



# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1986



## SHIRE BUDGET AND RATES

The Council has been through its annual exercise of preparing the Estimates of income and expenditure for the coming year.

This time the task was more difficult because of certain complicating factors, including the recent revaluation and the reduction in road funds.

### Revaluation:

The Shire Valuer, Mr. Ian McKenzie, recently completed the revaluation of all rateable property in the Shire. While all properties have risen in value since 1980, when the previous valuations were first used, the increases have not been uniform.

Generally, broadacre farmland has not risen in value to anything like the same extent as the smaller acreages, particularly those closer to the established towns.

Consequently, many owners of small holdings will find their rates have increased significantly, though not to an unreasonable extent.

Residential and rural residential properties have all increased in value over the past six years, some much more than others.

The revaluation has had the effect of ironing-out anomalies, which inevitably have crept in during the currency of the old valuation while property values have risen unequally.

The new relativities now established by the revaluation will remain for the coming six years.

Any ratepayer who believes his valuation is incorrect (and not just because of his rate bill) may lodge an objection on the prescribed form available from the Shire Office. The matter will then be investigated by the Valuer.

### Road Funds:

A big difficulty with which the Council must cope is the overall reduction in road funds from the government. The total allocation this year is down by about \$63,000 and most of the funds for unclassified roads have been allocated to replacement of the Red Gum Bridge over the Coliban River at Metcalfe. Although this project is overdue, the Council is trying to obtain Road Construction Authority approval for a transfer of part of the money to other less specialised projects so that, with what can come from

Shire funds, there will be sufficient overall to keep its employees in work. Even so, a slight reduction in staff numbers has had to be made to avoid a higher rate rise.

### Other Works:

The council intends to build an intermediate pool at Chewton Swimming Pool, estimated to cost \$10,000.

Concrete kerb and channel construction at Harcourt, Chewton and Taradale will be extended at a cost of \$60,000, half of which is recoverable from owners.

Stage 1A of municipal depot extension and development at Metcalfe will be undertaken at a cost of \$10,000.

Construction equipment to the value of \$60,000 will be purchased.

A grant of \$5,000 from the Mineral Springs Development Fund will enable further works to be done at Taradale Mineral Springs. The Mineral Springs Development Committee will also prepare plans for Taradale and Turpins Falls Reserve.

Only minor improvements to some halls and recreation facilities will be possible during the year.

Many desirable works unfortunately have had to be postponed due to the financial stringency.

### Rates for 1986/87:

The general rate is 11.1c in the dollar (last year 15.75c) on net annual values, with a minimum of \$190 (\$160). The farm rate is 7.4c (10.5c last year), and minimum \$410 (\$370).

The lower rates in the dollar are a direct result of the revaluation of the Shire recently completed. Some ratepayers will find their rate bills are only slightly higher than for last year, but most will experience a bigger increase.

Although every endeavour is being made to hold most areas of expenditure to no more than last year's levels plus inflation, some rises are not within the council's control.

Higher government charges and diminishing assistance mean that the council has to find the difference or reduce the level of service.

## Shire Office Holiday Arrangements

## MUNICIPAL FIRE PROTECTION PLAN

With this Newsletter all ratepayers will receive a copy of the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan, recently adopted by the Council after preparation by the Shire of Metcalfe Fire Prevention Committee, and a pamphlet issued by the Country Fire Authority.

Copies of the Authority's "Design and Siting Guidelines - Bushfire Protection for Rural Houses" are also available at the Shire Office. Call in, or phone (054) 232302.

All property owners are urged to do their utmost to make their properties fire-safe, as the threat of bushfires is again with us. The exceptional growth following the unusually heavy spring rains has ensured an abundance of fuel, and great care will be needed to minimise the risk of serious fires.

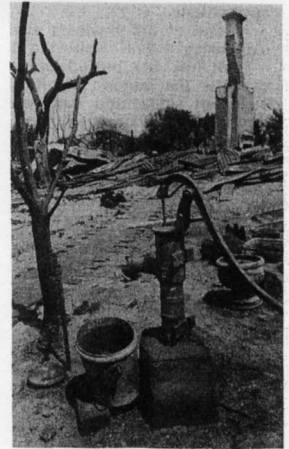
Spraying and mowing has been carried out by Shire staff and equipment along strategic roads. Notices to remove fire hazards from uncleared township blocks have been served on the owners concerned. In the event of non-compliance the work will be done by the Council and the cost charged to the owners.

Fire restrictions apply to the whole Shire from Monday, December 15th 1986.

Everyone's co-operation is vital: Clean up before Christmas!



It is vitally important to understand the environment we live in and protect it against bushfire. All property owners are urged to do their utmost to make their properties fire-safe.



Bushfire threatens peoples lives, properties, possessions and pets every year. We must be prepared.

## FIRE AUTHORITIES [AMENDMENT] ACT

Section 50 of the Country Fire Authority Act requires tractors and earthmoving, excavating and road construction machines which may come into contact with vegetation in the country area during a fire danger period to be fitted with a spark arrester. The amendment requires that:

- (i) All such vehicles sold after 1 November 1986, are to be fitted with a spark arrester which complies with Australian Standard 1019-1985;
- (ii) all replacement spark arresters fitted to such vehicles after 1 November 1986 must similarly comply; and
- (iii) the operators of such vehicles are to ensure that spark arresters fitted to the vehicles are in proper working order.

## CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Council has invited organisations and individuals in the Shire to submit nominations of persons who have made outstanding contributions to the Shire Community in 1986, so that they can be considered for recognition as the Citizen of the Year and Junior Citizen of the Year respectively.

Nominations, in writing, will be received at the Shire Office, Metcalfe 3448, until Monday, December 22, 1986. Junior Citizen of the Year nominees must be not more than 25 years of age at 25.1.87.

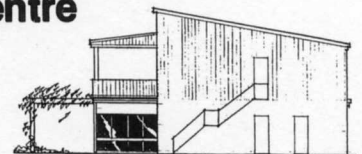
Those selected will be awarded an appropriately inscribed plaque, to be presented at the Council meeting on January 27.

Further details may be obtained from the Shire Secretary.

The Shire Office will be closed from 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24, re-opening at 8.30 a.m. on Monday, January 5.

Emergency contact may be made by telephoning 23 2326, 23 2248, or 22 2440. Quarterly rate instalments payable by December 31 will be treated as having been received within time if paid on or before January 5.

## Leisure Centre Nearing Reality



The proposed Harcourt and District Leisure Centre came a big step closer with the announcement by the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Neil Tresize, of a grant of \$40,000.

The Leisure Centre Committee is busily engaged in refining the plans and raising money, with a view to commencing construction in 1987. Application has been made to the Commonwealth Government for Community Employment Programme funds to further assist in getting the project under way.

The Leisure Centre will give sporting bodies the opportunity to act collectively, improve operations and resources, and develop the Harcourt Recreation Reserve into a substantial Community Complex.

It is proposed that the new complex will include 6 tennis courts, 1 netball court, area for aerobics and gymnasium facilities. Adequate change rooms, toilet and shower facilities, lighting, seating, kiosk, kitchen, office, car parking, landscaping and Public Hall requirements will be available. At future stages additional courts and facilities will be developed.

## Building Activity

In the eleven months to November 30, building permits were issued by the Council for 52 houses, to be located in all parts of the Shire. Other permits included those for home extensions, re-cladding, room heaters, sheds, and farm buildings.

## TREES AVAILABLE

The Council has received from the organisers of Project Branchout 3000 surplus native trees, which are available free to ratepayers.

Up to 50 will be supplied on application at the Shire Office. Higher allocations will be considered where special needs exist.

