he said.

Also present at the meeting were Newport Mosque president Sheikh Ali Halloum, Mohammad El Hawli and Dimitrios Avgoulis.

Earlier in the week, police reached out to another part of the community, handing out tea, coffee, doughnuts and sausage rolls to commuters at Laverton station.

Hobsons Bay police community liaison officer Sen-Constable Sharon Radau said police and Police Community Consultative Committee volunteers surveyed people about local crime issues and their attitudes towards police.

## MARIBRYNONG

### **CASH SPLASH TO CUT CRIME**

*Maribyrnong Star* – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/310/story/139305.html>

Local councils can apply for grants of up to \$250,000 to fund public safety infrastructure projects in a bid to prevent crime and make communities safer.

The grants of up to \$250,000 would support local councils in developing a variety of public safety infrastructure, closed-circuit television systems, vandal-resistant external lighting systems, security grade doors, perimeter fencing, bollards, window treatments and screens and alarms for community assets and facilities.

Western Metropolitan Region MP Andrew Elsbury said the grants were part of a \$39 million commitment towards community crime prevention.

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Minister for Crime Prevention Andrew McIntosh said action on community safety and crime prevention was a high priority for the State Government.

For more information go to [www.justice.vic.gov.au/infrastructuregrants](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/infrastructuregrants)

### **STATE IS TOO SLOW, SAYS THOMSON**

*Maribyrnong Star– 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/310/story/139301.html>

The Liberal Party is still too partisan in government and has been too slow to act on key Victorian Transport Plan projects, according to Footscray MP Marsha Thomson.

In an exclusive interview with Star, Ms Thomson revealed her disappointment at the Labor Party losing last year's State Election, adjusting to life as a member of the Opposition and the Labor Party's campaign to get vital transport infrastructure to the West.

Ms Thomson won a second term in the seat of Footscray at last year's November election, but suffered a 10 per cent swing in primary votes.

"It (the election) could've gone either way ... sometimes you know and you can determine straight off if you're going to win it or lose it, but I think this one was too close to call," she said.

"We'll be working as hard as we can to make it a one-term government.

"I think we've adjusted very well to the change-over.

"We're getting on with the job of holding the government to account with its election promises and for not meeting commitments that we believe are desperately needed out this way."

Ms Thomson admitted being in Opposition was "frustrating", but she's determined to make the most of holding the new State Government to account.

In particular, she is keen to see the government go full steam ahead with Victorian Transport Plan projects like the Truck Action Plan.

"If they needed to have the ego boost, they should have re-badged the projects and go out there and deliver it," she said.

"This was not a transport plan that came out of nowhere; it was a transport plan that was developed after a great deal of consultation, working with community, working with the industry sector and the experts.

"I think the Liberal Party has been very slow at getting started.

"(It) has to balance out the political interests against the interests of the state, and represent the whole of Victoria, not just those parts that are likely to provide them with government."

### **FOOTSCRAY SAYS IF PARKING PLAN IS PASSED - WE'LL ALL PAY**

*Maribyrnong Star– 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/310/story/139291.html>

The Footscray community is concerned the advent of more paid parking will drive shoppers away from Footscray's CBD.

Maribyrnong City Council tabled its proposed paid parking consultation at last week's council meeting, noting that between its blog pages, letters and meetings with traders, the majority of people did not support more paid parking in Footscray's CBD.

The council sought comments on extra paid parking machines in Footscray's CBD, whether street paid parking should be one or two hours, and taxi ranks, loading zones, disabled parking bays and 15-minute parking spots.

Out of the respondents, 53 opposed paid parking and 20 supported the move.

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Two of the letters attached petitions, with 65 signatures from the Vietnamese community and 80 signatures from visitors to the physiotherapy centre in Pickett St.

One anonymous blogger wrote: "why should we have more parking machines? Footscray will then become a very expensive place to shop and dine".

On the flip side, fellow blogger David Milner said: "A reality check ... parking machines will not make Footscray become a very expensive place to shop at all".

One suggested parking should be free around school areas like Gilmore College, while one resident called for dedicated "permit holder only" parking bays.

The council has put out a map detailing its proposed expansion of paid parking machines, which will cover about 700 car parking bay in central Footscray.

The expansion would mean around 1350 parking spaces in Footscray would fall under paid parking since the council introduced the measure in 2004 as part of its parking management strategy to alleviate the frustration of trying to find a car park in Footscray's CBD.

Residents with a valid parking permit will not pay for parking in their street.

Paid parking in Footscray recently went up 10 cents to \$1.10 per hour between 8am to 6pm.

Footscray Traders Association president Grant Miles said the consultation process was just a box ticking exercise for Maribyrnong City Council.

"I got the feeling the decision was made and it didn't really matter what we said in the consultation meeting we had," Mr Miles said.

"We pointed out a couple of things we disagreed with – including how, for some reason, they seem to think only Footscray deserves parking meters. We don't understand why they don't put them in any other areas."

The council will release a detailed report on the new paid parking strategy at the September council meeting.

### **STATE IN TRUCK WITH FEDERAL**

*Maribyrnong Star– 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/310/story/139296.html>

The State Government is in talks with the Federal Government, as it continues to review the Truck Action Plan.

Star sent requests to the offices of Premier Ted Baillieu and Roads Minister Terry Mulder earlier this month, asking what the State Government's plans were to get truck traffic off residential streets in the West.

Mr Mulder told Star the State Government was talking with the Federal Government over the funding of the \$380 million Truck Action Plan, which was a key feature of the Victorian Transport Plan.

"We have also used this time to start work on reviewing this project in light of the other projects that have been spoken about for the western suburbs, such as the proposal for the WestLink road," he said.

"The previous Labor Government only funded one tenth of what was required for the full Truck Action Plan.

"The northern section works funded under the previous Labor Government's proposal would have actually increased truck traffic in residential areas, which Labor conveniently failed to mention to the people in the western suburbs.

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"The Coalition Government understands the concerns of the people of the western suburbs, following 11 years of Labor not listening to them.

"We are working towards a solution that will not only be affordable for the Victorian taxpayer, but also achieve the outcomes expected of it in the short and long term."

Mr Mulder did not answer why the State Government provided no funding for the Truck Action Plan in the 2011-12 budget.

Mr Baillieu's office would not give a separate response.

Opposition MPs – particularly Jacinta Allen, Wade Noonan and Marsha Thomson – have been running a campaign in recent months to get the State Government to commit to the Truck Action Plan or an alternative solution.

Greens MLC Colleen Hartland has also questioned the State Government's motives.

"We don't need to another review or another strategy. We need action," she said.

"Freight moving through our suburbs is set to double within 10 years. That will mean double the number of trucks on our streets unless drastic action is taken.

"The Liberal Party must put their money where their mouth is, stop ignoring the growing truck problem, build the West Gate ramps and put freight on rail."

### **10-YEAR HOUSING LIST WAIT**

*Maribyrnong Star* – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/310/story/139295.html>

Thousands of disadvantaged and low-income residents, desperate for a home, are on public housing waiting lists in Sunshine and Footscray – some for up to a decade.

Last week, the number of applicants listed at the Office of Housing's Sunshine and Footscray/Flemington branches was released.

At June this year, there were 3786 people waiting for a home listed at the Sunshine office and 1284 at the Footscray/Flemington office – up from the March quarter figures.

Public housing lists are broken up into two sections, one for those classified as requiring early housing, like the homeless and disabled.

Everyone else with a low income is listed on the 'wait turn' list.

In Sunshine, there were 2800 people on the 'wait turn' list and almost 1000 requiring early housing.

In Footscray, there were more than 860 on the 'wait turn' list and 417 needing early housing.

The Office of Housing's Sunshine branch includes families waiting for homes in all of Brimbank, plus parts of Maribyrnong and Wyndham.

The Footscray/Flemington office has the waiting list for parts of Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay.

At the Braybrook and Maidstone Neighbourhood House, an advocacy and advice service for public housing tenants is available, called the Braybrook Maidstone Sunshine Public Tenants Association.

Chairwoman Vivienne Conn said "with waiting lists, there's not much you can do, they are so huge it's just terrible".

"Generally, on the waiting list, you can wait 10 years in this area," she said.

"It's not someone saying, 'I don't want that, I'll wait,' it's the first offer."

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Ms Conn said the early housing applicants wait on "very long lists too" and depending on their circumstances some waited two years for a home.

Ms Conn said many people waiting for public housing were paying high rents in Braybrook and Maidstone.

"A lot of people in this area are going to Melton, where the rent is lower," she said.

Ms Conn said after years of various governments selling public housing land to private developers, there was a lack of homes.

"The Office of Housing does everything they can and do a very good job, but they can only do what they can with the stock they've got," she said.

The State Government recently announced 89 new public housing properties would be allocated in Brimbank, Wyndham, Melton and Hume by June next year, plus 51 in Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay.

### **VICROADS URGED TO REVEAL TRUCK NUMBERS**

*Maribyrnong Weekly*– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/vicroads-urged-to-reveal-truck-numbers/2268517.aspx>

The State Government is under increasing pressure to come up with an alternative plan that will take trucks off residential streets.

And Roads Minister Terry Mulder has said he will urge VicRoads to release annual truck counts that have so far been withheld.

As reported in the Weekly, Maribyrnong Council was writing to VicRoads to seek the release of truck counts it helps pay to have compiled.

