

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012



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## BRIMBANK

### FULL SPEED AHEAD IN MELTON CUP

*Brimbank Leader*—3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/lifestyle/story/full-speed-ahead-in-melton-cup/>

Speed boaters from around Australia are set to compete in the annual Melton Gold Cup and Australian Championships this weekend.

Melton Reservoir has played host to jaw-dropping speedboat action for 15 years - and 2012 won't be any different.

Melton Runabout Speedboat Club event organiser Dennis Psaila said more than 80 competitors were registered to compete in a range of categories, including juniors, outboards, F1, 4.2, 5.2 and 6-litre competitions.

He said the highlight of the day would be the mad blown boats, which reach speeds of up to 250 km/h and should delight adrenalin junkies.

Running from 9am on Saturday and Sunday, he said between 5000 and 10,000 spectators were expected over the weekend.

"This will be an action-packed weekend full of thrills and spills and I hope everyone comes along," Mr Psaila said.

Tickets cost \$20 for adults and will be available at the gate.

Merchandise and food will also be available for purchase along with a jumping castle for the kids and a possible aerobatic air show display.

For more information, phone 0400 029 062.

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### **CITY RECOGNISES EFFORTS OF BRIMBANK GUIDES**

*Brimbank Leader—3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/city-recognises-efforts-of-guides/>

Brimbank District Girl Guides were presented with a Certificate of Recognition at Brimbank Council's Australia Day awards ceremony.

The inaugural ceremony recognised the achievements of individuals and groups in the local community.

Brimbank District Leader Carolyn Maggs said the certificate highlighted the work of all the leaders and why Girl Guides was a worthy organisation.

She said Girl Guides gave girls and young women opportunities to meet personal challenges, learn team building, leadership skills and make new friends.

"Shy children develop and learn how to get on with others," she said.

Brimbank Girl Guides are raising money to attend an international camp early next year in Tasmania.

### **KEILOR STAFF PARK THEMSELVES**

*Brimbank Leader—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/keilor-staff-park-themselves/>

Picnic-goers were turned away from Keilor's popular Brimbank Park on Australia Day as workers protested over proposed pay increases.

Parks Victoria workers locked the gates at the park until about noon last Thursday, protesting against the Baillieu Government's proposed pay rise of 2.5 per cent.

The industrial action started last month, and Australian Services Union secretary Richard Duffy said the closures would continue unless a fair deal was reached.

"We realise the general public may be unhappy with the disruptions, but we ask park users to join with union members to call on the Environment Minister Ryan Smith and demand a fair deal for Parks Victoria workers," he said.

Mr Duffy said members knew Parks Victoria management was under pressure to conform to the Government's "unfair 2.4 per cent ceiling for pay increases".

Environment Minister Ryan Smith said the industrial action was "disappointing", adding: "The unions were trying to prevent Victorians from enjoying a good day out on Australia Day.

"My office worked with Parks Victoria to make sure contingency staffing arrangements were put in place to ensure that parks were re-opened in the event of protest action."

Mr Smith said the Government was continuing to negotiate "in good faith" with staff through their bargaining representatives.

### **STRATHMORE BUNNIES BACK AND BOOMING**

*Brimbank Leader—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://brimbank-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/strathmore-bunnies-back-and-booming/>

Rabbit enthusiasts are invited to hop on down to a Strathmore rabbit club's first show in six years.

The Metro Rabbit Fanciers Club has re-launched this year after a six-year hiatus.

Based in Strathmore Heights, the non-profit organisation was established in 1993, committed to the promotion, care and exhibition of rabbits in Melbourne's north-west.

Acting secretary Christine McClintock said the club was forced to close in 2005 due to a lack of committee members.

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The re-opening comes as welcome news to Brimbank breeder Frances Micallef.

Ms Micallef, who has bred rabbits for 25 years, has more than 100 being prepped and groomed for exhibition at her St Albans home.

Her prized Polish fancy rabbit, Millennium Stoletto, took home the best in show prize at last year's Royal Melbourne Show, which Ms Micallef said is "the highest honour."

Just over a year old, Millennium Stoletto first started appearing in shows at 10 weeks old.

She took home the top prize after being selected by a judge from the United Kingdom.

Judges evaluate each rabbit with an ideal breed standard in mind.

Rabbit breeds are divided into four categories including Fancy, Lop, Fur and Rex, with desirable characteristics including size, ear carriage, and types of fur.

Shows to be held this year will include pure-bred rabbits on display, advice to the public about keeping rabbits and junior shows.

Visitors are welcome to view shows.

There is no admission charge.

The first show will be held this Saturday, February 4, from 5-9pm at the Strathmore Heights Community Hall, Boeing Rd, Strathmore Heights.

### REASONS TO CELEBRATE AUSTRALIA DAY FOR SYDENHAM FAMILY

*Brimbank Leader—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/reasons-to-celebrate-australia-day-for-sydenham-family/>

Australia Day holds special meaning for Sydenham's Fortomaris family.

"It means a lot, it means our arrival," said Stavros Fortomaris, better known as Steve.

He, his mother, Jordana ("Julie"), father and sister arrived at Melbourne's Station Pier on January 26, 1962.

The Fortomaris family had left Athens' Pireaus port on December 31, 1961, on the Patris.

Hailing from Agras, not far from the Macedonian border, the family arrived for a new life in Melbourne on the advice of relatives.

Even though he was just six years old, Steve said he remembered the trip well.

"The biggest memory ... was seeing the edge of the Great Australian Bight, the edge of the country, and just thinking, wow," he said.

"People were waving Australian flags at the docks."

Relatives met the family before they made their way to St Albans to set up their home.

"St Albans was completely different, it was just a dirt road," Steve said.

The family moved to Collingwood after a few months, before settling in Brunswick.

But Steve and his family have moved back to Brimbank and have embraced Australian life.

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"I've become Australian because I'm part of this country," he said. "I don't speak Greek, I don't have an accent.

"I learnt to speak Macedonian ... because all my family spoke it."

The family get together on Australia Day each year and have a meal to celebrate.

"It's great because we celebrate the founding of Australia," Steve said. "And for our family, arriving here has been such a prosperous thing."

### **GINIFER STATION RUBBISH PILE-UP RILES MP**

*Brimbank Weekly—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/ginifer-station-rubbish-pileup-riles-mp/2437220.aspx>

Brimbank residents are being urged to do the right thing with their trash.

The plea from Derrimut MP Telmo Languiller came after rubbish piled up again at a dumping hot spot near Ginifer railway station in St Albans.

Mr Languiller said it was shameful that residents were failing to take the right steps in disposing of waste.

"They should be ashamed of themselves. It is just a disgrace."

Mr Languiller said Brimbank Council should act quickly to clear up the rubbish before the site attracted more dumping.

Council's general manager for infrastructure and environment, Paul Younis, conceded that illegal dumping was an issue but said initiatives such as the council's rapid response unit were achieving results.

"The rapid response unit drives to the site of the reported rubbish to make an inspection and, if possible, collects the reported material on the spot. The council's

dumped rubbish unit also proactively inspects numerous hot spot locations across the municipality ..."

Mr Younis said anyone with concerns about rubbish left along the rail line near Ginifer station should contact Metro Trains.

People who witness illegal dumping can note down vehicle registration numbers and phone the council on 92494000.

Dumpers face fines up to \$907.

### **'WORSE TO COME' AFTER JOB CUTS**

*Brimbank Weekly—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/worse-to-come-after-job-cuts/2437219.aspx>

Melbourne's west should brace for more job cuts, a Liberal MP warned as Toyota announced 350 workers will be axed at Altona.

Western Metropolitan upper house MP Bernie Finn blamed the July 1 carbon tax and warned the west would be the worst hit.

O-I glass manufacturer has also announced 70 workers will go when one of its three furnaces at Spotswood closes on March 31.

State Williamstown MP Wade Noonan said it was "part of a worrying trend in Melbourne's west, particularly in the manufacturing sector".

He said Victoria was bucking the national trend.

"Victoria lost 2000 full-time jobs last month while 26,400 new full-time jobs were created across the rest of Australia."

All Toyota's cuts will be forced redundancies, covering blue and white collar workers at Hobsons Bay's biggest employer.

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More than 3300 workers assembled at the plant on January 23 in a company-wide briefing to hear Toyota Australia president Max Yasuda announce the cuts.

It is the latest blow to the car industry, which is increasingly reliant on government handouts for survival and caught with outmoded classes of cars as consumers increasingly opt for small cars and SUVs ahead of locally built, big sedans.

Despite the cuts, Toyota spokesman Glenn Campbell said the company was in for a busy year, with the introduction of the latest-generation petrol-electric Hybrid Camry in late February or March, a refreshed Aurion six-cylinder in April and a new engine plant to produce four cylinder engines due to be completed by year's end.

O-I Asia Pacific general manager Brian Slingsby said the glass furnace closure was due to deteriorating market conditions and weak consumer sentiment.

"This has led to declining food and beverage sales across the country, particularly in the beer and wine segments."

Mr Finn said: "I was predicting this last year, unfortunately: that the carbon tax would have this impact, particularly in the western suburbs."

### **CALL TO REMOVE ST ALBANS LEVEL CROSSING**

*Brimbank Weekly—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/call-to-remove-st-albans-level-crossing/2437226.aspx>

Another death on a St Albans level crossing has sparked calls for its immediate removal.

A man in his 40s was killed while crossing the tracks near St Albans railway station last Tuesday night.

Witnesses said he was attempting to beat the train when he crossed into the path of a city-bound V/Line service about 5.30pm.

The fatality, the third on the Sydenham line this month, caused major road and rail delays into the evening.

It comes in the wake of the death of student Teresa Ho, 15, in similar circumstances at Ginifer railway station last October.

St Albans Traders Association president Sebastian Agricola said the latest death showed the time for delay was over.

"This crossing and the one on Furlong Road are absolute death traps," he said.

"The government must fast-track their removal. This crossing is a disaster waiting to happen and this kind of thing will happen again."

The Main Road crossing in St Albans is number four on the government's priority removal list.

There were 26 incidents recorded at the crossing from 2007-09 in which trains narrowly missed vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians.

Kororoit MP Marlene Kairouz accused the government of ignoring the western suburbs as it removes crossings in the east.

But Liberal MP Bernie Finn said the ball was already rolling on planning for the complicated grade separation.

"Everybody is aware of the dangers of this particular crossing. I've been caught on it myself and it's scary," he said.

Mr Finn said the government was committed to beginning the project this term.

"What happened is obviously a tragedy and I want to extend my deepest condolences to the man's family. But it must also be said that the bells and lights

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and barriers are there for a good reason and people need to take note of the warnings.

"People ignoring them are putting their lives in jeopardy."

Lobby group Committee for Melbourne said that commuter safety would remain at risk until rail level crossings were removed.

### **NEW POLICE UNIT STEPS UP CRIME FIGHT**

*Brimbank Weekly—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/new-police-unit-steps-up-crime-fight/2437209.aspx>

When a shopkeeper was critically injured trying to protect her day's takings during an armed robbery in St Albans earlier this month, police vowed she would not be just another statistic.

A dedicated tasking unit rolled into operation and an arrest was made within 24 hours.

Brimbank's Detective Sergeant Glenn Schumann says the result shows the types of breakthroughs made by the newly established divisional tasking unit.

Operating since August, the unit has dedicated teams tackling burglary, armed robbery and drugs as well as a 'human source' team working on intelligence and informants.

Based at Keilor police station, the unit draws on police stationed across Sunshine and Melton.

When the armed robbery team swings into action, investigators dealing with a crime will be aware of other similar incidents in the area and form a picture that could help lead to an arrest.

Detective Sergeant Schumann conceded police faced an uphill battle making people feel safer on the streets.

But he hopes an increase in the number of visible police on the street, via special operations, will improve the public perception.

"Perception-wise, there is a gap. There are not a lot of crimes happening on the streets, but people are not comfortable."

Brimbank may not have Footscray's reputation for drug dealing, but the problem is bubbling away.

"The drug crew tackles mid-level dealers and tries to work its way up from there."

The burglary crew was formed in response to a sharp rise in break-ins.

"It used to be that you might have two people investigating 350 burglaries a month; you just can't do it," Detective Sergeant Schumann said.

"Now we have a dedicated response unit and in those six months we've seen a drop in burglaries resulting from the targeting of recidivist offenders."

Detective Sergeant Schumann expects the unit to remain permanent.

St Albans Traders Association president Sebastian Agricola said visible policing made people feel safer.

"There is nothing like those blue uniforms on the street, having people see that they're out there."

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### **SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION FAILING KIDS IN THE WEST AUTISM HIGH**

*Brimbank Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/333/story/147786.html>

Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham have the highest number of students with autism and the least amount of education options for them, a report has revealed.

Greens MP Colleen Hartland, said the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Education Provision Review, obtained under Freedom of Information, revealed that education provisions for ASD students were “failing families” in the West.

“The increasing demand for services, as well as community expectations, are not being met.” Ms Hartland said.

“The community consultation reveals the frustration of families.”

The documents show the results of a Grant Thornton study, which looks at the number of children with an ASD who are supported under the Program for Students with a Disability (PSD) in the West.

They reveal the number of students with an ASD category of the PSD in the West has grown by 15 per cent over the past four years and that the West has the second highest population of students with an ASD in Victoria, with 17 per cent.

At least 75 per cent, or 500, of these students reside in Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham and this number is expected to increase by another 220 students by 2015.

ASD students are predominantly educated at the Western Autistic School in Laverton, which the Government recently announced would become the west’s first P-12 autistic school, and students in Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham are required to travel “significant distances” to access ASD specific services, with two general specialist schools in Brimbank and one each in Wyndham and Melton.

“These LGAs do not contain a relative proportion of support services,” the report states.

In comparison, Hobsons Bay has the Western Autistic School as well as an ASD inclusion support program to cater for its nine per cent of the ASD student population.

Maribyrnong has two general specialist schools for its seven per cent and Moonee Valley also has a Western Autistic School campus, a general specialist school, inclusion support program and baseroom, which is a program auspiced by a specialist school.

Ms Hartland said the “true scale of the problem” is not revealed, as only those receiving funding under the PSD are included in the study.

Western Metropolitan MP Bernie Finn said it was “no surprise” that the need in the West was strong.

“We could easily spend \$100 million dollars and we’d still be behind the eight ball – that’s how bad things have become,” Mr Finn said.

He said the P-12 school for ASD students was not a complete answer but was a “giant step in the right direction”.

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### **AUTISM EDUCATION FACES CRISIS**

*Brimbank Weekly—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.brimbankweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/autism-education-faces-crisis/2437218.aspx>

Brimbank faces an education crisis for students with autism unless drastic steps are taken to boost training and services.

A demand and supply review by Grant Thornton for the Education Department found Brimbank and Wyndham have more than half of the west's students with autism receiving Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) support.

But few of the students have the benefit of local support services.

The review was prepared last April but was released only last week after a freedom of information request by Western Metropolitan Greens MP Colleen Hartland.

The review noted that autism was the fastest-growing disability in the state, up 21 per cent in the past four years.

Students funded for autism under the PSD more than doubled, from 1946 in 2006 to 4103 in 2010.

"The majority of students supported under the [autism] category of the PSD are in their primary years, which will place increased pressure on secondary mainstream and general specialist schools to provide for this cohort over the next two years," the report found.

Autism Angels president Dina Tamburro said the findings came as no surprise to parents in the area.

The Taylors Lakes mother said schools were not meeting the growing need for teachers and aides to be trained in supporting students with autism.

The number of students with autism enrolling in mainstream schools has rocketed, from 154 in 2006 to 429 in 2010.

Ms Tamburro said it was important for parents to have the choice of mainstream or specialist schools, but the west still has no specialist school beyond grade 3.

"We're supposed to have this prep to year 12 school in Laverton, but there's still no answer about when that will be. They're not telling us the full story."

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn said the government remained committed to the Laverton school before the next election.

But his priority is to see the integrated disability education and awareness program running at Moomba Park Primary School in Fawkner rolled out across existing schools.

Mr Finn cautioned that community expectations must be balanced against budgetary demands.

### **FOOD FOR FINES**

*Brimbank Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/333/story/147806.html>

Brimbank City Council libraries are offering to clear fines in exchange for food donations.

For the first fortnight in February residents can use non-perishable items to clear fines, while an amnesty is being offered for overdue items.

Any overdue items returned in good condition before Wednesday 15 February will automatically have the fines cleared off those items.

In the 2010-2011 financial year library customers paid \$74,129 in fines and penalties, with more than 1.7 million library items borrowed.

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Under the Food for Fines program residents can donate one non-perishable food item, with a minimum use-by-date of June 2012 to wipe \$10 or less in fines owed.

Two food items will clear them of fines between \$11 and \$20, three will clear between \$21 and up to \$30, while four items will clear fines between \$31 or more.

The food will be donated to the Uniting Care Sunshine Mission to distribute.

Chair of Brimbank Administrators Mr Peter Lewinsky said both programs were aimed at encouraging customers to come back to the libraries and start borrowing again, as well as returning as many items as possible for other customers' use.

"The Amnesty and the Food For Fines initiatives are only on for a short time so I'd like to encourage library customers to visit any Brimbank library and talk to library staff," Mr Lewinsky said.

He said the events were a great way to kick off 2012, which has been dubbed the National Year of Reading.

In 2011 the most popular fiction book borrowed from Brimbank libraries was 10th Anniversary by James Patterson and Maxine Paetro, while in non-fiction supermodel Miranda Kerr drew in readers with her book Treasure yourself: power thoughts for my generation.

But the overall most-borrowed and requested book last year was children's book Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog days by Jeff Kinney.

The Amnesty on Library Fines and Food For Fines programs will be held from Wednesday 1 February to Wednesday 15 February at all Brimbank Libraries.

### FOR THE LOVE OF SONG

*Brimbank Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/333/story/147808.html>

Chris Falks has always loved singing and now the experienced teacher wants to pass on her passion for music to other Brimbank residents.

Ms Falks, from Community Music Victoria, will facilitate a new singing group to be launched at the Cairnlea Community Hub in February.

The group was made possible through a Brimbank City Council grant and will allow community members to be mentored as singing group leaders in Neighbourhood Houses across Brimbank.

Volunteers will be given comprehensive training in community singing teaching methods, accessible repertoire and group facilitation skills, as well as running weekly singing sessions with support from a mentor.

Ms Falks, who also mentors in Delahey, said the new group was ideal for a wide range of people, including those who have sung before and those who want to try it out for the first time.

"Everyone will get something out of it," she said.

"The group is for all people; people who are curious and just want to see what it's all about."

She encourages people from all walks of life to get involved, and said this is not only a chance to learn how to sing, but also a great opportunity to develop friendships.

"I encourage everyone to rock up. People often learn how to sing better because they are with other people."

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For further information or to register for the free singing sessions call Cairnlea Community Hub on 9363 4800.

### **CALLING ALL SINGERS**

*Brimbank Leader–29<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/calling-all-singers/>

Whether it's trying to hit the high notes or just humming along to the radio, Brimbank residents who love to sing are invited to join in the chorus in Cairnlea.

A series of "come and try" singing sessions will start at the Community Hub next month.

The sessions are run by Chris Falk from Community Music Victoria. With the help of a Brimbank Council community grant, residents will be mentored as singing group leaders at Neighbourhood Houses.

Volunteers will be given training in community singing teaching methods, accessible repertoire and group leading skills. They will also run weekly singing sessions with support from their mentor.

Applicants do not need to read music, sing well or audition.

Further singing sessions will be offered at Duke Street Community House and Community West later this year.

Sessions start from February 7.

Details: 9363 4800.

### **HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**

*Brimbank Leader–28<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://brimbank-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/headed-in-the-right-direction/>

A soccer tournament aimed at showing off the skills of talented young African players living in the west has been hailed a success.

The West African Entertainment Union held a tournament in St Albans earlier this month for players aged between 15 and 25 years old.

Eight teams represented eight African nations - Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Zimbabwe - each with 22 players.

The tournament was made possible with a \$500 grant from the Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre as part of its Seeds for Growth program, which provides between \$500 and \$2500 to strengthen migrant and refugee communities' capacity to successfully settle in Australia. Three other Brimbank groups also received grants.

Union president Michael Andrews said it was the first time his group had received funding.

"We've been trying to get back on track since 2010," he said.

The group's vice-president Slyco Moorn died that year, which Mr Andrews said had been "a blow to the organisation."

"We've received letters from various African groups appreciating what we have done," Mr Andrews said.

Applications for the next round of funding open on February 1.

Details: [spectrumvic.org.au](http://spectrumvic.org.au) or 9496 0250.

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### HOBSONS BAY

#### **WILLIAMSTOWN VISION VOLUNTEER RECEIVES OAM FOR DECADES OF SERVICE**

*Hobsons Bay Leader—3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/williamstown-vision-volunteer-receives-oam-for-decades-of-service/>

Fifty years to the week since he migrated to Australia from England, Williamstown's Malcolm Daubney has received one of the country's highest honours.

