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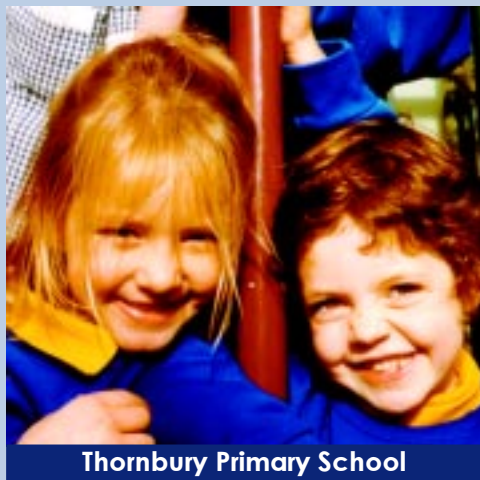
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051Z - 6 General Manager: Frank Mascaro Managing Director: Tony Mascaro
155 Poath Rd, Murrumbeena, 3163 PH: (03) 9568 4144 Fax: (03) 9568 4900
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Production Manager/Editor: Frank Mascaro Design & Layout: Amato Soriano

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THE CALMING MEAL BEFORE THE STORM

For my parents, it was the eve of an eight hour-long boat trip to Tasmania. In light of the recent severe storms that forced the Spirit of Tasmania to do an about turn, my parents were very nervous about their impending voyage to the Apple Isle. Neither my mother nor father were keen on the idea of travelling by sea - both (and particularly my mother) had suffered from sea sickness in the mid seventies when they ventured from their homeland in Germany to Australia. What could I do to ease their stress?

My wife and I decided to take them out for dinner, to a place where not only are the surroundings comfortable and homely, but the food is fantastic. **Casavini Ristorante** seemed to be the natural choice.

We arrived shortly after seven and were warmly welcomed at the door. Despite an enormous effort by my parents to show otherwise, it was obvious they were struggling to keep their nerves at bay. Our waiter suggested a calming pre-dinner drink to help kickstart the appetite. Selecting from Casavini's extensive wine list, we chose a delightful bottle of **Brown Brother's Merlot**, and decided on some **bruschetta** for accompaniment. The bruschetta was the perfect appetiser; the selection including some topped with traditional tomatoes, olive oil and basil, whilst others were topped with roasted eggplant and capsicums. What a treat!

We had also brought my mother in law along for the ride. Given that she was born and raised in a small Italian village, I knew that she would enjoy the evening's feast. After much debate, we finally came up with our choice of entrees. As we all like to sample from each other's plate, we each decided on something different from the variety of entrees available. My mother had ordered half a dozen **oysters Kilpatrick** (which would have been my first choice). My father ordered a **warm lamb salad** topped with feta cheese, my wife went for the more traditional **home made pasta** simply dressed in aglio e olio and my mother in law ordered the **risotto with seafood**. I had the **scallops in cognac** served on a bed of **creamy risotto**. Each was beautifully presented, and generously sized, although none of us felt that they were too filling. There's nothing worse than wanting to enjoy a good night's eating and then feeling too full to go on after the entree!

After just enough time to let the lingering flavours of our entrees subside and allow the conversation to flow, our mains arrived. My mother ordered the **pollo e avocado**. Chicken topped with a creamy sauce

and avocado, with fresh, crisp vegetables on the side. My father had the **spaghetti** topped with seafood. Being a spicy man he requested some chilli, which the good people at Casavini promptly delivered, arriving at the table with dried, crushed and fresh varieties. Being an ambitious man, my father proceeded to place a fine layer of chilli over the entire plate. For the rest of the night we laughed and made fun of his red sweaty face, but he loved every second of it.

I had chosen the **fillets of veal** dressed in a light **Napoli sauce** and topped with thin strips of high quality mozzarella. I stress the high quality. Sure, you can get prepackaged mozzarella from the supermarket, but it doesn't compare with the real thing.

My mother in law chose the fish of the day, **salmon** topped with a beautiful buttery sauce. I gather she liked it a lot as she wouldn't even let her own daughter sample some. My wife went for the **pork** in a mustard cream sauce. The pork was cooked to perfection. The sauce too, was a perfect balance of ingredients that complemented the pork rather than overpowering it.

