

Turf club president dies

THE Kerang community is mourning the sudden loss of highly respected Kerang Turf Club president Scott Strachan, who died early on Saturday.

Mr Strachan died at Kerang District Health with loving wife Cheryl by his side.

The 62-year-old was a well-known face and contributor in the Gannawarra region, especially at his place of work, Ellis & St Clair Plumbing in Kerang, and with numerous other community service groups.

In a statement from Kerang Turf Club, Mr Strachan was described as "a wonderful person" who "devoted so much energy as a volunteer in our community".

"It is with immense sadness that Kerang Turf Club (KTC) recognises the sudden passing of its devoted and highly respected club president Scott Strachan," the club said.

"He played a significant leadership role with the Kerang Turf Club, where he was a passionate committee

member for the past eight-plus years, proudly taking on the leadership role of president in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020.

A thoroughbred racing industry enthusiast, Mr Strachan enjoyed spending time at Alexandra Park in Kerang, together with his wife.

"His fellow KTC committee members will profoundly miss his leadership and guidance, coupled with his steadfast friendship," the club said.

KTC vice-president Colleen Shay

said the club extended its condolences to his wife and family at this difficult time.

"He was caring and respectful to all those he came into contact with," Ms Shay said.

"We are all in shock and disbelief upon hearing this tragic news."

Given the current COVID-19 restrictions in place across Victoria, the KTC intends to later acknowledge Mr Strachan in an appropriate manner.



Scott Strachan

Night of mayhem

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KERANG Fire Brigade captain Ramon Steel said crew members had not yet got to bed when they received a second call-out, just after 3.30am, to a terrace house in Wellington Street.

He said the brigade quickly controlled the second fire but then became aware of a third blaze two doors away that looked to have ignited from several places and was burning more fiercely.

That terrace house was left with a gutted kitchen and damage to a back room.

However, all three properties were unoccupied and no one was injured.

Around the corner in Victoria Street, offenders kicked in the front door of Loddon Valley Disposals just after 4am and "had a fair sort of a field day", according to owner Geoff Davey.

Mr Davey said when he arrived at the shop after receiving a phone call from police at 5am two people were in custody.

He said the pair were "in a divvy van out the front, and they were rattling around in there, they were rocking and rolling it".

"There were police everywhere."

Detective Sergeant Patrick Bell of Swan Hill crime investigation unit said Swan Hill police had joined Kerang units when the second fire was reported. Quambatook's officer was also called to Kerang to assist.

Sgt Bell said police had been searching throughout the night for people who had been seen in the vicinity of both fire scenes.

The foot chase had lasted less than a minute. Police did not believe drugs were a factor in the crimes, Sgt Bell said.

He said "bloody idiots" had been responsible for the fires. "They didn't comprehend how serious their actions were," he said.

Property, including knives, stolen from the disposals store had been recovered by police.

Investigations were continuing and anyone with information should call Kerang police on 5452 1955.

The 18-year-old is due to appear at Kerang Magistrates' Court in November.



The fire in the Lilac Avenue shed was fuelled by a car that was also destroyed in the blaze.

Picture: JENNY DENTON



Residents Howie Morrow, Kevin Berry, Frank Hughes, Lindsay Hogg and John Walsh survey the most treacherous section of the rest stop loop road.

Picture: JENNY DENTON

Bogged down over rest stop

JENNY DENTON
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LAKE Charm residents are calling on the Gannawarra Shire Council or VicRoads to fix an unsealed surface where four trucks got bogged last week after heavy rain.

The Beau Morton Reserve rest area, off the Murray Valley Highway just north of the town, is the only rest stop between Lake Charm and Swan Hill that is suitable for large vehicles.

Local farmer Kevin Berry had to pull a Scania truck out of the mud at the stop on Thursday morning.

With his big Chamberlain tractor on the job, the truck came out fairly easily, Mr Berry said.

"I didn't know if it was going to. It did take a bit of shifting at the start," he said.

The residents, who are members of the local Landcare group, said the loop road became treacherous every "wet winter" and they had made several attempts in recent years to have the problem addressed.

However, VicRoads and the council both denied that maintenance of the area was their responsibility.

Kerang Landcare Group secretary John Walsh said VicRoads had again been contacted last week about the issue and repeated that it was not the organisation's problem.

Gannawarra Shire Council staff on Thursday also denied

the responsibility was theirs.

Mr Walsh said the council had provided some recent assistance.

"They've been asked to do something several times, and to their credit they've put something in it, but that dirt would've been good topdressing for my garden bed," he said.

"I'm no engineer but I can see it needs rock.

"You need to put a base in — you could use rocks and stones, then roll it over and put gravel on top."

Local resident and Landcare member Lindsay Hogg said the issue was a simple one.

"Who's going to be responsible and put their hand up to do the maintenance?" he said. "It's not for the community to do it."

Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) regional director Barry Green told the Gannawarra Times on Friday the road authority was working with the Department of Water Land and Planning and the shire on how the site would be managed.

"We understand how important it is to keep freight moving, especially during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic," he said.

RRV said there were a range of rest stops along the Murray Valley Highway where freight drivers could pull over for a break.

It also pointed to the \$30 million project under way to increase Murray Valley Highway safety between Lake Boga and Lake Charm.

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