He was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia, OAM, in the annual Australia Day honours for services to vision-impaired people through Vision Australia.

Mr Daubney, Vision Australia voluntary chief executive from 2004 to 2006, has also served on the boards of the Centre for Eye Research Australia, Vision 2020 Australia and Singapore Association of the Blind since the late 1970s.

He said he was "delighted and honoured" but surprised to receive the medal, as he felt the satisfaction he got from his work was honour enough.

"The overwhelming satisfaction I've had for trying to improve the quality of life of the blind and vision impaired over 40 years has been reward in itself," he said.

A father of two sons, Mr Daubney said he would not have been able to achieve so much without the unwavering support of his family.

"Without (wife) Beverley, all that volunteering wouldn't have come about," he said.

"I spent thousands and thousands of hours and (at) meetings, and without her support it wouldn't have happened."

#### **METCARDS SCRAPPED**

*Hobsons Bay Star—3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/333/story/148049.html>

As part of the transition to force commuters onto myki, Williamstown train passengers will no longer be able to buy Metcards at the station.

Starting in February, Metcard ticket vending machines will be progressively removed from some CBD locations and the Williamstown line.

Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder said the State Government last year decided to retain myki.

"The extensive review of myki last year found that it would cost more to scrap it and start again, so our job is to bring it in and work to improve the way it is rolled out," he said.

Mr Mulder told Star senior citizens had all been posted out a free myki card to make the transition easier.

"We've given a commitment now – that myki will be fully operational by the end of this year," he said.

"We have to go through a transition period.

"We want to make that as smooth as possible. "We don't want to get to October, November and all of a sudden start pulling out machines and trying to switch everyone all of a sudden.

"We need to be able to gauge how the system is coping with a gradual increase and that's why we're doing it the way we do it."

Mr Mulder admitted that new technology doesn't always run smoothly but encouraged commuters to talk to station staff when they have problems. "I've

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been using mine for some period of time now... I see the queues for the tickets ... I beep, and I'm straight through."

Transport Ticketing Authority Chief Executive Bernie Carolan said by the end of April, public transport passengers will be able to purchase and top up myki cards at around 800 retail locations across Melbourne.

"While it will take a number of weeks to set up all retailers, passengers will know their local retail outlet has converted to myki by looking for the myki poster in the window."

### **DAY ON THE BEACHES**

*Hobsons Bay Star—3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/333/story/148062.html>

Hobsons Bay was kept on its toes last week, with thousands of people flocking to its beaches and parks to make the most of Australia Day.

There was something for everyone and even the weather co-operated, with the sky staying blue throughout the day.

For many, marking the arrival of the First Fleet was spent soaking up some sun at the beach or competing in the array of events.

Altona beach hosted the Western Suburbs Triathlon Club triathlon series while Williamstown beach hosted the annual Mobil Altona Refinery One and Two kilometre Swim.

Eighty-one people became Australian Citizens at a special ceremony at the Williamstown Town Hall and Logan Reserve hosted a special Australia Day in Altona festival.

There was a market, activities for children, horse and carriage rides, jumping castles, a sand castle competition, a sausage sizzle, face painting and live music.

Altona Homestead was also open all day, serving billy tea and damper and the annual Australia Day Breakfast at the Williamstown Town Hall was a popular choice for many.

The Festival of Sails, a sailing regatta featuring more than 400 yachts, was a favourite for many with boats sailing from Williamstown to Geelong, the oldest ongoing sporting event in Victoria.

Celebrations continued over the weekend with Movies by the Bay screening Aussie classic Muriel's Wedding on Friday night and Vika and Linda performing as part of Summer Sounds on Sunday.

But for some, Australia Day was spent at a quiet backyard barbecue with family and friends or eating fish and chips in a park just enjoying the day off.

### **FESTIVAL OF SAILS DESCENDS ON WILLIAMSTOWN**

*Hobsons Bay Leader—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.wherelive.com.au/lifestyle/story/festival-of-sails-descends-on-williamstown/>

The Royal Yacht Club of Victoria was transformed into a sea of sails when more than 300 yachts descended on Williamstown for this year's Festival of Sails.

The festival kicked off with regattas on January 21 and 22 when some of Australia and New Zealand's best racing yachts competed in Port Phillip Bay.

They then set sail to Geelong on January 26 for the historic Australia Day Passage Race.

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### ON YOUR MARKS FOR ANNUAL WILLIAMSTOWN SWIM

*Maribyrnong Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/on-your-marks-for-annual-williamstown-swim/2440290.aspx>

Perfect sunny weather greeted the 350 competitors who took to the water in Williamstown last Thursday morning for the 22nd annual Australia Day Swim.

The event included 1-kilometre and 2-kilometre swims and a corporate challenge, with competitors ranging in age from 12 to over 60s, while for the juniors there were 250- and 500-metre races.

Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club spokesman Kane Treloar said the club hoped \$9000 would be raised for training, rescue equipment and educational resources to help keep the beach safe.

"It costs \$200-\$300 to train each lifesaver we put on the beach," he said.

"Some people have taken part in all 22 swims, so we're extremely grateful for their continued support."

Weekly photographer Marco De Luca was there to capture all the day's action.

### HUMBLE MALCOLM EYES AWARD

*Hobsons Bay Star—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/333/story/147967.html>

Malcolm Daubney had two reasons to celebrate last week.

He was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his work with the blind and vision impaired and last Wednesday marked 50 years since his arrival in Australia from the UK.

Malcolm may have fallen into his voluntary work back in 1970 but for more than 40 years he chose to pursue it.

The Williamstown resident started out small by helping out with fundraisers but it wasn't long before big things started to happen.

Relocating to Singapore for four years Malcolm became the Vice-President of the Singapore Association of the Blind from 1979 to 1981.

With a \$10,000 grant Malcolm helped establish a clinic in a school classroom, a clinic that has grown since and is still operational today.

"Ninety poor children were the first people the clinic saw," he said.

"For many of them, they saw for the first time."

Back in Australia Malcolm's work continued, he sat on several boards and councils and played an integral role in the establishment of the Vision Australia we know today.

And when the organisation needed a CEO he volunteered his time as honorary CEO from 2002-2004.

Malcolm said he was honoured to be receiving an OAM.

"It was a surprise – I'm obviously very honoured," he said.

"But the biggest satisfaction I get is the satisfaction in improving someone's quality of life – that is more rewarding."

The 76-year-old said he wouldn't have been able to achieve as much as he has without the support of his wife.

"Without my wife Beverly's total support I wouldn't be able to do it."

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Malcolm was also humble about his OAM.

“The thing that disturbs me about awards is there are many people that are more deserving than I, that never get recognised.”

“That saddens me.

“The people that turn up every week to make the tea, sandwiches and scones never get awards.”

Malcolm celebrated Australia Day, his award and his arrival to Australia with a barbeque with family and friends last Thursday.

### HOME GROWTH

*Hobson Bay Star—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/333/story/147964.html>

Williamstown was named seventh highest growth suburb for 2011 with an annual increase in median house prices of 5.7 per cent.

Latest figures from the Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) show Williamstown's median house price going against Melbourne's trend with median house prices falling by 5.2 per cent.

The median house price in metropolitan Melbourne was \$550,000, representing a minor increase of 1.9 per cent since September.

Williamstown's median house prices bumped up to \$905,000 representing an increase of 2.5 per cent.

Altona also saw a slight increase of 4.4 per cent bringing the median house price to \$567,500.

But Altona and Williamstown were the only two Hobsons Bay suburbs that bucked the Melbourne trend with Laverton, Newport, Altona Meadows, Altona North prices all seeing a decrease in the last quarter.

REIV CEO Enzo Raimondo said that demand in the local residential market improved marginally from the previous quarter, as did housing affordability, due to the two interest rate cuts. However, transaction numbers were significantly lower than for the same time the previous year.

Feedback from REIV Members during the December quarter was that buyers were not as willing to buy and sellers not as anxious to sell as they hold out for an improvement in conditions.

“As we head into 2012, there is no doubt that housing affordability has improved with the combination of lower house prices and two interest rate reductions.

“The REIV does not predict any significant change in the market during the March quarter as it is generally the quarter with the least activity, however we are starting to see signs that the market may have bottomed in 2011 and, if there are improvements in economic conditions, we may see an improvement in transaction activity from the second quarter of this year.”

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### **ALTONA TRADER, CLUB WIN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

*Hobsons Bay Leader—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/altona-trader-club-win-citizen-of-the-year-awards/>

Altona made a clean sweep of Hobsons Bay Council's 2012 Citizen of the Year awards, with a local resident and group winning both categories this year.

Sharon Walsh, of Altona Traders' Association, was named Citizen of the Year at an Australia Day ceremony at Williamstown Town Hall, with Altona Lions Club named Volunteer Group of the Year.

Ms Walsh, a long-time trader in Altona's Pier St, has worked on many community events over the years including the Altona Beach Market, the Australia Day festivities at Logan Reserve and the Altona Beach Festival.

"I didn't think what I do was that worthy," she said.

"But then I read the nomination and when I look back over what I've done, I thought, geez, I must have been pretty busy."

Ms Walsh said Altona was "the place to be" this summer.

"It's fantastic," she said.

"The sun is shining, the weather's good, there are lots of events."

Lions Club of Altona president Kerry Cook said the club had nominated itself for the award and was pleased its efforts were recognised.

"We've worked hard in the community for 46 years (and) we're very proud of what we do," Ms Cook said.

"Our motto is, 'we serve' and our goal is to serve the community in whatever way that takes us."

She said the Laverton soup kitchen project, which had gathered 50 clients in just two months, was something the club was particularly proud of.

And with 34 members ranging in age from 23 to 85, there was something for everyone at the Lions.

### **IT'S A PROUD DAY FOR ALL IN HOBSONS BAY**

*Hobsons Bay Leader—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/its-a-proud-day-for-all-in-hobsons-bay/>

Melbourne turned on a picture perfect day for Australia Day celebrations last week and Hobsons Bay took on a festive atmosphere as people stepped out to enjoy the many activities on offer.

The early birds were out at Williamstown beach for the 22nd annual Mobil Altona Refinery Swim which kicked off at 9am.

The bay was awash with boats, boards and buoys as swimmers competed in the corporate team relay, the Nippers race and the main 1km and 2km events.

Activities on the beach such as soccer kept spectators entertained.

Later in the morning, Hobsons Bay welcomed 81 new citizens at a citizenship ceremony at Williamstown Town Hall.

"Australia Day is such a proud occasion on our calendar and I know our newest Australians will continue to celebrate this special occasion as one with all of us," Mayor Tony Briffa said.

Altona's festivities kicked off at 10am, with huge crowds turning out to enjoy a day packed with markets, triathlons, a barbecue and traditional Australian games at Logan Reserve.

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### **WILLIAMSTOWN PEDESTRIAN CROSSING CLOSER TO FIX**

*Hobsons Bay Leader— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/dangerous-williamstown-pedestrian-crossing-closer-to-fix/>

The notorious pedestrian crossing at North Williamstown railway station may be one step closer to an upgrade.

Williamstown Labor MP Wade Noonan said he understood VicTrack had commissioned consultants to investigate a safety upgrade at the crossing and that the analysis was “nearly complete”.

Mr Noonan said he was also told by the Department of Transport that the crossing upgrade was on “a priority list” with “about a dozen other crossings”.

The crossing was on the list because of its “risk and incident history” - the most recent incident on September 28 when a cyclist was hit by a train.

But Mr Noonan said it was not clear how many of the crossing upgrades would be funded before the end of the financial year.

He understood there were mixed views at the department as to whether the existing underpass would need to go to accommodate automatic safety gates.

“From my point of view I think we are getting very close to getting some substantial improvements at the crossing, but if the department uses common sense they will consult with the council and the local community before making any announcements,” Mr Noonan said.

Council works and assets director Phillip McDonald said the council had not yet received a response from the committee looking into the station.

“We would expect to receive a copy of their report in the coming weeks,” Mr McDonald said.

### **ALTONA RESIDENT AWARDED OAM**

*Hobsons Bay Leader— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/altona-resident-awarded-oam/>

Decades of serving the community through local government, the State Emergency Service and the Scouts have seen Leigh Hardinge receive a prestigious Australia Day honour.

Mr Hardinge, an Altona resident and former Hobsons Bay mayor, was awarded the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia last Thursday.

“I felt privileged and honoured,” Mr Hardinge said.

“But I also need to share it with a lot of other people who have worked with me over the years... (and) also my darling wife, Merridee, and the family for supporting me.”

It was on Australia Day 30 years ago, when severe storms battered Altona, that Mr Hardinge’s long association with the SES was sparked.

“It was Australia Day, 1982, where two people were unfortunately killed and about 20 others needed medical attention,” Mr Hardinge recalled.

“There was absolutely nothing here (in Altona) and the former Altona Council had to pull in SES units from other municipalities.”

He helped to establish the Altona SES unit in 1983 and was unit controller for 16 years.

Still actively involved with the SES, along with his wife and eldest daughter, Mr Hardinge had to cut short his family’s Christmas celebrations last year to help deal with Melbourne’s wild weather.

“We’d just finished (lunch), luckily,” he said.

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"It's like everything else, you take on the responsibility, you give a commitment and you've got to stick to that commitment," he said.

Mr Hardinge said his love for community work stemmed from some advice his father gave him.

"My father used to say to me 'son, always strive to leave a place a little bit better than you found it' and that's one of the things I've always tried to keep," he said.

Scouting has also been a big part Mr Hardinge's life since he started as a Cub in 1953.

He helped set up the Gellibrand and Werribee Plains Scout districts.

He chairs the Kariwara Scout District Association and believes Scouting is still relevant to today's youth.

"It gives them the opportunity to obtain skills where they can be independent but also be good citizens to their community into the future and I think that's probably its strongest gain."

A Hobsons Bay councillor from 2002 to 2008, Mr Hardinge was mayor in 2006-07.

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## MARIBRYNONG

### **FAMILY LAW FACTS FOR ALL IN FOOTSCRAY**

*Maribyrnong Leader—3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/family-law-facts-for-all-in-footscray/>

Vietnamese residents will now have better access to information about family law.

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) worked with the Footscray Community Legal Centre and the local Vietnamese community to produce Vietnamese language fact sheets about the most common family law concerns including divorce, parenting arrangements, dividing property and family violence.

VLA manager of community legal education Monica Ferrari said providing translated information about families and the law would reach more people and help them make important decisions.

VLA community legal education co-ordinator Allyson Hose said VLA had been told by community legal centres and groups that they needed to provide people with information in their language so they would feel comfortable with it.

"It helps people feel that they're getting all the right information and they can take the information away and read in private and absorb the information," she said.

"We hope that they will be helpful for people."

The fact sheets are also available in Chinese and Arabic languages.

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### CREATIVE TYPES WITH REAL DAY JOBS

*Maribyrnong Weekly*—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/creative-types-with-real-day-jobs/2441896.aspx>

By day, they're fixing your fridge, tallying your tax or teaching your kids their times tables. By night they slip into a parallel universe. Not mad about money or focused on fame, they are pursuing a passion they cannot resist. Benjamin Millar meets the 'hidden artists' of the western suburbs.

Suit or slippers? Each morning as she awakes, Kylie Trounson must think. Is she donning a suit, grabbing her case and setting off to her Sunshine law firm? Or sliding on some slippers and entering the mind of a character she is teasing out for her latest play?

The juggling act of a rewarding law career and blooming stage and screen success may at first glance appear unusual, but Trounson wouldn't have it any other way.

"I could just be working in a café, but working in law it keeps me on my toes. There's a challenge that means I'm not just doing my hours to earn my money, it's a legitimate career within itself that I find interesting, hard and fulfilling."

Trounson spends three days a week working as a personal injury lawyer with Slater & Gordon. Remaining days are devoted to writing plays along with occasional short film and television acting roles. She recently made her feature film lead debut as Alice in the cerebral thriller *Exit*.

"Acting-wise I'll just do what I think is interesting, keeping in mind the schedule I need to work around. Writing is a lot easier as it's a long-form thing I can do over time."

Few Australian artists can make a living directly from their work. Many will seek work in a related creative field. For some this is a happy balance yet for others it's a road to creative ruin.

Graffiti got its hooks into Avondale Heights artist Guill Bastias in 1987.

He spent his teens walking down train lines, "teaching myself about the rules of graffiti".

Tagging as 'Malice', Bastias was never taken by character-based work, considering graffiti a stylised calligraphy.

"I really got into typography. For me it's all about designing the lettering, the colouring, the whole work as a piece."

Knowing graffiti could never provide a secure income, Bastias spent years channelling his creative talents into his day job in graphic arts and computer game design.

Always gnawing away was the thought he wasn't being true to himself.

"Working as a graphic artist you are selling your talent, using your talents for someone else's vision. Doing so much art for other people started killing my passion, my ideas for drawings."

He decided to cut free and take a job at the Nine West warehouse in Footscray. He swears the decision has given him a new lease on life.

"It means I'm not coming home mentally exhausted every day," says Bastias. "I have the time and energy to work on new graffiti ideas — you don't drain yourself creatively."

Ascot Vale singer Bec Cole perfectly understands Bastias's dilemma. Her colourful career included an early stint as an art therapist in the disability sector.

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The role married her musical passion and desire to help others, a match seemingly made in heaven.

"I realised music was a good communication tool for people who weren't verbal," says Cole. "It was an amazing experience, but I just put so much of myself into it that it was like there was nothing left."

She left the role but never lost her interest in community work. She has emerged a few twists and turns later as the arts officer with Wyndham Council.

She's still engaging in creative thinking and supporting others, but also ensures her music has space to breathe.

Her lifelong passion has been rekindled by singing with experimental electronic duo Zero Flag, which she describes as "like Portishead's 'difficult' third album, only more difficult".

"For me, making sounds, making music and singing is my escape. It's the space I go into to process the world. Throughout all the other changes it has been the constant in my life."

Trounson is equally animated; whether discussing the rewards of working with her legal clients or the ideas bouncing around her mind for upcoming plays.

The spheres initially appear worlds apart, yet in many ways they align seamlessly. Her acting and creative experience help her think on her feet and her creativity is fed by the eye-opening life stories her clients tell.

"The types of people you interact with in a normal kind of life can be so narrow," says Trounson. "I love working in Sunshine, the people you meet and the life you see."

While embracing the two worlds, Trounson finds other people see a strange match.

"It definitely does weird people out," she admits. "I sometimes feel like I have two secret identities – I often don't tell people in the creative world that I'm a lawyer."

Cole also loves her job and has finally found a perfect balance. She sees a creative spirit awakening in the west and is excited to help develop that on the one hand and be a part of the wave on the other.

"People in the area are looking for cultural experiences in their own neighbourhoods and it's great to be part of building that. I see what's already bubbling away and it's an exciting time."

Working in the factory, Bastias may not gain the immediate artistic rewards he once reaped as a graphic artist, but harbours no regrets about his decision to leave that world behind to concentrate on his own art.

"The greater art community still doesn't fully understand what graffiti is," he says. "In a way that puts my graffiti work strictly into the realm of art in that I end up doing what I do for my own pleasure. For me that is what art is about – it's not about pleasing other people, it's about pushing myself."

By not putting all their eggs in one basket, all three artists feel a freedom to throw creative caution to the wind.

Cole says she has no interest in Zero Flag being part of any 'sound' or popular musical movement.

The act has nevertheless been attracting attention through gigs at iconic Footscray venue The Dancing Dog Café and at the recent Big West festival.

The next step is time in the studio to record some more tracks.

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"I don't harbour any pretence of fame – in fact I'm quite against the idea. Not being locked into ideas of commercial success is liberating."

Trounson has a busy and eclectic year ahead. She has no fewer than four projects on the boil, including works for Red Stitch in Melbourne and Belvoir Street in Sydney.

These works cover everything from UFO sightings and transgender cabaret artists to Labor Party leaders and IVF conception.

Occasionally flirting with dreams of writing plays in New York or doing big films, she'll just as often wonder what life might hold as a barrister or in a different area of law.

"It might sound a bit unambitious, but I'd actually just like to continue with both for now and see what comes. It's just nice to be in a place where I'm feeling happy in both worlds."

Meanwhile Bastias is forever drawing new ideas in his sketchbook and hunting out new walls for his work.

Driving his passion is the desire to "take graffiti to the next level" via designs or techniques that have never been seen before.

One thing he knows with certainty is that he couldn't give it up if he tried.

"I will probably die with a spray can in my hand."



### **YARRAVILLE BAND AMPED TO PLAY LANEWAY FESTIVAL**

*Maribyrnong Leader*—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/lifestyle/story/yarraville-band-amped-to-play-laneway-festival/>

Yarraville band Drunk Mums is amped about playing at the St Jerome's Laneway Festival this Saturday.

Following their win at The Very West, Drunk Mums earned a spot in the festival's line-up where they will take to the stage alongside M83, The Drums, Feist, SBTRKT and The Horrors.

