

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

4TH MAY 2011



WELCOME

At LeadWest we monitor the local, state and national print media for news relating to Melbourne's west.

We capture articles on subjects identified in the Western Agenda: Education & Skills; Economic Development & Jobs; Transport & Infrastructure; Health & Community Development; Environment, Planning & Image; and Tourism, Arts, Culture & Recreation.

We thought we'd extend the value of this media monitoring by creating this news summary for you – a key stakeholder in Melbourne's west.

We hope you do find it valuable to get all the key local news in one place. We plan to produce this document weekly and issue it each Friday. If you don't want to receive it just let us know and we'll take you off the mailing list.

All the best

The team at LeadWest

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BRIMBANK

STATE BUDGET: GOOD NEWS FOR ST ALBANS CROSSING

Brimbank Leader – 3rd May 2011

ST ALBANS horror **level crossing will be removed after decades of local lobbying**, the State Government confirmed today.

Almost \$400 million will be provided over four years to remove the worst 10 level crossings in Melbourne, with St Albans one of the top four priority locations.

Contained in the state government's budget for 2011-12 is an initial commitment of \$16.5 million for planning work, with major construction work to be funded by 2013 following the completion of major design work.

St Albans Traders Association secretary Asip Demiri cheered upon hearing the news, which he and other locals have fought hard for over the past 10 years.

"Blow Ted Baillieu a kiss. The state government are absolute heroes and can hold their heads high," he said.

"This crossing has divided the suburb in two, but this is going to provide an increase in employment – people are going to want to invest and beautify their properties.

"It will be the biggest boost to the area we have ever seen."

Level crossings in Mitcham and Springvale will be fast tracked ahead of St Albans under the plan, with both projects to be completed by 2014.

Sunshine Hospital also scored a win in the new budget, benefiting from an investment of \$104.8 million to mental health services across the state.

It will receive four beds for mental health patients that aim to take the pressure off emergency departments, while ensuring access to acute and clinical mental health services.

The Western Autistic School has been allocated a slice of \$156 million for essential upgrades.

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Another \$97.3 million has been earmarked to purchase sites for new schools, although of four new schools highlighted in the budget, **none are in Brimbank**.

Low income households will benefit from a new \$381.6 million initiative that will give concession card holders a discount on their electricity bill all year, not just during the six-month winter period.

SOLIDARITY THE KEY IN BRIMBANK CRIME FIGHT

Brimbank Weekly – 3rd May 2011

BRIMBANK Council and local police have joined forces to tackle crime and safety issues.

Council representatives have met with police to nut out a joint strategy to target safety, policing and crime, identified in a recent survey as the biggest worries for local residents.

The strategy will focus on strengthening ties with community groups and identifying areas in which the council and police can work more closely together. It builds on existing joint youth programs and efforts to target hooning and family violence.

The council is committed to going the "extra mile" to improve safety in Brimbank, according to chairman Peter Lewinsky. Inspector Michael Grainger said police had the same priority and saw a healthy partnership with the council and the community as vital.

"We appreciate the work council does towards enhancing safety in the community and are committed to working together to make Brimbank a safer place for all," he said.

Inspector Grainger said the meeting was timely, coinciding with the allocation of 24 extra police officers to Brimbank.

Safety issues in Brimbank town centres will be a priority and local trader associations will be part of new projects to target crime.

St Albans has been singled out after the survey revealed it was the area where people felt most unsafe at night. Deer Park trader Tuncel Irgat said he welcomed any efforts to improve safety in Brimbank, but he remained sceptical. The Deniz Kebab owner was slashed across the stomach with a syringe by a woman last August, and he still feels the area is too dangerous when he leaves his store at night.

"When I finish here I feel unsafe," he said.

"Last week, there was a robbery attempt at the post office two doors down. There are not as many of the trouble-making young people around, but sometimes they come like a big gang."

Mr Irgat said police did all they could in a difficult situation, but if one area improved, trouble-makers simply moved elsewhere.

BRIMBANK PLEA FOR TRANSPORT CASH

Brimbank Leader – 3rd May 2011

MONEY for inadequate public transport services for Brimbank's growing population has dominated the top priorities from community groups for the State Budget.

With population growth booming in Brimbank, community leaders surveyed by Leader were also calling on the State Government to invest in more infrastructure and services.

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Albanvale Residents Association secretary Clare Brennan said millions of dollars had been “wasted” on studies of the much-needed level crossings at St Albans and Ginnifer stations.

“Too many people have been killed on those crossings and nothings been done,” she said.

Ms Brennan and Delahey Action Group secretary David Anderson also named the rollout of the 902 SmartBus route as one of their wishes.

Ms Brennan said the State Government had penalised the area by boosting bus services in Melton - and not Brimbank - in a \$2.8 million bus boost in 2010.

“These things go in circles and we get shuffled down the bottom of the deck,” she said.

Mr Anderson said funding for schools and health services in Brimbank was sorely needed, especially for the number of schools which had “decrepit situations”.

LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer said he would like to see strong commitment to the future growth of the state. Brimbank’s rapidly growing population meant transport, health care and employment opportunities were top priorities, he said.

What community groups wanted:

LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer:

- 1. Significant investment in transport.**
- 2. Social infrastructure such as health services, childcare and education.**
- 3. Support for jobs growth.**

Albanvale Residents Association secretary Clare Brennan:

1. Increasing bus frequency and constructive routes.
2. Level crossing at St Albans Station.
3. Level crossing at Furlong Rd, near Ginnifer Station.

