

THE TIMES

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127TH EDITION



Where small business closure is just the beginning... **INSIDE STORY, PAGE 2>**

93%

Poll finds towns majority against Mid-West Bridge

NINETY-three percent of the Echuca-Moama community are opposed to the proposed Mid-West Bridge, with 69% supporting an investigation into the Mid West 2 option, a poll has found.

Nationals Member for

Rodney Paul Weller has conducted a survey on his website, which found that just 7% of voters support the Mid-West Bridge.

Mr. Weller told *The Times* that these results paint a picture of what opponents have been saying for nearly

two years against the Bridge.

“Noise problems, access to the cemetery, taking out the tennis courts – the community doesn’t think that VicRoads has done enough,” he said.

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Bunning's Warehouse: Where small business closure is just the beginning

INSIDE STORY

THERE isn't much that Bunning's doesn't sell. From bathroom and kitchen goods to flooring products, to lighting and electrical bits and pieces to paint supplies, Bunning's really is a one stop shop.

The television advertisements say it all; with one worker saying that "some of our customers spend their entire weekend in here!" But it was little surprise this month that Bunning's announced their intentions to set up shop here in Echuca.

Speculation and rumours about whether or not the hardware franchise would establish a presence in Echuca had been debated for years. But final confirmation verified some of the town's hopes and fears of what our future would hold with a Bunning's being part of it. With the announcement saying over 80 jobs would be created when the mega store opens next year, qualms have arisen that small business will suffer greatly – as Echuca has a large hardware supplying



industrial district. The franchisation of small towns has been a contentious issue for decades. America had its Wal-Mart boom, which saw many hundreds of family business shut shop and Australia had the rise of Woolworths, which has not been as devastating.

A recent report on retailers says that large franchises opening in small towns can "often can result in the reduction of consumer choice due to their tendency to cannibalize competing retail businesses."

But there's no saying that when Bunning's opens, the local industry will suffer – although a hardware war is likely to erupt between Bunning's and Mitre 10 – who are major national

competitors. Campaspe councillor Kevin Simpson thinks that it's entirely possible that smaller local businesses could shut when Bunning's opens. "It depends if they are corporate citizens or not. Some people support the community, others don't," he said.

They say history repeats itself, and it has. The same fears were raised when Big W opened in Echuca. "The result was people were not having to go out of town to shop. Average business will be all right," he said. What will happen when Bunning's opens is a complete mystery, but if local suppliers do begin to close, nothing can prevent it. "That's business," says Simpson.

Poll finds town majority against Bridge

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So far 151 people have voted on the poll, which asks viewers to vote on three questions.

Those questions ask if they support the Mid-West alignment, whether they agree to an investigation into the Mid-West Bridge and asks them to say if they support neither option.

"It does prove that only 7% of the community supports the Mid-West Bridge," Mr. Weller said. "It reinforces what community members have been saying."

The poll comes as Campaspe Shire Councillor Kevin Simpson wrote a letter to the *Riverine Herald*, slamming opponents of the Bridge.

"I remain sceptical about some of the reasons given by 'objectors' based on emotions and illogical opinions rather than facts that can be responded to," he said.

The council has also commissioned a survey of its own, which is hoped to get a better image of community opinion on the Bridge.

A phone poll is being conducted by an independent group, asking questions about other options and whether they are a Save



Paul Weller.

Vic Park group members.

"I am looking forward to seeing the results of the shire community opinion survey in the hope that it can show me the thoughts of the entire community rather than the vocal minority (who claim to have the entire communities support) that we have been hearing from recently," Cr. Simpson wrote.

Council will vote on the Bridge on November 17, something Mr. Weller refused to comment on, however Cr. Simpson is looking forward to a "sensible" decision.

Briefly...

Street

- A POLL conducted on Nationals Member for Rodney Paul Weller's website has found that just 7% of people support the Mid-West Bridge. It comes as the Campaspe Shire have commissioned their own phone poll which they hope will provide a more "accurate" picture of the towns opinion of the controversial Bridge option.

Local

- A HOTTER than average summer is being predicted for Echuca, with minimal rainfall forecast for the upcoming summer months. After some good spring rains, things are expected to go back to being dry again. Water restrictions were recently lowered to stage one.

National

- PRIME Minister Kevin Rudd is preparing to double the size of the Christmas Island detention facility amid the arrival of more and more asylum seekers. This morning, a boat with 40 asylum seekers sank off the Cocos Islands with 15 being rescued by Australian ships and fears are growing for the others.

World

- SIX decomposing have been found in the home of a convicted rapist in the United States. Police went into the home of Anthony Sowell to arrest him on suspicion of another rape. However they stumbled upon the bodies of six people. Two cannot be identified as they are too badly decayed.

