

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

29th JULY 2011



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BRIMBANK

BRIMBANK NEAR TOP OF BAD DRIVERS LIST

Brimbank Leader– 28th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/brimbank-near-top-of-bad-drivers-list-fbready/>

Brimbank drivers are among some of the worst road offenders, latest police statistics reveal.

Victoria Police released the top 20 suburbs where speeding, mobile phone and drink-driving offenders live and Brimbank featured predominantly.

Deer Park drivers were the second worst across the state, with 631 offences recorded for using a mobile phone while on the road.

St Albans was seventh with 591 drivers and Sydenham was ninth with 582 drivers.

Drivers from St Albans were also ranked fourth-highest for drinking offences, with 119 nabbed.

Sunshine drivers came in at tenth for drink driving, with 92 detected, and Sydenham where 1117 drivers were nabbed for speeding, ranked fifteenth.

Brimbank Insp Mick Grainger said the statistics were reflective of local activity.

“One of our key priorities is around road policing and policing offences that distract drivers,” Insp Grainger said.

“We have amongst the highest seizures of hoon drivers.”

But Insp Grainger said the statistics also meant police were able to catch more road offenders.

“I’m pleased that those enforcement numbers reflect those activities and 12 months from now you may see a further increase,” he said.

“I hope the public continue to heed the messages.”

Insp Grainger warned drivers to avoid distractions, such as mobile phones, while driving by turning devices off.

GOOD SPELL FOR ST ALBANS SCHOOL

Brimbank Leader– 28th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/good-spell-for-st-albans-school-fbready/>

Students at St Albans Catholic Regional College have said “ciao” to a new language centre.

On Friday, the long-awaited language centre was opened by Maribyrnong federal Labor MP Bill Shorten and Bishop Vincent Long.

With students from more than 40 countries, teacher Angela Robinson said the school was “very much multi-cultural” and a language centre would assist those students who needed extra help, not only with English but with other languages. Italian and Chinese are also taught at the school.

“Some of those students have limited English skills, coming to us from the English language school,” she said.

“A few students have language problems requiring one-on-one teaching, or instruction in very small language classes.”

The centre was funded with money from the Federal Government’s 2009 economic stimulus package.

Ms Robinson said the school’s five- year plan had included plans for a similar structure.

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"So when the stimulus package was announced, planning was already in an advanced state and our proposal was ready to submit by July 2009," she said.

TRAIN CHAOS AFTER V/LINE TRAIN RUNS OUT OF DIESEL AT FOOTSCRAY

Brimbank Leader– 27th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/train-chaos-after-v-line-train-runs-out-of-diesel-at-footscray/>

Commuters in the western suburbs are still experiencing delays after a V/Line train ran out of fuel.

Metro Trains is reporting delays of up to 10 minutes on the Williamstown and Werribee lines following the incident earlier this morning.

The V/Line service from Geelong ran out of fuel near Footscray station about 5.45am.

A signalling fault at St Albans has also caused some delays to services on the Sydenham line.

THE ST ALBANS LEAKING WATER PIPE NO ONE WANTED TO REPAIR

Brimbank Leader– 27th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/the-st-albans-leaking-water-pipe-no-one-wanted-to-repair-fbready/>

A leaking pipe was left to trickle water on to a St Albans street for days.

Vesna Zoricic, whose mother lives in public housing in Gooding St, said she called the Office of Housing on July 15 and was referred to City West Water.

City West Water managing director Anne Barker said they attended the site that day. "On investigation we found the leak to be on a private fire service pipe, which is not a City West Water asset," she said.

"We contacted the property owner, who is responsible for maintaining the fire service, to notify them of the leak and requesting that they undertake repairs to the pipe."

Ms Zoricic said it wasn't until Wednesday, July 20, that members from the Office of Housing were sent to fix the problem. "They couldn't decide who is responsible," she said. "The water has been wasted here for six days."

But the Department of Human Services spokesman Brendan Ryan said the Office of Housing only received one maintenance request on July 18.

He said members responded to the request on Wednesday.

SYDENHAM RAIL LINE: LINK BALLAST LAID, SO BACK TO NORMAL

Brimbank Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/sydenham-rail-line-link-ballast-laid-so-back-to-normal/2237304.aspx>

Sydenham rail line commuters are back on track after an unprecedented two-week shutdown.

Regional Rail Link (RRL) works were completed on schedule on July 17, allowing train services to return to normal as school holidays came to a close.

Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the closure enabled Metro, V/Line and the Sunbury electrification project to carry out construction and maintenance work.

"Closing the lines for two weeks has enabled work to be completed that would otherwise have had to happen over numerous weekends or on overnight occupations," he said.

Despite the smooth operation of replacement bus services, the works caused significant disruptions and increases in travel times.

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Almost 800 metres of track was realigned between Sunshine and Tottenham stations to make way for new RRL tracks to be laid next year.

Metro used the two-week shutdown to carry out sleeper renewal, track maintenance and works to overhead wiring, platforms and bridges. The RRL is a major new rail line running from west of Werribee to Deer Park and along the existing rail corridor to Southern Cross through suburbs including Sunshine.

COUNCIL STORM

Brimbank Star— 26th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/306/story/137586.html>

The first council meeting held in Keilor in almost three years has been rocked by controversy after dozens of residents stormed out in protest over what they have labelled “undemocratic” and “evasive” council processes.

Up to 40 residents abruptly left the meeting following question time after accusing council administrators of stonewalling their attempts to have their questions answered.

Angry residents hurled abuse at administrators Meredith Sussex and Joanne Anderson before leaving the building and holding their own meeting outside.

Keilor Community Action Group Convenor Virginia Tachos said residents were frustrated by a lack of opportunity to consult with the council over a proposal to sell off parkland in the city.

Last month, Star revealed a council plan to sell off 14 properties across the municipality, including vacant blocks of land and parkland.

Residents attending the meeting claimed some questions lodged by the community were not answered at all, while others had to be sent multiple times.

“I tried three times to get my questions through but a lot of people didn't get that far,” Ms Tachos said.

“Then in the meeting, the questions that had been tabled were not being answered properly and people were getting frustrated. The situation got to boiling point and everyone just got up and walked out the door, screaming things out at the administrators as they went.

“A lot of people were annoyed because we feel that the council was being very evasive and not responding properly to genuine requests for information. It's undemocratic.”

But Paul Younis, the council's General Manager of Infrastructure and Environment hit back at the claims, saying residents would have ample opportunity to have their say over the proposed land sales.

Mr Younis said ordinary council meetings were “not formats for discussion”.

“A separate process is in place for the purpose of hearing from people on the proposed land sales issue,” Mr Younis said.

Ms Anderson told Star she knew some residents had been angry over the parks issue but was unaware that they had left in protest.

Mr Younis said the council had received 21 questions from 10 individuals relating to the land sales and had responded to all questions.

The meeting was the first ordinary meeting to be held in Keilor after a council decision to rotate meetings across the municipality. It was held at the Keilor Bowls Club pending upgrades to the Keilor Municipal Offices.

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LANDFILL BUILD RULES

Brimbank Star– 26th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/306/story/137561.html>

Planning applicants will be forced to adhere to stringent new requirements if they want to build close to landfill sites in Brimbank.

Under new Environment Protection Authority (EPA) guidelines, some planning applicants will be required to commission environmental audits of their sites if they are near landfills.

At last week's meeting, the Brimbank Council considered the operation of the EPA's Landfill Best Practice Environmental Management guideline which applies to planning applications for sites within 500 metres of landfills containing rotting waste, and 200 metres of landfills of solid inert wastes, such as building materials.

Stuart Menzies, the council's acting general manager of city development, said the revised guidelines by the EPA were in response to land gas migration in 2008 from the Cranbourne landfill to a nearby housing estate.

"In general, the EPA's landfill guidelines aim to maintain adequate buffer zones between landfills and new housing and other developments to ensure occupants are not affected by gas migration," Mr Menzies said.

"This means that some planning applicants will need to submit environmental audits to the council before they can obtain a planning permit."

However, Mr Menzies said there was no need to panic.

STATE SKIPS OUT ON OBESITY PROGRAM

Melton Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/state-skips-out-on-obesity-program/2237305.aspx>

A physical education teacher is concerned for the health of children in the north-west after the state government scrapped an anti-obesity program.

Kids - Go for Your Life, launched in 2004, ended on June 30. Taylors Hill Primary School teacher Christina Polatajko said the school had successfully implemented the program since it opened its doors at the start of last year.

"It provided excellent resources and a lot of our health classes were designed from the program manual," she said.

The \$6.2million program encouraged 320,000 schoolchildren to establish better eating habits and promote exercise.

The government has yet to announce a replacement for the program but has indicated it will announce a new initiative to tackle the growing problem of child obesity.

Ms Polatajko said it was vital children were taught the benefits of healthy eating and encouraged to exercise.

CATHOLIC REGIONAL COLLEGE: MONEY TALKS FOR COLLEGE

Brimbank Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/catholic-regional-college-money-talks-for-college/2237309.aspx>

Students hoping to hone their language skills at Catholic Regional College have a new centre perfect for the task.

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A new language centre was opened at the St Albans school on Friday in a ceremony led by Bishop Vincent Long and Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten.

Teacher Angela Robinson said the centre, funded with money from the federal stimulus package, was an invaluable addition to the college.

"Part of the school's five-year plan was to have a structure similar to this, so when the stimulus package was announced, planning was already in an advanced state and our proposal was ready to submit by July 2009," she said. "The construction of this centre is a case of government money being spent on the right structure at the right time."

The multicultural school brings together students from more than 40 countries. Some have limited English skills and need continuing help to improve their language development.

"A few students have language problems requiring one-on-one teaching or instruction in very small language classes," Ms Robinson said.

Two foreign languages are also taught.

COUNCIL HONOURS 'GEMS' OF RECYCLING

Brimbank Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/council-honours-gems-of-recycling/2237298.aspx>

More than 100 residents who have revealed their recycling efforts have been identified as 'Brimbank gems'.

The council's recycling inspection team has randomly inspected more than 800 bins since June, handing out more than 100 rewards cards.

The 'Be a Brimbank Gem' program awards a sticker, certificate and reward voucher to owners of recycling bins containing the correct material.

Brimbank Council administrator Joanne Anderson said the waste reduction program encouraged recycling and sustainable living.

Annette Medley, of St Albans, was one of the first to be identified as a 'gem'.

She said she had always tried to do the right thing when it came to recycling.

"We were so excited to see the Brimbank Gem sticker on our bin.

"We have always tried to recycle everything we can, so to be recognised by the council for our efforts is a real honour."

While recycling levels in Brimbank are just above the state average, reducing waste remains a key council objective.

The campaign runs until mid-August.

VIBRANT CENTRE IN MAKING

Brimbank Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/vibrant-centre-in-making/2237293.aspx>

A new day is dawning in Brimbank thanks to a strong start from the Sunshine rising program.

Launched last September, Sunshine Rising aims to better integrate development of the town centre.

A report to last week's council meeting noted good progress in the centre, which is expected to be recognised as one of Melbourne's premier activity centres by 2030.

A draft vision presented to residents at the recent Brimbank Festival attracted almost 400 responses. Feedback reflected hope for a vibrant, safe and clean centre with increased policing and crackdowns on anti-social behaviour.

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Residents also want to see high-quality public places, streets and parks and an integrated transport hub at Sunshine railway station.

The council hopes to attract government and commercial services to the area and house the growing population in a range of apartment and townhouse developments. Sunshine Business Association president Bruce White said businesses were already working closely with the council on achieving improvements for the centre. "A lot of what you see happening here is on the back of traders channelling their concerns through the business association," he said.

Pedestrian crossings, improved footpaths, clean-up campaigns and graffiti removal are just some of the areas in which business concerns have influenced council project planning.

Mr White said the look and feel of Sunshine was always improving, creating a more desirable destination.

"Another 10 years and you won't be able to recognise it."

RISKY DRIVERS 'NEVER LEARN'

Brimbank Weekly— 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/risky-drivers-never-learn/2237303.aspx>

Brimbank's drivers have cemented their reputation as some of the state's most dangerous.

New police data reveals Brimbank is Victoria's highest risk area for road trauma.

Brimbank's suburbs are also home to some of the highest numbers of drink-drivers, speeding motorists and mobile phone offenders.

The findings come hot on the heels of St Albans again being declared the 'hoon capital' of Victoria with 181 offenders caught out over five years; 744 such offenders live in Brimbank.

Brimbank's Sergeant Rod Stein said police were tired of the behaviour of a minority tainting the whole area.

"The only way to stop them is to get them off the road," he said.

"We see 95per cent of road users doing the right thing, but there's a small number whose behaviour makes them a danger."

Sergeant Stein said most of those caught were booked close to their home.

He said police used the data to build a picture of the area's worst offenders before launching target operations to catch them out.

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

"It is simply not acceptable to speed, it is not acceptable to use a mobile phone while driving, and it's never OK to drink and drive. Yet some people living in these areas seem to think it is OK to do so."

Drivers using mobile phones may believe the risks are low, but evidence suggests their ability behind the wheel is dramatically affected.

Sergeant Stein said evidence showed driving with a mobile phone was equivalent to driving with a blood-alcohol content of 0.05.

Police will conduct a number of large-scale blitzes in the high-ranking areas in coming months.

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The new data came as Brimbank police revealed they had confiscated 15 cars in the first 20 days since new anti-hoon laws came into force.

Sergeant Stein said the drivers had had their cars impounded for 30 days, a far tougher sanction than the previous 48-hour period.

"A number of these drivers will lose their car for a lot longer when they front court because of their driving history."

Repeat offenders risk losing their vehicle for three months or permanently.

The period for taking prior offences into account has been increased from three years to six years.

Offences have included burn-outs, driving with a suspended or disqualified licence and exceeding the speed limit by more than 45km/h.

EPA TIGHTENS RULES ON ESTATES NEAR LANDFILLS

Brimbank Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/epa-tightens-rules-on-estates-near-landfills/2237300.aspx>

Developments near landfills in Brimbank face closer scrutiny before getting the green light under tough new guidelines.

