

The Chronicle

IN OUR 117th YEAR

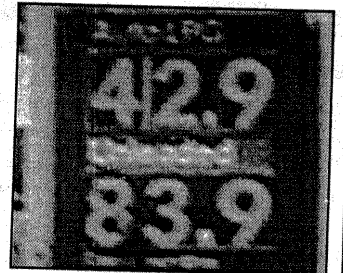
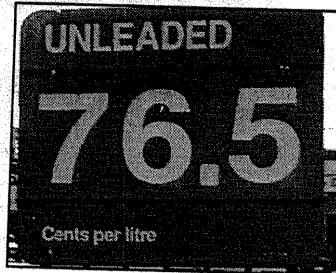
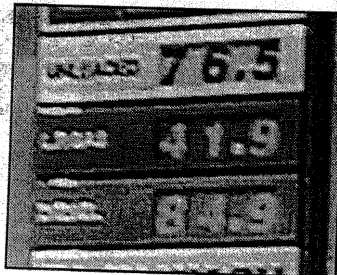
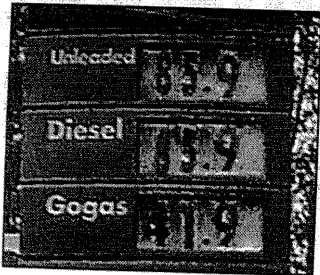
WANGARATTA, Wednesday, February 20, 2002

Tel: (03) 57212021

Price: 80c
(INC. GST)

THE CHRONICLE, Wednesday, February 20, 2002 - Page 3

“Wangaratta people are the luckiest in Australia”



COMPETITION between Wangaratta service stations resulted in yesterday's unleaded fuel drop to 76.5 cents per litre.

At 10.30am today, Apco, Caltex and Halls Ryley Street Service Station were still offering the same price.

Apco director Peter Anderson said the price was, in general, three cents a litre cheaper than Geelong and Melbourne prices.

By Jacquie Schwind

“It's competition - the fact we have got an independent in the market,” Mr Anderson said.

“I'll continue to either match or be the cheapest in the area.”

Managing director of Caltex Rowan

Street, John Hammersley, said the unleaded price began at 85.9 and ended up at 76.5.

“We were following directions from head office in Albury,” Mr Hammersley said.

“I think we are having a bun fight with local competition.

“The competition is that hot in Wangaratta I think we will probably have

cheap fuel for a while with large fluctuations.”

Halls Ryley Street Service Station proprietor, Graeme Hall, said his station also started at 85.9 and finished at 76.5.

The winners of the price war have been local motorists.

“I think Wangaratta people are the luckiest people in Australia,” Mr Hall said.

City petrol prices plummet

By VERONICA PERERA

WARRNAMBOOL motorists were yesterday filling up on what was believed to be the cheapest petrol prices in Australia.

Unleaded petrol at the city's Shell and Caltex stations dropped to 79.9 cents per litre yesterday while petrol at other outlets steadied at 85.9 cents per litre. The rock-bottom prices were nearly five cents a litre less than prices in Melbourne.

APCO petrol spokesman Richard Cumming yesterday said he was amazed at the prices which he believed were the cheapest in the country.

He encouraged motorists to fill up their tanks as soon as possible.

"I would suggest that Warrnambool prices are probably the lowest in Australia — it will be good to see how long it lasts for," he said. "Somebody is selling product at a very large loss so our advice would be to fill up."

Unleaded prices at Shell petrol stations in Melbourne were at 84.6 cents per litre, with the highest in Darwin at 99.5 cents and the lowest of the capital cities in Brisbane at 84.3 cents.

Director of APCO Peter Anderson expressed surprise at

Caltex and Ampol's latest pricing war.

"I am amazed that last week they were selling at 95.9 and this week they can sell at 79.9 — (especially) taking into account that there has been a six-cent-a-litre increase in the wholesale price," he said.

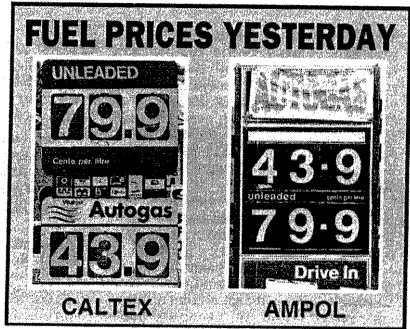
"Would somebody please explain to me how they could do this? I know what they're trying to do but I am not prepared to be quoted on it."

Warrnambool motorists have been subjected to some dramatic price increases in petrol this year, spiralling above \$1 a litre earlier this year.

Mr Anderson said that his company was already losing out with petrol prices at the level they were.

"I call on the federal and state governments to urgently address the situation. The recent legislation brought in by the State Government regulating terminal gate prices is useless, they can't do anything about it."

Mr Cumming expected prices would increase due to the state of the Australian dollar and the price of crude oil moving up. Ampol and Caltex distributor Richard Matthew could not be contacted for comment yesterday.



GEEELONG ADVERTISEMENTS

THE VOICE OF GEEELONG SINCE 1840

THURSDAY 16 AUGUST 2001

We're the cheapest

WADE PEARCE

GEEELONG had the state's cheapest petrol in July, but prices are expected to rise again from today.

Apco Service Stations director Peter Anderson said yesterday's low of 76.2c a litre would be short-lived.

"I would expect prices in Geelong to go up to about 88c, maybe even higher because we've had to pass on a number of price increases," Mr Anderson said.

"Certainly by the end of the week, I'd expect prices to go up."

