

Service clubs are anxiously asking Y

BY KAREN POH

SERVICE groups such as the Rotary and Lions clubs have traditionally played a big part in maintaining the fabric of society, but their branches in Hobsons Bay are reporting a significant decline in membership.

A big proportion of the membership pool is made up of those born before World War II and they are not being replaced.

Lions Club of Williamstown secretary Philippa Cursio says there is a need for young blood.

"The numbers now are 19, and we have about 14 working members. The average age is in about the late 50s at the moment," Ms Cursio said.

"We've gone down mainly because in the past four or five years some of our members have died because they are elderly. But I think every service club is the same, it's hard to get people to commit themselves to doing things like that ... and when you do get them, we never seem to retain them."

Rotary Club of Altona president Therese McKenney-Campbell is a baby boomer and at 50 is the second youngest member of the club.

"Then we have the oldest, who'd be hitting mid-80s," Ms McKenney-Campbell said.

"Our membership is 27, but it's an ageing club.

"It was a club of about 45 or 50 about 15 to 20 years ago. We've got to try and target the Y-generation."

But neither believes the community spirit is disappearing in Hobsons Bay.

"We might not have very many in our club, but the community supports us really well when we have fundraisers," Ms Cursio said.

"We have sausage sizzles and people will just come up and say here is a donation without even buying a sausage. But not everyone wants to be involved in the day-to-day and the paperwork and things like that. It's hard for people to make the time. We really do need younger people, but they're probably the most difficult age to get, those with young families, because nowadays life is so hectic.



At your service ... From left, Altona Rotary Club president Therese McKenney-Campbell, vocational director Peter McDonald, carpentry and joinery teacher at Victoria University TAFE Michael Hicks and Rotary Club Secretary Gus Garnsworthy at Victoria University carpentry and joinery facility. Picture: JOSEPHINE HARKIN.

"People have heart, but they don't know how to time-manage themselves."

The Y generation was also keen to make a difference, but did not know what to latch on to, Ms McKenney-Campbell said.

She admits it is time for service groups such as Rotary to reinvent themselves.

"There's a perception that Rotary is for old people. But Rotary is actually changing face," she said.

"Rotary is there to help the disadvantaged, to actually fund projects that other departments like the council wouldn't fund. We did a decking for a young disabled girl in Altona Meadows, for example. Her parents wrote to us. She was eight years old and wheelchair-bound, and her mother couldn't take her out because there was no disabled access from

her house. We purchased the materials, and our members, builders and carpenters, built the decking with the ramps so the little girl could go out and get some sunshine."

"It's a working club in the community, and we need the skills of the Y generation," she said.

Ms Cursio agrees. "If you invited a couple of young ones and they came to a meeting and they saw a lot of older people, they'd probably think, 'oh, my God'. But if they came in a group, they could come with new ideas and introduce a new culture."

And this is what Victoria University's young carpentry and joinery teacher Michael Hick has found. The 31-year-old is working with the Rotary Club of Altona on their latest project to refurbish the Logan Reserve rotunda on Pier St in Altona.

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West 'under threat'

BY KAREN POH

THE liveability of the inner West is under threat with Victoria's booming population and the increased demand for goods and services.

So says a joint submission to the East-West Link Needs Assessment Study by Williamstown and Footscray MPs Wade Noonan and Marsha Thomson.

The submission is the result of extensive community consultation, reaching out to more than 30,000 households across the two electorates through direct mail, as well as an inner-West stakeholder forum attended by representatives from a cross-section of the community.

While there were many different

and sometimes opposing views from the community, doing nothing was not an option for the people in the West, the submission said.

It warns that the transport network in the West will need to improve significantly to keep pace with the growth and change in the region, and the failure to do so will lead to a significant east-west divide and severely limit investment, business and employment opportunities in the western suburbs.

The submission highlights concerns over the large increases in the movement of container freight to and from the Port of Melbourne, as well as the increase in truck movements in the inner West, caused by the state's population boom and the flow-on demand for more goods and services.

As such, Mr Noonan and Ms Thomson rallied behind Sir Rod Eddington and his report in the call for:

- A 17km rail tunnel linking Melbourne's western and south-eastern suburbs that will also provide a major increase in the capacity for other western rail lines including the Werribee, Williamstown and Sydenham lines;
- A staged construction of an 18km cross-city road tunnel from the Western Ring Road to the Eastern Freeway, reducing the reliance on the West Gate Bridge;
- Targeted road improvements to remove truck traffic from local roads in the inner western suburbs, particularly in Yarraville;
- Enhanced east-west cycling con-

nectivity through the extension of Federation Trail from Millers Rd in Brooklyn along the West Gate corridor to Hyde St in Yarraville, and upgrading the existing facility from Hyde St to Footscray Rd; and

- Co-operation with industry to develop and implement a detailed action plan to support further investment in rail freight and develop inter-modal freight hubs in the west, north and south-east of Melbourne.

The 15-week public consultation phase for Sir Rod's report into east-west travel closed on 15 July with more than 2000 comments received, and will be considered as part of a comprehensive Victorian transport plan due to be unravelled at the end of the year.

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