



Community Newspaper Association
of Victoria
Representing Community Owned Newspapers

Roundabout

September 2012

Pushing the boundaries

Lively conference theme

'Pushing the boundaries', in the newspaper world, is bound to trigger lots of discussion during the seventh annual CNAV conference at Nagambie on the weekend of 26 - 28 October.

Who better to maybe touch on this subject than keynote speaker, Margaret Simons, as our committee moves to bring a new look to the pattern of our conferences.

Margaret's new book, 'Journalism at the Crossroads', a Scribe Publishing House September book, will certainly provide food for thought as we think about our future in newspaper reporting and just what are our boundaries?

** How far do community owned newspapers push these boundaries?*

** What comes next for community owned newspapers?*

** Are we entering a new phase and are we ready for it?*

** How might we fill some of the spaces left by the changes in mainstream media?*

** How much can community journalism achieve?*

We might compare traditional and digital newspaper production with thought as to how and when to make the move and how far. Or should we embrace both?

Some, such as our blooded editors, Jo Vondra, from the Lorne Independent, Rajeev, from the Guildford Globe, and John Ellis, at Chewton Chat, are well able to take their papers to that level where they cause even the highest in authority to think about how they manage our communities.

But that doesn't mean encroaching without thought on their neighbours, being ever critical, or unjustly moving into new territories without fairness, but means working with those authorities in liaison with our communities. And, people in authority, along with business houses, are quickly coming to know that our papers are right there in those communities. So we have some interesting discussion ahead at the Nagambie conference.

Six successful conferences done and dusted, and the seventh being run by a team, now



A restful spot on the Lake Nagambie shoreline, two minutes walk from the conference centre.

highly experienced, and aware that community owned newspapers have become an important link between government and the people.

As well, they fill the gap for reporting grass roots community activities and effectively message their local communities, something mainstream press is finding more and more difficult. They are being well read because communities have ownership of their pages and this places significant importance on a very local line of communication.

The Nagambie conference will discuss how best to capitalize on the assets we already have.

Also, the conference provides opportunity for delegates to visit one of CNAV's top member papers, 'The Waranga News' at Rushworth.

Registration forms are available on line at:-

www.cnav.org.au

or from Helen Smith at:-

cnav.membership@gmail.com

Fire awards are important

Entries are open for the 2012 fire awareness awards.

Fire awareness awards are made throughout Victoria to recognise individuals, groups and organisations involved in fire safety projects.

Fifteen awards are available, all carrying generous cash prizes.

Categories cover help with bushfire recovery, improvements to fire service delivery and increased community safety.

Applications can be made on line www.fireawarenessawards.com.au

Improvements grant money for scouts

Minister for Youth Affairs Ryan Smith has opened the final round of funding for the Scouts and Girl Guides Facilities Grants Program.

Scouts and Girl Guide groups across Victoria are being encouraged to apply for this final round of funding, which will see facilities upgraded in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Mr Smith said the funding was part of the Victorian Coalition Government's \$4 million election commitment to upgrade Scouts Victoria and Girl Guides Victoria facilities across the state.

"With this new funding Scouts Victoria and Guides Victoria will be able to modernise facilities and continue their fantastic work in supporting, training and mentoring young Victorians," Mr Smith said.

"This funding will also ensure that these facilities are still available for other community needs, such as accommodating local not-for-profit organisations working with young people."

Mr Smith also announced \$280,000 in funding to enhance the Scouts Victoria volunteer training program and to encourage greater

participation of multicultural young people at the 2012 Scouts Activities Expo with Member for Mount Waverley Michael Gidley.

Chief Commissioner of Scouts Victoria Bob Taylor said the funding provided formal support and recognition for the program they have been informally undertaking in Victoria for more than 100 years.

"We are now empowered to present a structured and tailored program to more areas of the community than ever before, particularly the multicultural and disadvantaged areas," Mr Taylor said.

Mr Smith said the Government was committed to providing opportunities for young people to lead healthy, active and fulfilling lives as outlined in its youth statement Engage, Involve, Create.

"We want to see young Victorians involved in their local community and decision making, engaged in education, training and employment, and creating culture, communities and enterprise," Mr Smith said.

"Scouts and Girl Guides have been developing and supporting young people for more than 100 years.

"This investment will ensure they continue to do this with excellence," he said.

Scouts and Girl Guides groups are required to apply directly through their central organisations who will then make a recommendation for priority projects to the Minister for Youth Affairs.

Groups will be contacted by their central organisations to inform them of the process for applying. For further information on the grants program please visit:-

www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au

www.vicscouts.com.au

or www.girlguidesvic.org.au.

