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Treasured citizen
Christopher Quinn, one of Knox's top citizens, has died. Tributes have flowed for Mr Quinn, who was named Knox citizen of the year for 2007. For more, turn to page 3.

Picture: Julie Bowyer

Knox skate park battle escalates

THE fight to keep the popular Knox Bowl in Wantirna South is ramping up.

The new facility in Knoxfield has been labelled as too advanced and skaters want the council to keep both skate parks.

Skaters were expected to attend last night's Knox Council meeting in a bid to get councillors to abandon plans to demolish the park.

SEE page 3 for more on the skate park issue.

Safety plea

By Will Wright

CALLS for Ferntree Gully railway station to be upgraded have been renewed after a man was stabbed last Thursday.

About 5.30pm, police taped off the scene after a 27-year-old man was smashed over the head with a bottle before being stabbed in the upper body with the broken glass.

The Ferntree Gully resident was taken to The Alfred in a serious condition.

Senior Sergeant John Hess, of Knox police, said detectives were looking for three males and a female.

He said that while the victim provoked the attackers verbally, "it doesn't

justify what they did to him".

Community leaders have previously called for the busy station to be manned.

The State Government did not respond to the *Journal's* calls as to whether the attack justified a review of staffing levels, but had previously stated it had no plans to upgrade the station.

Ferntree Gully MP Nick Wakeling said last week's assault showed the need for the station to be upgraded to premium status.

"How much will it take the Brumby Government to realise what the rest of

Renewed calls to improve 'Gully station

the community knows? Ferntree Gully station needs to be upgraded to priority status to improve the safety of commuters."

Knox councillor Karin Orpen said the State Government could not request greater patronage on public transport if commuters did not feel safe using it.

She said that while having staff on the platforms would not completely eliminate violent incidents, more people would be inclined to use the service.

"There's safety in numbers."
A Connex spokesman said the com-

pany had tried to make rail travel in Melbourne as safe as possible.

"We employ 350 customer service officers as well as station staff to assist our customers."

The spokesman said closed-circuit television cameras were used at all stations. "However, no one, not even police, can be everywhere and attacks such as you have described are a problem for our society as a whole, not just Connex."

Information to Knox police on 9881 7000.

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Skaters vow to save park

By Will Wright

SKATERS were expected to make a strong plea to Knox Council last night to save their beloved skate park.

More than 1000 skaters and BMX riders have signed an online petition calling for the council to abandon plans to demolish the Knox Bowl at Wantirna South.

The Save Knox Bowl group, led by former Knox resident

David Lalama, was planning a protest at last night's council meeting and expected a "decent" turnout.

Mr Lalama said the skate park on Lewis Road had become a "social hub" since it was built in 1989 and catered to people of all skill levels.

He accused the council of getting rid of the "historic" facility without consultation.

The council will begin dismantling the site once the

\$650,000 regional skate park at Gilbert Park, Knoxfield, is completed.

The new facility is expected to be finished by February.

Mayor Jim Penna said the council would not change its decision to scrap the Knox Bowl.

He said it would cost between \$20,000 and \$25,000 to provide immediate improvements to the facility if it was retained.

Cr Penna said the council

adopted a skate and BMX plan in 2002 after extensive community consultation and decided to replace the Lewis Park bowl with a new facility.

It had input from users and residents about the design of the new bowl, Cr Penna said.

Professional BMX rider Dave McComb said "none of our suggestions were taken on board" and the new bowl catered only for advanced users.

Cr Penna said Lewis Park was an important part of the council's vision for the development of Knox central as a "vibrant CBD for the next century".

He said the skate park in Gilbert Park was suitable for people with a wide range of abilities, from beginners to more experienced skaters.

The petition can be viewed at www.myspace.com/saveknoxbowl

Flasher strikes again

A SERIAL flasher in Knox continues to elude police despite numerous complaints.

Since August, Knox detectives have received about 20 reports of a man exposing himself to children.

The latest incident was on January 6 at Fair Park, Ferntree Gully.

The man, in his 20s or 30s, is described as Caucasian and thin. He usually wears ¾-length leggings, sunglasses and a beanie or peaked cap.

Information to police on 9881 7999.

Backing for postbox

BAYSWATER state MP Heidi Victoria and Deakin federal MP Mike Symon have joined a fight to keep a postbox on Elmhurst Road, Bayswater North.

Australia Post had plans to remove the mailbox this month because it had been repeatedly vandalised and had a low usage rate.

Australia Post spokeswoman Nadine Lyford said the decision to remove the box would be postponed until the middle of next month.

Affected people should call 13 13 18.

Stud Road crash

EIGHT vehicles were involved in a crash on Stud Road, Rowville, about noon on Saturday.

Senior Sergeant Tracy Leitch, of Rowville police, said no one was injured.

Speed signs ignored

RACV chief transport engineer Peter Daly says motorists are breaking the reduced speed limits along Wellington Road because roadworks appeared to be finished.

He criticised VicRoads for having speed limits in place that no one obeyed.

A VicRoads spokeswoman said the lower speed limit was in place for road workers' safety.

Push for signals

KNOX Council is asking VicRoads to install traffic signals along Ferntree Gully Road near the new skate park in Knoxfield.

Cr Debbie Field said the council offered to design the crossing to provide facility users with safe access.

VicRoads did not respond before the paper went to press.

Uni offers

WANTIRNA'S Swinburne University of Technology made 2400 course offers to school graduates and a further 300 offers to its TAFE graduates.

A spokeswoman said the intake was similar to last year.

New drug and alcohol program is all the 'rage'

A GROUP of young people handed out lollipops at Knox shopping centre last week to help deliver a strong message about the harmful effects of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.

Seven Knox residents have developed a program called Register And Get Educated to help health promotion messages get through to youths.

RAGE representative Vanessa Egan said they handed out Chupa Chups to encourage youths to approach them and register for the program.

The Bayswater resident said many young people were "irresponsible" with alcohol, drugs and smoking.

"The fact that RAGE is run by young people means it is much more relevant than traditional top-down approaches."

Until June, the group will work with drug and alcohol workers to design SMS messages to be sent to youths registered with the program. "The strength of RAGE is the cost effectiveness - SMS and MySpace are inexpensive social marketing tools," Ms Egan said.

The RAGE project is funded by the National Illicit Drugs Strategy and co-ordinated by the Knox Community Health Service.

Our number one man was a 'lovely bloke'

LAST year's Knox citizen of the year, Christopher Quinn, has died aged 80.

The Ferntree Gully resident's death last Friday has shocked those who knew him.

"He was as fit as a mallee bull," Cr Karin Orpen said.

"He was a lovely bloke."

She said he would be missed by the Knox community.

"Everybody knew Chris Quinn."

Accepting his award on Australia Day last year, Mr Quinn said migrants had made Australia the special nation it was today.

Mr Quinn migrated from Ireland to Australia in 1949 and moved to Ferntree Gully seven years later.

He was recognised for his contribution to the municipality as one of the area's first greengrocers.

Mr Quinn was an active member of the St John's Catholic Church and St John's Primary School and worked with immigrants through the Irish Welfare Bureau.

Mayor Jim Penna said the council was saddened to hear Mr Quinn had died and extended his condolences on behalf of the council.



Bright idea: Vanessa Egan is using Chupa Chups to help deliver important health and wellbeing messages to young people. Picture: Rob Carew

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