

Skaters' pleas earn reprieve

By **Will Wright**

SKATERS' pleas to save their skate park have persuaded Knox Council to review its decision to scrap it.

The demolition of Knox Bowl at Lewis Road, Wantirna South was due to start next month, but the plan has been postponed after the council received a 573-signature petition opposing the move.

BMX riders and skaters filled the council chambers at a meeting last Tuesday night as part of a peaceful protest. Save Knox Bowl group

leader David Lalama said he did not get his hopes up.

"I don't think the council sees [the bowl] as an asset, they just see it as a liability.

"If the facility is demolished we'll have a few people interested in running for council."

Cr Adam Gill said he did not see why Knox couldn't have a new skate park at Gilbert Park, Knoxfield, and the skate park on Lewis Road.

"People clearly love [the old skate park]. I was quite impressed

'I don't think the council sees [the bowl] as an asset, they just see it as a liability. If the facility is demolished we'll have a few people interested in running for council.'

David Lalama

that young people took the time to come to the council meeting and sit there quietly with their placards. I think a lot of councillors respect that."

Cr Mick Van de Vreede

said he wanted to know whether users of the old skate park were consulted about its decommissioning.

"If I feel they weren't consulted properly, then that's

a concern for me," he said.

Knox chief executive Graeme Emonson said there had been no consultation about the decommissioning of the park.

Mayor Jim Penna said the council had always envisaged that Gilbert Park bowl would replace the old skate park.

He said the council had followed due process and responded to the community's concerns that the Lewis Park bowl was out of sight and had problems with anti-social behaviour.

Guidelines create hurdle for pony clubs

THE threat of horse flu may have subsided, but tight restrictions on pony clubs remain in force.

Stringent biosecurity guidelines for activities involving horses were introduced in August after an equine flu outbreak in NSW.

However, many pony clubs were unable to abide by the guidelines, which included the possibility of a lockdown if a suspected case was discovered.

Five months on, the clubs are still feeling the effects.

The Riding for the Disabled centre in Lysterfield lost at least 10 volunteers during the shut-down.

Coach Andy Rouget said: "We haven't ridden since August. Financially, it's been a nightmare. Obviously, the riders that haven't been able to ride have missed out on that physio and social interaction."

"We've lost quite a lot of volunteers because they've gone and volunteered somewhere else."

Pony Clubs Victoria Association chief executive James Fitzpatrick

said most activities could resume soon.

"Some clubs may still have difficulties meeting the revised biosecurity guidelines and be able to cope with either a short-term or long-term lockdown, but this is entirely dependent on the capabilities of each individual club."

He expected biosecurity measures to remain in place until the middle of the year.

Anyone wishing to volunteer at the Riding for Disabled Centre can call 0408 582 716.

Police 'coming down hard' on road offenders

By Will Wright

BORONIA police are clamping down on drunk drivers and other road offenders by conducting a series of covert operations.

Officers pulled over 69 drivers in the municipality on January 17 and 19.

Thirteen traffic infringements were issued, including driving while intoxicated (2), unregistered (4), unlicensed (3) and riding a motorbike without a helmet (1).

A 45-year-old Vermont man driving a Ford Falcon utility vehicle crashed into oncoming

traffic on Dorset Road, Boronia, at 7.30pm last Wednesday. The man has charges pending in relation to drink driving and other offences.

Senior Sergeant Cliff Sunderland, of Boronia police, said he wanted to send a strong message to motorists that the community is concerned about the number of road fatalities.

"Victoria Police is very determined to do everything in our power to prevent victims of these offences suffering road trauma. We're going to start coming down hard."

Senior Sergeant Sunderland

said the operations were being funded by the Traffic Accident Commission to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

He said police were also cracking down on bicycle riders.

Eighteen cyclists were given penalty notices for offences including failure to wear a helmet and disobeying road signals from January 16 to 18.

"I am sure that if people stopped and considered the long-term pain, cost and community trauma caused as a result of not wearing a helmet or disobeying traffic control signs, they would do the right thing."

Maroondah City Council in conjunction with CONNECTEAST presents

Maroondah Festival

2008

celebrating
**your
backyard**

Sunday
17th February

10am-5pm Croydon Park
Mt Dandenong Road, Croydon

Free family fun all day with food,
market stalls, business expos and amusements.

www.maroondahfestival.com

festival hotline 9294 5604

RACV we're there for you

Journal

resi

DENSO

Advertisement

Riders, skaters flock to new facility

Knox Council captures Olympic year boost

A new regional skate park in Knoxfield is set to bring the world's best BMX riders and skaters to Melbourne.

The facility has attracted hundreds of riders since the main bowl was opened just before Christmas, including influential magazine and skating representatives keen to view the site off Ferntree Gully Road.

Chair of the Knox Council Skate and BMX Park Reference Group, Councillor Debbie Field, said the park would put Melbourne on a world stage, such was the quality of the facility.

"It's an amazing design," she said. "In fact, we're thrilled at the level of community response and support for the new facility."

"The community told us that a regional facility of this type would be popular, but we've been amazed at how strong the support has been for the new site."

"The timing of a new regional facility couldn't be

better," Cr Field added.

"And that's because skateboarding will be a demonstration sport at the Beijing Olympics this year, so I expect we're going to see massive growth in the sport."

Family friendly facility

A special emphasis has been placed on making the site attractive for all the family, including girls as well as boys," Cr Field said.

"We didn't want to just make Gilbert Park a place for boys and forget about the wide range of interest that these sports now attract."

Knox Council is keen to provide facilities that meet the needs of its growing population, she added.

Gilbert Park is located in Knoxfield, off Ferntree Gully Road. Parking is available in Forbes Close, accessed via Gilbert Park Drive (Melways 73 C7).

A bus stop is also nearby.



Written and authorised by Knox City Council, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South, 3152