The band also won a mentorship at the Footscray Community Arts Centre and an invitation to perform at Big Sound in Brisbane in September.

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Guitarist and singer Jake Doyle said he was excited to be performing at the Laneway festival.

“It’s like Christmas again,” he said.

Tambourine player Isaac Forsyth said people could expect to see “something out of the ordinary” when they performed.

He described their music as an “amalgamation” of every different type of garage music from the ‘70s through to now.

Guitarist and singer Dean Whitby said the band, together for over two years, would put on a fun show on Saturday at the Footscray Community Arts Centre on Moreland St.

### **POP IN TO NEW YARRAVILLE PARK**

*Maribyrnong Leader—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/pop-in-to-new-yarraville-park/>

A new park has quite literally “popped up” in the middle of Yarraville.

Maribyrnong Council has transformed a section of Ballarat St into a public space, installing large planters, synthetic turf, tables, chairs and umbrellas.

Mayor John Cumming said the park would provide a different perspective on Yarraville village life.

“This is a unique concept and one that will allow residents and visitors alike to enjoy some open space right in the heart of Yarraville village,” he said.

“Anyone can drop by for a coffee, read a book, have lunch with friends or enjoy an ice-cream in the sun before their movie starts.”

Traders, community groups and locals will be given the opportunity to hold events and art installations in the pop-up park to participate in the activation of the space.

It will be available until April, when it will disappear as quickly as it was installed.

### **WORKS START ON WESTERN SUBURBS BIKE PATH UPGRADE**

*Maribyrnong Leader—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/works-start-on-bike-path-upgrade/>

Upgrade works have started on a western suburbs bicycle and pedestrian path used by 1000 cyclists each morning.

A total of \$475,000 will be spent on the Footscray Rd shared path from Docklands Drive to the Maribyrnong River in Footscray.

The money will be spent on:

- widening and reconstructing parts of the existing path under CityLink;
- line marking with pedestrian and bicycle logos;
- installing pedestrian fencing;
- installing new pedestrian operated signals on the westbound service road; and,
- improved street lighting and vegetation trimming.

The path provides vital link for cyclists commuting to the CBD from Melbourne’s western suburbs.

During the morning peak from 7am and 9am, up to 1000 cyclists use the route to commute to and from central Melbourne.

But the high traffic volume has also seen a number of accidents.

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In the five years to December 30 2009, there were 13 crashes involving cyclists on Footscray Rd.

Roads Minister Terry Mulder said the upgrade would improve safety for all road users.

“Upgrading the shared path on Footscray Rd will minimise impacts on other road users and provide increased safety, capacity and priority for cyclists and pedestrians,” Mr Mulder said.

Member for Northern Metropolitan Region Craig Ondarchie said the works would make the path more safe for recreational cyclists.

“This is a particularly busy area for commuter cyclists during the week and family cyclists on weekends,” Mr Ondarchie.

“This upgrade will provide improved safety for those riding to the city for work and encourage greater recreational cycling for inner city residents and families.

Western Metropolitan Region Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury said today’s announcement would be warmly welcomed by cyclists throughout the Footscray, Seddon, Yarraville and Tottenham region.

“Combined with our commitment for the Westgate Punt, this is further evidence that the Coalition Government is delivering for the cyclists of the West,” Mr Elsbury said.

VicRoads plans to complete the Footscray Road bike path works in the first half of this year.

### **'ARMPIT' SKINNER RESERVE NO LONGER ON THE NOSE**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/armpit-skinner-reserve-no-longer-on-the-nose/2440299.aspx>

Braybrook's Skinner Reserve was once described as a "shaved armpit of a ground".

It was a place where VFL and AFL teams would go toe to toe in preseason interclub and intraclub matches against a backdrop of scant facilities.

It was where Western Bulldogs' fans had their first look at a young rookie by the name of Chris Grant.

Fast forward to 2012: the goalposts have gone and the Western Bulldogs no longer play their preseason matches there.

Even the code has changed. For a time national powerhouse Sunshine George Cross Soccer Club called the ground home. It played its first game there against a South Melbourne team led by Hungarian legend Ferenc Puskas.

It's now used by Maribyrnong Greens and Maribyrnong United soccer clubs.

The reserve itself is undergoing a gradual transformation, and last week the state government contributed \$650,000 for redevelopment of the pavilion, while community groups raised \$100,000.

Stage one of the \$1.9million project includes the pavilion works, extension of the community centre with player and umpires' change rooms, toilets, and a multipurpose space for up to 150 people, with a kitchen and kiosk.

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### **TAKE-TWO: NICHOLSON STREET MALL DEFECTS TO BE FIXED**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/taketwo-nicholson-street-mall-defects-to-be-fixed/2440297.aspx>

Contractors responsible for the \$4.5 million redevelopment of Footscray's Nicholson Street Mall could be made to repave parts of it.

Maribyrnong Council is taking action against a contractor responsible for some of the redevelopment works.

Council CEO Vince Haining confirmed in a statement that it was taking action, but he did not detail what form the action would take.

"Council is aware of some minor defects that have occurred within the Nicholson Mall paving works and is seeking rectification of the defects from the relevant contractor," Mr Haining said.

Traders have long complained about poor quality of materials and workmanship, from cracked and stained tiles to discolouring of the yellow rubber surface that zigzags through the mall.

The council committed to a makeover of the mall, built in 1975, and \$4.5million was contributed by the council and the state government.

Mayor John Cumming said the quality of work was unacceptable and it would be fixed, even if the council had to pay for it. "Just because we're in the western suburbs we're not about to accept that standard of work."

Footscray Traders Association president Grant Miles said Nicholson Street Mall had been an "obscene waste of taxpayers' money, for which no one was accountable". "If I were to have my backyard landscaped and this was the result, I would ask for my money back."

He said the lengthy construction period had hurt trade.

"We were told the long-term benefits would greatly outweigh short-term inconvenience.

"To now witness the decrepit state of the mall, with broken tiles, cracks and potholes is extremely disappointing. The most important lesson is making sure the same mistakes are not repeated again, which is avoidable with proper consultation and reviews put in place at various stages throughout construction. That has been the case in the recent upgrade of Leeds Street, and the great result there speaks for itself."

### **LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL SAVOURS AROMAS OF SUCCESS**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/lunar-new-year-festival-savours-aromas-of-success/2440296.aspx>

From grilled beef wrapped in vine leaves to dancing dragons, central Footscray was filled with the sights, sounds and smells of Vietnamese culture on Sunday.

After a break last year following a dispute between organisers the Footscray Asian Business Association and Maribyrnong Council, the East Meets West Lunar New Year Festival was back.

Traders cooked and sold traditional street food while dancers, martial arts displays and musical performances by a police band and a Japanese blues duo entertained the crowd.

Organisers estimate about 50,000 people attended the 21st edition of the Tet festival from 10am to 10pm despite the temperature reaching 35degrees in the afternoon.

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Event manager Hai Pham said it was the best festival to date in terms of safety measures, culture and community involvement. Mayor John Cumming praised the festival and said the council was working with FABA to secure its long-term future in Footscray.

"I think it was the best-run Tet festival we've had. That comment was made to me by a number of people. It's exactly the sort of festival we need and want in Footscray."

Acting Senior Sergeant Gerard Clanchy of Footscray police said the day went smoothly despite the heat and no issues were reported.

"We had very good support from the operational response unit and the transit police in providing personnel to assist in providing a visible presence."

### **PETER SOMERVILLE: SPRUIKER OF THE MARIBYRNONG**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/peter-somerville-spruiker-of-the-maribyrnong/2440293.aspx?storypage=0>

'What would it take to drag Peter Somerville away from his beloved Maribyrnong River?

"Death," the affable man behind Blackbird River Cruises says with a grin. "I could never see myself leaving."

It was history that brought Mr Somerville to the river, and he has plied the waters of Melbourne's "other" river for 32 years, becoming a staunch advocate for protection and recognition of its environmental and historic heritage.

"We wanted to do something to recognise the first explorers on the river. The first was Charles Grimes [in 1803], but John Batman and John Fawkner seem to get all the credit."

Mr Somerville, 76, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in this year's Australia Day honours for his services to commercial passenger boating and conservation.

Elaine Brogan, secretary of the Western Metropolitan Group of Historical Societies and a committee member of the Living Museum of the West, nominated Mr Somerville for the honour.

In her nomination letter she wrote: "Peter's love of the river and its environment has given people the opportunity to visit this beautiful, historical part of the west ... He is a proud man from humble beginnings. He is a friend everyone would want to have; I'm proud he's mine".

Over the years, Mr Somerville's passion for the environment and history, particularly of the west, has inspired him to join the Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley, the Keilor Historical Society, the Colonial Day Re-enactment Society, and Friends of Sandy and the Australian Lighthouse.

He was a founding member of the Living Museum of the West and campaigned to save Pipemakers Park from development.

The hairs on the back of his neck stand up when he hears people disparaging the west. "People are pretty quick in putting down the west. My answer to them is that if it wasn't for the west there'd be no war effort in the Second World War," he says.

Mr Somerville says his work with Blackbird Cruises and community groups go hand in hand.

"Doing the river cruise with the boat I can keep my eye on what is going on along the tidal reach of the river from Canning Street [in Avondale Heights] down to the

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docks. It's like having a pair of eyes out there for conservation. It's been worth every effort," he says.

The once heavily polluted river that served as little more than a drain for the industries that once flourished along its banks has come back to life and is in fine health compared to when Mr Somerville's cruises began.

"You couldn't see anything under the water [back then]. We were fishing dead sheep out of the way." On his cruises, he explains the rich history of the west, from the former ordnance factories to the ship building industry that flourished on the banks of the Maribyrnong.

He wants to see what's left of it preserved.

"It'd be wonderful if we could save more buildings along the river [in the Defence site]. We could showcase that history and it'd be a real drawcard for walkers and cyclists, and schoolchildren could learn about the military history of the area."

### **CITY OF MARIBYRNONG'S STARS HONOURED**

*Maribyrnong Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/peter-somerville-spruiker-of-the-maribyrnong/2440293.aspx>

The dedication of 12 inspiring individuals and groups, who work tirelessly to improve community life, was recognised as part of the Australia Day celebrations in Footscray.

Braybrook resident Vivienne Conn was presented with the City's top honour, the 2012 citizen of the year award.

The recipients of the 2012 civic awards include:

Citizen of the year — Vivienne Conn

Ms Conn volunteers for more than 100 hours each month as the coordinator of the Braybrook and Maidstone Neighbourhood House. She is also the chairwoman of the Braybrook, Maidstone and Sunshine Public Tenants Association and coordinates a special weekly fruit and vegetable distribution for 24 families.

Young citizen of the year - Elfred Mathiang

Elfred has volunteered as a basketball coach for the Maribyrnong Youth Services Sports and Leadership Program since 2010. He teaches not only basketball skills but also discipline and commitment. Elfred is also the club treasurer and the under-16s coach of the Sudanese basketball club, the Longhorns.

Special commendation - Jack Sheppard

Mr Sheppard has worked with young indigenous people and introduced them to a range of art mediums. He was chosen to take part in the 2011 Indigenous Learning Program and the Emerging Cultural Leaders Program at the Footscray Community Arts Centre. He has also worked with young people from indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to develop new skills.

Emerging community leaders group - Freeza Maribyrnong

In the past year, the Freeza Maribyrnong volunteer committee has hosted 12 events attended by more than 2800 people. The events have showcased battle of the bands performances, hip-hop, acoustic, hardcore, punk and DJs. The group has also supported White Ribbon Day events and provided musical entertainment at the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre.

Special commendation - Emerging Cultural Leaders Program

The program has helped to mentor and develop the skills of people from indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Footscray

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Community Arts Centre program has provided participants with an opportunity to work with leading artists to develop their skills to take back to their communities.

Mayoral award - Maribyrnong Makers Group Inc

The group's six volunteers have helped to increase Melbourne's appreciation and recognition of the craft and design community in the City of Maribyrnong. The group hosts three makers markets and supports the fund-raising activities of schools, kindergartens, service groups and charities.

Emerging community leader individual - Chelsea Hatherall

Ms Hatherall has volunteered with a range of organisations, including the Phoenix Youth Centre, Western Edge Youth Arts, Footscray Community Arts Centre and the Australian Academy of Design. More broadly, her efforts have helped to support White Ribbon Day, Amnesty International, Ovarian Cancer Research, the Cancer Council, Eat So They Can, the Laverton Community Kitchen, the UnderGround Cinema and the Victorian Flood Appeal.

Community service group award - Yarraville Trugo Club

In the past year, the club's volunteers have shared their passion for trugo and helped pass on the history and rules of the game to people of many ages, backgrounds and organisations. As the oldest club in operation, it will celebrate its 75th birthday this year.

Special commendation - Young at Heart Planned Activity Group

The group provides a weekly social outlet for older people in Maribyrnong. From poetry and stories to quizzes, music, physical activities and delicious meals, each activity encourages personal growth, enhances quality of life and promotes independence.

Community service individual award - Senior Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan

As the Abbot at the Quang Minh Temple, Senior Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan's achievements and commitments are vast. He is a spiritual adviser, a principal of the Van Lang Vietnamese Language School and vice-president of the World Fellowship of Buddhists. He is also a member of council's Emergency Relief Committee and a dedicated advocate of the council's Clean and Green Committee.

Special commendation - Aida Napoli

Aida's cooking skills have helped to shape the success of the Maidstone Community Centre's annual Harmony Feast and free community dinners. Aida is also a regular volunteer for Gateway Social Support Options and the Braybrook and Maidstone Neighbourhood House.

Mayoral award - Don Nancarrow

Mr Nancarrow is dedicated to supporting the development of driving skills of young people. He has been a volunteer with the Wheels in the West program since 2009 and has helped to promote road safety to young people and newly arrived communities. He also volunteers as a teacher two days a week to teach young people marquetry in woodwork classes.

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### WHEN FIREWORKS TRIGGER MEMORIES OF CONFLICT

*Maribyrnong Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/when-fireworks-trigger-memories-of-conflict/2440292.aspx>

The year Kurdish refugee and now Footscray resident Rali Hamasalih was born, Iraqi forces under Saddam Hussein killed more than 10,000 people in a poison-gas attack on the town of Halabja.

Kurdish people like Mr Hamasalih would live in fear of such mass attacks, since recognised as an act of genocide, and ongoing persecution.

"Most people outside Kurdistan don't know these things happened," he said. "Under Saddam, we didn't have any rights as Kurds. We couldn't even say we were Kurds."

After the US-led invasion in 2003, Kurdistan was freed of the grip of Saddam's Iraq and became the semi-autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Yet attacks on Kurdish soil still occur as sectarian violence and attacks by Turkish forces continue to claim lives.

"I remember some fighting, but there weren't any bomb blasts before the Iraq war. There was fighting and killing and shooting, but there weren't any bombs," Mr Hamasalih said.

"My friend was killed in one of the bomb blasts. I missed it by two minutes. I said goodbye to him and had just turned a corner when it went off. I went back and I saw my friend and many people struggling for their life or dead."

Mr Hamasalih, 23, came to Australia in late 2008. Life here can't compare to Iraq, but he has a burning desire to help others understand the mental toll war exacts on a person.

With the help of a grant from the Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, Mr Hamasalih, who was a lighting technician and cameraman in his home city of Sulaymaniyah, will use film and sound to try to convey to people the horrific memories that refugees of conflict carry with them.

Beginning on Australia Day, the normally joyous sound of fireworks will take on the symbolism of war, the explosions triggering a young man's memories of bombs, automatic weapons and death.

"We have to live with these memories every day. Sometimes people don't believe what we've been through, that I've seen real fighting and real car bombs," Mr Hamasalih said. "I want people to understand my experiences and people with similar experiences."

Once this project is complete, he wants to tell more stories about Kurdish suffering, such as the gas attack on Halabja.

### DRUNK MUMS COMING TO A LANEWAY NEAR YOU

*Maribyrnong Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/drunk-mums-coming-to-a-laneway-near-you/2440298.aspx>

The musical landscape has changed, perhaps forever, for fledgling indie rock band Drunk Mums.

Founding members Jake Doyle and Dean Whitby recall being so broke last year that they spent an hour trying to sneak into the St Jerome's Laneway Festival in Footscray, eventually giving up and sitting next to a fence to listen to the music.

Just 12 months on, the Drunk Mums are playing at the festival after winning The Very West 2011 competition last December, which hands local unsigned bands a Willy Wonka-esque ticket on the line-up.

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"As corny as it sounds, it's like a dream come true," says frontman Doyle, 24, who sings vocals and plays guitar in the band.

"We're hoping to take this opportunity and just ride it and keep it rolling. Because if we don't keep it rolling noone's gonna notice us."

Originally from Cairns, the Drunk Mums moved to Melbourne three years ago with their brand of breezy '70s-inspired garage/surf rock.

Unashamedly dismissive of their home town, they cut their teeth at the iconic Johnos Blues Bar, now defunct, where their name was born from drunk old ladies in the crowd grabbing their cheeks and trying to seduce them. "There's nothing going on in Cairns. There was nothing going on in Cairns and there's still nothing going on in Cairns," Doyle says about its music scene. "Melbourne's way too good. Just the amount of things happening here. Every night just blows our minds. It's ridiculous."

Down south, the band's five members ended up in Yarraville, three of them living at a house in Francis Street, which has turned into a hub for friends and musicians, the remaining two not more than a block away.

"This is the Francis Street house, which is becoming a bit of a legend on its own, but it was the Draper Street house up there," says 22-year-old Whitby. "We'd have parties Friday, Saturday nights; it was a network of all our friends."

Whitby says the band is playing as much as possible and finally starting to get serious about its music. "We've been doing it for years, living the lifestyle of a musician without sort of doing it properly," he says when asked about living the dream. "We've always wanted to and we've always played music and I think we always just bummed around too much."

Doyle hopes the Laneway spot will kickstart the band's rise, with surf-inspired music soaring in recent years. "It's skyrocketing and this is definitely our time to make shit happen."

The St Jerome's Laneway Festival is on Saturday at the Footscray Community Arts Centre. Drunk Mums are on stage from 11.50am-12.20pm.

Details: [lanewayfestival.com.au](http://lanewayfestival.com.au)

### **ANGER AROUND MARIBYRNONG FOOTBRIDGE IS RISING**

*Maribyrnong Leader—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/anger-around-maribyrnong-footbridge-is-rising/>

Maribyrnong residents have jumped to the defence of the Rising Sun footbridge.

The bridge, connecting people from West Footscray to Seddon, Kingsville and Yarraville, is earmarked for demolition by Regional Rail Link's Footscray-Deer Park Alliance.

Leader's January 17 article ("Don't break the link") sparked a strong online reaction.

Support to retain the bridge continued even after the alliance said it would be "consolidated" into the new station ("Rising Sun to go but community won't lose its footing", January 24).

Daniel Szych commented: "The new station will have a ramp, but will be hundreds of metres west of the existing station.

"Please think again - let's not make yet another mistake at Mt Mistake," he said.

Another reader, cyclist Bill Fish, also supported the retention of the bridge.

"The alternatives north of the tracks are terrible," he said.

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“The removal of the overpass would sever the last, sub-standard link to the Principal Bike Network.”

Seddon resident Shannon Lea sent a submission to the Regional Rail Link Authority late last year after being informed of the proposed removal.

In her letter, Ms Lea said the demolition of the bridge would affect pedestrian access of Seddon children attending Footscray Primary School, decrease pedestrian activity and disconnect Seddon and West Footscray from the community.

Not all readers agreed.

“It’s only a few hundred metres along, so I don’t know what the big deal is,” reader Andrew said.

Meanwhile, the Footscray-Deer Park Alliance will be constructing its office on Ashley St, Tottenham, between February and March. Work on Nicholson St to West Footscray train station will be carried out on Saturday nights during February.

The alliance has warned there may be noise from machinery.

### **MARIBYRNONG MAN AWARDED OAM FOR VOLUNTEER WORK**

*Maribyrnong Leader—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/maribyrnong-man-awarded-oam-for-volunteer-work/>

More than four decades of volunteering has earned Maribyrnong’s Peter Somerville a top Australia Day honour, leaving him lost for words.

Mr Somerville received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the annual Australia Day honours for his countless hours of volunteer work.

The former Trans Australia Airlines aircraft sheet metal worker started volunteering in the 1960s with the Keilor Historical Society and has since been

involved with the Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley, the Living Museum of the West, Friends of Sandy and the Australian Lighthouse.

Mr Somerville said receiving the award was “like a big electric shock”.

The 76-year-old said it was “a great recognition”.

“You don’t expect these awards when you go out volunteering,” he said.

“You’re going out there to do community stuff that you’re interested in.”

Asked to tally the number of hours he put into volunteering over one month, he said it was in the hundreds if he included making phone calls, attending meetings, and monitoring websites and newsletters.

He said “seeing things achieved and getting a buzz out of it and having the opportunity to create with other people” made volunteering worthwhile.