Mr Anderson's comments follow the release of figures showing average fuel prices in Geelong last month were at their lowest all year.

A. an average 81.4c a litre, Geelong was one of Australia's cheapest cities to refuel, with only Brisbane, at an

average 76.3c, and several Queensland coastal towns selling cheaper petrol.

Figures compiled by Informed Sources, which supplies data to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, showed Geelong's petrol was consistently cheaper than Melbourne this year, except in January and February.

Despite Apco's price rise warnings, RACV government relations manager David Cumming said city petrol prices were unlikely to rise sharply before October.

"We're in a fairly stable patch at the moment and I anticipate prices to range from 70c to 80c a litre in the city and 80c to 90c a litre in the country," Mr Cumming said.

PETROL PRICE SHOCK:

"The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries meets in October and this is when we'll make our next review."

Strong competition from independent service stations, such as Apco, and low delivery costs were key factors in keeping prices down in Geelong and other cities, Mr Cumming said.

However, he has called for tax reform to cut high petrol prices in country areas.

Mildura recorded Victoria's highest average petrol price last month at 99.2c a litre.

Other country areas, including Hamilton and Portland, had monthly averages well above 90c a litre.

Daily monitoring in Geelong last

month showed unleaded petrol varied from 75.4c a litre to 88.9c a litre at major service stations.

The July average for Geelong was 13c lower than February's average of 94.4c a litre, when prices peaked above \$1.

Mr Cumming yesterday urged motorists to maintain their rage about high fuel costs by lodging submissions with the federal government inquiry into state and federal petrol taxes.

"Every time you fill your tank, almost 50 per cent of what you pay is tax, comprising both an excise and a GST, an unfair tax on a tax," Mr Cumming said.

"A recent RACV survey showed

Average unleaded prices a litre in July:

GEEELONG 81.4 cents
MELBOURNE 82.0
BENDIGO 86.1
WANGARATTA 86.9
HORSHAM 88.6
WARRNAMBOOL 88.7
WODONGA 89.6
BALLARAT 89.6
BENALLA 92.0
MILDURA 99.2

Source: Informal Sources

PAGE 2 EXCLUSIVES

Petrol thieves: hit 'em hard

76.2c, BUT SET TO RISE

that 83 per cent of city and 91 per cent of country motorists support a scheme where country motorists pay lower road user charges on petrol in order to make country petrol prices comparable to the city."

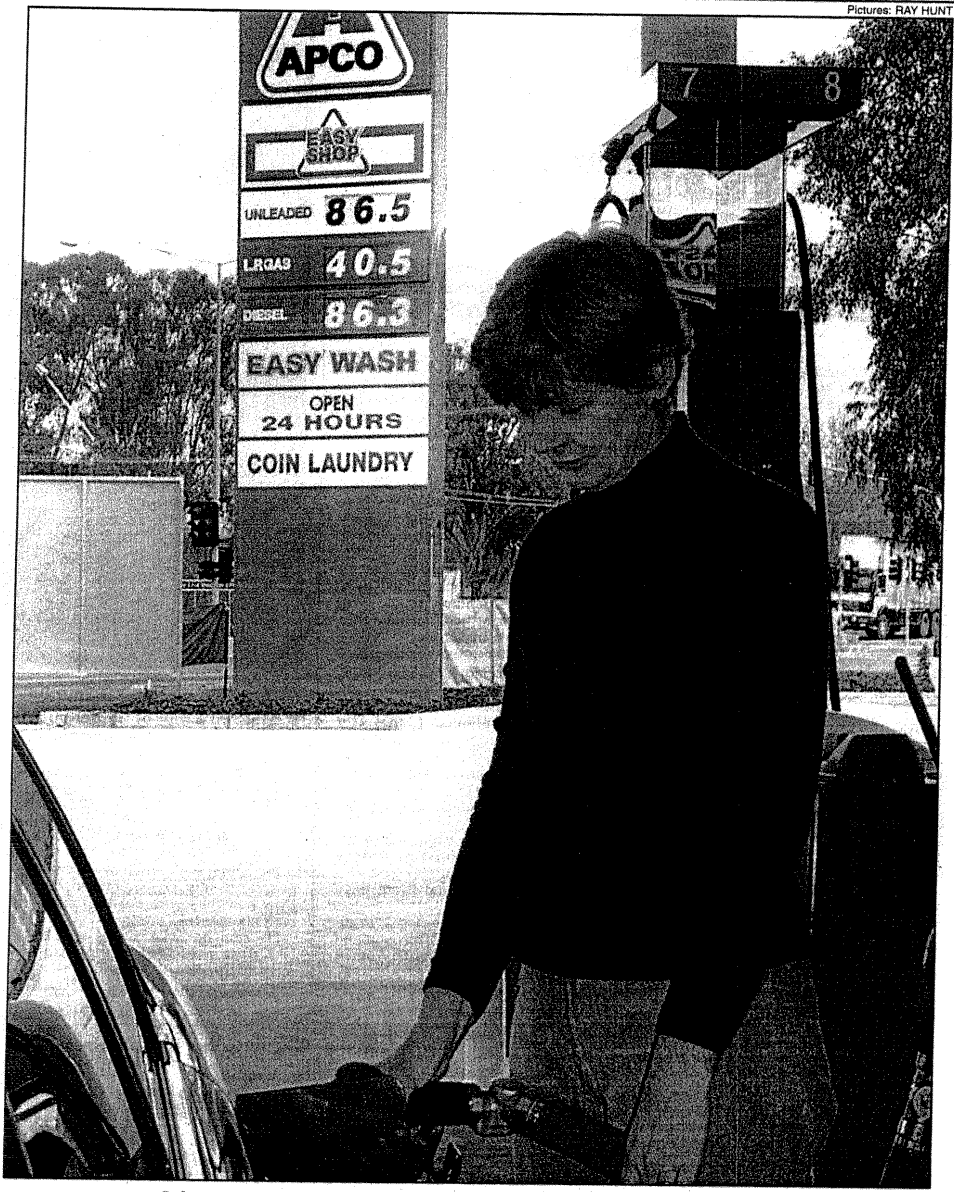
After months of complaints about high fuel costs, the Victorian Government passed a new law forcing major oil companies to publish diesel and petrol prices on their websites from this week.