Applications for the Scouts and Guides Facilities Grants Program close on 14 November 2012.

Generic system to fund fire services

Contributions toward funding fire services in insurance payments will be stopped.

Premier Ted Baillieu said the inequitable insurance based fire services levy will be abolished from 1 July 2013 and Victoria will move to a fairer, more transparent property based levy to help fund fire services.

Money contributed in Country Fire Authority (CFA) areas will go to the CFA and money contributed in the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) areas will go to the MFB.

Mr Baillieu said the reform would save households and businesses across the state more than \$100 million a year.

"We have listened and acted on the concerns of the many Victorians who said the fire services levy was unfair and inequitable," Mr Baillieu said.

"These changes will ensure everyone contributes a fair share to the fire services, not

just those who adequately insure their properties.

"The reform will abolish the unfair 'tax-on-tax' which sees GST and stamp duty charged on the current fire services levy.

"The reform also introduces a \$20 million concession scheme for pensioners and veterans," he said.

Deputy Premier Peter Ryan said the decision was in line with recommendation 64 from the Bushfires Royal Commission.

"The Coalition made a promise to Victorians before the last election that we would abolish the flawed insurance based fire services levy.

"We have worked hard to get the model right and we are proud to deliver on that promise.

"Under the current system only those who insure their properties make a contribution to funding the state's fire services.

"The insurance based model increases the cost of insurance and acts as a disincentive to insure, leaving people vulnerable in the event of natural disasters like Black Saturday.

"Primary producers disadvantaged by the insurance based fire services levy will also be better off as a result of this reform," Mr Ryan said.

Grants for better boating

Boating Safety and Facilities (BSFP) grants are open.

Minister for Ports, Denis Naphthine, said community groups, search and rescue organisations, local waterway authorities, local government, government agencies and committees of management are invited to apply for funding.

The program is funded from a portion of revenue received from recreational boat operator licensing and vessel registration fees.

The BSFP will fund a range of initiatives through a mixture of community grants and State wide initiatives.

Mr Naphthine said the initiatives would play an important role in local communities by making boating safer and more accessible for Victorians.

A copy of the Program Information booklet can be downloaded from:-

www.transport.vic.gov.au/grant.

Award to recognise community treasurers

Treasurers will be recognised under the Westpac Community Treasurers' Award.

Westpac's award is to show appreciation of the enormous contribution community treasurers make to volunteer groups.

The winner in each category, small, medium, and large will win five thousand dollars for their organisations and a trophy to recognise their achievements, plus five thousand dollars worth of tools and training from Our Community. All treasurers nominated and eligible for an award will receive a Certificate of Recognition to mark the esteem in which they are held.

Categories are 'small organisations' with an annual income of less than \$100,000.

'Medium organisations' are those with an annual income of between \$100,000 and one million dollars. And 'large organisations' are those with with an annual income of more than \$1 million.

Nominees must be the treasurer of an Australian not for profit organisation, receive no payment, and the organisation must have been in operation for more than one year. Applications should be made to Our Community:- treasurersawards@our-community.com.au or phone 9320 6800.

Victorians asked to stand against bullying

Attorney General Robert Clark has called on Victorians to take a stand against bullying. He launched a campaign 'Take a stand against bullying' and distributed information about bullying and Brodie's Law to more than 8000 schools, workplaces, and police stations across Victoria.

The campaign is being undertaken by the Department of Justice in conjunction with the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI), Victoria Police, and Lifeline.

Speaking at Lifeline headquarters in Melbourne, Mr Clark said the campaign was about reminding people of the devastating consequences bullying can have and that help and support were available to assist anyone experiencing serious bullying.

"Everyone is entitled to be safe in our com-

Apology on forced adoptions

Premier Ted Baillieu and Minister Mary Wooldridge said the Victorian Government would formally apologise to women, children and families affected by past adoption practices, particularly during the period from the 1950s to 1970s.

The apology will be made in State Parliament on Thursday 25 October.

Mr Baillieu said it was important to acknowledge the pain and suffering felt by mothers whose children were forcibly removed at birth, and the contribution past government policies played in condoning those practices.

"We now understand and acknowledge the deep grief many mothers experienced after the loss of a child to adoption, and the lack of support offered to help manage their grief.

"What was done was wrong, and it is our sincere hope that this apology will be an important part of the healing process for relinquishing mothers and their children who may continue to experience feelings of grief, pain, anger and loss," Mr Baillieu said.

