

THE TIMES

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Peace talks

Stop the Bridge bickering: Group offers route compromise

EXCLUSIVE

DECADES of endless bickering over the location of a second bridge across the Murray River could come to an end after a compromised Mid-West route was outlined.

Several Community Consultation Group members met with Nationals Member for Rodney, Paul Weller and outlined an alternative that offers a compromise.

The route is similar to the Mid-West route that VicRoads has tabled, but does not cut through the High School, tennis courts or tower over the caravan park.

The nearest house will be 250 metres away from the route and will not affect the residential areas near the cemetery.

The Times can reveal that the Indigenous Heritage consultant, David Rhodes, recommends that it is plausible to build a route over sensitive areas such as the sand hills. This recommendation opens the opportunity for the route to cross other parts of the sand hill.

A similar problem was resolved
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University students clamber out of their ruined school.



Oceania in shock as Mother Nature's fury unfolds

DETAILS, HOW TO DONATE, PAGE 4>

The man holding Echuca at ransom

ROB Symons has got the council sweating. The Port of Echuca, the heart and soul of the town, could be without its iconic paddle steamers if the council does not meet Rob's demands.

As owner of the Moama Slipway since 1973, Rob has got fed up with the council for not paying enough money for many of the services he delivers for the boats – services which he pays for out of his own pocket.

But, this week, in a twist bound to keep the local gossipers talking for months, Rob has barred the council's boats from using his slipway. It is illegal for boats not to be slipped – taken out of the water onto a slipway for inspection by Maritime safety authorities – every two years.

In what would seem like a well orchestrated plan, on the eve of the Celebration of Steam festival, the *PS Pevensey* has been taken out of service.

If council's negotiations with Rob fail, the Port's paddle steamers could potentially come to a stand



The PS Pevensey has been taken out of service because of the dispute.

still – a disastrous result for our tourism driven economy.

But Rob has good reason to do this. For decades Rob has paid over \$350,000 himself to keep the slipway maintained, just so the council's boats can use it "below cost."

In a letter sent around the town, Rob claims council is charging illegal mooring fees and is hiding information of the Ports profits and losses. He also says that "over the last 12 months, Council has been scheming to get control of NSW land beside Watson Street... This land is not

Council land, much of it is Murray Shire land," he wrote.

Mayor Peter Williams denies these comments. "He (Rob) has a lease on that property for a number of years to come... We don't have any secret or hidden plans to take it from him," he told *The Times*. Cr. Williams says that the extra demands, which have not yet been met, are completely unrelated to the slipping saga and go back almost twenty years. "We have to use caution. We really don't want to upset the slip way owner... We need to do this as soon as possible," he said.

Street

- MEMBERS of the CCG group have outlined a compromise route of the Mid-West option that misses houses, tennis courts and the high school in an attempt at diplomacy that could end decades of bickering about a second Bridge in Echuca. The group drew up a map with Nationals Member for Rodney, Paul Weller and will present it to VicRoads soon.

Local

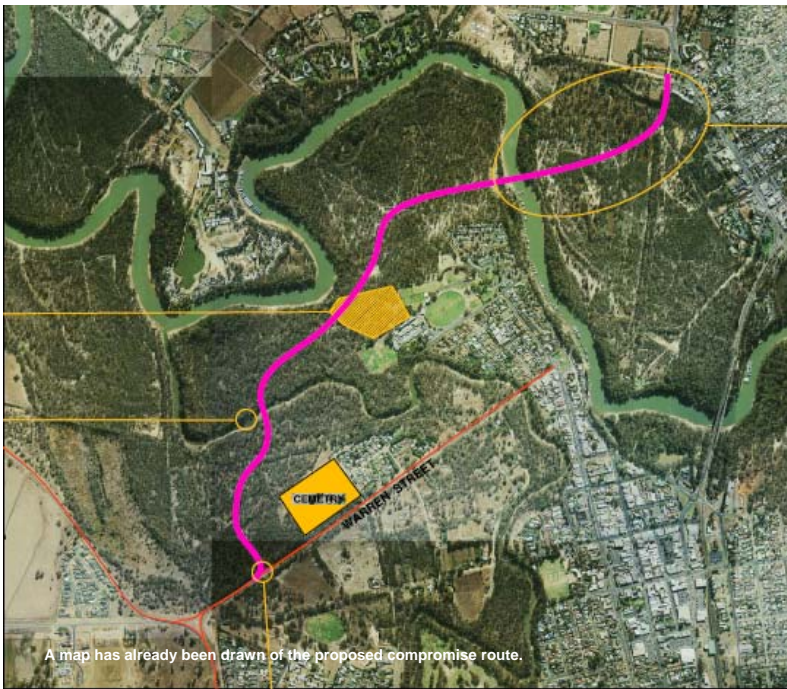
- MOAMA slipway owner Rob Symons has bared council paddle steamers from using his slipway until they meet his demands about management. The *PS Pevensey* has been pulled out of action for the Celebration of Steam festival this weekend and the *PS Alexander Arbutnot* may be out of action soon as well.