Delahey Action Group secretary David Anderson:

1. Extension of 902 SmartBus route through Brimbank and Werribee.
2. Services on Watergardens train line to be equal to eastern lines.
3. Investment in schools that have urgent situations.

MENTAL HEALTH HOPES FOR SUNSHINE

Brimbank Leader – 28th April 2011

A WORLD-LEADING mental health service plans to open in Sunshine to tackle what its founder has called complex and severe issues in the area.

Internationally respected Orygen Youth Health is investigating how it can open in Sunshine’s Visy Cares Hub within the next 12 months.

The service, emulated in Europe and North America, would complement the existing Headspace youth mental health facility with the aim of giving local youths a welcoming space to tackle the problem estimated to affect 4.4 million Australians every year.

With Orygen turning away 1500 cases a year, its founder Prof Patrick McGorry said extra services were vital in disadvantaged areas such as Brimbank.

“There is an extra degree of complexity and severity in disadvantaged areas for sure,” he said.

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"An extra 20 per cent of disadvantage lessens the resources and means fewer providers, and Brimbank is typical of that."

Prof McGorry, Australian of the Year last year, said Brimbank youths struggled with multiple mental health issues but often couldn't get the help they needed.

"The scaffolding around young people making the transition to adulthood has never been very strong in disadvantaged communities," he said.

"People in these areas face a lot more pressure than those in affluent areas. Some communities have never been given a fair go.

"There needs to be a fair bit of action, not discrimination."

Prof McGorry was speaking at a Brimbank Council social justice summit where he also criticised the Federal Government's handling of asylum seekers for increasing the complexity of mental health issues.

SHUNT FORWARD FOR SUNSHINE RAIL WORKS

Brimbank Weekly – 26th April 2011

THE grade separation of the Anderson Road level crossing and a revamp for Sunshine railway station are one step closer after two consortiums were shortlisted for the works.

Synergy Rail - a consortium comprising Abigroup, Coleman Rail, John Holland, AECOM and GHD - and a consortium formed by Thiess, Balfour Beatty, Parsons Brinckerhoff and SKM will submit fully costed proposals for the works.

The final contracts are expected to be awarded next year.

Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the shortlisting of potential builders for the Footscray to Sunshine package of the Regional Rail Link was a major milestone.

"Once completed, the Regional Rail Link will become metropolitan Melbourne's first major new rail line in 80 years, improving capacity and reliability for regional and metropolitan train services across the train network," he said.

Key features of the section include two new 7.5-kilometre tracks for services from Footscray to Sunshine, redevelopment of West Footscray and Footscray stations, and an upgrade of Sunshine station. The latter will involve the construction of a new platform, changes to the existing platform and a new pedestrian bridge accessing the platforms.

The removal of two level crossings on Anderson Road, Sunshine, will also be part of the package.

Brimbank Council chairman Peter Lewinsky said Sunshine station would benefit from the footbridge and plaza entries to the station, new platform and safety improvements.

"The Regional Rail Link will also unlock 10 hectares of underdeveloped government-owned land surrounding Sunshine station that could be used for development and open space," Mr Lewinsky said.

"It will create major opportunities for urban renewal and a brighter future for Sunshine."

Ardeer and Deer Park stations could also receive additional diesel services.

Mr Mulder said the government had been forced to go to the market to find contractors due to budget pressures and the deferral of \$500million in federal government funding.

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said the project would deliver significant improvements to public transport in the west.

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OVERNEWTON COLLEGE'S \$10M MAKEOVER

Brimbank Weekly – 26th April 2011

VINEYARDS, market gardens and acres of rural land are just some of the views pupils at Overnewton College in Keilor will experience when the school's new junior school facility is complete.

Works on the two-storey building, which includes 20 classrooms, started earlier this month. The building will be ready for the 2012 school year.

Each classroom is designed to have clear views of the Maribyrnong Valley and will be equipped with interactive whiteboard technology, iPads and specially designed furniture.

Principal Jim Laussen says the new facility will have a positive effect on children's learning.

"Our current junior school is around 25 years old, so we're excited to be building a more modern and practical building," he says. "It will be run by solar power and will include rain gauges, a weather station and a power usage display, which our pupils will use for assignments."

Mr Laussen says the school will pay for all the works, to cost about \$10million.

"We are very proud of this project and we believe the pupils will respond when given a special environment to work in." Mr Laussen says parents are pleased the new junior school is being built next to the school car park. "Children won't have to walk far to meet their parents after school, and traffic congestion around the school will be reduced."

BRIMBANK TO GET NEW ADVISORY PANELS

Brimbank Weekly – 26th April 2011

BRIMBANK Council has taken the final step in establishing three new advisory committees.

Six community representatives will be on each committee.

The 18 members will draw on their experience for a community well-being committee, economic development and transport committee, and sustainability and environment committee.

Forty-seven people registered interest in the 'advisory' plan, with 33 expressions of interest lodged.

Council chairman Peter Lewinsky is pleased with the response.

"This excellent response from applicants both in and outside Brimbank is a symbol of the keen community spirit here," he said.

Anne Bourke, Myfanwy McDonald, Melissa Prescott, Mary Panayiotou-Bereux, Ranjit Singh and Tim Johnston will join the community well-being committee, to be chaired by Mr Lewinsky.

Brimbank administrator Jo Anderson will chair the sustainability and environment committee, which will have Anthony Mangiardi, Jack Sheridan, Larissa Stewart, Guy Edgar, Damien Wigley and Wayne Binney.

Bill Petreski, Maria Langwell, Rodney Con Foo, David Anderson, Tony Smith and Robert Chessel will be on the economic development committee, to be chaired by administrator Meredith Sussex.