Forced adoption is defined as the situation where mothers were compelled, coerced, or given no choice other than to relinquish their babies for adoption.

A Commonwealth Senate Committee Inquiry tabled in February 2012 found forced adoptions were widespread in Australia during the 1950s to 1970s, and the emotional damage caused remained significant.

munity and no one should be forced to suffer from bullying.

"Authorities rely on information from the community to stamp out bullying, so if you or someone you know is being bullied, report it.

"All bullying is unacceptable, and serious bullying is a serious crime."

Brodie's Law made serious bullying a criminal offence punishable by up to 10 years in jail and became law in Victoria in June last year.

"Having Brodie's Law in place is about sending a strong message that threatening, bullying behaviour, in the workplace or elsewhere, will not be tolerated," Mr Clark said. Bullying can be committed by people of different ages, in a variety of ways and in a variety of situations including workplaces, schools, sports clubs, shopping centres and increasingly, via the internet.

Brodie's Law was introduced after the tragic suicide of a young Victorian woman, Brodie Panlock, who was subjected to ongoing serious bullying in her workplace.

Brodie's parents, Damien and Rae Panlock said they were proud to support this campaign and all efforts to combat the scourge of bullying.

"Having experienced the devastation that results from merciless bullying, we are passionate about stamping out bullying," Mr and Mrs Panlock said.

"We don't want any family to endure what we have been through which is why we are committed to all efforts to raise awareness about the very serious nature of bullying and its consequences.

"It is our hope that the thousands of posters and pamphlets that will be distributed through this campaign will inspire anyone who is a victim of bullying or has witnessed bullying behaviour, to report it."

Evelyn Field, a psychologist with extensive experience in dealing with school and workplace bullying, said the campaign was the beginning in developing community awareness about creating bully free schools and workplaces.

"I look forward to seeing more progress being made in this area," Ms Field said. VECCI chief executive Mark Stone said bullying should not be condoned in any workplace.

"We encourage employers to embrace the 'Take a stand against bullying' campaign to ensure a positive environment is maintained in workplaces at all times."

See more Victorian State Government releases in 'The Messenger', a supplement to Roundabout.

Invasion of privacy norms are still relevant

Many years ago the then Press Complaints Commission chairman, Lord Wakeham, suggested seven questions editors should ask themselves when the possibility of invasion of privacy arises.

His advice stands the test of time:-

(i) Is there a genuine public interest involved in invading someone's privacy, such as detecting or exposing crime, protecting public health, or preventing the public from being misled. Or is this simply a story which interests the public?

(ii) If there is indeed a genuine public interest, are there ways to disclose it which minimise the invasion into the private life of the individual concerned?

(iii) If you are using photographs obtained by clandestine means, as part of the story, and therefore compound the invasion of privacy, does the public interest require their automatic publication or are they simply illustrative?

(iv) If there is a genuine public interest, which cannot be exposed in any way, other than intrusion, is there a way to minimise the impact on the innocent and vulnerable relatives of the individual concerned, and in particular the children?

(v) If you intend to run a story about someone connected to or related to a person in the public eye in order to illustrate a story about that public figure, are you satisfied the connection is not too remote and that there is a genuine public interest in mentioning that concern?

(vi) In preparing to publish a story seeking to contrast what a public figure has said or done in the past with his/her current statements or behaviour, are you satisfied that it is fair to make such a comparison and that the original behaviour or statement was recent enough to justify publication in the public interest?

(vii) If you intend to run a story about the private life of an individual where there used to be a public interest, have you applied each of these guidelines afresh in case such a defence no longer exists?

The importance of journalism is to maintain the threat of fairness.

Networking a plus on advertising advice

Elizabeth Sleigh from the Landsborough News, and CNAV committee member John Ellis from Chewton Chat, had a little chit chat about rules pertaining to advertising puppies to 'give away to a good home'.

This was a great example of networking among our member papers because the 'old sage' had the answer for Elizabeth.

She said an issue for the Landsborough News was with a community member advertising puppies 'free to a good home'.

"We understand the law is that such advertisements should include microchip numbers and pups must be at least eight weeks old."

"Do you or anyone at CNAV have further advice to offer us including where we might find rulings.

"At present we have rejected the community advertisement."

John's advice was go to the Department of Primary Industry website:-

www.dpi.vic.gov.au/pets/dog-care/microchip-details-now-needed-in-catdog-sale-advertisements.

He said the fifth question under 'frequently asked questions' applied to the free to a good home situation.

The advertisement eventually appeared in the FREE TO A GOOD HOME. 3 female Collie X Kelpie pups. 9 weeks old.