Having volunteered on many projects, Mr Somerville said some of his most memorable achievements included leading the push to get the Johnson St Bridge over the Yarra renamed to Charles Grimes - one of the first Europeans to travel up the Maribyrnong River - and being named Maribyrnong Council’s Citizen of the Year in 2010.

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### THONG TIME

*Maribyrnong Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/333/story/147890.html>

On your marks, get set, throw! Yarraville Club put their twist on Australia Day celebrations by hosting a thong throwing competition in their car park. A total 18 contestants – men, women and children – lined up to chuck their thongs. The throws weren't measured but were judged by markers. Some throws went out onto Stephen St. Andy McLean took out the biggest throw and scored a slab of beer for his efforts

### SPROUTS HEALTH WARNING

*Maribyrnong Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/333/story/147887.html>

Health authorities in Victoria are advising consumers not to eat two commonly used types of salad sprouts which have tested positive to high levels of the bacteria E. coli.

Acting Chief Health Officer Dr Rosemary Lester said consumers should not eat Gippsland Sprouts Co Salad Sprouts – Alfalfa, Onion and Mung Beans; and Flowerdale Farm Alfalfa Salad Sprouts - Alfalfa, Onion and Mung Beans, both with a use by date of 23 January.

Dr Lester said both alfalfa products were sold in 120g plastic clam shape packets.

“Company testing of these products found high levels of E. coli and consumers should dispose of them,” Dr Lester said.

“These products were for sale at small grocery stores and green grocers from 5 January and the Footscray Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable market.”

Dr Lester said the company was conducting a recall of these products through Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

Dr Lester said common symptoms of E. coli infection are stomach cramps and pain, vomiting and diarrhoea.

“Anyone who has consumed these products and exhibits any of these symptoms should consult a doctor,” Dr Lester said.

### NOISE LINKED TO RAIL WORK

*Maribyrnong Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/333/story/147876.html>

Footscray residents have been warned of noise and traffic disruptions ahead of more Regional Rail Link work.

In letters sent out to affected residents, the Regional Rail Link Authority has advised of upcoming works to take place along the Footscray – Deer Park section of the line over coming months.

Residents can expect work to take place between Monday and Saturday from 7am to 6pm, with weekend night works also taking place on Saturday nights between now and through February from 10pm to 6.30am.

The RRL Authority has advised that there may be some noise associated with the use of light machinery and vehicles, including reversing beepers and a small generator.

Meanwhile, the Footscray – Deer Park project team will soon be calling Tottenham home, and is setting up a project office on the west side of Ashley St, opposite Rupert St.

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The project office will include on-site parking for about 300 of the management team, project managers and senior engineers that will work from that area.

The team will upgrade the informal car park on Rupert St to provide an extra 100 parking spaces for Tottenham train station.

A section of the car park will be closed for one day in February as part of the project.

The RRL Authority will host a community barbecue in coming weeks to give residents an opportunity to meet key members of the team and find out more about the works in Tottenham.

State Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the Government welcomed feedback from the residents.

“We try our hardest as a Government, and VicRoads do as well, to minimise the impact... but there’s always a trade-off on these types of projects and sometimes you can’t keep everyone happy,” Mr Mulder said.

“But you still should be prepared to talk to them.”

The Footscray Senior Citizens Centre and acquired homes along Buckley St have already been knocked down as part of Regional Rail Link works.

Old storefronts along Irving St have also been demolished to accommodate the new rail line.

### **CAPTAIN AWARDED OAM**

#### *Maribyrnong Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/333/story/147872.html>

Blackbird Cruises captain and tireless volunteer Peter Somerville can now add three letters after his name after receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia.

Mr Somerville, who “saw the light and crossed the river” and moved to Footscray in the mid-1980s, has run the Blackbird Cruises along the Maribyrnong River for over 30 years with son Warwick.

The now-Seddon resident is a staunch campaigner for preserving the vegetation and wildlife surrounding the stretch.

Mr Somerville is a member of the Friends of Sandy group and was a founding member and driving force behind the development of the Living Museum of the West.

He has also been involved as an honorary waterways keeper, a contributor in Parks Victoria’s Two River Project, and a member of the Moonee Valley Integrated Waterways Advisory Committee.

In 2010 Mr Somerville was Maribyrnong’s Citizen of the Year.

Mr Somerville said he was honoured to make the Australia Day Honours List.

“I’ve lost the expression that I often use, where I say ‘nobody takes any notice of me, because I’ve got no initials behind my name’. But now, I have OAM, so I won’t be able to say that anymore,” he laughed.

“It’s like something that’s come out of the blue, because when you do all this volunteer stuff, you’re not looking for awards or any payment of any description.

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"You do it because you want to do it and you want to see the environment change so when you depart this world, you've left something that's good for the others to follow on."

### **NOISE LINKED TO RAIL WORK**

*Maribyrnong Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/333/story/147875.html>

Footscray residents have been warned of noise and traffic disruptions ahead of more Regional Rail Link work.

In letters sent out to affected residents, the Regional Rail Link Authority has advised of upcoming works to take place along the Footscray – Deer Park section of the line over coming months.

Residents can expect work to take place between Monday and Saturday from 7am to 6pm, with weekend night works also taking place on Saturday nights between now and through February from 10pm to 6.30am.

The RRL Authority has advised that there may be some noise associated with the use of light machinery and vehicles, including reversing beepers and a small generator.

Meanwhile, the Footscray – Deer Park project team will soon be calling Tottenham home, and is setting up a project office on the west side of Ashley St, opposite Rupert St.

The project office will include on-site parking for about 300 of the management team, project managers and senior engineers that will work from that area.

The team will upgrade the informal car park on Rupert St to provide an extra 100 parking spaces for Tottenham train station.

A section of the car park will be closed for one day in February as part of the project.

The RRL Authority will host a community barbecue in coming weeks to give residents an opportunity to meet key members of the team and find out more about the works in Tottenham.

State Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the Government welcomed feedback from the residents.

"We try our hardest as a Government, and VicRoads do as well, to minimise the impact... but there's always a trade-off on these types of projects and sometimes you can't keep everyone happy," Mr Mulder said.

"But you still should be prepared to talk to them."

The Footscray Senior Citizens Centre and acquired homes along Buckley St have already been knocked down as part of Regional Rail Link works.

Old storefronts along Irving St have also been demolished to accommodate the new rail line.

### **UNITS IN HOT DEMAND**

*Maribyrnong Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/333/story/147885.html>

Maribyrnong units and apartments are in hot demand, according to the latest real estate data.

The Real Estate Institute of Victoria's quarterly median figures for December 2011 showed an 8.2 per cent increase in sales of units and apartments across the municipality, compared to a 0.8 per cent reduction in the Maribyrnong median house price.

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The median prices per suburb reflected the shift in demand, with a 44 per cent increase in Footscray units to \$449,000 and a 16 per cent increase in West Footscray units to \$429,500.

On the flip side, Braybrook's house median dropped 19 per cent to \$380,000 and the Footscray house median went down by 0.8 per cent to \$501,000.

Meanwhile, Maidstone enjoyed a 15 per cent boost in its median price, while West Footscray was named one of the top 10 growth suburbs for the December quarter.

There were no sales figures for Tottenham.

REIV CEO Enzo Raimondo said that demand in the local residential market had improved marginally from the previous quarter, as well as housing affordability because of the two most recent interest rate cuts.

Despite this, the number of homes selling was significantly lower than for the same time the previous year.

"REIV data confirmed that, overall, the median house price has not changed over the last six months; the key factors driving the current market are a combination of lower consumer confidence, a slowing state economy and an increase in supply," Mr Raimondo said.

Feedback from REIV Members during the December quarter was that buyers are not as willing to buy and sellers are not as anxious to sell as they hold out for an improvement in conditions.

"The REIV does not predict any significant change in the market during the March quarter as it is generally the quarter with the least activity, however we are starting to see signs that the market may have bottomed in 2011 and, if there are

improvements in economic conditions, we may see an improvement in transaction activity from the second quarter of this year," Mr Raimondo said.

### **SLOW STARTERS**

#### *Maribyrnong Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/333/story/147870.html>

Only two of Maribyrnong City Council's seven current councillors have stated their intention to contest this year's election.

Mayor John Cumming and Michael Clarke will hit the campaign trail this year for a chance at re-election when this year's municipal elections are held on 27 October.

Cr Cumming told Star last week that he had unfinished business.

"I've got half a dozen projects which I'm hoping to complete, primarily, the second sports centre and swimming pool... either in the centre of Footscray or at the Bradmill site," he said.

"That's the kind of thing you need to continue on council to achieve, because it may not be a priority for another person in council.

"In the past three years we've had improved lighting, the cameras in the CBD, and we have improved relationships with the traders – I think they're all things I've contributed to."

If elected, this will be Cr Cumming's second consecutive term with the Maribyrnong City Council.

Cr Cumming also served a term under the Footscray City Council in the 1990s, but he is adamant he will not chase a third consecutive term.

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"If I run a second term, I'm not going a third, under any circumstances. There are a few things that are still unfinished, but if you can't get them done in eight years, then you really should handball it," he said.

Meanwhile, Cr Clarke has no qualms about chasing a third term, and is looking forward to the challenge of winning another election under the new municipal boundaries.

The Victorian Electoral Commission will change the ward boundaries from seven single-councillor wards to seven councillors representing three wards after this year's election.

"It's going to be hard yards, because the area's now almost three times as large, so you have to get out and let people know who you are," Cr Clarke said.

Sheoak Ward councillor Martin Zakharov, who controversially boycotted last year's mayoral election, is in two minds about contesting.

"I'm going through family issues and also, the ALP hasn't made a final decision on whether they'll be endorsing candidates, so that's part of it a little bit," he said.

"(My first term) has been good mostly, I've enjoyed it. It's a fair bit of work, it's certainly poorly paid, but I feel like it's useful, what I've been doing."

Fellow councillor Sel Sanli was likewise undecided.

"It's a bit too early for me to commit to a decision at the moment," he told Star.

Councillors Sarah Carter, Dina Lynch and Catherine Cumming did not return Star's calls last week.

### **CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

#### *Maribyrnong Star—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/footscray-yarraville/333/story/147877.html>

The cream of Maribyrnong's crop was celebrated on Australia Day at the 2012 Civic Awards, with tireless volunteer Vivienne Conn named the municipality's Citizen of the Year.

Ms Conn, 58, has been volunteering for the past 12 years after an illness put her off work, and now volunteers more than 100 hours a month as the co-ordinator for the Braybrook Maidstone Neighbourhood House.

She is also the chairperson of the Braybrook, Maidstone and Sunshine Public Tenants Association and coordinates a special weekly fruit and vegetable distribution for 24 local families.

The Maidstone resident was overwhelmed by the accolade.

"There's so many volunteers in the City of Maribyrnong that do such a great job," Ms Conn said.

"It was wonderful just to be nominated.

"Volunteering gives me so much joy, it's about giving back to our community, and my time at the Braybrook Maidstone Neighbourhood House gives me the opportunity to do that."

Mayor John Cumming said Ms Conn was a natural choice.

"Vivienne is an inspiration, she is a proud Braybrook resident and worthy recipient of our City's greatest accolade," Cr Cumming said.

"I congratulate and thank Vivienne and all of our award winners and nominees this year for their contributions."

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Ms Conn was one of 12 inspiring individuals and groups who work tirelessly to improve community life who received awards on the day.

Other award winners included Young Citizen of the Year Alfred Mathiang, Freeza Maribyrnong, the Maribyrnong Makers Group, the Yarraville Trugo Club and Chelsea Hatherall from the Footscray Community Arts Centre.

"Australia Day is the best time to reflect on what makes our country unique and give thanks to those people who help create a connected and thriving community," Cr Cumming said.

Meanwhile, 18 residents became dinky-di Aussies during a citizenship ceremony held on the day.

### **TRUCKS' NIGHT MOVES ANSWER TO MARIBYRNONG'S POLLUTION PUZZLE**

*Maribyrnong Leader—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/trucks-night-moves-answer-to-maribyrnongs-pollution-puzzle/>

Large trucks that travel at night are the answer to Maribyrnong's pollution problems, an expert says.

Thousands of trucks roll through the city's streets daily, polluting the air.

Victorian Freight and Logistics council chief executive Rose Elphick said steps could be taken to alleviate the pressure of trucks on streets well before money was spent on major infrastructure or the Truck Action Plan.

Ms Elphick said higher productivity trucks carrying bigger loads would result in fewer trucks on the streets.

She said they would operate at night under a permit.

For this option to get the green light, Ms Elphick said VicRoads, the State Government and Maribyrnong Council would need to approve it and issue the necessary permits.

She said the Truck Action Plan was a priority in the council's freight and logistics freight futures document, which is published every two years.

In the meantime, she said the inner west would continue to be affected by "through traffic" from industrial areas in Maribyrnong.

Williamstown Labor MP Wade Noonan said while the growth of the Port of Melbourne was positive for the economy and generated jobs, it was not positive without infrastructure investment to take trucks out of residential streets.

He said Maribyrnong streets were never designed for the volume of truck traffic that travels on them.

"The Government at this stage hasn't been prepared to invest ... to ensure those trucks are to be redirected away from the streets," Mr Noonan said.

But Ms Elphick said a container origin and destination study completed showed that Port of Melbourne was "less than 4 per cent of the problem".

VicRoads director for vehicle management and safety Don Hogben said it had completed a two-year high-productivity freight trial.

"These larger trucks can only be used on approved routes which are suitable for these vehicles," Mr Hogben said.

Mr Hogben said that after consulting the Victorian Transport Association, Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council and the Victorian Freight and Logistics Council, VicRoads was considering options for the future operation of high-productivity freight vehicles in consultation with municipalities such as Maribyrnong.

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### **LOUISE'S 17,000KM JOURNEY TO BECOME A NEW AUSSIE IN MARIBYRNONG**

*Maribyrnong Leader—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/louises-17-000km-journey-to-be-a-new-aussie-in-marybyrnong/>

New Australian citizen Louise Fisher travelled about 17,000km to follow her heart.

Having fallen in love with an Australian man she met in London, British-born Ms Fisher followed him to Melbourne five years ago and the pair have set up life together in West Footscray.

Alongside 17 other new Aussies, Ms Fisher took the oath to become an Australian citizen at Maribyrnong Council's citizenship ceremony on Australia Day.

"I feel it's my home here now," she said.

While becoming an Australian citizen meant a lot to Ms Fisher, she said it was also important to her boyfriend that she became an Australian citizen.

"It's the culmination of a journey my boyfriend and I have taken," she said.

Ms Fisher said she had already seen a great deal of Australia, having travelled to every state and territory, except the ACT.

She said she loved the Australian wildlife and nature, as well as the Melbourne lifestyle.

With only a few distant relatives in Western Australia, Ms Fisher said working as a fashion buyer allowed her to travel home often to visit loved ones.

### **MARIBYRNONG COUNCIL SALUTES ITS RESIDENTS**

*Maribyrnong Leader— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/maribyrnong-council-salutes-its-residents/>

Braybrook resident Vivienne Conn was awarded the city's top honour at Maribyrnong Council's Australia Day civic awards.

The Braybrook and Maidstone Neighbourhood House co-ordinator was named the 2012 Citizen of the Year.

Ms Conn spends more than 100 hours each month in the co-ordinator's role.

She also chairs Braybrook, Maidstone and Sunshine Public Tenants Association and co-ordinates a weekly fruit and vegetable distribution for 24 families in need.

Ms Conn said she was overwhelmed by the honour.

"There are so many people in this community that give so much that I just thought there's always someone so much better," Ms Conn said.

Ms Conn began volunteering 12 years ago after beating a brain tumour to get back into the workforce and to share what she had learnt from her illness.

She said she now dedicated her time to help people with disabilities or mental illness get the support they needed so they could volunteer.

Meanwhile, Senior Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan, the abbot at the Quang Minh Temple, was awarded the Community Service Volunteer Award.

Abbot Thich said he was honoured to receive the award.

"My whole life is volunteer work," he said.

"I think my community will be very happy about this."

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Young Citizen of the Year was awarded to Elfred Mathiang, a basketball coach for the Maribyrnong Youth Services Sports and Leadership Program.

Chelsea Hatherall was named Emerging Community Leader of the Year for her work with a range of local organisations including the Phoenix Youth Centre, Western Edge Youth Arts, Footscray Community Arts Centre and the Australian Academy of Design.

FReeZA Maribyrnong won the Emerging Community Leaders Group Award and The Yarraville Trugo Club took out the Community Service Group Award.

Eighteen Maribyrnong residents became Australians at the council's citizenship ceremony.

Mayor John Cumming was joined by Western Metropolitan state Liberal MP Bernie Finn, Western Metropolitan state Labor MP Martin Pakula, Volunteer West general manager Emma Sharp, former Footscray mayor Fred Madden and local police officers to congratulate the new citizens.

### **POLICE JOIN JOBS PUSH**

*Maribyrnong Leader – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://maribyrnong-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/police-join-jobs-push/>

Footscray police are helping people from African backgrounds find employment.

In August last year community liaison officer Sen-Constable Ash Dixit formed the Maribyrnong African Youth Advancement Committee.

Its main goal is to help people from African backgrounds procure a job or apprenticeship.

Sen-Constable Dixit said the committee helped people acquire training and put them in touch with prospective employers.

Two people have found jobs and two others have been shortlisted for apprenticeships through the committee.

Although it is a youth committee, Sen-Constable Dixit said it would help people of all ages in need of employment.

He said the program would help build a more positive relationship and trust between police and the African community.

"I think we are making progress but it will take time ... it's not going to happen overnight," he said.

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## MELTON

### NEW BACCHUS MARSH ROAD TAKES TOLL ON ROOS

*Melton Leader—3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012*

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/new-bacchus-marsh-road-takes-toll-on-roos/>

Signs have been put up warning drivers about the dangers of kangaroos crossing Anthony's Cutting.

But with reports of kangaroos being run down on the realigned highway, one motorist says a reduction in speed limits and kangaroo-proof fencing are needed.

Justin Carter, who travels the highway from Bacchus Marsh to Melton, said kangaroos were being slaughtered every day.

"One day I counted no fewer than seven fresh kangaroo kills in the middle of the freeway," he said.

Mr Carter said a work colleague also reported hitting a kangaroo and almost ran off the road and down a 30-metre embankment.

"Since the construction of Anthony's Cutting, there has been a sharp increase in the number of vehicle accidents involving these animals," Mr Carter said.

"What is needed at the very least is lit kangaroo warning signs, possibly flashing lights, a drop in the speed limit or kangaroo-proof fencing."

BADGAR Wildlife Rescue Centre head Donna Zabinkas supported the call.

She said the centre received three to four calls a week to help injured kangaroos on the Western Highway.

"Even with the old Anthony's Cutting, we received quite a few calls about injured or dead wildlife, so it's not surprising the new freeway saw a higher level of activity to begin with," she said,

"While any death is unacceptable, things have quietened down to what we would expect now."

VicRoads western projects acting director Mark Koliba said five animals had been removed from the highway in the past few weeks.

But there had been a decrease in animal deaths since the new freeway alignment opened in June last year, compared with the old Western Highway route.

"In the first six months in 2011, records show 22 kangaroos removed from the old Western Highway, compared with 10 on the new freeway between July and December 2011."

He said VicRoads was investigating kangaroo movements in the area to consider other practical measures that could be taken, including fencing.

### MELTON'S BUSY ROAD TO GET A MAKEOVER

*Melton Leader—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/meltons-busy-road-to-get-a-makeover/>

Work is under way to duplicate one of Melton's busiest thoroughfares - Centenary Ave.

The \$3.8 million duplication from Coburns Rd to Palmerston St involves building a new east-bound carriageway and incorporating part of the existing service road.

There will also be a partial reconstruction and asphalt overlay of the west-bound carriageway.

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The extensive work includes service relocations, underground drainage, kerb and channel works, vehicle crossing and footpath works, bicycle and parking lanes.

It will also involved lighting, signs, line-marking and landscaping.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the duplication would improve traffic flow and safety in the area.

"It is required to address increasing traffic volumes on Centenary Ave, road safety and the issue of congestion around Mowbray College, particularly at school times," he said.

"Council is committed to delivering high quality infrastructure to cater for our fast-growing municipality."

The existing road is a single, two-way carriageway on the south side of the road reserve and a service road on the north side.

Construction is expected to be completed by June.

During the construction stage, road users have been advised to allow for extra travel time, particularly at school pick-up and drop-off times.

### **ALLEGED ILLEGAL SLAUGHTERHOUSE FOUND**

*The Sydney Morning Herald—2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/alleged-illegal-slaughterhouse-found-20120202-1qufd.html>

A man will face court after the discovery of illegally kept wildlife and slaughtered goats at a Melbourne property.

Police raided a Rockbank property on Wednesday along with representatives from the RSPCA, Melton Shire Council, the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the regulator responsible for meat safety, PrimeSafe.

