

THE TIMES

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117TH EDITION

Councillors 'gagged'

INVESTIGATION

NEW legislation has "hog tied" Campaspe Shire councillors from voicing their opinion about the proposed Mid-West Bridge, with the consequence of losing their vote on the project if they speak publicly. Councillor Greg Toll has been angered by these changes, recently coming into effect, likening the rules to those of Communist China, at a fiery council meeting this week. "You don't have to go to China to say you don't have an opinion, you can stay right here in Victoria, which is quite concerning," he said. "If I want to go into debate when the final things (Bridge studies) come up, I can't if I've been advocating it one way or another... you're basically gagged," Cr. Toll told *The Times*.

Save Vic Park member Peter Conway was given permission to speak briefly about the Bridge at the council meeting, however was interrupted four times by council.

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New legislation forces councillors mouths closed, or risk being booted out on Bridge vote



Shire CEO Keith Ballie fielded questions at a fiery council meeting this week.

‘Hog tied’ councillors can’t debate Bridge

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“Why wouldn’t it be okay for a councillor to have an opinion? What’s the harm of having an opinion? What have you been elected to do? To voice your constituents concerns,” Mr. Conway said, addressing the councillors.

“I would like you to stand up and voice your opinion. Don’t watch Rome burn, don’t stand and watch this community get destroyed,” he said, before being interrupted by Cr. Marion Riley.

There are concerns that if council does not voice its opinion on the proposed Bridge option, the government will think the community is in favour of it and it would be approved and built.

Cr. Toll said at the meeting that he is “concerned that council’s position is being misrepresented by other organisations.”

However he told *The Times* that when he tries to criticise the process, most of the other councillors side with Cr. Kevin Simpson’s more conservative views. Toll said he was annoyed that the councillors can just deny anything they said in un-minuted meetings.



Save Vic Park spokesman Peter Conway addresses council.

“I need a tape recorder to bring to some of my meetings so they can’t deny what they said, and if they do I can say ‘Here’s what you said.’”

After Cr. Toll’s statement in council, Cr. Riley rebutted his ‘hog-tied’ claims, saying that it’s just a government process.

Mayor Peter Williams supports the new legislation – known as the Winky Pop decision – saying it makes sure councillors have an open mind right up until the their decision.

The new legislation comes after a Victorian Government supreme court decision in 2007 saw a planning decision by Hobson’s Bay Council quashed because of a councillor’s ‘prejudgement.’

“I think that councillors are finding it challenging to meet the requirements of the legal interpretation that came out of Winky Pop,” he said.

“I agree with the general principle, which makes us capable of being influenced to make the decision... however now you’ve got to say things like ‘I believe this... but I could be persuaded otherwise’ which sounds a bit wimpy,” he said. Cr. Williams recently declared a conflict-of-interest in the Bridge debate, which means he no longer sits in on discussion about it; however it also means he is less constrained by the new legislation. >P2

'Don't watch Rome burn'

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Controversy was caused during this weeks meeting in Peter Conway's address when he said that Cr. Kevin Simpson was an advocate of the Bridge, an accusation that could kick Simpson out of the vote. "I would like to start by strongly rejecting the accusations made by Mr. Conway a moment ago that I'm an advocate of the Mid-West option. That is a complete fabrication," Cr. Simpson responded.

Simpson called it a scurrilous claim, taking a swipe at the Save Vic Park group.

"Against us is a group of people who perceive that they may be detrimentally affected by this project, and make up all sorts of untruths and put them out to the public, and if I have made the impression that I support this option by correcting those untruths, well that's it," he stated.

However, Simpson, who is an engineer, seconds later, went on to say how good the Bridge will be for the shire.

"Apart from the irrigation works around the district, this is probably the biggest infrastructure project to happen in the Shire," he said.

"The shire will not back away from a decision on a very important project like this."



Cr. Kevin Simpson: categorically denies accusations.

However, before the Winkipop decision had come into effect, Cr. Simpson has publically endorsed both the Mid-West, Central and Eastern alignments.

"This is the only option we have, we have to support it," Simpson was quoted in *The Times* as saying last year.

"I still think there is some possible merit in this option," he also said.

Conway's address was only allowed because of a small item in the agenda relating to the Bridge, which was given to him on the night of the meeting, giving him no time to prepare, however he thinks it went well and believes he got his message across.

Briefly...