The Environment Protection Authority has released the rules following the disastrous development of the Brookland Greens estate in Cranbourne.

The EPA and Casey Council were forced to pay \$23.5million to residents affected by dangerous methane levels released by nearby landfills.

In Brimbank, applicants would be required to commission environmental audits for sites within 500 metres of landfills containing decomposable waste and 200 metres of solid inert wastes such as building materials.

Brimbank Council's acting general manager of city development, Stuart Menzies, said best practice guidelines ensured buffer zones between landfills and developments to combat the impact of gas migration.

"This means that some planning applicants will need to submit environmental audits to the council before they can obtain a planning permit," he said.

Many of the recommendations stem from an Ombudsman's report into the Cranbourne debacle. Brimbank Council has in turn developed an assessment framework based on the characteristics of each landfill site in the area. It has identified 100 applications that are affected, but only small proportions are likely to require audits. Applications are exempt if no ground disturbance is proposed.

Mr Menzies said the delay experienced by applicants during development of the council's framework was regrettable but meant most applications required only limited assessment.

Thousands of Brimbank residents and businesses are within the buffer zones, but none has safety problems. The area contains five active landfills and 21 former landfills with a further four landfills within 500 metres of Brimbank's boundaries, one of which remains active.

BRIMBANK SENIORS CALLED ON FOR ASPIRIN TRIAL

Brimbank Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-seniors-called-on-for-aspirin-trial/2237308.aspx>

Mary Barkshire hopes a study on the benefits of aspirin could lead to improved health and well-being for elderly residents in Brimbank.

The sprightly 81-year-old Kings Park resident is taking part in the ASPREE (Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly) study, which is being led by researchers at Monash

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University and the United States' Berman Centre for Outcomes and Clinical Research.

The five-year study will assess whether taking aspirin contributes to the maintenance of good health for people over 70.

Aspirin is often used as an analgesic to relieve minor aches and pains. It can reduce fever and is used as an anti-inflammatory medication.

About 19,000 healthy people living in Australia and the US aged 70 and over will take part in the trial, the largest of its kind to be held in Australia.

Mrs Barkshire is urging residents to take part.

"The population is getting older so we need to look at ways to stay healthy in our older years," Mrs Barkshire said.

Head of Monash School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Professor John McNeil, said aspirin was known to prevent heart attacks and some forms of stroke, and research indicated it might prevent mental decline.

"We want to look at the potential of aspirin to maintain good health in older Australians, something that is increasingly important as our population ages," he said.

"Aspirin is also known to have side effects, such as increased bleeding, and that may offset its benefits.

"ASPREE will provide evidence to settle the question of whether aspirin's benefits outweigh the risks for older Australians."

Participants will be recruited over the course of 2011 and early next year.

Residents can learn more about the trial by talking to their GP or calling 1800728745.

BRIMBANK WON'T STAND FOR CHILDCARE CASH CUTS

Brimbank Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/brimbank-wont-stand-for-childcare-cash-cuts/2237294.aspx>

Brimbank Council has thrown its weight behind a campaign to keep occasional childcare services operating in the face of spending cuts.

A report to the council by community well-being general manager, Kelly Grigsby, has urged it to advocate for the continuation of funding for the Take a Break (TAB) program, due to run out at the end of the year.

There are 92 occasional childcare places across six locations in Brimbank.

"The only service funded under the TAB program in Brimbank operates from the Duke Street Neighbourhood House and without ongoing funding the occasional childcare service will not be financially viable," the report stated.

Highlighted in the report was a 2010 council survey that found the service was valued by residents, but local availability and cost were issues faced. Duke Street Neighbourhood House offers 15 places during four weekly sessions. It is the only service in Sunshine catering to the 0-2.5-year-old age group.

The state and federal government remain at loggerheads over funding of the program, each accusing the other of causing its collapse.

Duke Street manager Bronwen Merrigan said council's support was encouraging.

"I know other municipalities are also helping to put pressure on about this issue."

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She said the clock was ticking on the fight and any funding announcement would need to come through quickly.

"September is really the time we need to know one way or another," Ms Merrigan said.

"We're not just talking about the families here, we have three staff we would have to let go."

DEBATE OVER BRIMBANK'S GLASS BUS SHELTERS

Brimbank Leader— 26th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/safety-the-main-issue-over-brimbank-bus-shelter-debate-fbready/>

Bus shelters in Brimbank will continue to be made of glass despite calls from residents for alternative materials following constant vandalism.

Taylors Lakes resident Alex Borg said he constantly saw smashed bus shelters around the municipality and it was a "bad look for the community".

He called for an investigation to explore options for steel shelters in the hope it would discourage vandals.

"Every week I see one smashed in," he said. "It's a waste of taxpayers' money constantly having to repair them."

Adshel manages and maintains the shelters.

Spokesman Richard Dupe said smashed glass was the most common form of vandalism on the 271 shelters it maintains in Brimbank.

The company spent about \$50,000 repairing the shelters in the 2010-11 financial year.

He said the reason glass was used instead of other materials was safety.

"There is an option to mesh the shelter but it's a safety issue because at night people sitting in the shelters are not visible," Mr Dupe said.

Council infrastructure and environment general manager Paul Younis said the 31 bus shelters it maintained did not contain glass.

The council spends about \$2500 a year repairing those shelters under its control.

Mr Younis said nine complaints were received last financial year.

Transport Department spokeswoman Andrea Duckworth said Adshel aimed to clean up broken glass "within a few hours" and replace glass panels within two days.

BRIMBANK STATIONS UNACCEPTABLE, COMMUTERS SAY

Brimbank Leader— 26th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/brimbank-stations-unacceptable-commuters-say/>

Unsafe, dingy train stations on the Sydenham line have been under the microscope as patronage continues to jump.

Brimbank commuters have been rating their stations as part of the pt4me2 Better Stations survey, a state-wide council-led initiative with the Metropolitan Transport Forum.

Survey results will be used to lobby the State Government to improve stations.

Patronage on the Sydenham Line has grown by 77.3 per cent over the past five years to 8.7 million boardings annually with estimated 28,900 boardings each weekday.

But, according to some commuters, improvements at the stations have failed to keep up.

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One commuter claimed they “never see the toilets open” at Albion station, while another said the subway was “dark and dingy” and “strewn with litter”.

Sunshine commuters also feel their underpass is unsafe despite having cameras - one person has called for the entire station to be renovated and updated.

Parking at the station is also a problem, according to residents on a Sunshine online community forum.

One commuter described St Albans station as horrible, “with a lot of ‘undesirable’ people accosting you and being a nuisance”.

Bus interchanges are the major gripes at Watergardens station, with the bus transfer point labelled “totally unacceptable,” by a survey respondent.

Another said if the lift was not working on the Sydenham Road side of the station, there was “no access for wheelchair-bound passengers.”

Metro spokeswoman Geraldine Mitchell said the station had three lifts and ramps for wheelchair bound passengers.

Metropolitan Transport Forum Chair Cr Jackie Fristacky said the promise of Protective Services Officers on stations at night highlighted the need for station improvement.

“Already the survey is showing strong support for more shelter, better cleaning and toilets on stations,” she said. Brimbank acting chief executive Paul Younis said the survey fitted with the Brimbank Integrated Transport Strategy and the council saw the need “for a number of improvements at train stations”.

A transport department spokesperson said the government was committed to improving safety at train stations and surveyed users monthly to inform station designs and upgrades.

Commuters can complete the survey online at www.pt4me2.org.au/mobile until the end of this month.

FURY AT BRIMBANK COUNCIL PARKS TALKS

Brimbank Leader— 26th July 2011

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/fury-at-brimbank-council-parks-talks-fbready/>

Angry residents demanded answers on the future of Brimbank parks and talked down Brimbank council administrators during a rowdy public question time last week.

The conflict comes after the council announced last month it was considering selling 14 properties across Brimbank.

The properties were identified as areas with open spaces nearby and council has said sale proceeds would go into improving other parks.

Consultation has started, with seven properties being analysed and letters sent to affected residents.

At a packed meeting in Keilor on Tuesday, the council received 21 questions from 10 people.

But unhappy with answers from the council’s Infrastructure and Environment general manager Paul Younis some residents were prompted to answer back.

People at the meeting asked for guarantees from the council that the land would not become housing, and that all proceeds would go towards other parks in the municipality. Some complained they had not received consultation letters and that submitted questions had not been answered.

About 40 residents left the chambers but continued to talk loudly outside during the meeting.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

29th JULY 2011



Mr Younis said some public questions lodged through the council's website may not have been received in time due to technical difficulties with the site server, since fixed.

The council took the residents' concerns seriously and said administrator Meredith Sussex had allowed questions to be heard and replied to even though residents were not in the gallery, or the questions exceeded a two-question limit.

According to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council total public open space in Brimbank is 1872ha, a ratio of 9.7ha of parks per 1000 people compared with a metropolitan average of 5.8ha.

Mr Younis said the council had invested more than \$10 million transforming almost 50 parks in the last four years.

HOBSONS BAY

DYSLEXIA HELP PUSH WINS SUPPORT IN THE WEST

Hobson's Bay Leader— 26th July 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/dyslexia-help-push-wins-support-in-the-west/>

An Altona North mother's campaign to have dyslexia recognised as a specific learning disability in Victorian schools is gaining momentum as local politicians come on board.

Julie Martin, along with Yarraville mother Rebecca Cleaver, has started the western suburbs' first dyslexia support group and will lobby the State Government for recognition for their children.

The group has received support from all sides of politics, including Western Metropolitan Greens MP Colleen Hartland, who said she had undiagnosed dyslexia.

Ms Hartland said she left high school "basically illiterate" and didn't receive any support until she went to university at age 40.

She said standard dyslexia tests in schools were a necessity.

Altona Labor MP Jill Hennessy said the Baillieu Government had to "step up their responsibility" on that front.

And Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn said he fully supported the campaign and would like to see dyslexia recognised on a national basis.

Dyslexia Support Group West will hold an information night for parents, carers and teachers on August 1 at Williamstown Primary School from 5pm.

Bookings are essential: Ms Martin on 0418 657 749 or Ms Cleaver on 0425 771 357.

STREET NAME CONFUSION IN SEABROOK

Hobson's Bay Leader— 26th July 2011

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-street-name-confusion-in-seabrook/>

Residents of Seabrook's Teatree Place say the fact there is a street with an almost identical name in nearby Point Cook is continuing to cause havoc.

Since Teatree Terrace - which is less than 3km away from Teatree Place - was named seven years ago, Teatree Place locals have dealt with missing mail, lost tradesmen and even wayward ambulances.

But an ongoing disagreement between Hobsons Bay and Wyndham councils means the confusion is unlikely to be resolved soon.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

29th JULY 2011



Hobsons Bay Council “respectfully declined” a request by Wyndham Council to rename Teatree Place at last Tuesday’s council meeting.

As reported in the Leader, a resident of Teatree Place complained to Wyndham Council about the confusion with Teatree Terrace last year.

Despite Teatree Place being named in 1997, six years before Teatree Terrace in 2003, Wyndham Council asked Hobsons Bay Council to rename Teatree Place.

Teatree Place resident Susan Bellchambers said Wyndham Council was acting like “the big kid on the block” by demanding her street changes its name.

“I don’t think it’s fair that we should change because we were here first and we’ve been here longer,” she said.

And fellow resident Zeljka Radic said she called an ambulance to her home in 2007 and it spent 10 minutes outside the wrong house.

Neighbour Bhuvana Iyer said her newspapers were often delivered to the wrong street.

Teatree Terrace residents were less fazed by the issue.

Kaz Boiko said she didn’t see a need to change either name.

Another resident said she’d never had any problems but thought the duplicate names were “a bit silly”.

Australia Post and the emergency services support the renaming of one of the streets.

Wyndham Council acting director of community services Anna Urban said one Teatree Place resident and no Teatree Terrace residents had complained to the

council and there were “significantly less households which would be affected by a name change in Hobsons Bay”.

“While any change represents a minor inconvenience, it made much more sense to inconvenience five households than 21,” she said.

MARIBRYNONG

MARIBRYNONG'S GROWING PLACES

Maribyrnong Leader– 28th July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/maribyrnongs-growing-places-fbready/>

Maribyrnong Council will create more than 315 community garden plots in an effort to ensure all residents have access to fruit and vegetables in future.

Under the Growing Food, Growing Maribyrnong project approved last week, the council aims to have five plots for every 1000 people in established areas and 10 for every 1000 people in new large-scale developments - such as the Maribyrnong Defence site. Each plot would be a minimum of 10sq m.

Murnong Community Garden at Quarry Park, Footscray, and Braybrook Community Garden will be expanded with the \$125,755 from the 2011-12 budget and other model gardens will be investigated.

Cr Michael Clarke said the plots would help families help themselves and reconnect children with the food cycle. “It doesn’t matter how many times you play the Xbox, it won’t feed you,” he said.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

29th JULY 2011



Wesley Mission community relations executive manager Paula Gething applauded the council initiative and said the group welcomed anything making fruit and vegetables more accessible.

POSITIONS OPEN AS COUNCIL REJIGS STRATEGY GROUP

Maribyrnong Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/positions-open-as-council-rejigs-strategy-group/2239703.aspx>

Industry and community representatives are being sought to join the Brooklyn industrial precinct strategy committee.

It's overseeing a long-term planning, design and development strategy for the area.

Chaired by Brimbank administrator Meredith Sussex, the committee meets every two months and has met twice, in March and May.

Brimbank Council has rejigged the committee, cutting community members from four to three and increasing industry representatives from two to three, creating a vacancy in each sector. Community representative Bert Boere is encouraging other concerned local residents to get on board. "The committee is taking a long-term view and I would encourage people to get involved so it can get opinions from different areas and put forward what the community would like to see them do here."

Also on the executive of the Brooklyn Residents Action Group, Mr Boere is hopeful long-suffering residents affected by dust, noise and odour will eventually be able to get on with living alongside a more modern industry.

"Whether the industries would change or move out of the area entirely, that's part of the long-term view for the area."

