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Echuca's dark social flaw put to rest

Bashings
and Big
Mac's: why
McDonalds
cut 24 hour
service

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Council accepts reports but no vote

THE Shire of Campaspe council has accepted the finalised reports into the Mid-West Bridge, but denies that the motion represents council's support for the corridor.

Council added a foot-note motion after accepting the reports, saying that decision "Neither constitutes nor

implies that council supports the Mid-West corridor or has any position on it at this time."

Mayor Peter Williams told *The Times* that "Technically there is no reason the Bridge can't go ahead, but we have not supported it yet."

The council is expected to vote on the Bridge on

November 17 and that meeting will be held in Echuca.

It is not clear yet what the voting intentions of the councillors are, but since being shown copies of the finalised reports it is hoped they are better educated to make an informed vote on this corridor.

Bashings and Big Macs: drunken violence shut out

INSIDE STORY

IT WAS early on a Saturday morning. The night was cold and employees at McDonalds had droopy eyes. The streets seemed quiet; however they could hear distant shouts.

Minutes later, a group of over 20 young men entered the restaurant, clearly inebriated but wanting food. It was not surprising that in the following moments a brawl broke out. Employees hid behind the counters and called the police as the drunken violence escalated around them.

The police arrived and quelled the rowdiness, although not without someone being thrown through a window.

This unfortunate scenario was regrettably a regular situation at McDonalds Echuca, and was a dark flaw in this community's social fabric.

Owner Gary Radford says that because McDonalds is halfway between major pubs and nightclubs, commuting party goers would come to McDonalds in search of food, but "they would cause trouble."

Security guards were hired for the night time shifts, but there were instances where



the violence was too out of hand to control.

For 18 long months, McDonalds was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but when the weekend began, so did the violence.

"I was concerned for my management and employees safety," Mr. Radford told *The Times*.

Council and local police had also hinted at the social problems that some McDonalds patrons were causing at night, so this week, something was done about it.

Trading will now be cut back to normal hours, with the restaurant to close at 11.30 on weeknights and 12.00 on weekends.

Already, Mr. Radford has

noticed the difference and is hoping that the crime statistics will start to go down.

The 24 hour trading cut back has caused some disappointment for many locals though. Even Mr. Radford admits he enjoys stopping by McDonalds for a bite to eat late in the night. However, he says "this loutish behaviour has spoilt it for everyone else."

"The majority of the trouble was caused by a minority of people," he said.

We may love the convenience of 24 hour service, but with appalling antisocial behaviour stemming from all night opening, it was the right move to close early. Perhaps Echuca's pubs and clubs should take note of this.

Give ENTER the exit, say students

YEAR 12 students believe that the ENTER score, which may ultimately decide their future, has many flaws and may not get the best out of students.

As muck up day celebrations reigned this week, students are preparing for the final exams, which will be held over the next months.

Students interviewed by *The Times* believe that the ENTER score is used as a ranking system, not a personal score for your own ability.

They say that it is unfair for students who don't perform well in exams, as the final ENTER score is what decides student's futures at university, and further on in their careers.



Mucking up all in good fun

THE last day of school embraces many emotions: sadness to be leaving, happiness to be leaving, regret for not doing some of the things you wanted to do, anxiety for university and maybe even anger for getting in trouble for mucking up.

There may be police involvement, and some people may do some stupid pranks. But who wouldn't? After 13 years under the dictatorship of education, freedom is a

beautiful thing. The year 12's wore what they wanted and everyone had a good time. Exams now stand ahead, something that will decide their futures, whether they like it or not.

It is sad to see the year 12's abdicate from the throne of school, but they leave in their place the year 11's, who now inherit the enormous responsibility of leadership – and power. Good luck to them all.

Briefly...

Street

- MUCK up day celebrations have been a success for Echuca College and St Joes, as well as other schools across the district, as year 12's finished their last day of school. Students donned all kinds of garments for the day, however in Melbourne a few arrests were made because of bad behaviour.

Local

- THE Campaspe Shire has passed a motion accepting that the proposed Mid-West Bridge can physically go ahead. However this bizarre motion is no representation on what councils opinion is of the Mid-West corridor, as they will officially vote on the alignment at a November 17 meeting in Echuca.

