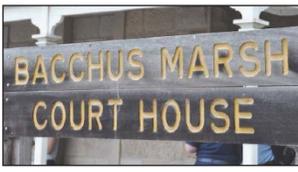


Fifth time unlucky

By Lachlan Ellis



A Bacchus Marsh man facing two charges of driving while suspended – his fourth and fifth such charges – has been ordered to do 100 hours of unpaid community work.

Moeitaala Seinafolava entered a plea of guilty at the Bacchus Marsh Magistrates Court on 23 April, represented by lawyer Tim Smurthwaite.

Police Prosecutor Senior Constable Mitchell Pruitt told Magistrate John Bentley that the accused had been intercepted twice in less than a month.

“On Sunday 19 January 2020 at 6 am, police intercepted the accused driving a golden Camry sedan. Police spoke with the driver, and he produced a Victorian driver’s licence which was suspended for six months. The suspension commenced on the 23 August 2019. The accused stated: ‘I’m sorry, I didn’t know,’” Senior Constable Pruitt said.

“On Thursday 6 February 2020 at 12:06 am, police were travelling east on Main St, Bacchus Marsh when they observed and pulled over a golden Camry sedan. The accused produced his licence, which was suspended. The accused said he was driving ‘to get to work.’”

Mr Smurthwaite said that on both occasions, his client was driving for work-related purposes – “making his way to work on one occasion, and from work on the other.”

Mr Smurthwaite also told the court that Mr Seinafolava had a hospitalised daughter. While Magistrate Bentley sympathised with the accused, he said there had to be a penalty for his actions.

“I’m thinking of a corrections order, he has to get the message, this is the fourth and fifth time he’s done this. The fining is not working, is it?” Magistrate Bentley said.

“I won’t touch his licence because he’ll need to go to hospital, and to his community work I will impose on him. I will place him on a community corrections order, but there will be no financial burden put on him.”

The Magistrate warned Mr Seinafolava against shirking required during the 12-month community corrections order.

“If you don’t do this corrections order, you will come before me again and I’ll send you to jail,” he said.

“My advice to you is to drive safely, stop picking up demerit points and you won’t have anything to worry about. Your licence is important to you, that’s why I’m not taking it off you – but respect that licence.”

Lights, netball, action

By Lachlan Ellis

The pandemic meant 2020 was a write-off for local sport, but 2021 has seen the light shine on Darley Football Netball Club, literally.

Saturday April 17 saw the Devils play the Sunbury Lions under the new lights at Darley Park for the first time, and also the unveiling of the new netball courts took place.

The lighting was made possible by generous funding from Moorabool Shire Council, State Government, and the Bacchus Marsh Community Bank Branch.

Ballarat Federal MP Catherine King, Member for Melton Steve McGhie, and Council CEO Derek Madden were present for an official opening ceremony for the lights.

Before the first bounce of the Seniors football match, Darley FNC President Mark Shelly and Ms King addressed the home crowd.

Mr Shelly thanked the representatives for their support in getting the lights up and running.

“It’s with great appreciation I welcome you all here for the turning on for the first time in this competition, our new light towers here at Darley Football Netball Club. New lighting at Darley Oval will allow greater variation for competition, and practice for our three sporting clubs that operate out of this park,” Mr Shelly said.

“The lights will also help us cater to the growing demand for increased playing time by larger numbers of participants here at Darley Park.”

The Darley Park lights cost over \$500,000, with the Darley Junior and Senior Football Clubs contributing \$75,000, the State Government \$50,000, the Federal Government \$150,000, and Council providing over \$244,000.

Ms King said she was proud to help support local sport through a Sports and Infrastructure Grant, and to see football and netball back up and running this year.

“Who would’ve thought after the year we had last year, that we’re back with footy well and truly this weekend? It’s really a bit emotional to see all of you here, it’s really one of the landmarks that we missed all of last year,” Ms King said.

“Can I say to the Darley Football Netball Club, congratulations on the lights, they look magnificent. It’s fantastic to see them here for the first game tonight.”