Mr Lewinsky said the representatives would help shape council policy and action.

The committee members have been appointed for an initial 12-month term. Their first quarterly meeting is due next month.

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MARIBRYNONG

MARIBYRNONG'S SLICE OF STATE BUDGET PIE

Maribyrnong Leader – 3rd May 2011

ROAD and **infrastructure upgrades for Maribyrnong have been ignored in the 2011/2012 State Budget** but the area will receive education and health improvements.

The redevelopment of the **Rosamond Special School received \$9.5 million** in a \$208 million allocation for school capital programs across the state and a focus on special needs schools.

Education Minister Martin Dixon said the State Government was determined to give parents of children with autism and special needs improved school and better opportunities.

But Williamstown state Labor MP Wade Noonan said it was "one of the most woeful budgets ever delivered for the Williamstown electorate.

"Whilst the government has committed \$4.4 billion to upgrade infrastructure across Victoria, there is not one cent allocated in this budget to upgrade any roads, police stations, kindergartens, train stations, community facilities or our local hospital in the Williamstown electorate."

He said the lack of commitment to deliver the WestLink or Truck Action Plan projects was "outrageous and insulting".

The Regional Rail Link is mentioned in the budget but not how much money will be put towards it.

Maribyrnong Mayor Sarah Carter said infrastructure funding for the West was insufficient to sustain growth.

"We welcome the extra beds for mental health care but I would have liked to see more money contributed towards planning for the infrastructure we need as the fastest growing region in Australia," Cr Carter said.

"Westlink or an alternative (would have been good) and also the Truck Action Plan because we have too many trucks on residential streets and that's only going to grow."

Footscray's needle and syringe program will be expanded to ensure 24-hour operation.

"We still have a high incidence of needles disposed in the Footscray CBD area but I wouldn't have thought it was a high priority. It would've been nice to see some money put towards Footscray hospital," Cr Carter said.

The Banksia Adolescent Unit in Footscray will get 46 more mental health beds.

MARIBYRNONG TRAMS 'NO ISSUE' DESPITE NEAR MISSES

Maribyrnong Leader – 4th May 2011

PARENTS are **calling for safety measures at a busy tram stop at Maribyrnong College's main entrance**, fearing a student could be hit by a tram.

Parent and school council member Suzette Kroll said parents had been campaigning since 2008 to have barriers installed or a speed restriction placed on the No.82 tram line on River Street outside the college.

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After the college had raised concerns about students leaving the college "en masse" and crossing the tram tracks, a Yarra Trams internal memo was sent to drivers in September, 2009, asking them to "sound their gong well in advance of arriving ... and [ensure] the tram is slowed to a safe speed".

A study of the site by Yarra Trams in May last year also acknowledged the "risk to schoolchildren/pedestrians/passengers crossing the tram tracks".

The report concluded that tram-activated boom gates would be the best solution but ultimately would be too costly. A scissor fence with an attendant was the next-best outcome..

But to date, teachers holding a yellow chain when a tram approaches remains the only safety precaution. Contacted by the Weekly, **neither the Department of Transport nor Transport Minister Terry Mulder's office believed there was an issue and refused to comment on parents' concerns.**

The college has grown from 296 students in 2006 to 882 last year.

"We've had a couple of near misses where students have been pulled back from the tracks," Ms Kroll said.

"The potential is there for a serious injury and unless we do something more proactive it will happen.

"It's disappointing that the statutory authority and the operator are not taking the safety of students quite as seriously as parents are and parents think they should.

"We would accept a lower speed limit as in interim measure until they come up with a permanent solution."

Yarra Trams spokesman Colin Tyrus said the school council had been contacted and invited to meet company officials to discuss the problem.

Footscray MP Marsha Thomson said she was concerned about the issues raised by parents and had written to Yarra Trams' CEO.

SUDANESE LAP UP NEW CHANCE IN EDUCATION

Maribyrong Leader – 4th May 2011

In the wake of a torrent of negative publicity for the Sudanese community, Dan O'Sullivan has a closer look at some efforts being made to ease the challenging transition from war-torn homeland to Melbourne's west.

"WE'VE been delighted with their real desire to learn," says Judie Bainbridge, co-founder of the River Nile Learning Centre in Footscray.

The centre is designed to help African refugee women, particularly Sudanese, in re-engaging in education if they have failed or dropped out of mainstream institutions.

Father Don Edgar and Ms Bainbridge established the River Nile centre in 2007.

"We set it up because there has always been a significant failure rate of these new arrivals from mainstream education," Father Edgar said. "It has clearly been a problem for some time,"

River Nile is focused on helping women in the 15-25 age group, many of whom having young children, but Father Edgar says there is certainly scope to reach out to some of the young men who have been courting controversy in recent weeks.

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"It's the young men who are in need, that is obvious. There is a real problem with disengaged male youths, but we just don't have the resources to deal with them at the moment."

Maribyrnong mayor Sarah Carter agreed that engaging young men of new and emerging communities continued to be one of the great challenges for the municipality.

"There seems to be a great deal of disengagement from youth in that area. We need to be considerate and flexible in how we deal with newly arrived migrants instead of going for a one-size-fits-all approach."

Footscray police's youth resource officer, Senior Constable Jodie Ebenger, has overseen a number of programs aimed at breaking down barriers between police and new and emerging communities and maintains the relationship with the Sudanese community is "generally good".

"It's frustrating when something like this [violence] happens," she said. "Often an opinion on police has already been formed by these youths before they arrive here, so our goal is to break down those barriers. I think we generally have a good relationship with the Sudanese community, but it's a matter of building trust."

