

Springvale Dandenong Leader

dandenongleader.com.au

MONDAY, MAY 9, 2011

\$1 Incl. GST



STATE BUDGET
SPRINGVALE
CROSSING WIN p5



DEAR DIARY
SLICE OF ANZAC
HISTORY p8



School principal Martin Culkin surveys the damage after a crash on Herbert St. He says only a road closure during school hours will prevent future accidents.

Picture: VALERIU CAMPAN N4605104

Staring at disaster

Safety | Rebecca David

Call to close road between campuses

A CAR crash which saw a Dandenong High student taken to hospital has sparked renewed calls to close Herbert St to cars during school hours.

A year 12 student was crossing the street when it was alleged a learner driver, 35, lost control of the car, hit the student and crashed into a fence about 3.30pm on May 2.

The student, 17, had minor cuts and bruises and was taken to hospital.

In October, Greater Dandenong

Council proposed the closure of the street between two Dandenong High campuses during school hours, to ensure students could cross safely.

After a trial period — and pressure from residents — councillors voted to reopen the road.

With students crossing the street several times a day, school principal Martin Culkin said only a road closure would prevent future acci-

dents' at the site. "We've just opened a new building and received funding for another one on that side of the road in the State Budget. The movement of students at this crossing will continue forever," Mr Culkin said.

Council has allocated \$300,000 in the draft Budget to narrow the street at the crossing and have traffic management works.

But Cr Peter Brown will put for-

ward a motion at tonight's meeting seeking the closure of Herbert St.


"Traffic lights are not the answer. You can have as many lights as you like, but motorists drive through them," Cr Brown said.

He said he would seek State Government intervention if councillors did not support his motion. "We are staring at the prospect of the death of a student unless this street is closed."

Earlier this year, *Leader* reported that residents wanted the street reopened to have its former bus route reinstated.

But Grenda has confirmed — after consultation with the council and Department of Transport — that buses will not return to Herbert St.

No charges had been laid over the crash when *Leader* went to print.



Should Herbert St should be closed during school hours? Have your say at dandenongleader.com.au

Angst over Herbert Street

BY SARAH O'CONNOR

A DANDENONG student has been hit by a car while crossing Herbert Street, which has only just reopened to traffic after being closed due to safety concerns.

The street runs between Dandenong High School's two campuses and is frequently crossed by students throughout the school day.

The City of Greater Dandenong trialled closing Herbert Street for the last two terms of 2010, at the request of the school.

'What we've got is a relative handful of ratepayers who have suffered a minor inconvenience ... putting the lives of 2000 students at risk.'

— John Lawton

The school and parents lobbied for the road to remain closed during school hours beyond the trial to ensure student safety.

But 794 out of 950 residents surveyed in the area said they disagreed with Herbert Street's closure and it was reopened by the council at the end of January.

Dandenong resident and teacher at the school John Lawton said he was angry at the council for "feeding into their whinging".

"What we've got is a relative handful of ratepayers who have suffered a minor inconvenience... putting the lives of 2000 students at risk," he said. "The safety of students has got to be paramount."

Police said the year 12 student was struck about 3.30pm last Monday as he crossed Herbert Street using a supervised crossing.

The driver, a 35-year-old female L-plater, allegedly lost control of the vehicle and hit the



Angered: Martin Culkin standing where the car ploughed through a fence after hitting a student on Herbert Street.

Picture: Ted Kloszynski

boy before careering into a nearby fence. The student was taken to hospital with cuts and bruises.

Dandenong High School principal Martin Culkin said he was "frustrated and scared" by the situation, because student safety was his responsibility.

He said he needed to be confident students were safe but couldn't be while Herbert Street remained open to traffic.

Greater Dandenong councillor Angela Long supported the reopening of Herbert Street following the trial closure and said her stance had not changed despite last Monday's incident.

She said the council had funded \$300,000 worth of 'road calming works' for Herbert Street in its 2011-12 draft budget, which

would include a raised pavement and narrowing the street to help improve pedestrian safety.

The council's engineering services director, Bruce Rendall, said the council had already installed speed cushions in the street.

"It's an unfortunate situation but we have not implemented all the safety measures we intend to do," Cr Long said.

She said she did not think the road needed to be closed ahead of completion of the works.

"There are crossings on Stud Road and Princes Highway, but if there was an accident on those, would they close Stud Road or Princes Highway? I don't think so."

Mr Lawton said the school had sent parents a letter asking them to contact the council to voice their views about Herbert Street.