Street

- A COUNCIL meeting has heard that councillors are being 'hog-tied' by the new Winky Pop legislation introduced by the Victorian Supreme court last year. Cr. Greg Toll said that if he spoke out about a project like the proposed Mid-West Bridge option, he risked losing his vote on the alignment.

Local

- COUNCILLOR Kevin Simpson has categorically denied accusations made by Save Vic Park member Peter Conway during a council meeting that he supports the Mid-West Bridge. Cr. Simpson risks losing his vote on the alignment if this is true, saying it was a "scurrilous claim," however moments later said how good it would be for the shire, for such a big project to be built.

National

- FORMER Victorian Cabinet Minister Theo Theophanous will not face trial after rape charges against him were thrown out due to a lack of evidence from the alleged victim. Mr. Theophanous was delighted by the news and is considering resurrecting his political career in the near future.

World

- NEW Jersey has been labelled the most corrupt state in America by the FBI, after 44 elected officials and Jewish Rabbis were arrested on charges of extortion, bribery, money laundering and bizarrely human organ trafficking.

Fake or not, the moon landing still creates a buzz

EVERYONE remembers where they were on July 20th 1969, well almost everybody. I don't, because I was just a premature ova, ready to be born 25 years from that moment. But on that day, 40 years ago this week, man first stepped foot on an extraterrestrial body – our moon.

“That’s one small step for man... one giant leap for man kind,” Neil Armstrong spluttered as he clambered out of the lunar module. I’ve always thought they should have brought an international flag onto the moon, not just an American flag, it seems a bit selfish. But that’s just the way it was and it is probably the most historic moment from the twentieth century. We’ve all seen those grainy images, which were broadcast from the moon’s surface to everyone’s 10 inch TV screens, in black and white and complete



Buzz Aldrin walks on the surface of the moon in 1969.

with commentary from the TV networks.

Some people still think the landing was staged, in a last ditch attempt to win the space race. Maybe it was, has anyone asked President Obama? He would probably know... somebody go and ask him....

Anyway even if it was fake, it’s still an extraordinary

studio set, it must have taken months to make the papier-mâché surface! Almost half a billion people tuned in to watch the broadcast (suck on that *MasterChef*) and still creates a buzz of excitement. Now the next generation is waiting for the Mars landing...

THE CROFTON STREET TIMES

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DEAN COSTELLO, OF RAY WHITE ECHUCA

SPORT



A Rochester player fends off an Echuca player, in a match which saw the latter team be obliterated.

OBLITERATED

Echuca smashed in grudge match, but can anyone beat Rochester?

ROCHESTER remains the Goulburn Valley Football League's superpower, a point proven last weekend in a spectacular match that left Echuca ravaged in an embarrassing loss.

Final score: Rochester 140 d Echuca 24.

At quarter time, spectators thoughts turned to how much will Rochester win by?

No one really expected Echuca to win, after all

'At quarter time, spectators thoughts turned to how much will Rochester win by?'

Rochester is on top of the ladder, while Echuca sits on at eighth. But a loss of 116 points may have been a loss so large, no one predicted it. Echuca still had their pride in tact throughout the middle part of the game, fighting back the juggernauts with a few

points kicked. However from first bounce, it was quite obvious that Rochester was the better team, and they won easily.

Echuca Coach Brett Henderson didn't think his team's performance was very inspiring, pulling them over after the first quarter saying "That's the worst quarter of football we have played." Give them a break, Brett, Rochester's only lost 2 matches this season!

EDITORIAL

War on terror? Who exactly are we fighting?

KEVIN Rudd has tried with all his might to build up support for Australia's involvement in the Middle East, by linking the recent Jakarta Bombings to the death of a young Australian serviceman in Afghanistan, our 11th fatality in this perpetual war.

Firstly, it is completely wrong that the Taliban – whom we are supposedly fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan – organised the Jakarta bombings this week. And secondly, after a year since the Government “pulled out” our troops, over 1000 still remain in the warzone, with more troops dying every month. Britain has also supposedly pulled out their combat troops, however just last month they suffered their bloodiest 24-hours since the Falkland's war, with 6 troops slaughtered.

The United States has also pulled their troops out of Iraqi cities, but 142,000 troops are still there, fighting and dying.



The carnage from the recent Jakarta bombings.

But why are we still fighting in this warzone?

