

Russell Northe MLA

Member for Morwell

Community Newsletter

JULY 2011



Coalition Government Halves Ambulance Fees

Yearly Ambulance Victoria membership fees have been made more affordable for all Victorians, with fees slashed from 1 July 2011.

From July 1, ambulance membership costs have dropped from \$150 to \$75 a year for families and \$75 to \$37.50 a year for singles – that is just 20 cents a day for families and 10 cents a day for singles.

This is similar to prices for ambulance membership fees in 1993 when membership cost \$70 for families and \$35 for singles.

Around two million Victorians are members of the Ambulance Membership Subscription Scheme.

In the event of an emergency, Ambulance Victoria members do not have to pay transport costs which can exceed \$900.

To treat and transport patients in emergencies is an expensive exercise.

Victoria's paramedics are some of the best trained and most experienced paramedics in Australia.

With 100 per cent cover, and 50 per cent off, there is now simply no reason to risk being caught without Ambulance Victoria membership.

The cut in membership fee will encourage even more Victorians to join, ensuring people can access ambulance services whenever required without concern for cost.

Rebates on Water Efficient Products

For the first time, rebates for water-efficient products are available to help all Victorians – including those on non-reticulated systems – become water efficient in their homes and gardens.

In the face of rising water bills, these rebates will help households make great savings by installing a rainwater tank or purchasing water-efficient appliances.

Up to \$1000 is available for rainwater tanks that are designed and manufactured to Australian standards and are connected to a house's toilet and laundry.

Rainwater tanks help us use our water efficiently and deliver year-round savings. They also assist in minimising stormwater runoff and pollution associated with the runoff.

The Coalition Government has also made rebates available on a new range of appliances including washing machines and pool covers.

Washing machines are one of the biggest water users in the home and this \$150 rebate provides the incentive people need to install the most water-efficient models. A rebate of \$200 has also been introduced for the first time on the cost of pool covers.

For the first time, small businesses with 20 or less employees will also be eligible to receive rebates of up to \$2000 on a range of water efficient products such as commercial glass washers, dishwashers, washing machines, higher pressure cleaners and dual flush toilets for the first time.

For more information about rebates available, contact your local water authority or visit www.water.vic.gov.au/rebates

Inside this issue



HOONS ON NOTICE AS TOUGH NEW LAWS START

Hoons are now on notice as the Coalition Government's tough new dangerous driving laws came into effect on 1 July 2011.

For a first offence, drivers caught hooning will lose their cars for 30 days, not 48 hours. The 30 day impoundment period will provide a much stronger deterrent to hoon behaviour and it is anticipated to reduce offence rates.

Additional offences have also been added to the vehicle impoundment scheme, including repeat drug driving, drink driving, driving without a license and carrying more passengers than there are seats available.

Harsher penalties will apply to extreme high risk offences, such as travelling over the speed limit by 70km/h. In these instances drivers will be fast-tracked and treated with consequences as if it was a second offence.

The new laws aim to prevent the needless loss of life that can result from this dangerous behaviour.

The time for which prior offences are taken into account will be increased from three years to six years.

We are aiming to minimise the rate hoons re-offend to send a clear message that the Coalition Government and the community has zero-tolerance for hoons.

More information is available at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au



IN PARLIAMENT

The following Bills have recently been introduced into State Parliament:

- Local Government Amendment (Electoral Matters) Bill;
- Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Drugs of Dependence) Bill;
- Farm Debt Mediation Bill;
- Justice Legislation Amendment (Protective Services Officers) Bill;
- Transport Legislation Amendment (Public Transport Safety) Bill;

The Local Government Amendment (Electoral Matters) Bill will be of direct relevance and interest to all local Councils and local Councillors. This Bill proposes to alter the day on which general elections of Councillors for all Councils must be held.

The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Drugs of Dependence) Bill seeks to provide for better regulation of drugs of dependence and particularly the emerging new drugs such as "synthetic cannabis".

The Farm Debt Mediation Bill seeks to implement a Coalition election promise ensuring that farm creditors participate in farm debt mediation processes IF the farmer wishes to pursue this course of action when facing severe financial difficulties.

The Justice Legislation Amendment (Protective Services Officers) Bill seeks to establish the powers needed by the 940 Victoria Police Protective Services Officers who will be protecting rail commuters under the Baillieu Government safer public transport plan.

The Transport Legislation Amendment (Public Transport Safety) Bill seeks to improve safety regimes which apply for buses and train operators.

The Bills were introduced into State Parliament on 29 June 2011 and will be debated fully on or after 16 August 2011.

The Bills are available online via the following steps:

1. Type www.parliament.vic.gov.au
2. Go to Legislation & Bills tab
3. Click on Bills
4. Scroll down and click on the Bill you wish to view.

All documents are easily printable, but if you would prefer a hard copy of any of the Bills and/or Second Reading Speeches please contact my electorate office on 5133 9088.

Please send your comments on these matters to me as soon as possible via return email at russell.northe@parliament.vic.gov.au

Out & About



Russell at the Callignee/Callignee South School Reunion with Thelma Berryman and Vera Trew



Russell with Morwell Croquet members and their new equipment



The Latrobe Valley Sustainable Gardening Pod show their collection of goods for the Seed Aid Project for flood affected gardeners



Russell and Darren Chester congratulating Brian Ford of the Traralgon Swimming Club on funding received recently.

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for Regional Victoria