My father and I thought we would pace ourselves a little and have a **cognac** before dessert. My wife and mother in law joined us with an amaretto. Now I must say I was feeling pretty full by this stage, and I know everyone else was as well, but there was no way my mother was going to pass up on some home made **tiramisu**. While she was at pains to tell us that "...no I can't fit another thing in, I'll explode if I eat any more!", we all knew the truth. As soon as the dessert was placed in front of her she cleaned it up - no one else even got to try it! I went for the lighter and fresher option of some **sorbet**. My wife had the **flourless orange cake** and my mother in law sampled the **Sicilian apple torte** which they both exclaimed were beautifully textured and fresh. Finally, going against my doctors orders, I joined my mother in law in knocking back an espresso - how I love the taste.

While enjoying our coffees I thought it the opportune time to get my mother in law's opinion on the night's Italian fare. Knowing so much about Italian cooking she's a difficult one to impress, but she tilted her head towards me, nodded and said "Bellissimo!" That means bloody good.

For the remainder of the evening we engaged in discussion, avoiding the topic of boats and the sea and basked in the home like environment of Casavini Ristorante. My parents looked relaxed, my mother in law was impressed.... what more could you ask for?

SABAH - A SLICE OF NATURAL ASIA

BY STEVEN SCHELOSKE

Now I must be honest. Before embarking on this weeklong trip to Sabah I had very little knowledge of the country let alone the region. However, as I am forever interested in the natural Asia, the Asia that hasn't been overtaken by swarming tourists and sky rise buildings, a one-week sojourn to Sabah was pretty hard to knock back.

Like most of South Eastern Asia it is hot and humid and your introduction to its climate is a harsh one, taking place as soon as the plane lands. Much to my surprise the airport was larger and more advanced than what I was expecting. No bungalows here. After quickly getting our bags we were taken to the Shangri-La Tanjour Aru Resort where we would be staying. Flash accommodation, at this stage, is still ridiculously cheap, and this five star hotel had all the creature comforts of home and then some. As we arrived relatively late in the afternoon we took it pretty easy and had a few drinks at the bar followed by a seafood BBQ on the shore which was to die for. There was chilli crab, lobster and even creamy seafood lasagne. Needless to say we ate and sampled as much as we could. After dinner we decided to have an early night and head off to bed.

Early nights often mean early mornings. My wife and I woke up at the silly time of 6.00am (old habits seem to die hard) but we were rewarded with the most glorious sunrise over a mountain range that I have ever seen. A big part of travelling is the food and Maria and I took our time at this particular breakfast buffet as it offered some different items that had to be sampled, such as traditional Asian breakfast favourites such

as prawn balls, dim sums like I have never tasted before and my personal favourite, the pancakes with coconut jam.

Our first day was spent lounging around the resort - the morning by the pool and the afternoon by the South China Sea. A little R and R is always a good thing. At around 6:00pm the entire resort made its way to the shoreline to witness this coast's most stunning attraction - the sunset. I remember 15 years ago in Bali watching the sunset from some secluded spot that took us an hour to drive to and being left breathless. Well here, in our very own (temporary) backyard I was able to share the same experience this time with my wife in my arms. The sun appeared gigantic as it slowly sank into the sea. Over the next week we would venture down to the shore with our fellow guests and watch this miracle take place night after night, and every time my heart would stop and I would be left speechless.

The next couple of days we explored the capital city of Kota Kinabalu. In all honesty there isn't exactly a great deal to see here. The markets, both day and night, are interesting but lack the energy of other markets in Asia. There was one exception, which was the Filipino Market. This extremely cramped shed, that looked like it once housed a plane, had some bizarre items on offer such as mummified frogs. In general, the shopping is pretty average and the sights are few and far between. As a matter of fact the one attraction that I had read most about, the Atkinson Clock Tower, was devoid of tourists and we seemed to have been the only people for quite some time who had climbed the steep hill to see it up close. This relic of the colonial era is one of the only structures to





have survived the Allied bombing of Jesselton in 1945. The city also features a ridiculous amount of *kedai kopi* (coffee shops) and restaurants, however those stomach-expanding breakfasts left us with no desire for food during the course of the day.