Balibo an enraging and engaging film

WHEN I walked out of the movies after witnessing *Balibo* I was angry. Angry because there was no happy ending. Angry because Indonesia killed our journalists and the East Timorese people. Even angry because we learn Indonesian at school. But despite the unnerving truths conveyed in *Balibo*, it was a gripping film.

Anthony LaPaglia is a very believable Aussie, accent and all, and plays journalist Roger East – who is killed whilst investigating the deaths of the other Aussie journalists.

There are no details spared in the brutal deaths of our journalists. The killings make you wince and turn away. You know what the final result will be, but you're still hoping there'll be a happy ending. There



Indonesian forces invade Dili, East Timor.

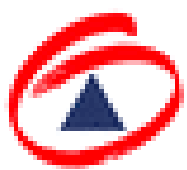
was not. Indonesia is painted in a very dark light – as they should be – but the blame on the deaths and invasion is largely dumped on the military commanders, who were pictured but not named. Over 150,000 East Timorese people were slaughtered in the 1975 invasion of that country,

and it is hoped this film will make way for proper justice to be imposed on the Indonesians.

Director Robert Connelly does a brilliant job at telling the true story of what happened at Balibo, and should be a story that is never forgotten.

NEXT WEEK: THE BALIBO STORY

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SPORT



Echuca's bowled well to secure its third win.

Echuca victorious against BLU

WITH Echuca missing three of its major stars – Captain Simon Maddox, Brendan Prendergast and Grant Harrison – they still managed to score a seven-wicket win against Bamawm-Lockington United last Saturday.

Although undermanned, Echuca dismissed BLU for 108 before making a total of 3/112, in just 30 of its billed 40 overs for the one day match at Vic Park.

Echuca's win may be attributed to BLU's poor performance, which their coach described as its worse in five years.

Tom McQuillan was in top form for the match with his bowling, retaining 4/32 off just six overs.

After BLU's average stint at the crease, Echuca stood up to bat.

Adam Jones and Leigh Kentish opened, racking up 40 runs to give Echuca a strong starting score.

Jon Varcoe and Ryan Hon put on an impressive partnership to keep going for 56-runs, until Hon was run out for 23 and Varcoe continuing to make 22 with Steve Tonkin – passing the 108 target.

BLU's bowling performance was quite poor, with only two bowlers taking wickets – Greg Pearse and Hayden Collins.

Pearse said that there was no way Echuca looked that good, "our poor batting made them look good," he said.

Echuca will take on Rochester Tigers next week.

EDITORIAL

Stage one too early?

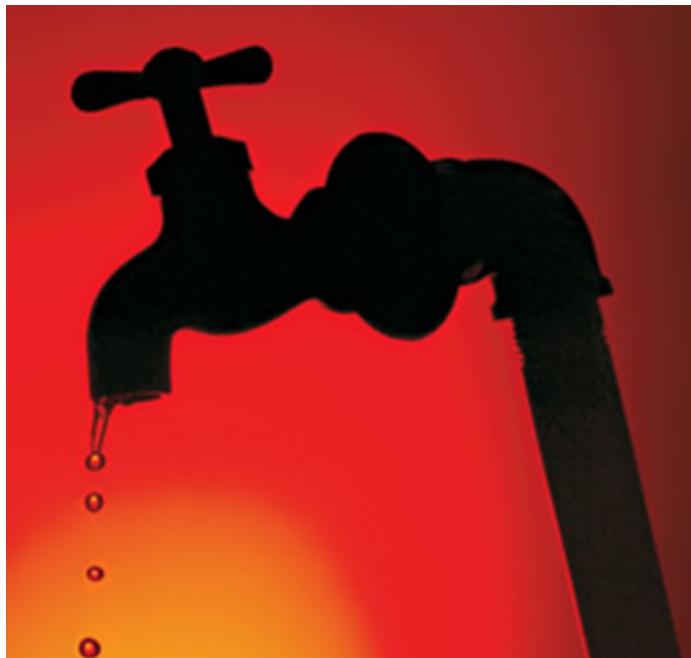
THE top soil may still be damp after some recent refreshing rains, but if you dig just a few centimetres down, you will discover dust.

The state has hailed the spring rains almost like the second coming of Jesus, but in reality the drought is no where near breaking point. In fact, if the drought were to break today, it would take over four years for the landscape to recover and get back to normal.

But that has not stopped a knee jerk decision from Coliban Water to downgrade Echuca's water restrictions to just Stage One, where you can freely water your lawns and garden.