The Petroleum Products (Terminal Gate Pricing) Act is aimed at making petrol pricing more transparent. Published prices do not include additional costs such as transport.

A

New fuel firm forces big cuts

Pictures: RAY HUNT



● A customer fills up at Wangaratta's independent APCO station yesterday.

By MATTHEW CULLEN

ALBURY-Wodonga motorists are now paying an average of 5c a litre more than their Wangaratta counterparts for unleaded petrol.

Prices at Wangaratta have dropped to 86.5c a litre as a result of a new independent operator opening at the weekend.

APCO entered the market in Wangaratta on Saturday with prices starting at 88.9c a litre before dropping to the present level.

There are even larger savings to be had on liquid petroleum gas with APCO which is charging up to 10c a litre less than on the Border.

APCO is charging 40.5c a litre for liquid petroleum gas while most Albury-Wodonga stations are charging 51.4c a litre.

While it was hoped the introduction of the independent APS station in Lavington would have the same effect on the Border, early price drops have not been sustained.

APCO director Mr Peter Anderson said he was looking to open a station in Albury or Wodonga but had not found the right site yet.

"We will go anywhere if the

location is correct and the population will support it," Mr Anderson said.

APS is charging 90.9c a litre for unleaded and 51.6c a litre for liquid petroleum gas.

Mr Anderson said it was shocking that the price of fuel has been able to drop so much since the station opened.

"It's amazing how our competitors are suddenly able to match these prices," he said.

"LPG has always been a highly-priced product and that has dropped significantly."

Lavington APS service station manager Mr Phil Smailes said he could not really understand why prices were higher as they were calculated from the cost of purchasing the fuel.

"There are different grades of

LPG and you can get the auto mix which is a poorer quality," Mr Smailes said.

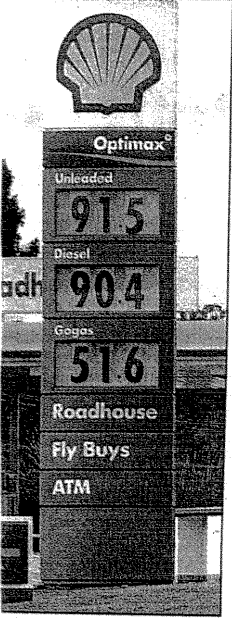
"With petrol though it is all a bit strange."

Mr Anderson said the prices in Wangaratta matched many of the stations in outer Melbourne with the company's station in Geelong also charging 86.5c a litre.

Holbrook also has cheaper petrol prices than Albury-Wodonga, but Holbrook customers did not enjoy the same savings as those in Wangaratta.

The APS station in Holbrook is charging 89.9c a litre for unleaded petrol and 46.9c a litre for liquid petroleum gas.

Wangaratta has another independent supplier in Liberty which also has helped to cut the price of fuel in the rural city.



Fuel prices at a North Albury petrol station yesterday.

Winter Escapes

from Albury
return to

Brisbane \$424.60
Hamilton Is. \$595.10
Cairns \$639.10
Geelong \$410.00

Highest



HIKE: the fuel prices advertised at the Shell Woolpak service station on McIvor Road.

Fuel cost hikes to continue

PETROL prices are likely to rise in Bendigo within the next few weeks, after some unusual pricing spikes yesterday.

Unleaded petrol shot up five cents a litre at one petrol station overnight on Monday.

And yesterday, there was a variation of seven cents between the cheapest and most expensive petrol in a 4.5 km stretch of road near Bendigo.

Along McIvor Road, the prices ranged from 86.9 cents a litre at Liberty and APCO, 90.9 cents at Mobil, and 93.9 at Shell Woolpak.

Along High Street, prices were: 86.9 cents at APCO, 87.4 cents at Ampol and Caltex in Golden Square; 89.9 cents at Shell Kangaroo Flat; 90.3 cents at BP Bendigo; 90.9 at Mobil in Kangaroo Flat, and; 93.9 at Shell, Bendigo.

Yesterday, the RACV's manager of government and corporate relations, David Cumming, said Bendigo motorists were in for a "difficult period" with petrol pricing.

He said prices had also risen dramatically overnight in Echuca.

By LINDA BARROW

He said there were two reasons for the unstable prices.

The first was a rise in crude oil prices, and the second was a drop in the Australian dollar.

Mr Cumming said the maximum wholesale price of unleaded petrol had risen eight cents a litre in the past 14 days.

"Clearly, somebody in Bendigo has received a delivery at the higher price," he said.

He said the price had spiked at 94.9 cents a litre in Mildura.

