

More funding for the Rock Confine pets, council says

FURTHER funding to protect and maintain Hanging Rock has been delivered by the State Government, with a \$1950 grant through the Communities for Nature Funding Program.

The grant is being provided to the Friends of Hanging Rock to conduct revegetation and produce a new website to promote the group's activities.

Matthew Nickson, of the Friends of Hanging Rock, said three sections of the saddle area at Hanging Rock which have been seriously degraded by heavy tourist traffic will be revived with 400 locally sourced indigenous plants comprising native grasses and under-storey species.

"This will help combat against continuing erosive loss of soil from this particular area of Hang-



Good news: Amanda Millar MP and Donna Petrovich with Friends of Hanging Rock Nathan Alexander, Matthew Nickson, Doug Dalgleish and Park Ranger Guido Bigolin.

ing Rock," he said.

"Plantings will be protected by the arrangement of tree branches to form a natural barrier to tourists.

"Funding is only required for plants

and hardware as our members will provide the labour."

Member for Northern Victoria Amanda Millar said the funding grant was an example of the Coalition Government's

ability to deliver real and tangible support to local communities that directly benefits Victoria's environment.

"Following the historic funding announcement made

in May, funding from the Communities for Nature program further recognises the significance of Hanging Rock to communities in the Macedon Ranges and our local environment," Mrs Millar said.

Liberal candidate for Macedon Donna Petrovich said the funding would be used towards practical environmental solutions and improved communication for the Friends of Hanging Rock.

MACEDON Ranges Shire Council is reminding dog owners to check their pets are well secured in response to a recent spike in reports of dogs attacking wildlife.

Council has been working closely with the Macedon Ranges Wildlife Network to find the dogs involved in these incidents.

Dogs that have been found attacking wildlife may be seized for lengthy periods and dog owners face legal proceedings in a Magistrate's Court.

"Eighty per cent of dog attacks in public places could be prevented if all dogs were adequately confined. By securing your dog, you are also keeping them safe from traffic, injuries or fights with other dogs," council's manager of community safety Anne-Louise Lindner said.

"For dog owners, this means your yard must have a closed gate, and an escape-proof fence that your dog cannot jump, get under or through.

"The use of electronic collar confinement systems are not sufficient, and are known to have failed many times," Ms Lindner said.

"Apart from the legal consequences, incidents caused by dogs at large can be damaging and distressing for our community. Native wildlife are very special to our shire and its ecology, and their protection is imperative," she said.

Information on responsible animal ownership can be found at <mrsc.vic.gov.au> or <depi.vic.gov.au>, or can be requested at council's customer service centres.

Residents are encouraged to report unsecure or wandering dogs to council immediately by calling 5422 0333, and to report injured wildlife to the Macedon Ranges Wildlife Network on 1300 094 535.

Keeping youth off the streets

A NOT for profit organisation has been working to keep young people off the streets across the Macedon Ranges by offering opportunities that bring positive change to their lives.

Kids Under Cover takes an early intervention approach to find solutions to issues in the lives of young people that put them at the risk of becoming homeless.

Acknowledging that homelessness amongst young people often stems from family relationships, mental illness, domestic violence, overcrowding, or drug and alcohol abuse, Kids Under Cover created their studio program.

The full relocatable studios are constructed on the grounds of the family/carers home, allowing families to stay connected, giving them extra room to live and providing the young person with a safe, secure, and stable environment to grow into a healthy adult.

Kids Under Cover have done a lot of work across the Macedon Ranges, with

Mount Macedon resident Athol Guy OAM getting heavily involved in the program.

A total of 14 studio projects in the Macedon Ranges has seen the prevention of homelessness, benefiting 14 different families.

There are currently eight studios on the properties of families in Kyneton, Riddells Creek, Woodend, and Lancefield.

Kids Under Cover CEO Jo Swift said the studio program has proved itself as a positive way to tackle homelessness amongst youth.

"By acting early to identify and address the issues that can lead to homelessness, we have found that we can mitigate the detrimental effect of the problem, and offer the support required to bring positive change to the lives of young people," Ms Swift said.

"This approach reduces the cost to government and society that invariably results from entering the cycle of homelessness."

To date, the organisation

has helped to support almost 3000 young people who are either homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

"Without such intervention, young people are increasingly becoming the new face of homelessness in Australia," Ms Swift said.

The Caravan Industry Association of Victoria have recognised the work that Kids Under Cover do, and are now running a campaign to raise money to build relocatable studios throughout the Macedon Ranges and Victoria.

The aim is to get young kids off the streets, living safely and securely, with the first CIAV initiative to raffle off a luxurious five star family caravan on October 5 this year the Melbourne Leisurefest Sandown Racecourse.

Ten raffle tickets are \$30. To purchase tickets for the raffle, contact the CIAV on 9372 5388.



Helping hand: CEO of Kids Under Cover Jo Swift and Rob Lucas, CEO of the Caravan Institute Association of Victoria, check out a studio in Lancefield.

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An initiative of the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group

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mary-anne thomas
LABOR CANDIDATE FOR MACEDON

LISTENING POST

Outside Malmsbury Bakery

DATE: Saturday 2 August

WHERE: 77 Mollison St, Malmsbury

TIME: 10AM - 12PM

I look forward to seeing you there.

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