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THE HILLIER VIEW

Kevin Hillier finds an 'us and them' culture disturbing

A look over the council ballot paper, a leisurely stroll down Watton Street or through Pacific Werribee or observing a school at home-time will tell you the face and fabric of the western suburbs is changing rapidly. That is inevitable – but can we keep the values that we westies rate highly as all these cultural changes are taking place?

Qualities such as loyalty, tolerance and giving people a go have been the very essence of the spirit of the west. While we may all share incredibly different and diverse backgrounds, there is a shared geographic link that has been the centre of connection for decades. A connection that is available to all, no exceptions. It is a way of uniting for support in facing common problems and frustrations that come with living in the west.

Unfortunately, what I am seeing developing is an "us and them" culture within the west that is ethnically driven. There is a growing resentment towards certain ethnic groups in our community – and that is not healthy now, nor for the future.

One of the more alarming features of this tension is the way that some people are using it to further their own personal agendas. Those agendas are poisonous. While their immediate effect is cause for concern, the long-term damage could fracture relations in the west for years to come.

This is where real community leaders will shine. Unfortunately, we currently have a few so-called community leaders who are guilty of self-serving and self-promoting.

I am hopeful that the other great western suburbs institution – the BS Detector – will help weed out these individuals.

I think there will always be a stigma attached to living in the west from those outside and I don't really care about that for the most part.

The only thing to really concern ourselves with is the way we see ourselves and the way we go about our lives. Be true to the values I have mentioned and you really can't go wrong, and you will always have the support you need from your fellow real westies. ■

If you have any news or events, let me know at kevin@howdypartnersmedia.com.au



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Briefs

Picnic time for the kids

The Children's Week Picnic returns to Werribee Park this weekend, with free rides and entertainment on offer. Highlights of this year's event will include the Little Red Train, performances by the Kazoos, face-painting and bungee trampolines. The picnic will be held on Sunday, October 23, from 10am-4pm. More information: 9742 0777




Manor Lakes college revamp

Architects have been appointed to design the \$10.9 million final stage of Manor Lakes P-12 College. Plans for the upgrade include a new senior administration block, a new student centre and community building, significant external works, a soccer oval and gym extension. The school's upgrade is expected to be complete by the end of 2018.

Mature-age job-seeker survey

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is seeking mature-aged job seekers from Tarneit, Werribee and Point Cook to participate in a research study. Participants will take a survey that will enable the organisation to check if they meet the study's criteria. If successful, participants will be contacted for a 60-minute interview. Survey at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/BSLmatureagejobs

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