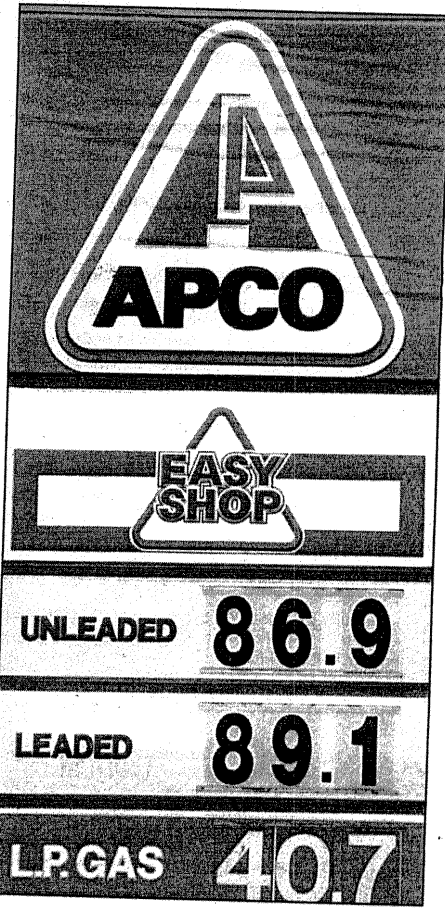
"These prices are still not acceptable because not everybody has the same buying price," Mr Cumming said.

"There will be others in Bendigo buying six cents below the wholesale price. I would suggest Liberty might have more buying capacity than the others."

Mr Cumming said he expected petrol prices would rise further.

"Unfortunately, it's all bad news leading into the new GST period. I don't have any good news," he said.

Lowest



DOWN THE ROAD: prices at the APCO service station on McIvor Road were among the cheapest.

Independent owner leads the way in Ballarat

show the major petrol stations in Ballarat would only follow price cuts if an independent owner had his unleaded price by 0.5 cents yesterday.

Service Stations director Mr Anderson said most petrol stations would pass on price increases but were reluctant to pass on price cuts.

As his stocks of petrol bought at a higher price dwindle, Mr Anderson said he would be passing on more price cuts to customers and other stations would follow his lead.

He has a policy to make a certain profit margin plus cover the cost of freight," he said.

As he slowly getting down to it, at 8:30 pm yesterday Mr Anderson said the price of unleaded petrol had fallen 1 cent a litre at his Ballarat service stations.

By 6 pm, at least two nearby petrol stations had matched the local

RACV government relations manager David Cumming congratulated Apco, saying Ballarat needed a leader to bring prices down.

However, the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce issued a press release late yesterday saying local dealers had little control over petrol prices.

VACC executive director David Purchase said the "hapless dealer trying to run a service station" was not responsible for fluctuations.

"The price motorists pay for petrol is generally out of the control of the person who sells it to them," he said.

But Swift Petroleum manager Justin Bentley said to a certain extent local operators did have a say in the price of local petrol above the wholesale price.

"Everybody is free to set what they want," he said.

Other local petrol station operators declined to comment.

FAX:

PAGE 02

PRICES		73.9
Apco		73.9
Princo Regent Mobil (Main Rd)		74.3
Swift		74.3
Shell		74.3
BP (Sturt St)		74.3
Mobil (cnr Skipton and Dawson Sts)		74.3
Mobil (Sturt St)		74.3
Ampol (Howitt St)		74.3
BP (Howitt St)		74.3
Caltex (Main Rd)		74.3
Alien Fuel		74.3

SHELL UNLEADED PETROL PRICE BREAKDOWN

Import price:	16
Federal tax:	3
State tax:	
Freight:	
Wholesaler and retailer profit:	1



BENDIGO ADDY MARCH 98

Bendigo enjoys fuel price cut

BENDIGO drivers are reaping the benefits of a drop in the wholesale price of petrol, with further cuts expected at some outlets today.

The price of unleaded petrol was 75.5 cents a litre at most Bendigo service stations yesterday, although the APCO Easy Shop in Kangaroo Flat and the nearby Caltex outlet sold it at 75.3.

Caltex later cut its price to 75.1. The Ampol Road Pantry in High Street Golden Square was slightly higher than the average with unleaded at 75.9 cents a litre.

Along the Calder the price was

steady at 75.5 cents in Harcourt, Taradale, Mineral Springs and Kyneton.

Petrol is cheaper still in Melbourne, with city drivers enjoying a 10-year low of about 63.9 cents a litre.

The RACV's petrol pricing spokesman David Cumming said the wholesale price of petrol had dropped by about three cents since the start of February.

This was caused by a reduction in the price of crude oil and an oversupply of the product in Asia.

"The price in Singapore impacts directly on our prices," he said.

The wholesale price had dropped to 67.7 cents this week, down from about 73 cents a litre on February 1.

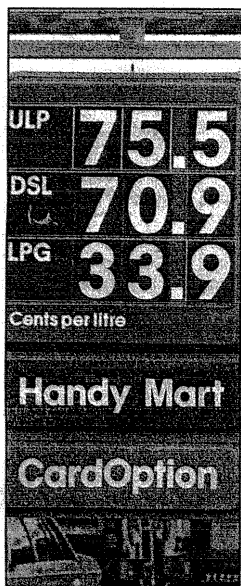
He said Bendigo residents should have noticed the drop by now, but would still find themselves paying more than their city cousins.

"A price war in Melbourne has brought our petrol prices down to almost a 10-year low," Mr Cumming said. "Unfortunately, regional Victoria doesn't always follow suit."

Continued — Page 2

Bendigo enjoys fuel price drop

From — Page 1



FUEL prices at a Mobil service station in the Bendigo area.

Apco co-director Peter Anderson said he believed the Bendigo service stations had cut prices in line with the wholesale drop, and in response to reductions by Apco.