Member for Williamstown Wade Noonan took the issue to State Parliament last week and came back with an assurance that Mr Mulder will speak with VicRoads

and seek the release of the annual figures. "He made this offer in good faith and the community will hold him to his word," Mr Noonan said. "Having said that, Minister Mulder remains as quiet as a church mouse on the issue of the Truck Action Plan."

The former Labor state government's Truck Action Plan was aimed at reducing truck traffic on residential streets in Melbourne's inner-west and improving freight access from the west to the Port of Melbourne. But it has been under review since the Baillieu government came into power, leaving residents increasingly frustrated by a lack of action. More than 83 days after Greens MLC for Western Metropolitan Colleen Hartland put questions to the state government about its plans to address truck traffic; Mr Mulder told Parliament there were "three key strategies currently under development".

He said the state government was "committed to improving freight efficiency and addressing congestion and amenity concerns in Melbourne's inner and outer suburban areas, including the western suburbs". A strategy for more freight on rail was being developed and would be completed by the end of the year.

But Ms Hartland said: "We don't need another review or another strategy. We need action."

She pointed to a media release put out by Ports Minister Denis Napthine in May last year when, in Opposition, he said: "The increases in imports and exports and a massive decline in the use of rail freight has put many more trucks on the roads around our ports, adding to local congestion and pollution. Victorians are sick of more trucks on their roads and sick of their roads crumbling yet John Brumby sits on his hands and does nothing to increase rail freight."

VicRoads regional director Nial Finegan said the truck counts were expected to be released "very soon".

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### **CALL FOR ASHLEY STREET, TOTTENHAM STATION FIX**

*Maribyrnong Weekly– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/call-for-ashley-street-tottenham-station-fix/2268513.aspx>

A Maribyrnong councillor is demanding action on the traffic bottleneck at Ashley Street and the creation of a permanent, sealed car park at Tottenham railway station.

The calls come as commuter's rate Tottenham station as the worst in Melbourne.

The council last week passed a motion to write to VicRoads asking it to upgrade the intersection of Ashley Street and Sunshine Road, near Tottenham station.

Cr Catherine Cumming said traffic queued regularly in both directions on Sunshine Road to turn into Ashley Street

"It's a ludicrous situation where you've got four lanes in Ashley Street and four lanes in Sunshine Road that are funnelled under one narrow bridge. You've only got three north-south connections at Victoria Street, Gordon Street and Ashley Street. If you widened Ashley Street you'd alleviate all that traffic banking up."

Cr Cumming suggested the underpass was built with enough width for extra lanes, and there would be no need to rebuild the rail bridge.

She's also calling for the Department of Transport to upgrade the dirt area used as a commuter car park on the northern side of station. "Up to 100 cars park in the dirt there. You can't get under the bridge with the traffic so people park on the north side."

A Metropolitan Transport Forum survey of more than 1800 commuters has revealed that Tottenham station is Melbourne's worst.

This responses to the 'pt4me' survey echoed Cr Cumming's concerns about the station: "Current car parking is in a muddy paddock. Needed is asphaltting and lighting. Ramps and walkway under bridge are 'scary'. I rarely use the station because of appalling conditions. This station would not be tolerated if it was in a more affluent area."

West Footscray and Footscray stations also appeared in the list of Melbourne's top 10 worst.

VicRoads metropolitan north-west regional director Nial Finegan said the agency was "aware of the concerns" and said the problem was due to water main works. "VicRoads does not have plans to upgrade Ashley Street in Tottenham at this point in time. VicRoads welcomes any proposal to improve the Victorian road network. We have not yet received a formal proposal from Maribyrnong Council on this issue but would be happy to investigate any proposal put forward."

### **WARD BOUNDARIES IN THE BALANCE**

*Maribyrnong Weekly– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/ward-boundaries-in-the-balance/2268511.aspx>

Maribyrnong residents could have more elected representatives to call on if ideas put forward as part of a review of ward boundaries are adopted.

A common theme of dividing the municipality into three wards with three councillors in each has emerged in preliminary submissions to the Victorian Electoral Commission's review of ward boundaries. It would mean increasing the number of councillors from seven to nine.

The VEC review, which began last month, is considering the number of councillors for the municipality and ward boundaries.

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One of the aims is to ensure the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality.

Maribyrnong is expected to grow from 73,000 residents in 2011 to almost 92,000 in the next decade, with the bulk of that growth in Footscray and Maribyrnong, according to population forecasts by .id Consulting.

Submissions by the Footscray Traders Association (FTA), the Greens' inner-west branch and the Proportional Representation Society of Australia recommend three wards with three councillors in each.

The society describes the current system of one councillor per ward as a "winner-take-all system, which often leads to councils not reflecting the range of views of voters as a whole".

FTA's argument is that more councillors in each ward would give residents greater access to their elected representatives. "Although the number of councillors would be increased by one from the current system, each councillor would still be representing approximately 7000 voters, in line with many other municipalities with similar populations."

Maribyrnong was split into seven wards with one councillor representing each following a review in 2005.

A report with preferred options will be released at the end of the month. Submissions will be taken on the options before a public hearing. A final report will

go to Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell on October 26.



### **CYCLING STUCK IN LOW GEAR, SAYS REVIEW**

*Maribyrnong Weekly— 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/cycling-stuck-in-low-gear-says-review/2268516.aspx>

A plan to build a network of bike paths across the city to make cycling a viable mode of transport has been heavily criticised in a report by the Victorian auditor-general.

A review of the state government's 2009-10 Victorian Cycling Strategy, which was supposed to grow cycling into a major form of personal transport, found the plan

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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had failed and "serious limitations in its development and implementation compromised its potential to achieve its goal of transforming cycling into a major form of personal transport".

The review included input from local councils, including Maribyrnong which has important cycling routes to and from the city.

The report, by auditor-general Des Pearson, cited 2006 figures: Victorians cycled for 1.6 per cent of the journeys they made on a typical weekday, compared to rates of between 10 and 27 per cent for European countries where cycling has become a popular mode of transport.

"The strategy was developed in haste without sufficient understanding of current cycling journeys or what was required to 'mainstream' cycling as a form of transport," Mr Pearson found.

"There was an over-emphasis on physical infrastructure solutions, to the relative neglect of other measures essential to achieving the strategy's goal, such as promoting cycling, educating potential cyclists and reducing the incentives to use cars."

Annual counts of cyclists using major routes in Maribyrnong show cycling is becoming increasingly popular.

This year's numbers were down slightly on last year but remain at historically high levels.

Cycling advocates say more needs to be done to improve cycling paths and lanes in Maribyrnong.

### **KIDS STARVED FOR CHANCES**

*Maribyrnong Star* – 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/310/story/139302.html>

More than one in four Maribyrnong young school children are considered to be developmentally vulnerable, according to the latest Australian Early Development Index (AEDI).

The AEDI was rolled out as a national program in 2009 and is a measure of children's development as they enter school.

Based on a teacher-completed checklist, the AEDI measures five key areas of early childhood development – physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communications and general knowledge.

Results show that of the 726 City of Maribyrnong preschool and primary school students interviewed, 25.3 per cent were developmentally vulnerable in at least one of the five key markers.

A further 12.8 per cent were developmentally vulnerable in two or more key markers, while 6.1 per cent of kids interviewed had special needs.

In Maribyrnong, the vast majority (87.4 per cent) of Prep children were reported to be either in excellent or very good health.

Maribyrnong City Council took part in the AEDI pilot project between 2005 and 2008 and used the findings to drive the consultation process to develop the Maribyrnong Early Years Plan 2010/2014.

The council will use the data to understand key trends and impacts from local actions and interventions.

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"The demographic profile shows that Maribyrnong has significant levels of disadvantage which are known to impact on family access to early childhood services," a council report read.

"This is often related to poorer parental knowledge and skill in early childhood care and education.

"Much of the focus of the local actions have, and continue to be, on improving parental skill and knowledge, and addressing families' barriers to early years services."

The report said this year's AEDI figures show that early years intervention programs have had a positive impact on the community.

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But Ms Hartland said: "We don't need another review or another strategy. We need action."

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### **DAYS OF RECKONING FOR ROOMING HOUSES**

*Maribyrnong Weekly*– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/days-of-reckoning-for-rooming-houses/2268515.aspx>

Rooming houses are set for a shake-up with the state government planning stricter regulations.

The government last week released an impact statement outlining four options to tighten regulation of rooming houses. They range from incentives and self-regulation to the introduction of 11 minimum standards.

Many rooming houses in the western suburbs, including some visited by the Weekly earlier this year, are overcrowded, dirty and unsafe.

Housing Minister Wendy Lovell said the Department of Human Services favoured introducing minimum standards, including fire-safe locks on bedroom doors, lockable main entrances, and provision of kitchen facilities.

Maribyrnong's community planning and advocacy officer, Nick Matteo, said the council was aware that not all rooming houses were up to scratch.

"Council believes that there are a significant number of premises operating as rooming houses without the necessary planning, building or health registrations."

Western Region Health Centre's Bernadette McCartney welcomed the proposed regulations but said they didn't go far enough.

"The department is saying they prefer 11 standards and I don't disagree ... it's similar to the supported residential services model they did 10 years ago. They need to introduce option one and be prepared to offer a subsidy, to get them [rooming houses] up to scratch."

Ms McCartney said the preferred option would work well in conjunction with a subsidy option, which the department is also considering.

Under the subsidy option, rooming house owners would receive funds to encourage them to make improvements to their dwellings in order to meet a range of standards.

