



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1986

POLL ON RESTRUCTURE: AUGUST 2.

On June 20 the Minister for Local Government, the Honourable J. Simmonds, announced that he had referred to a Division of the Local Government Commission 16 proposals involved in the proposed restructure of Councils in the North Central segment of the State.

The proposals cover alterations to all municipalities in the segment, originally 24 and now increased to 30. The result will be, if the proposals are adopted, a reduction of nearly half in the total number of councils in this part of the State.

Under the proposals the Government intends that your Shire, the Shire of Metcalfe, will disappear. Instead, new shires based on Castlemaine and Kyneton will be created, each including part of the Metcalfe Shire and parts of other municipalities.

The proposed dividing line, running generally north and south, follows Barty's Road, Jennings Hill Road, Bendigo-Sutton Grange Road, Potts Road, the creek which crosses Potts Road south of Phillips Road and the Coliban Main Channel.

Your Council is totally opposed to the proposals, and believes the overwhelming majority of ratepayers and residents will be too.

In order to gauge public feeling the Council has directed that a poll will be taken on the day of the Annual Elections, Saturday, August 2. All persons whose names are on the voters' rolls for the five ridings of the Shire are urged to take this opportunity of showing the Minister and the Local Government Commission what they think of their proposal to dismember the Shire and include the two parts with Castlemaine and Kyneton in new, large municipalities.

Previous indications, from public and other meetings and a survey conducted through the December Newsletter, have been that there is very little public support for the Government's proposals. These are summarised in the Commission's Options Paper as follows:

1. A capacity to perform a wider range of functions
2. Savings in administration costs.
3. Communities will be united, not divided, by municipal boundaries.
4. More equitable distribution of the costs of providing services.
5. Better quality services and administration.
6. Greater co-ordination in physical and social planning.
7. Increased financial flexibility to meet changing needs.
8. Fairer sharing of the burden of rates.
9. Greater financial and political autonomy for local government.

The result of the poll will be communicated at once to the Minister and the Commission but will not be binding on them. Nevertheless it will be a solid indication of how the people of this Shire view the proposals.

A council submission has been prepared and lodged with the Commission. In it your Council's concerns are spelled out in detail, and the Minister and the Commission are urged to re-think the proposals. The Council is totally opposed to any form of enforced restructure, believing that the people of the Shire have the right to self-determination. The will of the people, expressed through a poll, should be paramount.

Hundreds of Shire people have individually notified the Commission that they intend to make oral submissions at the public hearing.

It seems that the Minister and the Local Government Commission believe that small municipalities must be uneconomical, inefficient and ineffective, but by restructuring them into larger units they will become more efficient and effective. Not only that, but they claim that the money saved overall by reduced administration costs will pay for new services. The Minister has not said what those added responsibilities might be; only that they will be devoted to restructured municipalities, which will be given more powers and more money for the purpose, when the Government has worked out the details of its social justice strategy.

To your Council, the idea of the destruction of the Shire, which has existed for 126 years, is unthinkable.

The Council believes the Government's move is largely a means of gaining more control over local government. It can see no advantages, only disadvantages, from the restructure of municipalities generally, and the Shire of Metcalfe in particular.

Some of the disadvantages your Council can see for Metcalfe ratepayers and residents are:

- Complete loss of identity as a Shire and as a people.
- Loss of control over their own affairs.
- Forced union with other areas having different needs and priorities.
- Increased rates, no savings to buy new services.
- Reduction in existing services, except at higher cost.
- Loss of effective representation on new councils.
- Municipal offices more remote from most people.
- Party politics to the fore in council matters.
- More impersonal service.
- Neglect of outlying areas.
- Slowing of development; tighter development controls.
- Bigger, more impersonal bureaucracy with which to deal.

If major restructuring occurs, all affected municipalities will be abolished and new municipalities created in their place. The only exceptions will be areas where only minor boundary changes are made.

This means that all former councillors and staff will go out of office, and new elections and appointments will be necessary.

Cont. P.2



MAJOR MITCHELL TREK 150 Years Celebration

One Hundred and Fifty years ago the first known white men to set foot on what was to become the Shire of Metcalfe's soil were Major Thomas Mitchell and his exploration party.

To celebrate this historic event, a Major Mitchell Ball and a Major Mitchell Trek have been organised.

The Major Mitchell Colonial Ball will be held at the Sutton Grange Hall on October 3.

The Major Mitchell Trek will follow as close to the original 45km route and begin at 9.30 on Saturday October 4.