SPOTSWOOD VICTORY MARCH TO GO AHEAD

Maribyrnong Leader– 27th July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/spotswood-victory-march-to-go-ahead-fbready/>

An eleventh hour rethink has seen Hobsons Bay Council reverse its decision to block a traditional community march crossing over busy Melbourne Rd next month.

Roads Minister Terry Mulder intervened last week to allow the Victory in the Pacific march to cross the VicRoads' controlled Melbourne Rd after the council originally vetoed it.

A council staffer had notified the march organising committee that stopping traffic on Melbourne Rd for a few minutes at 10.30am on Sunday, August 14, could cause a traffic jam on the West Gate Freeway.

The council had wanted the march confined to local roads west of Melbourne Rd. But by Friday, Hobsons Bay works and assets director Phillip McDonald said that after further discussion with the Minister, VicRoads and police the march could go ahead.

"The council, VicRoads and police will work together to arrange for the necessary traffic management to be provided for the march to ensure the safety of those participating in the march and the general public," Mr McDonald said.

Speaking before the backdown, Commemoration Park Memorial Committee member Jean King of Yarraville said she had extended the march to follow the former Spotswood RSL Anzac Day route at Cr Peter Hemphill's suggestion.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

29th JULY 2011



For more than 50 years the RSL had marched from the rail crossing at Hudsons Rd across Melbourne Rd, down Cullen St and into the reserve in Mary St for the service.

Mr Mulder had said VicRoads had no objection to the group crossing Melbourne Rd saying it was "important" the community continued to mark historical days.

Cr Hemphill said he was surprised by the council's initial stance given he'd safely marched across Melbourne Rd in at least 10 RSL events, most recently in 2009.

The Victory in the Pacific march will start at 10.30am on the corner of George St and Hudsons Rd in Spotswood and include a blitz buggy that saw combat in the Solomons.

Children will be able to sit in the buggy after the service at 11am.

Students from Wembley Primary School will perform and Mrs King said everyone was welcome.

The August 14 service will include the renaming of the reserve in Mary St as the Veterans' Garden of Remembrance.

Commemoration Park Memorial Committee has withdrawn an offer to pay for new signs because Hobsons Bay Council refused it the choice over the lettering font.

MARIBYRNONG DEFENCE HOUSING SITE STILL THREE YEARS OFF

Maribyrnong Weekly – 27th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/maribyrnong-defence-housing-site-still-three-years-off/2239704.aspx>

The state and federal authorities responsible for developing 3000 homes on the Maribyrnong Defence site have rejected speculation the project is facing lengthy delays.

It was reported that remediation work at the former munitions factory is far more complex than first thought, leading to long delays and cost blowouts.

A full list of chemicals - some highly toxic and carcinogenic - used on the site over almost 100 years was submitted to Federal Parliament in May last year.

The site (pictured) must be given a clean bill of health before it can be handed to the state government's developer VicUrban.

A Defence Department spokesman said it was not expecting delays, and work was continuing on developing a remediation plan.

"The cost will be made public following [federal] government approval."

VicUrban urban revitalisation general manager Dominic Arcaro said he expected the site to be transferred to its control in 2014-15. "This is the date we have consistently communicated during the shared vision process and on our website."

Further announcements, including naming the master planners for the site, were expected in the next couple of months, he said. In the interim, all VicUrban projects, contracts and staff will be transferred to the recently announced Urban Renewal Authority.

Federal Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten said he was advocating a fast resolution but was determined that "nothing happens unless and until the land is fully cleaned up".

In response to questions about costs driving up house prices, he said a key principle for the site was to provide a wide range of housing options.

"I have been advocating for 20per cent affordable housing on the site and will continue to work with VicUrban during the master plan process."

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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POSITIONS OPEN AS COUNCIL REJIGS STRATEGY GROUP

Maribyrnong Weekly– 27th July 2011

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'GO FOR YOUR LIFE' ... AND IT'S GONE

Maribyrnong Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/go-for-your-life-and-its-gone/2239701.aspx>

Primary Schools in Maribyrnong could be fighting the battle against obesity without a key health program when the Kids - Go For Your Life initiative is replaced later this year.

The state government last week announced it won't be renewing the 'Kids ...' program on which the previous government spent just over \$6 million over five years.

Footscray, Footscray North, Footscray West, Footscray City, St John's and St Augustine's primary schools will no longer be funded for the program, which educates children about healthy eating and physical activity.

A spokesman for Health Minister David Davis said development of a new program was under way after a formal review found the 'Kids' program was disorganised and not producing good outcomes. "The State Government has committed nearly \$40million over the next four years to develop and fund a new and better program, Healthy Children."

Principal of St John's Primary School Jean Corr said obesity wasn't a major issue for her students, although the school continued to monitor eating and exercise habits. "We discourage fast food and have a range of physical activities for students to undertake."

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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DRIVERS LET FINGERS DO THEIR TALKING ON PARKING

Maribyrnong Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/drivers-let-fingers-do-their-talking-on-parking/2239699.aspx>

Maribyrnong Council's plan to double the number of paid parking meters in central Footscray has met with a mixed response on the council's new parking blog.

The council plans to install 69 multi-bay parking machines, expanding paid parking by 700 spaces. The idea has been labelled revenue-raising by some residents in the feedback section of the website.

James, of Yarraville, was scathing about what he described as the council's attempt to "sponge every last cent from shoppers".

"Good onya Maribyrnong City Council, you are well and truly on the way to turning Footscray into a ghost town. Parking meters should be taken away completely from this suburb to try and revitalise it."

Hoa Le was concerned metered parking would turn shoppers "away from Footscray".

David Milner was in favour of meters and remained unconcerned about the small amount it would cost per visit, believing a "few dollars in a parking meter will hardly make it like Toorak".

Despite some negative responses, council spokesman Gareth Rees said the council was happy with the amount of feedback on the blog.

"Using blogs to allow the community to provide comments is a new initiative for council and we're pleased to see so many people providing feedback," he said.

The website was launched in an effort to improve community consultation on the paid parking issue and encourage feedback after criticism of the way controversial parking cameras were introduced in 2009.

Councillors are split over the paid parking plans; with Cr Michael Clarke of Wattle ward and Cr John Cumming of Saltwater ward both opposing further paid parking in central Footscray.

Cr Cumming said it was unreasonable to increase paid parking in Footscray when it was not under consideration for Yarraville.

SERVICE IS WHAT COUNTS IN CHILDCARE BATTLE

Maribyrnong Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/service-is-what-counts-in-childcare-battle/2239698.aspx>

Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews has conceded families don't care who pays the bills for the Take a Break occasional childcare service. But a funding solution remains elusive.

State and federal governments have been engaged in a running battle over who has fiscal responsibility for the \$1.9million program. Speaking at the Laverton Community Centre, Mr Andrews (pictured), said the last thing families wanted were "political games". "Parents don't care which one pays the bills, they don't care which government provides the funding. They want these services and need them, and the kids benefit from them."

West Footscray Neighbourhood House manager Sharee Grinter said it continued to be frustrating for families to see two sides of the political spectrum battling over what seemed like a minimal amount of money.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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COUNCILS UNITE ON LIBRARY CASH DEAL

Maribyrnong Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/councils-unite-on-library-cash-deal/2239697.aspx>

Maribyrnong representatives have joined a chorus of condemnation against more than \$5 million funding cuts to Victorian libraries.

At a meeting last week more than 90 representatives from 50 of the state's municipalities agreed the state government should reverse its recurrent library funding cuts and negotiate a better long-term funding deal with local government.

Participants agreed they won't sign a new funding agreement.

Nominations were received at the meeting to form a Libraries Campaign Advisory Group to help the Municipal Association of Victoria in the funding reversal campaign.

MAV president Bill McArthur again voiced his disappointment at the sudden funding cuts.

"The state's process was poor, ill-timed and not transparent.

"We're supposed to be partners in providing library services to Victorian communities and we hope to achieve a stronger partnership moving forward," he said.

"The common view expressed at the meeting was that the state must reverse its 2011-12 funding cut, and agree to conduct a full funding review to protect the viability of public libraries into the future."

Maribyrnong deputy mayor Martin Zakharov attended the meeting, which chartered the road forward for the local governments' campaign to reverse the cuts.

The MAV campaign will include:

- Councils to pass urgent resolutions to write to the Premier and local government minister seeking a review of library funding.

Councils resolve to write to local state MPs asking for the matter to be raised in Parliament.

- Facebook campaign.
- Petitions in public libraries.
- Other activities to engage support from local communities.

FOOTSCRAY MARKET: VIABILITY THE KEY IN EPPING MOVE

Maribyrnong Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/footscray-market-viability-the-key-in-epping-move/2239691.aspx>

The wait is finally over for traders at the Footscray Road wholesale fruit and vegetable market.

The state government last week gave the green light for relocation of the market to a site in Epping.

The relocation has been the subject of a lengthy review by the state government since January.

The project's spiralling costs had sparked fears that Major Projects Minister Denis Naphine would abandon the Labor initiative altogether.

Shane Schnitzler, president of Fresh State, the leading representative body in the fresh produce industry, said the decision to formally approve the move to the partly constructed Epping site was inevitable.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"It's not a shock; it's fair to say the move was always going to happen," Mr Schnitzler said.

"We were all keen to be getting something in concrete so we can move into some commonsense negotiation.

"We want to sit down with the government and work through the issue of making this financially viable for traders."

While Mr Schnitzler reiterated his original opposition to the move, he said businesses had to come to terms with the new reality.

"The mood [among traders] has been, 'OK, now at least we've got an answer, we can move forward'. It's about the government recognising our equity."

Dr Napthine said it would be at least \$100million cheaper to keep the Epping site rather than redevelop the market in West Melbourne.

The government, he said, had adjusted Labor's funding model to avoid traders' rent more than doubling when they moved to the new site. He could not say what the final cost of the relocation would be to taxpayers, but about \$200million had already been spent.

Footscray Market manager Allan Kong said the relocation would mean higher costs for traders in other parts of Melbourne, but he was confident his market would not take a hit from the move.

"The move won't affect our traders so much as a lot of them get their produce directly from wholesalers in Werribee and Geelong, so they are pretty confident that they can deal with it."

SHARING NATURE IN MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/sharing-nature-in-maribyrnong/2239690.aspx>

A program in which the community's excess fruit and vegetables are given to people in need is being developed in Maribyrnong.

For the Street Harvest project, a team of volunteers will seek out excess produce from the community's fruit trees and vegetable gardens to donate to those who could use it.

Food bank Victoria chief executive Ric Benjamin pitched the idea to Maribyrnong Council last week and got a strongly positive response.

"It's a great way for the community to put fruit and vegetables that may be destined for the bin to good use," he said. "It's a terrific combination of volunteers connecting with the community."

The project has already been a raging success in Wodonga where 8000 kilograms of fruit and vegetables have been donated to people in need in the 18 months the program has been operating.

"The Maribyrnong project will be the pilot program for the urban communities," Mr Benjamin said.

The next step toward implementing the project in Maribyrnong will be filling the role of volunteer co-ordinator.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

29th JULY 2011



CRIMS CAUGHT ON CAMERA IN FOOTSCRAY

Maribyrnong Leader– 26th July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/crims-caught-on-camera-in-footscray-fbready/>

Footscray's CCTV network, still in trial mode, has exceeded police expectations, with the million-dollar system assisting with 18 arrests.

The early success comes with the network not yet fully operational, but running with alternating cameras at different times.

The system is expected to record continuously on all 16 cameras within three weeks.

Footscray Inspector Tony Long said the arrests had been made directly because of or with assistance from the cameras over the past three weeks.

Inspector Long said charges relating to stolen goods and proceeds of crime had been the most common with alleged offenders caught on tape carrying items including televisions.

"In one case, there was a burglary reported outside the CCTV area, but witnesses said the alleged offenders were running toward the CBD and we identified them on the cameras and arrested them," he said.

"It's been a fantastic tool, and even better than we expected."

Footscray crime investigation unit Detective Sen-Constable Brendan O'Mahoney said a combination of live monitoring and reviewing the footage after crime reports had led to the arrests.

"We're also actively looking for people out on warrants for failing to appear in court, we see them on the cameras then go and pick them up," he said.

Det Sen-Constable O'Mahoney said descriptions from witnesses and victims were now more important than ever. "We arrested five people yesterday off CCTV from a description given from a burglary," he said.

"People are a bit desensitised to crime in Footscray so they haven't reported incidents straight away, now if they call 000, we can go straight to the cameras and see what's happening and decide how many units to send and where to send them."

Maribyrnong Mayor Sarah Carter said the argument that the cameras would just move the problem elsewhere had been around since the idea was first discussed, but action had to be taken.

"There's a lot depending on this - investment, safety. Footscray draws people and hopefully prosecutions will act as a deterrent," she said. "I saw an assault unfold in Nicholson St recently and it was comforting to know the cameras were there."

Through the advanced technology of the system, police are able to "tag" vehicles, or people and track them through the recordings without sifting through hours of footage.

DEVELOPING CONFUSION FOR MARIBYRNONG

Maribyrnong Leader– 26th July 2011

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/developing-confusion-for-maribyrnong-fbready/>

Maribyrnong Council says it is getting tough on inappropriate development despite approving an apartment complex that some councillors argue is exactly that.

Councillors' passionate support for a Footscray master plan to regulate development came in the same meeting as their approval of the three-storey Ballarat Rd apartment complex with inadequate parking.

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Councillors had earlier opposed a “medium-density” three-storey, 11-dwelling complex on two blocks in Francis St that attracted 53 objections.

Cr Michael Clarke successfully moved the application be rejected but then voted for the Ballarat Rd development, which drew condemnation from Mayor Sarah Carter and Councillors Sel Sanli and John Cumming.

“I’ve had enough of waiving car parking,” Cr Carter said.

“Car dependency will lessen, but not in the next two years.”

However Cr Dina Lynch believed VCAT would approve the development if the council didn’t.

All councillors then enthusiastically backed the master plan, which will govern the design of 350-400 CBD apartments.

“If we don’t put our vision on paper, someone else will impose their vision on us,” Cr Lynch said.

The community will be consulted during the development of the plan.

