

# THE TIMES

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Murray councillor attacks policy which excludes NSW

# Weyrich slams Bridge debate

MURRAY Shire's deputy mayor, Tom Weyrich, has slammed the approach his own council, and other stake holders took when negotiating the Mid-West Bridge and Western alignment.

He says the Mid-West option is "not the best" and says he is critical of the legislation which is peculiar to Victoria only.

Cr. Weyrich also revealed that the Murray council has never had a vote on any alignment that has been put forward to them.

"Echuca-Moama has been waiting for this Bridge since 1970, we're not far from this being an embarrassment to the



Cr. Tom Weyrich

Victorian Government," he told *The Times*.

He also said that "VicRoads numbers are rubbery at best", referring to recent traffic modelling VicRoads released, and other studies. "What they're (VicRoads) building is for 20 years, while the West is for 100 years."

Weyrich is an adamant supporter of the Western **Page 4**➤



Along with bringing chilly mornings and not much rain, winter has brought some beautiful clear skies, as you can see here.

# VicRoads v Vic Park

The propaganda, the accusations: how CCG member Kay McLaurin attacked VicRoads, only to be left in a spin

## WAR OF THE WORDS

**KAY MCLAURIN (CCG MEMBER)**

The headlines "Options stack up" is unforgivable when less than 24 hours prior the CCG meeting was clearly and accurately pointing out some glaring concerns in the traffic modelling of the corridor and that the modelling in no way "stacked up".

We were under the assumption you would take our concerns away and further work with them, not blast to the community that all is well with your model and even worse, infer the CCG were party to this.

Statements such as "We have changed the access to Vic Park to make it more accessible" is outrageous considering a massive earthen wall is intended to bisect the park. These responses smack of desperation on Vic Roads part and highlight to me what little value Vic Roads places on the CCG's community driven opinion.

The information bulletin you tabled at the last CCG is yet another example of only telling the community what Vic Roads wants it to hear. I strongly object to these bulletins being released until all the studies have clearly been assessed and that both the negative and positive aspects of the studies are reported to the community.

This type of media coverage is otherwise known as propaganda and the information bulletin's title should be changed to "Misinformation bulletin" if Vic Roads continues down this track of one sided reporting.

**HAGEN RIECK (VICROADS P.R)**

You might recall from the last CCG meeting that I discussed that we view one of the CCG's essential roles was to provide us with feedback that improves the way we communicate with and inform the communities of Echuca and Moama about this important project.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring the upcoming studies and figures are as robust as possible. Importantly, the role and input from the CCG and other key stakeholders is vital to helping ensure the community fully understand the outcomes.

We fully understand that the community wants to know what a new crossing will mean to them and how they will be affected. And like the communities of Echuca – Moama, we are aware that we need a new bridge. Therefore, it's vital that the community is kept well informed; importantly that the information provided to them is valuable, relevant, clear and easy to understand, easily accessible and above all factual. Your valuable feedback is helping us ensure this continues.

Our last meeting with the local media was in fact very useful for both parties. We provided a broad overview of the previous night's meeting... How this information is then represented is not something we have direct influence over, nor should we be seen to be either...something I'm sure you can personally appreciate.

I take this opportunity to address a key point you raised in your email "incredible display of spin at best and was misleading to the community". As managers of this important planning study, our continuing role is to provide updates to the community on the current status of the study's findings.

# Governor to Visit

Briefly...

## Victoria's Sri Lankan born Governor to stop in Echuca

STUFF Brumby, because his boss is coming to town. Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II representative in Victoria, Professor David de Kretser AC will tour the region in four days time, to do nothing in particular. As Australia is a constitutional monarchy, extraordinary powers are given to those who sit in Vice Regal positions, and the Professor actually has the power to dismiss the Premier. No doubt some of the regions farmers will try to convince him to do so, to end Brumby's "ridiculous water-stealing leadership." We can only hope he'll take it on board. The Governor and his wife are interested in the "extraordinary things that are happening here in our region", according to our Mayor, such as agriculture and climate change. Mmm, sounds fun.

The de Kretser's also plan to visit a working dairy farm, to see a cow produce milk (11,500 litres of milk actually). The Campaspe Shire stated in a media release: "Also on the itinerary is a visit to a privately owned company which is a leading provider of material movement solutions, including conveying and line control, palletising, robotic automation and complete project delivery." Umm, what?



Victorian Governor David de Kretser AC.

Aren't we meant to keep the Governor interested? I'm sure Mrs. De Kretser will be fascinated by the conveying and line control... But it wouldn't be a regal visit to a small country town without a trip to a local primary school. The mayor might have to apologise for not having a ribbon ready for the Governor to cut, as they are so used to doing. Of course he'll have to take a ride on the *PS Pevensey* (Which the Governor General did last year) and will probably mingle with the 'worthy' upper class Echucarites. He'll enjoy it all!

### Street

- THE Murray Shire Council has finally waded into the Mid-West Bridge debate, with deputy Mayor Tom Weyrich opposed to the route and critical of the legislation that gives the Victorian Government most of the power. Weyrich also told *The Times* that he thought VicRoads traffic numbers were "a bit rubbery."

