

Council Candidate



☆ Council candidate Stephen Gardner, pictured with family pooch Sapphire.

Since moving to Maldon two years ago, Stephen has given his time to a number of local organisations, including the Maldon Hospital Board, Maldon Primary School, the Maldon Tennis Club, Castle-maine Scouts and Soccer and the Cactus Warriors. He is also on the National Board of the Aussie Hands Foundation.

According to Stephen, there are a number of issues in Maldon that need to be addressed. "The streetscape is looking tired and needs some restoration," he said, "and a greater diversity of businesses would attract more visitors. More job creation would benefit the town, as would fibre to the premises NBN. After hours childcare support for families is also essential."

If elected, Stephen intends to push for a review of Council's staff and administration costs, which he believes are too high. He'd also press for greater transparency regarding the road maintenance program. On a more local level, Stephen would give more support to the Young West youth program, extend the Maldon pool hours and assist the Baringhup-Maldon bus.

Stephen decided to stand for Council after trying to secure a planning permit to set up a 'glamping ground' on his property. After a protracted process, Council refused his application on the grounds that it was not a suitable use for land within a farming zone. "There seems to be a view that farming zones are untouchable," he said. "My belief is that some diversification within farming zones is necessary in order to create income and jobs. There should be an alternative to the current status quo."

Stephen has not given up on his plans to set up a glamping ground on his patch, and has lodged an application with VCAT to appeal his case. The date for the hearing is 7 February 2017.

THE forthcoming Council elections for Tarrangower Ward may not be a lay down misere after all - local resident Stephen Gardner has decided to stand against incumbent Councillor Sharon Telford.

Stephen, who lives just outside Maldon on a farming property with wife Kylie and his three children, is looking

forward to the challenge of running for Council. With a solid background in business and administration, he has an MBA and works as a risk management consultant. He also has a good feel for small business in Maldon, through his involvement with Beaton's. This is a family-owned shop that has had a connection with Maldon for around 20 years.

NBN Meeting

LOCAL residents turned out in force last week to attend a meeting regarding the future of the NBN rollout in Maldon.

As reported in previous editions of the *Times*, Bendigo Federal MP Lisa Chesters is campaigning to have Maldon connected to the NBN using fibre to the premises rather than fibre to the node technology.

Fibre to the node will mean: slower internet speeds, reliance on the old copper network

and the presence of unsightly metal boxes throughout the town.

Fibre to the premises will bring: faster internet speeds and no unsightly metal boxes.

The old copper network is already failing some businesses and residences in the town. The *Times* knows of two businesses that have recently had major problems with phone lines and ADSL connections, with the Telecommunications Ombudsman stepping in to mediate.

In School Philanthropy



☆ The Maldon Primary School students who designed and built a music hall for the Maldon Pre-Schoolers used recycled materials for their project. They managed their budget so well that they donated all \$150 of it back to the Pre-School!

THE final In School Philanthropy event, run by Melbourne-based Kids Thrive, was held at the Maldon Community Centre last Friday morning.

Students from Maldon, Baringhup and Tarnagulla Primary Schools had the opportunity to present their philanthropic projects to an appreciative audience.

There's no doubt about it - the In School Philanthropy program has produced a crop of budding philanthropists. A great deal of thought had obviously gone into creating a range of imaginative and effective projects. Along the way, the children learnt a great deal, including how to work as a team and with other community groups and how to keep within their allotted budget. As well as learning a lot, they had plenty of fun.

One project led to the creation of a sensory garden for the women and children out at the farm at Tarrengower prison. The Maldon Primary School students running the project, however, came up against a major hurdle: they were not permitted to visit the farm. Their idea, however, has proved to be very popular, with the women and children as well as prison officers adding to the garden.

Planning a virtual around-the-world trip, setting up a



☆ Baringhup Primary School students passed on a \$1,000 cheque to Righteous Pups to purchase some additional training hours for Jimmy the assistance dog. This means that Jimmy will be placed with new owner Jen Bryce before Christmas. Jen expressed her thanks to the children and Righteous Pups head trainer Kelly said that she was very pleased with the students' commitment to the program and willingness to work with a range of dogs. The children and Righteous Pups plan to catch up again next term to see how Jimmy's training has progressed. Pictured with the children are, from l. to r., Principal Janette Leaver, Jen and Kelly.

rabbit baiting station, building billy carts and helping to fund and train a companion dog - these were some of the nine ideas dreamed up by the students participating in this year's In School Philanthropy program. Their energy and enthusiasm is to be commended.

Fire - Deliberately Lit

THE Maldon Fire Brigade received a call out on Sunday afternoon when smoke was noticed coming from the toilets next to the Folk Festival Offices in High Street. Two youths were reportedly seen leaving the premises.

When the Fire Brigade arrived, it was discovered that some toilet paper holders had been set alight. Little or no

damage was done, but there is a zero tolerance policy in place regarding fires - particularly those which are deliberately lit. CFA volunteers took time out to search the streets and to successfully track down the alleged offenders.

The Police were called and Maldon Police Officer David Rose is currently investigating the matter.



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