Submissions can be made until October 14. Visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

### **WE'LL ALL PAY**

*Maribyrnong Star*– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/309/story/139163.html>

The Footscray community is concerned the advent of more paid parking will drive shoppers away from Footscray's CBD.

Maribyrnong City Council tabled its proposed paid parking consultation at last week's council meeting, noting that between its blog pages, letters and meetings with traders, the majority of people did not support more paid parking in Footscray's CBD.

The council sought comments on extra paid parking machines in Footscray's CBD, whether street paid parking should be one or two hours, and taxi ranks, loading zones, disabled parking bays and 15-minute parking spots.

Out of the respondents, 53 opposed paid parking and 20 supported the move.

Two of the letters attached petitions, with 65 signatures from the Vietnamese community and 80 signatures from visitors to the physiotherapy centre in Pickett St.

One anonymous blogger wrote: "why should we have more parking machines? Footscray will then become a very expensive place to shop and dine".

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On the flip side, fellow blogger David Milner said: "A reality check ... parking machines will not make Footscray become a very expensive place to shop at all".

One suggested parking should be free around school areas like Gilmore College, while one resident called for dedicated "permit holder only" parking bays.

The council has put out a map detailing its proposed expansion of paid parking machines, which will cover about 700 car parking bay in central Footscray.

The expansion would mean around 1350 parking spaces in Footscray would fall under paid parking since the council introduced the measure in 2004 as part of its parking management strategy to alleviate the frustration of trying to find a car park in Footscray's CBD.

Residents with a valid parking permit will not pay for parking in their street.

Paid parking in Footscray recently went up 10 cents to \$1.10 per hour between 8am to 6pm.

Footscray Traders Association president Grant Miles said the consultation process was just a box ticking exercise for Maribyrnong City Council.

"I got the feeling the decision was made and it didn't really matter what we said in the consultation meeting we had," Mr Miles said.

"We pointed out a couple of things we disagreed with – including how, for some reason, they seem to think only Footscray deserves parking meters. We don't understand why they don't put them in any other areas."

The council will release a detailed report on the new paid parking strategy at the September council meeting..

### **MARIBYRNONG COUNCIL DIGS IN ON POKIES SITING**

*Maribyrnong Weekly– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/maribyrnong-council-digs-in-on-pokies-siting/2268509.aspx>

Maribyrnong Council has released a tougher gambling policy giving it greater powers in deciding future pokies venue applications, particularly in disadvantaged suburbs such as Braybrook.

The policy will now include a planning scheme amendment "to reduce the number of electronic gaming machines (EGMs) in areas of disadvantage, reduce convenience [of] EGM gambling, and influence venue design that does not encourage EGM gambling".

The changes to the gambling policy come after the council was 'burned' in a time-consuming battle at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal where it fought a Western Bulldogs proposal for 70 electronic gaming machines (EGMs) at Club Edgewater.

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

The case is dragging on with more hearings this week discussing the Bulldogs' plan, as part of planning permit conditions, to relocate pokies from its other venues.

The council says the plan is not to its satisfaction. Council and the Bulldogs had a preliminary hearing at VCAT on Monday. The matter is yet to be settled.

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

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Dr Charles Livingstone, a senior lecturer in the department of health social science at Monash University, said it was "appalling" that councils had limited powers when it came to deciding if and where gaming venues could be built.

He said any regulatory measures to increase their say were welcome, particularly in disadvantaged suburbs like Braybrook where average losses were up to \$3200 per person per year.

"This appears to be part of a process the council is undertaking to make sure it gets its case right when it does go to appeal. In practicality, when councils have decided not to approve [a gaming application] they've had to fight an appeal and more often than not they've lost.

"It's a ridiculous situation for local governments, which have more than enough to spend time and money on."

Maribyrnong mayor Sarah Carter said: "We have one of the highest ratios of gaming machines per 1000 adults in the state, yet we have some of the most social and economically disadvantaged areas in the state.

"This policy will give council a greater say on where gaming machines are placed," she said.

### **BARREN LAND TO MAIDSTONE PARK**

*Maribyrnong Leader*— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/barren-land-to-maidstone-park-fbready/>

Maidstone residents have banded together to turn a barren wasteland into a community park and meeting place.

The popularly known Suffolk Triangle was a barren wasteland, a magnet for rubbish and hoon drivers until a group of residents got together more than three years ago.

Now it is a playground for children and a meeting place for families, and one of the newest slices of public open space in the municipality in decades.

Resident Hannah Langham told Leader the community had come together to buck the trend of shrinking public open space.

"An Urban Design Framework for Maidstone came out around the time we first met that said it would be fixed up but not until 2017 so we put it to council to consider bringing that forward," she said.

Maribyrnong Council agreed and has been working with the Friends of Suffolk Triangle ever since, planting trees and paving areas.

Now the council is taking submissions on making the name Suffolk Park Triangle official.

"We always wanted it to have a name, it legitimises it," Ms Langham said.

"A lot of kids use it now and I've noticed a couple of older people sitting there, the main thing people wanted was a place to sit (or) safely kick a ball.

"There are a lot of subdivided houses now and people don't have the open space they used to and there's been a change in demographics so there are more families, so the park fits in beautifully with that."

Ms Langham hoped the group's success would inspire others to advocate for their communities.

Maribyrnong Council also plans to create parks at the Yarraville Sinking Village site and at a site near Yarraville railway station.

There are also plans to open up access to the river front in Footscray after the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council ranked Maribyrnong 26 out of 29 municipalities for the provision of open space.

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Written submissions on the suggested name must be received at Maribyrnong Council's governance unit, PO Box 58, Footscray Vic, 3011, by September 15.

### **PEDDLING CYCLING IN MARIBYRNONG**

*Maribyrnong Leader– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

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

Maribyrnong residents inspired by Australia's first Tour de France winner, Cadel Evans, are getting on their bikes. But more could be done to encourage cycling, according to an Attorney-General's office report.

Beasley Cycles manager Stewart Morton said the Buckley St shop had seen an increase in visits by both experienced and novice riders during last month's race and since Evans's triumphant return. Some customers had joined staff for a ride to Federation Square for the civic reception.

"The more people on bikes the better," Mr Morton said.

A report last week found the 2009 Victorian Cycling Strategy, which aimed to increase cyclist numbers in inner Melbourne and central districts, including Footscray, was hastily put together.

It said the number taking up cycling for transport was stunted by a focus on infrastructure rather than promoting cycling, educating cyclists, and reducing incentives to use cars.

Maribyrnong Mayor Sarah Carter said she was happy with the recent growth of cycling, but more could always be done.

Maribyrnong Residents Association president Alan Ross said it was clear Melburnians were not yet willing to give up their cars, and motorists' attitude towards cyclists needed to be tackled

Maribyrnong Council is hosting Bicycle Victoria's Ride to Work Day on October 12. Check paths at [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au)

### **MAYOR CALLS FOR GRIT IN MARIBYRNONG**

*Maribyrnong Leader– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/mayor-calls-for-grit-in-maribyrnong-fbready/>

Maribyrnong Mayor Sarah Carter has called for council planners to fight harder for good development and for her fellow councillors to shake off their "defeatist attitude".

In yet another meeting dominated by planning, Cr Carter made the plea after Cr Martin Zakharov and Cr Dina Lynch gave their support to a \$6 million 37-unit development on Francis St, Yarraville.

At 10 metres high, it violated ResCode and had a shortfall of 10 car parking spaces.

The pair were voted down.

Cr Michael Clarke successfully moved an alternative motion to reject a planning permit, based on the development's unacceptable bulk and scale and lack of car spaces.

In supporting the alternative motion, Cr Carter said councils had acquired a "learned helplessness and defeatist attitude" by approving unacceptable developments only because they believed they would ultimately be approved after a VCAT challenge.

"We have to be responsible for the decisions we make. We have to send a message to our planners to fight harder for us, so that we don't have to see developments with too few car spaces coming to council," she said.

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The decision to reject the planning permit for the Francis St proposal was met with cheers from the crowd attending the meeting. Eighty objections had been lodged against it. Cr Lynch and Cr Zakharov argued that residents had to compromise or VCAT could veto concessions council had negotiated.

Last month, council rejected an 11-unit proposal for Francis St in an equally fiery debate.

Maribyrnong and Yarraville residents in Bloomfield Ave and Finlay St were not so lucky last week. Developments there were both approved, despite angry interjections from the gallery.

## MELTON

### REVOLT AT MELTON MUSIC GIG CANCELLATION

*Melton Leader* – 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/revolt-at-melton-music-gig-cancellation/>

Melton's TABCORP Park says it will be thousands of dollars out of pocket after the cancellation of a rock concert next month.

The venue was to host the Soundwave Revolution, which was to feature headline acts Van Halen, Alice Cooper, Sum 41 and Courtney Love's band, Hole, on September 30.

But the concert was cancelled just over a month before it was scheduled after an unnamed headline act pulled out.

TABCORP Park executive general manager Joe Ivisic said the cancellation would have a financial impact on the harness racing venue.

It had shifted a night race meeting to accommodate the festival.

"We were very disappointed to learn of the cancellation of Soundwave Revolution," Mr Ivisic said.

"It has caused us inconvenience, but the decision was ultimately out of our hands."

The Soundwave Revolution website says online tickets will be automatically refunded, while tickets purchased from outlets were now available to be refunded.

"It is with great sadness that we announce the cancellation of the (Soundwave) Revolution Festival," the website says.

"Many of the festival bands will still be coming to Australia in that time period and team up to bring you some very special shows.

"These will include multi-band line-ups in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

"We will be announcing these events soon."

