

# House dump on city street

## Clean-ups cost millions

KIERAN ROONEY

MOUNTAINS of illegally dumped rubbish are piling up on Melbourne streets as councils spend millions battling the avalanche.

The industrial scale of the problem was highlighted recently when every piece of a dismantled house was left on a street in the City of Port Phillip.

Now local authorities are calling on the state government to help tackle the thousands of tonnes of dumped trash, including spending money from its waste levy on improved recycling programs.

Councils say the trend escalated during Covid but it is also believe the problem is linked to the state's increased waste levy – making a trip to the tip too expensive for some.

Over the past three years, this government fee has doubled from \$66 a tonne to \$126 and costs have been passed on to customers at tips.

Ratepayers are also copping it by funding millions of dollars in clean-up fees.

The City of Hume, considered one of the hot spots for the issue, estimates it cleaned up 3580 tonnes of dumped waste last year, costing \$3.2m.

Boroondara mayor Jane Addis said the council picked up dumped rubbish 2900 times in the last financial year.

She said there needed to be more transparency about where money from the waste levy was spent.

"The Victorian government has collected the levy for many years and, for most of that

time, spent very little of the money on waste and recycling initiatives," she said.

Ms Addis said it was believed the government was weighing up a change to current laws, which would allow Recycling Victoria to receive the cash.

Greater Dandenong Council has now become a dumping ground for tyres, which are expensive and hard to dispose of.

The council's director of business, engineering and major projects Paul Kearsley said the region had seen a rise in dumped rubbish.

"At times we have collected more than 100 tyres from one location," he said.

"Most dumped waste in Greater Dandenong comes from rental houses. We assume this is due to the increasing costs at disposal facilities."

Port Phillip mayor Marcus Pearl said the dismantled house dumped on a Port Melbourne street was a blatant example of the problem.

He said the council had installed motion-activated cameras in illegal dumping hot spots.

"While the cameras mainly act as a deterrent, council has successfully captured footage leading to several fines for dumping," Cr Pearl said.

Tip-offs to the council about illegally dumped rubbish have soared from 5984 to 9145 in just five years.

The state government said it was investing heavily and working with all parties to try to solve the issue.

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## I'm ready to come Home (and Away)

SHE fled overseas to escape her famous tormentor, but now brave sexual assault survivor Sarah Monahan says she is ready to return home - and to the small screen.

In her first interview since her one-time *Hey Dad..!* co-star and on-screen father Robert Hughes was deported to Britain after serving jail time for the sexual abuse of young girls, including herself, Monahan tells tomorrow's *Stellar* magazine about her dream of living back in Australia and maybe landing an acting role on *Home And Away*.

"I knew when I spoke up that I would probably never work again," she reveals.

"But since I came out there has been a royal commission, *Me Too*, *Time's Up*, the Women's March and I've watched (sexual assault survivor) Grace Tame become Australian of the Year," Monahan says.

"You can't see it when you are in it and change takes time, but now that Robert is out and he is leaving forever, I feel like it is my time to start anew.

"I no longer have the case hanging over my head and I am ready to not just be the girl who sent her co-star to prison.

"I've spent the last however many years living that and I have to move on".

Declaring that she was excited for her future, the former child star said she hoped to "make it as an actor.. as an adult, on my own terms without having a sex offender there to ruin the experience".

"I could return to *Home And Away*," she said. "I want to be remembered for the work I do, not what happened to me."

TOMORROW

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stellar

# Minority religions record rise in followers as majors dwindle

JOHN MASANAUSKAS

IMMIGRATION has led to huge increases in the number of followers of some minority religions in Victoria, census data show.

A big inflow of Indian settlers over the past five years has resulted in a 59 per cent increase in the state's Hindu population, now boasting 214,058 adherents.

Another Indian religion,

Sikhism, has grown over the period by an astonishing 74 per cent to claim 91,745 followers in 2021.

Tarneit, in Melbourne's outer west, has the biggest Hindu population, rising from 14.7 per cent of all residents in 2016 to more than 20 per cent last year. Sikhs comprise 13.6 per cent of Tarneit's population, up from 7.8 per cent.

Another significant Hindu settlement suburb is Trugani-

na, where adherents jumped from 14.2 per cent to 20.2 per cent of all residents.

Truganina's Sri Sai Siva Vishnu Temple Guruji, or minister of religion, said the temple provided a special place for the area's rapidly growing Hindu community to pray, socialise and seek guidance.

"Dozens of people come here weekly and a lot more during big religious festivals like Diwali," he said.

However, Guruji said that governments and municipal councils did not provide enough support for religious communities that were non-profit.

Victoria's Islamic population has risen 46 per cent since 2016 to reach 273,028, according to the census.

Most Muslim settlement is found in the city's northern suburbs, which have significant Turkish, Lebanese and

Iraqi communities. Dallas has become Victoria's first locality to have a majority Islamic population, with 55 per cent of residents Muslims, up from 49.3 per cent in 2016.

Other key Muslim suburbs are Meadow Heights (rising from 41.2 per cent to 48.1 per cent), and Broadmeadows (up from 35.6 per cent to 36.1 per cent). Dandenong, in the city's outer southeast, also has a big Muslim population, increasing

from 30.1 per cent to 34.1 per cent of all residents.

Buddhist numbers in the state rose by 12.4 per cent since 2016 to reach 204,493, mainly due to growing Vietnamese and Cambodian communities.

Victoria's biggest religious group, Catholicism's numbers fell from 1.37 million to 1.33 million people since 2016.

About 425,000 Victorians identified as Anglicans in 2021, down from 530,700 in 2016.