"The other agencies attended the residential address in relation to information about possible wildlife and animal cruelty offences, as well as the alleged production and selling of meat," a police spokeswoman said on Thursday.

Advertisement: Story continues below

An RSPCA spokesman said 22 dogs of varying breeds were found and about 100 goats, one of which had to be euthanased on humane grounds.

PrimeSafe chief executive Brian Casey said two slaughtered goat carcasses were found and about 20 kilograms of sheep or goat meat was discovered in a freezer.

There was no evidence dogs had been slaughtered, he said.

In Victoria it is illegal to slaughter non-consumable animals such as dogs, horses, cats and donkeys.

"You can slaughter consumable animals (such as goats) but they must be slaughtered at a licensed abattoir," Mr Casey told AAP.

There was an exemption in place to enable farmers to slaughter edible animals on their properties for their own consumption, but the Rockbank property was not a farm, he said.

More than 45 animals were seized by DSE including 30 frogs, four central bearded dragons, a children's python and a crucifix toad, which were being kept illegally.

DSE compliance officer Sam Moore said the man could provide no guarantee he had obtained the wildlife legally.

"This is an important reminder, to anyone that keeps wildlife, that it is a privilege to keep and trade wildlife and there are certain responsibilities that come with this," she said in a statement.

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"A wildlife licence is required by anyone keeping and trading protected wildlife in Victoria."

A police spokeswoman said guns, a refrigeration truck and what is believed to be cannabis was also found.

A 41-year-old Rockbank man will face court at a later date.

### **ROCKBANK RAID: DOGS, GOATS BELIEVED SLAUGHTERED**

*Melton Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/rockbank-raid-dogs-goats-believed-slaughtered/2440861.aspx>

Authorities raided a Rockbank property Wednesday morning where they suspect animals, including dogs and goats, were illegally slaughtered and sold for human consumption.

A 26-member joint taskforce including Caroline Springs police, Police Search and Rescue, Melton detectives, RSPCA, the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Prime Safe and Melton Council arrived at the property about 7.30am.

They found dozens of animals including goats, chickens, dogs, reptiles, horses, pigs, and an emu.

They also found a number of goat carcasses hanging on butcher's hooks and butchering equipment including saws, blow torches and knives.

Police seized around \$200,000 of stolen machinery and cars from the premises, illegal firearms, ammunition and cannabis plants from a mobile home on the property.

The raid was organised after police received a statement from a witness who said they saw a dog being butchered and a blowtorch used to remove its hair before the carcass was hung on a hook.

It was also alleged a man who lives on the large property sold dog meat to around 100 customers for between \$100-350.

The witness said the dogs were found through public notices that advertised the animals as free to a good home.

In a separate statement, another witness claimed they saw a man receive a bag of pork at the property. They said the man admitted to buying the meat on a weekly basis at a "cheap price".

No dog meat was found on the premises.

PrimeSafe, the Statutory Authority regulating the safety of meat, poultry and seafood across Victoria, scoured the property and inspected carcasses and equipment and seized and destroyed quantities of meat from a freezer.

PrimeSafe is yet to confirm the origin of the meat, but Chief Executive Brian Casey said the information obtained by its operations and licensing managers during the inspection is subject to further investigation.

The RSPCA checked around 30 dogs on the property, mostly caged and some chained to trees.

Several notices will be issued under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986.

An RSPCA spokeswoman said while most of the dogs scored "good body condition" ratings, poor animal husbandry practices existed.

"Dirty cages, with a huge build of faeces and urine, with dirty water or lack of [was witnessed]." the spokeswoman said.

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A dog that was too tall for its cramped cage was moved to a larger shed following RSPCA advice.

An emaciated goat was put down and taken away for post mortem.

The RSPCA spokeswoman said other goats were in poor condition and lameness was a concern due to possible foot rot, abscesses or overgrown hooves.

Two restricted breed dogs were also found on the property.

A Melton Council spokesman said the owner has been issued with notices of declaration for the restricted breed dogs.

A 41-year-old Rockbank man has been charged and bailed on criminal offences in relation to the raid.

### **HOW TO CUT TOLL IN MELTON**

*Melton Leader—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://melton-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/how-to-cut-toll-in-melton/>

Safe driving initiatives and scare tactic advertising are not working with young drivers in Melton shire, it has been claimed.

Instead, youths are being asked to offer their ideas to help save peers from death and injury on the road.

Djerriwarrh Employment and Education Services, Melton Council and Melton police are working to reduce the number of people aged 16-25 in serious crashes.

Victoria Police statistics show four people aged 15 to 26 died in road accidents on Melton shire roads last year.

Through the Melton Youth Road Safety Ambassador project, 16 to 25-year-olds will be given the chance to talk to peers about road safety ideas and safe driving habits.

DEES road safety project officer Chantelle Epere said government initiatives and scare tactics were not working.

"The message isn't getting through, so we are looking for the best way to get information across - and what better way than through peer-to-peer contact," she said.

"It's about encouraging ideas and getting young people together where there is no pressure and no wrong or right."

She said many young people had been affected directly or indirectly by road trauma.

"This project strongly urges those young individuals to get involved to discover ways that we can reduce the road toll," she said.

"It is a real opportunity for youth and the communities' future leaders to make a real difference."

### **MP FEARS JOB CUTS IN MELTON**

*Melton Weekly—31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.meltonweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/mp-fears-job-cuts-in-melton/2438223.aspx>

Melbourne's west should brace for more job cuts, a Labor MP has warned after Toyota announced 350 workers will be axed at Altona.

Melton MP Don Nardella said there was no guarantee that 120 workers at Melton's MHG Plastics, which is a key provider to Toyota's Altona factory, would have job security into the future.

"There are now hundreds more local workers and their families facing an uncertain future," he said.

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Mr Nardella said that after 14 months in office, Premier Ted Baillieu had failed to deliver on his election commitment to deliver a jobs plan for families.

"While there are national and international factors affecting the economy, Mr Baillieu has a special responsibility to support local jobs and investment," he said.

"The state's manufacturing industry is the largest employer of Victorians ... more than 20,000 jobs have already been lost from the industry."

MHG Plastics refused to comment on the possible effect of Toyota's decision.

The company, which produces painted and chrome-plated parts for major manufacturers, consolidated its NSW and Victorian plants into a new factory at Melton in 1996.

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn blamed Toyota's decision on the impending July 1 carbon tax and warned the west would be the worst hit.

"I was predicting this last year, unfortunately: that the carbon tax would have this impact, particularly in the western suburbs."

Glass manufacturer O-I has also announced 70 workers will go when one of its three furnaces at Spotswood closes on March 31.

Williamstown MP Wade Noonan said it was "part of a worrying trend in Melbourne's west, particularly in the manufacturing sector".

Toyota's announcement is the latest blow to the car industry, which is increasingly reliant on government handouts for survival and caught with outmoded classes of cars as consumers increasingly opt for small cars and SUVs ahead of locally built, big sedans.

Hours before last week's announcement, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union was still in the dark over job-loss plans.

Toyota had reneged on its commitment in the enterprise bargaining agreement signed last month to consult with the union ahead of any job cuts, said Ian Jones, federal secretary of the union's vehicle building division.

### **TEACH FOR AUSTRALIA IN MELTON**

*Melton Leader—29<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/teach-for-australia-in-melton/>

Melton Secondary College is among 18 Victorian schools taking part in the Teach for Australia program.

In the program, high-performing university graduates combine study with a two-year teaching placement.

Western Victoria Liberal MP Simon Ramsay said 28 university graduates would take up their posts in the program from term 1.

Teach for Australia attracts and trains university graduates and prepares them for a career in teaching.

The program aims to tackle educational disadvantage.

People taking part will receive mentoring support throughout their two-year placement.

### **EQUIPMENT UPGRADE WILL CUT LANDFILL WASTE AT MELTON**

*Melton Leader—28<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/equipment-upgrade-will-cut-landfill-waste-at-melton/>

An equipment upgrade at Melton's Recycling Facility will mean less waste goes to landfill.

Hydraulic tipping hoppers have been installed at the residual waste disposal area.

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Residual waste is household waste items that cannot be composted or recycled.

The new tipping equipment, designed and manufactured by Rossco Engineering in Bacchus Marsh, has made a significant difference to the area.

Melton Mayor Justin Mammarella said the upgrade had made the disposal process safer and more efficient for users.

“Council is committed to providing best practice services and facilities for residents and this upgrade has made it safer and easier for residents to dispose of those waste items that cannot be composted or recycled,” he said.

Another benefit of the new equipment is the ability to extract greater quantities of recyclable materials that otherwise would go to landfill.

The Melton Recycling Facility is located on Ferris Rd, Melton. Throughout daylight saving, it is open Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm, and on weekends and public holidays from 8.30am to 5pm.

For more information, phone the Melton Recycling Centre on 9743 1983 during opening hours or contact council’s customer service unit on 9747 7200.

### **CARING MELTON RESPONSE TO CALL OF THE WILD**

*Melton Leader—28<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/caring-melton-response-to-call-of-the-wild/>

Several new pieces of real estate have come on to the market in Arnolds Creek.

Nine nesting boxes painted by students from Coburn Primary School were placed in trees beside the creek last Tuesday.

Built for the Melton Environment Group by the Melton Men’s Shed, the boxes will provide a haven for an array of wildlife.

Group president Daryl Akers said parrots, corellas, galahs, ducks, kookaburras, owls and possums would all benefit from the boxes.

He said the boxes had been beautifully painted by students, who displayed both imagination and artistic talent in their designs.

“They have been painted in environmental themes including brightly coloured flowers, birds, dragonflies and other insects, possums, lizards and other wildlife,” he said.

He said the nesting boxes had been placed in trees at least 4m from the ground.

“The distinctively painted boxes will remain brilliantly coloured tributes to the students who painted them so imaginatively,” Mr Akers said. “These will not only be homes for wildlife but examples of community art.”

### **A BIT OF HUFF 'N' PUFF GETS MELTON SHIRE KIDS ACTIVATED FOR THE YEAR AHEAD**

*Melton Leader—27<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://melton-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/a-bit-of-huff-n-puff-gets-melton-shire-kids-activated-for-the-year-ahead/>

Hundreds of Melton Shire kids kicked off the new year by getting active during the school holidays.

Melton Council’s popular Huff ‘N’ Puff program and multi-sports days were combined for the first time this year to become Get Activated.

Twilight and morning events were held throughout the shire, including at Diggers Rest, Rockbank, Caroline Springs and Melton.

Activities included a variety of preschool and primary school sporting elements such as AFL, cricket, tennis, hockey, soccer, lawn bowls, and dancing.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

## 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012



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## MOONEE VALLEY

### **BUDDY IS A REAL LIFESAVER**

*Moonee Valley Leader— 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://moonee-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/buddy-is-a-real-lifesaver-1/>

It was the niche market that Laura DiMartino would rather not have stumbled across.

But a major family health scare was the impetus for a product that could save vital seconds in an emergency.

Ms DiMartino is the creator of Allergy Buddy, a rapid-access medical panel that stores epi-pens - the medication administered to people who suffer an anaphylactic attack, a potentially fatal reaction to insect bites and some medications and foods.

Laura and husband Paul DiMartino came up with Allergy Buddy after their youngest daughter, Carla, then three, was diagnosed as having anaphylaxis.

Anaphylactics must always carry an epi-pen, also known as an adrenaline auto-injector, in case of an attack.

Like other families, the DiMartinos bought a lunchbox in which to store Carla's epi-pen.

It sat in the first-aid cabinet of the kindergarten kitchen, along with seven others containing students' epi-pens.

"It didn't make sense that lifesaving medication for a severe allergic reaction would be stored inside a lunchbox," Ms DiMartino said.

The Allergy Buddy panel hangs on a wall and includes space for a photo ID card that includes information about the person's allergies and the expiry date of the medication.

Allergy Buddy is in 160 Victorian schools and the DiMartinos hope to roll it out around Australia.

Ms DiMartino said she hoped to expand the product line this year.

### **FILLIP**

*Moonee Valley Star— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/in-moonee-valley-its-hip-to-hiphop/2436049.aspx>

Research into medical disorders is galloping ahead at Sunshine Hospital thanks to the outstanding success of Flemington's Western Health race day.

Last month's Victoria Racing Club event raised more than \$100,000 for the new Australian Institute for Musculoskeletal Science at the Western Centre for Health Research and Education.

Institute director Professor Peter Ebeling said the national reference centre for research into bone, muscle and joint disorders would use the money to support programs that fight these conditions through exercise and proper diet.

Western Health chief executive Kathryn Cook said the service played a pivotal role in disease prevention as the west's population grew.

The fundraising easily surpassed last year's record total of \$68,000.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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### RECOGNITION

*Moonee Valley Star*— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/in-moonee-valley-its-hip-to-hiphop/2436049.aspx>

Maribyrnong MP Bill Shorten is encouraging people in the electorate to show their support for indigenous recognition in the Australian constitution.

The federal government has received an expert panel's report on the recognition of indigenous people in the constitution and will consider the recommendations.

Mr Shorten said residents could show their support by joining a You Me Unity campaign at [youmeunity.org.au](http://youmeunity.org.au).

### IN MOONEE VALLEY, IT'S HIP TO HIP-HOP

*Moonee Valley Star*— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.mooneevalleyweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/in-moonee-valley-its-hip-to-hiphop/2436049.aspx>

Moonee Valley Council is calling out to dance crews across Melbourne and Victoria to enter this year's Step Off competition.

Step Off is an urban dance crew competition held each year in April as part of the council's National Youth Week celebrations.

Last year, more than 400 dancers competed in the competition and were watched by more than 1600 people.

Dance crews can register online at [youth.mvcc.vic.gov.au](http://youth.mvcc.vic.gov.au) now and categories include school, junior, varsity and open divisions.

Registrations close at 5pm on March 1 or when all places have been filled.

Step Off is on April 14 at the Dallas Brooks Centre, 300 Albert Street, East Melbourne. Tickets go on sale March 19.

It's an all-ages drug-, alcohol- and smoke-free event. For more information, visit [youth.mvcc.vic.gov.au](http://youth.mvcc.vic.gov.au).

### CLUB OPENS GATES FOR BLACK CAVIAR TO ATONE FOR MOONEE VALLEY DEBACLE

*Sydney Morning Herald*— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.smh.com.au/sport/horseracing/club-opens-gates-for-black-caviar-to-atone-for-moonee-valley-debacle-20120130-1qpx5.html>

In what is sure to be a winning public relations move, racing aficionados and sports fans will be able to see champion mare Black Caviar free of charge when the world's best sprinter attempts to add to her 17-run unbeaten streak in next Saturday week's Orr Stakes at Caulfield.

In an extraordinary move by the Melbourne Racing Club, patrons will be admitted free on a day that was viewed as one of the club's prime opportunities to achieve significant turnover following last Friday night's debacle at Moonee Valley.

In a public relations disaster for the sport, Moonee Valley catered for just 8000 people to see Black Caviar, however long queues and angry patrons forced the Moonee Valley Racing Club to open the gates for free.

It's understood the blunder, despite a crowd of more than 15000 streaming into Moonee Valley, cost the struggling club more than \$250,000 in revenue and years of goodwill with many patrons claiming they would never return to a race meeting again.

With an hour's wait for food and drink, and racebooks sold out before the first race, punters vented their frustration on sports talkback stations that night. The move by the Melbourne Racing Club is seen by insiders as an apology to those alienated by Friday's events.

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The state Racing Minister, Denis Napthine, said he applauded the move by the club to make Black Caviar's next appearance at Caulfield free.

"I hope all of Victoria turns out to see this wonderful mare. I hope they come from everywhere in the state and so they can say to their grandchildren I saw the great Black Caviar. It's going to be racing history and you will see it for nothing," he said.

The club's chief executive, Alasdair Robertson, confirmed yesterday it would grant free admission to encourage the public to see the world's best sprinter try for her 18th successive win in the Orr which will be her first attempt at 1400 metres.

The unbeaten five-year-old, yet to race beyond 1200m, was watched by a crowd of 15,000-plus when she won her 17th straight race in the group 2 Australia Stakes (1200m) under lights at Moonee Valley.

"The Melbourne Racing Club doesn't underestimate the greatness of this very special horse and we'd love as many people as possible to come to Caulfield and celebrate her," he said. "Allowing the public to attend free of charge sets the foundation for a memorable occasion."

Meanwhile, given he's bought horses from New Zealand since 1958, it's no surprise that Bart Cummings is regarded almost as an honorary Kiwi. As of yesterday, it's official. He is now the first foreigner to be given a place in the New Zealand Racing Hall of Fame.

Cummings was inducted at a ceremony before the beginning of the 2012 New Zealand Premier Yearling Sale yesterday by the Prime Minister, John Key.

### **PLAQUE RECALLS AREA'S ROLE IN BURKE AND WILLS EXPEDITION**

*Moonee Valley Leader*— 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/plaque-recalls-areas-role-in-burke-and-wills-expedition-2/>

It was the first stop on an ill-fated expedition that personified the big ambitions and resilience of Australia's early European explorers.

A plaque was unveiled in Queens Park Moonee Ponds on Australia Day, explaining the area's role in the story of Burke and Wills.

The Moonee Valley area was their first stopover in the 1860-61 expedition to cross the Australian mainland from Melbourne in the south to the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north.

Seven men died, including the leader, Robert O'Hara Burke, and the third in command William John Wills.

Only one of the four men who reached the north coast, John King, survived to return to Melbourne.

The plaque was donated by periodontist specialist and amateur historian Dr Ross Bastiaan, who said he recognised the need to introduce people to events and places of historical significance.

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### **MP HULLS QUILTS: BY-ELECTION TO BE CALLED**

*Moonee Valley Leader— 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/your-say-mp-hulls-quits-by-election-to-be-called/>

He cited the campaign against the Niddrie Quarry as one of the biggest local issues in his time.

Prior to state politics, Mr Hulls was the federal MP for Kennedy from 1990-93.

Mr Hulls' resignation causes a by-election, which means Niddrie voters will go to the polls for the second time in just over a year.

The seat covers Airport West, Avondale Heights, Essendon West, Kealba, Keilor East, Keilor Park and Niddrie.

Parts of the suburbs of Essendon, Keilor and Tullamarine are also included.

The seat will be left vacant until the result of the by-election is known.

Mr Hulls has been the local MP since 1996 and holds the seat by a 6.9 per cent margin.

The Leader will publish the by-election date online when it is announced.

### **PAINTING A GREENER PICTURE IN MOONEE VALLEY**

*Moonee Valley Leader— 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/lifestyle/story/painting-a-greener-picture-in-moonee-valley/>

A local artist will mark the third anniversary of the Black Saturday fires with a message of regeneration.

Essendon artist Christina Markin, 36, has reflected on the 2009 fires with her RE exhibition, comprised of oil paintings.

Markin, originally from Salmon Arm in Canada, had her hometown devastated by fires in 1998 and this had motivated her to help in her adopted state.

About 17 homes were burnt to the ground in Salmon Arm, northeast of Vancouver, and she was part of the team that helped evacuate 500 people.

Markin said she visited Kinglake after the Black Saturday fires and said she was incredibly moved by the experience.

"I didn't go with the intention of painting.

"I took some photos because it was such an incredible place to look at," Markin said.

"It felt like being on another planet."

Markin has visited Kinglake several times in the past three years and said there was a sense of recovery evolving in the community.

"I was also quite struck by some of the wildlife going back and it started to make me think that things were starting to return to the state of normality," she said.

Markin said her exhibition was about renewal, both spiritually and physically.

"Things will never be exactly the same, but things are getting better," she said.

Markin, a teacher at St Bernard's College in Essendon, has lived in Australia since 2004.

She studied a postgraduate diploma in fine arts at the Victorian College of the Arts.

The exhibition will be from February 15-29 at Hogan Gallery in Collingwood.

Opening night event is on Thursday February 16 from 6pm.

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### **SEEING RED ON GREEN PLANNING IN MOONEE VALLEY**

*Moonee Valley Leader*— 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/your-say-seeing-red-on-green-planning-in-moonee-valley/>

Inflexible state planning policy is holding Moonee Valley back from making a greater reduction in community greenhouse emissions, the local council says.

While Moonee Valley Council is well on track to meet its target of zero emissions by 2020, it has called for a more flexible approach to town planning that encourages more environmentally friendly designs in new developments.

The council has a voluntary option for developers to assess the sustainability performance of their planning applications.

But this is not enforceable, and cannot be, until there is significant governmental change, it says.

“For real reductions in community greenhouse emissions, we need structural change at federal and state policy,” Mayor Jim Cusack said.

“The State Government needs to provide leadership by approving environment provisions in the planning scheme requiring that all new houses and buildings meet standards for energy efficiency.”

The State Government was unable to respond to the Leader’s questions before deadline.

The council’s Greenhouse Strategy was adopted in 2010 and will cost about \$350,000 a year up to a total of about \$6 million.

The council said rates would not be increased to roll out the project.