National

- AUSTRALIAN aid and personnel have joined a steady stream of international help arriving in Sumatra and Samoa after twin earthquakes rocked the different regions causing a tsunami and killing thousands of people, including four Australians. 60 Aussies are still unaccounted for.

World

- RIO de Janeiro will host the 2016 Olympic Games, being the first South American city to do so. The streets of Rio were filled with joy as celebrations kicked off after the announcement. Favourite Chicago was left deflated, as was Madrid.



A map has already been drawn of the proposed compromise route.

Olive branch extended

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at the duplication of the Goulburn Valley Highway near Murchison.

The proposed alternative route follows many of VicRoads originally proposed paths, however still crosses the river at the Vic Park boat ramp.

It follows VicRoads proposed line on the NSW side of the river, joining up with the Cobb Highway in Moama.

The group is hopeful that if all parties involved concede a little, a solution may be imminent.

It is one of the first methods used of serious diplomacy in the bridge debate; the group believes, and has the potential to end the bickering once and for all.

The new map is expected to be made public on Monday; on the day VicRoads holds a public display session on the Mid-West corridor.

The display session will be held at the Echuca Workers and Services Club on Monday from 4pm-8pm and will showcase some of the findings from the final reports.

CCG members have been sent disks containing the finalised investigations into the Mid-West corridor, *The Times* believes, however VicRoads is keeping tight lipped as to what those investigations reveal.

Paul Weller is assisting the group by presenting their compromise to the Roads Minister, Tim Pallas.

Echuca population, growth increasing

TWO hundred and sixty people are moving to Echuca annually, which is up 0.4% from 2001.

Two percent of Echuca's 12,358 population is migrating to Echuca, the Shire of Campaspe council says.

Councillor Kevin Simpson told *The Times* that most of the people coming to this town were retirees from Melbourne.

He says that population growth benefits the community economically as it gives businesses a chance to expand.

"Some move to retirement villages, others into flash houses," he said.

It comes as Melbourne's population reached 4 million people this week and Australia's is not far from 22 million people.



Thousands dead after twin quakes

A HUMANATARIAN crisis is unfolding in Sumatra and Samoa after two separate earthquakes collapsed towns and triggered a tsunami across the Pacific.

Over 1,100 people are estimated to have been killed in Indonesia, including four Australians. Sixty Australians are still unaccounted for. Last night, aid from Australia, the United

States and New Zealand rushed to help the victims. Many bodies are believed to be under collapsed buildings, but rescue teams have now arrived at many impoverished villages to help with the relief effort.

People are urged to donate food, clothes and money to the Red Cross so they can help with the 60,000 people who are now homeless.

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SPORT

DOUBLE DEFEAT

ECHUCA'S under 18 footballers and netballers have finished the 2009 GVFL season in defeat, however have picked themselves up and dusted themselves off ready for 2010.

In a heartbreaking loss, Echuca's footballers lost their match against Kyabram by just one point. Echuca was leading by 26-points in the final quarter, however the opposition picked up some speed and



was able to overtake them in the dying minutes by seven points. A quick goal from Echuca on the final siren narrowed the loss to just one point.

Meanwhile, the A-grade netballers were composed when Shepparton United thrashed them at Deakin

Reserve. United – a well known favourite – won by 22 goals, a score which does not reflect how hard Echuca's netballers had fought. United was able to slide forward throughout the match, however Echuca's defence stopped the margin from being even greater. Although both teams are disappointed with their premiership losses, they have vowed to try their hardest to win next year's grand finals.

Geelong proves its greatest team of all

AFTER making it all the way to the top, Geelong could not handle another premiership defeat. In a nail biting grand final, they glided through the match under St. Kilda's shadow, only being a few points behind at any one time. But in the dying minutes of a blockbuster match, Paul Chapman kicked an unforgettable goal, bringing the team in front to win by 12 points.



EDITORIAL

Coal is the lifeblood of the nation

ALTHOUGH we hate to admit it, coal is our lifeblood. Without it we have nothing. No televisions, no lights, no heating, no hot showers, no computers, no electricity. It's that simple.

Brown and black coal provides 85% of Victoria's energy needs, possibly more. It's dirty and pollutant (roughly 42% of our greenhouse gas emissions are from coal power stations) but we need it to satisfy our daily consumerist lifestyles.