Right now, Echuca's main water catchments are still very low. The Dartmouth Dam sits at 30%, Lake Eildon is on 33% and Lake Eppalock is barely full at 8.16%.

It's a sad situation, and it represents the fact that we are still in a one in one thousand year drought. And it may be here to stay. Recent studies from the CSIRO say that El Nino -



a climatic situation which controls wet and dry temperatures across the Pacific – may be here to last.

The drought has now entered its 13th year and more and more farms continue to close, with the agriculture industry still struggling.

Bushfires are expected to get worse this summer also as the states forests are still tinder dry – despite the recent rains.

Rain is a rare thing to witness nowadays. We value it more than gold, and we store it carefully and efficiently.

But when a few showers make the dead grass green again, it does not mean we can let our guard down on conserving water. It also doesn't mean we can revert back to Stage One water restrictions.

Every drop counts, so we must help our farmers out however we can.

ODD BOX Police in Indianapolis say an armed robber, 23, spent nearly 10 minutes on his knees praying with a clerk at a cheque-cashing business before fleeing with \$20 from the cash register. His face was visible in security camera footage and he was arrested soon afterwards

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Elephants are great, but not all great things are elephants
Det. Boothe
Bones

JOKE BY JAKE

How do you kill a circus?
 Go for the juggler.

HOROSCOPE



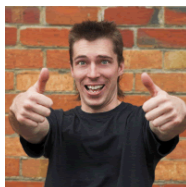
I HATE it when people say that they're bored on Facebook or Twitter. The whole reason these people are on these sites is because they are bored. Besides, no body cares! Why can't these people get off their computers and do something interesting. For example, for the past two days, I've been canoeing down the Goulburn River. Although my arms hurt quite badly, I had heaps of fun and I definitely was not bored. Maybe the bored people on Facebook are waiting for someone to suggest something for them to do? Tell them to go skydiving, that's always fun. Anyway, back to canoeing... We canoed (and kayaked) 30km and camped on a random river bank along the way. No internet access the whole time either... imagine that!

“Should the Melbourne Cup be a four day weekend?”



Kevin Rudd

“Oh of course not. I don't even think we should have Tuesday off! Some people call me a workaholic, but I like to think of it as fun.”



Bogan

“Yeah mate... lets take the full week off! And the Deni Ute muster should be a national holiday too...”



Bindi Irwin

“The horsies need a rest after their big race so we should Wednesday off too!”

Critic's choice

Four Corners

ABC1, 8.30pm Monday

FOUR Corners rarely receives any attention for the work it does. It's a quiet little show that doesn't rate that well on Monday night, compared with *The Mentalist*, *FlashForward* and *Good News Week* which are all on at the same time. The show has an experienced bunch of reporters who are very good at finding the truth. This week they interview paedophile Dennis Ferguson.

Border Security

Channel 7, 7.30pm Sunday

SOME people are very stupid to try and smuggle drugs into Australia. Not only will you get caught, but you will be on national television on *Border Security*. Any little drama that happens in an airport is likely to be captured by the show's many cameras. It's probably an invasion of privacy – but channel 7 doesn't seem to care. If it's good TV, run it!

Melbourne Cup Day

Channel 7, 10am Tuesday

IF anyone cares what some C-grade celebrity (probably from Channel 7) is wearing at the races or who has committed fashion suicide – then tune into Seven's Melbourne Cup day coverage. I usually like to watch the 3 minutes of horse racing, followed by the silly horse back interview with John Letts. But with Bruch MacAvaney hosting, it's bound to be good.

“Australian Idol, six years!”

DOES anyone remember Guy Sebastian? I was quite shocked to see him on *Sunrise* the other day, belting out one of his new “songs”. But before I turned the mute button on, I found out an interesting fact: six whole years have passed since Guy Sebastian won the first *Australian Idol*. Six years! A lot of things can happen in six years – wars, Olympics, deaths to name a few – but it is quite shocking to think that it's been that long that *Idol* has been dragging along.

Anyway, I can remember being back in primary school, where people were actually mildly interested in the show, and there were some intense conversations about who would win the series – Guy Sebastian or Shannon Noll. Obviously we now know the answer to that, but it's amazing to think that six years have passed since that first season.

But as the years passed, the winners of *Idol* became less and less famous – when compared with Noll and Sebastian – I can't even remember the names of them. Oh well, they're probably working in McDonalds somewhere, living in a suburban shack with 12 other people.

This week, *Idol* got down to its final 3 contestants, and there's no doubt that when the final announcement comes around there will be mass jubilation in the streets.

I think *Idol* has bored Australia a bit with its same old routine, and no body really cares about who wins or loses anymore – well not like six years ago anyway.