The council has shared in about \$215,000 in funding from the State Government already.

But it will require more grants to roll out future energy-saving projects.

The council is averaging a 9 per cent reduction in its greenhouse emissions each year.

### **MOONEE VALLEY CLUB GIVES ITSELF A BLACK EYE**

*The Australian*— 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/sport/moonee-valley-club-gives-itself-a-black-eye/story-e6frg7t6-1226256697092>

A \$2 billion industry, Victorian racing is considered by the other states and territories as the best in the land.

Home to the spring carnival and four days that generates for the Victoria Racing Club an income that is the envy of every race club in the region.

### **LABOR DEPUTY LEADER ROB HULLS RESIGNS**

*Moonee Valley Leader*— 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012

<http://moonee-valley-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/labour-deputy-leader-rob-hulls-resigns/>

Labor MP Rob Hulls has announced his resignation from politics.

Speaking to the Moonee Valley Leader, the Niddrie state MP and deputy Labor leader said a health scare last year had prompted the decision.

“I’ve had a great journey, but six months ago I had a very serious health scare and since then I’ve been reassessing my life.”

“I made the decision I wouldn’t run in the election in 2014.

“The best thing I can do for the party and also for the people of Niddrie is to leave the parliament now having made the decision.

# LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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"It will give the party the chance to renew and hopefully, they can get somebody new and someone young into the seat of Niddrie."

Mr Hulls said he wanted to spend more time with his family, which includes his four children Kate, 20, Jack, 8, Nick, 6, and Tom, 4.

Young Nick is starting his first day of prep next week at St Monica's Primary School in Essendon – something Mr Hulls said he was looking forward to.

Mr Hulls was elected to parliament in 1996. In 1999, with the election of the Bracks Labor Government, he was appointed Attorney-General.

In 2007, he was appointed Deputy Premier, a post he held until the defeat of Brumby Labor Government last year.

During Labor's period in office, he also held the Manufacturing Industry, Racing, Work Cover, Planning and Industrial Relations portfolios.

Back to the polls

Mr Hulls' resignation will cause a by-election, which means Niddrie voters must go to the polls for the second time in just over a year.

Niddrie has been a safe Labor seat since 1976. Mr Hulls has been the local MP since 1996 and he holds the seat by a 6.9 per cent margin.

The seat will be left vacant until the result of the by-election is known.

The Niddrie seat is aligned to Labor Unity, the centre-right faction of the ALP's Victorian branch.

A member of the same faction will be offered the seat by party strategists, under a share agreement with the Socialist Left and Right factions.

End of the tweets?

The retirement of Hulls may also bring an end to his social networking life.

Mr Hulls is an avid user of twitter (@RobHullsMP) and has become known for his often brutal and sometimes witty "tweets" on all things to do with state politics, media and his beloved Geelong Football Club.

Among the better ones of late was this one: "Memo to self: do not tweet unkind things about Speaker during Qn time#springst"

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## WYNDHAM

### PAIR PROUD TO BE MARRIED 60 YEARS ON AUSTRALIA DAY

*Wyndham Leader*— 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/pair-proud-to-be-married-60-years-on-australia-day/>

The country's national day of celebration last week had special meaning for Ken and Norma Nash, who achieved 60 years of marriage on Australia Day.

They married on January 26, 1952.

The couple celebrated their diamond anniversary with friends and family at an aged-care home where Mr Nash, 85, now lives.

Mrs Nash, 82, visits regularly but continues to live at the Werribee home she shared with her husband for 30 years.

Their eldest son, Peter, said his parents had tied the knot on Australia Day because it fell on a Saturday.

Peter, of Wyndham Vale, said the key to his parents' lasting relationship was simple: "They have common interests and they just love each other."

He said both were active in the Wyndham and Hobsons Bay communities and had also travelled together.

The couple received a letter from Prime Minister Julia Gillard congratulating them on the milestone.

They have three children and three grandchildren.

### BEHIND THE SCENES AT ROYAL MELBOURNE

*Weekly Times*— 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

[http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2012/02/03/436891\\_horses.html](http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2012/02/03/436891_horses.html)

They paraded in jewels, with braided hair and expensive make-up for the southern hemisphere's biggest equine breed show last week.

And that was just the horses.

Owners, trainers, riders and support crews were there too, grooming, plaiting and polishing their mounts for competition.

Held at the Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre, the four-day Royal Melbourne Horse Show showcased more than 40 breeds and 30 new classes.

Riders in tweed jackets, dun and banana-coloured breeches, and bowler hats sweltered as the mercury hovered above 35C.

But it was all about the horses, with equine make-up, painted hooves, bridle bling and shark teeth brush marks across their flanks all part of the preparation for a royal show.

From the outside, horse showing with all its pomp and ceremony seems like a hobby for the rich and famous.

But in the stables, everyday people work hard for the love of their horses.

One of Australia's most talented horsewomen, Jackie Long, grew up with horses and dedicates at least six hours a day to working them.

Fitting this in around part-time jobs and family time, Ms Long's story is not dissimilar from many involved in showing horses.

She has won more than 100 champion titles, but her success has come at a cost.

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The bill for preparing a horse for a royal show can run into tens of thousands of dollars, but the vast majority of competitors are not rich, or elite.

Many work more than one job and often put horse costs ahead of domestic costs.

"The prize money is almost zilch; at big shows such as the nationals you can win a few thousand dollars plus saddles and things, but it's not huge money," Ms Long said.

"I often ask myself why I do this, but it's more than money, it's a great challenge."

After weeks of specific feeding regimes and training schedules, horses are like primed athletes at the peak of their fitness, but the risk of injury is high.

"It can be disappointing when a lot of time and effort goes into preparing a horse before it is then pulled out," she said.

"When you travel a lot of things can go wrong."

But the hard work again paid off for Ms Long, who showed her star stallion Heza Star as well as clients' horses Kallenia Jessica II and Kirala First Impressions.

All received placings for Ivery Park Stud.

Kyabram rider Jess Williams said despite the hours of hard work she couldn't imagine life without horses: "I've been doing this since I could walk," Ms Williams said.

"It's really a family thing, there really wasn't a lot of choice, but the thing is, I really enjoy it."

Ms Williams said it would be impossible to compete without family support - everyone has their role, whether it's braiding manes, driving the float or helping fund the costly entry fees.

"It's easy to spend at least \$10,000 on the horses preparing for an event, but you do it because you love it," she said.

This year the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria added classes for Riding Pony Stud Book Society over-height Show Hunters and Show Hacks, Open Breed Show Hunters under-14 hands, Fell Ponies, Champion Gypsy Cob Derivative and Saddle Horse Championships Champion Shetland.

The 2012 Best of Show Championship was won by DP Destiny, exhibited by the McMaster family of Locksley.

The bay mare, led by Simon De Leeuw, qualified for the Best of Show after victory in the Supreme Champion Led Show Hunter class.

### **SPRUCE-UP FOR WYNDHAM CIVIC CENTRE**

*Wyndham Weekly*— 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/spruceup-for-wyndham-civic-centre/2441955.aspx>

Wyndham Council will spend \$737,000 on the civic centre's landscaping.

Works will include paving, timber seating, decking, tree planting, instant turf, mulching and installation of timber furniture.

Mayor Kim McAliney said: "The civic centre is a great source of community pride for Wyndham residents. We want residents to do more than just pay their rates or their animal registration when they visit by encouraging them to use the grounds and come to view master plans, have their say on policies and strategies and find out what's going on in their city."

Works will begin next month and are due to be completed mid-year.

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### **WERRIBEE LANDFILL FIRE PUT OUT**

*Wyndham Weekly– 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/werribee-landfill-fire-put-out/2441954.aspx>

Firefighters spent four hours battling a blaze at the Werribee landfill site last Friday.

Crews from Werribee were alerted to the fire at the Wests Road site about 5pm, although captain Michael Wells believes it began a considerable time before it was reported to the CFA.

Mr Wells said the fire was being fanned by a south-westerly wind and firefighters were concerned it would spread to nearby grasslands.

There were also fears the section of the tip on fire would collapse or items in the landfill might explode.

Eighteen CFA and MFB vehicles and council water tankers were rushed to the site because of water supply problems at the tip.

Landfill operators used heavy machinery to help fire crews access a nearby dam.

### **PET 'DOG-NAPPED' AFTER DISPUTE**

*Wyndham Leader– 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012*

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/pet-dog-napped-after-dispute/>

A pet dog was “dog-napped” following a dispute between neighbours at Hoppers Crossing, a court has heard.

John Black, 72, pleaded guilty at Werribee Magistrates’ Court last December to one count of animal cruelty relating to him driving his neighbours’ dog 17km in the boot of his car to a dam, and throwing it in, last July.

The dog was not injured.

Wyndham Council’s prosecutor, Basil Stafford, told the court the crime followed a long-running and bitter dispute between the neighbours.

Magistrate John Bentley fined Black \$500 without conviction, and ordered him to pay the council’s court costs of almost \$1270.

The maximum penalty was \$5000.

### **GLEN DEVON SITE STILL IN LIMBO**

*Wyndham Weekly– 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/glen-devon-site-still-in-limbo/2440147.aspx>

The future use of the Glen Devon Primary School site remains undecided as the state government continues talks with interested parties.

Western Metropolitan MP Andrew Elsbury said he was determined to see it used as a community education centre, including an English language school.

He said the education department was holding discussions with Wyndham Council and the Wyndham Community and Education Centre, but talks had been put back by a fire last year.

The school had been dormant for more than a year following a merger with Glen Orden Primary School.

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### **WERRIBEE CUP: RACEGOERS DIVIDED ON SUNDAY MEET**

*Wyndham Weekly– 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/werribee-cup-racegoers-divided-on-sunday-meet/2440142.aspx>

The decision to move the Living Legends Werribee Cup to a Sunday has drawn mixed reactions from racegoers, with many unsure about the change.

While first-time attendees hailed the day's relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere, many regulars felt the change had dampened the spirit of the event.

Werribee Racing Club moved the race to Sunday in the hope that bringing it forward to January would boost crowd numbers and put the time-honoured race back on the map.

Last year's cup was held in March, as the club sought to squeeze it onto the racing calendar.

Altona's Lavinia Hanson has attended a number of Werribee cups and said the jury was still out on whether the shift to Sunday was a success.

Werribee's Karen Patterson and Lisa Knuckey were also unsure if the new day and date were good ideas.

"There is not the same vibe as the spring carnival," Ms Knuckey said.

Racing club member Rosa Agosta believed the change was worthwhile.

"It's been a good day. It has been a bit more relaxing [than previous cups] and there seems to be more people."

First-time attendees Debbie McDonald and Daryl Brian also said they enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere.

Werribee Racing Club chief executive Jeremy Crawford was confident racegoers would grow to appreciate the Sunday event, viewing the change as a chance to stage a more family-friendly community event.

"There was a different atmosphere than in the Spring Racing Carnival and we want to continue to build on that and provide kids activities for families," he said.

"We have got a huge population and a lot of families living in the area.

"We don't want to make it all about the racing because [the cup] is outside of the spring carnival.

"We want to get people down to the track and enjoying the day."

### **WERRIBEE CUP: RACING TO PERFECTION**

*Wyndham Weekly– 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/werribee-cup-racing-to-perfection/2440154.aspx>

The cup wasn't the only hotly contested prize at Sunday's Werribee Cup with about 50 men and women vying for the fashions on the field crowns.

While some chose to enter the competitions for fun or to fulfil a dare by friends, others took the event seriously, having spent weeks picking out the perfect outfit.

The three categories were judged by designer Jenny Bannister, celebrity stylist Philip Boon and milliner Rebecca Share.

Mount Evelyn's Nicole Walter won the women's classic racewear category in a white Lisa Ho dress and black and white hat she bought in New York last year.

The winner of the men's classic racewear category was Richmond's Michael McAlpine, who wore a grey Uberstone suit with an orange and white shirt and tie.

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Ms Walter and Mr McAlpine are regulars on the fashions on the field circuit and won their respective categories at Cranbourne in October.

Ms Walter said she considered Mr McAlpine to be good luck. Mr McAlpine, who only discovered there would be a men's competition on Friday, said he was glad to again share the moment with Ms Walter.

The winner of the most spectacular headwear category, which was judged by Ms Share who won last year's Flemington millenary award, was Rebecca Gore.

### **WORKERS SHUT OUT WERRIBEE PARK CELEBRATIONS**

*Wyndham Weekly*— 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/workers-shut-out-werribee-park-celebrations/2440148.aspx>

Families wanting to celebrate Australia Day at Werribee Park last Thursday had their plans put on hold because of industrial action by Parks Victoria staff.

Members of the Australian Workers Union closed the gates to parks across Victoria in the morning as part of a continuing dispute with the state government about a new enterprise bargaining agreement.

Parks Victoria management is offering staff a 2.5 per cent pay rise, in line with the government's cap on pay rises for public sector workers.

Staff want a greater pay rise in recognition of the amount of work they are expected to carry out.

In early December, Parks Victoria employees closed the gates at Point Cook Coastal Park, Brimbank Park, Jells Park at Wheelers Hill and Kings Billabong near Mildura. AWU state secretary Cesar Melhem said last week's closure was aimed at making the public aware of how long Parks Victoria staff had been waiting for a new EBA.

He said negotiations began nine months ago.

"These are men and women who perform their jobs with dignity and dedication are asking for nothing more than a fair deal," Mr Melhem said.

Environment and Climate Change Minister Ryan Smith said his office had worked with Parks Victoria to minimise the impact of the park closures to the public.

He said the government continued to negotiate in good faith with the Parks Victoria staff.

Parks Victoria management did not respond before the Weekly went to print.

### **HOOPS LASH OUT AT WERRIBEE TRACK SURFACE**

*The Herald Sun*— 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/sport/superracing/hoops-lash-out-at-werribee-track-surface/story-fn67siys-1226258736358>

Werribee is the latest country track in the gun, with jockeys describing the surface as like tarmac.

Two recent meetings at the much-maligned track, which has been out of play for much of the past five years because of safety concerns, have been "terrible", according to top jockey Craig Newitt.

Other jockeys have described the track as far too firm, with Victorian Jockeys' Association chief executive Des O'Keeffe saying some hoops had told him, "You could land a plane on it".

Newitt said: "It's too hard, terrible. I'm sure you'd find a lot of horses are jarring up on it. No wonder it's so leader-biased."

Another leading jockey said the grass was cut so short at Werribee, "you could putt on it".

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The track rating at the two recent Werribee meetings, including Sunday's cup program, was Good 3 by start time, and Dead 4 on race morning.

"It hasn't raced good. It's raced fast," Newitt said.

Track preparation policies have been widely criticised in recent weeks, starting with a too-hard surface that led to a Geelong meeting being scrapped in late December.

A pothole caused the cancellation of the New Year's Day meeting at Hanging Rock and meetings were lost at Benalla on Sunday because of a boggy section of the track and at Kilmore on Monday, after four races, because of unsafe conditions with surface water.

Racing Victoria operations manager Bernard Saundry defended the kikuyu surface at Werribee, saying RVL's feedback had been positive.

### **KATE'S GOT THE MOVES**

*Wyndham Star*— 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/333/story/147966.html>

Kate Bryant has moves that would make Dita Von Teese and Cher green with envy.

The trained classical, tap, jazz and contemporary dancer wants to share her skills with Hobsons Bay.

Kate will be offering burlesque dance lessons at The Substation, starting next week.

But don't get the wrong idea about her classes.

"Burlesque has a bit of a smutty reputation but traditionally it's not like that and that's not the way I teach," she said.

Having worked with numerous burlesque dancers over the last few years, Kate's classy, polished, traditional technique has evolved using time-honoured music and stylish, elegant choreography.

"I try really hard to choose the right music carefully.

"A really wise song choice – you hear it and just want to move to it."

For Kate, the increasingly popular genre of dance is one of the most glamorous, enjoyable ways of exploring femininity whilst improving strength and flexibility.

She hopes the classes will encourage new ways for people to get fit, teaching skills you can't learn at the gym.

"Boring exercise can be really uninspiring and make you resent it," she said.

"But burlesque is also about how you hold yourself, your posture and how you walk and carry yourself.

"It can improve your self-esteem and confidence and allow you to let go of your inhibitions."

Kate has choreographed in Australia and overseas with several of her students having gone on to achieve professional success.

Classes start on Wednesday 8 February for information visit [www.thesubstation.org.au](http://www.thesubstation.org.au).

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### SHARON'S A WORTHY WINNER

*Wyndham Leader*— 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/333/story/147963.html>

Altona resident Sharon Walsh was last week awarded Hobsons Bay's Citizen of the Year while the Lions Club of Altona was awarded the 2012 Volunteer Group of the Year.

Hobsons Bay Mayor Tony Briffa, who presented the awards at last week's Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony, said Ms Walsh had worked tirelessly for her community for a number of years, helping bring people to Hobsons Bay through a range of initiatives, including the Altona Beach Market, Australia Day festivities in Logan Reserve and Altona Beach Festival.

"She has been a long time retailer in the Pier St precinct and is a driving force behind the Altona Traders' Association," he said.

"Sharon has also devoted much of her time to helping those less fortunate."

Cr Briffa said the Lions Club of Altona was a very worthy recipient of the 2012 Volunteer Group of the Year.

"This club has worked tirelessly for the Hobsons Bay Community for the past 46 years," he said.

"Just in the past year, they've put in more than 12,000 volunteer hours and donated more than \$30,000 to the community in funds or products.

"Some of the regular projects run by the club include: Altona Beach Festival; Clean up Australia Day; performing community work for the elderly; providing hampers for the disadvantaged; assisting in homelessness related projects; running a soup van; and the project list goes on.

"The Lions Club of Altona and its members are shining examples of the Australian notion of community spirit, always looking for a way to help out many members of our community."

Nominations for the Young Citizen of the Year are still open.

Winners will be announced at a citizenship ceremony in March.

To nominate an outstanding young person, go to the Youth Services facebook page or visit

[www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au) before Wednesday 29 February.

### LET WYNDHAM YOUNG JOIN IN

*Wyndham Leader*— 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012

<http://wyndham-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/let-the-young-join-in/>

Most teens take it for granted that they can enjoy a hit of tennis after school, sign up for a season of football or join clubs or groups.

But for young people living in residential care homes, it is not always possible to take part in community activities.

As part of a joint community integration program, youth organisation Whitelion and the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner are calling for Wyndham volunteers to take young people in residential care to clubs, groups or activities and help them to meet new people.

Program leader Nicholas Mills said the teens were able to decide which activities they took part in.

"It's an opportunity to connect or reconnect young people with their community - they quite often don't have the chance to get involved when living in the out-of-home care system," Mr Mills said.

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He said there were many interested in activities, including drama, music and sport, but unable to take part.

"Young people who are actively involved in their local communities are more likely to remain in school, get a job and lead healthy and positive lives," Mr Mills said.

Tarneit volunteer Sharee Anderson, who recently joined the program, said she was looking forward to taking part.

Ms Anderson said she saw the community integration program flyer in a supermarket and decided she would like to help.

"It's a good thing to do, to help other people who need it," she said.

If you are interested in volunteering for the program, phone Mr Mills on 8398 6832.

### **SECT'S 6AM SERVICES NOT TOO EARLY FOR COUNCILLORS**

*Wyndham Weekly— 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/sects-6am-services-not-too-early-for-councillors/2440144.aspx>

A secretive religious sect has been given approval by Wyndham Council to worship in a hall in Werribee.

The Wyndham Gospel Trust, which is understood to be a branch of the controversial Exclusive Brethren, had a permit for a worship hall in Ballan Road approved at a council meeting on January 23.

In its application, the trust said it would use the hall for twice-weekly services for up to 50 people. Services would run for two hours from 6am on Sundays and from 6pm on Mondays, plus a Sunday afternoon service once a month.

The council received a 27-signature petition and 18 other objections from residents opposed to the trust's planning application, mainly citing concerns about noise, neighbourhood character, early morning services and parking and traffic issues.

The bid follows a similar application last November from the Brethren to build a new worship hall in Greensborough.

It was narrowly knocked back by Nillumbik Council after a forceful community campaign.

Cr Heather Marcus described Wyndham's Exclusive Brethren as a quiet denomination of "fabulous people".

"I don't know where people get all this negativity about them from. Many of the women were customers in my shop [in Watton Street] years ago. I watched them grow up, get married, and they were lovely, lovely people." she said.

"We all have our religions and I've learned to always judge people as I find them."

Speaking on behalf of the applicant, planning consultant Annemarie Spinks said the new worship hall would be its fifth in the Wyndham area. Others include sites in Mambourin Street and Pyke Street in Werribee and Manor Lakes Boulevard in Wyndham Vale. The trust had gone "above and beyond" to ensure the new hall would not disturb nearby residents, she said.

Ms Spinks said the trust would decommission its Mambourin Street hall, which has been in use for more than 40 years, and planned to build a larger hall in Wyndham.