One night we had a hankering for some crazy seafood, so we allowed our taxi driver - who became possessed by Michael Schumacher the moment he took off - to take us to a place that he thought would be best. Actually, it must be said that whilst the taxi drivers are cheap in Borneo they drive like madmen. Not because they are concerned about you being punctual but because they have agreed to a fixed fee before you have jumped in the car. I felt sorry for the cars, the women and children that we pushed out of the way just so that we could get to our restaurant, which at this stage had no name. The place that our driver took us to was a huge open 'barn-looking' place that was filled with hundreds of fish-tanks containing all sorts of marine life - some of which I had never heard of before. Our waiter walked us around the tanks and suggested different ways of cooking these presently live wonders of the sea. We ended up opting for the tiger prawns in a chilli sauce, the elephant nose (which was a type of shell fish) in a butter sauce and some grass-like beans steamed with garlic. The food was so good that we found ourselves back there two days later trying other delectable offerings.

Another night we took our doorman's advice and went to a local restaurant by the name of Sri Melacca. Despite the unfortunate name this place has been around for some thirty years and it's no wonder. There were over one hundred mains on the menu that you could order in three sizes. We ended up ordering seven small traditional dishes that our waitress recommended and a couple of beers, and walked out of there content with full bellies. The best part was that all costs associated with dinner - taxis, beers, and food - was around the AU\$20 mark. How good is that?

Despite my wife's attempts to make it so, our trip wasn't all about dining and shopping. On one day we went on a glass bottom boat tour to see the beautiful coral of the Tunku Abdul Rahman marine park located minutes from the resort. The fish were numerous and colourful. We even saw the clown fish made famous by the cartoon *Finding Nemo*. After the boat trip we went to one of Sabah's many neighbouring coral-fringed islands called Sapi. We were excited about the prospect of seeing monkeys running around on the beach and I was hungry to explore the shore's famous reef. As soon as we got there my wife was quick to spot one of the native monkeys, the long tailed Macaques, and then another one, and then another one followed by about 100 more. For every bronzed tourist that lay on the shore there were half a dozen monkeys plotting to steal their belongings.

Equipped with nothing more than hotel towels and my snorkelling gear

we were not that concerned about theft and went into the sea. The water was clear and before long I was surrounded by hundreds of fish representing all the colours of the rainbow and exploring a beautiful underwater garden of coral. I spent hours face down in the water, following the fish and feeling their little teeth against my hands as they searched for food. I burned my back in the process (word of advice, wear a t-shirt) but loved every minute of it. It was the true highlight of the holiday.

We also took a little time out to see the area from a completely different perspective - the sky. I don't know how, but I managed to get my wife to go parasailing with me. What a view and what a ride. The cheeky kids controlling the boat, who I had joked around with beforehand, had the last laugh, dunking us in the water several times which was all good fun even if my wife was not prepared for the event. The view was breathtaking. From our vantage point, we were able to see the islands surrounding the resort as well as the stilt houses many of the locals reside in. Amazingly, one of our fellow holidaymakers commented that while they were parasailing, they managed to spot a turtle swimming in the sea.

On another day we made the trip to the Shangri La's sister hotel that lies at the foot of a mountain and an orangutan sanctuary. Rather than an enclosed environment the orangutans are allowed to roam free in the jungle only coming to the feeding area if they desire to. We were lucky enough to watch two of the 'showmen', eat, play and throw a bit of poo around while running in between our legs. Their faces are filled with such character and their body language is that of a 1920s actor. We spent an hour with these two guys as they entertained us non-stop with their mischievous behaviour. The orangutans originated here in Sabah and whilst they can be seen in zoos around the world there is something to be said about seeing the wild 'men' of Borneo playing in their own native untouched jungle.