Contact Shane, Landsborough 0447 261 996.

Hopefully the pups will be well placed, and there's another service by a community owned newspaper.

Cat investigation will need more meow

The Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Sustainability and Environment will conduct an investigation into claims that big cats, possibly black leopards, sometimes called pumas, cougars, or panthers, exist in Victoria.

Enormous anecdotal evidence exists in reports and newspaper clippings that provide a strong prima facie case that the big cats exist in Victoria.

The pity of the plan is that it will be an office job with no field work.

The Government is in the process of gathering this information and if it decides there is a strong case will decide on further action.

Reports of big cat sightings throughout the Yarra Valley, Dandenong Ranges, and Bass Valley were by far the most on going single issue coming to me in forty years of journalism. The last I was involved in was a story we published in the Pakenham Gazette, about five years ago, with photos of a horse that had been mauled and dragged several metres. I spent many late nights and early mornings, trying to sight the animal, particularly around Emerald, and following the horse incident, went to the Melbourne Zoo for advice. I was told the animal was most likely a black leopard and that I could have been within two metres of it and not seen it because they were so clever at camouflage in the bush. I was told they were extremely shy of humans and left few signs of their presence. I was advised the only way to prove the

animal existed was by using sophisticated equipment that was extremely expensive. I then abandoned any further research.

However, if I had been sitting on a panel to hear these witness reports given under oath, my decision would be that the animals, possibly as many as one hundred, exist in Eastern Victoria.

During the 1970s I received a series of phone calls one morning, of sightings ranging from Upper Yarra to Yarra Glen; all from people known to be responsible.

One of the reports was from a church minister and his wife.

During the next two or three weeks I established that none of about six people who made the spontaneous reports were known to each other. I was convinced the animals existed in the hills, but after the Emerald incident, and my meeting with Zoo animal experts, I became sure they existed.

Hopefully, this investigation will lead to a field study.

Jim Mynard

Conference bookings

Bookings are open for the CNAV conference to be held at the Comfort Inn, Nagambie on Saturday 27 October.

Many members will gather for an informal get together on Friday 26, with nibbles and drinks available from 6pm.

Registration, meet and greet, will begin in the Comfort Inn at 9am on Saturday, with the official opening at 10am.

Keynote speak Margaret Simons will then address the conference.

With the main business and dinner over, Sunday morning has been set aside for breakfast and an informal get together.

Then an option is a visit to the Waranga News at Rushworth

Networking

Please send stories about your paper or successes your paper has enjoyed for inclusion in

Roundabout

These can help and encourage others

Information Corner

The State Government Regional Communication Policy can be found at www.dpc.vic.gov.au
Media contact: Sonia Heath 0413 485 526 sonia.heath@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Items in Roundabout may be used in CNAV member newspapers

News items

If you have information useful to other community owned newspapers please send it to

Roundabout

mynardmedia6@bigpond.com

New members

Welcome to new members Around Point Cook, a sister publication to Around Altona.

And to Watsonia Matters, produced by the Diamond Valley Scout Group.

The Messenger

Spring Street releases

A supplement to Roundabout September 2012

Be a good sport at local sport this finals season

With Victorian winter sports clubs heading into their local finals, the Minister for Sport and Recreation Hugh Delahunty, has asked Victorians to get behind their teams, cheer them on responsibly and do their communities proud this season.

As part of the Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport initiative the Victorian Coalition Government is undertaking a range of activities to promote positive behaviour at sporting events.

The initiative includes a series of nine videos on the Sport and Recreation Victoria website featuring former Melbourne Football Club champion Garry Lyon providing tips to help encourage welcoming and inclusive clubs across Victoria.

"Victorians are passionate about sport especially in the lead up to, and during the finals.

"The Coalition Government is working with State Sporting Associations to ensure everyone, from players to fans, volunteers and umpires enjoy their sport all year round, especially when passions are high.

"Earlier this year I asked my Department to consult with sport and recreation stakeholders to provide them with an opportunity to develop new initiatives which they need, and can use to support and promote appropriate behaviour in their sporting community.

"We have Garry Lyon to help reinforce the message that an important part of enjoying sport is good spectator behaviour and sporting conduct on the field of play," he said.

Mr Lyon said team sport continued to play a big part in his life thanks to the great support from the local clubs, coaches, volunteers, friends and family that have helped him

along the way.

"These videos are all about sharing those positives with the wider sporting community so clubs can not only become more welcoming and inclusive, but everyone can have fun, be involved and benefit from the wide range of opportunities that only community sports can deliver," Mr Lyon said.

