

Maura's melanoma mission

MAURA Luxford is trekking 1,880 kilometres on horseback from

Kempsey, New South Wales to the Peter Mac Cancer Centre in Mel-

bourne to raise awareness of melanoma after losing her daughter to

the disease in 2008. Maura established the Hannah Rose Melanoma

Research Fund after her daughter Hannah lost her year-long battle with a malignant melanoma. Hannah was only 20. Since then, Maura has set out on two *Ride 4 a Cure* rides, firstly by bike and now on horseback.

Maura left on her 81-day ride from Kempsey on April 17, and when **Numurkah Leader** met up with her in Katunga last Thursday, she was on day 65. She is due to arrive at the Peter Mac Cancer Centre on July 4.

She has also created a multi-media presentation called *Mela-What?* which she presents at schools along the way, and to date over 13,000 students have heard her presentation. *Mela-What?* promotes sun safety and skin cancer awareness to young Australians.

It is hoped that by September this year, \$150,000 will have been raised to be used for melanoma research.

Long journey ... Maura Luxford is riding from Kempsey in New South Wales to Melbourne to raise awareness of melanoma.

Cemetery trust to complete works

THE Numurkah/Wunghnu Cemetery Trust has successfully gained a grant of \$25,000 to enable it to complete works on the Numurkah cemetery's native memorial garden.

The memorial garden provides an alternative for ashes, where instead of being stored in a wall, ashes can be stored with a memorial rock.

Numurkah/Wunghnu Cemetery Trust Chair Lindsay Mitchell said the trust has been trying to obtain funds for years to complete the project.

"We've got small grants here and there, but we really needed this one to get this development finished," Mr Mitchell said.

"This grant came out of the blue, and we're totally thrilled to have it."

The funding gain is a plus, but the trust also has some worries. Red soil stored at the Wunghnu cemetery, which is used to back fill graves, has been gradually and suspiciously disappearing.

"Car tracks leading to and from the soil make it evident someone has been helping themselves to the soil," Mr Mitchell said.

Red handed ... Red soil is being taken from the Wunghnu cemetery without permission.

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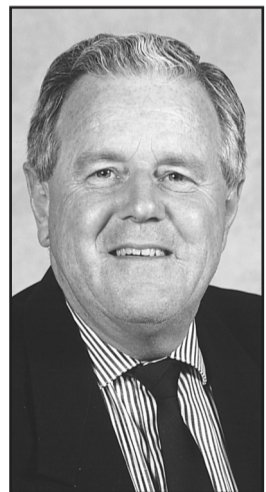
Licence fees must be reviewed

THE inequities in liquor licensing fees are in need of immediate further review by the state government, with exemptions not going far enough to overcome a number of licensing inequities and discrepancies, according to Nationals Member for Murray Valley Ken Jasper.

Mr Jasper said that while he welcomed the logical exemptions of bed and breakfast establishments, florists and gift maker businesses from liquor licence fees from 2011, exemptions did not cover a substantial group of other licence holders under strain.

"The continued inappropriate level of fees and ongoing inequities is causing anger and frustration for liquor licence holders across Victoria, and in my electorate of Murray Valley," Mr Jasper said.

"The difficulty is many licence holders in my electorate have paid the high liquor licence fees under duress so they



could be licensed to operate in this calendar year.

"Numerous genuine appeals to the Liquor Licensing Authority have been rejected, and licence holders forced to pay the new licence fees by January 21, 2010 or face the possibility of the imposition of fines for being unlicensed."

Mr Jasper said he has made extensive representations to the Consumer Affairs Minister Tony Robinson on behalf of many liquor licence holders, and has

also arranged two meetings to assist licence holders understand the government's intentions.

"Most licence holders are justifiably angry with the government's headlong pursuit of fee increases to raise \$35 million from licence holders this year, with no real consideration of the adverse effects of such a massive increase in fees for either the licence holder or the community," he said.

"Of greatest concern generally is that the high fees imposed seem to have little relationship to the so called high risk problem areas or hot spots the government is supposedly trying to overcome.

"The minister has responded to ongoing representations, indicating a recognition of the problems with a range of inappropriate fee increases, which he says will be reviewed in future years, but that is of little comfort for those paying high licence fees now for the 2010 year," Mr Jasper concluded.

Dear Sir,
THE Fire Services Levy (FSL) that funds the CFA is being reviewed by the State Government, and CFA volunteers agree that change is needed.

Any new system for funding fire services should be more equitable – the FSL is collected through property insurance, so people who don't insure don't contribute to the cost, even though the CFA protects their property too.

The new system must generate enough funding for the fire services – it takes time, tankers and training to make new volunteers into the firefighters who protect country and suburban Victoria every day of the year.

And any improved system should recognise that CFA volunteers already contribute to the fire service – it is clearly unfair that they are taxed to pay for a service that they provide for free.

Yours etc.,
Allan Monti
Volunteer
Fire Brigades Victoria.

FARM IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Applications close 30 June 2010

A grant of up to \$1,000 is available for eligible Victorian farmers to co-invest in farm improvements. For example, if the cost of installing new water troughs totals \$1800, a \$900 grant is available.

Irrigators in the Northern Irrigation region are eligible for grants of up to \$2,000 if they invest \$1,000 or more on an eligible improvement.

These grants are available to recipients of Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Relief Payments from Centrelink between 22 October 2009 and 30 June 2010.

Applications must be received by June 30, 2010. Applicants must check eligible improvements and receive grant approval prior to purchase.

This program is part of the Victorian Government's \$47 million drought package for 2009-10.

For information and to apply contact
Rural Finance on (03) 5448 2600
or visit www.ruralfinance.com.au

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