National

- THE thirty-sixth boatload of asylum seekers has been intercepted by the Australian Navy and sent to Christmas. It raises further concerns that the Christmas Island detention facility will soon be overcrowded. It comes as a Human Rights Commissioner said the detention centre "violated" the rights of asylum seekers.

World

- SRI Lanka abused human rights laws in the last days of the countries civil war, a US State Department report has said, however has been angrily rejected by the Colombo Government. Sri Lanka said it was "unsubstantiated and devoid corroborative evidence."

Circus returns to town



The Stardust Circus, with all of its animals will be in Echuca until Sunday.



Reports admits Caravan Park flaws

THE Echuca Caravan Park will bear the brunt of increased noise if the Mid-West Bridge goes ahead, and also faces restriction to possible future growth, a council dossier summarising the Bridge reports has revealed.

“The Land Use, Economic and Noise reports all acknowledge that the Mid-West Corridor would result in negative impacts for the Echuca Caravan Park, primarily due to noise,” the document said.

The caravan park is one of the most economically beneficial businesses to the Campaspe Shire and the document acknowledges that noise will affect guests.

“...For long term visitors to the park the increased noise would be noticeable,” it wrote.

“It is the increase in noise level when compared to the relatively quiet ambient noise currently experienced that is the greater impact at the caravan park..”

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SPORT

Second blood

ECHUCA has recorded its second straight victory for the 2009 cricket season, with a narrow victory against Moama at the weekend.

Moama, who were surprised at their second loss, were defeated by 12 runs in the first two-day match this year.

Moama's total ended up at 5/75 in the second innings, while Echuca made 95 runs.

However the match scored much higher in the first round, with the best batsmen sent forward as openers on both sides.

Echuca made 163 in the first innings, and Moama's reply sat at 5/68 at tea time last week.

Moama's captain Jamie Murphy and Jack Keogh started the second innings, however Keogh was soon dismissed for 13 and Murphy fought on with Mark Scholes.

Echuca's Chris Russell gave Murphy and LBW, seeing him out for 30 in the 45th over.

Scholes fell soon after, before Anthony Farrant stepped up. He went well,



Echuca's batting performance was excellent.

getting 21 runs off 38 balls, but he was no match for Echuca's Jason Charlile who dismissed Farrant with a LBW also.

Moama struggled from then on, receiving four wickets in seven overs.

Echuca then began their batting streak, with Ryan

Hon the star performer.

Moama's chances at victory diminished with the batting of Echuca captain Simon Maddox, finishing with 3/39 off five overs.

Echuca was happy to finish at 163, twelve runs over Moama's 151, and will play Rochester this weekend.

EDITORIAL

Hoaxes: Why?

HOAXES are painfully frustrating sometimes. For the Government and police force, the revelation of a hoax sends a cool chill through their body. Hoaxes usually cause major, usually public embarrassment, and can cost millions of dollars to sort out.

Remember the 1995 “Alien autopsy” hoax, where footage was released to the media, claiming to be after the Roswell crash. Of course, the US Government spent weeks vigorously denying the allegations, which did nothing to control the damage.

There’s been the Piltdown man hoax where modern science was fooled into thinking a fake skull was that of an early human, as was a hoax of a mermaids fossil. Even last month, an environmental group published a fake version of *The New York Post* with dire messages of global warming all though it, and gave it to the public. Hoaxes are real pains. They give the perpetrators a real thrill when their gullible prey believes what they



The run away balloon as it's about to land. Below: a FaceBook message about a boy being "taken" in Rochester.

and AMBER ALERT... 3 year old BOY taken in ROCHESTER, IN by a man
 MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE plate number 98B351... Please put this as your
 it moves all across face book. YOU WOULD IF IT WAS YOUR CHILD!!!
 at 7:22pm · Comment · Like

claim. Most of these perpetrators want publicity, even if it’s bad publicity. For example, this week an American family has been charged for leading on the entire world into believing that a boy was stuck in a runaway balloon. The global media covered it live, and Eddie McGuire claimed on radio that he could see the boy. Obviously, we know now, that the boy was hiding in the attic. Even Echuca was affected by a major hoax, with a message

spread across Facebook and through text messages across the district, claiming a 3 year old boy has been “taken” in Rochester. It gave the cars description and number plate. But our police station had to desperately stop a wild goose chase, saying that it’s not true, and even if it was, it’s Rochester in *America*. Hoaxes can be dangerous and they can be funny. They also cause a lot of frustration, but also show how susceptible we, and the media, are to hoaxes.