Visit www.premier.vic.gov.au for more news The Coalition Government has committed \$130,000 to seven sports, Australian Rules football, basketball, Rugby League, bowls, tennis, cricket and soccer, for projects to improve spectator behavior, reduce overall levels of misconduct, or provide training and support to officials and volunteers; \$50,000 to train 24 people nominated by sports as mediators; \$50,000 to continue the 'Fair go, Sport!' project with Hockey Victoria and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and extend the project to another sport; and \$12,000 for Membership Protection Information Officer training for volunteers and officials nominated by sports. Victorian sporting associations are required to comply with the Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport. Clubs and associations must continue to comply with the Code to be eligible for Sport and Recreation Victoria funding.

"Working together we can ensure grassroots sports continue to attract and retain players, volunteers and officials from junior levels right through to seniors," Mr Delahunty said. "I encourage all fans to continue to show their support in the best possible way by cheering on your teams and doing your communities proud," Mr Delahunty said.

To see Garry's tips, please go to :- www.sport.vic.gov.au

Grants to preserve history records

Community groups are invited to apply for a share in \$350,000 for projects that preserve and share stories of Victoria's past.

Premier and Minister for the Arts Ted Baillieu said individual grants of up to \$15,000 were available to non profit groups such as historical societies, schools, sporting clubs, and special interest groups for projects that capture and share the fascinating stories of Victoria across the ages.

"The Local History Grants program provides money to support a diverse range of projects, including exhibitions and multimedia projects, publications, oral histories, digitisation or preservation of vital historical items, which together provide greater access to our community history.

"Victoria has a rich history with so many important stories to uncover and celebrate. This program supports projects that enable community members to connect with their history in innovative and engaging ways.

"Importantly, in addition to supporting individual projects, the Local History Grants Program also supports the tireless efforts of volunteer networks and community organisations that act as custodians of our State's heritage, ensuring that it is available to future generations," He said.

The program, which is run by Public Record Office Victoria, is open to not-for-profit community groups across the State.

Applications for the Local History Grants Program are open now, and close on Monday 12 November 2012

Visit:- <http://prov.vic.gov.au/community-programs/grants-awards/local-history-grants>.

Join the Community Newspaper Association of Victoria

Supports community owned
newspapers.

Acts as an effective liaison between
member papers and the
Government.

Provides networking and advice.
Conducts an annual conference
www.cnav.org.au

The Messenger

is a Mynard Media service
to pass on Government press
releases that might be of
interest to community owned
newspapers.

Victoria to host carbon capture centre

Victorian Energy and Resources Minister Michael O'Brien launched a major new research centre that cements Victoria's reputation as an innovator in carbon capture and storage (CCS).

The Peter Cook Centre for CCS Research will be a world class facility located at the University of Melbourne and will initially host 30 scientists and engineers working on CCS.

The Coalition Government is contributing \$500,000 towards the creation of the centre. The new centre has received a \$6 million sponsorship from Rio Tinto to create a research platform that will be integrated with the Co-operative Research Centre for Greenhouse Gas Technologies (CO2CRC), operator of the successful Otway Project.

A significant proportion of the funding will go towards the continuation of the Otway Project as an international research facility covering subsurface and monitoring and verification work.

"The launch of the Peter Cook Centre for CCS Research is an exciting new chapter in Victoria's emergence as a leader in CCS and will help attract investment and the best and brightest scientists and engineers.

"Victoria has a well-earned reputation in research into technologies like CCS, which will be crucial as we make the transition to a

carbon constrained future.

"CCS has the potential to deliver significant benefits to Victoria, which is uniquely placed with large stable storage reservoirs in the Gippsland Basin.

"The research carried out at this new centre will add to our understanding of this potential new industry; an industry which could deliver jobs, boost skills and attract investment, while strengthening Victoria's energy security in a low emissions future.

"I congratulate Rio Tinto on its investment in this important initiative and in the development of the next generation of CCS experts in science and engineering," He said.

The research outcomes from the University of Melbourne and the Otway Project facilities will support Victoria's CCS centrepiece, the CarbonNet Project, and further the development of the CCS industry.

CO2CRC is the lead research organisation for the CarbonNet Project.

The Peter Cook Centre for CCS Research, named after the geologist who founded CO2CRC, will be based at the University of Melbourne and will provide postgraduate education and applied research in CCS.

The Coalition Government has demonstrated its commitment to this important initiative by its sponsorship of the geological carbon storage component of the Centre.