The Government's reason for troops continuing war effort is to train local Iraqi and Afghani police to combat the local Taliban. However Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston admitted this week that we might be in Iraq for the next 5 years. The US says they will be out by a maximum of 2011, but observers highly doubt they will be. So is there another agenda? Call me a conspiracy theorist, but has anyone else noticed that petrol prices

have not been skyrocketing in the past 18 months, in fact they are relatively cheap compared to 2 years ago?

Our allies now control the Iraqi countryside, a place rich in oil drills. About 5 years ago, the rumour started that we were only in the Middle East for the oil, but so far it has not been proven wrong.

We need our troops out of the Middle East now, before any more of our soldier's die, in a war which has forgotten its original cause.

Harry McLaurin

OPINION

Your views, your say, your Opinion

ODD BOX A US writer who failed to find a publisher is putting his novel on Twitter — 140 characters at a time. Matt Stewart said it would take about 3700 "tweets" to transmit all 480,000 characters in *The French Revolution* and admitted few would "weed through all my tweets"

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

God did not intend religion to be an exercise club.

Naguib Mahfouz

JOKE BY JAKE A husband and wife are eating soup. the wife spills soup all over her and says: "Oh no, I look like a pig" "yes and you also have soup all over you!"

HOROSCOPE



DON'T laugh, but I joined the debating team at school (to get the day off). But now I've got all this work to do! I knew I should have joined the chess team instead!! Anyway the thing we're debating is the usual "Money can't buy happiness," and of course, we're debating that it can't. I'm a cynic, so I really wish we were on the other side, but I can't change that now. Anyway, apart from the work, debating is kind of fun. You get to act like a jerk to the other team, and speak like you have a pole up your arse. It's great fun to rebut all their little claims and crush their hopes of winning the debate. Ha ha it's so much fun!

“What were you doing when man landed on the moon?”



David Hasselhoff

“I was sitting in my underwear on the couch with a beer... well, you wanted the truth!”



Woodstock patron

“All men are evil, man... its all about the music, dude... Man I can't even see right, what the hell is the moon?”



Computer nerd

“Damn, did I miss the moon landing as well?! First I miss JFK's assassination, now this! What am I doing with my life?!”

Critic's choice

MasterChef

Channel 10, it's over now ®
NAWW, Julie won, Poh lost and Channel 10 succeeded in dragging out the final show (or "cook off") for 2 bloody hours, while raking in the ratings. 3.7 million People watched the episode, which is the third largest rated show in Australian history. Yes, it is quite sad that our nation has succumbed to this, but it's all over, for now.

Dance Your Ass Off

Channel 9, 7.30pm Tuesday
I THOUGHT It was a joke when I first heard about this show, but no, only in America could something as shameless as this exist. *Dance Your Ass Off* is a mix between *The Biggest Loser* and *So You Think You Can Dance*. It's a show where fatties can get on TV for a few minutes while trying to dance, while we cringe at all that blubber jiggling around. It's gross, and it's degrading, and none other than Channel 9 has scooped it up.

Play School

ABC1, 3.05pm weekdays
MY favourite part of *Play School* was when they listed the odd shaped windows to find out the day of the week. Now that I look back on it, I find it hard to imagine anyone with a diamond shaped window, but hey, it's TV! It's always fun, although quite boring, to tune in to *Play School*, to watch Big Ted and Little Ted play with their friend Jemima while the hosts tried their hardest to sing repetitive songs. So stuff *MasterChef* and get hooked on this awesome show.

"The 7pm Project"

IT'S intelligent, it's funny, it's different... it's Channel 10's latest risky show and I love it. It's about time that Australia got a show like America's *Daily Show*, and the network has named it *The 7PM Project*.

Instead of putting up with *So You Think You Can Dance* or *Big Brother*, we might actually learn something while having a laugh at the same time.

The format of the show is much different to *The Daily Show*, hosted by Jon Stewart, where Stuart would read the news while cracking a joke about it at the same time. In *The 7PM Project*, Carrie Bickmore would read the headlines and the rest of the team (Dave Hughes, Charlie Pickering, James Mathison and Ruby Rose) would then make their funny comments about what's been going on in the world. The show is also like *The Panel*, which was also on Channel 10. *The 7PM Project*, although only starting this week, has managed to make most of its viewers laugh and has pulled in some heavy ratings. It's live and anything could happen, with an interesting guest always on to talk with the hosts. Although I'm going to miss Carrie and Dave from *Rove*, I'm sure this show (on every night at, obviously, 7pm for the rest of the year) can make up for it.