ODD BOX A pitch-black art installation in London claimed its first victim on the opening day as a man walked straight into a wall. How It Is, by Polish artist Mirosław Balka, opened to the public this week in the huge Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern gallery. The man was given first aid by staff

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

I sang in the choir for years, even though my family belonged to another church.
Paul Lynde

JOKE BY JAKE A doctor has come to see one of his patients in a hospital. The patient has had major surgery to both of his hands. "Doctor," says the man excitedly and dramatically holds up his heavily bandaged hands. "Will I be able to play the piano when these bandages come off?" "I dont see why not," replies the doctor. "Thats funny," says the man. "I wasnt able to play it before."

HOROSCOPE



APPARENTLY plastic water bottles are bad. I mean, if a town's banned them they must be bad! And they are. Look at all the emissions they waste by being transported, when you can just get it out of the tap! And the bottles don't break down for thousands of year, so some poor echidna could get suffocated in one or something. Anyway why do we need bottled water all together? There's nothing wrong with tap water, apart from the fact that it tastes like you know what! I've heard Adelaide's water is particularly bad as well. And when you're driving in a long car trip, like most Aussies do, how often do you spot a tap to get some water? Whether we like it or not, we need some kind of bottled water, even if it is making a few more emissions to get to you.

“Should McDonalds close its 24 hour service?”



Manuel Uribe

“No”



Renee Williams

“No”



Michael Qui

“No”

Critic's choice

The Simpsons

Channel 10, Tuesday 7.30pm

IT surprises me that Bart and Lisa are still 10 and 8 years old, even though *The Simpsons* has been going for 25 years. The new episodes, however, are keeping up with the times, with Bart getting a mobile and Marge and Homer following him around because of a tracking chip in it. The stories are still original and, of course, are still funny.

Crime Investigation Australia

Channel 9, 9.30pm Wednesday

ALTHOUGH it's a creepy show, about creepy murders with lots of creepy details, I still enjoy watching *CIA* (although that may be saying something about myself). This week they looked at the Bondi murders in the late '80's and early '90's. Their stories are well researched and I always love the dodgy re-enactments

Catalyst

ABC1, 8pm Thursday

THIS week *Catalyst* sadly finished its bushfire series. It was very informative, although, for someone who was glued to the news during the February 7 blazes, there wasn't much extra to learn. Three reporters told us about the possibly worse fire season to come, and how we should prepare ourselves for it. Our understanding of bushfires has never been more crucial, so the *Catalyst* series was good to watch.

“Race relations”

WHO WOULD have thought that a Jew plus a Palestinian would equal a Jellistinian? Well, who other than John Safran would be there, in Jerusalem, to tell us so.

John Safrans Races Relations aired this week, which no doubt offended thousands of people (on our public broadcaster, gasp!), but was terribly entertaining.

It's not racist, as some people would believe. It's smart and poses interesting questions about racism, but there's no doubt someone on talkback radio will say otherwise.

In the first episode, Safran painted himself black – not like on *Hey Hey*, but genuinely black, to see what its like.

He also went out to discover if he, as a Jew, is attracted to other races, or genetic opposites, in particular “Eurasians.”

He had a test in mind to get the underwear of 5 Jewish women and 5 Eurasians, then sniff them blindfolded to see which scent he was attracted to more.

Safran got (covertly) most of the underwear from various famous Eurasians, including a Pussycat Doll and a Thai princess. He even tried to get Climate Change Minister Penny Wong's underwear, but with no success.

The results found that Safran was, in deed, attracted to Eurasians, including the Eurasian doctor who tested him.

Apart from masturbating to a picture Barack Obama, *John Safran's Race Relations* is a damned entertaining show, even if it is a little offensive.