### Local

- AN EXPLOSION has left a nineteen-year-old with burns to 30% of his body. The Kyabram man was in the cellar of the Bridge Hotel on Tuesday afternoon when an explosion took place, he was later flown to the Alfred Hospital. WorkSafe and Victoria Police still have no idea how the blast was caused, however they found a broken gas bottle at the scene.

### National

- AN Australian Rio Tinto mining executive has been arrested by Chinese police, along with four of his staff on the suspicion of bribery and stealing state secrets. After almost a week in jail, with no official charges, Stern Hu will meet with consular staff soon to discuss his situation.

### World

- ETHNIC tensions have been blamed for the loss of 156 Chinese people in riots in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang region. The Government has vowed to execute those responsible for starting the riots, and President Hu Jintao has flown back from the Italian G8 summit to deal with the problem.

# Weyrich critical of Bridge diplomacy

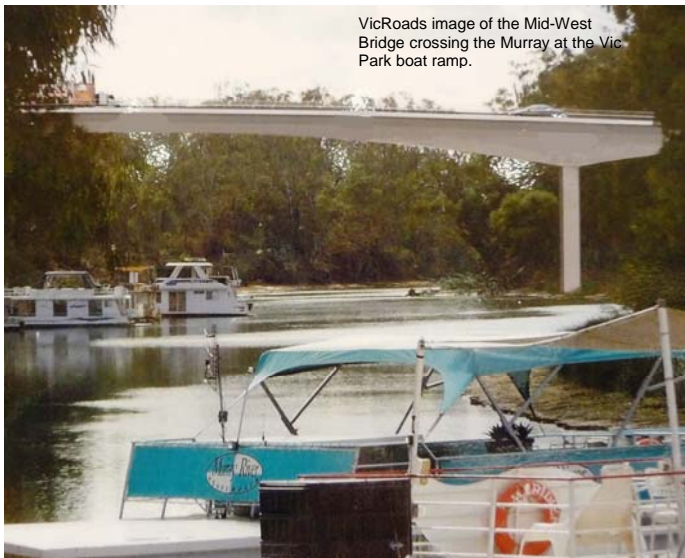
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option, however is critical of the way the negotiations between the Yorta Yorta aboriginal group and other stakeholders took place. He says that the diplomacy was “not too pleasant”, however has accepted the errors of the past.

“I am respectful of the aboriginals, but I have to be careful what I say.”

Although if councillor Weyrich could have an alternative choice, he says he would choose the Eastern option.

“I’ve talked to people who have been long term locals of Echuca and understand the nuts and bolts of the town and they support the Eastern route,” he said. Cr. Weyrich believes that the Eastern route would cost a phenomenal amount of money to build, however *The Times* informed him that the Mid-West could cost in excess of \$150



VicRoads image of the Mid-West Bridge crossing the Murray at the Vic Park boat ramp.

million.

The Murray Shire council has a delegate in the Community Consultative Group who supplies the councillors with the latest information, however the council, which is considered a major stakeholder in the Mid-West alignment has stayed relatively quiet, and has not waded into

any Bridge debates.

Cr. Weyrich says he supports further investigations into the alignment, but is hesitant to support it, even though “time is running out.”

The Murray council, like it’s Campaspe counterpart has not stated it’s opinion on the proposed Bridge, and will only do so when all the studies are finished.

**THE CROFTON STREET TIMES**

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# SPORT

Echuca is now placed ninth on the GVFL ladder after a loss against Mooroopna at the weekend.



## Echuca downed but not out after loss

ECHUCA is disappointed, but not giving up after it lost quite considerably in a match against Mooroopna.

**Final score: Mooroopna 103 d Echuca 57.**

The first quarter saw neither teams dominate, however Echuca emerged four points ahead. However after the first break, Mooroopna took the lead, and it stayed that way for the rest of the match.

By half time, Mooroopna

was 27 points ahead, mostly thanks to the seven goals they kicked during that quarter, compared with Echuca's two.

However in the second half, the opposition took off, even more so, and eventually won the game by 46 points.

Echuca's best players were multiple goal kicker Josh Edgar, Simon Maddox, Brendan Prendergast Chris Casey and Liam Voigt.

### GVFL LADDER

13. Rochester
14. Kyabram
15. Tatura
16. Mansfield
17. Mooroopna
18. Seymour
19. Shepparton
20. Shepparton Swans
21. Echuca
22. Euroa
23. Shepparton United
24. Benalla

## EDITORIAL

# Is taxing smokers going to curb death?

SOME of the most revered people in history were heavy smokers. Robert Menzies, Winston Churchill, even Barack Obama has admitted to lighting up every now and then.

So does that make it okay to get hooked on the fags?

Well, no. Endless scientific reports have found that cigarettes kill, they are addictive and they are dangerous to those around you. And now the government is making sure that even less people smoke.

The government is considering a massive tax hike on “cancer sticks” and will ban all remaining advertising as well as covering the packs with danger labels.