REGIONAL RAIL LINK: MARIBYRNONG COUNCIL, RESIDENTS DEMAND ANSWERS *Maribyrnong Weekly – 27th April 2011*

FOOTSCRAY residents in the path of a \$5 billion rail project still have unanswered questions about how the state government will deal with noise, pollution and property acquisition issues.

Frustration bubbled over at last week's Maribyrnong Council meeting where residents demanded to know the council's stance over concerns about noise,

vibration and air pollution that were revealed in an Environment Protection Authority report.

The report revealed possible chronic sleep disturbance from the two new tracks, which will form part of a regional service from west of Werribee to the Southern Cross station.

Residents, whose home or business has been acquired, are facing a stressful countdown to August 31 when they have to vacate their property.

They want to form a working group with the council to ensure their concerns are heard loud and clear as planning for the rail link progresses.

Mayor Sarah Carter told residents the council would "be on their [the state government's] backs to make sure we get the best outcome".

Transport Minister Terry Mulder dismissed claims that residents were not kept well informed of the project's progress. He told the Weekly his door was open to hear concerns.

"I was somewhat surprised to read in the paper comments [from residents] in that they weren't consulted and they weren't let know about the fact the project was going ahead when in actual fact the Regional Rail Link Authority contacted all parties, and we ensured that would take place.

"If [they] wish to come back [to] the table when Parliament is sitting and have a further discussion, I'm more than happy to have it."

Mr Mulder said a further environmental study was in the hands of Planning Minister Matthew Guy.

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"The minister for planning is currently engaged in a process looking at the noise levels of the project and that's a very wide-ranging review and I can't comment what that's going to be other than I don't believe it was handled well in the first place."

Asked what assurances he could give residents, Mr Mulder said: "We're looking at innovative [engineering] solutions to deal with a whole range of issues and of course noise mitigation is going to be one of those."

He said the Regional Rail Link Authority had been instructed to take into account individual circumstances regarding the eviction date.

"What I've said to the authority is for them to have discussions with some of the parties whose properties they are acquiring and, if it's possible at all, to allow any people to stay on any longer without interfering with the project ... but if it [remaining at the property after August 31] was going to delay the project in any way shape or form, well, that wouldn't be possible."

MARIBYRNONG'S TRUCK ACTION IN DOUBT

Maribyrnong Weekly – 26th April 2011

THE State Government has committed to retaining \$19 million towards the Truck Action Plan, at least in the short term with the plan under review.

Speaking at the launch of a petition to fund the \$380 million project, Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews and Williamstown MP Wade Noonan said they were concerned the Liberal Government had already spent the money on something else.

In the 2010-11 state Labor Government budget, \$11 million for the planning, design and strengthening works on Shepherds Bridge and a further \$8 million to widen the bridge for new bike and pedestrian paths were committed.

A further \$21 million for widening Whitehall and Moreland roads was announced as an election promise.

"We're not asking them (the Government) to fund it overnight, but sign up, don't abandon all our work," Mr Andrews said.

But spokeswoman Larissa Garvin, for Roads and Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder, said there were no plans to redirect funding for the project while the Truck Action Plan was under review.

Ms Garvin did not respond to when that review would be finished or if it would be in time for May budget considerations.

Mr Noonan said the community needed to work together to show the Government the project was needed.

But Westgate Community Reference Group member Bruce Light said the TAP was a short-term measure, and funding really needed to go into the \$3.6 million WestLink tunnel and freeway.

\$9M HOLE IN FOOTSCRAY NEEDS FILLING

Maribyrnong Leader – 19th April 2011

CONDITIONS at Western Region Health Service's two dental clinics are so bad one had be shut repeatedly last summer due to poor ventilation and the other is inaccessible to ambulance trolleys.

Neither fully meets infection control standards.

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WRHS chief executive Lyn Morgain said staff at the clinics were under the greatest pressure of all 17 WRHS sites due to substandard and outdated equipment.

Ms Morgain showed Liberal MP Bernie Finn around the “decaying” sites last week to demonstrate why providing \$9 million for a new clinic is critical.

He had earlier asked the government to pay for 12 new dental chairs for the site.

But Ms Morgain said they would not be able to be installed in the cramped quarters.

“The only way we can provide appropriate care for people of the western suburbs is with a new clinic at one of our existing sites.

“Last summer I was required several times to close the surgeries because of inadequate ventilation. It was too hot to treat patients.

“And the corridors at Paisley St are too narrow for an ambulance trolley to get through.”

Ms Morgain said the two clinics’ facilities were unsafe which affected recruitment and staff retention and led to increased wait times, already at 14 months for general care and 22 months for denture care.

A feasibility study for a new clinic was completed last month by Suters Architects.

Mr Finn said the present dental chairs were better placed “at the Tutankhamun exhibition” and he was now aiming for a new clinic.

“The adult clinic at Paisley St was crowded and the children’s clinic blew me away, it was falling to pieces,” he said.

“There were no toilets inside the building, the children have to go outside, which just typifies what facilities the staff have to put up with.”

“They can not continue the way they are, they told me they don’t know how long the building can physically stand up.”

Health Minister David Davis said while he believed Mr Finn was exaggerating on the age of the chairs, it was clear there was a need for “some attention”.

MELTON

STATE BUDGET: SLIM PICKINGS FOR MELTON AND MOORABOOL
Melton Leader – 3rd May 2011

BALLAN appears to be our area’s only winner from the 2011-12 State Budget with most of Melton and Moorabool Shires failing to get a mention.