Mr Ivisic said that despite the cancellation, the venue would still consider hosting future concerts.

"We were looking forward to showcasing Melton as an ideal location for such a popular event," Mr Ivisic said.

"While it didn't work out on this occasion, we look forward to more opportunities like this in the future," he added.

Meanwhile, more than 50 pages have been set up on social networking website Facebook by concert-goers expressing their anger at the late cancellation.

Poster Zak Hadfield said he still would have attended the amended line-up.

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"I don't understand why they can't just take away the artists who can't play and go on regardless ... I'd still go, I wanted to see the artists who bothered to show up for their fans," he wrote.

### **OPERATION BARRA: PLATES GIVE THE GAME AWAY**

*Melton Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/operation-barra-plates-give-the-game-away/2267499.aspx>

Unlicensed motorists and those driving stolen or unregistered vehicles were targeted in Melton last week as part of Operation Barra.

The operation involved the use of automatic numberplate recognition technology, meaning that within seconds offending road users were detected.

Brimbank highway patrol's Sergeant Rod Stein said that as part of ongoing industrial action, police did not collate statistics from the operation, but offenders would be processed as usual.

"Police from within the Brimbank division, which includes Brimbank and Melton, were helping ... because we get a large number of intercepts, we need quite a few police to work through them. There was a considerable amount [of motorists] driving while suspended and disqualified. There were also a number of unlicensed and unregistered cars."

Sergeant Stein said that as part of the operation, which is conducted somewhere across the western suburbs over two days each month, two people were arrested for theft offences.

One driver was caught driving while suspended, only to be caught again two hours later.

### **'SQUIRRELLING AWAY' FOR HOME DEPOSIT**

*Melton Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/squirrelling-away-for-home-deposit/2267514.aspx>

Melton remains among Melbourne's most-affordable suburbs, with new figures revealing that first-home buyers face the second-shortest wait when saving for a deposit.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Melton buyers take an average of 3.1 years to save for a typical deposit of about \$62,000.

Bankwest senior analyst Tim Crawford said that over the past financial year, there were 25,790 first-home buyers across Victoria, 34 per cent fewer than the previous year.

"The fact that first-time buyers are taking longer to save a deposit, especially in Melbourne, directly contributes to this drop in new buyers entering the property market," Mr Crawford said.

"For the property market to prosper there needs to be a consistent number of first-time buyers, as historically this has been the catalyst for growth in the sector."

However, Melton estate agent Jason Ryder, of Professionals Ryder Real Estate, did not believe the figures reflected reality.

He said that the three-year average was likely based on the experience of individuals with a high income.

"Based on the \$62,000 figure in three years, well, that's nearly saving a thousand each month, which I'd say for Melton isn't the case.

"First-home buyers with 20 per cent saved are pretty rare; once people save 10 per cent they are looking to get into the market."

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Mr Ryder said most people with a stable job and a good credit history was likely to get finance for their first home.

"My advice would be, don't over-commit yourself; buy within your budget. Buy what is affordable today and look to upgrade in a few years' time."

Melton Residents Association President Peter Rowan wasn't surprised by the figures and said affordability was a reason first-home buyers were attracted to the area.

"We attract the young families because it is still affordable here. You can buy an established home for \$250,000 to \$300,000."

But the shire's explosive growth, which is set to increase with the launch of the Toolern development, also creates challenges.

"The residents association is advocating for more infrastructure for the growth," Mr Rowan said.

Mayor Justin Mammarella said he understood Melton's strong appeal to first-home buyers.

"The Shire of Melton offers the attractive combination of urban and rural lifestyle options for prospective residents.

"The availability of land, coupled with our close proximity to Melbourne, further adds to the shire's appeal."

### **FENCE ARGUMENTS A FLASHPOINT**

*Melton Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fence-arguments-a-flashpoint/2267516.aspx>

Quarrelling Melton neighbours are most likely to dispute shared fences, according to new data from the state Dispute Settlement Centre.

Last financial year, Melton residents logged 122 calls for advice about fence disputes, 72 calls about bad behaviour, and 25 concerning trees, shrubs and creepers.

There were more than 17,000 calls throughout the state.

Centre manager Gina Ralston said the most frequent disputes were about fencing and behaviour, such as bullying and intruding uninvited on a neighbour's property.

"Some of the calls resulted in mediation sessions that aim to make resolution cheaper, fairer and simpler than costly court action. At these mediations, over 70 per cent are able to reach agreement," she said.

"Fence disputes continue to cause the most friction between neighbours, particularly where there are disputes over sharing the costs of constructing a new fence."

Ms Ralston said the centre gave free advice to help callers resolve disputes rather than resorting to costly court procedures.

Principal lawyer at the Melton Law Offices, John Wertheimer, said of those neighbours' disputes where mediation failed, the majority were dealt with by magistrate's courts.

But he said that, where necessary, intervention orders could be effective for antisocial behaviour.

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"If the contact is unacceptable between neighbours ... the very fact that you make the application for an order ... well, the behaviour generally stops.

"The magistrate always warns the person that the consequences of breaching an intervention order can be very severe. They usually temper their contact."

Melton Council's acting manager of compliance, John Russell, said most neighbour disputes, including overhanging branches and tree root invasion, were outside council jurisdiction.

He said the council was able to respond to some complaints such as loud music, barking dogs and drainage issues.

### **MELTON COUNCIL ON JOB IN LITTER FIGHT**

*Melton Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/melton-council-on-job-in-litter-fight/2267504.aspx>

Cash grants to help the council and environmentalists in the fight against litter have been welcomed by a local group.

Melton Environment Group president Daryl Akers said state government funding of \$75,000 would go some way to reducing rubbish in the shire.

The council will use the funding to employ a litter prevention officer and to enforce litter laws.

"It is sad that we need these extra resources but littering is a major problem, especially where our waterways are concerned," Mr Akers said.

"It has a major implication for wildlife in our creeks."

Mr Akers said platypuses were most at risk from rubbish in creeks and rivers.

"The rubbish we throw away in the street ends up in the creeks and rivers through the stormwater system.

"Old hair ties and plastic rings that are attached to drinks are hazardous as they get caught up around platypuses' necks as they forage around the stream bed looking for food."

New housing developments were also a concern, as building debris too often ended up in waterways.

"The challenge is to avoid builders' rubbish finding its way into Arnolds and Toolern creeks, as well as into Melton Reservoir," Mr Akers said.

"It will be important to make sure that storm drains emptying into these creeks are properly maintained and that authorities demonstrate responsibility concerning their maintenance."

### **FIVE'S A CROWD, BROOKFIELD RESIDENTS SAY**

*Melton Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fives-a-crowd-brookfield-residents-say/2267518.aspx>

Residents in a small Brookfield court fear their quiet lifestyle will be ruined if separate plans for five units are approved.

Liberty Court resident Sally Caddick said parking and traffic would be a serious concern if applications for three units on one lot and two townhouses on another got the green light.

The application for the units has already been rejected by Melton Council and an appeal has been lodged with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

"A court is not ideal for units, especially in our quiet court," Ms Caddick said.

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"Our family environment could be threatened."

She said residents heard about the application for the townhouses shortly after attending the VCAT hearing into the units.

"The day I got back from VCAT, there was another letter notifying us of the application for two townhouses in the court," Ms Caddick said.

"There should only be three houses where five units are being considered."

Neighbour Christine Wruss said her children felt free to play in the court, but if units were built this would no longer be safe.

"In summer, the kids walk in and out of each other's houses, playing games and kicking the footy."

Ms Wruss said the reason she and her husband bought a house in the court was the security of knowing the court would not be overdeveloped.

"Only single dwellings were allowed and that's why we bought here. You weren't allowed to build more than one house; not even a granny flat out the back.

"[But] the covenants have all expired now anyway. Now it doesn't matter what they do."

Ms Caddick and Ms Wruss said parking would also be a major concern.

"The court is too small now as it is," Ms Wruss said.

The council's acting planning manager, Steve Finlay, said the initial application for the units was rejected because parking was inadequate.

"This was conveyed to the permit applicant who refused to modify their plans."

The council's refusal was subsequently appealed against at VCAT. The parties are awaiting a decision.

The application for the two townhouses is being considered by the council.

### **COAL SEARCH: CALL TO SCRAP LICENCE**

*Melton Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/coal-search-call-to-scrap-licence/2267520.aspx>

Mantle Mining's coal exploration licence in Moorabool should be scrapped, say the Greens as they step up the fight to safeguard prime farmland.

With drilling to start at 15 sites across Parwan, Rowsley and Maddingley as early as next week, Victorian Greens leader Greg Barber wants the state government to cancel the licence.

It allows Mantle Mining to search for brown coal in a 38,000-hectare area between Bacchus Marsh and the outskirts of Ballan.

"Instead of just talking about protecting valuable farmland and residences, which is what we've got around Bacchus Marsh, the Baillieu government needs to actually act and do something about it," he said.

Victorian Greens' Senator Richard Di Natale said the area covered agricultural land that was too important to jeopardise with the threat of coal mining.

"This is at a time when we face issues about food security as a nation. Our priority has to be to feed ourselves and the world," he said.

"The last thing we should be doing is considering mining prime agricultural land."

Under the state Mineral Resources Act, Energy Minister Michael O'Brien has the power to exempt any part of the state from mining and exploration.

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But he believes the government can strike a balance between the "sustainable development" of mining and the interests of residents and farmers.