"In the towns we go to, we have a policy of having four cents above the wholesale price, plus freight.

"This gives the oil company franchisee a margin.

"Unfortunately there is always this (difference in price) situation between Bendigo and Melbourne.

"But Melbourne is just such

UNLEADED	75.3
LEADED	77.5
LPGAS	33.7
DIESEL	70.9

THE APCO Service Station fuel board in High Street, Kangaroo Flat.

a false price, it doesn't matter."

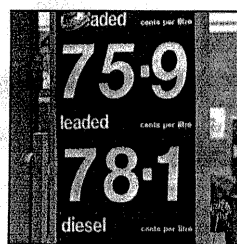
He said city petrol sellers were able to survive as a result of deals with oil companies, and because of the sheer volume of petrol they sold.

Mr Anderson said he expected the price of petrol to fall a further half a cent today.

"Over the next few weeks, I think you will see the board in Bendigo continue to fall even further."

The price of unleaded petrol was about 77.5 cents a litre in Bendigo 12 months ago.

— LINDA BARROW



THE Finco Road Pantry in High Street, Golden Square.



THE cheapest fuel price in Bendigo yesterday. Motorists who paid 75.1 cents per litre for unleaded got the best deal.

Bendigo Advertiser, Friday, October 16, 1998

Attention Rob - Love Apco 9

Letters to the Editor

Apco does right thing by motorists

SIR — I write to thank and congratulate Bendigo's Apco service stations for having the decency to maintain their LPG prices at their pre-gas crisis level.

I encourage other gas-reliant motorists to vote with their wallets and reward Apco's courage with their custom.

At the same time, I send a vote of severe disapproval to the relatively larger players in the industry for having the hide to raise their prices by four cents a litre — and still maintain it a week after the problem is solved.

If Apco can do it, why can't Shell, Mobil and the other big boys?

Congratulations, Apco, you've won my business, and hopefully a lot of other motorists too.

MARK HAYES,
Don Street,
Bendigo.

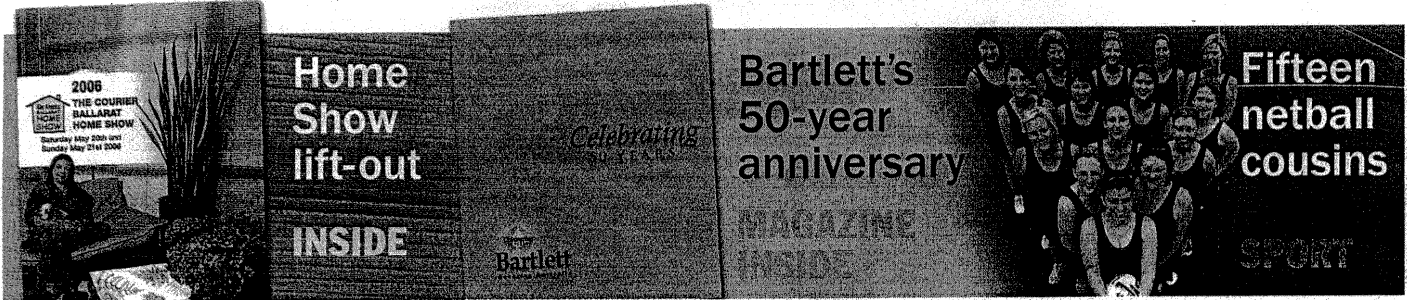
The Courier

SERVING THE BALLARAT REGION SINCE 1867

\$1.10 (inc GST)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2006

TODAY
Mainly sunny
16
TOMORROW
Fog then fine
15



Bypass work set to begin

By Karen Keast

CONSTRUCTION of the \$331 million Deer Park Bypass will begin in September, two months ahead of schedule.

VicRoads yesterday revealed works will start on the three-level Western Hwy interchange at Caroline Springs ahead of the touted November works date.

Work on the bulk of the bypass, which is expected to take up to three years, could begin early next year.

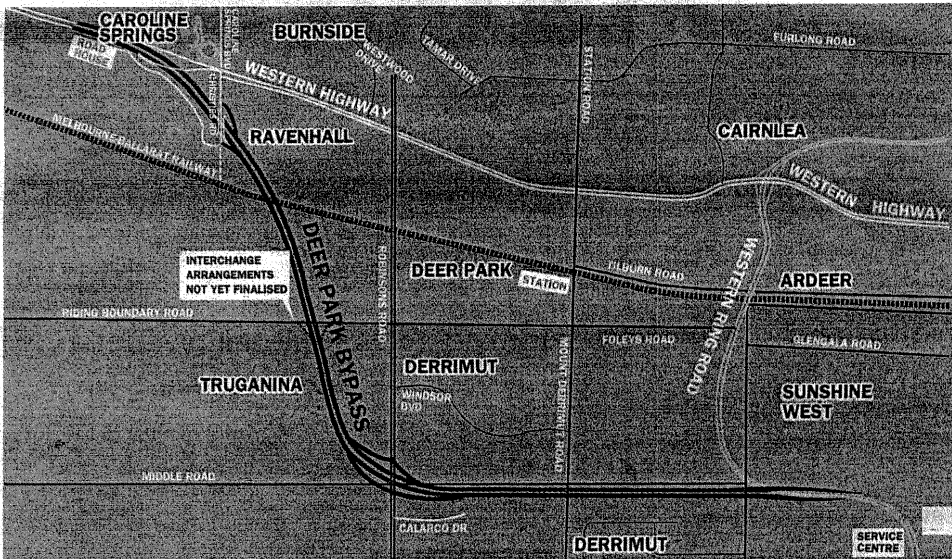
And construction of the Leakes Rd interchange on the Western Hwy at Rockbank as part of the project, will begin mid-2007 and take about 18 months to complete.

