

## THIRD TERM

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## REWARDING PROJECT

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# Medical clinic impacted

JENNY DENTON

THE Wedderburn Medical Clinic was left without phone and internet for over a week after a power outage disrupted services.

While most Wedderburn residents didn't have trouble with Telstra services after power was restored on Friday night, several homes and businesses continued to experience problems.

Nigel Kett, who is a patient at the Wedderburn clinic, said he believed Telstra had been contacted various times over the week about the problem.

The Korong Vale resident described the situation as pathetic.

"I have to drive 13 kilometres in the hope I can see the doctor because the phone lines are down," Mr Kett said.

"It's just pathetic.

"The staff can't take appointments or access records or test results.

"The doctor is seeing patients blind.

"He can't even check what medication he's given me last time."

After being contacted by the *Loddon Times*, Telstra said it had prioritised the issue.

Regional general manager Steve

Tinker apologised and said the company was working to fix the problem.

"The issue stemmed from a problem with power which was beyond our control – we're now working to resolve the issue as a matter of priority," Mr Tinker said.

"We know how important it is for medical services to stay connected and we want to apologise for the interruption."

Mr Tinker said after commercial power to Telstra's Wedderburn exchange was lost on Friday, services had been maintained on a battery backup for a period, but the length of the outage meant the battery

had failed.

"Customers, including the Wedderburn Health Clinic, reported the outage and once mains power was restored, Telstra worked to reconnect services at the exchange," Mr Tinker said.

"There was an issue reconnecting the Wedderburn Health Clinic which was not detected until the customer re-reported the issue on Thursday."

However, a Telstra technician who visited the clinic on Friday and again on Monday was unable to find any issue with the lines.

On Monday, he confirmed the fault

was caused by IT issues.

Telstra has set up a temporary phone at the clinic, which will enable it to make and receive calls until IT providers can resolve the issue.

Wedderburn Medical Clinic staff declined to comment on the incident.

Powercor said the loss of power in Wedderburn on November 1 was due to a fault caused by a broken powerline between Wedderburn and Charlton on the Calder Highway.

A Powercor spokesperson said the fault caused power outages to 7700 customers.

Picture: ROBYN BROWN



# Three injured in Prairie crash

JENNY DENTON

A WOMAN remains in hospital, following a collision at Prairie which left her trapped a vehicle, while two other people were injured.

The 61-year-old, from Nullawil, was a passenger in a twin-cab utility which collided with a HiAce van just before 5pm last Monday afternoon

at the intersection of Prairie-Rochester and Bendigo-Pyramid roads.

Her husband, the 63-year-old driver of the utility, was taken to hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

The 31-year-old driver of the van, who had been working in the Cohuna area and was returning home to California Gully, was also hospitalised.

Both drivers have since been released from hospital.

Robyn Brown, who lives close to the intersection, said she had just pulled up in her driveway when she heard a loud bang.

"I knew what it was as soon as I heard it," Ms Brown said. "I jumped straight back in the car and went down there."

Ms Brown said the Nullawil

couple had been travelling west on Prairie-Rochester Road and were T-boned by the van, which was heading south on Bendigo-Pyramid Road.

The driver of the Toyota injured his knee and wrist and received cuts to his head but got out of his van following the crash and was trying to go to the aid of the occupants in the other vehicle.

The couple were both trapped in the ute, which was struck on the driver's side.

Ms Brown and her 13-year-old granddaughter assisted the accident victims until paramedics arrived.

Dingee and Mitiamo firefighters were the first emergency services to arrive at the scene.

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A 61-year-old Nullawil woman was airlifted to Melbourne after she was trapped in her vehicle. Pictures: ROBYN BROWN

# Three injured in Prairie crash

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MORE than 12 emergency service vehicles responded to the two-vehicle crash, including MICA paramedic crews, the Pyramid Hill CERT team and the Rochester SES.

“There were uniforms eve-

rywhere and flashing lights,” Ms Brown said.

The woman, who had broken 14 ribs and was having trouble breathing, was removed from the car and flown to Royal Melbourne Hospital. Ms Brown described the in-

tersection as a very dangerous one.

“Over the 29 years I’ve been living here, there would have to have been at least half a dozen accidents there,” she said. “It’s a blind corner.

“People that know the road slow down.”

Ms Brown said the utility narrowly missed a power pole and a highway sign after the impact. “It was a miracle nobody was killed,” she said.



Both vehicles were extensively damaged.



Emergency services personnel responded to the incident, assisting the three injured people.

# Bees, bugs and butterflies

WEDDERBURN Community House will create an outdoor classroom at the Wedderburn kindergarten thanks to a \$5000 Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grant. Organisers said the project would provide an opportunity for local children to explore the world using their senses, while learning about life cycles.

The project aims to increase awareness about the key role insects play in sustaining life.

Wedderburn community house education officer Trudy Nelsson said everyone involved was excited about the initiative. “The project includes a variety of activities, including story time sessions, butterfly releases, constructing bee hotels and planting indigenous species,” Ms Nelsson said.

“There will also be activities that provide environmental, educational, health and social outcomes and benefits.”

Ms Nelsson said it was hoped that parents, volunteers and students would gain a better understanding of native species through the program.

Activities will be focused particularly on the Australian painted lady butterfly and the blue banded bee.

“The Australian painted lady butterflies fly down from Sydney and Brisbane all through the eastern coastal area,” Ms Nelsson said.

“They’re attracted to the flowering everlasting plant that we have here.”

“The blue banded bee is a native bee that makes mud nests, and we hope to be making some of those nests.

“They say it’s the prettiest bee.”

The Wedderburn Community House is one of 128 schools and youth organisations to receive one of the grants, which was provided by the Victorian government, in partnership with Landcare Australia.

The project is also supported by the Loddon Shire Council and the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network.



The Wedderburn kinder embraces outdoor learning. Picture supplied.



## Police Beat

## Trafficking charges

A LEITCHVILLE woman was arrested and charged with methamphetamine trafficking and other offences after driving a stolen car into an irrigation channel near Lockington last Sunday morning.

The incident occurred on Lockington Road, near the intersection of Prairie-Rochester Road, at around 11am on November 3.

Police said speed was a factor in the crash, noting the 30-year-old was travelling in a northerly direction when she failed to negotiate a bend and drove into the Waranga Channel.

While being rescued by witnesses, the woman allegedly removed something from the vehicle.

Police said when they arrived at the scene they located a quantity of methamphetamine in her possession.

Echuca Police, Leading Senior Constable Brent O’Grady said the woman was driving a stolen car which was registered to a Melbourne suburb and was fitted with stolen number plates.

The woman was taken to Echuca Police Station and charged with methamphetamine trafficking, possessing stolen property, and numerous driving offences.

She was bailed to appear in Echuca Magistrates’ Court on February 4.

## Dumped cars set alight

POLICE are seeking information about two cars that were stolen from the Swan Hill area and subsequently dumped in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

A blue Holden Astra was dumped at Gunbower, while a Mitsubishi Triton ute was abandoned at Durham Ox.

Police believe both vehicles were used in criminal activity in the Swan Hill area.

Both were set alight.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Swan Hill police on 5036 1600, Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or the police assistance line on 13 14 44.

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