Mr O'Brien said Mantle could not extract anything it found in Moorabool without applying for a mining licence. But Senator DiNatale said issuing exploration rights left the gate open for a mining licence to follow.

"If they find enough brown coal and if the state government doesn't do what it should and refuse to grant a mining licence, this commercial company could get the commercial return it's looking for," he said.

"This is brown coal for export - we don't export brown coal now, so we're not talking about protecting existing jobs in the industry or the local economy."

Meanwhile, Moorabool residents have ramped up their opposition to Mantle's coal exploration, launching an email campaign to the company's underwriter, Intersuisse, urging it to terminate equity-raising.

The emails urge Intersuisse to use an exit clause in its contract with Mantle and withdraw from the "controversial project".

Senator Di Natale said worried residents could be optimistic after Mantle scuttled similar coal exploration plans in the Otways when residents objected at a meeting on July 27.

"What happened in Deans Marsh is an example of what happens when a community speaks in one voice."

### **COAL SEARCH: ANIMALS, PLANTS 'AT RISK'**

*Melton Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/coal-search-animals-plants-at-risk/2267521.aspx>

A Moorabool environmental group fears potential coal mining in the area could threaten endangered animals and plant life.

Parwan Landcare spokesman Simon Jolly (pictured) said the volcanic grasslands in the Parwan region were among the rarest in Victoria.

Once stretching from Melbourne's inner-western suburbs to the South Australian border, the grasslands have declined by about 98 per cent since colonisation.

"Parwan is one of the few patches of undisturbed remnant grasslands," he said.

"We've lost most of it because of grazing and urbanisation of Melbourne's west."

Mr Jolly said strip-mining would harm plants and animals, including rare species of spiny-rice flowers, glowing grass frogs and an endangered quail-like bird called the plains wanderer.

He said the government needed to weigh the consequences of mining the remaining grassland.

### **REALM OF WONDERS AT NEW LIBRARY**

*Melton Weekly– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/realm-of-wonders-at-new-library/2267525.aspx>

'Tinkerbelle' put Bacchus Marsh library co-ordinator Dale Johnston (pictured) under a spell on Saturday as the doors to the new Lerderderg library were officially opened.

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A big crowd turned out for the event. Located on Main Street, the new library and community learning centre has more space, books, computers and private meeting rooms which the community will have access to.

A self-checkout system designed to save time has also been installed.

The new library will also house a visitor information centre, council customer service centre, and the historical society.

### **LEVEL CROSSING CRACKDOWN**

*Melton Leader– 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011*

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/level-crossing-crackdown/>

Police are cracking down on level crossing safety for National Rail Safety Week.

At 60km/h, it takes a train 200m to stop, but police see motorists and pedestrians taking risks at level crossings as trains approach.

Motorists caught entering a level crossing, or failing to stop or give way will be hit with a \$611 fine and four demerit points.

Road policing Acting Superintendent Martin Boorman said motorists are not thinking of the consequences when they disobey level crossing signals.

“People need to realise that it is extremely hard to judge how fast a train is approaching, and they cannot stop quickly,” he said.

Acting Supt Boorman warned anyone considering the risk, “you will come off second best”.

Across Australia, about 37 people die at level crossing a year.

Looking at fatalities, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau found:

- 51 per cent happened when the boom gates were down and lights and bells on

- More than 80 per cent happened in daylight on straight, dry roads

- More than 60 per cent happened on weekdays

- In a third of crashes, motorists hit the side of the train.

### **WHITE BALLOON DAY CAMPAIGN TO BREAK SILENCE ON CHILD ABUSE IN MELTON SHIRE**

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

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/white-balloon-day-campaign-to-break-silence-on-child-abuse-in-melton-shire/>

A campaign that supports a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse within the shire has been started by Melton Council.

The council says it will offer its full support to White Balloon Day next month.

To be celebrated on September 7, White Balloon Day is held annually as part of National Child Protection Week.

Mayor Justin Mammarella says participation in White Balloon Day will help empower children and adults to break their silence on child abuse, increasing awareness and helping to educate, empower and protect children.

“I recently initiated a campaign that supports a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse within our community,” he said.

“Work undertaken by the National Child Protection Association has indicated that up to 50 per cent of child abuse incidents are not reported, as those witnessing the incident do not feel confident or empowered to report such behaviours.

“Initiatives such as White Balloon Day help in empowering people to speak up and report child abuse. I encourage residents, workplaces and schools across the shire to support White Balloon Day and raise awareness of this important cause.”

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### **MELTON LIBRARY TO VU WHILE HUB BUILT**

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

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-library-to-vu-while-hub-built/>

Melton library will move to its temporary site at the Victoria University campus next month while the new Melton Library and Learning Hub is built in McKenzie St.

The library will close at 5pm on Thursday, September 15, and reopen at the university in Rees Rd, Melton South, at 10am on September 20.

During this time no library items should be returned, but customers can still use library services at the Caroline Springs library, either in person or over the phone for general inquiries and item renewals.

No Melton library items will have a due date which falls between September 15 and September 25.

An extended loan period will be in place to avoid items being due during this time.

All Melton library programs and community group meetings will recommence at the Victoria University base from September 26.

The temporary location offers convenient public transport, with buses 459 and 457 stopping in front of the university entrance in Rees Rd.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the council wanted to ensure the move was as seamless as possible.

“Council understands that access to library services is very important for our community and is committed to providing a continued public library service during construction of the Melton Library and Learning Hub,” he said.

“It was very important to council that things like operating hours and the phone number (9747 5300) could remain the same at the temporary location. We are

very grateful to VU for their willingness to share library resources during the construction period.”

### **MELTON POLICE REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE**

*Melton Leader– 20<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-police-reinforcements-arrive/>

Melton Police have welcomed three new constables into their ranks to boost boots on the ground.

Constables Christian Arbanovski, Holly Gibson and Ric Holloway are the new police.

Their arrival will come as a boost to Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella, who earlier this year said Melton needed at least 20 more police officers over the next three years as the shire expanded.

Constable Gibson, 24, from Bacchus Marsh, said she joined the police looking for a job that was challenging and different.

She originally studied chemistry at university and worked part-time as an HR manager at McDonald's.

She said she had no expectations going into the job, but loved working at Melton.

“Melton is a great station with lots of members willing to help,” she said.

Insp Mario Fiorentino said it was great to see fresh new faces around the station as part of the government and Victoria Police commitment to increasing numbers.

“Constables Holly, Christian and Ric have settled in very well into their new surroundings and are providing a welcome boost to local resources,” he said. “This will ultimately improve our service delivery capabilities to the community.”

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In April, Cr Mammarella said extra police were needed to cater for the growing municipality.

But Police Association secretary Greg Davies said Melton needed about 30 new officers, not 20.

"We'd like to think that both the Melton and Caroline Springs police stations will be beneficiaries of the remaining 1500 or so police to come over the next four years," he said.

Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella said other police service areas received more officers than Melton because of their higher crime rates.

### **WARNING FOR NOISY MELTON SHIRE RATEPAYERS**

*Melton Leader*– 19<sup>th</sup> August 2011

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

Ratepayers attending Melton Council meetings have been warned to be on their best behaviour or face a costly penalty.

The reminder comes after a man was asked to leave the July 21 council meeting for taking his vocal protest too far.

The unruly public gallery was also cautioned several times by Mayor Justin Mammarella. The council has threatened nuisance ratepayers with fines of up to \$500 if they refuse to leave the council chamber when directed. No fines have yet been issued.

The council says the mayor is also prepared to adjourn meetings should the audience become too disruptive. The warning, printed in agendas this year, comes as the council faces growing discontent about its decision to adopt higher rates for development land in the urban growth boundary.

Ratepayers have also been reminded that silence should be maintained, unless the mayor allows otherwise. A visitor must not interject or interfere with any debate in the chamber. The council's general manager corporate services, Peter Bean, said the warning was included on agendas because visitors were unaware of protocols regarding conduct. "It has largely related to people talking to each other during a meeting, which has made it very difficult for councillors to conduct the meeting," he said.

"People have also attempted to ask questions of individual councillors, as well as the whole council, during meetings, without knowing that it is not allowed."

## MOONEE VALLEY

### **MOONEE PONDS WILL WALK THIS WAY FOR PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

*Moonee Valley Leader*– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/moonee-ponds-will-walk-this-way-for-pedestrian-safety/>

Moonee Ponds pedestrians look out, the eyes of the law are on you.

Operation Walk This Way is focusing on pedestrian safety following four pedestrian deaths in the Moonee Valley policing area in the past 12 months.

Since January 1 this year, three pedestrians have been killed on Moonee Valley roads.

In July a 92-year-old man was killed while crossing a Moonee Ponds street.

In May an 80-year-old woman was killed while crossing the Tullamarine Freeway at Strathmore Heights.

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In March a 4-year-old boy was killed at a pedestrian crossing on Epsom Rd, Kensington.

Moonee Ponds acting Sgt Lisa Prentice-Evans said the daylong operation will target poor and dangerous pedestrian behaviour.

"Pedestrians are some of our most vulnerable road users but too often we see pedestrians choosing to disobey laws and pedestrian signals," Sgt Prentice-Evans said.

"We want to raise the awareness of road rules and the appropriate pedestrian behaviour within the community."

Pedestrians who fail to obey traffic lights and who cross within 20m of a pedestrian crossing (but not on the crossing), will receive a \$61 fine.

That failing to obey the no pedestrian signs and walk over train tracks when there is a subway or overpass, will receive \$214 fines.

Drivers who do the wrong thing in areas where there are pedestrians will also be targeted.