But will this solve the cigarette problem? Will it stop the deaths? Or could there be a worse result.

The proposed taxes would make a pack of 30 cost over twenty dollars – and in today’s financial crisis, that would be an even bigger



Cigarette prices are set to rise substantially.

burden on addicted smokers. So what’s the cheaper alternative? Marijuana. Cocaine. Drugs. Countless evidence has found that drugs are much more harmful than cigarettes, and with massive taxes now on cigarettes, drugs look to be cheaper. When cigarettes are inevitably banned from Australia, and they will be, people will discover that growing a marijuana plant

out the back yard is way easier than risking jail by being involved in cigarette and drug trading. Why pay a fortune for the precious product when it’s out the back for free?

Three million Aussies smoke, and the Government is hoping that the taxes will bring that down to two million. And it probably will, but there is nothing stopping the drug user’s rate from skyrocketing.

# OPINION

Your views, your say, your Opinion

## ODD BOX East

Yorkshire newlyweds Claire and Stuart Linley opened their wedding presents - to find they had been given 24 toasters. They had asked for cash or vouchers from their 160 guests, but realised something was amiss when they received a pile of gifts all in same-shaped boxes

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

I'm like Bush, I see the world more like checkers than chess.

**Dennis Miller**

## JOKE BY JAKE

Where do blondes go to meet their relatives?  
The vegetable garden!

**By Jake Morris**

# HOROSCOPE



I WENT to the gym for the first time the other day. I don't get why people get so hyped up about them, I mean, it hurts. I don't know how some people can lift those huge 80kg weights... I suppose it comes with being an exercise freak who wastes their life in the gym, trying to impress anyone's who watching (but truthfully no one really cares). People say they go to the gym to get fit, but really just stand out the front, eating a meat pie, then brag about going there to their friends. But if you ever do go to they gym, keep out of the way of the intimidating instructors... they'll make you work!

## “Were you saddened by the death of Michael Jackson?”



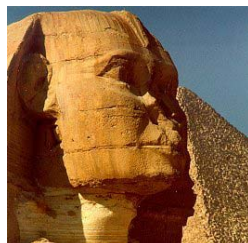
**Richard Wilkins**

“Oh definitely, Channel 9 viewers were also saddened by Jeff Goldblum’s shock death.”



**Joe Jackson**

“He may have been white trash, abused by me and a bit weird, but he was my son and I, uh, love him (and his record contracts)”



**The Sphinx**

“It’s always sad to loose a member of the family.”

## Critic's choice

### Journos

#### SBS1, 9.30pm Sundays

THE majority of journalists aren't intrepid adventurers who are imbedded in war zones and will do anything to report the story to the public. Most just sit in front of their computer talking on a phone. But for the few journos that risk their lives on battlefields in foreign countries, SBS's new series is very intriguing, and gives you a look at how this newspaper reports the stories that matter (Cough! Cough!)

### 'Til Death

#### Channel 9, 8pm Fridays

THE last time I had a big belly laugh was while watching *'Til Death*. It's a show of simple comedy – the usual battle of the sexes thing – and the old married couple, Eddie and Joy, do well to make us laugh. I was cracking up about a marriage retreat they went to, however they couldn't complete the true unity test of "finishing each others sentences", especially when Eddie tries to start a sentence with "Sandwich". Very funny.

### Football

#### Channel 10, 7, weekends

ALTHOUGH I was quite depressed that my team, Geelong, lost to Saint Kilda last weekend, it was a truly magnificent game of footy. The two top teams battled it out in front of a TV audience of millions, who all witnessed the incredible skills and tactics both teams paraded during the match. Although Geelong only lost by a goal, it made better viewing because the scores were so tight in the final minutes. Unfortunately the Saints slotted in one goal a few minutes before the siren.

## "THIS Afternoon"

WHAT were the mysterious people lurking around behind the scenes at Channel 9 thinking? "Let's replace our 4:30 news bulletin with a dumbed down talk show about American celebrity gossip!" Well, someone must have suggested that at one of their little gatherings, because that's what they have put on the air. *THIS Afternoon*, as it's been called, is like an afternoon edition of the *Today* show. With a tiny snippet of news, then they cross live to Los Angeles to get the latest celebrity news. (I'm also confused about why they always have the word 'This' in capitals)

Anyway, Andrew Daddo and Katrina Blowers host the hour long show, while Mark Ferguson reads the news every now and then, while secretly seething inside about his stupid decision to join the show. I reckon he's going to leap across the desk one day and punch Daddo in the face for being such a tool, and for not reading the autocue properly.

I thought the *Today* show was trashy, but I realise this show is merely being raped to sell its advertisements to the Bogans who watch it. It's also full of promos for shows on Channel 9, including *Millionaire Hot Seat* – which is on straight after the show finishes. Does anyone else realise all they want is ratings? It's nothing about news and current affairs, like the website says, just gossip and "magazine segments" as they say.

But if you're like me and can't stand shows that treat you like a ignorant bogon who's left school in year 8, switch over to the ABC.