None of the items on mayors’ Pat Griffin or Justin Mammarella’s budget wish lists, which included the Caroline Springs train station and a rebuild of the Bacchus Marsh Secondary College, were funded.

Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella said he was really disappointed for his community.

“I’m disappointed for the community who have to walk to Melton station in the mud and people waiting for surgery.”

He said west Melbourne and especially the outer suburbs had not received anything from the Liberal conservative government.

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“The lack of funding demonstrates that the government is not planning ahead and has no plan or strategy in place for the west,” Mr Nardella said.

But \$2 million was set aside to redevelop the Ballan Hospital and a further \$700,000 will be spent to fully fund and upgrade the Ballan railway station.

Water projects in both shires were also given the nod.

More than \$18.3 million was allocated for the Central Highlands Water Wastewater Reticulation and Treatment Scheme in Gordon and \$3.1 million has been budgeted to aerate a lagoon in Bacchus Marsh. Stage 2 of the Woodend Recycled Water project was not funded this year.

In Melton, \$4.5 million was earmarked for various water main, sewerage and infrastructure upgrades, but the Surbiton Recycled Water Plant Storage Lagoon Refurbishment missed out.

More than \$24 million was allocated to the Western Highway Realignment - Anthony's Cutting project and a further \$2.9 million will be spent to duplicate Kings Rd from the Calder Freeway to the Melton Highway.

The government has also allocated \$4 million over the next four years to reinstate a fox and wild dog bounty across the state providing hunters with \$50 for each wild dog and \$10 for each fox they kill.

DENTISTS COME TO TOWN, AND STAY

Melton Weekly – 3rd May 2011

MELTON residents have fewer excuses not to make an appointment with the dentist with a new dental centre opening in town.

More than 1200 people have been 'opening wide' each month at the \$4.9million Melton Dental Health Service since it opened on Barries Road late last year.

The centre features 12 chairs, as well as two laboratories for making dentures and plates and conducting sterilisation

Djerriwarrh Health Services' deputy chief executive, David Grace, said **the new addition made access to public dental services much more convenient to local people.** "It would be one of the biggest clinics in Victoria," he said.

However, despite it operating at full-capacity, there is still a waiting list of several months, reflecting a shortage in dental services not only in the region but the entire state.

"Access is a big issue. It is challenging getting appointments in a timely manner," Mr Grace said.

The centre has 20 staff, including four dentists. A further 10 LaTrobe University dentistry students, increasing to 20 next year, work under supervision.

"We like to think some of them, once trained, will want to work in the local area," Mr Grace said. "It can be very difficult to attract dentists. "

Melton Dental Health Service replaces the former one-chair van that visited Coburn Primary School for check-ups on children. The new centre is open to preschool and primary school pupils, secondary school students with a parent on a pension, and adults on a pension. Previously, most of these people would have to travel to St Albans or Footscray services or to private clinics in town.

Oral health therapist Ronald Lopez said the upgrade was improving the rate of appointments.

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He said that, ideally, people should visit the dentist every 12 months - but at least every couple of years - to detect gum disease and tooth decay.

Bacchus Marsh resident Hayley Mitchell, 22, is an apprentice dental technician with the service, learning the trade 'on the job' while studying part-time. "It's good to work in a brand-new lab," she said. "It's so close to home. I always expected to have to go into the city to get a job."

HEALTH, TRAINS TOP LIST FOR MELTON STATE BUDGET WISH LIST

Melton Leader – 2nd May 2011

HEALTH and transport are high on the wish list for Melton Shire when the State Budget is handed down next week.

Melton state Labor MP Don Nardella and Melton Shire Mayor Justin Mammarella have flagged improvements to the shire's health facilities and public transport as priorities.

Mr Nardella said he hoped the government would fund improvements at Melton railway station, including the sealing of car spaces and extra CCTV.

He also pushed for the Melton Day Hospital to be built and for extra mental health services.

"I'd like to see the relocation of the Melton Community Health Centre next to Melton Health and the building of the Melton Day Hospital next to Melton Health," he said.

"Also, more mental health services, especially for our young people and families."

Cr Mammarella also pushed for funding towards transport and health services, including the building of a public hospital in Melton and the start of work on Caroline Springs railway station, which has been deferred.

"Council welcomes the State Government's commitment to the Regional Rail Link, which is a very important project for the Western Region," Cr Mammarella said.

"Council, along with several other municipalities in the west, strongly advocated for it and we will continue to lobby for other services and infrastructure, including a public hospital in Melton, the railway station in Caroline Springs, electrification and duplication of the Melton rail service and an upgrade to its carpark and the duplication of the Melton Highway."

STRONG STUDENT DEMAND FOR ISLAMIC SCHOOL

Melton Weekly – 26th April 2011

MELTON Shire would be the ideal location for a new Islamic school, according to Imam Buksh, business manager of Iqra Grammar College.

The college has applied to Melton Council for a permit to build a private Islamic co-education primary school in Kurunjang.

"There are a lot of people living there. We have Muslims in that area. There is a demand for supply," Mr Buksh said.

While the application provides for 80 pupils, he said there could be up to 1000 pupils educated at Iqra campuses in Melton in future years.

Iqra College was established in 2006 in Minto, New South Wales, but there are plans to expand to Melbourne.

"We want our colleges everywhere in the world," Mr Buksh said.

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"There are already 35 Muslim schools in Australia. Education is very important to us."

The proposed campus on Gisborne-Melton Road would offer a range of academic subjects, as well as Islamic religious education and Arabic language classes.

The school would allow enrolments from the wider community, Mr Buksh said.