VicRoads Deer Park Bypass project manager Trevor Boyd said the early start date was good news for motorists.

"The sooner we have traffic on the bypass the number of crashes on the existing highway will reduce enormously."

The 9.3km, four-lane bypass will run between Caroline Springs and the Western Ring Rd at Sunshine West, skirting a 10km stretch of the congested Western Hwy, which contains 20 intersections and six sets of traffic signals.

The Federal Government has committed \$265 million



THE ROUTE: This map shows where the Deer Park Bypass will be situated.

and the State Government will inject \$66 million into the project.

Mr Boyd said the first contract for the interchange, one of the largest interchanges in Melbourne, was advertised in April. He said works on the interchange would take about 14 months.

"We expect to award that contract some time in July or August," he said.

Mr Boyd said the planning and pre-construction work for the bypass were almost complete while survey work, environmental and cultural heritage studies and land owner interviews were fin-

ished. He said geotechnical work, land acquisition and design activities were now being finalised.

Mr Boyd said a community consultation committee for the bypass had also been formed.

Western Highway Action Committee chairman Peter

Russell, also a member on the consultation committee, said he was pleased construction would soon begin.

A spokeswoman for the State Government said the project would begin ahead of schedule because the government had already budgeted its funding for the bypass.

Shop local threat

RACV corporate and government relations manager David Cumming has advised Ballarat motorists who commute to Melbourne to avoid local petrol stations whenever possible.

He said commuters should attempt to fill their tanks in the state's capital as greater competition meant petrol prices were about 10 cents a litre cheaper than in Ballarat.

"If you can travel to Melbourne on a third of a tank then fill up before you leave (to come home)."

Ballarat service stations were yesterday charging just under \$1.40 per litre for unleaded petrol.

According to the RACV website the average unleaded petrol price in Melbourne yesterday was 129.6 cents per litre.

Commerce Ballarat chairman Adrian Doyle said people should consider the benefits of buying locally.

"We're very disappointed to hear other bodies advocating people shop outside of Ballarat," he said.

"Everyone loves a bargain, but at what cost is that bargain when the impact of everyone buying petrol out of town means a loss of revenue and a loss of employment."

Continued page 2

Haystack Covers, Silage Covers, Grain Bunker Covers, Harvesters Covers, Cricket Pitch

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roadrules

SAFER MERGING

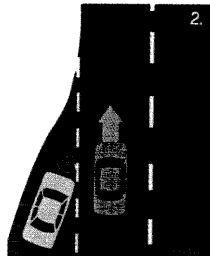
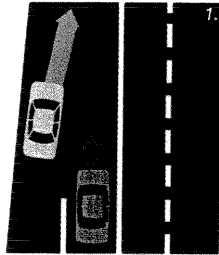
Merging is one of the more difficult manoeuvres a driver must perform, and the thought of trying to join a line of fast-moving traffic can be quite intimidating to a lot of motorists.

On Victoria's road network there are two types of merging situations. The first is when two lanes join together and there is no dashed line (Diagram 1). In this situation the vehicle in front goes first, regardless of whether the vehicle is on the left or right. This type of merge is commonly known as a 'zip-merge'.

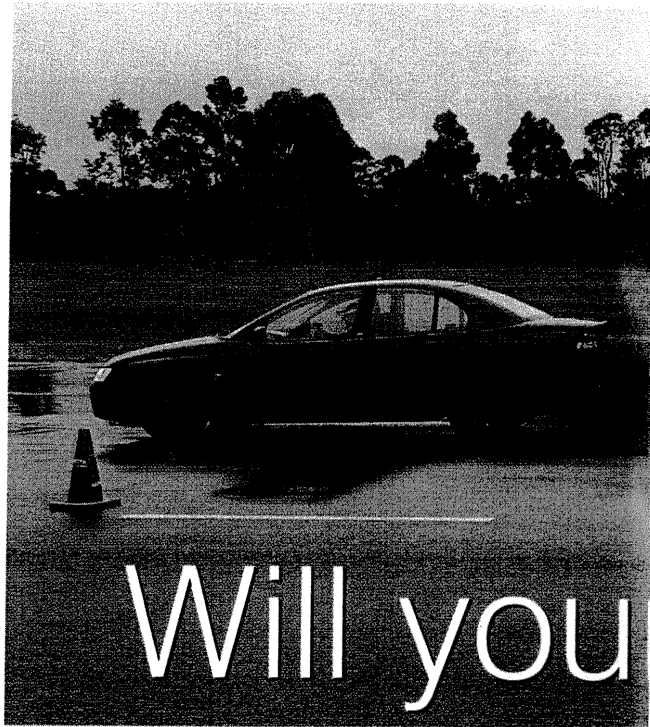
The second type of merge is where vehicles must cross a dashed line (Diagram 2). In this situation the vehicle crossing the line must give way to any vehicle already travelling in the lane the driver wishes to enter. This type of merge commonly occurs on freeway entry ramps.

In most cases, merging vehicles don't actually have to stop to give way, but they have a responsibility to find a suitable, safe gap to merge into. Other drivers can assist by being courteous and adjusting speeds or changing lanes where appropriate, to create a suitable gap.