### **POLICE OPERATION ZEROS IN ON INNER-MELBOURNE OFFENDERS**

*Moonee Valley Leader— 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://melbourne-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/police-operation-zeros-in-on-inner-melbourne-offenders/>

Police are increasing patrols to combat a spate of night-time assaults and robberies in the inner north-west.

Police from the Melbourne North police station have ramped up patrols in North Melbourne, Flemington and Kensington in a joint operation with police in the Moonee Valley area.

Melbourne North Acting Senior Sergeant Rob Zussa said the spike in robberies was at its peak in June and July.

"They were happening on Friday and Saturday nights in darkness on the street. People were walking down the street and getting attacked and having their wallets, cash, phones and iPods taken," Acting Sen-Sgt Zussa said.

While he was unable to provide figures, Acting Sen-Sgt Zussa said the rate of robberies had decreased after two North Melbourne men were recently arrested in the CBD.

But he said isolated robberies were still occurring and he urged people to use caution walking home late at night, especially if they had been drinking alcohol.

"Be conscious of your surroundings, try to walk with someone else, try and stay in well-lit areas and, if you've been drinking, consider taking a taxi," he said.

Acting Sen-Sgt Zussa said police were also running proactive initiatives in housing estates in Kensington and North Melbourne

### **RISE IN HOMELESS IN MOONEE VALLEY**

*Moonee Valley Leader— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/rise-in-homeless-in-moonee-valley/>

More people are going homeless or being forced into rooming houses as our public housing waiting list continues to grow.

Latest figures show 14,370 homeless or at-risk people were waiting for public housing across the North West metro region in June.

This includes Ascot Vale, Flemington and North Melbourne.

From April to June, 939 public housing applications were lodged in Ascot Vale, 1284 in Flemington and Footscray and 1402 in North Melbourne and Carlton.

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The figures showed an increase of 133 applications in Moonee Valley since the March quarter, with the biggest jump in North Melbourne, with an extra 80 applications in the three months.

Victorian Housing Minister Wendy Lovell said there was a housing shortage.

“(This is) particularly in the private rental market, placing additional pressure on the public housing sector,” Ms Lovell said.

Flemington resident Esra, who did not want to disclose her surname, spent four years living on people’s couches before being offered a housing commission property in Melton this year.

“They stuff you around a lot,” she said. “They say it’s a minimum of a two to four-year wait but it also depends on the area you apply for.

“There’s less of a wait if you apply for country-type areas.”

The figures come after the Leader highlighted the plight of squatters living in the old Racecourse Hotel in Flemington last week.

They were signed to a government housing register after being evicted from the dilapidated building.

Anthony Vippond, a developer with the Flemington site’s owner, Global8 Investment, said: “It’s unfortunate that these people will have to go back on to the streets.”

“I had to do it, I had no choice. Their presence was upsetting the community,” he said.

### **MOONEE VALLEY COUNCILLOR'S SWIPE AT POLICY 'PRICE'**

*Moonee Valley Leader— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/moonee-valley-councillors-swipe-at-policy-price/>

An outdated planning policy is to blame for a spate of multi-storey development proposals in Essendon, a Moonee Valley councillor has said.

Cr Jan Chantry said her own council’s North Essendon and Keilor Rd Structure Plan, now under review, had resulted in an influx of planning applications in “narrow” Winifred St, just off Mt Alexander Rd.

This was impacting adversely on the suburb’s amenity, she said.

Developers have lodged plans for at least two separate multi-storey residential developments within metres of each other, despite council and resident objections.

The first development, at 16 Winifred St, includes plans to transform the site into a three-storey building with 17 dwellings.

The other development, at 6 Winifred St, is a three-storey complex with 15 dwellings.

Cr Jan Chantry said poor planning policies were to blame for an increase in apartment applications.

“When we put the (plan) together in 2007, council allowed Winifred St to be listed as a transitional zone, thus placing in jeopardy the residential amenity and lifestyle of those homes,” she said.

“We also earmarked the sites for possible development and the developers jumped right in and offered big money for those homes on large blocks of land. We are now paying the price.”

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Moonee Valley Council failed to decide on 16 Winifred St within the set planning time frame. It now goes to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal in November.

But at an ordinary council meeting last week, councillors said they would have refused the application on the grounds of “unacceptable building bulk, height and scale”.

On top of these two developments, Cr Chantry said, were also plans for a 15-unit subdivision at 13 Winifred St, bringing the total of new units to 47.

Residents, who have lodged more than 45 objections, told the Leader last week they feared being “forced out” of their homes.

Debbie Domas said: “we feel like we’re being told our street is changing and we’re forced to leave”.

“We hope VCAT will uphold council’s decision.”

### **KEILOR ROAD TOWERS 'WILL MAKE ROAD A WIND TUNNEL'**

*Moonee Valley Weekly— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/keilor-road-towers-will-make-road-a-wind-tunnel/2266448.aspx>

An application for two five-storey buildings at 102-110 Keilor Road has been approved despite fears by one Moonee Valley councillor that the proposal would turn the road into a wind tunnel.

Buckley ward's Cr Jan Chantry said that why the council supported the large-scale development was "beyond her".

"It's incredible that in our structure plan we state that five-storey buildings on Keilor Road are acceptable.

"Keilor Road will become nothing but a wind tunnel."

The application lodged by Townhouses Pty Ltd is for a mixed-use development with two five-storey buildings which would include five retail shops and 142 apartments.

Cr Narelle Sharpe added an amendment to the application asking the developer to provide parking and associated signs for the length of the development on the east and west side of nearby Gillies Street.

In an original application, the plan was for one of the buildings to be six storeys and for limited car parking on Gillies Street.

Rosehill ward's Cr Ange Kenos said while he normally had reservations about supporting high developments he supported this one.

"It has been significantly amended with the parking issue. Had it remained as it originally was I would definitely not be supporting it."

The application received one formal objection.

Mayor John Sipek and Buckley ward's Cr Paul Giuliano were absent from the meeting. The application was passed 6-1.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011



### **ESSENDON APARTMENT PLAN HEADS TO TRIBUNAL**

*Moonee Valley Weekly* – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/essendon-apartment-plan-heads-to-tribunal/2266446.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council has refused an application for a three-storey, 17-unit apartment complex at 16 Winifred Street, Essendon - but it may be to no avail.

The application by the Terrain Consulting Group is bound to appear at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal after the council failed to make a decision within the prescribed time set down by the state government.

There was a community outcry when the application was submitted to the council in March, many residents saying the planned complex was too big and not in keeping with the character of the street.

Several community consultation meetings have since failed to reach a compromise between the council, residents and developer.

At its meeting last week, the council said continuing negotiations and the workload placed on council planning staff delayed its decision.

Council officers recommended the proposal go ahead, but the council passed an alternative motion to advise VCAT that if the council had made a decision in time the application would have been refused.

Buckley ward's Cr Narelle Sharpe tabled the motion on the grounds that the development was not in keeping with the surrounding residences.

She said the proposed development was of unacceptable bulk, height and scale and would be a visually dominant building in the streetscape.

Under the North Essendon structure plan, Winifred Street is marked as a "transitional area" where some kind of significant change in the streetscape is expected.

But a community backlash has sent the council back to the drawing board and it is reviewing the street's inclusion as a transitional area.

Winifred Street is residential on one side and commercial on the other; the application is for the residential side of the street.

Buckley ward's Cr Jan Chantry said residents had been let down by the structure plan.

"We allowed Winifred Street to be listed as a transitional zone, thus placing in jeopardy the residential amenity and lifestyle of these homes."

A date for a VCAT hearing has not been set.

### **NOTORIOUS NORTH MELBOURNE ROUNDABOUT MADE SAFER**

*Moonee Valley Leader* – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/notorious-north-melbourne-roundabout-made-safer/>

Safety upgrades have been completed on North Melbourne's notorious 'roundabout of death'.

The roundabout, at the junction of Elizabeth St, Peel St, Flemington Rd and Royal Parade, has been given four sets of traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and bicycle lanes.

Roads Minister Terry Mulder today turned on the traffic lights at the roundabout, which is considered one of the most dangerous in Australia.

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"The Haymarket Roundabout is the gateway into the CBD from Melbourne's northern and western suburbs and over the years has been known as the 'roundabout of death'," Mr Mulder said.

"It's a confusing a very complex intersection which has resulted in a high number of crashes over the years."

Since 2000 there have been 78 recorded crashes, including 14 serious injury crashes.

"Many drivers have experienced a dangerous situation or a near miss with another vehicle at this roundabout," Mr Mulder said.

The \$2.34 million project includes traffic lights and pedestrian crossings at all four roundabout entrances and dedicated bicycle lanes clearly marked with green pavement.

Later this year Vic Roads and Yarra Trams will also complete tram stop upgrades at Elizabeth St.

### **ASCOT VALE RESIDENTS SAY, STOP WRECKING OUR HERITAGE**

*Moonee Valley Weekly*— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/ascot-vale-residents-say-stop-wrecking-our-heritage/2266444.aspx>

A group of Ascot Vale residents is turning up the heat on Moonee Valley Council, demanding protection of their historically significant neighbourhood.

Residents in the Rothwell Hill area of Ascot Vale, which includes St Leonards and Roxburgh streets and Bayview Terrace, say they are increasingly fed up with the number of houses being pulled down because they are not heritage-protected, and replaced with units.

Resident Vicki Carter said a house at 31 St Leonards Street was last week demolished, despite it being next door to a house that is heritage-protected.