"It is open for anybody, any race, religion or culture."

The school philosophy is that students should strive for excellence, equity and a strong moral ethos.

"We want people to understand us. We will talk to anybody. We want the best for this country. This is our home."

BUILD CAROLINE SPRINGS STATION: ALP
Melton Leader – 22 April 2011

PRESSURE has been put on the State Government to confirm if it will deliver a new railway station for Caroline Springs.

Leader exclusively reported in March that the Baillieu Government was reviewing all the previous government's public transport commitments, including the \$189 million pledge to build four new railway stations in Melbourne's growth areas, including at Caroline Springs.

Visiting the site of the proposed Caroline Springs railway station last week, Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews said Premier Ted Baillieu should be ashamed for not supporting a project that would provide better transport facilities in the area. "Families in Caroline Springs need a railway station and the only person holding this important project up is Mr Baillieu," he said.

Mr Andrews said more people than ever were using Victoria's rail network and it was vital new stations and commuter services were delivered to major growth areas such as Caroline Springs.

"Now, almost five months after being elected, the Baillieu Government is still dithering and unwilling to confirm whether they will build a railway station for Caroline Springs," he said. "Mr Baillieu needs to get on with the job and finish what Labor started."

Kororoit state Labor MP Marlene Kairouz said a Caroline Springs station would serve the growing local community, which is expected to become home to nearly 25,000 people over the next 10 years.

"The new station on the Melton line between Rockbank and Deer Park stations, about 1km south of Caroline Springs, will enable V/Line services to connect communities with vital services and will improve transport options for residents," she said.

Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder said the new coalition government was determined to bring better public transport to Melbourne's growing western suburbs and rural cities.

He said announcements regarding specific projects would be made on May 3 when the government's state budget was brought down.

MOONEE VALLEY

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STATE BUDGET: PLANS FOR MOONEE PONDS FIRE STATION SEARED BY BLOW-OUT

Moonee Valley Leader

A \$5.4 million blow-out in the price tag for a new fire station in Moonee Ponds has been revealed in today's State Budget.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade project is now tipped to cost \$7 million, according to the Victorian Government's State Capital Program papers, which is likely to only further delay the project.

MFB western zone Commander Peter Thomas told the Leader in January 2010 that the former Foxtel site near the Moonee Ponds junction had been considered for a new station.

But no decision had been made and it was under review. Commander Thomas said at the time a "hole" had been identified in response times to Strathmore and Essendon North and the Moonee Ponds station would help fill that gap.

There was only one new capital works project specifically for Moonee Valley – a \$7.4 million investment in upgrading water mains from North Essendon to Footscray. That is part of an overall \$83 million project that still has \$66 million to be funded.

Other local capital works projects funded include:

- The last stage of Flemington Primary School's modernisation, including new classrooms was funded, worth \$111,000.
- The Western Autistic School in Niddrie will get \$604,000 to expand as part of a \$4 million project, with \$3.4 million yet to be funded.

- Dousta Galla Kensington will get \$380,000 towards planning and development of its community health centre. A total of \$620,00 remains outstanding on that project.
- A total of \$19.3 million was funded for a new Melbourne North police station, worth \$20.6 million overall.

Essendon state Labor MP Justin Madden was scathing of the Budget, saying it delivered "nothing to the electorate".

"In the lead up to the State Election they offered nothing to the western community and we see a confirmation of that today," Mr Madden told mooneevalleyleader.com.au

"Basically, their first State Budget I think is an embarrassment for them. It contains no vision to grow jobs in our state or ensure security for Victorians. The Treasurer's speech didn't mention jobs once."

Mr Madden denied the lack of big ticket items for Essendon was punishment for voting in a Labor candidate when the Coalition won the election.

"I think it shows whether it was in their campaign or whether it was in the selection of their candidate, or whether it was today's announcements, they care little for the Essendon electorate and they have a track record of that."

LATTE LINE MOVING WEST

Moonee Valley Leader – 26th April 2011

MELBOURNE'S middle class is rapidly leaving behind the leafy eastern suburbs for a new life west of the Yarra River, a leading demographer has found.

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Bernard Salt says a new middle class has evolved from Essendon down to Williamstown - dubbed "Melbourne's Latte Line" - over the past 10 years, signifying a major shift in the way north and western suburbs are perceived.

Mr Salt's research, commissioned by Victoria University to better understand cultural shifts in the western region, found booming populations in Wyndham and Melton had created a middle-class wedge in the inner west.

That wedge, which covers most of Moonee Valley, is where people are now "aspiring" to live and shop, much like Chapel St, South Yarra, is to Melbourne's inner east and Brunswick St, Fitzroy, to Melbourne's north.

Mr Salt said the social geography that has defined Melbourne's east had finally taken root in Melbourne's west.

"It's almost as if all the talent, all the aspiration, all the chutzpah of 700,000 residents of Melbourne's west had percolated towards the CBD and settled and tamed a new middle-classed frontier," Mr Salt said.

In the 10 years to 2006, the number of white-collar residents in the inner north-western corridor jumped from 18,000 to 79,000, with white-collar jobs and people with higher education qualifications also increasing.

Another indicator had been the rise of fine dining restaurants west of the Maribyrnong and Yarra rivers. In 1999, there was just one, but this has since jumped to 10, with five of those in Moonee Valley.

"Doctors, teachers and other professionals are moving to the inner west in big numbers and they are bringing their foodie ways with them, although many more are desperately needed west of the Latte Line," Mr Salt said.

Moonee Ponds cafe owner Dean Perks, of 42 Cafe and Bar, is among those who moved from east to west four years ago.