In both merging situations, drivers wanting to merge should try to match the speed of the traffic they are joining. Differences in traffic speeds can make merging difficult and may cause crashes. Stopping before entering the traffic stream can lead to rear-end crashes, and makes it almost impossible in heavy traffic for merging vehicles to find a large-enough gap in the traffic to accelerate from a standstill and safely join the traffic stream.



Daniel Przychodzki



Basic tyre maintenance is ignored at the driver's peril – just take a look at the startling results of RACV tyre tests. Greg Hill reports

The condition of your car's tyres can mean the difference between a heart-fluttering near-miss and a heart-breaking disaster.

Even late-model cars with good brakes will have their stopping performance compromised by badly worn tyres. And now that winter is upon us, RACV warns that motorists need to ensure their vehicle has good tyres and to look after them properly.


This has been underlined by a series of tests RACV conducted with VicRoads, VACC and TAC for Automotive Safety Week which demonstrated the performance characteristics on wet roads of tyres with different degrees of wear.

On badly worn tyres our test car, a 2003 Holden Commodore Acclaim, required an extra 3.9m – that's almost one car length – to stop from 60km/h and a massive 12.8m (three car lengths) from 80km/h, compared with its performance when we fitted near-new tyres. Like the recent TAC television commercial explained, a lot of the speed is not wiped off until the end of the stop. At the point where the good tyres stopped, our data shows that with worn tyres the car was still travelling at 25km/h when braking from 60km/h, and at 50km/h when braking from 80km/h.

Just as concerning, and frightening for unsuspecting drivers, was the inconsistent stopping and unpredictability in the car's behaviour in an emergency situation when we performed the test on worn tyres.

During the project, at the Australian Automotive Research Centre at Anglesea, we conducted a series of stopping tests from both 60km/h and 80km/h, and a swerve and

RACV/SHELL PETROL WATCH

	Product cost	+Federal tax	GST	Freight	Shell & retailer	Retail price
 Shell w/sale price	78.9	37.7	11.8	0.0	1.6	130.1
Melbourne	78.9	37.7	12.1	0.6	3.5	132.8
Average non-metro	78.9	37.7	12.5	1.7	7.1	138.0
Albury-Wodonga	78.9	37.7	12.7	1.6	8.9	139.9
Ballarat	78.9	37.7	12.6	0.8	9.0	139.1
Bendigo	78.9	37.7	12.6	1.1	8.3	138.6
Echuca	78.9	37.7	12.7	1.6	8.8	139.7
Geelong	78.9	37.7	12.1	0.5	3.5	132.7
Latrobe Valley	78.9	37.7	12.9	1.3	11.2	142.0
Mildura	78.9	37.7	12.6	2.6	6.4	138.2
Sale	78.9	37.7	12.7	1.8	8.8	139.9
Shepparton	78.9	37.7	12.6	1.5	8.2	138.9
Swan Hill	78.9	37.7	13.0	2.4	11.4	143.5
Warrnambool	78.9	37.7	12.7	1.3	9.3	140.0

Average May prices for unleaded petrol (cents per litre)

*Includes state subsidy of .43 cpl. Most non-metro retailers get extra 1cpl federal subsidy.

JOHN'S FIX ON A GREAT

Without making a specific comparison, John Doolan's description of the role of a mechanic sounds much like that of a trained medical practitioner, skilled in the art of diagnosing an ailment.

"You've got to understand the relationship between the components; the fault may be one thing but the cause is another," says John, a mechanic with more than 20 years' experience and now the manager of RACV's workshop and Service Centre in Noble Park.

"And that's the best part of the job, being able to assess then repair complex machinery," John adds. "It's great to be able to give the vehicle back to the customer performing well."

New technologies and cars and a broader range of employment and training options provide renewed opportunities to those considering a



CONSUMER TIP: BE WARNED

There are a couple of clues even the most inexperienced motorist can use to keep a check on their vehicle's basic health. Check the owner's manual to learn what the warning lights on the instrument panel mean. They indicate when a component has failed and needs attention. Ignoring them can result in expensive repairs, or even loss of control of the vehicle.

RACV/SHELL PETROL WATCH

	Product cost	*Federal tax	GST	Freight	Shell & retailer	Retail price
Shell w/sale price	65.0	37.7	10.4	0.0	1.6	114.7
Melbourne	65.0	37.7	10.9	0.6	5.3	119.5
Average non-metro	65.0	37.7	11.2	1.7	7.4	123.0
Albury-Wodonga	65.0	37.7	11.3	1.6	8.7	124.3
Ballarat	65.0	37.7	11.1	0.8	6.8	121.4
Bendigo	65.0	37.7	11.4	1.1	9.6	124.8
Echuca	65.0	37.7	11.3	1.6	8.3	123.9
Geelong	65.0	37.7	10.8	0.5	5.0	119.0
Latrobe Valley	65.0	37.7	11.1	1.3	7.4	122.5
Mildura	65.0	37.7	11.7	2.6	11.9	128.9
Sale	65.0	37.7	11.2	1.8	7.8	123.5
Shepparton	65.0	37.7	11.1	1.5	6.4	121.7
Swan Hill	65.0	37.7	11.7	2.4	11.6	128.4
Warrnambool	65.0	37.7	11.5	1.3	10.7	126.2

Average March prices for unleaded petrol (cents per litre)

*Includes state subsidy of .43 cpl. Most non-metro retailers get extra 1cpl federal subsidy.

