

HUMR

Call to overhaul VCAT role

Rebecca David

Councils say they are best placed to make decisions on developments

COUNCILS have taken aim at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for overturning their planning decisions, saying local and elected officials are best placed to decide on development.

Frankston Council has put forward a motion to this week's Municipal Association of Victoria State Council meeting with concerns about VCAT, the Essential Services Commission and the "continued encroachment of unelected bureaucratic bodies on local government in Victoria".

The council is calling for an overhaul of the "overbearing intrusion" of VCAT in determining planning applications and says the process allows developers to "game the system".

"Instead of considering the material placed before council by applicants ... VCAT goes significantly further and often invites and entertains entirely new development proposals of the subject site with material supplied by

the applicant that was never seen by council," the motion states.

VCAT set aside 824 responsible authority decisions the past financial year, out of 2281 determinations. Leader polled 22 councils about the issue. While many said they respected VCAT's role in the

planning and appeals process, more than half said councils had a better understanding of appropriate local development.

Hume Council planning and development director Michael Sharp said both the council and VCAT played an important part in the planning process in Victoria.

In Hume, 14 council decisions were overturned by VCAT in 2016/17 and six in 2017/18.

Planning Minister Richard Wynne said VCAT was a vital part of the planning and appeals process. "All parties are required to submit their documentation in advance of any hearing so that there are no surprises when a matter is brought on for consideration," he said.



Allen Fox is looking for more volunteers to help him at Sunbury Community Health. Picture: ROB LEESON

SERVICE DRIVES PUSH FOR VOLUNTEER HELP

VOLUNTEERS are being sought to help patients reach much-needed medical treatment. Sunbury Community Health is looking for community

drivers for a range of shifts during the week. Drivers help others attend appointments at hospitals, centres or health specialists. Volunteer Allen Fox said no

two trips were the same. "I like having the social interaction and getting to meet different people. There are certainly some real characters," he said. "You're doing a community

service. It's more a social outing than work." The service runs from 8.30am to 4.30pm on weekdays. Volunteer shifts can range

from a couple of hours to half a day.

Details: Sue Hitchen, 97449509 or sueh@sunburychc.org.au

Birthday bash

Gisborne skate park will celebrate its 10th birthday with a big celebration on November 3. Stalls, food, graffiti workshops and a local DJ will be on hand throughout the day at the Hamilton St park.

Free session

Macedon Ranges businesses are invited to a free workshop on October 25 at 6.30pm at the Romsey library, 98 Main St. Business consultant and coach Milton Collins will speak on his six points for success.

Bird week

Join National Bird Week celebrations by taking part in a citizen science project counting birds on Saturday, 8.30am at Mount Gisborne Reserve. Breakfast and a guided walk with an ornithologist are included. RSVP/details: mrsc.vic.gov.au

Feed it Forward

Enjoy a lunch made with reclaimed produce. 'Feed it Forward' takes donated and excess food and uses it for monthly community meals. The event will be held at Lancelfield Mechanics Institute, corner High St and The Crescent, at midday on Wednesday, October 31.



Libby Fisher 2017 Pride of Australia medallist

Herald Sun | Sunday | Leader | We're for you



Nominations Now Open

Do you know a local hero or someone in the community who deserves recognition? Pride of Australia celebrates everyday Australians doing extraordinary things.

Nominate now at prideofaustralia.com.au

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY

