

Project builds hope for homeless youth

Relocatable studios have kids in need covered

By JULIE ATKINS

FOR many residents of Hepburn Shire, life is comfortable, but compared to a growing number of its youth, getting a night's sleep can be tough, particularly if you have no place to sleep.

This is about to change for some local youth, thanks to the Caravan Industry Association of Victoria and the Kids Under Cover charity.

Kids Under Cover was started by Ken Morgan, OAM, in 1991 in response to the Senate National Inquiry into Youth Homelessness.

Mr Morgan set about convincing members of the building industry that a relocatable house should be constructed. Not only that, it needed to be done for free.

CIAV chief executive officer Rob Lucas took up the challenge and members donated their time and material for the project.

Mr Lucas said: "The KUC Program is a key initiative in making a significant change to



COSY HAVEN: A relocatable studio made by the Caravan Industry Association of Victoria and distributed by Kids Under Cover for homeless or disadvantaged youth.

the lives of young people who, without this program, face life without hope.

"In my discussions across the region, the number of children (youth) living off the street, in halfway houses or couch surfing

is growing along with the need to support them.

"The aim is to get young kids off the streets, living safely and securely," Mr Lucas said.

"The relocatable studios provide the young their own

space and they can still be connected with a family."

Kids Under Cover national chief executive Jo Swift said in the last independent program evaluation report by The Nous Group, it was found that there was a 330% return on investment in the studio program.

"This means that for every dollar invested in a Kids Under Cover studio, on average \$3.30 is saved by society in the form of reduced health and justice costs, and flow-on economic benefits.

"In conjunction with CAFS, we have installed a total 13 studio projects so far in Hepburn," Ms Swift said.

To help with the growing demand for the units, the CIAV is raffling a five-star family caravan at this year's Melbourne Leisurefest Sandown Racecourse.

To help raise money for more relocatables in this area, call 9372 5388 to order tickets.

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JACK'S WEATHER

Day and date	Low	High	Rainfall mm
Monday 21st:	0.9	9.9	-
Tuesday 22nd:	-1.0	15.4	-
Wednesday 23rd:	-0.3	13.9	-
Thursday 24th:	5.1	10.5	6.0
Friday 25th:	7.9	9.6	5.75
Saturday 26th:	7.5	10.2	4.5
Sunday 27th:	1.1	11.1	-

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Jewish history uncovered

THE new owners of the Continental Guest House in Hepburn, Veronica and Steve Whitter, uncovered many intriguing historical newspapers when replacing floor coverings at the hotel recently.

The couple was delighted to discover editions of the *Australian Jewish Herald*, *Jewish Gazette* and many other magazines and papers while renovating the old building.

Continental House was built by David Saffer and his wife, one of many Polish Jew immigrant couples who came to the area during the mid-1920s.

Continental House was a haven for Jewish people, where a Jewish Welcome Society was set up to welcome people who came here to work, particularly after the war.

Ms Whitter said after a short time working in Melbourne, the Saffers settled in Hepburn Springs and built the renowned Continental House.

"This soon became a favourite destination for many of Melbourne's Jewish community, who flocked here for fun, music, food, cards, dancing and a sense of togetherness in mutual support with many visiting year on year," she said.

The old hotel was falling down when the Whitters bought it, with beer-can steel as the pressed roof ceiling.

Evidence of many parties and hooky competitions, hand-written notes about infectious diseases and housekeeping notes have also been found.

The Whitters, along with assistant manager Sarah Leeworthy, are continuing to restore Continental House.



DISCOVERY: Pictured browsing newspapers found at the Continental Guest House are Sarah Leeworthy (yoga activities co-ordinator) and owner Veronica Whitter.

Picture: JULIE HOUGH

Debut novel tunes into the lighter side of reality TV

IF YOU'VE ever had a bad day, you'll love reading Melinda Houston's book *Kat Jumps the Shark*.

For 20 years, Houston wrote everything from local news to celebrity profiles and hundreds of book, film, food and bar reviews.

In 2006, she scored her dream job as a TV critic and she brings her love of television to her fiction writing.

Kat Jumps the Shark is the first novel for Ms Houston, which is a moving but at times hilarious tale about losing it all, only to find it again in the most unexpected place.

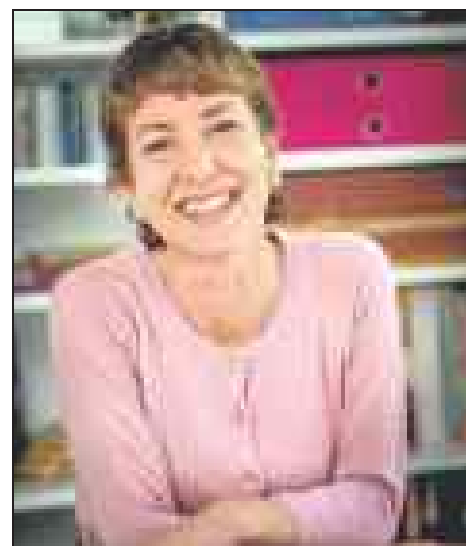
Clunes Booktown manager Sheila Hollingworth said: "Ms Houston has written

a great first novel. I think many of us have a strange fascination with the whole reality TV world, and a novel set inside a known geography of Melbourne, but the unknown landscape of reality TV production, makes for an enjoyable and entertaining read."

The book is full of cheeky digs at celebrity culture, with the likeable main character, Kat, who reckons she's got life sorted.

"The book is a fun read for everyone," Ms Hollingworth said.

Melinda Houston is the next guest for the Clunes Booktown Sunday Selection series at the Warehouse Clunes on Sunday, August 3.



Melinda Houston

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