Maribyrnong Residents Association spokesman Allan Ross said multi-storey developments with inadequate parking were becoming too common.

Mr Ross said building boundary to boundary prevented future road expansions and exacerbated traffic problems.

“Where are we heading with this madness?”

HARDWARE, HAMMER AND TONGS

Sydney Morning Herald– 25th July 2011

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/hardware-hammer-and-tongs-20110724-1hvh4.html>

A sausage sizzle versus a cappuccino and pastry. The battle between hardware giant Bunnings and new kid on the block Woolworths' Masters, will be fought out in the car parks and coffee shops of the rival hardware stores as well as down the aisles of paints, hammers and ladders.

Woolworths, which is spending \$1 billion over the next five years to build a 150-strong network of hardware stores, looks to have tweaked its store format with it now subleasing in store cafes to outside operators.

Original plans lodged with the City of Maribyrnong for its store in the Melbourne suburb of Braybrook had the cafe as part of the Masters Hardware business but now new plans lodged with the local council have asked for the cafe to be run by someone else.

A spokesman for Woolworths would not comment on the change of plan, saying it wanted to "maintain an element of surprise" as it worked towards the first Masters opening later this year.

What is known is that the Braybrook Masters store, tipped to be the first to open, will have 13,500 square metres of retail space that will include a cafe, a 2276 sq m trade section and a 853 sq m nursery. There will be nearly 420 car spaces.

Bunnings Warehouses are typically between 13,000 and 14,000 sq m. Bunnings has longed recognised the importance of its cafes to drive customer traffic through the door, keep people at the store and act as a handy diversion and rest stop for frustrated children and their hardware-fanatic parents.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

29th JULY 2011



The Wesfarmers-owned Bunnings is more famously known for its sausage sizzle, with community groups and charities invited to light up a barbecue and offer hot dogs to passing customers.

Other big-box retailers have jumped aboard the strategy of offering a range of dining options to keep shoppers away from the exit. Furniture goliath IKEA offers a giant hot breakfast for \$1.95 as well as Swedish-inspired food such as meatballs and salmon dishes. US supermarket group Costco, which last week opened its second Australian store in Sydney, has a smaller range of food for shoppers including popular American meals.

Mirroring the popular food courts of larger shopping centres like those operated by Westfield, the cafes and sausage sizzles can help drive a significant amount of revenue for big-box retailers.

Wesfarmers will release its fourth-quarter sales results on Friday, which will include the quarterly and full-year performance of its Bunnings hardware chain as well as its supermarket business Coles.

MELTON

MELTON NESTING BOXES GET THE ONCE OVER

Melton Leader– 28th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-nesting-boxes-get-the-once-over/>

Wildlife along Arnolds Creek can nest in style following a splash of colour added to their new boxes.

Melton's Men's Shed members, who had already built many wildlife boxes for Wildlife Victoria in bushfire-affected areas, last year built 15 nesting boxes for the Melton Environment Group to house local wildlife.

MEG president Daryl Akers said the boxes, built from recycled timber, would suit parrots, corellas, galahs, ducks, kookaburras, owls and possums.

A number of the completed boxes were painted by students at Coburn Primary School and returned to MEG last Friday.

Mr Akers said the children would gain a sense of helping to protect their wildlife.

He said the painting boxes would give them a distinctive appearance and it was not expected that the wildlife would be deterred by the vivid colours.

The colourful boxes were given back to MEG at an afternoon school assembly last Friday.

SPEND TO HELP CHILDREN LEARN

Melton Leader– 28th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/spend-to-help-children-learn/>

Woolworths has unveiled its biggest program for kids.

The Woolworths Earn & Learn initiative will enable schools and children around the country to benefit from up to \$5 million worth of educational resources.

By shopping at Woolworths between July 18 and September 18, customers can earn points for their school.

Schools can then redeem Earn & Learn points against a choice of more than 7000 educational resources spanning the primary and secondary curriculum.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

29th JULY 2011



Since 2008, Woolworths has given away about \$8 million to sporting clubs and community groups to encourage children to lead healthy, active lives.

This year, Woolworths has extended the program - proudly supported by Melton Leader - to meet a greater variety of educational needs while delivering benefits to even more children.

“Whether its library books, classroom equipment or art and craft materials, participating schools will be able to redeem their Earn & Learn points for equipment and supplies,” Woolworths Supermarkets director Greg Foran said.

The program is open to primary and secondary schools. Every \$10 spent at Woolworths earns one Earn & Learn point.

To get involved, customers can send their Woolworths shopping dockets in to their local school.

CAROLINE SPRINGS SCHOOL IS TOP OF THE CLASS

Melton Leader– 28th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/caroline-springs-school-is-top-of-the-class/>

Caroline Springs parents have the option of a new school to choose from for their children.

Southern Cross Grammar, a new secular independent school, came into being after the demise of ICA College Melton.

The new school was officially opened last Monday.

ICA College shut its primary school at Caroline Springs and secondary school at Narre Warren at the end of last year after it went into administration.

After the community rallied hard to save the school, philanthropic investment company Zig Inge stepped in and purchased the primary school building at Gourlay Rd so Southern Cross Grammar could be established.

The new school has started life with 46 foundation students.

Classes will run from prep to grade 5, but 2012 enrolments for prep to year 7 are filling quickly.

The school plans to develop another campus as it nears capacity.

CUT AND PASTE IN MELTON WEST

Melton Leader– 27th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/cut-and-paste-in-melton-west/>

Stevie, 4, gives Melton mayor Justin Mammarella a hand at the craft table at Melton West Children’s and Community Centre.

The centre has been upgraded to provide kindergarten, maternal and child health services, and a community space in one location.

The work cost \$400,000, with Melton council and the State Government splitting the bill.

ANGER AT MELTON RATES HIKE

Melton Leader– 27th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/anger-at-melton-rates-hike/>

AN irate ratepayer was asked to leave and the gallery was cautioned to behave during a heated rates debate at Melton council.

At least 100 disgruntled land owners, unhappy with a higher level of rates placed on development land, packed the council chambers last Thursday.

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Councillors adopted a 0.0056 per cent rate for development land for the first time in its 2011-12 budget.

Council's chief executive officer, Kel Tori, said in the past rural landholders had paid a significantly lower rate - about 40 per cent of the residential rate.

Under the new differential rating system, the 80 landholders with land included in a detailed Precinct Structure Plan will pay about 170 per cent on the residential rate of 0.0033435.

The remaining 350 land owners with land in the urban growth boundary without a PSP in place will pay the residential rate. But with the environmental rebate, this amounts to 75 per cent of the residential rate, double what they are used to paying but still less than the full residential rate.

Mr Tori said council took the view that now this land was within the urban growth boundary, it was clearly no longer appropriate for it to be treated as rural land.

"Landowners ought to be making a fair and equitable contribution to the cost of running Melton Shire, the same way residential ratepayers are and have been doing for number of years," he said.

Aware of the likely heated nature of the debate, the council organised for a security guard to be present.

One man was asked to leave the chambers after ignoring Mayor Justin Mammarella's requests to be quiet.

MELTON SHIRE JOBLESS FIGURES IMPROVING

Melton Leader – 27th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/melton-shire-jobless-figures-improving/>

Unemployment in Melton Shire has fallen for the fourth quarter in a row.

The shire's official unemployment rate for March 2011 was 6.7 per cent - a 0.05 per cent drop on the December 2010 quarter figure of 6.75 per cent.

But the shire's March 2011 jobless rate is still 1.5 per cent higher than the state average of 5.2 per cent and 1.8 per cent higher than the Melbourne average of 4.9 per cent.

Melton Shire's jobless rate has decreased 1.4 per cent for the past year.

It reached a high of 8.1 per cent in March, 2010.

Unemployment in Melton Shire was 7.55 per cent in June 2010, and 7.2 per cent in September 2010.

There were 3325 people officially registered as unemployed in Melton Shire in the March 2011 quarter.

For the December 2010 to March 2011 quarter Melton East saw its unemployment rate fall from 5.7 per cent to 5.6 per cent (down 0.1 per cent), while the balance of Melton remained steady at 7.8 per cent.

For the 12 months from March 2010 to March 2011 Melton East's unemployment rate fell from 6.9 per cent to 5.6 per cent (down 1.3 per cent), while the balance of Melton fell from 9.3 to 7.8 per cent (down 1.5 per cent).

Melton East now has a labour force of 25,200 people and the balance of the shire has 24,470.

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JOBLESS RATE FALLS IN MOORABOOL

Melton Leader– 26th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/jobless-rate-falls-in-moorabool/>

Unemployment in Moorabool Shire continues to fall.

The shire's official unemployment rate for March 2011 was 4.7 per cent, a 0.5 percentage point drop on the December 2010 quarter figure of 5.2 per cent.

Moorabool Shire's jobless rate decreased 0.2 percentage points for the past year, slipping from 4.9 per cent in March 2010 to 4.7 per cent in March 2011.

There were 734 people officially registered as unemployed in Moorabool Shire in the March quarter, compared with 813 in December 2010.

For the March quarter, Bacchus Marsh's jobless rate dropped from 5.5 per cent to 4.8 per cent (down 0.7 percentage points), Ballan fell from 5.2 per cent to 4.6 per cent (down 0.6), and Moorabool's west dropped from 5 per cent to 4.6 per cent (down 0.4).

For the 12 months to March 2011, Bacchus Marsh's unemployment figure fell from 5 per cent to 4.8 per cent (down 0.2), Ballan fell from 4.9 to 4.6 per cent (down 0.3), and the west of the shire fell from 4.8 to 4.6 per cent (down 0.2).

Bacchus Marsh now has a labour force of 9734 people, Ballan has 3582 and the west of the shire has 2161, making a combined workforce of 15,477, up 258 from December 2010.

The shire's March jobless rate of 4.7 per cent is lower than the state average of 5.2 per cent and the Melbourne average of 4.9.

SPRUIKER COLUMN

Melton Leader– 26th July 2011

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

Melton Shire business owners are invited to take part in the "Melton think local, buy local" campaign, designed to create promotional opportunities, training and mentoring for businesses.

Benefits include broad media promotion and local business profiles, a Secret Shopper Program, training for owners and managers, and signage and branding.

Expressions of interest close this Friday.

Phone: Esther Clark, council's economic development officer, on 9747 7200 or email: estherc@melton.vic.gov.au.

A VARIETY of small business training workshops are being run by Melton Council next month.

On August 8, there will be a free Tax Basics seminar covering the fundamentals of tax for small business. Organised by the Australian Tax Office, the seminar will run from 9.30am-12.30pm at the Melton Council building.

On August 15, there will be a workshop on record keeping for business.

The free session will run from 1-4.30pm at Caroline Springs Library, 193-201 Caroline Springs Blvd, Caroline Springs.

To book for either seminar, call 132 215 or visit ato.gov.au/busreg and choose the state link for your seminar.

BRANDED! Melton's Small Business Professional Development Day will be held on August 11 at West Waters Hotel in Caroline Springs.

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The event features keynote speaker John D Anderson, founder of Contiki Holidays.

It also offers workshops led by four marketing gurus- Ailsa Page, of AP Marketing Works; Paul McCarthy, of Flying Solo; Yvonne Adele, of Ms Megabyte; and Lisa Smith, of Minds at Work.

Tickets cost \$65 for the morning or \$95 for the full day.

MELTON GROWTH MOVE CREATES SCHISM

Melton Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/melton-growth-move-creates-schism/2238260.aspx?storypage=0>

Melton Council has recommended including Diggers Rest South and the Diggers Rest-Plumpton corridor in the urban growth boundary (UGB), in a move which has divided the community.

The recommendations will be sent to the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) for consideration as it looks at "logical inclusions" within the UGB.

The council's submission was approved during a heated meeting last week, during which one resident was asked to leave the chamber.

The submission recommends Diggers Rest South be included as an opportunity to provide local employment and better road connections, and it called for the identification of the Diggers Rest-Plumpton corridor as a major employment precinct.

The submission also recommended land at Melton North, Brookfield West and Hillside West to be included in the UGB.

An advisory panel is considering submissions already made to the 2009 UGB review.

These submissions identify land for possible inclusion within the UGB for either residential or employment purposes.

The review is limited to growth-area municipalities, including Melton, Wyndham, and Hume, and no new private submissions can be made.

Diggers Rest resident David O'Connor supported the council's push to have the corridor identified as a new employment precinct of state significance.

"The process should help to improve the necessary jobs per household ratio within our shire," he said.

"It's now up to the GAA as to whether they agree with the broad strategic opportunity, or if they wish to ignore the potential to shape a logical outcome for the community."

But fellow resident and Diggers Rest Residents Association secretary Julie Murray feared for the fate of her town should major development continue.

"When council was asked whether a buffer would be placed between the houses and factories, the reply was, 'We will deal with it later'," she said.

"My biggest concern is that a huge proportion of the land will be factories. There will be more factories than houses."

Ms Murray said the area's peaceful and idyllic lifestyle could be wiped out.

"I don't think people have any idea what they are in for. It will no longer be a country town."

Council planning services manager, Bob Baggio, said the submission included all areas previously recommended for inclusion by the Melton township structure plan.

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"It's considered that the Plumpton-Diggers Rest corridor was an obvious inclusion in the context of identifying significant employment opportunities ... and ensuring that these employment areas are located in proximity to major transport corridors," Mr Baggio said.

Last week's council meeting included a public question time during which some residents continued to object to the recently approved rate increase.

ANTHONY'S CUTTING: DRIVERS FRUSTRATED AT DELAYS

Melton Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/anthony-s-cutting-drivers-frustrated-at-delays/2238253.aspx>

Angry motorists have expressed frustration at traffic disruptions on the \$200million Anthony's Cutting realignment, which opened last month.

The new stretch of highway opened nine months ahead of schedule, with warnings that it would operate at reduced speeds for the first four to seven days.

The normal speed limit is 110km/h.

But road works have continued on the new freeway, with speeds between Melton and Bacchus Marsh slowed to 60-80km/h and lane closures delaying traffic even further.

Overlay work is being carried out on each end of the freeway where the old and new roads connect.

Some sections are still being sealed and barriers erected. Landscaping and line marking are also taking place.