"We looked all around the south-eastern suburbs. I'm originally from that side, but my business partner (Steve Carson) came over one time and walked into Puckle St," he said.

"It had a good feel and looked a good area with potential."

MAYORS JOIN FORCES TO CUT CITYLINK TOLLS

Moonee Valley Leader – 26th April 2011

THE mayors of Moreland and Moonee Valley have hatched a bold plan that would put an end to 11 years of motorists being sluggish with CityLink tolls on the Tullamarine Freeway.

Moreland's Oscar Yildiz and Moonee Valley's John Sipek have joined forces to lobby the State Government to remove the toll point north of Moreland Rd, which would make it free to travel to or from the city via Flemington Rd from the northern suburbs.

They say this would prevent drivers from using the Bulla Rd and Bell St exits to avoid tolls on their way to the city, which they blame for the traffic chaos in their municipalities.

Both mayors admit the campaign won't be easy. But if they can pull it off, it would be their biggest achievement in local government, saving drivers money everyday and easing traffic congestion.

Motorists have been charged tolls to use the Tullamarine Freeway since CityLink opened in 2000 and Transurban's 34-year contract to operate the road doesn't expire until 2035.

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Cr Sipek said he thought the northwest had "paid its dues" and it was time to move the toll.

"The roads are clogged up across the municipality: Keilor Park Drive, Buckley St, Mt Alexander Rd, Bulla Rd, take your pick," he said.

"Our two cities cop the worst of it and I'm prepared to start a petition to send to the State Government. It was the Liberal Government who put it there in the first place, now their apprentices should do the right thing by the community."

Victorian Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder said high population growth in the northern suburbs had resulted in increased traffic.

"There will always be some who choose to travel further or longer simply to avoid tolls but there is no evidence to suggest that this is the sole reason for drivers exiting at Bell St or Bulla Rd," he said.

"VicRoads is always investigating and reviewing traffic issues and possible solutions for Melbourne's growing population."

Shadow Minister for Roads Jacinta Allen urged Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu to meet with Mr Yildiz and Mr Sipek to hear their concerns.

WYNDHAM

STATE BUDGET: WYNDHAM GETS ONLY SMALL SLICE OF PIE

Wyndham Leader

WYNDHAM has received a small share of this year's State Budget, despite it now being the fastest growing municipality in Australia.

The State Budget was released this afternoon by Premier Ted Baillieu.

Wyndham will get \$2m for the first stage of work on a \$10m P-9 school at Point Cook and \$2m for the first stage of a new \$10m P-9 school at Tarneit.

The Western Autistic School at Laverton, just outside Wyndham in Hobsons Bay, will also be extended.

There is also \$3 million to start planning a direct rail link to Wyndham's closest airport at Avalon.

The Liberals promised no Wyndham-specific projects leading up to last year's State Election.

Wyndham grew by 12,600 or almost 9 per cent in 2009-10, more than any other local government area in the country, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures.

Wyndham Council has been calling on state and federal governments to provide more funds to help it cater for the growing population. Wyndham now has 12 arterial or state roads that are over capacity.

Altona Labor MP Jill Hennessy said she felt the West had been ignored in the State Budget.

"The Baillieu Government's first budget has demonstrated its contempt and neglect of the West," she said.

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“Specifically **the budget did not deliver on Westlink or an alternative to the West Gate; projects to address local road congestion; any projects to deliver and support employment and no significant capital investment in health services.**

“I am deeply disappointed at the lack of investment in roads and public transport.”

But Ms Hennessy did welcome funding for the first stage of the P-9 school in Alamanda Blvd, Point Cook, and for a prep-9 school at Tarneit.

TIME FOR WYNDHAM 'PEOPLE POWER'

Wyndham Leader – 3rd May 2011

THE same “people power” used to defeat plans for a toxic waste dump at Werribee in 1998 is needed in Wyndham

But this time **people should campaign to secure more funds from state and federal governments for Wyndham’s booming population.**

Cr Shane Bourke told a council meeting last week the city should consider holding a public forum on its infrastructure needs in the coming months.

He said people would again “come out in droves”.

“The only way to make governments sit up and take notice is with people power,” he said.

The comments came during discussion on a council submission to a State Government inquiry into liveability in Melbourne’s outer suburbs, including the impacts of population growth.

Cr Bourke said the state needed to pitch in more to cater for new residents, as did Lalor federal MP (whose electorate includes Wyndham) and Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

“The Prime Minister can’t get away with not putting more things into this city as well,” he said.

Last year, Cr Bourke told Ms Gillard at a forum in Wyndham about the pressures of population growth.

He said the council could not keep up without help, despite spending a massive \$105 million on capital works in 2010-11.

About 30 people in the public gallery at last week’s meeting clapped after Cr Bourke’s comments.

They also applauded Cr Heather Marcus, who said liveability in Wyndham was declining.

“I moved here to Wyndham in 1969 because Werribee at that stage was known as the country suburb. How this has changed so quickly with the rapid growth,” she said.

A spokesman for Ms Gillard said last week the Federal Government had invested heavily in local infrastructure, including more than \$3.2 billion for the proposed regional rail link project and \$134 million for Building the Education Revolution projects at schools in the electorate.

There was no decision last week on the public forum suggestion.

HEALTH DEMANDS

Star News – 26th April 2011

NINE new dentists, 28 more GPs, 150 extra nurses and 120 additional primary school teachers will be required annually to deal with Wyndham and Melton's rapidly increasing populations, according to new research.

