

Knox Journal

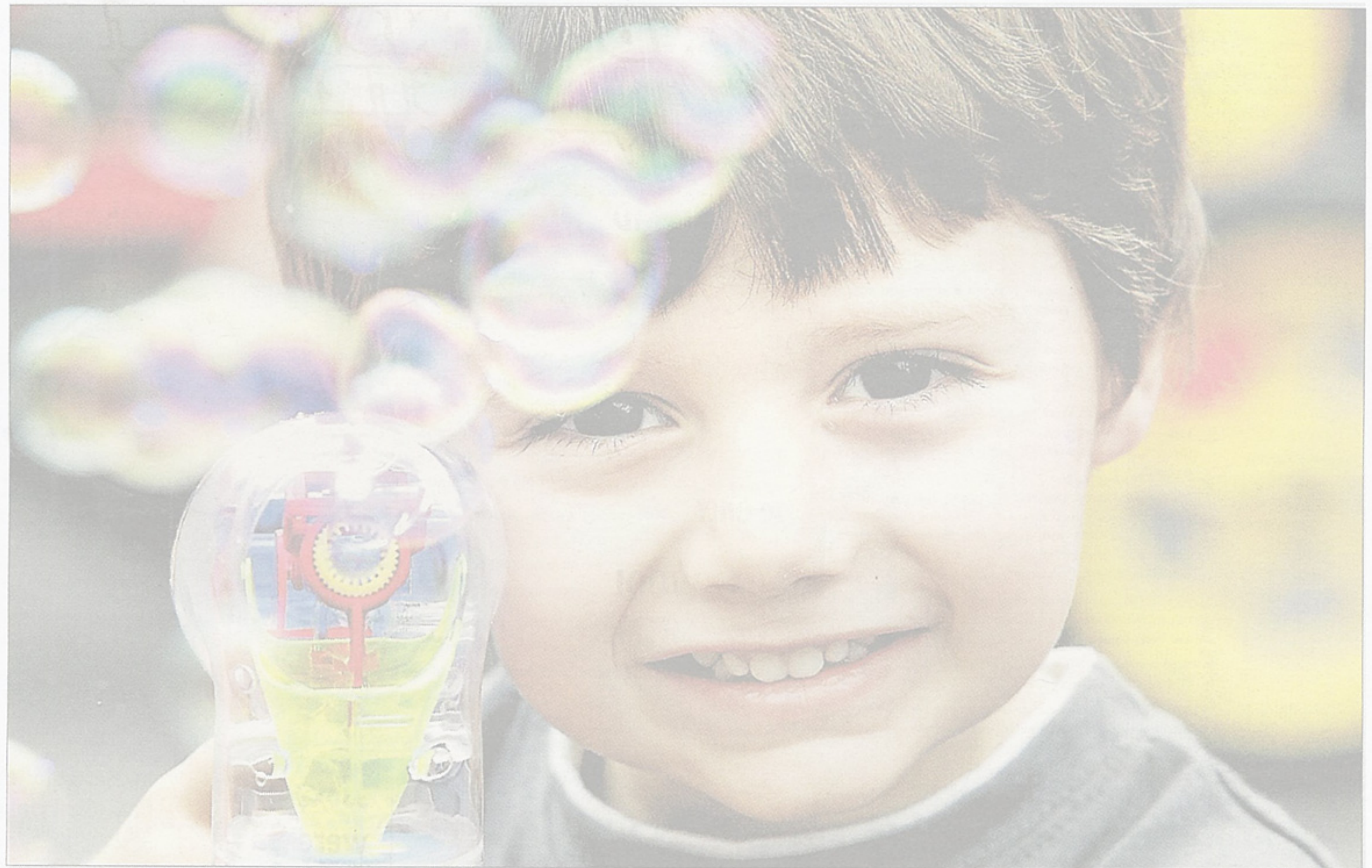
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Bubbles of fun

Ferntree Gully resident James was among a record crowd of 40,000 people at the Knox Festival last weekend. Held at Ferntree Gully Recreational Reserve, the gala offered something for everyone, from rides, art, music and food to community group workshops. The *Journal* is a Knox Festival media sponsor.
Picture: Wayne Hawkins

Tickets, please

By Winston Tan

Paid parking proposal on the table

KNOX Council is considering introducing paid parking to broaden the city's revenue base.

Staff are to prepare a report for a council meeting in April that will consider the economic, social and environmental implications of paid parking in council-owned shopping centre car parks and major recreational areas such as the Eastern Recreation Precinct and Stamford Park.

Cr Darren Pearce said the council needed to review "how are we going to raise revenue, away from being dependent on rates".

He said 67 per cent of the council's revenue came from rates, much higher than the 45 per cent of some inner-Melbourne councils.

"That's because they've got better-diversified revenue sources, one of which is car parking."

