

Heritage home hoax letters

ANONYMOUS LETTERS WITH INCORRECT INFORMATION HAVE BEEN SENT TO SOME HERITAGE HOME OWNERS

By Barclay White

Shepparton residents with historically significant homes have been sent anonymous letters warning of a potential council takeover of their property.

The letters, which have been dropped in the letter boxes of several homes on the Greater Shepparton City Council's draft heritage study, warns of potential impacts of a future heritage listing.

The anonymous letters warn the recipients if their home is added to the heritage register the council

could "take control of your property".

It warns council will use the study to push developers where they want and that homeowners will be heavily restricted on what they can do to their own homes.

Home owner Tamara Currie received a copy and described it as baseless "scaremongering".

Her home, which she described as a new modern Californian bungalow built in 1939 could potentially be added to the Heritage Register.

She did not see a potential

Heritage Register listing as a threat to her investment and wanted the house to be protected into the future.

"It has quite a lot of historical significance, it bridged the Art Deco with what they called New Modern," she said.

She believed heritage protections were important to protect the important older buildings that could be torn down in the name of progress.

"Shepparton used to be such a pretty town, there have been some amazing buildings that have been

destroyed," she said.

Among the letter's questionable claims were that insurance premiums for her home would triple under a heritage listing and property values would fall.

"Most agents I have spoken to have said that for a home in good condition, a heritage protection would actually increase its value," she said.

The council had confirmed a number of homes on the public draft heritage study had been sent the questionable letter.

Currently 182 homes of potential

heritage value are on the study and the council is engaged in a public consultation program with the homeowners.

A council spokesperson said the information in the anonymous letter was "incorrect".

"Property owners with any questions about the heritage register or heritage overlays can contact the Planning Department at Council on 5832 9730," the spokesperson said.

● Have you received the anonymous letter? Let us know on editor@sheppnews.com.au

Poetry workshops bridging cultures

By Rhiannon Tuffield

A workshop intent on improving confidence and breaking down barriers between cultures visited Shepparton High School on Friday, as part of a spoken word and poetry showcase to hit town next week.

Around 15 students from the school took part in the workshop on Friday, facilitated by Melbourne writer and spoken word artist Soreti Kadir.

Initiated by Multicultural Arts Victoria, the Common Ground program creates a unique space for young people from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds to come together in spoken word and poetry as a medium for dialogue, friendship and interaction.

Multicultural Arts Victoria creative producer Anita Larkin said the program was about creating a space for young people to come together to discuss and write about issues relevant to them.

"The aim is to develop their creative writing skills, but to then develop a piece for performance, and then to develop the confidence that comes with it," Ms Larkin said.

"Spoken word poetry is a pretty vibrant and happening scene in Melbourne and it has had a resurgence, so through this program we're hoping to stimulate a bit of interest in this form, because there are a lot of stories to be told in this community from the first peoples, all the way to the recent arrivals."



Breaking down barriers: Shepparton High School students from Year 10 to Year 12 took part in the poetry workshops.

The program is running in Shepparton for the first time, with a series of three public workshops, as well as a series of workshops with students at Shepparton High School.

Shepparton High School EAL coordinator Nej Akdere said it was tr-

ditionally difficult for those from different backgrounds to express themselves, and the space offered them a non-threatening environment to do that.

"It could be the domino effect of past trauma or there are no opportunities for them to open up, but

people tend to feel safer within their own identity groups, so this project actually breaks down those barriers," Mr Akdere said.

"It's building an intercultural understanding, and an understanding of different perspectives, getting to sit down and have

conversations about belonging, about conflict, about peace and about identity."

The budding young poets will transform their papered confessions into spoken word when they bring their own voices and stories to the stage on September 15.

Program focusing on family violence

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The women said it was fantastic family violence was beginning to receive so much focus and funding at a government level.

"They're realising the impact it can have on everything," Ms Monteith said.

"For so long it has been seen as just a women's issue.

"This program is fantastic as it connects the dots between family violence and poor parenting.

"The parent is usually so busy trying to survive that they can't help their child to survive."

Ms Monteith and Ms Meloury hoped to have taken four groups through the CMiM program before the end of the financial year.

Participants will also be offered vouchers throughout the program.

● For referrals phone the Caroline Chisholm Society, Goulburn Valley Pregnancy and Family Support Service on 5821 0826 and ask for Jeanette Monteith or Liz Meloury.

Not just women's issue: Caroline Chisholm Society, Goulburn Valley Pregnancy and Family Support Service's Children and Mothers in Mind program senior practitioners Jeanette Monteith and Liz Meloury.

Picture: Julie Mercer