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### RESIDENT HAS ALLY AGAINST FINCHLEY PARK CRESCENT PROPOSAL

*Wyndham Weekly– 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/resident-has-ally-against-finchley-park-crescent-proposal/2440153.aspx>

A Tarneit resident is concerned that Wyndham Council's decision to knock back a development for three double-storey houses next to her home will be overturned if the developer appeals to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The council refused the Finchley Park Crescent development at its meeting last week, believing it did not comply with neighbourhood character, was an overdevelopment of the site and would create "visual bulk" in the street.

Samantha Jobe fears the developer will take the matter to VCAT, where the council's ruling could be overturned.

Ms Jobe is against the development because of its closeness to her house.

She fears the occupants of the double-storey houses will be able to look into her living and entertainment areas and that the development will cast a shadow on her garden.

She's also concerned the driveway to the three houses would run along the length of her fence and that the noise from cars coming and going could disturb her young daughter. Fourteen other objections were received.

The council's planning staff had recommended the development be approved, but Cr Shane Bourke moved an alternative motion calling for the development to be knocked back.

He said he shared many of Ms Jobe's concerns, adding the development was wrong for the area. "The reality is there are real people living [in the street] who this is going to impact on," Cr Bourke said.

Ms Jobe said she did not oppose the site being developed but would be more comfortable with two single-storey houses on the land.

"I'm a single mother and I saved up to get this house. I am concerned it will lose value," she said.

"Potentially, there is going to be three families, three barking dogs and three sets of parties taking place next door.

"I don't want all that noise. If I wanted noise I would live on a main road."

The developer has 60 days to lodge an appeal with VCAT after receiving the council's notice of refusal.

### WAYNE GETS THE BALL ROLLING

*Wyndham Weekly– 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wayne-gets-the-ball-rolling/2440152.aspx>

Growing up with a brace strapped on his left leg, Wayne Slattery was never as agile as other boys his age.

His muscles were weakened after he had polio as a twoyearold, limiting the sports he was able to play.

"I was still mobile enough for cricket and volleyball when I was younger," he says. "Then it was table tennis, and I quit that only after I realised I was older than the collective age of everyone else in the team."

Today, the Hoppers Crossing resident, 58, is leading the push to get young people with disabilities into sports and recreation.

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As Wyndham's newly appointed access all abilities officer, Mr Slattery has already got the ball rolling, forging relationships between sports clubs and special needs schools across the municipality.

Sport and recreation is vital for young people's minds and bodies, he says.

"People with physical or mental disabilities often don't have the capacity to exercise that able-bodied people do, and they can be on medication where they put on weight easily.

"It's really important to find activities they can do to keep their bodies active and healthy, and it's important for a sense of self-worth, not sitting alone at home, confined, watching telly and not much else."

Mr Slattery says many sports clubs often only need advice about providing resources for someone with special needs.

"There's one man in Wyndham who's been able to compete in a mainstream darts competition from a wheelchair, arranging to have the dart board adjusted for his height," he says.

With Wyndham's explosive growth, he says there are many young families of children with disabilities who may not know of nearby sports groups, or the area's bus routes to access them.

"My hope is when I leave the role, there'll be more disabled people in activities they desire - I'd like to see a sailing club at the marina and a horse-riding club for young disabled people."

### **POINT COOK RESIDENTS PROVE THEIR POINT**

*Wyndham Weekly*— 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/point-cook-residents-prove-their-point/2440141.aspx>

Residents will continue to voice their concerns about plans to build 2000 homes in Point Cook West, despite a public consultation meeting being cancelled due to a groundswell of interest.

On Friday, the state government's Growth Areas Authority scrapped a meeting scheduled for yesterday in favour of a series of pre-arranged sessions to be held over the next two weeks.

The cut-off date for submissions to the plans remains February 16.

Point Cook Action Group chairman Bernard Reilly hoped the government would listen to residents' worries about the redevelopment plans.

"It's no surprise there was such a massive interest once people heard about these plans like these," he said.

"Any development is going to create interest because of the huge hassles we've already got in Point Cook due to the lack of planning and infrastructure.

"The frustration of everyday life out here is no matter where you drive, you've got traffic problems."

Plans for the 145-hectare site, between Hacketts Lane and the Princes Freeway north of Sneydes Road, include a diamond interchange connecting Sneydes Road to the freeway and an extension of Dunnings Road to cater for extra traffic in and out of Point Cook.

The plan shows that no money has been earmarked for the roadworks, expected to cost more than \$80million, and that construction could be up to 15 years away.

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Mr Reilly said Point Cook's infrastructure and services were already failing to keep pace with rapid population growth.

"Our schools are shockingly under-numbered, and they haven't even built the next primary school as Point Cook has expanded," he said.

"This is why people are irate, because they're experiencing first-hand the problems of having nothing in place but still bringing more people in. Where are these new people going to send their children and where are they going to drive?"

Mr Reilly urged the government to "slow down a minute" and ensure the GAA took on board the planning considerations needed to create a liveable community.

GAA chief executive Peter Seamer said planning would ensure the community's infrastructure and services needs were met.

"This [plan] is part of a broader roll-out of plans to create new homes for a growing population and deliver new roads, schools, sporting facilities, parks and health, education, leisure and community services to ensure Wyndham remains an affordable and attractive place for people to live, work and raise a family."

### **CITY'S PAST TO BE UP TO DATE**

*Wyndham Weekly*— 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/citys-past-to-be-up-to-date/2440150.aspx>

Wyndham's colourful history is set to be documented, with the council commissioning a new book and website about the city's past.

Known as the Wyndham History Project, the book and website will be written by Castlemaine historian Geoff Hocking.

It's hoped residents will contribute to the project by sharing their stories, memories, photographs and memorabilia.

Werribee District Historical Society, which has released a book about the first 100 years of Werribee, believes the project will encourage people to learn more about their local area.

Member Lance Pritchard said he welcomed any project which would get residents more interested in the area's past.

"We need something to make history more interesting," he said. "We do have a very interesting history; it's just a matter of getting it out there."

The book and website will be launched in mid-2013. The site will be regularly updated with new research.

Mr Pritchard hopes the book will pay as much attention to Wyndham's history from the 1930s onwards as it does to the municipality's early years.

"[Recent history] has not been documented a lot. There is research that has got to be done into that."

Chaffey Ward's Cr Shane Bourke said the history project would remind residents what Wyndham had achieved.

"Undertaking a project such as this will remind us what a vital role the community has played in building such a strong municipality."

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### **FIGHT TO THE FINISH**

*Wyndham Weekly*– 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/fight-to-the-finish/2440149.aspx>

Kyle Mould, 12, celebrated the end of the school holidays with a water fight at the Youth Resource Centre. Kyle and other school-age children from around Wyndham gathered at the Hoppers Crossing-based centre last Friday for an afternoon of pool, table tennis and a water balloon fight. Throughout the holidays, the centre ran outings and activities to help make the summer more enjoyable.

### **OZ DAY A TOP TIME AT WERRIBEE SOUTH BEACH**

*Wyndham Leader*– 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/a-top-time-for-sure/>

A record 5000 people descended on Werribee South beach to celebrate Australia's day of national pride last week.

It was the biggest turn-out since Wyndham Council started hosting its Australia Day festivities on the foreshore in 2010.

The crowd enjoyed an evening of live music, fireworks and free sausages in fine but windy weather.

Earlier in the day, locals gathered at Tarneit Community Learning Centre, which hosted a family fun day.

But Werribee South beach was the big drawcard.

Parked cars lined both sides of almost the entire length of Beach Rd and packed a nearby reserve.

The crowd ate 1700 sausages cooked by volunteers from the Rotary Club of Hoppers Crossing and waited patiently in long lines for a jumping castle, facepainting, drinks and toilets.

Many waved free miniature Australian flags.

People picnicked on the lawns, danced in front of a live band belting out Australian classics and played cricket on the sand using makeshift wickets.

The main fireworks display at 9pm lasted more than 10 minutes. There was also a burst of fireworks at 7pm, startling some dogs.

Traffic was bumper-to-bumper on roads leading from the foreshore after the fireworks.

Werribee CFA displayed one of its trucks. There was no police presence although police attended afterwards and reported no trouble.

Marathon runner and Australia Day ambassador Steve Moneghetti was among the crowd.

### **COMMUNITY & CLUBS: AUSSIES EXPERIENCE COSTA MESA IN EXCHANGE VISIT**

*Daily Pilot*– 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.dailypilot.com/entertainment/tn-dpt-0201-deboom-20120131,0,979498.story>

The Kiwanis Club of Costa Mesa hosted a lunch on Jan. 12 to honor this years' Australian exchange students from Hoppers Crossing Secondary College near Melbourne in the state of Victoria.

This is the fourth year of Kiwanis of Costa Mesa's involvement with this program, which also includes visits to Australia by students from Estancia High School. The seven students from Australia stayed with host families in Costa Mesa for two weeks. They attended classes at Estancia High and visited many local venues throughout Orange County.

Charlie Markel, this years' president of the Kiwanis of Costa Mesa, presented the Australian exchange students with a certificate of appreciation for the presentation

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that they made to the club about their school and Hoppers Crossing. Kiwanis of Costa Mesa also supports the Estancia Exchange Students who will voyage to Australia this summer.

### **KNOCK, KNOCK. WHO'S THERE? MR BURGLAR**

*Wyndham Star*– 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/333/story/147857.html>

A doorknocking thief has been targeting homes in the Point Cook area, in a series of burglaries which have been occurring during daylight hours on weekdays.

Police said they believed the offender might be knocking on doors to check whether anyone is at home, before breaking into the residences. Some houses which have been targeted are located next door to each other.

Streets where the crimes have been carried out include Malibu Blvd, Hewett Drv, Cooina Way, Regal Rd and Palace Rd.

Police said the offender has been entering rear yards, removing flyscreen sliding windows and using a small implement, possibly a screw driver, to break into the homes.

Items stolen have included laptops, mobile phones and jewellery, and police said they believe the offender might have been wearing gloves during some of the burglaries.

Wyndham Burglary Unit Constable Casey O'Grady said the burglaries were not necessarily all related, but have been happening since at least the start of the year, with the most recent on 19 January.

Anyone with information about the burglaries can call the Wyndham Burglary Unit on 9742 9411 or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

### **CUP JOY FOR APPREHEND**

*Wyndham Star*– 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/333/story/147862.html>

Apprehend reigned supreme in Sunday's Living Legends Werribee Cup after a flawless ride from jockey Craig Newitt.

Starting as second favourite behind Persian Star, the Tony Vasil-trained horse was first out of the gate, putting an early gap on the field.

Newitt continued to race his mount to perfection and at the 600m mark, he made the move that would ultimately win him the race, putting three lengths on his rivals within a matter of seconds.

As the field rounded the final corner the lead only grew further as the red and black colours of Apprehend crossed the line first to claim the \$140,000 race.

Hanks, ridden by Luke Nolan, ran on hard to claim second while Hiphopotamus held on for a gallant third. Persian Star finished towards the rear of the field.

The victory over 2600m had a group of 20 happy owners jumping for joy as they entered the winner's circle and embraced Newitt before the formal trophy presentation took place.

Part-owner Glenn Tyler was rapt that his horse was able to produce its best on the big stage.

"It's a great feeling. Certainly the biggest thrill I've had in racing.

"To be out in front with such an easy pace during the race we were confident of coming home well," he said.

"The pace was fairly kind and we knew that he was fit having carried higher weights in previous starts.

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"This time he was down in the weights, got the right barrier, and it couldn't have been any better."

With excitement still in the air, plans are already under way for the horse's next target with a possible interstate trip on the horizon.

"He is as tough as they come and we are just hoping that we might be going to the Adelaide Cup or something like that in six week's time," Tyler said.

"We will leave that to Tony but the Mornington Cup isn't too far away either and Tony has always said he was keen to get him over the two miles."

### **HOT TO TROT AT THE WERRIBEE CUP**

*Wyndham Weekly*— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/hot-to-trot-at-the-werribee-cup/2439321.aspx>

Sweltering heat was no handicap for stayer Apprehend as star jockey Craig Newitt booted him home in Sunday's Werribee Cup.

Nearly 4000 people braved temperatures up to 34 degrees to watch six-year-old Apprehend (\$6) win the \$140,000 cup by three lengths.

Newitt shot the Tony Vasil-trained stayer four lengths clear 600 metres from the post and he held on to beat Hanks and Hippopotamus.

Part-owner Glenn Tyler was thrilled with Newitt's ride and the hard work of Vasil in the lead-up to the big day.

"What a pleasure it is to be standing here with the Werribee Cup in my hand," Tyler said. "This is a horse that has given us a lot of enjoyment over the years."

The lawns at Werribee Racecourse were a sea of tents and umbrellas as punters desperately sought shelter from the sun.

But the heat did little to temper their enthusiasm, with bookies reporting strong betting on each of the day's nine races.

Werribee Racing Club chief executive Jeremy Crawford said while the crowd was slightly down on the club's expectations, largely because of the heat, the decision to move the cup to January had paid off, with numbers still well up on last year.

He was pleased the day ran smoothly, given the club's previous problems, which included issues with the track and meetings being called off because of heavy rain.

"It was important to us to run a full day without any issues and we got through the day.

"We have to continue building the event and providing entertainment. We want to make it a community race day."

Senior Sergeant Peter Nichols of Werribee police said only one arrest was made following a minor incident. Overall police were satisfied with the behaviour of the crowd.

### **COUNCIL SENDS STRONG MESSAGE TO STATE GOVERNMENT HOME STOP PUSH**

*Wyndham Star*— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/333/story/147839.html>

Another 2000 homes could be built in Point Cook despite Wyndham Council sending a strong message to the State Government disapproving of a proposed housing development.

The State Government and the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) recently announced a plan to create a new residential community, Point Cook West that would bring about 2000 new homes and 6000 new residents to Wyndham.

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The land that is being eyed off for the development is directly west of Hacketts Rd in Point Cook, between the Princes Freeway and Sneydes Rd.

The land is owned by the State Government but the council last week revealed their intentions to receive a report on the history of the land to see what powers they would have to make the State Government invest in specific infrastructure before any development would be allowed to begin.

Deputy Mayor Glenn Goodfellow said Point Cook's roads were already struggling without the addition of another 2000 homes.

"I don't have to tell you the major problems we have in Point Cook with road access in and out of the suburb as well as a lack of bus services to service the current residents," Cr Goodfellow said.

"There is no point in putting in just another new development if the infrastructure isn't there to support it or the surrounding areas."

The GAA's Point Cook West Precinct Structure Plan states that a new diamond interchange between Sneydes Rd and the Princes Freeway would be built, along with an extension of Dunnings Rd over the Princes Freeway, to help deal with the extra traffic the development would create.

But Cr Goodfellow said that given these new roads had been set a time frame of zero to 15 years to be built, it was not good enough.

"There is no funding to construct a diamond interchange from Sneydes Rd onto the bypass at any time within the next short to medium term time frame," he said.

"So in other words, within the next 15 years. So here we have a road in a plan and guess what, it's a road to nowhere."

### EMPLOYMENT BOOST

*Wyndham Star* – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/333/story/147856.html>

The future of a project that could bring up to 60,000 jobs to Wyndham is looking brighter with the State Government finally making an announcement on the long-awaited Werribee Employment Precinct.

Member for the Western Metropolitan Region, Andrew Elsbury, has confirmed that the State Government has asked the Growth Areas Authority to develop a master plan for the Werribee Employment Precinct.

"The Coalition Government has a plan of action which will work towards developing the Werribee Employment Precinct as a place for professional jobs to be based in the City of Wyndham," Mr Elsbury said.

"The Werribee Employment Precinct presents many opportunities for our community as it will place jobs closer to our homes, it will develop the business opportunities of Wyndham and the West and it also provides opportunities for the Health, Education and Science organisations that already call the Werribee Employment Precinct their home."

Wyndham Council has been calling on the State Government to develop more than 900 hectares of government owned land into an employment precinct.

The land includes the Werribee Mercy Hospital, Suzanne Cory High School and Melbourne and Victoria University campuses.

A question mark has been hanging over the future of the project since the last state election with the current State Government making almost no statements about it.

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Executive Director of the Committee for Wyndham, Nik Tsardakis, told Star the latest announcement was good news.

“The importance of the Werribee Employment Precinct to Wyndham and the West cannot be overstated,” Mr Tsardakis said.

“The confirmation to move to identify the potential through a master plan thus removing the continuing uncertainty around the form and role of the precinct is most welcome.”

### **FAMILY FOR LIFE**

*Wyndham Star– 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/333/story/147860.html>

A brave Hoppers Crossing family has banded together to raise money for the Wyndham Relay for Life, after losing three beloved relatives to cancer.

The Blake family, including Dad Peter, Mum Sue, daughter Elisha, son David and niece Janelle, will take part in the annual event at the Victoria University Athletics Track in Werribee on 21 April.

Beforehand, on 31 March, they are holding a fundraising dinner dance at the Grandstar in Altona North.

Every year, the Relay for Life raises funds for the Cancer Council’s research, education and support services.

The Blake family knows how important these services are.

Around three years ago, Mr and Mrs Blake’s youngest daughter, Danielle, tragically passed away from ovarian cancer at only 20 years old.

Janelle, now aged 21, lost her mother Fiona – who was suffering pancreatic cancer – a week after making her deb ball.

In addition, Mrs Blake’s father, John, died from bowel cancer.

The three family members all died within nine months of each other.

Elisha advised families in similar situations to stay strong, something her sister did after being diagnosed with cancer at 19.

“She was one of the strongest people I’ve ever seen go through it, all three of them were, they all lived life to the fullest,” she said.

Mr Blake has appealed for corporate sponsors to make donations to support of his family’s fundraising efforts.

Several of the family members work at Sema in Laverton North, where they last year held a sausage sizzle to raise funds for the relay, while other Wyndham businesses including the Auzone magazine, Shawn’s Swim School and Global Tiger have already contributed to this year’s efforts.

The band ‘The Bald and The Beautiful’ will play for free at the dinner dance. All sponsors of the dinner dance will be advertised on the night and at the Relay for Life.

The family hopes to sell more than 500 tickets for the event, which will be on 7.30am Saturday 31 March at the Grandstar in Altona North.

Contact Janelle on 0400 506 421or Elisha on 0487 102 027 for more information.

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### **RESPIRE CENTRE BLOW**

*Wyndham Star– 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/333/story/147844.html>

Parents of disabled children in Wyndham have slammed the State Government's refusal to fund a respite care centre in the municipality.

As revealed in Star almost a year ago, parents have been struggling without any respite services in the whole of Wyndham.

Mambourin, a Wyndham based charity, revealed to Star last year that they had made a submission for funding to build a vital respite centre through the Commonwealth Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund (SAIF).

In what is being described as a "heartless" move, the proposal has been refused.

It is believed that Karingal, a Geelong based charity, has been successful in receiving similar funding.

CEO of Mambourin, Rohan Braddy, told Star he hoped the needs of disabled children and their families would still be met.

"Whilst we were disappointed to have missed out on the funding after putting so much work into the application, we are pleased that the needs of people with disabilities and their families in this area have been recognised and hopefully will be met by this other project", Mr Braddy said.

But Steve Morgan, whose nine-year-old son Corey has severe autism, said the State Government was not in tune with resident's needs.

"It's absolutely short-sighted of the State Government," Mr Morgan said.

"They are so tied up in the bureaucracy that they can't be practical.

"We need a break. We're losing the fight simply because we're so exhausted."

Mr Morgan recently set up a disabled swimming class to cater for his son. The immense popularity of the class shows how desperate Wyndham families are.

"We now have more than 50 children in the class in less than a year," he said.

"This is something I just set up for my own son, but how can I turn away another parent in need.

"We don't even bother with government funded services anymore because all they want is for you to fill out a form so they can push you to one side."

Mr Morgan said it was not good enough to expect parents to drive to Geelong for respite services.

A Department of Human Services spokesperson would not reveal why Mambourin's application was unsuccessful.

### **JENNIE'S JUST REWARD**

*Wyndham Star– 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/333/story/147847.html>

A Wyndham humanitarian with a vision of a more peaceful and harmonious community has been recognised for more than 30 years of dedication.

Jennie Barrera was named a People of Australia Ambassador by the Australian Multicultural Commission earlier this month after being nominated for the honour by none other than Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

Ms Barrera is the CEO of the Wyndham Community and Education Centre as well as the co-founder and chair of both the Wyndham Humanitarian Network and the Wyndham Interfaith Network.

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The passionate voice for the community said she was humbled by the honour.

"I'm absolutely thrilled and honoured," Ms Barrera told Star.

"This is my work as well as my passion. I love what I do so to have your work recognised; it's just a win win."

The Wyndham Community and Education Centre runs education, community development and refugee settlement programs, which Ms Barrera said were of vital support to members of Wyndham's refugee community.

"We accept them into the country so we need to ensure that they have the right support to enable them to be successful," she said.

"For most people success is simply having a job, being able to support their families and living a peaceful life.