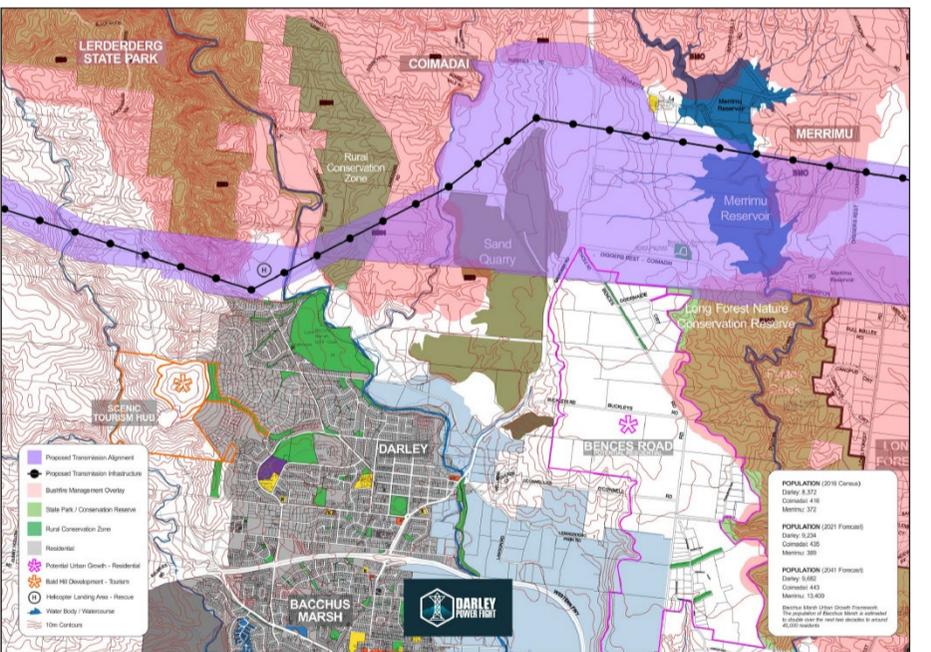
Catherine King MP prepares to cut the ribbon to officially open the new lights at Darley Park with Moorabool CEO Derek Madden and Steve McGhie MP. Photo Robyn Bewley

The lights were officially ‘opened’ with the cutting of a red ribbon.

The outdoor tennis and netball courts were also refurbished, with the old asphalt surfaces replaced by blue hard courts, funded mainly by the Bacchus Marsh Community Bank Branch and Council.

Claire Sutherland, Chair of the Bacchus Marsh Community Bank Branch, cut a red ribbon to formally open the new courts, telling spectators the Bank was “all about putting money back into the community, and making it sustainable”.

The Community Bank contributed \$25,000 to the court works, more than half of the total cost of over \$43,000. Darley’s senior and junior clubs provided \$2,500 each, with Council making up the difference.



The impact map prepared by Darren Edwards.



(L-R) Darren Edwards (Darley Power Fight) gave Lachlan Molesworth (National Trust) and Member for Western Victoria Bev McArthur MP the ‘Cumulative Environmental Effects Brochure’ prepared by Darren on behalf of Darley Power Fight, and highlights the significant and destructive impact on Darley, Coimadai, Merrimu and surrounding regions along the proposed northern corridor of the Project’s Area of Interest.

Power fight continues

By Lachlan Ellis

The battle to get high voltage transmission lines put underground seems to have been going forever, but a spokesperson for one community group says meeting with politicians over the past few weeks has “reinvigorated” the fight.

Darren Edwards is the spokesperson for Darley Power Fight, one of many groups backing an underground alternative to AusNet’s Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (WVTNP).

Over the past few weeks, Mr Edwards has met Federal and State politicians, including Ballarat MP Catherine King and Victorian Opposition Leader Michael O’Brien, as well as representatives from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the national energy regulator, AEMO.

Mr Edwards and fellow members of Darley Power Fight also met with the new Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, Andrew Dyer, in a two-hour meeting at his home in Darley, on 21 April.

“One of our primary questions was how he could actually change the outcome. His role, essentially, is to listen to and address community concerns, and take them back to key stakeholders and decision makers – whether that be AusNet, DELWP or the Minister for Planning,” Mr Edwards told the Moorabool News.

“While that doesn’t necessarily mean he has the ability to alter the outcome, he can certainly be a valuable conduit for us to convey information to the right parties. Obviously, his office has access to stakeholders and decision makers at a higher level than what the community would.”

Mr Edwards said that while being optimistic in such a drawn-out battle was difficult, the face-to-face meetings he’d

had with decision makers were somewhat heartening.

“There’s still a long way to go, the EES [Environmental Effects Statement] process has only started. It could be, looking at past EESs, an 18-month process or a 5-year process. Obviously, everyone including AusNet, is hoping it will be a shorter process,” he said.

“It’s hard with a project like this to remain optimistic, there’s a lot of energy you have to put into it to research the impacts and alternative solutions. Along the way, you hit bumps in the road where you lose hope and then regain it...but for me, any face-to-face meeting we have does invigorate that hope.”

Mr Edwards said, “it gives you the hope that at least your concerns are now getting heard”.

“Because up until now, I think that myself and a lot of the community are feeling that we’ve been voicing our concerns for close to 12 months, and the general feeling is that nothing’s being listened to.”