

Letters

Editor's note

This Halloween, try going plastic free

When I was kid the fourth most exciting night of the year (after Christmas, Easter and my birthday) was Cracker Night, otherwise known as Bonfire Night, or Guy Fawkes night. Each year on November 5 neighbouring friends and family would gather after dark on a vacant block of land at the end of our street to light a huge fire and then let rip an assortment of explosive treats with names like Spitfire, Jack in a Box, Golden Fountain, Tom Thumb, Penny Bungers and of course, my favourite, the Catherine Wheel.

Alas those days are long gone but in its place another annual tradition has emerged, perhaps a little scarier for some, but a lot less dangerous. Halloween of course has its origins in ancient Celtic festivals but was super charged by our friends in the USA. Though it's taken decades to take hold here, it's now well entrenched in suburban Australia and each year more and more of us embrace the tradition.

I myself am all for it, mostly. Who doesn't love a creepy costume and bags stuffed with lollies? I happily prepare our front garden for the arrival of young thrill seekers dressed as goblins and ghouls, with eager faces and empty baskets ready for free candy. I even add a spooky soundtrack and smear my face with witchy makeup for extra impact (though some say I don't need to).

What I don't like so much is all the plastic crap that comes with the occasion.

Retailers are already filling their stores with aisles and aisles of plastic rubbish in colours orange and black, which all end up in landfill on November 1. So by all means celebrate this All Hallows Eve with gusto, but try to make it a plastic-free occasion. Head to our story on page 9 which provides tips for a clean, green, Halloween. With 51 trillion microplastics already littering our seas, it's predicted there'll soon be more plastic in our oceans than fish. That's the real horror story. [▶](#)

Barbara Heggen

Got a comment? Keen to submit an article? Like to support or advertise in community paper? Feel free to get in touch at: editor@thewestsider.com.au



Letters to the editor

Praise for Maribyrnong City Council!

Justice Action Maribyrnong (aka JAM!) commends Maribyrnong City Council for decisions made at its September meeting.

The meeting considered two proposals relating to First Nations peoples. The first was an Officer Recommendation that Citizenship Ceremonies no longer be held on January 26, 'in recognition that 26 January is considered a day of reflection, mourning and loss for many First Nations Communities'. This recommendation was adopted unanimously by Council members who spoke movingly in support, and reflects the findings from Council's own community engagement and community input.

The second proposal, also unanimously adopted, was a motion including that Council, 'Will publicly declare support for The Voice to Parliament and provide opportunities to raise awareness and inform the community about the upcoming referendum'. Maribyrnong's culturally diverse community appreciates the leadership and support Council is providing on The Voice Referendum. Getting accurate and clear information about the Voice can be difficult, so Council's involvement will be helpful to many people.

John Chadderton
<https://justiceactionmaribyrnong.com/the-voice-more/>

It's that time of year again ... Snake Season!

Snake breeding season is here and so is the sunshine. Snakes will emerge to sun themselves at different times of the day. Once warmed up, they will start moving around looking for other snakes to breed with.

If you are out walking, we suggest keeping to the footpaths, and keep your dogs on leads, and don't forget to look down!

If you do happen to come across a snake, remain calm. If it's slithering off the footpath, just give it time to slither off, then continue as normal. If the snake is sunning itself and not moving, give it a wide berth. If there are other people around, let them know about the snake to help keep them safe.

If you come across a snake on your property, make yourself, your family and your pets safe. Try keeping an eye on the snake's location from a safe distance, and immediately call us to find out what your options are.

We are available 24/7 for all emergency snake removals. Call 0413277588, or 1300REPTILE (1300737845). Save the number in your phone.

Please also remember that it is not only ILLEGAL, but also extremely DANGEROUS to interact and interfere with any wildlife unless you are trained and licensed to do so. Snakes are protected under the Wildlife Act 1975, and must not be killed.

Stewy The Snake Catcher

Who is allowed to call themselves an MP?

Last month, reader Stephen wanted The Westsider to ask former politician Catherine Cumming why she is still using the letters MP after her name on her Facebook profile.

MP stands for Member of Parliament and according to Hannah Sottile, Parliamentary Officer of Information, only current members of Parliament should be using the letters MP. However, there is no law stopping anyone else from using the letters.

To continue using the letters MP after losing one's seat in parliament is forgetful at best, and duplicitous at worst. The Westsider reached out to Ms Cumming for comment but at the time of printing The Westsider had not received a reply from her.

Editor

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 the happy apple
EST. 2007

Editorial

Why I'm voting YES in the Voice referendum

The Voice is a very simple proposition. The Voice will advise Parliament on proposed laws which will directly impact First Nations people. A better-informed Parliament is likely to lead to better laws that will have a positive impact on First Nations lives.

The Voice will NOT give Indigenous people special rights, it is an advisory body only.

The Voice will NOT be another ATSIIC. It will not administer programs or deliver services. I repeat, it is an advisory body only.

The Voice will NOT introduce 'race' into the constitution. The 'race power' already exists in Section 51 of the constitution.

The Voice will NOT give Indigenous people the right to take your home or your farm (unlike mining companies!).

The Voice will NOT cede Indigenous people's sovereignty.

The Voice will NOT divide Australia. Deliberate fear mongering, lies, and wedge politics are what divides us.

Voting 'No' won't make you a racist, but every racist in the country will be voting No. That's not a club I want to join.

I want to be on the right side of history. That's why I'll be voting YES!