Two houses on the other side of the road have also been demolished, one replaced with units.

Ms Carter said there were too many holes in the heritage overlay of the council's planning scheme for Ascot Vale.

She said the council needed to act to stop heritage being lost.

"The council is too slow; they need to do more than they're doing. There is a groundswell of community outrage about what's going on."

Ms Carter said residents of more than 100 homes in Ascot Vale had placed signs in their front yards calling for more heritage protection for the neighbourhood.

Resident Carli Wilson said all residents were asking for was appropriate development for the area.

"People are not unreasonable about development in the local area."

A revised heritage study of Ascot Vale conducted last year recommended that more houses be included in the council's heritage overlay.

However, despite the council endorsing the review it has not been acted upon by the Department of Planning.

Council chief executive Neville Smith acknowledged there were holes in the heritage overlay for Ascot Vale.

"[The] council has done a lot of work to address heritage gaps in the local area, including developing a heritage strategy.

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"One of the measures in the strategy is to undertake a study to ensure consistent and thorough heritage overlay implementation across the municipality.

"The council is also consulting the community about incorporating into the planning scheme updates to eight heritage precincts.

"Three of the precincts are in Ascot Vale and will contribute to rectifying heritage gaps in this area."

### **NEW VENUE SOUGHT FOR ESSENDON YOUTH HUB**

*Moonee Valley Weekly*— 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-venue-sought-for-essendon-youth-hub/2266443.aspx>

The YMCA has abandoned plans to convert a disused fire station in Essendon into a training and support centre for youth in Melbourne's north-west.

The YMCA and Metropolitan Fire Brigade say building costs make the project unviable.

In May, the Weekly revealed the YMCA hoped to use the Bulla Road station as a "youth foyer", which would provide training for young people with a focus on community engagement and finding secure employment.

There was strong opposition from residents who feared the centre would become a halfway house for youth with drug and alcohol problems.

YMCA chief executive Peter Burns said the association and MFB remained committed to supporting the needs of vulnerable young people in Moonee Valley.

But he said the modifications required to make the building suitable had made the costs too prohibitive for the YMCA.

"This was very much a mutual decision. We still, however, hope to find another suitable venue and are working closely with the Moonee Valley Council on this front.

"We look forward to continuing our partnership with the MFB. This effort and energy will not be lost, and we look forward to working with both organisations to find other creative solutions to meet the needs of our most disadvantaged young people."

Mr Burns put a call-out to anyone who knew of a possible alternative venue.

Anyone interested in helping form a "youth foyer" in Moonee Valley can contact YMCA youth development manager Marisa Uwarow on 0400540868 or at [marisa.uwarow@ymca.org.au](mailto:marisa.uwarow@ymca.org.au)

## WYNDHAM

### **CASH SPLASH FOR WYNDHAM VALE STUDENTS**

*Wyndham Leader*— 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/cash-splash-for-wyndham-vale-students/>

Students at a Wyndham Vale primary school have a new spacious learning centre far removed from the desk rows their parents would have been familiar with.

Our Lady of the Southern Cross Catholic Primary School's new centre opened this month and cost \$2.5 million, with funding provided by the Federal Government. A new administrative building opened in April and a new home economics centre opens in September.

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The school has a fundraising mini market and car boot sale from 10am this Saturday.

"We hope that the local community will support this activity and come along for a fun day," Principal Jennifer Poon said.

### **FOCUS ON OWNERS NOT BREEDS, RSPCA SAYS**

*Wyndham Weekly– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/focus-on-owners-not-breeds-rspca-says/2268488.aspx>

Calls for certain dog breeds to be banned in the wake of the death of Ayen Chol have not been fully supported by the RSPCA.

While Hoppers Crossing campaigner against dangerous dogs Leanne Pelen has called for vicious breeds such as pit bull terriers to be banned, RSPCA chief executive Maria Mercurio has called for a stronger focus on pet ownership. "Our policy has always been to focus on 'deed not breed'," she said.

"No dog should ever be at large, regardless of breed. What we don't want is for everyone to get caught up in breeds and get complacent about the responsibilities that come with ownership."

Wyndham Council has identified 20 dangerous dogs, 19 restricted breeds and 12 dogs that have been declared menacing. There were 43 dog attacks reported in Wyndham this year that resulted in investigations. Of those, 19 involved attacks on humans and 24 against animals. Restricted breeds such as pit bulls must be registered in Victoria.

### **MORE STORES COMING TO WILLIAMS LANDING**

*Wyndham Leader– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/more-stores-coming-to-williams-landing/>

Construction of the first major stores at Williams Landing's town centre is expected to begin by the end of next year following the State Government's announcement of the contract for the new Williams Landing train station.

Developer Cedar Wood's Victorian state manager Nathan Blackburne said work on the design of roads linking the town centre with the station had begun and construction of those would begin before the end of this year.

The Government and Wyndham Council have already signed off on plans for the town centre, which includes a Big W, Woolworths and Master home improvements store.

Mr Blackburne said speciality shops would soon be advertised for lease.

He said construction of the shopping centre and home improvements store would begin from mid to late next year and take a year to 18 months to complete.



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### GETTING INTO THE WILLIAMS LANDING ZONE

*Wyndham Leader*– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/getting-into-the-williams-landing-zone/>

The Public Transport Users Association has warned against including the new Williams Landing train station in zone one, saying it was likely to increase fares overall.

The State Government has announced that Abigroup will design and build a new station and road overpass at Williams Landing.

The project is expected to cost \$110 million - \$86 million for the station and \$24 million for the overpass. Construction should begin within weeks and be completed late next year.

Many readers responded to the news by calling for the station to be rezoned zone one, saying Wyndham commuters would continue to drive to Laverton station to avoid the more expensive zone two fares.

But PTUA president Daniel Bowen said the problem with including the new station in zone one was that people using other zone two stations at Hoppers Crossing and Werribee would want them to be also rezoned one.

He said he could understand why people would want to travel from zone one as it was about 80 per cent cheaper than zone two.

“But you end up with a single zone system that would cut revenue and increase fares across the system. That’s what happened in Adelaide,” Mr Bowen said.

“A better solution would be to revise the fare structure so the jump between zone fares is not so sharp.”

Mr Bowen said frequent bus services between the station and areas such as Point Cook would discourage car use and decrease commuter costs.

A Transport Department spokeswoman said the new station would be in zone two.

“Fare zones are generally based on distance from Melbourne by train,” she said.

Laverton is the last station in zone one on the Werribee line.

“This is consistent with zoning of other lines on the network.”

### FAMILIES WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN 'DEVASTATED'

*Wyndham Weekly*– 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/families-with-autistic-children-devastated/2268476.aspx>

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

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

Mr Finn this month said there was no funding for the program next year. "Families are devastated, but that seems to mean nothing to those in department back rooms wielding the axe."

### STATIONS GET LOW RATING

*Wyndham Star*– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/310/story/139037.html>

Public transport users have ranked both of Wyndham’s train stations as among the worst in Melbourne, according to the results of a new survey.

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The pt4me2 (public transport for me too) survey results, in which they questioned close to 2000 people about their local railway station, were made public on 11 August.

Werribee was ranked the 12th worst, while Hoppers Crossing was ranked ninth.

Among the issues that leave people most irate at Hoppers Crossing, was a lack of car parking spaces, a shortage of buses travelling to the station and a lack of timetables or functioning clocks.

Wyndham Mayor John Menegazzo said the council supported the findings.

“In terms of Hoppers Crossing, we’d definitely like to see more happening there as far as improvements to it,” Cr Menegazzo said.

“We definitely need more parking, everyone knows that. Even if it’s just some temporary parking to alleviate the problems that we’ve got now, in terms of numbers at both Werribee and Hoppers Crossing.”

A spokesperson from the Department of Transport said the results could not be taken as a concrete guide to what improvements should be made to the stations.

“While the Department of Transport encourages all feedback on the public transport network, there are some limitations with the PT4ME2 opt-in survey,” the spokesperson said.

“It is difficult to unequivocally rank Melbourne’s best and worst train stations based on one question in a four-question survey. This issue is compounded by the limited sample size (1868) in respect to the 212 metropolitan stations.”

Cr John Menegazzo said he also supported resident’s opposition to armed guards at both stations.

“In terms of armed guards, that’s probably something we’d be not supporting all that much,” he said.

“I just think it sends the wrong message personally to people going there.”

### **STATION IS ON TRACK FOR START**

*Wyndham Star– 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/310/story/139039.html>

Wyndham residents can expect to be boarding trains from the municipality’s third train station by next year as the State Government announced works would soon begin on the Williams Landing Railway Station.

Transport Minister Terry Mulder visited the site of the station on Monday last week to also announce that the Palmers Rd overpass would be widened to include two more lanes.

“The widening of Palmers Rd from three lanes to five means traffic flow between Williams Landing and Point Cook is improved for those commuting to the station by car, bus or bike,” Mr Mulder said.

“We know there will be greater demand for access via Palmers Rd to the station and between Williams Landing and Point Cook, and we’re doing something about this now.”

The new station will include around 500 parking spaces, a new bus terminal and taxi rank and facilities for cyclists.

Western Metropolitan Region MP Andrew Elsbury said the \$110 million project was about getting it right the first time.

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"The Laverton and Footscray train stations serve as reminders of how wrong the previous Labor Government got it, as any user of these two stations is acutely aware of," Mr Elsbury said.

"The Baillieu Government intends to get this project right so everyone is able to access the train platforms, allowing easier movement through the station precinct for all and emergency access available at all times."

### **THIEVES ON LIVESTOCK, PETS SPREE IN WYNDHAM**

*Wyndham Leader— 19<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/thieves-on-livestock-pets-spree-in-wyndham-fbready/>

DOGS, sheep and even a pig have been snatched from yards across Wyndham.

Police said two Labrador pups were stolen from the backyard of a Tarneit house on Kinnear Ave during the day on August 3.

A locked gate to the yard was forced open.

Two days later the pups, Montague and Belle, were found on Leakes Rd.

Has your pet been stolen? Tell us about it below.

Their owner Phillip Perry believed his beloved pets were abandoned by the thieves after word of the theft spread.

In a separate recent case of dog-napping, a Staffordshire bull terrier was stolen from the backyard of a Hoppers Crossing house on Baden Drive.

The house was broken into and paperwork about the female dog stolen.

Police said livestock had also been a target.

Two border Leicester sheep tagged 3GGHB092 were stolen from a paddock in Werribee on K Rd on July 22-28 and, in a separate incident in the suburb, three sheep were stolen from a paddock on Hoppers Lane, on July 21-22.

Police said a trailer would have been needed to transport them.

Also, a pig was stolen from a rural property in Truganina on Middle Rd on July 22-23.

A padlock on a gate was cut to get to the young pig, police said.

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## ACROSS THE REGION

### **NUDISTS CAST OUT INTO THE COLD AT WESTERN SUBURBS SWIMMING POOL**

*The Herald Sun— 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/nudists-cast-out-into-the-cold/story-fn7x8me2-1226121584511>

Nude swimming sessions have been cancelled at a western suburbs pool after pictures of naked children were published online.

Solar West Nude Leisure Group has pulled down a website that contained pictures of naked children at a public pool.

But the group has been kicked out of the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre pending an investigation by the local council.

The decision last night means this Saturday night's regular naked frolic will not go ahead.

Maribyrnong council chief executive Vince Haining confirmed the move last night.

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"After confirmation that photographic material was posted on a website available to the public, the use of the (pool) for these activities has been discontinued pending an investigation," he said.

A Solar West Nude Leisure Group spokesman said he would meet the council tomorrow to press his case for continued use of the pool.

### **MELBOURNE'S NEW TRAMS REVEALED**

*The Age*— 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/melbournes-new-trams-revealed-20110824-1j9iz.html>

The prototype of a fleet of 50 new trams that will begin appearing on Melbourne's network from late next year has been unveiled today by Transport Minister Terry Mulder.

Mr Mulder went to Dandenong, to train and tram manufacturer Bombardier, this afternoon to preview the mock-up of the first low-floor tram.

Bombardier was awarded the contract for the 50 new trams last year.

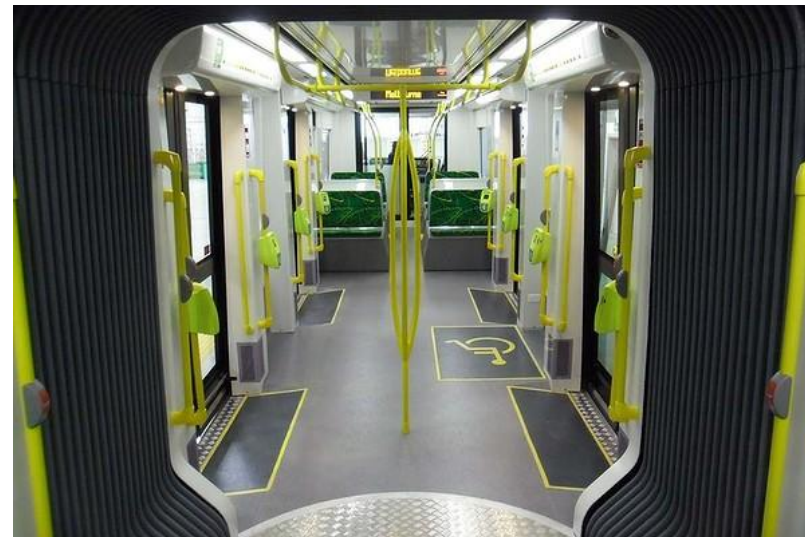
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The trams are 33 metres long and feature a door at each end for the exclusive use of tram drivers, under a design agreed under the previous state government. There are five passenger doors on each side of the tram.

The trams are too long for many Melbourne superstops but the alignment of the doors mean that passengers will be able to get on and off despite the tram's ends jutting out off the superstops.

The new Bombardier trams, which will be just over 50 per cent locally manufactured, can carry up to 210 passengers, with seating for 64 people.

The trams have a maximum speed of 80km/h - which will be seldom reached on Melbourne's system, where the average speed is about 16km/h.



### **RAIL LINK FEASIBILITY STUDY ON TRACK**

*ABC News*— 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-08-24/rail-link-feasibility-study-on-track/2853924>

The Victorian Government has announced the start of a two-year, \$2 million study into the feasibility of a train line between Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo.

Transport Minister Terry Mulder says the project will need to examine infrastructure requirements, existing rail tracks and community opinions.

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"There is a huge amount of work to be undertaken and it will also be done in line with discussion with other ministers," he said.

"We want to make sure if we do it, we do it right and we've got all the information at our fingertips."

Mr Mulder says the Government will consider funding the rail project after the study is completed in 2013.

"In terms of future regional development, I think that is the real impetus in terms of this initiative," he said.

"That we believe having those major cities connected would create great opportunity."

The Government has also assured it is still looking at returning passenger rail to Mildura but says any new service is likely to be at least five years away.

Mildura has been without a passenger train for 20 years and a report was finished by the previous government into returning the service.

Mr Mulder says he was unhappy with some of the work done for that report and the Government is still having further talks with Mildura residents.

"I think one of the big issues we all realise we've got to get over before we move to some of these regional connections is to get the regional rail link project completed first," he said.

"That is going to take us through to 2016 now [and] that's going to greatly enhance services from Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong into the metropolitan Melbourne."

### **PICTURES OF NUDE CHILDREN PUT ON SWIMMING WEBSITE**

*The Herald Sun*— 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/pictures-of-nude-children-put-on-swimming-website/story-fn7x8me2-1226120775047>

Nudists have put up pictures online of children attending skinny dipping swimming sessions at a western suburbs pool.

Solar West Nude Leisure Group proudly boasts on its website of its late night nudist activities at the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre every second Saturday.

The sessions at the glass enclosed pool are held behind special screens paid for by the council.

Pictures of full frontal nude teens taken at the Maribyrnong pool were still online last night, despite a club spokesman saying he would take them down.

Family groups were outraged at the use of nude teenagers to promote the club, calling on the council to end the sessions.

Maribyrnong Council was reviewing the club's access to the pool last night.

But a defiant club spokesman, who would not reveal his name, said the nudist nights would continue, denying there was a problem with the online photos.

"The children in that photograph were only 73 pixels high, they are not identifiable and they were never intended to be released publicly," the spokesman said.

He said the images of the children's genitals "were only two pixels".

The spokesman, 51, said nudity was natural, dismissing concerns about their sessions at the public pool.

"There is nothing illegal, immoral or dangerous in what we do," he said.

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"It is a legitimate pursuit. A good 30 per cent of the population has gone skinny dipping at some point. It's no different."

But Terri Kelleher, of the Australian Family Association, said that the pictures of naked teenagers were objectionable.

"We're talking a lot about sexting these days and here they are putting up photos of naked children online to publicise their club," she said.

"What they do in a private place is their business, but I don't think a council-run pool is a private place. Ratepayers have a right to object to this questionable behaviour."

The club had been using the pool without complaint for 20 years, Maribyrnong Council said in a statement to Channel 9 last night.

"Nevertheless, if allegations of inappropriate material being on their website are accurate, council will review the existing hire arrangements," the council said.

### **SCHOOL WAY OUT WEST TO OFFER THE BEST IN CHOICE**

*The Age*— 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/school-way-out-west-to-offer-the-best-in-choice-20110821-1j4v3.html>

A western suburbs state school will join the ranks of elite private schools under the Baillieu government's push to expand choice for students in the public system.

Werribee Secondary College will become the first Victorian government school to offer the International Baccalaureate diploma for students in years 11 and 12 - an alternative to VCE that is recognised by universities worldwide.

The prestigious diploma, offered at 15 independent schools in Victoria, enables students to go on to study anywhere in the world, including Harvard, Oxford and Yale.

Advertisement: Story continues below

Students are required to study six subjects, including a second language, do 160 hours of community work and complete a 4000-word research project.

Werribee Secondary College principal Steve Butyn said he had been investigating offering the International Baccalaureate diploma at the school, which has a focus on internationalism and global citizenship, since 2003.

"We wanted to be a different kind of government school," Mr Butyn said. "I was aware that independent schools can provide International Baccalaureate and I kept on asking myself: 'Why can't students in government schools have that opportunity, given they have the same talents and skills?' To me it was a no-brainer."

Werribee became an International Baccalaureate World School in July 2009, after spending two years working towards accreditation, which needs to be approved by the Geneva-based International Baccalaureate Organisation.

However, the launch of the program was stymied by the Education Department under the previous government because of concerns about financing. At the time, the department had frozen applications for schools to implement specialised curriculums, such as the International Baccalaureate, Steiner and Montessori programs, while the national curriculum was developed.

The International Baccalaureate program will be introduced at Werribee Secondary College from 2013, with about 25 of the school's 1400 students expected to study it in the first year.

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