More frontline police

Deputy Premier and Minister for Police and Emergency Services Peter Ryan said 350 additional frontline police officers would be allocated across Victoria by the end of June next year.

Mr Ryan said the extra frontline police personnel would have an enormous benefit to community safety and would provide Police Command with greater flexibility to deploy resources to areas of need.

"By June 2013, an additional 1200 police positions will have been allocated across Victoria since the Coalition Government won office in November 2010," Mr Ryan said.

"This is a huge step towards improving people's safety.

Mr Ryan said the biggest beneficiaries included the Southern Metro Division 4 (Frankston and Mornington Peninsula)

Western Division 3 (Ballarat and Moorabool). North West Metro Division 4 (Hume, Moonee Valley and Moreland).

Southern Metro Division 3 (Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong).

He said the Coalition Government had allocated \$602 million towards the recruitment and training of new police and a further \$54.6 million towards new and upgraded police stations.

"This is a huge investment and one that is making a real difference in supporting Victoria Police in their ongoing efforts to fight crime and anti-social behaviour," Mr Ryan said.

"The recruitment of additional police personnel is going extremely well, and Victoria Police will allocate a further 500 frontline police by November 2014 in line with the Coalition's commitment.

"By November 2014 the Victoria Police organisation will enjoy an overall boost to its ranks of 1700 frontline personnel above attrition, in the biggest boost to frontline police resources in a single term of government in Victoria's history," he said.

Travelling conmen placed on notice

Travelling conmen have been put on notice as three States join forces to stop them taking advantage of consumers.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Michael O'Brien said New South Wales, Tasmania, and Victoria signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

He said over the past year, 46 reported incidents of travelling conmen in Victoria were received from across the State and this MoU put conmen, who think they can rip off people, on notice.

"Cross border co-operation means that conmen will find it difficult to cross into other states to try their luck with their dodgy schemes, disrupting their plans and bringing them to justice quicker.

"Through increased reporting, vigilance, and education, the sharing of intelligence with our neighbouring States is critical to shutting down conmen operations.

"I urge anyone who has been approached by travelling conmen to report them so they can be investigated.

"These unscrupulous operators take advantage of the most vulnerable and do not respect consumers or borders, so I am pleased to be working closely with New South Wales and Tasmania to protect innocent Australians from being duped," Mr O'Brien said.

Since launching the Stop Travelling Conmen campaign last October, 417 calls were made to the national hotline, 32 individuals have been prosecuted for more than 100 breaches of various laws and \$303,359 in fines and related court costs ordered.

To report a travelling conman, contact the national hotline on 1300 133 408, connect through the Stop Travelling Conmen Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/StopTravellingConMen, or log onto the interactive map for reports on travelling conmen at www.stoptravelling-conmen.org.

New number plate slogan

Victorian number plates will soon carry the road safety message 'Stay Alert Stay Alive' as part of the Government's bid to reduce the State's road toll.

Premier Ted Baillieu said the plates would be seen by early 2013.

"We want to ensure we keep road safety front and centre for every Victorian.

"What better place to reinforce road safety messages to motorists than on number plates," Mr Baillieu said.

If you learn one thing at the CNAV conference, in addition to networking and fellowship, it is worth attending.

Small high powered magnets banned

Small magnetic novelty items that can cause grave health risks if swallowed are banned in Victoria.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Michael O'Brien said the ban was effective immediately, and they must not be sold or made available for sale in any store across Victoria.

Consumer Affairs Victoria inspectors will be checking and will seize these items if they have not been removed from sale by businesses.

The Minister approved a 60 day interim ban order on small, separable or loose permanent magnetic objects such as BuckyBalls, Buckycubes, Nanodots, Neocubes, Neodymium sphere magnets and Xcube.

Similar bans have been enacted in Western Australia and New South Wales.

Mr O'Brien said, while the Commonwealth Government was proposing a nationwide ban, this did not result in the immediate removal of the products.

"We take the safety of children very seriously, and have taken swift action to remove the potentially dangerous products immediately to prevent them from causing further harm." He said the magnets, which were usually sold in quantities within a single package, could cause serious injury if swallowed or

inhaled.

"There are risks to toddlers and small children placing the objects in their mouths, as well as a risk from accidental swallowing by teenagers or adults using the magnets as facial jewellery.

"The magnets can lock together through intestinal walls causing perforations and blockages.

"Urgent surgery may then be required to remove the magnets, to avoid serious medical complications or death.

"Children can choke or suffocate if the magnets lodge in their throat or block their windpipe.

"Although these products may be branded with warnings, the serious health risks they pose are not obvious, and unfortunately injuries are becoming more common," He said.