"There is nothing worse than being marginalised and not knowing where to turn, so we try to ensure that people have a voice and are able to participate in the community."

Visit [www.werribeecc.net](http://www.werribeecc.net) for more information about the Wyndham Community and Education Centre.

### **COUNCIL URGES GALVIN ACTION**

*Wyndham Star* – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/werribee-hoppers-crossing/333/story/147851.html>

Wyndham Council has written to Ted Baillieu and Minister for Education, Martin Dixon, pleading with them to make a commitment on the future of one of Wyndham's most troubled schools.

Galvin Park Secondary College has been struggling for months with caved-in ceilings, exposed asbestos and mould affected buildings following rain damage last year.

The State Government has refused to make any ironclad commitments on how the school will be repaired in long term, but has insisted that it will be "clean, safe and dry" by the start of classes this year.

But at last week's council meeting an urgent message was sent to the State Government.

Councillor Adele De Crescenzo called on a commitment to be made on the ailing school and an early announcement that sufficient funding will be made available in the upcoming State Budget to start a rebuild.

"Disgusting. That's the only way I can describe the conditions I witnessed at Galvin Park when I undertook a guided tour of the school," Cr De Crescenzo said.

"The conditions I witnessed at Galvin Park in one hour shocked and appalled me. There is no way I could have studied in those conditions myself, however the State Government expects over 1000 students to do just that next week. Worse still they expect professional teachers to teach in that environment."

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Cr De Crescenzo said the students, parents and staff of the school could not wait until the budget is released in May to know what kind of funding they would receive.

### **CALL TO WATCH OUT FOR SNAKES IN WYNDHAM**

*Wyndham Leader*— 29<sup>th</sup> January 2012

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/call-to-watch-out-for-snakes-in-wyndham/>

Lizards are being mistaken for snakes by wary Wyndham residents.

The council has received 23 snake callouts to residential properties between December 1 last year and January 19 this year.

Nine calls resulted in snakes being caught and removed, and four turned out to be lizards.

The 10 other reported snakes could not be found on arrival.

Adam Sapiano, of Victorian Reptiles in Hoppers Crossing and a qualified snake catcher, said it was an easy mistake, and that locals were right to err on the side of caution.

“The tail of a blue tongue lizard doesn’t differ that much from a tiger snake unless you know what you’re looking for,” he said.

Wyndham acting chief executive Bill Forrest said the callouts were up slightly on previous years, due to increased rainfall and an abundance of snake food.

He said the council received unconfirmed reports of a dog being bitten at the site of one of the snake removals in Wyndham Vale, in Marne Ave.

To reduce the chances of snakes entering residential properties, the council recommends keeping grass and vegetation short and tidy; piles of wood, tin or tiles away from houses; and aviaries free of spilled seed which attract mice.

The council says snakes are protected by law and residents can be fined and prosecuted for harming or killing them.

Residents who find a snake on their property should not touch it, but keep an eye on it from a safe distance and phone the council on 9742 0777, to have it removed for free by a qualified snake catcher.

### **POINT COOK COMMUNITY CENTRE SET TO OPEN**

*Wyndham Leader*— 29<sup>th</sup> January 2012

<http://wyndham-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/point-cook-centre-set-to-open/>

A new community centre at Point Cook opens next month.

Featherbrook Community Centre on Windorah Way will have kindergarten and maternal and child-health consulting rooms, and meeting and learning spaces.

Three-year-old-plus activity groups, playgroups, Scottish country dancing and Girl Guides also will be based there.

Wyndham Deputy Mayor Glenn Goodfellow said the centre would help serve the area’s growing population.

“With a neighbouring oval and sports pavilion, this precinct will be buzzing with people from kinder kids to the teenagers playing a game of footy,” he said. “Point Cook is expected to grow by more than 23,000 residents over the next 10 years, which makes facilities like Featherbrook Community Centre vital.”

The centre and pavilion cost \$6.3 million, paid for by local, state and federal governments.

Details: phone 0419 420 018, email [featherbrookcc@wyndham.vic.gov.au](mailto:featherbrookcc@wyndham.vic.gov.au) or visit [wyndham.vic.gov.au](http://wyndham.vic.gov.au)

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## ACROSS THE REGION

### **BATTLERS HIT HARDEST BY POWER RISES**

*The Herald Sun—3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/battlers-hit-hardest-by-power-rises/story-fn7x8me2-1226261282869>

Victorian mortgagees are among the hardest hit by combined electricity and gas price rises of more than \$200 a year.

A new report exposes hip-pocket pain to be caused by soaring energy bills throughout the state over the next 12 months.

Households in Melbourne's outer northern and eastern suburbs, such as Ringwood and Chirnside Park, face the highest overall average increase of \$230.

Families in country areas in eastern Victoria and outer western suburbs, including Hoppers Crossing and Werribee, will suffer a \$200-\$215 whack.

The study by St Vincent de Paul Society found residents in inner suburbs faced the lowest average rise of \$160.

The gap is due mainly to different distribution costs for delivery of energy to different regions through poles and wires, smart meters and gas pipes - charges that are passed on to retailers, and then consumers.

"It's the reality of the decision to break up and privatise the SEC and the Gas and Fuel Corporation and charge according to different cost structures," energy analyst Gavin Dufty said.

"We understand that some people will be upset when their prices go up by more than others, but we need to accept it would be too costly to buy back the multi-billion-dollar energy industry."

The blow comes on top of surging water, council rates, insurance, education and health bills.

But customers are being urged to shop around for retail deals to potentially save hundreds of dollars.

The study comes as the State Government pushes for national regulation changes that would allow more scrutiny of distributors and discourage excessive charges.

The Victorian Energy Prices report, funded by an Australian Energy Market Commission panel, also reveals:

Some customers are being slugged \$400 a year, or more than \$1 a day, for supply charges before they actually use any power.

Fixed power supply charges make up more than half the total annual bill for some households.

Shopping for a new deal can save high-use households \$220-\$390 a year for electricity. Low-consumption households can save up to \$250 a year in extreme cases.

Battlers are missing out on the best power and gas deals because they can't pay every account on time.

Mr Dufty said price rises also fluctuated due to how companies chose to divide costs between residential and business customers or fixed and variable charges.

People who had the highest annual price rise did not necessarily have the biggest overall bills.

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The study focused on default prices, known as standing offers, for the three major retailers, Origin, AGL, and TRUenergy.

Customers on market contracts are expected to experience similar cost increases, but usually have lower overall bills because of discounts and other incentives.

The industry blames higher wholesale and infrastructure upgrade costs, green energy targets and a growth in power-guzzling appliances such as air conditioners and electronics.

The Herald Sun last week revealed Melbourne's electricity bills had leapt 74 per cent in past five years.

### **WYNDHAM AUTISTIC STUDENTS 'LACK HELP'**

*Weekly—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.wyndhamweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/wyndham-autistic-students-lack-help/2440138.aspx>

Wyndham faces an education crisis for students with autism unless drastic steps are taken to boost training and services.

A report commissioned by the Education Department found Wyndham and Brimbank had more than half of the west's students with autism receiving Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) support.

But few of the students have the benefit of local support services.

The review was prepared last April but released only this week after a freedom of information request by Western Metropolitan Greens MP Colleen Hartland.

It noted autism was the fastest-growing disability in the state, up 21 per cent in the past four years. Students funded for autism under the PSD more than doubled from 1946 in 2006 to 4103 in 2010.

"The majority of students supported under the [autism] category of the PSD are in their primary years, which will place increased pressure on secondary mainstream and general specialist schools to provide for this cohort over the next two years," the report found.

Autism Angels president Dina Tamburro said the findings came as no surprise, as there were no support groups in Wyndham for parents of children with autism.

Ms Tamburro said schools were well behind in being able to meet the growing need for teachers and aides to be trained in supporting students with autism.

She said it was important for parents to have the choice of mainstream or specialist schools, but the west still had no specialist school beyond grade 3.

Point Cook mother Kathy Downie knows too well how stretched autism education is in the west. She faced a lengthy battle last year to secure her son Liam a place at Western Autistic School. "For the first few years, mainstream school wouldn't be able to cope with him and he wouldn't have been able to cope with them," Ms Downie said.

"With the noise and the crowds, if Liam's anxiety is heightened he can become very distressed and prone to self-harm."

Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Bernie Finn said the government remained committed to an autism school in Laverton before the next election, but his priority was to see the integrated disability education and awareness program running at Moomba Park Primary School in Fawkner rolled out across existing schools.

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### TRAIN PASSENGERS AT VANDALS' MERCY

*Weekly-1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/news/local/news/general/train-passengers-at-vandals-mercy/2440295.aspx?storypage=0>

Vandalism accounted for three out of every four lift breakdowns at Footscray and Laverton railway stations last year, leaving disabled and elderly commuters stranded.

Breakdown reports released to the Weekly by train operator Metro show there were 220 "unplanned outages" at Laverton station and 57 at Footscray last year.

Neither the \$93million Laverton station, opened in July 2010, nor the \$14.7million footbridge at Footscray station has ramp access to the platforms, so if lifts break down disabled and elderly passengers or parents with infants have to negotiate the stairs.

Metro spokesman Daniel Hoare said vandalism was by far the most common cause of lift faults at the two stations.

"Despite extensive CCTV at Laverton, groups of vandals regularly kick the doors of the lifts and break equipment on the control panels.

"Police are aware of the ongoing vandalism of lifts there."

In response to concerns raised by Greens MP Colleen Hartland, Transport Minister Terry Mulder acknowledged there was a problem at Laverton but said he "was not aware of any concerns at Footscray station".

Ms Hartland wrote: "The consequence is that commuters with prams, with a disability, and those who are elderly often cannot access the platform and therefore travel.

"I am providing this information to ensure you are aware that there are significant concerns with access at Footscray train station."

Ms Hartland wrote to Attorney-General Robert Clarke in October, asking for an assessment on how the Laverton and Footscray stations satisfied disability standards and requirements for accessible public transport.

Transport Department spokesman David Stockman said it was aware of concerns about the Laverton elevators.

"[We are] investigating issues with elevators at Laverton railway station and if it is determined that there are issues we'll develop solutions to ensure that access for all people is maintained."

A Department of Transport spokeswoman said it was working with Metro, VicTrack and local police to improve security in the lifts at Laverton and Footscray stations, and to ensure swift response by repair teams wherever possible when the lifts require maintenance.

"In addition, the 2011-12 State Budget has provided \$212 million over four years to recruit 940 Victoria Police Protective Services Officers. Two Victoria Police Protective Services Officers (PSOs) will be deployed at every metropolitan train station and selected regional stations from 6pm to the last train, seven days a week. PSOs are focused on preventing and managing anti-social behaviour, alcohol and drug-related offences, weapon offences, property damage and crimes against the person."

However, minutes of the meetings between Metro and the Department of Transport obtained under freedom of information laws by Greens MP Greg Barber, shows the department expects the first PSOs to be on stations at the end of this month

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"Details are still being discussed surrounding locations, infrastructure considerations and patrol unit numbers," the minutes state.

### **DEFENCE NEEDS MORE SKILLED WORKERS - PAPER**

*The Herald Sun—1<sup>st</sup> February 2012*

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/defence-needs-more-skilled-workers-paper/story-e6frf7jx-1226259526964>

The defence industry faces a shortfall in highly skilled workers needed to fulfil high-technology projects to equip the Australian Defence Force (ADF), a discussion paper warns.

Many of the skills required by defence industries were also keenly sought by other sectors, increasingly the need for more engineers, technicians and tradespeople over the next decade.

"Overall, the key challenge is not the level of supply in most trades until 2020, rather it is the likely extent of competition for these skills from other industries, especially the resources sector," the paper, prepared by Skills Australia, said.

The Government plans to spend \$200 billion on defence force equipment over the next 10 years.

The discussion paper said the resources sector could need an additional 89,000 workers between 2010 and 2016, and there would be more demand for workers to take part in the construction of the Federal Government's National Broadband Network and other major infrastructure projects.

At present, the demand for highly skilled workers by the ADF was not a major issue due to the size of the labour market.

"This capability is reflected in the labour market, as the defence materiel supply industries workforce of around 30,000 employees is a relatively small proportion of Australia's current employment of over 11 million persons," it said.

"This means that many skills needed for the defence materiel supply industries are readily available in the labour market."

Many defence industry jobs require advanced qualifications and extensive experience, and many workers need security clearances.

Defence materiel minister Kim Carr, who launched the discussion paper at the Pacific 2012 maritime exposition in Sydney today, said competition for such skills will be fierce in the future.

"A steady supply of steelworkers, welders, electricians and mechanics is needed, among many other trades," he said in a statement.

"And we also need engineers, systems analysts, accountants and specialists in air and marine transport."

The industry and Federal Government have already launched a series of campaigns to boost defence industry skills, however Skills Australia also believed encouraging more young people to study science and maths at school would also help build a larger pool of such workers.

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### **VIOLENCE WORKSHOP PLANNED**

*Bendigo Advertiser* – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

<http://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/news/local/news/general/violence-workshop-planned/2437991.aspx>

Violence against women will be in the spotlight at a City of Greater Bendigo workshop next month.

Representatives from the Office of Women's Policy, Women's Health Victoria, City of Maribyrnong, White Community Health Services and Salvation Army will speak at the Achieving Respect and Gender Equality forum on February 22.

City of Greater Bendigo director of planning and development Prue Mansfield said the workshop was designed to bring people together to work on ways to build respect and gender equality at both a state and local level.

"Some of the themes that will be explored on the day include preventing violence against women in the home and workplace, elder abuse and community safety in the street," she said.

"Local government plays an important role in contributing to violence prevention in the community by working with a range of stakeholders to promote community safety and healthy living.

"The community's desire for the City of Greater Bendigo to take action relating to violence prevention is reinforced in the Greater Bendigo 2036 Community Plan and Council Plan 2009-2013 (updated 2011)."

Robyn Trainor from the Centre for Non Violence said one in three Australian women experienced physical violence between the ages of 15 and 44.

"And one in five experience sexual violence between the ages of 15 and 44," she said.

"These are the current statistics released in the women's action plan, it's huge."

Ms Trainor said the upcoming City of Greater Bendigo workshop was a great initiative.

"While there's a lot of focus on response with specialist services we need to do more at a preventative level," she said.

"We need to look at strategies we can implement for early intervention.

"So things like this are great."

The City of Greater Bendigo is currently developing a Violence Prevention Plan and the information gathered at the forum will be used to inform the plan.

"We hope to find out the answers to a number of questions such as what are the key issues and opportunities in terms of violence prevention for Greater Bendigo, what are some actions that could be undertaken to prevent violence and who can we partner with to achieve these actions," Ms Mansfield said.

"I would like encourage anyone with an interest in achieving respect and gender equality to attend this free forum and workshop," said Ms Mansfield.

Anyone interested in attending can download a registration form from [www.bendigo.vic.gov.au](http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au) or by emailing [socialplanning@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:socialplanning@bendigo.vic.gov.au)

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### **LAUGHING AT DEATH TRAIN FATALITY REIGNITES GRADE SEPARATION ANGER**

*Star News Group— 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/keilor-taylors-lakes-sydenham/333/story/147791.html>

Western Metropolitan MP Bernie Finn says planning is underway for a grade separation at Main Rd in St Albans after a man was struck by a train last week.

The man, aged in his 40s, is believed to have jumped the fence at St Albans Station in an attempt to beat a city-bound V/Line train at around 4.30pm on Tuesday 24 January.

His death is the third in four months on the Sydenham line, and the second at a St Albans level crossing - schoolgirl Teresa Ho died when she was hit by a train at the Furlong Rd level crossing in October last year.

Mr Finn said he was "very distressed" to hear of the man's death.

"My sympathies go out to the victim's family," Mr Finn said.

"As we have seen on far too many occasions, if you ignore the bells, if you ignore the lights, the gates and the barriers, you are taking your life into your own hands.

"I beg people not to do that."

Mr Finn said "planning processes" were happening for the Main Rd grade separation but said construction should have begun during Labor's 11 years of Government.

"Even if we had started building that underpass the day we were elected, we still wouldn't have it finished by now," he said.

"It's a huge project.

"But we are totally and absolutely committed to fixing this problem."

The Transport Safety Commission previously told Star that there had been six fatalities at the Furlong Rd crossing since 1995 and one fatality at the Main Rd crossing in 2007, along with a number of injuries (Enough is enough, St Albans Star, 19 October 2011).

Last week's incident brings the number of fatalities at each of the level crossings to eight in 17 years.

But St Albans Traders Association secretary Asip Demiri believes the numbers are much higher.

Mr Demiri said the St Albans level crossings was the number one local issue and that residents would be "relentless" in their campaign for grade separations.

He said governments past and present had "laughed at the deaths of these people" by not beginning construction.

"Tell us how you're going to do it, how's it going to look, when's it going to start and when's it going to finish," he said.

"Not a person in the world knows. I don't know what could be more important than people's lives."

Star contacted Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder but received no response before going to print.

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### LEARNING FOR LIFE

*Western Bulldogs—30<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.westernbulldogs.com.au/westernbulldogsnewsfeatures/newsarticle/tabid/4112/newsid/128319/default.aspx>

Over the past week more than 40 newly arrived Australians, as young as 5, have participated in the Western Bulldogs water safety program delivered through the Club's Settlement Grants Program (SGP).

Learning to swim is an important part of Australia's culture and a key safety concern for newly arrived refugees and migrants many of who have number come to Australia from landlocked countries and refugee camps with no prior swimming experience.

The SGP Swimming Program is just one of the many Bulldog's initiatives that help newly arrived migrants and refugees to successfully integrate into Australian communities as well as teaching them essential life skills.

Now under the auspice of Aquatics and Recreation Victoria's VICSWIM Cultural Program and supported by Hobsons Bay City Council, the SGP Swimming Program has become a regular fixture in the school holidays at the Laverton Swim and Fitness Centre for the local migrant and refugee families.

The Western Bulldogs community programs offer more than just an opportunity for people to be engaged in football and their local community.

Through programs such as the SGP the Club provides an opportunity for newly arrived Australians, children and youth in particular, to learn skills for life through sport.

Our Learning for Life philosophy is highly evident in the Bulldogs Swimming Program, funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

From the program's inception in 2007 over 400 participants have been taught essential water safety skills with nine participants going on to receive their VICSWIM Austswim certificates enabling them to transition from students to swimming teachers.

Three more young adults are currently training to become swim teachers in the VICSWIM Austswim Program fostering in the next wave of bilingual swim teachers to assist with the program.

### WERRIBEE, SUNSHINE AND MELTON AMONG WORST HIT AREAS FOR JOBS

*The Herald Sun— 29<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/werribee-sunshine-and-melton-among-suburbs-feeling-job-losses-the-most/story-fn7x8me2-1226256230487>

Up to 8000 more Victorians have been left jobless as the state's unemployment rate continues to rise.

New Australian Bureau of Statistics figures reveal unemployment in Victoria jumped 0.3 per cent to 5 per cent between December 2010 and December 2011.

The state's depressing unemployment was 0.5 per cent below NSW but matched the national average.

Melbourne's outer west, which includes suburbs such as Werribee, Sunshine and Melton, was worst affected, with 6800 more people unemployed - the highest in the state.

Melbourne's northeast, including Diamond Creek and Whittlesea, also showed a spike in job losses with an extra 4700 people joining the unemployment line.

The Gippsland region defied the depressing trend by almost cutting the number unemployed in half from 10,400 to 5800.

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The Goulburn and Murray areas also saw a drop in the number of jobless by 1800. Employment in the Barwon and Western district region remained stable.

The jobless surge comes as the Baillieu Government comes under growing pressure to produce a plan to stop an outbreak of sackings, particularly in the manufacturing industry.

A spokeswoman for Treasurer Kim Wells, Kate Walsh, denied Victoria was headed for an unemployment crisis.

"Victoria has the second-lowest unemployment rate in Australia and last year employment increased," she said.

"The Coalition Government is implementing a clear economic plan to create new jobs, increase business investment and grow exports. By contrast, Labor's only economic policy is to create a new public holiday."

But State Opposition employment spokesman Tim Pallas accused the Government of using seasonally adjusted figures that did not truly reflect the dire employment situation in Victoria.

"The Government has got to think strategically about things," Mr Pallas said.

"They have this philosophical view it's not their business to get into job creation ... it's an ambient approach to the business of government."

### **MAN, 90, DIES AFTER BEING STRUCK BY 4WD IN MARIBYRNONG**

*The Herald Sun*— 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/man-90-dies-after-being-struck-by-4wd-in-maribyrnong/story-fn7x8me2-1226255481454>

An elderly man struck by a car last week has died in hospital.

The 90-year old Maidstone man was struck by a four-wheel drive on Rosamond Rd, Maribyrnong, about 8.30am on January 20.

He was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital but died yesterday.

Police are investigating the collision and will prepare a report for the coroner.

His death brings the road toll to 23, nine more than this time last year.

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