

## NEWS

# Old garage coming down

BY DAVID JOHNSTON

A PROMINENT site in East Albury, where a mechanics workshop was built in the mid 1970s, is the subject of demolition plans lodged with council.

The garage was built about two decades before Albury Base Hospital opened its doors on the opposite side of East Street in 1994.

A development application for demolition of the remaining buildings on the site have been submitted to Albury Council for approval, but future redevelopment plans for the site remain unclear.

The application submitted by consultants Habitat Planning on behalf of Jarrad Hutchinson states the existing brick building

on the Borella Road-East Street roundabout has been abandoned and became a target for vandalism including graffiti attacks and smashed windows.

"It is anticipated that demolition works will take approximately 30 working days, weather permitting and will be undertaken to avoid local school holiday periods and any other local events that

may have any impact on traffic and access," the application states.

"Proposed works will be undertaken predominantly using heavy machinery such as excavators, backhoe loader, rigid truck, mobile crane and compactors."

As part of the development application a preliminary site investigation was carried out by consultants, GHD,

which concluded there was potential for contamination at the site due to its historical storage of motor oils and lubricants and infrastructure associated with being a mechanics workshop including an underground waste oil separator.

"If contamination is identified in soil or groundwater onsite that could pose a risk to human health or the envi-

ronment, an environmental management plan or remedial action plan should be prepared with measures to mitigate that risk," the GHD report said.

Demolition works are proposed to take place on Monday to Saturday, but no works will take place on Sundays or public holidays.

The property has a total area of 2105.2 square metres.



**WINNER:** Garth Stead won \$500 in taxi fares on Saturday as he became the three-millionth customer since 2012 to book with Albury Taxis. Driver Manpreet Heer Bhangu was at the wheel for the prize-winning trip. **Picture:** TARA TREWHELLA

## Luck extends from penny to prize for Garth

BY ELLEN EBSARY

FIND a penny, pick it up and you'll have good luck - that saying proved to be true for Garth Stead as he made the three-millionth booking at Albury Taxis.

The competition, marking a milestone after the co-op moved to an automated dispatch system, went off around 1pm on Saturday.

Mr Stead was being picked up at his West Albury unit and minutes before had pocketed a coin that was on his driveway.

"I got in the cab, thinking that was a good thing for the day, and it went on the three million," he said.

"When he (the driver) said you're the

three-millionth, I said, 'You're having a lend of me', and he goes, 'No, listen (to the radio) - I've got it'.

"The radio went quiet and he said, 'They will all hate me now!'"

Manpreet Heer Bhangu, who has been driving with Albury Taxis for three years, wasn't expecting to host the winner.

"We got the email on Friday saying it was close, and I thought it would be on the Sunday or some other day I wasn't driving," he said.

"I got the message saying he was the lucky one."

For Mr Stead, the \$500 credit in taxi fees means a lot.

"It saves a lot of walking and a lot of buses," he said.

"It's good, because it's not great walking over the hill - I'm not that fit, I'll be honest.

"I've got doctors to go to and a bit of shopping I do, otherwise I keep to myself."

The 53-year-old, from Sydney, moved to Albury in 2006.

He's come to know Mr Bhangu's face after a few bookings, but expects to become well-acquainted with him in coming months.

"I've seen him a couple times - he's always polite and keeps the place clean, and he's a good driver," Mr Stead said.

"It (winning the prize) sure put a smile on my face."

## SPATE OF SHED FIRES, ESCAPED BURN-OFFS

BY JANET HOWIE

GRASS growth in the southern Riverina has contributed to hay fires and escaped burns, with NSW Rural Fire Service warning landowners to take extra care.

Superintendent Patrick Westwood, district manager for the Southern Border team, said Monday's fire at a hay processing facility near Tocumwal served as a reminder to be vigilant.

"We are seeing a string of hay shed fires at the moment due to the increased amount of grass growth that we've had," he said.

"The green nature of the stalks and stems within the bales, there is a real potential for people to accidentally have ignitions occur by spontaneous combustion."

Mr Westwood said the facility landlord had been well prepared but unfortunately the blaze caused a lot of damage.

Many permit burns were taking place at the moment, but the RFS had seen "fairly low compliance".

"There's been a lot of escapes and a lot of people not adhering to all their conditions," Mr Westwood said. "It's happening right across the Riverina. This year, with the amount of growth that's around, people just need to take extra caution and be prepared to change some of their tried and true tactics that they've used to light fires in the past."

One example is when creating fire breaks, push the dirt piles - which tended to include more grass this season - further into the break, not on the edge.

"Last week in the Culcairn area we had what we'd assume to be the accidental ignition of two power poles," the superintendent said.

The RFS planned a hazard reduction burn today at River Road, Jingellic, with future burns around Albury if conditions allowed.



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