The number of injuries from small, powerful magnets is increasing.

The Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit has reported that of 203 'ingestion of magnets' incidents in the 15 years to 2010; 43 per cent involved 'magnetic balls/spheres'.

There has been a substantial increase in incidents since 2005. This is the first Victorian interim ban introduced under the Australian Consumer Law's product safety powers.

Two million more fish in Victorian lakes and rivers

For the second consecutive year the Victorian Coalition Government has stocked more than two million native fish into lakes and rivers to improve recreational fishing opportunities across Victoria.

Agriculture and Food Security Minister Peter Walsh said Fisheries Victoria stocked 81 lakes and rivers with native fish last financial year.

"More than one million of the fish were golden perch and 885,000 were Murray cod, as well as Australian bass, silver perch, estuary perch and Macquarie perch," Mr Walsh said.

"Most of these fish were released as fingerlings and will take three to five years to reach legal minimum size, depending on the species.

"However, anglers won't need to wait that long because there are already productive freshwater fisheries and some developing ones, which is exciting news for anglers this coming season.

"The extensive stocking of Nagambie Lakes is beginning to yield results with legal size golden perch caught last summer by local club anglers.

'More than 900,000 native fish have been stocked into the Nagambie Lakes since 2009.

"Stockings of Australian bass in Gippsland are also showing encouraging signs with catches of fish in Blue Rock Lake, the Macalister River and Lake Glenmaggie last summer.

"The fishing licence funded Murray Cod Million project at Lake Eildon is also progressing well.

"Two thirds of those cod have been stocked and bait fishers have already reported catches of small fish.

"Lake Eildon has a long history of Murray cod stocking since the 1990s so anglers don't even have to wait for these million fish to grow.

"Several giant cod measuring more than one metre have been landed in recent months and the lake has a growing reputation that should only improve when these recently stocked fish reach size," he said.

For the full list of stocked native fish waters visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fisheries/aboutfisheries/fish-stocking-reporting/native-fish-releases-2012

Anglers are reminded that the three month closed season for Murray cod began at the start of September and runs through to the end of November.

Footy club and Salvos build magpie nests

Minister for Housing Wendy Lovell said a partnership between the Collingwood Football Club and the Salvation Army was providing 'nests' for homeless people.

She said the partnership resulted in development of an Innovation Action Project delivering secure and affordable accommodation for homeless people.

Ms Lovell said the project was a new component of the Safe Exits Innovation Action Project, one of 11 Innovation Action Projects funded as part of the Victorian Coalition Government's Victorian Homelessness Action Plan.

"It is exciting to see the Collingwood Football Club getting involved and helping those most in need.

"The project provides affordable accommodation for people who are either sleeping rough or in unsafe rooming houses.

"The Salvation Army provides mentoring and support services including counselling, funded through the Victorian Government's

Innovation Action Projects.

"The Government is committed to tackling homelessness, through a combination of earlier intervention and working closely with community groups and the homelessness sector," Ms Lovell said.

She said the Victorian Homelessness Action Plan, aimed to provide clear pathways for those experiencing homelessness, or those at risk of homelessness, into stable housing and social and economic participation.

"One important part of the Action Plan is funding for 11 new Innovation Action Projects which are exploring new and creative ways of either tackling homeless or preventing people becoming homeless in the first instance."

"The first phase of the Magpie Nest Housing Project has seen two houses in Preston made available to homeless people.

"Each house will accommodate no more than three tenants, who will remain in the properties for as long as they need to. Salvation Army case workers, through the Safe Exits Innovation Action Project, will identify and mentor participants and oversee the day to day operation of the houses." she said.

The Community Newspaper
Association of Victoria
conference is at Nagambie
on 27 October

Roadshow on sharing the road with trucks

A truck fitted out with interactive games and information is taking to the state's highways and freeways in a two month road show to encourage greater respect between car and truck drivers.

Minister for Roads Terry Mulder said the truck was part of the Road to Respect campaign, which aimed to encourage road users to share the road, in particular focusing on the relationship between cars and trucks.

"The goal of the campaign is to help drivers better understand how to share the road safely and with trucks."

"Centrepiece of the campaign is the, Road to Respect Roadshow, a travelling road safety exhibition.

"The semi-trailer will travel across Victoria delivering the important message in an interesting and relevant way, showing road users how to share the road safely, not just telling them.

"We are providing people with the opportunity to understand and experience the roads from a truck driver's perspective and vice versa.

"Simple things such as understanding the

physical limitations of heavy vehicles, like braking distance and blind spots, can make a big difference," he said.