He said the council would need to analyse the capital cost of implementing paid parking and enforcing it, whether it was justified by the revenue received and the effect on activities in the area.

"It's an issue that needs to be looked

at right now for planning over the next five or 10 years."

Cr Peter Cole opposed the move. "With rising fuel and insurance costs, what motorists don't want is another slug," he said.

Cr John Mortimore said he would not support fees in community neighbourhoods, but might consider it for major activity areas, such as the Eastern Recreation Precinct, which is currently under construction.

"Even modest fees can offset the

costs of maintaining these areas."

Mayor Joe Cossari said he would consider paid parking at the Eastern Recreation Precinct but not at shopping centres such as Wantirna Mall.

"They're doing shopping, they're locals and pay their rates."

Boronia trader Murray Gibson said he would be dead against the proposal. "It's hard enough as it is. It's just not on."

Neighbouring councils Maroondah and Monash do not have paid parking.



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Council-owned car parks in Knox include Studfield Shopping Centre and Wantirna Mall.

The council also owns sections of car parks in Alchester Village, Dorset Square, Bayswater Village, Mountain Gate and Scoresby Village.

Privately owned car parks, such as at Knox City Shopping Centre, would not be affected.

TODAY

Skate park flip

Councillors agree to consider funding for previously doomed skate and BMX park: Page 3

Jobs on the line

Local companies and workers at risk as Government cans insulation scheme: Page 5

Team spirit

CFA team injured in last year's bushfires stays focused and committed to the cause: Page 23

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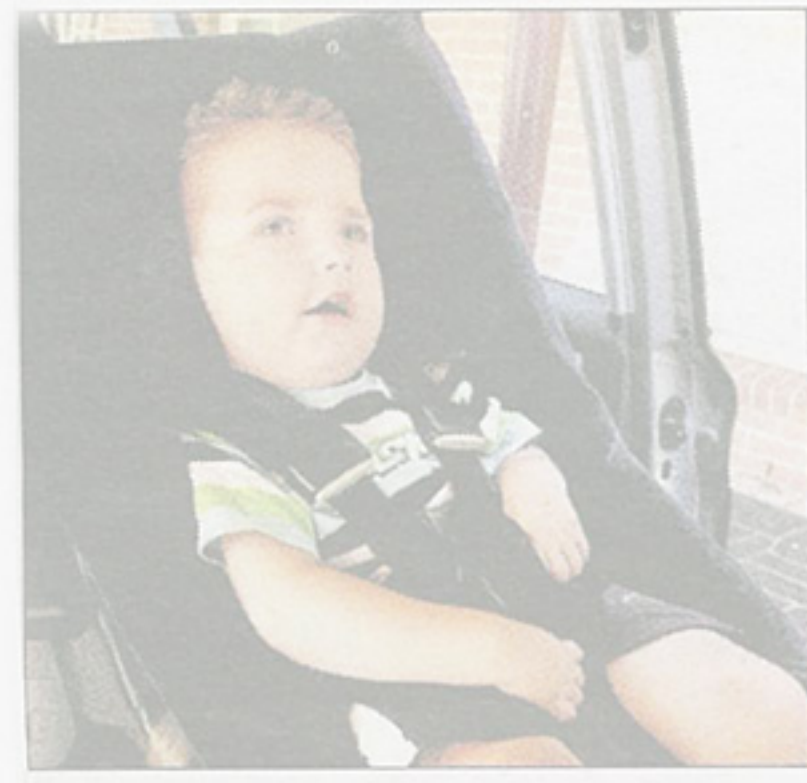
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Big booster in Bailey's battle



Generous effort: Bailey Timms has received a new modified car seat. Picture: Wayne Hawkins

By Winston Tan

LIFE is looking a lot brighter for a young patient of the Monash Medical Centre since his family received help to buy a special modified car seat for him.

Lysterfield resident Bailey Timms has epilepsy and osteoporosis and is prone to bouts of pneumonia.

The four-year-old is unable to walk and has to be fed through a tube in his stomach.

The Timms family last year made an appeal through the *Journal* for a modified car seat so they could get out and about together and take Bailey to medical appointments.

Readers have donated \$6000 to Bailey,

'I want to thank all the people who donated, and let them know the money was genuinely used.'

Claire Timms

meaning the modified car seat, which cost just under \$4000, has been paid for. The rest of the money will be used to buy other medical equipment.

The modified seat, which is on a swivel, will make it easier for family members to help Bailey get in and out of the car.

The seat will last about four years.

A hoist to help get Bailey in and out of the bath has been donated by another family.

Bailey's mother Claire Timms was ecstatic over the public's generosity.

She said she was initially too scared to check Bailey's account, worried that no one would donate. And if anyone did donate, she didn't expect much more than \$150.

"It just kept going up and up," Mrs Timms said.

"I want to thank all the people who donated, and let them know the money was genuinely used."