Many motorists have contacted the Weekly with complaints about ongoing delays.

"Every second day, a lane is blocked for two to three kilometres and traffic banks up. It's poor planning and poor management," Hopetoun Park resident Seray Hassan said.

"They've opened early and created chaos in Bacchus Marsh."

Glynes Turner, manager at Angelo's Bakery Cafe in Main Street, said many customers were irritated by the road works. But most were happier that it was now a safer stretch of road.

"It's a straight road now; I don't care how long it takes if it's going to save lives," she said.

Realignment project spokeswoman Laura Stewart said workers had made the most of dry weather conditions early on in the project, which contributed to the early finish.

"The new road is also much safer than Anthony's Cutting and it was ready to go, so why not open a safer road as soon as possible?"

Ms Stewart said the ongoing road works were normal and part of the process of a development of this size.

"These works would still be happening even if we opened nine months later," she said, adding that the bigger concern was the number of drivers ignoring the reduced speed limits.

On July 10, police caught a driver tearing down the new freeway at 170km/h in an 80km/h zone. The man had an alcohol reading of .119. He was charged on summons and his car was impounded for 30 days.

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Bacchus Marsh's Constable Michael Goodman said police had detected a number of drivers speeding on the new stretch of road, and they would continue to enforce the limits.

Ms Stewart said a completion date on works along the Old Western Highway would depend on weather conditions. It was hoped speed limits would return to normal within two weeks.

NEW CHAPTER OPENS FOR LERDERDERG LIBRARY

Melton Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-chapter-opens-for-lerderderg-library/2238254.aspx>

Bacchus Marsh librarians have spent the past few weeks bundling books into boxes as they prepare to move into the town's new Lerderderg library.

The community learning centre, 70 metres from the former building on Main Street, will open on August 15, with the old library closing on Monday.

The library will use the two-week interval to shift stock, install new computers and train staff in new programs.

Library manager Dale Johnston said the upgrade was greatly needed.

"Bacchus Marsh is a commuter town. There's a real need for social areas and the new centre will really be a community hub," he said.

"It's a growing area with a young demographic."

The new library will feature more space, books, computers and private meeting rooms that the community will have access to.

It will also use a new self-checkout system to save time for users.

The building's design, by architects Whitefield McQueen, has drawn inspiration from the light that filters through the elm trees that flank the Avenue of Honour.

It has been built with a focus on sustainability, with a ground-source heat loop for heating and cooling, and rainwater harvesting incorporated into the design.

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

Mayor Pat Griffin said the multi-functional space would be welcomed by the community.

"It's a very different type of library compared to those when I was a kid," he said.

Mr Johnston said libraries had become more of a social outlet for people, especially with the advent of computers, social networking and Skype. "It's a real meeting place."

As reported in the Weekly, a new agreement between Moorabool and Ballarat councils for 2011-12 means the council will keep its mobile service for those living in the shire's outer areas.

An official opening will take place on Saturday, August 20.

BACCHUS MARSH BILL PASSED IN YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Melton Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/bacchus-marsh-bill-passed-in-youth-parliament/2238258.aspx>

Some of the area's future leaders have benefited from the chance to debate issues they are passionate about in the 25th YMCA Victorian Youth Parliament.

Melton's James Farrier, 17, was in a team of Bacchus Marsh College students who successfully introduced a bill for voluntary euthanasia in State Parliament.

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"Our bill passed and it was good to see that [my colleagues] felt passionate about it. It needs to be considered by the Parliament," James said.

More than 20 previous Youth Parliament bills have become law in Victoria, including bills enacting drug testing for drivers, increased de facto rights for same-sex couples, and over-the-counter access to the morning-after pill.

Euthanasia is an issue which James feels strongly about, having watched a family member suffer from terminal cancer.

"My Nan asked one of the nurses in palliative care why someone should lie in a comatose state in such pain, and the nurse said, 'It's a waiting game'. I thought why is it a waiting game? People have the right to live; they should have the right to die as well."

James, who is in year 12, hopes to study medicine after completing VCE.

"I want to be involved in the community."

Youth governor and Footscray resident Kieran Ryan, 23, was happy with the level of debate during this year's Youth Parliament.

"It has been fantastic. There have been fiery debates over very important issues and very important bills introduced by very young Victorians," he said.

Mr Ryan said engaging young people and the public in the parliamentary system was important. "Without public engagement, democracy fails."

ICA STUDENTS FIND A SCHOOL

Melton Weekly – 26th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/ica-students-find-a-school/2238262.aspx>

Parents and children who suffered much heartache after ICA College Melton was unexpectedly shut down last year have reached the end of a long and winding road, with a new school opening at the Caroline Springs site.

Southern Cross Grammar opened its doors on July 18.

It was set up by a group of parents who were devastated when ICA was put up for sale after its parent company went into voluntary administration on November 1 last year.

The group rallied tirelessly for months to secure funding to buy the college site.

It was aided by the Zig Inge Group, which stepped in to buy the land and school facility on behalf of the parents.

Zig Inge will lease the property back to the group for no charge until the school gets on its feet.

Southern Cross Grammar hopes to eventually buy back the property so that it will be completely owned by the community.

The independent school has retained the 'new generation learning model', which was revered by parents and pupils alike.

Principal Andrew Ponsford and most of the staff from the ICA College have returned.

The new school has 46 pupils enrolled from prep to grade 5.

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Speaking at the school's opening, Hillside parents Thomas and Deborah Garth said they were delighted their daughter Hayley was back at the school she loved.

"We had to move her to another school and we noticed pretty quickly that her spelling and reading levels started going down," Mr Garth said.

"It's definitely worth the drive because the teachers are really dedicated and it feels like a real family here."

Chairman Michael Daly was pleased that most of the children at the new school were former ICA students.

"We've worked really hard and I'm confident this school will be a big success."

MELTON WEST CENTRE BACK ON TRACK

Melton Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/melton-west-centre-back-on-track/2238264.aspx>

Melton West Community and Children's Centre has reopened following a \$400,000 redevelopment.

The renovated centre will provide families and children such as Jackson, 5 (pictured), with access to kindergarten, maternal and child health and community space at one location.

The number of four-year-olds attending kindergarten in the shire has increased by 12.8per cent over the past three years.

PM HONOURS TOOLERN VALE VOLUNTEERS

Melton Leader– 25th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/pm-honours-toolern-va-le-volunteers/>

Ann and Trevor McNair are the toast of Toolern Vale after having their volunteer work recognised by Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

As recipients of this year's Above and Beyond Award, the couple was congratulated by Ms Gillard at a ceremony at Wyndham City Council this month.

The Above and Beyond Awards recognise the efforts of individuals in the community who have gone beyond the call of duty to assist others in need.

Ms Gillard said the couple had volunteered for 32 years with the Toolern Vale Fire Brigade and had given their time helping with some of the major Victorian bushfires.

Mr McNair, who joined the brigade in 1978, is the communications officer. He received the National Medal in 2007.

Mrs McNair has also held various positions within the brigade.

She is also involved in the wider community through various committees and previously ran pregnancy support classes with Melton Council and worked with the Red Cross.

BEAUTY MATE, MELTON PROJECTS VIE FOR AWARDS

Melton Leader– 25th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/beauty-mate-melton-projects-vie-for-awards/>

Two projects in Melton shire have been shortlisted as finalists in the Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria 2011 Sustainable Cities awards.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Melton Council's Historical Newsletter is a finalist in the Cultural Heritage category, while the Toolern Vale Dingo Discovery Sanctuary and Research Centre have been nominated in the Protection of the Environment category for its Learn about Dingoes project.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the nominations were recognition of the council's commitment to working with the community to make the municipality more sustainable.

"The Keep Australia Beautiful Awards are a great opportunity to celebrate and recognise the wonderful effort our community puts in to making our local environment and community more sustainable," he said.

"By working in partnership with the community, with other organisations, and other levels of government, we can act to preserve the great natural assets and character of our community now and into the future."

Winners will be announced on July 29 and will go on to compete for the national awards.

In 2010, Melton Council was named Victoria's Sustainable City for a second time and also won the National Keep Australia Beautiful award for Energy Innovation.

TAYLORS HILL PROJECT GETS FEDERAL FUNDING BOOST

Melton Leader— 24th July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/taylors-hill-project-gets-federal-funding-boost/>

Taylors Hill residents have 100,000 reasons to smile with funding approved for the town's Neighbourhood Play space project.

Melton Council has received \$100,000 in federal funding for the project, which will form part of the Taylors Hill Youth and Community Centre and Recreation Reserve.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the money would enable the council to construct an accessible playground at the site to cater for children of all abilities.

He said work had started, with excavation for the ovals nearly complete and the concrete slab poured.

"The facility will provide a home base for council's youth services provision in the area as well as space," he said.

Cr Mammarella said the facility would also feature multi-purpose recreational space such as ovals that would accommodate cricket and football.

The council has allocated \$7.4 million in the 2011/12 budget for the project.

It is set to be completed by the end of the year with the ovals and open space ready by May 2012.

MELTON STUDENT TRADIES IN HOME RUN

Melton Leader— 23rd July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-student-tradies-in-home-run/>

Takeaway wooden homes built by Melton Victoria University trade students are in hot demand.

Each year aspiring carpenters build about a dozen of the modular, three-bedroom houses, which can be used as granny flats, beach homes and starter houses.

The buildings take about 11 weeks each to complete.

Part of VU's carpentry program for 15 years, the project involves students of plastering and painting as well as building-design students.

The takeaway homes have been delivered throughout the state, from suburban blocks in Taylors Lakes to beachside properties in Venus Bay.

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Construction Industries live works manager David Delahunty said VU was among Victoria's few training organisations to offer carpentry students opportunities to work on real homes, rather than models.

"The students are very precise because they know this will be used by paying clients," he said.

"They are very proud and protective of their work since this is the first time they've done something this big from start to finish."

The houses are built at cost, must be signed off by external inspectors and include warranties, the same as any commercial job.

MELTON ON PAR WITH PRAHRAN

Melton Leader— 21st July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/melton-on-par-with-prahran/>

House prices in Melton were the second fastest growing in Melbourne over the past year.

The REIV June quarter median prices show the median house price in Melton rose from \$266,500 in June 2010 to \$312,500 in June 2011, up 17.3 per cent.

Melton was narrowly beaten to top spot by Prahran, which rose 17.4 per cent for the year from \$937,000 in June 2010 to \$1.1 million in June 2011.

House prices in Melton were also Melbourne's fourth fastest for the past quarter, rising 14.5 per cent from \$273,000 in March 2010 to \$312,000 in June 2011.

Hillside was Melbourne's 19th fastest growing suburb for the past year, rising 3.5 per cent from \$425,000 in June 2010 to \$440,000 in June 2011.

House prices in the east of the shire generally performed better than the west.

Taylors Hill rose 8.8 per cent for the year from \$475,000 in June 2010 to \$517,000 in June 2011.

But as there were less than 30 sales recorded for the past quarter, Taylors Hill failed to make the top 20.

Caroline Springs rose 2.2 per cent for the year from \$425,500 in June 2010 to \$435,000 in June 2011.

Kurunjang recorded Melton shire's only drop in house prices, falling 7.3 per cent from \$300,000 in June 2010 to \$278,250 in June 2011.

REIV CEO Enzo Raimondo said the Melbourne residential property market has recorded moderate price growth over the last 12 months.

"This result is reflective of a market which is now stable following the GFC and corrective action taken in response," he said. "In a stable market such as this, it is important to look at a suburb's performance over a longer time period."

"With the exception of Prahran, these suburbs all have house prices at or below the median, indicating that demand is still being driven by the housing needs of our growing population."

CALL TO OPEN MELTON RESERVOIR

Melton Leader— 21st July 2011

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/call-to-open-melton-reservoir/>

A report looking at community access to Melton Reservoir has condemned Melton Council for its inaction over the past 30 years.

The report called No Entry: A study into community access for passive and active recreation at the Melton Reservoir claims the council has failed to develop recreational areas of the reservoir or set aside funding to do so.

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It cites Lake Wendouree in Ballarat as an example of how a large water resource close to a large populated area can be exploited for the benefit of residents.

But Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella questioned the accuracy of the report.

“Council has not had time to fully digest the report, however I have been informed that it appears to contain a number of inaccuracies and relies heavily on a statistically invalid ‘survey’,” he said.

Written by Reece Welsh, a Parliamentary intern for Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella, the report surveyed 30 residents. It found 43 per cent of respondents were not aware of the reservoir, but that 96.7 per cent of those who did said they would use it if it was available as a recreation hub.

The report says the Melbourne Runabout and Speedboat Club have had an exclusive “right of access” agreement with reservoir manager Southern Rural Water since the early 1960s.

“The privilege of having sole access to a water resource inaccessible to over 100,000 residents seems incredulous,” it says, claiming the council has been aware of public interest since the 1980s in developing the reservoir.

It made 12 recommendations, including that the council provide or seek funding to immediately begin development of recreational areas.

Copies of the report are available from Mr Nardella’s office at 3 Alexandra St, Melton.

MOONEE VALLEY

A SAFER ROUTE FOR CYCLISTS

Moonee Valley Leader– 26th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/a-safer-route-for-cyclists/>

Sections of the Moonee Ponds Creek Path have re-opened following work to make it safer for walkers and cyclists.

Moonee Valley Council pitched in \$250,000 and the Federal Government \$100,000 to re-align sections of the path at Nursery Bend and Ormond Park.

“There were sharp corners at Nursery Bend and Ormond Park and these improvements make the path safer for people who walk or ride a bike,” said Deputy Mayor James Rankin.

“I encourage all cyclists and walkers to come and check it out. I’ll be taking my own bike to go and have a ride too.”

Wills federal Labor MP Kelvin Thomson said up to 600 people used the path each day.

“What a great example this region is setting for a sustainable and green future,” Mr Thompson said.

Cr Rankin and Mr Thompson helped Strathmore North Primary School students plant a tree at the opening of the Nursery Bend section of the path last Tuesday.

