

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT

PAGE 3



TOWN TURNS PINK

PAGE 4



Mitiamo resident John Pedersen would like to see an improvement in the town's non-potable water supply. Picture: JENNY DENTON

Dirty water described as ‘third world’

Jenny Denton

MITIAMO resident Phil Hamley is furious about the quality of the town's water and has written to Victorian Water Minister Lisa Neville about the issue.

"I cannot stand that water and I cannot afford to put in bigger tanks," he told the *Loddon Times* last week.

"It really is a health issue now. It's an urgent situation."

Mr Hamley recently experienced a bout of diarrhoea he blames on his exposure to town water, and said his partner was suffering from a scalp condition which her

doctor said was caused by it.

The motor mechanic, who grew up in Mitiamo, said in his childhood he used to have baths in "crystal clear" water, provided through the same system.

However, since the town's dam was inundated during the 2011 flood, the water quality had dramatically deteriorated, leaving the supply muddy, sometimes smelly and subject to blue green algae outbreaks in warmer weather.

The water, supplied by Coliban Water from the Goulburn-Murray Water's main channel, is classified as "regulated water", meaning it is

non-potable and not to be used for drinking or cooking.

However, Mr Hamley and the majority of the town's 117 residents use the water for showering.

Mr Hamley also has concerns about breathing air from his evaporative cooling system, which relies on the local water source to operate.

Filters he fits to the intake of his 'swampy' rooftop air conditioner and to his hot water system clog up with mud within a short period, sometimes within days.

He said the filters were smelly and discoloured, leaving him to question the water's contents.

When blue green algae is detected in the Mitiamo town supply, Coliban Water trucks water in from Pyramid Hill, and Mr Hamley argues the water corporation should do so all year round, until the water quality is improved.

Former resident Andrew Withington agreed the water was "a lot worse" since the 2011 flood.

"You can turn the hand basin tap on here at times and it looks like a chocolate milkshake," he said.

John Pedersen, who moved to Mitiamo eight years ago from Melbourne, described the water as "third world".

"I would like to see an improve-

ment in the water and I don't mind paying extra but I don't want to pay a fortune for it," he said.

With water rates in the town as low as \$18 a quarter, the prospect of a significant increase is a concern for many.

Mr Pedersen said at times, the water smelt and despite his clothes often smelling after being washed in it, he was now used to it.

Like others in the town, he acknowledged Coliban Water's efforts to address residents' concerns, which had included fixing the water pressure in recent years.

CONTINUED — Page 2

Citizenship congratulations



LAST week I had the pleasure of presenting citizenship certificates to our newest Australian citizens.

Suwattana Chulakathappa, formerly from Thailand, along with Esther Noemi Jacob Domingo and her son Von Marco Domingo Fernandez, from the Philippines, made the Australian Citizenship Pledge during a ceremony at the council chambers last Tuesday.

Changes to the Bridgewater dump point

PATRONS at the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park will no longer have to leave the park to dispose of their waste after the installation of a dump point for their use within the caravan park.

The dump point at the Bridgewater Recreation Reserve has been decommissioned.

The dump point suffered consistent vandalism and misuse, as well as issues with the pressure flow and fall of the sewage line.

The new dump point at the caravan park has improved pressure for flushing and blackflow prevention and will be monitored by park

staff.

Due to public liability and legal requirements, the new dump point is only available to park patrons.

This means that the township of Bridgewater will lose its RV Friendly status.

Regenerative Communities Forum

RECENTLY I had the opportunity to address the Regenerative Communities Forum in Mildura on the subject of economic migration – inviting diversity.

The session covered a lot of relevant and interesting issues such how we are injecting new life into our communities by embracing migrants.

Pyramid Hill is an example of how a declining small town with an aging population has been transformed in just over 10 years by skilled migration.

Over 100 Filipinos now call the town home, boosting the primary school, filling crucial roles in the emergency services and even hosting a vibrant cultural festival.

Another topic of discussion at the forum was the importance of local produce - how we can all help boost our local economy by buying food which is produced and sold locally, and is in season.

The forum offered a unique opportunity for us to learn from the experiences of other towns and see what is being done elsewhere to rejuvenate local economies and communities.

Clean up your property

THE CFA reminds us that everyone in Victoria needs to prepare their property for bushfires, not just those who live on rural

properties.

There are many blocks and properties around our towns that look untidy and pose a fire risk as the weather warms up.

The CFA recommends removal of flammables from close to the house, keeping grass to less than 10cm, pruning trees and shrubs near buildings, keeping rooftops and gutters clear of leaf litter and keeping woodpiles tidy and away from houses.