roadrules

IN THE ZONE

There are many different zones that allow, or prevent, parking for particular vehicles. Knowing what each of these zones mean will help you to park without the worry of a fine. Most zones are quite clear on which type of vehicles can legally stop within the zone. Truck, Taxi, Bus and Minibus Zones are for the exclusive use of those respective vehicles. Works zones can only be used by drivers of vehicles engaged in construction work in or near the zone. Permit zones can only be used by vehicles displaying a current permit issued by the responsible body (e.g., a local council). And Mail Zones are for the exclusive use of postal vehicles. Drivers must not stop in a Loading Zone unless they are driving one of the following:

- A public passenger vehicle or taxi that is dropping off, or picking up, passengers.
- A truck (which has a gross vehicle mass more than 4.5 tonnes) that is dropping off, or picking up, goods.
- A courier vehicle or delivery vehicle displaying a Courier Vehicle or Delivery Vehicle sign permanently affixed (i.e. not magnetically) on to the body of the vehicle.
- A vehicle that is dropping off, or picking up, goods. The vehicle must be constructed mainly for carrying loads (i.e. not a sedan, stationwagon or motorcycle) and must display an identifying label approved by VicRoads. A limit of 30 minutes applies to Loading Zones unless indicated otherwise. Penalties for parking infringements can be more than \$100.

Daniel Przychodzki

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Greenfield



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SEVEN ACCUSED OF PRICE FIXING

■ 69 allegations

■ Hearing June 14

By ALEX EASTON

SEVEN Ballarat petrol distributors will go to court next month to answer allegations of price fixing.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission alleges companies trading under the Swift, Apco, Mobil, BP, Shell and Ampol/Caltex brands in Ballarat set petrol prices on 69 occasions between June 1999 and December 2000.

Seven individuals from the companies are also accused of price fixing.

If found guilty, the companies face fines of up to \$10 million each and the individuals of up to \$500,000 each.

The companies accused of price fixing are: Leahy Petroleum and Leahy Petroleum — Retail (which sells under the BP brand); Triton 2001 (Shell); Brumar (Shell); Justco (Swift); Apco (Apco); J Chisholm (Ampol/Caltex); and Balgee Oil (Mobil).

Balgee Oil has been in the hands of administrators since June 2001 and none of the major oil companies, whose brand names are used by the service stations, were said to be involved in the court action.

In a statement of claim lodged at the Federal Court in Melbourne yesterday, the ACCC alleges the companies had an arrangement whereby they decided by telephone when and by how much prices would increase.



The Courier
BALLARAT EST. 1867

EDITORIAL

Australian motorists should be able to expect a fair go when buying such a basic commodity as petrol.

— Page 8

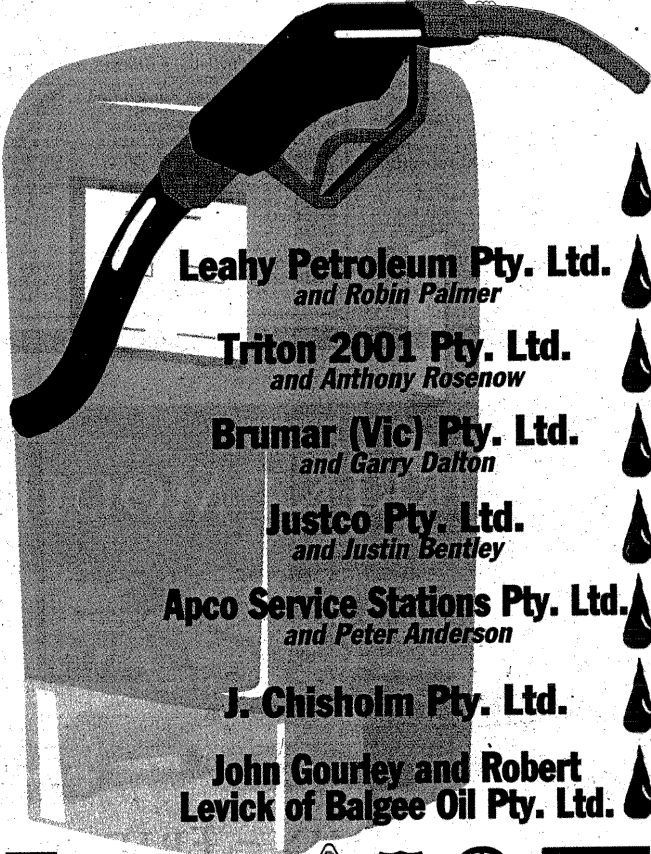
They would then contact their individual service stations to implement the increase.

The ACCC alleges pressure was put on service stations that did not take part in the scheduled price rises.

The watchdog brought a separate action against Leahy Petroleum and its general manager Robin Palmer.

● Continued Page 4

ACCC'S HIT LIST



**Leahy Petroleum Pty. Ltd.
and Robin Palmer**

**Triton 2001 Pty. Ltd.
and Anthony Rosenow**

**Brumar (Vic) Pty. Ltd.
and Garry Dalton**

**Justco Pty. Ltd.
and Justin Bentley**

**Apco Service Stations Pty. Ltd.
and Peter Anderson**

J. Chisholm Pty. Ltd.

**John Gourley and Robert
Levick of Balgee Oil Pty. Ltd.**

SWIFT PETROLEUM **Mobil** **APCO** **BP** **CALTEX**

Graphic: TROY EVERETT

INSIDE

Friday extra

BALLARAT photographer Peter Kervarec has come up with a breathtaking series of photographs of Ballarat.

Free inside



Shadow of war looms

CONCERTED diplomatic efforts were being made overnight to pull nuclear powers India and Pakistan back from the brink of war.

Page 14



On the street

SAM Newman's interviews with a few Ballarat residents went to air last night on *The Footy Show*.

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