"It's been a fantastic response, and I couldn't have done it without all the people helping."

Councillors flip on skate park funding

KNOX skaters and BMX riders scored a win when Knox councillors agreed to consider funding for the Lewis Park skate and BMX park in this year's budget.

At a council meeting last month, councillors unanimously agreed to consider \$120,000 worth of improvements for the park, along with an increase in annual operating funds, when it deliberates on Knox's 2010-2011 budget.

The council had initially decided that the Lewis Park park was a "non-preferred site to develop a new centralised skate and BMX facility", particularly with the opening of the Gilbert Park skate park in Knoxfield in 2006.

But in February 2008, a petition with 573 signatures and an online listing with 1146 names showed support for the Lewis Park site.

Since then, a council reference group, which included the park's users, has sought to find the best path forward for the skate park.

Reference group member and park campaigner David Lalama said the council seemed to be getting behind keeping the skate park.



Long battle: David Lalama, centre, celebrates Knox Council's support of the Lewis Park Skate and BMX facility with Jai Bradley, Chris Jozsa and Jake Deering. Picture: Rob Carew

"It's very promising. The skate park is very important. It's an iconic facility."

Mr Lalama described the skate park as a second home to many youth

More than 50 users and their parents attended last month's council meeting to

see councillors decide on the park's future.

Mr Lalama said an enormous amount of hard work, from children to adults, had gone into saving the park.

"The biggest struggle was trying to make the council aware that it is iconic,

much valued and much used."

Mr Lalama said it was crucial that the skate park was funded during the budget process.

"The campaign has enabled the youth to have their voice heard."

Winston Tan

Rowville rail campaign still on track, says council

KNOX Council is stepping up the pressure on the State Government to deliver better public transport for the municipality.

Mayor Joe Cossari, Cr Mick Van de Vreede and chief executive officer Graeme Emonson recently met the new parliamentary secretary for public transport, Brian Tee, to sell their case for Rowville rail, a Knox tram and improved bus services.

Cr Van de Vreede said he expected the

Government to commit to a feasibility study to Rowville rail within a year or two of its next term, if re-elected.

"When I'm out on the hustings talking to people, clearly it is one of the top issues in the area.

"People have an expectation the Government will deliver on this."

Cr Van de Vreede provided Mr Tee with a list of services and infrastructure improvements the council wanted the

Government to implement.

He said he was disappointed in Premier John Brumby's recent comments that the Government would wait until the SmartBus service bedded down before deciding on Rowville rail.

"The SmartBus has been in place for a couple of years now, and is performing exceptionally well. A rail line is the only answer for the outer east, through to Monash University and Huntingdale."

Mr Tee has previously said he would keep an open mind, but buses were cheaper and more flexible.

"It gives you a lot more flexibility around those areas compared with the cost of rail."

The council is also lobbying for increased hours and frequency of bus services and improved bus routes to service main roads, industrial areas and housing estates.

Bandit foiled

POLICE are investigating an attempted armed robbery in Upper Ferntree Gully last Thursday.

Police said a man wearing an Essendon beanie and sunglasses entered the ANZ bank on the Burwood Highway about 4.30pm, told the teller it was a robbery, produced a knife and handed over a bag.

Another teller activated a security screen and the bandit was restricted from any further ability to carry out the robbery.

Tree hugging

KNOX Council says it will still play a role in National Tree Day, despite claims of a funding shortfall in its bushland management department.

According to Friends of Blind Creek Billabong spokeswoman Fay Rimmer, the council has decided not to hold a tree day event in the municipality due to a lack of funding in the department.

City development director Angelo Kourambas said bushfire-preparedness had had a high priority, but the council was happy to support a tree day activity at Stamford Park in Rowville on August 1.

Hub for The Basin

KNOX Council has signalled its support for a community hub in The Basin.

Community services director Kerry Stubbings said the council supported an application by The Basin Community House to seek state funding for a feasibility study for a multipurpose community centre.

The council will prepare a report for a meeting in May.

Fire probe

POLICE are investigating a fire that damaged three properties in Bayswater. The blaze broke out in Imperial Avenue on February 20.

CFA spokeswoman Anne Sheedy said one property suffered structural damage and the other properties had damage to a garage and outside fence.

It's showtime, pets

PETS and their owners have been invited for a day out at Knox Council's Eastern Regional Pet Expo.

Mayor Joe Cossari says people will find information and products for their pets and enjoy a day of pet-friendly entertainment.

The event is at Ferntree Gully Recreational Reserve, off Brenock Park Drive, on Sunday, March 28.

Boon for readers

LIBRARY hours in Knox will be extended from July 1.

Cr Adam Gill said libraries would open earlier, from 9am on most days, with a net gain of 9½ hours access across the municipality. Details: www.erl.vic.gov.au or 1300 737 277.

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