As I have mentioned in previous mayoral columns, long grass and rubbish on your property can also attract vermin and snakes.

There have already been a number of sightings of snakes in built-up areas this spring.

If your property is unsightly, I would urge you to rectify that immediately.

Residents who fail to keep their property safe and well maintained not only aggravate their neighbours but may receive a formal notice to comply with the local law to tidy their properties.

If you have any questions please contact council on 5494 1200.

Taking pride in where we live and work makes Loddon shire a more vibrant and liveable place to call home.

Keep in touch van

YESTERDAY was a wonderful day at the Wedderburn Splatter Run, which was held in partnership with Wedderburn College and Inglewood and Districts Health Services.

Now in its second year, the Splatter Run, is a unique event in the Loddon shire that celebrates healthiness, happiness and encourages the youth of the area to be more

active in the community.

In an exciting initiative, the Keep In Touch Van (KIT Van) was launched at the event.

The KIT Van is a mobile youth mental health resource, which has been created to provide information for the 12-25 age group and can be accessed for community events.

This roving service has been co-designed and co-led by young people, alongside local government and state government services.

The KIT Van promotes a positive mental health message and works in conjunction with other local service providers and the youth crew.

Did you know

APPLICATIONS are currently open for Loddon Mallee farmers and communities facing drought and dry conditions to gain funding under the Look Over the Farm Gate program.

Look Over the Farm Gate events let farmers take a break from the farm, reconnect, access professional support and participate in mental health training.

The program encourages community groups to come up with a creative single event or series of events to most effectively support farmers in their region.

The program is managed by the VFF in partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Country Women's Association, the Country Fire Authority, and The National Centre for Farmer Health.

For more information about eligibility and how to apply, visit the Look Over the Farm Gate website.

MELBOURNE CUP
CHICKEN & CHAMPAGNE
BUFFET LUNCH

Starting 12 noon
including nibbles and dessert

BOOK NOW

Book by November 1

PRIZES, SWEEPS, GAMES

RAILWAY
HOTEL
BOORT

84 Godfrey Street, BOORT. P: 5455 2025

Loddon Times

loddon@gannawarratimes.com.au

Circulating throughout the Shire of Loddon and surrounding areas.

Established 1995 -
Published every Tuesday

Editorial

Phone: 5452 1733

Facsimile: 5452 1603

E-mail: news@gannawarratimes.com.au

* Editorial contributions and news tips welcome

Advertising

Boort: 5455 2050
(Post Office agency)

Kerang: 5452 1733
(Head office)

sales@gannawarratimes.com.au
classifieds@gannawarratimes.com.au

Member of

A division of

Elliott Newspaper Group

Published by Robert Wesley Duffield for Northern Times (Kerang) Pty Ltd (ABN 81 097 210 654) at 24 Scoresby Street, Kerang, 3579, and printed at Sunraysia Publishing Company Pty Ltd (ABN 34 004 231 261) at 22 Deakin Avenue, Mildura, 3500. Responsibility for election comment is accepted by the editor.

Water quality questioned

FROM — Page 1

Coliban Water said that it was “not aware of any current issues with the untreated water that would create a health issue if the water was used for washing or in air-conditioning units.”

Coliban also dismissed concerns raised by Mr Hamley that there were health risks associated with the Mitiamo system’s asbestos concrete pipes, noting Water Services Association of Australia advice that extensive testing showed “no elevated risk of asbestos-related diseases from drinking or using water delivered through asbestos cement pipes.”

While there were risks if asbestos fibres were to become airborne if the pipes were damaged or being worked on, “all relevant regulations were adhered to when handling asbestos cement pipes under these circumstances,” WSAA said.

Coliban said that contractors Lendlease would be flushing the Mitiamo system’s mains next Monday and Tuesday, which should reduce sediment in the pipes and produce cleaner water.

The water corporation also said the connection of the town to the recently announced Mitiamo pipeline should lead to improved water.

“Piped water should be of better quality than water delivered via open channels,” Coliban said.

However, the Mitiamo pipeline will not deliver drinking water.



Phil Hamley holds a dirty filter from the inlet to his hot water service, which he only fitted a month ago. Picture: JENNY DENTON



SPLATTER FUN

SPLATTERS of colour covered community members at Donaldson Park on Sunday, where the community gathered for the Wedderburn Community Splatter Run.

Returning for the second year, the day was a huge success, raising much-needed funds for the local community.

This year the unique run was a partnership between Wedderburn College, the Loddon Shire Council and Inglewood and Districts Health Services.

The event raised funds to replace hospital beds at IDHS, which will cost around \$2500.