LEADWEST'S NEWS SUMMARY FOR MELBOURNE'S WEST

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Last week, KPMG demographer Bernard Salt presented his research into the changing social and economic status of residents in the West, at Victoria University's Footscray Park campus.

The university commissioned the research, which found the combined growth of Wyndham and Melton – adding up to around 20,000 people in the 12 months to June last year – also created annual demand for 6000 dwellings, approximately \$1.2 billion in new residential mortgages, \$200 million new retail spending, two cinema screens and 14,000 extra cubic metres of pre-mixed concrete.

Mr Salt's presentation said there was a “desperate need for doctors, nurses, dentists in the West” as well as a “rising need for training and skills in property and business services, retail, health, construction and transport”.

Mr Salt said jobs needed to be taken out of the Melbourne CBD and created in the West to help ease transport woes.

He said a long-term solution to keep up with the demand for doctors and teachers would be for students to “train and grow locally” at places such as Victoria University.

The demographer also outlined research which showed there was a “wedge” of “aspirational and professional inner-city middle-class” residents emerging in the inner west including Essendon, Footscray, Yarraville and Williamstown.

Mr Salt described this “latte line” or “goat's cheese curtain” as stopping at New St, Rosamund Rd and Hoffmans Rd.

“What I am looking for is a middle-class invasion, if you like, of Melbourne's inner-west,” he said.

He said the “persons per medico ratio” west of the “latte line” was 1300 to one, whereas for rest of Melbourne the average was 320 to one, during the 2006 census.

Mr Salt predicted this could change, with the new middle-class residents of the West being “articulate and organised” and not content to live with certain issues, such as trucks creating noise in their neighbourhoods at night.

Mr Salt also said Sunshine looked set to become the “Yarraville-Seddon of 2020” if the West's population growth continued to grow rapidly.

ACROSS THE REGION

LEADWEST PUSHES WEST GATE ALTERNATIVE TO REDUCE CONGESTION

Supply Chain Review – 3rd May 2011

Representatives from Melbourne's fastest growing region are calling on the Victorian Government to proceed with plans to build an alternative access to the West Gate Bridge to ease freight congestion.

Lobby group LeadWest, which was formed by councils in the city's west in 2007, wants Transport Minister Terry Mulder to help relieve the bridge from further congestion.

The group wants the former government's WestLink project, which was designed to improve access for heavy vehicles to the Port of Melbourne, to proceed.

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The bridge currently serves as a critical link connecting freight, business and employment and is the only major route linking regional Victoria, LeadWest CEO Anton Mayer says.

"Victoria needs an alternative to the West Gate Bridge which is reaching capacity," he says.

"The amount of traffic passing through the Port of Melbourne is expected to double by 2035 as Australia's largest port quadruples its operations, handling up to eight million containers per year.

"The efficiency of the road network in the western communities surrounding the port is critical to Victoria's economy and congestion is currently costing the state as much as \$2.6 billion per year and this is expected to double within the next 15 years.

"The uncertainty about the future of Westlink has left investment and development in the west on hold, to the detriment of businesses and communities in the area as well as surrounding regional economies."

The request comes days before the government is due to announce its first budget. The former Labor government's \$2.5 billion road tunnel proposal from Footscray to Docklands is unlikely to go ahead.

"The West Gate Bridge on any morning going into the city is already chock-a-block. It takes a huge amount of time from places like Point Cook to make your way into the city because of the sheer volume of both freight and pedestrian vehicles using the road," Mayer says.

"If anything happens at the bridge then west of Melbourne and west of Victoria is basically cut off.

"Because the bridge is so crowded and you've got no alternatives, you've got an awful lot of truck movement between the port precinct and the depots in and out of western suburbs."

Mulder was quoted saying the government will fight for more Commonwealth funding to ease road congestion but would not comment on the future of Labor's proposed tunnel.

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER ALLOCATED TO WERRIBEE RIVER

Stock and Land - 28 April 2011

WATER Minister Peter Walsh has signed off on an environmental entitlement to increase flows in the Werribee River to help maintain water quality and protect aquatic plants and animals.

Mr Walsh made the announcement, which will see about 3 billion litres of water returned to the Werribee River in coming months, with Upper House Coalition MPs Andrew Elsbury and Bernie Finn on the banks of the river yesterday.

"The entitlement will improve the environmental values and health of the Werribee River and its tributaries by legally entitling the river to 10 per cent of the inflows into Lake Merrimu," Mr Walsh said.

"This is a great outcome for the river which is a centre for social and recreational activities and is recognised as a river of very high regional significance.

"At present the Werribee River only receives passing flows below weirs and reservoirs, or unregulated flows when reservoirs and weirs spill.

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“This entitlement will return flows to the river to help create the conditions under which the whole river’s ecosystem – including native fish and platypus – can thrive.”

Mr Walsh said in accordance with section 48B of the Water Act 1989, an order to make the changes official would be published in the Government Gazette in the next few weeks.

Lake Merrimu has a storage capacity of about 32 billion litres and is primarily used by Western Water to supply drinking water to Melton and Bacchus Marsh. Southern Rural Water also operates the reservoir to supply some water to irrigators.

At present 20 per cent of the inflows to Lake Merrimu and 20 per cent of the dam’s storage capacity is unallocated.

Once the entitlement is established, the environment will have a start-up allocation of about 3 billion litres in Lake Merrimu. From then on, it will be entitled to 10 per cent of Lake Merrimu’s inflows.

The new environmental entitlement will have no impact on the entitlements of Southern Rural Water customers who divert water from the Werribee system for irrigation, industrial or stock and domestic use.

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