FOCUS ON THE BUSINESS OF BRANDING

Moonee Valley Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/focus-on-the-business-of-branding/>

Networking is on the menu at an upcoming gala lunch.

Moonee Valley Council will host its annual Gala Business Lunch on August 9, providing a forum for local business people to meet and learn from each other.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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This year's event will focus on branding strategies, with branding guru and author Simon Hammond as guest speaker.

Mr Hammond's expertise extends to working for Australia's top companies, including Sportsgirl, Festival Mushroom Records, the National Gallery of Victoria, Cadbury and Melbourne Central.

Sponsored by LeadWest and the Department of Business and Innovation, the lunch will be at Moonee Valley Racing Club, McPherson Street, Moonee Ponds, noon-3pm. Tickets are \$55.

Visit mvcc.vic.gov.au/businessevents or email business@mvcc.vic.gov.au

WE WANT A 'YES', MINISTER

Moonee Valley Leader— 26th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/we-want-a-yes-minister/>

Plans for a revitalised housing, business and activity hub in Moonee Ponds are a step closer.

Moonee Valley councillors last week asked Planning Minister Matthew Guy to tick off their plans for the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre.

The document will guide planning in sections of Pascoe Vale, Mt Alexander and Ascot Vale roads, Puckle St and surrounding areas.

It aims to develop a mix of higher density housing, business, shopping and leisure facilities and public transport.

The zone would include a new town square, redeveloped public transport interchanges and expanded community services.

It will look at growing retail, business and employment opportunities, increase population in medium to high-density housing, provide recreational, arts and entertainment opportunities and protect heritage qualities.

Moonee Valley Mayor John Sipek said if the minister approved the plan, community feedback would be sought before final council approval.

"We needed a vision for the future of this important activity centre in Moonee Ponds," Cr Sipek said.

Cr Sipek said the zone covered most of the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre, but not the Moonee Valley Racecourse, as the racing club had not finalised its master plan.

"Council is yet to receive a master plan or application from the Moonee Valley Racing Club," Cr Sipek said. "When this happens, the community will be notified and residents will have the opportunity to have their say."

A separate proposal to include the racecourse in the zone will need to be completed after the racing club's master plan has been finished.

FOSTERING GREATER INTERACTION

Moonee Valley Leader— 26th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/fostering-greater-interaction/>

An interfaith network will be formed to unite residents of different religions.

Moonee Valley Council's Interfaith and Intercultural Community Advisory Committee has received a \$15,000 State Government grant to develop the network.

Rev Duncan Reid, from St George Anglican Church in Flemington, said connecting community leaders would help promote understanding of different faiths, on activities like bus tours.

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"It's really about meeting the people of those communities, but certainly visiting their place of worship is an important step."

Inderbir Singh, who is a member of the Sikh community, will also be part of the network and hopes it will help residents understand all the different cultural and faith groups in their community.

"It will make a really nice multicultural place in Moonee Valley," Mr Singh said.

Mayor John Sipek (pictured) said the council would help get the network up and running but it would be driven by the community.

"With 75 per cent of Moonee Valley following one of 88 faith groups, this network of community members will promote intercultural exchange and deliver projects aimed at bringing together people from different faiths and cultures to promote community harmony, celebrate shared values and increase general understanding of, and respect for, Moonee Valley's diverse cultures and faiths," Cr Sipek said.

Network projects will include creating an interfaith directory and organising bus tours to the municipality's places of worship and cultural significance.

Groups interested in being part of the network can contact Bianca Nutt at the council on 9243 9124.

STRATHMORE'S MISSION TO 'MARS' NOT SO ALIEN

Moonee Valley Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/strathmores-mission-to-mars-not-so-alien/2236933.aspx>

A world first science program at Strathmore Secondary College will give its students the chance to play a part in a robotic mission to 'Mars'.

The Victorian Space Science Education Centre at the school has created an online Robotic Mission to Mars learning environment.

The project includes a simulated Mars surface, a remote-controlled robotic rover and a space station science laboratory.

Students in years 9 and 10 science classes will be able to manoeuvre the rover across the 'Mars' surface via their computers.

School science teacher and space centre director Michael Pakakis said the Mars mission was the latest feature of the school's \$6.4million science education centre.

"We have a fully functional robotic rover and have put together a software package that allows students to operate the rover."

He said the school used space as an umbrella topic to teach numerous science and maths subjects.

Education Minister Martin Dixon visited the school last week to launch the Mars Mission.

"This incredible new program will put Victorian students ahead of the world in a learning 'space race'," Mr Dixon said.

MOONEE PONDS CREEK PATH SAFER

Moonee Valley Weekly– 26th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-ponds-creek-path-safer/2236932.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council estimates up to 600 people use the Moonee Ponds Creek path each day.

Their journey has been made safer thanks to a \$350,000 upgrade of the path near Nursery Bend in Strathmore and Ormond Park in Moonee Ponds.

The council contributed \$250,000 to the upgrade and secured \$100,000 from the federal government's regional and local community infrastructure program.

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Moonee Valley deputy mayor and regular path user James Rankin says the works have improved safety for walkers and cyclists.

"There were sharp corners at Nursery Bend and Ormond Park and these improvements make the path safer for people who walk or cycle."

MOONEE PONDS ACTIVITY CENTRE PLAN

Moonee Valley Weekly— 26th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-ponds-activity-centre-plan/2236928.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council has asked Planning Minister Matthew Guy to approve an amendment to its planning scheme to include an activity centre zone for part of Moonee Ponds.

(A designated activity centre zone is an area where different planning rules apply so bigger projects can be undertaken without the normal restrictions that might be present on the Moonee Valley planning scheme.)

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said the process was part of the Moonee Ponds activity centre structure plan, which was adopted in March last year after five years of planning and community consultation.

Cr Sipek said the proposed zone covered most of the Moonee Ponds activity centre but not the Moonee Valley Racecourse.

MOONEE VALLEY SAYS NO TO LIBRARY CASH CUTS

Moonee Valley Weekly— 26th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-says-no-to-library-cash-cuts/2236931.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council will not sign a state government library funding agreement which would slash \$5million from libraries during the next four years.

At a Municipal Association of Victoria forum last week, Crs Miriam Gillis and Ange Kenos agreed to join the fight for a better deal.

"We look forward to the MAV meeting the state government to find a solution so that this vital community service can get the support and funding it needs in the future," Cr Kenos said.

The funding was quietly pulled this month.

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said the council was still assessing the implications of the funding cuts but had no plans to cut its library operating hours or services.

He said the proposed cuts would leave the council \$11,000 short of what it had budgeted for this financial year.

"In the immediate future [the current financial year] any budget implications are likely to be around the purchase of resources and our ability to offer new community programs.

We are unsure of budget implications after the current financial year as future funding amounts have not been advised.

"If the current level of funding cuts continues we will need to consider the impact to our public libraries at that time."

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

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

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

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

Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell said the previous Labor government's poor financial management had affected funding.

MOONEE VALLEY, CANBERRA IN LINE ON CARBON

Moonee Valley Weekly— 26th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-canberra-in-line-on-carbon/2236930.aspx>

As the Labor government continues to "sell" its carbon tax to the community, the message appears to be clouded in Moonee Valley.

Local government and traders are still unsure how the proposed tax will affect them.

Despite developing its own greenhouse strategy, which was adopted last year, Moonee Valley Council has not revealed whether it supports the carbon tax, while some traders fear the tax will add to small business overheads.

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said projections on how the council and ratepayers would be affected had not been done.

"Because the full details of the carbon tax scheme are not available, it is difficult to know what financial impact this new tax will impose on the council and citizens of Moonee Valley."

Philosophically, at least, the council would appear to be in line with such a proposal with its own greenhouse strategy stating a "commitment to reducing greenhouse emissions and joining worldwide efforts to prevent global climate change".

The council also set ambitious targets to produce zero carbon emissions by 2020.

Niddrie Traders Association president Joe Parnis said he feared a carbon tax would add to small business overheads, which would be passed on to consumers.

Mr Parnis said his association had not discussed the implications of a carbon tax formally but would deal with it if it was introduced.

Moonee Valley residents have expressed their concern about climate change.

During recent consultation for the council's community plan, Moonee Valley 2020 - Living Together, Living Well - climate change was identified by residents as one of the most important priorities for Moonee Valley to deal with.

MOONEE VALLEY UNLEASHES NEW DOG LAWS

Moonee Valley Weekly— 26th July 2011

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/moonee-valley-unleashes-new-dog-laws/2236929.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council is urging dog owners to tighten the leash on unruly dogs or face the consequences.

The council has introduced strict new on-leash laws and recently increased fines for dog owners who ignore them.

It follows an increase in reported dog attacks in recent years.

In 2010-11, there were 97 reports of dog attacks, dogs rushing or chasing incidents. This was up from 83 in 2009-10 and 77 in 2007-08.

Moonee Valley mayor John Sipek said the new laws were necessary to increase safety.

He said community feedback showed unruly dogs had become an issue in Moonee Valley.

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"In the past 12 months, complaints associated with unleashed dogs have increased. This includes in our streets and on-leash parks, as well as dogs reported rushing or attacking people and animals.

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

The fine for a rushing or chasing dog is now \$118, up from \$113 in 2008-09.

New leash laws require all owners to keep their dogs under effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash.

The order also prohibits dogs from being within 15 metres of any children's playground, public barbecue or exercise equipment area.

Flemington dog owner Ji Lawson welcomed the strict rules and said responsibility for public safety was always with the dog owner.

"I have two British bulldogs, Spud and Bonnie, and I only ever let them off in off-leash areas.

"There have been times though walking in Flemington where I did feel my safety and their safety had been threatened from dogs running around. You do have to stick to the right places."

The council has designated off-leash areas.

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

The designated dog off-leash areas are: Aberfeldie Park, Allan Reserve, Boeing Reserve, Cross Keys Reserve, Davis Reserve, Fairbairn Park, Spring Gully Reserve, Thompson Street Reserve and Travancore Park.

Cr Sipek said the increase in the number of reported attacks may be the result of the council encouraging people to report incidents as part of a community education campaign.

NOD FOR TWO-STOREY HOUSES

Moonee Valley Leader – 25th July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/nod-for-two-storey-houses/>

Three lots of double-storey developments have been given the go-ahead by Moonee Valley councillors, but plans for a triple-storey development have been dismissed.

The three double-storey dwellings at 21 Balmoral Ave, Strathmore, received 45 objections, but were approved with the condition the third dwelling be reduced to one-storey.

A development at 17 Creswell Ave, Airport West, for two double-storey dwellings and one single-storey dwelling, was also approved. Also ticked off were plans for three double-storey dwellings at 58 Creswell Ave, conditional to the third dwelling being reduced to one level.

Both applications received 11 objections on matters including over-looking, parking and over-development.

The councillors, at their ordinary meeting last Tuesday, went against the town planner's recommendation and refused a permit for two attached triple-storey dwellings 61 Willonga St, Strathmore. Plans for a similar development had previously been rejected by the council in 2009, and that decision was upheld by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Cr Jan Chantry said she believed very little had changed since the first sets of plans were put to the council, except minor changes "to tick the council boxes".

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“Medium-density housing developments need to be site responsive,” Cr Chantry said. “I firmly believe this is an over-development of the site.”

HEALTH LOW PRIORITY FOR BUSY MUMS

Moonee Valley Leader– 22nd July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/health-low-priority-for-busy-mums/>

Moonee Valley women have been urged by an Essendon doctor not to put their health last on the to-do list.

Dr Caitlin Tran joined Glass Street Medical Clinic six months ago from a Gladstone Park clinic and said she was seeing many women presenting with health issues they had been “too busy” to attend to earlier.

“They’re neglecting their health because they’re looking after children, working and raising a family without a lot of support,” she said.

Dr Tran said the area’s younger patient base meant she had seen many young families who had moved away from the support of extended family, as well as a lot of young patients with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and communicable diseases.

Dr Tran said some of the biggest health issues for young women were STIs, ensuring they were using the correct contraception for them, having regular pap smears and the cervical cancer vaccine.

For older women, diabetes, cardiovascular health, depression, postnatal depression and menopause were issues, while for elderly women it was osteoporosis, breast and endometrial cancer.

Dr Tran encouraged women of all ages to see their GP regularly and to learn more about looking after their health by visiting websites such as the Royal Women’s Hospital.

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

Moonee Valley Leader– 21st July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/breaking-down-the-barriers-1/>

African youths are on the ball when it comes to breaking down barriers and bringing the community together.

Established last year, the Australian Somali Football Association (ASFA) organised Australia’s first Somali football championship in December, drawing more than 4000 spectators to the five-day tournament.

In recognition of its efforts, the association was recently named the inaugural Moonee Valley Youth Voice Award winner.

In April, the club’s under-18 team was selected to compete in the 11th annual Mediterranean International Cup in Costa Brava, Spain.

The squad of 16, including refugee players from Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Oromo, competed against youth teams from Manchester United, Real Madrid, Barcelona and Arsenal.

ASFA spokesman Ahmed Dini, 23, said it was more than just a club for its 15 members.

“Soccer is an international language and it’s a good way to help correct misconceptions of African youths,” he said.

“We encourage the best of young people to come on board and show everybody that we’re just like everybody else.”

Mr Dini said ASFA was busy organising its next Somali football championship for December.

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Mayor John Sipek said the club had made a “fantastic contribution” to Moonee Valley through its work with young people and sport.

POPULAR BIKE PATH OPENS

Moonee Valley Leader– 21st July 2011

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/popular-bike-path-opens/>

Sections of the Moonee Ponds Creek Path have re-opened following work to make it safer for walkers and cyclists.

Moonee Valley Council pitched in \$250,000 and the Federal Government \$100,000 to re-align sections of the path at Nursery Bend and Ormond Park.

“There were sharp corners at Nursery Bend and Ormond Park and these improvements make the path safer for people who walk or ride a bike,” said Deputy Mayor James Rankin.

Cr Rankin and Mr Thompson helped Strathmore North Primary School students plant a tree at the opening of the Nursery Bend section of the path last Tuesday.