Mr Mulder said some simple steps people could take to be safer around trucks included

- * Blind spots: Truck blind spots are large. Know where they are and be sure the driver can see your vehicle in the truck's mirrors.

- * Stopping distance: Trucks take longer than other vehicles to stop. Don't drive in the gap that is required for a truck to stop safely.

- * Overtaking: When overtaking a truck, be patient and wait for a safe opportunity. Look and allow enough time and distance to overtake.

- * Tailgating: Don't drive too closely to the vehicle in front and respect other road users.

- * Speed: Drive at or below the speed limit. Be aware of the conditions and travel at an appropriate speed.

- * Sharing the road: All road users have a right to use the road. You have a responsibility to play your part – we are all in this together.

- * Turning trucks: Don't overtake or travel beside a turning truck. Trucks use more road space to turn.

VicRoads Director of Vehicle Management and Safety Don Hogben said the Road to Respect is a timely campaign to emphasise that Victoria's roads are a shared resource for all Victorians.

"Freight plays an important role in society and our daily lives.

"With the increase in population it is becoming increasingly important that road users become more aware of each other and share the road safely," Mr Hogben said.

"There are more than four million cars and more than 122,000 trucks registered in Victoria and freight volumes in Victoria are estimated to double by 2030.

"The Road to Respect Roadshow supports the notion that road safety is the shared responsibility of all road users.

"Ultimately, our aim is to shift driver and rider behaviour so that all road users – big or small – are treated with the respect they deserve on Victoria's roads," he said.

The Road to Respect campaign will run until Sunday 4 November 2012.

Information about the campaign - including an interactive map showing the Roadshow schedule and general information about sharing the road with trucks is available on the VicRoads website at:-

www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/RoadToRespect or The road show will be in Melbourne from 22 to 30 September; Elmore 2 to 4 October; Yarrowonga 5 and 6 October; Sunbury 3 October; Geelong 18 to 21 October, and Sale 2 to 4 November.

More ambulance staff to help in rural areas

Minister for Health David Davis said the Victorian Coalition Government was on track to deliver its \$151million commitment to boosting ambulance services, with 143 extra ambulance staff already on the road.

He said 113 new paramedics were deployed to ambulance stations across Victoria, as well as 30 patient transport officers.

"The Victorian Coalition Government is committed to ensuring all Victorians have access to the highest quality ambulance service delivering timely responses during emergencies.

"We are delivering on our commitment to employ 310 additional paramedics and 30 patient transport officers over five years.

"I am extremely proud that we have already fulfilled our promise for 30 patient transport officers, with new non emergency patient transport crews now working in Geelong, Wonthaggi, Morwell, Ballarat, Wodonga, Seymour and Bendigo.

"New highly trained MICA units are also up and running in Warnambool, Wonthaggi, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Wodonga and Mildura.

"Other ambulance services in locations including Maffra, Grantville, Alexandra, Lyndhurst, Cowes, and Belgrave have been boosted with upgrades to ensure paramedics are rostered on 24 hours a day," he said.

Mr Davis said of the 113 new paramedics, 95 were deployed to ambulance stations in rural Victoria.

"I am working with Ambulance Victoria to deliver the election commitment supporting the allocation of new paramedics to areas of the state with the greatest need," Mr Davis said.

Mr Davis said the patient transport officers across regional Victoria would relieve pressure on paramedics so they were available to respond to life threatening emergencies.

Patient transport officers provide non emergency patient transport (NEPT) services. NEPT crews undertake the non emergency transfer of patients, typically between hospitals, nursing homes and other health care providers, which in rural areas frees up emergency ambulance crews. For further information about the locations of new paramedics and patient transport officers, please visit the Ambulance Victoria website.

Fire research aims to protect Victorians

The Victorian Coalition Government has provided \$6.45 million to fund a package of fire research projects by the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC).

Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith said the research, commissioned by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, would cover bushfire risk management, fire danger and severity rating, improving planned burning, and the use of fire to manage our flora and fauna.

"These new research projects will enhance the effectiveness of bushfire management agencies in Victoria.

"Despite rain over the past two fire seasons, Victoria is one of the most fire prone places on earth.

"Bushfire will always be a part of the Victorian landscape and the Coalition Government is committed to improving fire management practices to protect our communities and the environment.

"The Bushfire CRC is internationally renowned and will engage research partners from Australia and New Zealand over the next three to four years to deliver this program.

"This research will enhance our knowledge of bushfire and help us to prepare and protect Victorian communities from the threat of damaging bushfires." He said.