

Police promise station to stay

By Jessica Micallef

The Macedon police station will remain open amid concern surrounding its future.

Last week, Police Association secretary Wayne Gatt indicated the station may close in the near future due to a lack of police resources.

The one-man station, which operates eight hours a day, is currently being operated by officers from nearby towns.

But Macedon MP Mary-Anne Thomas said there was never any intention to close the Macedon station.

"The [Macedon] officer is currently injured and temporarily off work and the Macedon Ranges police services area commander Chris Large is ensuring that there are police ... in that community," she said.

"In an area like Macedon, we have a Macedon Ranges police services area and that includes a number of stations."

Ms Thomas said it was up to Victoria Police to make more police officers available throughout the Macedon Ranges.

"The Victoria government has provided record funding to Victoria Police including

"There are no plans to close the Macedon police station"

- Victoria Police

employing more than 3000 police and they are currently being rolled out," she said. "How they are deployed is a decision for Victoria Police."

Macedon Ranges Police Inspector Chris Large also said there was never any intention to shut down the station.

He said officers from other stations will cover

the Macedon area until the station returns to normal circumstances.

Victoria Police said in a statement: "[The] Macedon community will continue to receive a 24 hour police response".

"There are no plans to close Macedon police station."

"Recently, there has been a period of temporary closure due to [an] unplanned absence. There will be a police presence at Macedon police station using resources from across the Macedon Ranges police service area until normal arrangements resume."



Paul and Natasha Holgate are celebrating two decades in business. (Joe Mastroianni)

Top drop marks 20 years in business

Holgate Brewhouse is celebrating 20 years in business.

The Woodend brewery has come a long way since its inception in a backyard shed and co-founder Natasha Holgate said she was delighted they had reached this milestone.

"It's awesome that over 20 years we've seen a huge interest in craft beer in the general population," she said.

"It's become a vibrant industry and I think it's given people a lot of choice."

Ms Holgate and her husband Paul Holgate started their brewery in May 1999 in Woodend.

"We started off by just putting up a shed at a property ... we started brewing at home," she said.

"In 2002, we took over the hotel in Woodend and at the time it was the Keatings Hotel. Then in 2006 we moved the brewery from home to the hotel."

Ms Holgate said the brewery had become a drawcard in Woodend - attracting visitors from near and far.

"It's actually manufacturing something in the heart of Woodend and it's something everyone can enjoy," she said.

To celebrate two decades in business the brewery is re-releasing its first beer, with a special twist on the original recipe.

"The first beer was an ESB, an extra special bitter," Ms Holgate said. "So what we're doing is, we're making a bigger version - it's higher in alcohol and we're also putting it into a 500ml can."

The special edition beer will be released during Good Beer Week, May 11-19.

Details: holgatebrewhouse.com/

Jessica Micallef

Labor in child hub pledge

A Sunbury child health hub could become a reality if a Labor government is elected at this month's federal election.

Labor is promising to deliver \$2.5 million to fund stage one of the project, which is expected to be located at Sunbury Community Health.

The proposed hub will bring together paediatric allied health professionals including speech and language pathology, audiology, paediatric occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

Sunbury Community Health chief executive Phill Ripper said the funding pledge was welcome given Sunbury's growing population.

"Families are the best places for kids and supporting parents to be their child's first educator - the most important educator is what we're about," he said.

"The idea of a hub and the capacity to build on that is really welcomed."

"We have been able to keep up with a fair bit of that growth ... but as anyone who walks through this building knows, we are absolutely at breaking point and have been for quite some time."

"It'll be a welcome relief for our staff and visitors but most importantly the children and families that use our service."

McEwen MP Rob Mitchell was at Sunbury Community Health on Friday to announce the election pledge.

He said the child hub would be a boon for Sunbury families.

"This is going to be a big opportunity to expand, give more room ... [and] to deal with the huge amount of growth that we have in this area," he said.

Jessica Micallef

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