WYNDHAM

THOUSAND SEEK TO JOIN SELECT STATE SCHOOL

Wyndham Leader– 28th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/thousand-seek-to-join-select-state-school/>

Demand is rising for a place at Werribee’s new school for academically gifted students.

Suzanne Cory High School, opened this year, is the first public selective-entry school for students in years 9-12 in Melbourne’s West and the fourth in the state.

An entrance exam for year 8 students wanting to join any of the four schools in 2012 was held last month.

Before the exam, students’ parents had to list up to three schools in order of preference.

The Education Department said 1004 of about 3000 applicants had Suzanne Cory High School in their list this year, compared to 800 of about 3000 last year. It will take just 200 year 9 students next year.

The department could not say how many people listed the school as their first preference but said other more established public selective-entry schools - Melbourne High School at South Yarra for boys and The Mac Robertson Girls High School in Melbourne - were the most popular.

Students should find out next month if their bid for a place at any of the schools has been successful.

Suzanne Cory High School in Hoppers Lane now has 200 year 9 students and will reach its limit of 800 students in years 9-12 by 2014.

School Principal Peter Starford was pleased with demand from prospective students and said it should increase as the school became more known.

He said school buildings would be completed early this term.

Mr Starford said about 75 per cent of students this year were from the West, including about 25 per cent from Wyndham.

Half came from public schools.

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The school takes its name from one of Australia's leading scientists - Suzanne Cory is a biologist who has worked on the genetics of the immune system and cancer.

WYNDHAM SALVO CASH SPLASH TO HELP NEEDY

Wyndham Leader— 28th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/wyndham-salvo-cash-splash-to-help-needy/>

There have been many victims of the slowing economy in Wyndham and calls for help continue to rise.

This is why Wyndham City Salvation Army staff had an anxious wait for vital cash which had been under threat.

The group will receive \$312,000 across three years from the Federal Government for direct assistance after the extra funding was slashed earlier this year.

The branch was granted additional Federal Government cash in the 2009-10 and 2010-11 budgets to help deal with increased demand during the global financial crisis, but that was cut this financial year.

However, a change of heart by the Government has seen cash injected back into the group.

Wyndham City Salvation Army Captain Lance Jeffrey said it was an anxious wait for the branch, which still needed the money despite the global financial crisis easing.

“Two years ago, when the global financial crisis hit, we were given respite by the Government with additional funding allocated to help with the additional demand,” he said.

“In 2009 there was a definite spike in demand for services and that extra funding was supposed to help us get over that little hurdle until we returned to normal.

“But this is the new normal. The demand peaked and it has continued at that level.”

Capt Jeffrey said rising living costs, including rate rises for utilities, rent and mortgage repayments, were behind the surge in demand.

Capt Jeffrey said money would be “passed directly on to those who are in need” and would be used for direct assistance which includes providing food, vouchers, furniture, clothing and assistance.

WYNDHAM ADVOCATES FOR 'CRITICAL' CHANGES

Wyndham Weekly— 27th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-advocates-for-critical-changes/2239492.aspx>

Building a new justice precinct, providing natural gas throughout Werribee South and identifying 'champions' to promote the west were among the ideas put forward in submissions on the city's advocacy strategy.

The document, Working For Our City's Needs, was initially presented as a draft to Wyndham councillors on May 23. One of its key objectives was increasing the pressure on state and federal governments to recognise the needs of Wyndham's rapidly growing population. It identifies the highest priorities for the city under five themes: traffic and transport, employment and skills, environment, infrastructure and community health, well-being and safety.

On the issue of transport, the strategy identified westerly ramps at the Duncans Road interchange, arterial road upgrades and improved bus services among the most critical requirements.

A plan to create more jobs closer to home, a development authority to drive the creation of 60,000 jobs in the Werribee Employment Precinct, and a campaign to

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lobby governments to decentralise their workforces were listed as priorities. Pushing for more police was also high on the agenda.

The council received 20 submissions from organisations including Deakin and Victoria universities, Werribee Mercy Hospital, City West Water and VicRoads.

Faster internet connection was identified as a key issue, particularly for Manor Lakes and Point Cook residents, while the hospital again re-stated the importance of opening the city's own critical care unit.

Key changes to the strategy, adopted by councillors on Monday, included urging governments to support the city's agribusiness sector and greater work to improve the city's image to attract and retain more workers in the health and education sectors.

DAVIS HOUSE: HISTORIC HOME FACES DEMOLITION

Wyndham Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/davis-house-historic-home-faces-demolition/2239484.aspx>

One of Werribee's oldest properties faces demolition if a new location can't be found within 12 months.

The future of the historic Davis House, on the corner of Watton and Synnot streets since 1905, divided Wyndham councillors at a meeting on Monday night.

Despite an interim council heritage overlay, owners of the site, Watton Street Investments, had submitted an application seeking to knock down the main buildings.

Last year, the council stated an overlay would not protect the buildings from demolition.

The Davis family was among Werribee's pioneering families. The site was developed by Herbert Davis, an insurance agent, who relocated the former Miss Davis House and Davis House from his family's property at Cowies Hill, near Tarneit.

While the larger Davis House served as the family's principal residence for many years, and was occupied by Mr Davis' only daughter Vera, until her death in 2005 at the age of 103, the smaller cottage was rented to tenants. In recent years, the buildings have fallen into disrepair, and been subject to fire.

An initial recommendation put forward by council officers to refuse a permit for the demolition was supported by Iramoo ward councillor Cynthia Manson.

However, Truganina ward's Kim McAliney proposed the council grant a permit for the demolition subject to a range of conditions, including it not be completed within 12 months. During this time, the owner would be obligated to seek an alternative site for the relocation of the timber structures and provide \$20,000 towards moving costs.

"The buildings are in extremely poor condition," Cr McAliney said.

Fellow Truganina ward councillor Glenn Goodfellow said Cr McAliney's motion provided the buildings with a chance "to fight another day".

However, Cr Manson disagreed and moved for councillors to defer the decision on whether to grant a permit for their demolition. This was refused, with Cr McAliney's motion approved by five votes to three, with Iramoo ward councillor Heather Marcus absent due to a conflict of interest.

Last October, the council approved demolition of outbuildings at the rear of a hardware store.

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A section of land adjoining the site is being redeveloped as a two-storey office block.

In November, the Wyndham Heritage Recovery Group stated the store could be transformed into a museum. Report author Bill Strong had then said the remaining buildings required protection.

JULIA GILLARD LOSING GROUND IN LABOR HEARTLAND

Wyndham Weekly— 27th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/julia-gillard-losing-ground-in-labor-heartland/2239488.aspx>

Voters are turning away in droves from Prime Minister Julia Gillard in the wake of her announcement of the federal government's carbon tax, with a new poll indicating she faces an uphill battle to retain her seat.

Less than a year after she secured a fourth term in Lalor - which covers Wyndham - with a massive 64 per cent of the primary vote, it has been revealed she would be forced to rely on preferences at the next election.

According to the JWS research poll, which surveyed 625 voters in the electorate last week, this figure has dropped to an alarming 46 per cent.

However, a nationwide poll published this week suggested support for the tax had risen 6 per cent since the start of the government's advertising campaign. Details from the JWS research poll found Labor would still retain Lalor with 58 per cent of the two-party preferred vote, down from 72.2 per cent at last August's election.

On the carbon tax, 43 per cent of Lalor voters were opposed to the carbon tax, 33 per cent in favour and 24 per cent undecided.

It comes as Ms Gillard urged Wyndham residents to ignore the "scare campaign" by Opposition Leader Tony Abbott and state Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn.

She said the government's carbon pricing policy would benefit businesses, industries and families across the west.

This month, Wyndham Industrial Liaison Development Committee chairman Barry Harvey said it would decimate the manufacturing sector, already struggling due to lower overseas labour costs and the high Australian dollar. However, Western Region Environment Centre director Harry van Moorst said while it was a "step in the right direction" more work had to be done to avert the spread of climate change.

Ms Gillard said government data indicated nine out of 10 households in Lalor would receive financial assistance as a result the carbon policy.

BACKFLIP FORCES FAMILY TO SELL-UP

Wyndham Weekly— 27th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/backflip-forces-family-to-sellup/2239647.aspx?storypage=0>

A mother of two autistic boys says she will be forced to sell the family home because the state government broke its promise to build an autism-specific P-12 school at Laverton.

Derrimut's Maria Ager said her family had to sell so they could move closer to another school because her nine-year-old son had to leave Western Autistic School in December.

The school caters only for children in prep to grade 3.

"My younger son can't go to mainstream school, there's no way," Ms Ager said.

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He can't cope with 800 kids at a school or 25 kids in one class. His IQ is about 49. His speech has improved, but it's not like the communication that we have. He still doesn't know how to read and write."

She said both boys needed a daily routine.

"Everything needs to be structured. If I do change anything, all hell breaks loose."

While her eldest was "high-functioning" and attended a mainstream school, he wasn't always able cope. Though his borderline IQ of 76 made him ineligible for a special-needs school.

Williamstown MP Wade Noonan has repeatedly called for a review of assessment criteria for children with autism. The Education Department has repeatedly refused.

"He's going to be 12 soon," Ms Ager said of her eldest son.

"He's going to be dealing with 15, 16, 17-year-olds. If he goes up to a kid and says something the wrong way, he could get his head bashed in."

Ms Ager was among parents who protested for a P-12 autism school before November's state election.

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn rallied alongside other parents of children with autism.

Ms Ager said: "They [Liberals] said, if you vote for us you're going to get the P-12 school, and since they got in we haven't heard anything about it.

"They've failed us."

Action for Autism Education spokeswoman Angela Hickey-Sorbello said western suburbs parents wanted equal rights as the rest of Melbourne. "We want equity

with other regions; \$16million went to the eastern region for a P-12 school. We're sick of waiting. The west has been waiting too long."

James Martin, a spokesman for Education Minister Martin Dixon, said an almost-completed study would "consider options" for "investing" in students with autism.

"The Coalition is committed to investing \$4million in capital works to provide P-12 specialist autism education in the western metropolitan region in this term of government." He said no decision had been made on a site.

"What, however, is guaranteed is the fact that the \$4million will be spent on capital works to provide P-12 specialist autism education in the western metropolitan area."

Mr Finn did not respond before the Weekly went to print.

LITTLE RIVER RESIDENTS UNHAPPY OVER FREIGHT HUB

Wyndham Weekly— 27th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/little-river-residents-unhappy-over-freight-hub/2239506.aspx>

Angry Little River residents are fighting plans for a transport hub they fear will result in thousands of trucks hurtling past the township daily.

More than 150 residents attended a community meeting last month to discuss the Intermodal Freight Facility proposal.

The transport hub and associated industrial park has been planned by NSW-based Builddev for a 750-hectare site on the corner of Beach and Old Melbourne roads.

Although the hub would be located in Geelong, residents of Little River, in Wyndham, fear it will devastate the amenity of the township.

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Resident Patrick O'Halloran from the Lara and Little River Rural Action Group fears the proposal could result in an additional 18,000 trucks and 40,000 cars a day being added to already under-maintained local roads. Opponents are also concerned it will create significant noise pollution and destroy native grasslands and wildlife habitat.

Geelong Council was told that while the hub would create more than 9000 jobs, it would generate 4000 vehicle movements an hour upon completion.

Mr O'Halloran said the group was angry at Geelong Council over a lack of community consultation, with a consultant's report identifying more appropriate sites.

"We object to it being built in a farming zone when there's plenty of underutilised industrial land around Lara and Geelong, where it wouldn't have as much impact on residents.

"This hub would effectively join the townships, when the long-term plans have always been to keep them separate."

Geelong Council's general manager of economic development, planning and tourism, Peter Bettess said the opportunity for an intermodal transport facility on the site was identified in the Lara Structure Plan in April. He said residents would be given the chance to have their say on the site's rezoning if Planning Minister put it to public comment.

However, Mr O'Halloran said residents were frustrated the council had failed to consult the community before the site was earmarked in the plan.

Buildev spokesman Mark Regent said the site was close to key road and rail links and Avalon Airport. "No heavy vehicles will be going through Lara or Little River.

"The site was identified by Geelong Council and the state government as a possible location for an intermodal hub and we've simply responded as an applicant."

Mr Regent said that if approved, the development would involve significant roadworks to meet the increased traffic, including road widening, new access points, traffic signals and additional lanes.

FIRE UP IN WEST

Wyndham Weekly— 27th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fired-up-in-west/2239500.aspx>

A \$105,000 artwork titled Fire within two has been installed on the Princes Freeway at the gateway to Hobsons Bay.

Fire within Two by Adrian Mauriks (pictured) has gone up beside the freeway at the Kororoit Creek Road off-ramp. Constructed from painted epoxy resin and steel, the organic forms are arranged in a 12-sided polygon or dodecagon. It will be illuminated at night.

Gippsland-based Mauriks said that like the expanding universe, Fire within Two was a "metaphor for the inner fire of us, liberating creativity". He said it was his "signature" piece and it expressed hope for Melbourne's western suburbs.

Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Brimbank, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham councils commissioned his latest installation as part of the Images of the West art project.

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WYNDHAM ADVOCATES FOR 'CRITICAL' CHANGES

Wyndham Weekly– 27th July 2011

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-advocates-for-critical-changes/2239492.aspx>

Building a new justice precinct, providing natural gas throughout Werribee South and identifying 'champions' to promote the west were among the ideas put forward in submissions on the city's advocacy strategy.

The document, Working For Our City's Needs, was initially presented as a draft to Wyndham councillors on May 23. One of its key objectives was increasing the pressure on state and federal governments to recognise the needs of Wyndham's rapidly growing population. It identifies the highest priorities for the city under five themes: traffic and transport, employment and skills, environment, infrastructure and community health, well-being and safety.

On the issue of transport, the strategy identified westerly ramps at the Duncans Road interchange, arterial road upgrades and improved bus services among the most critical requirements.

A plan to create more jobs closer to home, a development authority to drive the creation of 60,000 jobs in the Werribee Employment Precinct, and a campaign to lobby governments to decentralise their workforces were listed as priorities. Pushing for more police was also high on the agenda.

The council received 20 submissions from organisations including Deakin and Victoria universities, Werribee Mercy Hospital, City West Water and VicRoads.