Although Canberra can make empty promises about carbon capture plants and reducing emissions, they know as well as we do that suppressing the coal industry is a bad move.

Approximately 75% of coal mined in Australia's 32 major coal mines is exported overseas, backing up our economy substantially well – 25% of our export earnings are in fact from coal.

So its little wonder the Government wants to cut



our greenhouse gas emissions by just 5-15%. It was an economic decision to do so, not an environmental one.

Even so, perhaps our coal industry is what kept our financial system afloat during the economic tsunami. We export 340 million tonnes of coal to the world – making up 9% of the worlds total coal consumption – so it's a very vital part of the worlds energy sector. What about

renewable energy though?

The government makes promises of solar plants (one in Mildura was stopped ironically because of the financial crisis), and carbon capture and storage – which wont begin until 2040.

Wind is a possibility, but hydro is a lost cause when there's no water.

Coal is our lifeblood, and it will be for decades to come. Promises can be made, but as our environment suffers our pockets still get lined with gold.

ODD BOX Tennessee deputy sheriff Richard Barnett went to the wrong house in Elizabethton but still made an arrest. Called to a domestic dispute, he knocked on the wrong door. A man, 33, asked him in and surrendered, confessing that a warrant was out for him for non-payment of fines. He was jailed for 40 days.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Don't forget Mother's Day. Or as they call it in Beverly Hills, Dad's Third Wife Day.
Jay Leno

JOKE BY JAKE

Two snowmen are standing in a field. One says to the other: "Funny, I smell carrots too".

HOROSCOPE



"CHILDREN should be seen and not heard." Of all of those annoying quotes from the nineteenth century, this annoys me the most – mainly because it was almost true. When your parents haul you off to their friend's places for a dinner party and there's no other kids there, there is nothing to do but sit there and be quiet! At least you don't have to sound interested in their conversations that don't make any sense anyway. Then everybody laughs at a joke someone said and you have no idea what it's about either. It's incredibly boring and if anybody does take notice of you its always "How's school?", "You've grown so much," or "Who are you and why are you here?"

“Are CCTV cameras invading our privacy?”



Paris Hilton

“Oh, ahh... yes... I hate publicity...”



Robert Erricson

Conspiracy theorist

“Definitely! The Government controls us, man, they know where we are all the time! They brainwash us, dude.”



“Big Brother”

“Well, at least we don't watch you in the toilet... well, most toilets anyway...”

Critic's choice

Last Chance Surgery **Channel 7, 8pm Tuesday**

"IF YOU don't have this surgery you will die in four weeks," was how the doctor explained it to a 17 year old girl. Talk about harsh. *Last Chance Surgery* is a repulsive show about people's "battles" with life threatening illnesses. Another man had a tumour on his spine and was going to die as well, but lucky Seven's cameras were there to capture all his tears and emotion and broadcast it to the world. What a disgusting program.

TMZ

GO! 6.30pm Monday

GOSSIP. Speculation. Rumours. Some people love it. Which celebrity is having a divorce? Is Robert Patterson getting married? Have Ange and Brad had another child? *TMZ* is a show based on the gossip website (which reported Michael Jackson dead 6 minutes before he actually died). It's trash TV at its finest, with *Entertainment Tonight* its only rival.

Highway Patrol

Channel 7, 8pm Monday

HIGHWAY Patrol? Are you serious? We've already got *Surf Patrol*, *Border Patrol* and *Sea Patrol* do we need another show with the suffix 'patrol'? Really. Next we'll be having *Hospital Patrol* or *Office Patrol* or even *School Patrol* – hunting down naughty kids in the playground. Anyway *Highway Patrol* follows the life of a policeman cruising our highways, looking to arrest someone. Sounds riveting.

“Money for jam”

I HATE spending money. *My* money anyway. It makes me feel guilty when I do, so that's why I shoplift things now. I just pick up a shirt I like, and run! It's that simple. Although it is frowned upon in the justice system, so try to do it discreetly. Anyway shop lifting is a rather easy process, and a quick way to save you some money – not that *Money for Jam* would tell you that.

No, Channel 9's latest cringe-worthy show is apparently a family program and would probably discourage such practices like theft, prostitution and paid murder. They're more into helping kids with Aspergers Syndrome to get fit, while having a joyful time and making a quick buck as well.

They also suggest letting a boarder rent out a room in your house – don't worry about police checks though, it might cost some more.

You could also get your hair done in the “Glam van” (a mobile hairdressing saloon that could drive straight to your house. However I thought a more logical way to save money would be to cut your hair yourself, or not cut it at all...

A segment called “Super scrooge of the week” also told us that we can save some cash by making our own bed linen! That's right! We can just slave away with some cheap fabric for 5 hours to save a whopping \$45! How simple is that