It will leave Castlemaine, passing through Chewton, Faraday, Sutton Grange and finishing at Redesdale where a commemorative plaque will be unveiled.

It is estimated that a few hundred horse riders, horse drawn jinkers, at least one Cobb & Co. Coach and vintage vehicles will take part, along with many cyclists and walkers.

People are encouraged to dress in period costume. The cost to join in the event is \$20-adult, \$15-child, \$50-family, which includes lunch, afternoon tea, B.B.Q. (spit roasts), campfire, Bush dance admission, overnight camp and breakfast. Those wishing to camp overnight will return to Castlemaine via Elphinstone next day.

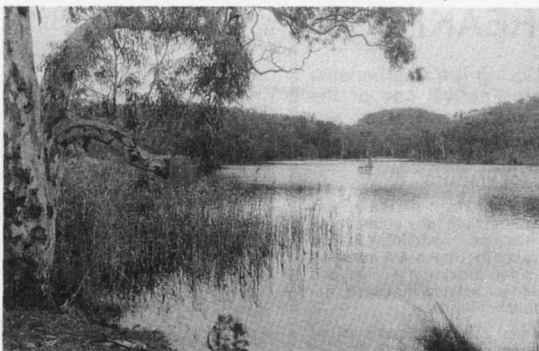
The Bush dance will feature the 'Fossilers Colonial Bush Band'. For those who don't join the trek but wish to enjoy the B.B.Q. and dance the cost is \$10.

All fees must be paid a fortnight in advance.

A painting by well known Castlemaine Artist, Alan Sartori, of the Coliban Falls, admired by Major Mitchell in his journal, will be raffled during the evening. Second prize will be three bottles of 'Major Mitchell' tawny port from the Romany Rye Vineyard at Redesdale. 6 glasses will accompany this prize. Commemorative glasses displaying Major Mitchell's portrait will be available.

The organizers of the events are hoping local business and individuals will sponsor the Major Mitchell celebrations.

For further information contact Noel Davis or Phil Clayton, 72 2044



Major Mitchell named a grassy valley, through which flowed Forest Creek, Expedition Pass, 'confident that such a line of communication between the southern coast and Sydney, must in time, become a very considerable thoroughfare'. Today it is a tranquil reservoir.

See Page 3 for notes on the Expedition and a map showing the commemorative Major Mitchell Trek.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Crs. Shirley Archbold (Chewton Riding), Mac Barty (North Riding) and Elaine Murphy (South Riding) are unopposed and will be declared elected on August 2.

Cr. Tony Phillips (Taradale Riding) has not re-nominated. Mr. John Petschauer and Mr. John Wilkinson will contest the vacancy.

In the West Riding, Cr. Ray Rice is opposed by Mr. Stephen Mooney.

Polling hours are 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. on Saturday, August 2.

There will be polling booths at Taradale Public Hall for the Taradale Riding poll, and at Elphinstone Primary School and Harcourt Public Hall for the West Riding poll.

Compulsory voting rules apply, and persons unable to attend a polling booth on election day may record a postal vote. Application forms may be obtained at the Shire Office, Metcalfe, telephone 054-232302

SHIRE STATISTICS

The Australian Census is taken every six years and in 1986 it was due again.

The Census is used by the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics for information used in town planning, and aid decisions of future developments in areas such as schools and migration programmes.

As the figures from this won't be available for another two years it may be of interest to know what the most recent facts and figures are.

METCALFE SHIRE

Created a District, 14th August, 1860.

Proclaimed a shire, 18th July, 1865.

Taradale Borough united, 7th October, 1870.

Chewton Borough united, 2nd May, 1961.

and Re-subdivided into Five Ridings - Taradale, North, South, West and Chewton.

Area - 59,054 ha.

Population - 2,500

Dwellings - 1,200

C.E.P. Projects

A number of project's will be carried out this year with the aid of the Commonwealth Employment Programme.

Council has recently improved the alignment of the northern approach to Doyles Bridge on the Kyneton-Metcalfe Rd., but further work is needed to be done along Snodgrass Creek to ensure the security of the bridge.

Under the C.E.P. project, the problems along Snodgrass Creek will be rectified. In its present condition the risk of erosion is a major threat and in severe circumstances it could mean the loss of Doyles Bridge. Reinforcing is also needed to protect the bridge.

Other C.E.P. projects include roadside clearing, such as the removal of fallen and low hanging branches and the clearing of undergrowth.