Faster internet connection was identified as a key issue, particularly for Manor Lakes and Point Cook residents, while the hospital again re-stated the importance of opening the city's own critical care unit.

Key changes to the strategy, adopted by councillors on Monday, included urging governments to support the city's agribusiness sector and greater work to improve the city's image to attract and retain more workers in the health and education sectors.

LITTLE RIVER, BIG TRUCKS

Wyndham Star– 26th July 2011

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/306/story/137614.html>

Residents from one of Wyndham's often forgotten corners are up in arms about a plan that could see 18,000 trucks pass by their rural properties every day.

Land surrounding Little River, a country town with a population of around 400, has been floated as a potential location for an Intermodal Freight Terminal.

The area was listed in a feasibility study commissioned by the Department of Infrastructure and the City of Greater Geelong. Little River is divided equally between Geelong and Wyndham City Council.

It is hoped that the terminal will enhance rail freight transport activity in the Geelong region.

According to the feasibility study, around 18,000 trucks could pass through Lara and Little River if it is chosen as a suitable location.

Emma Sutcliffe from the Lara and Little River Action Group, which has been established to fight the proposal, said it would have a negative impact on the area.

"Little river is such a quiet, lovely place away from all the dirty trucks and developments found everywhere else, and this proposal risks that," Ms Sutcliffe said.

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“Some people here have two or three generations of relatives in the graveyard, and this particular development will affect our day to day lives.”

According to the study, trucks travelling to and from the terminal to Geelong could use the Princes Highway.

“Given the convenient access to Princes Highway, it is expected that all truck movements to/from Geelong and surrounding areas will travel via the Princes Highway and access the site via Beach Rd and Old Melbourne Rd,” the study said.

Ms Sutcliffe said Old Melbourne Rd would suffer under the increase in truck numbers.

“It won't be long until trucks are roaring down Old Melbourne Rd and Wyndham City Council will have to bear the cost of a Geelong Council initiative.”

FREE FOR ALL AT WERRIBEE SCHOOL

Wyndham Leader – 26th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/free-for-all-at-werribee-school/>

The clean-up job at an abandoned and heavily vandalised Werribee primary school has begun, with people helping themselves to the school's contents.

The Education Department last week hired contractors to clean up the former Glen Devon Primary School site and give any salvageable goods to local schools.

But some members of the public were seen loading cars and trailers with equipment, including tables, chairs and computer monitors.

The Golden Ave site is under investigation after Leader discovered confidential documents, including students' behavioural and medical reports and teachers' tax file declaration forms, inside open buildings earlier this month.

The Education Department has denied claims by residents that the public was encouraged to take the goods.

“With the exception of one table and one chair that was given to a member of the local community, the few salvageable goods, including items of furniture and toys, were transferred to local schools and early childhood centres,” a department spokeswoman said.

But Bill Strong, whose two children attended the school, said it was “like a free-for-all”.

“It's quite upsetting to see people just taking the furniture, loading chairs and tables into the back of their cars and people taking things back to their homes,” he said.

“There are heaps of other schools that are needy and in need of this equipment.”

Harry van Moorst, whose children also attended the school, said it was “quite disgraceful” that the Education Department left the equipment piled up in the school grounds.

“They (the Education Department) are denying any responsibility for the community,” he said.

The future of the site remains clouded until an independent review of the closure of the school is completed.

It is believed Education Department officers were met last Friday to sort through the confidential documents, now at Wyndham Park Primary School, to determine if anything had been stolen.

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COMMUNITY BID TO BEAT BAD WYNDHAM DRIVING

Wyndham Leader– 26th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/community-bid-to-beat-bad-wyndham-driving/>

Police and community members will gather this week to brainstorm ways to stamp out dangerous driving in Wyndham.

A meeting with representatives from Roadsafe, VicRoads, Mercy Hospital, Wyndham Council and schools is to be held after a spate of accidents and the release of figures that show Werribee and Hoppers Crossing drivers among the worst road offenders in the state.

Police statistics for the 2009-10 financial year showed Werribee was the No.1 area for mobile-phone offenders in Victoria with 765 chatty drivers nabbed.

It also had the third highest number of speedsters (1686) and the fifth highest number of drink-drivers (119).

Hoppers Crossing recorded the third highest number of drink-drivers with 122.

It also had the fifth highest number of mobile-phone users behind the wheel (597) and the eighth highest number of speedsters (1392).

Wyndham police Inspector William Weatherly said he was "disappointed and frustrated" some people were still not hearing the road-safety message.

"I have attended the past two fatal accidents in Wyndham and they have been horrific. The effects these accidents have on many people are everlasting," Insp Weatherly said.

"The loss of these young people was very preventable.

"On the night of our last fatal accident, there were two booze buses operating in the Wyndham municipality, yet we lost the life of a young member of our community. That is the part I still struggle to get my head around."

Cr Kim McAliney, who is on the Roadsafe Westgate Community Road Safety Committee, said the meeting would allow a co-ordinated approach.

DINNER WITH PM

Wyndham Leader– 25th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/dinner-with-pm/>

A MAYORAL charity dinner dance in Wyndham at the weekend raised an estimated \$27,000.

Relatives of Mayor John Menegazzo, Julian and Connie Menegazzo, paid \$4200 for a dinner for two with Prime Minister Julia Gillard at The Lodge, auctioned on the night.

Proceeds go to the Uniting Care Werribee Support and Housing Youth Reconnect program.

Meanwhile, Ms Gillard has responded to Liberal MP Bernie Finn's anti-carbon tax campaign, branding him Opposition Leader Tony Abbott's "puppet".

As reported in the Leaderaif last week, state MP Mr Finn had urged councils to join his West Against Carbon Tax (WACT) group, saying it would protect industry, jobs and families in the West.

He said the tax had the potential to push companies overseas or into bankruptcy with massive job losses.

Lalor federal MP Ms Gillard urged people to look beyond the Liberal Party's "scare campaign".

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She said her government's carbon pricing scheme would benefit businesses, industries and families.

"This policy will reduce carbon pollution, while also delivering financial support to the families and industries in our community," Ms Gillard said.

She said the government's data for the Lalor electorate showed nine out of 10 households would be financially helped by the carbon pricing policy.

WERRIBEE PLAZA NOD PENDING

Wyndham Leader— 24th July 2011

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/werribee-plaza-nod-pending/>

Wyndham Council is yet to give the nod for work to start on Werribee Plaza's much-anticipated expansion.

It said last month it would decide within weeks on issuing a planning permit required before works could start.

The council said last week it was continuing to work through the plans. "However, there have been no delays in the permit process, as the Leader is the only party who has requested an ultimate time frame," it said.

"All other parties, including the applicant, have been more focused on resolving detail rather than setting time frames."

The expansion plans were announced back in September 2009.

ACROSS THE REGION

WANT TO BUY A PARK? COUNCIL PLAN ANGERS LOCALS

The Age— 28th July 2011

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/want-to-buy-a-park-council-plan-angers-locals-20110727-1i0cr.html>

Dotted with wattle gums and lilly pilly trees and with a simple swing set at its heart, a large block of open space on Patterson Avenue in Keilor is a treasured park for local residents.

It's a modest patch of green where they can get fresh air, let their children play and spot the occasional rosella or cockatoo.

But those residents fear their small suburban park will soon be built on, as administrators at the City of Brimbank propose to sell the parcel of land and 13 other open spaces in the city to developers.

The council says the money from the sale of the 14 spaces will go to a \$40 million program to buy or improve "more appropriate" open space elsewhere in the city. But locals say the parks are perfectly viable now and some are informal community meeting places.

Labor's state MP for Keilor, Natalie Hutchins, whose electorate contains seven of the open spaces that could be sold, said the administrators were scratching around for ways to raise revenue in one of Melbourne's least affluent municipalities.

"I think it's just to fill the black hole in the maintenance budget that Brimbank has. They've got some financial problems and they see a quick fix to that is to sell off parks," Ms Hutchins said.

Keilor resident Virginia Tachos said her son, Jamie, has grown up playing in the park at Patterson Avenue.

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"It's very close to us, we can walk there in a few minutes, we feel safe, you can kick a football; there are neighbours all around," Ms Tachos said.

She and dozens of other Brimbank residents argue the city's administrators - who came to power after the former Brumby government sacked the Brimbank council in 2009 - have been cagey about the proposed sell-off. Many people walked out of a meeting with council staff last week, frustrated that they would only answer questions that had been emailed to them in advance.

"We want to hear what mandate they have to sell off our assets," Ms Tachos said.

The administrators posted about 700 letters last month to residents telling them of their intention to sell the parks and seeking community feedback. People have until August 8 to make written submissions about the mooted sales.

"We're going to the local community and saying, 'Can you tell use how you use the land?', then we'll be in a position to decide if it's to be sold or not," Brimbank's general manager for infrastructure and environment Paul Younis said.

"I know there's some parcels of land people actually want sold because people use them inappropriately, dump rubbish, that type of thing," he said.

Taylor's Lakes resident Graham Elkington said that if the sales went ahead home owners who had purposely bought a house near one of the parks would be worse off.

"We bought a lifestyle and we have a nice tranquil area and now they intend to sell it off," Mr Elkington said.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/want-to-buy-a-park-council-plan-angers-locals-20110727-1i0cr.html#ixzz1TRDAM4NR>

HATE-FILLED THUGS TERRORISE COMMUNITIES IN NORTHWEST SUBURBS

Title of New source— 24th July 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/hate-filled-thug-terrorise-communities-in-northwest-suburbs/story-e6frf7jo-1226100462930>

A heavily armed racist gang is terrorising communities across the northwest suburbs of Melbourne.

The brutal thugs - who call themselves Bros over Hoes or BOH - have been involved in drive-by shootings, home invasions and bloody clashes with African refugees.

Chilling photos of masked young men brandishing an arsenal of weapons including guns, machetes and a chainsaw have also been uncovered in a special investigation by the Sunday Herald Sun.

Ten frightened African families have fled the area and others, without the finances to move, remain in fear of their lives.

The Sunday Herald Sun has handed 25 photos of the Melton-based gang to Victoria Police.

It shows them brazenly posing with guns, knives, spears, a bow and arrow and a chainsaw.

There are also videos online of them taking drugs and bashing women, including stamping on one girl's head.

Supt Graham Kent said he was aware of the pictures and that many of the men were "well known" to police.

"I don't like it (the pictures) but there is not much we can do about it," Supt Kent said.

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"Many of these men are well known to us and anyone who comes to our attention we will deal with. Our understanding is that these men have a loose association.

"They are not organised criminals but unsophisticated and the pictures are of them strutting their stuff."

He said some pictures had been online for a long time and that some men were in prison, or had been punished for a range of crimes.

A community leader has also told how ethnic minorities do not walk the streets of Melton alone, refuse to go out after dark and do not use public transport in an attempt to avoid horrifying, unprovoked attacks.

"We came here thinking Australia was a lawful country where everyone is protected, but that is not the case here," said Abraham Jongroor, a father of two.

"Those who can, have moved away, but the rest of us are living here in fear of our lives.

"Racist gangs have fired guns at our houses, nearly killing a family.

"A boy they wanted dead was hit by a four-wheel-drive car, which had mounted the nature strip to get him.

"The gangs chase us with baseball bats and iron bars, physically beat us, throw rocks and eggs, smash our cars and windows of our houses and shout racist abuse, telling us to 'go home' and threatening to kill us if we stay.

"We used to go to the police all the time but nothing ever happens. Our cases are never solved and we do not get updated with what is happening."

One woman was the victim of a home invasion in which eight youths smashed all the front windows of her home, and then used a large wooden plank to break down the front door.

The young men stormed into the house and stopped only when they were confronted by a grandmother who was protectively clutching her six-month-old grandchild.

They demanded a young Sudanese boy fight them, but he was not there and they eventually left after spitting abuse at the terrified elderly woman.

Mr Jongroor said the situation had gradually improved since December when he warned police if they did not start clamping down, the African community would start fighting back.

"I gave them a list of trouble spots across Melton and Kurunjang. I said if anyone calls from these areas, they must act quickly.

"They know where we are from. If they do not protect us, we'll start protecting ourselves."

Don Nardella, MP for Melton, commissioned a report on the issues affecting the African community.

The damning 19-page document lists a catalogue of "racial intolerance".

"One respondent was forced from their new rental property by neighbours determined to stop their entry into the neighbourhood," the Bridging the Gap report states.

"The event involved police and came close to being violent. Indeed, the tension and anger displayed was so high that he claimed one neighbour shouted at the family, 'Get your f----- black a--- out of here or we will shoot you one by one'.

"Racist graffiti has also been utilised by local racist gangs.

"It is believed that two 'anti-black' youth gangs are operating in Melton. One interviewee estimated membership of these gangs to be about 60-70.

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"He claimed gang's harassed and co-ordinated bashings of Africans, often driving their membership to predetermined locations."

The Bridging the Gap report details several complaints against police.

"A perception exists by some Africans living in Melton that dealings with police are unsatisfactory," it says.

"Complaints relating to police by some interviewees included perceived failure to act or follow through on issues, targeting Africans unfairly because of race, over-reaction and overuse of force, failure to attend call-outs, ignoring concerns and failure to protect/provide a safe environment for Africans.

"One interviewee said she had been treated like 'an animal'."

Supt Kent said he had read the report, had a briefing with Mr Nardella and attended an African community forum.

"We are doing our best to understand the issues that have been raised in the Bridging the Gap report," he said.

"We are deeply concerned but I do not believe we have a history or particular issue.

"We actively monitor people of interest as best we can and we will continue to do so. Our intelligence around this issue is very strong.

"We are always concerned about weapons in the community, especially if anyone has a prohibited firearm, and I would urge anyone with information to contact us or Crime Stoppers."

Mr Nardella said he was "very disturbed" by the gang that had "an outdated racist view of the world". "It's a small minority of people and 99.9 per cent have no problem with the African community," he said.

"We are being very proactive in looking at ways to tackle this problem and these people should know that if they break the law, the police will come down hard on them and they will face the full force of the law."

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