Sadly time got the best of us and we ended up missing the two-day trek through the jungle up to the pinnacle of Mt. Kinabalu, one of the highest mountains in south-east Asia, and witnessing the world's largest flowers, the Rafflesia. Of the twelve or so species only found in Borneo and Sumatra, several are unique to Sabah.

Whether it is the service and the hotel, the friendly locals, the dining in the city or swimming amongst the rainbow coloured fish, Sabah is an oasis within Asia. It is really worth exploring now before mass tourism turns this place into just another part of what, for tourists, has become the more familiar Asia.



CATCHING THEM YOUNG

What sort of classroom practice helps young children to enjoy and become engaged with mathematics? Doug Clarke and Barbara Clarke describe a classroom research study that identified particularly effective teachers, then watched how they worked with their students.



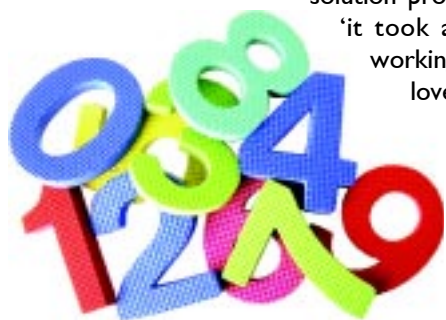
Anne Joyce's year 2 class at Ararat North Primary School loved problem solving. During their involvement in the Early Numeracy Research Project (ENRP), the project team occasionally sent them problems to explore. At one stage, we sent this problem:

A man goes into a shop and says to the shopkeeper, "give me as much money as I have in my pocket, and I will spend \$10. It is done, and then the man does the same thing in a second and third shop, after which he has no money left. How much did he have at the start?"

The reader is encouraged to work on this problem for a little while. This is a very difficult problem for Grade 2s, but the children seized on the challenge, and worked on this problem for three weeks. All contributed - making money, acting out the story, suggesting strategies. Although this is a bit of a 'silly' problem, it has a lot going for it mathematically.

The Year 2s sent a poster to the project team outlining their solution process. They concluded:

'it took a lot of thinking and working out.' These children loved problem solving, and they had a teacher who demonstrated clearly one of the characteristics of effective mathematics teachers. Anne



Joyce 'promoted and valued effort, persistence and concentration.'

As part of the ENRP in Victoria, 354 prep to year 2 teachers in 35 schools participated in a three-year research and professional development project, exploring the most effective approaches to the teaching of mathematics in the first three years of school. There were four key components of this project:

1. a research-based framework of 'growth points' in young children's mathematical learning (in Number, Measurement and Space);
2. a 40-minute, one-on-one interview, used by all teachers with all children at the beginning and end of the school year;
3. extensive professional development at central, regional and school levels, for all teachers, coordinators, and principals;
4. case studies of particularly effective teachers.

Student interview data from the first two years was used to identify particularly effective teachers, the ones whose children showed the greatest growth over two years, for intensive study in the third year.

Six case study teachers were studied intensively using lesson observations, detailed observer field notes, photographs of lessons and collection of artefacts (worksheets, student work samples, lesson plans), and teacher interviews following the lessons.

"The Year 2s sent a poster to the project team outlining their solution process. They concluded: 'it took a lot of thinking and working out.' These children loved problem solving, and they had a teacher who demonstrated clearly one of the characteristics of effective mathematics teachers. Anne Joyce 'promoted and valued effort, persistence and concentration.'"

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE CLASSROOMS OF EFFECTIVE P-2 TEACHERS

Sometimes, a list such as the one on page 14 can seem removed from the life and colour of the classroom. The following classroom examples illustrate the themes evident in the table.

Effective teachers of mathematics structure purposeful tasks that enable different possibilities, strategies and products to emerge.

The one-on-one student interviews made very clear the considerable range of knowledge and understanding within any classroom. As a result, teachers made extensive use of open tasks, encouraging children to share their solution strategies. Examples of such tasks included:

- Two children measured the basketball court with rulers. Huong said it was 20 rulers. Yasmine said it was 19. Why might that be?
- I drew a shape with four sides. What might my shape look like?
- I bought some things at the supermarket and got 35 cents change. What did I buy and how much did each item cost?

- What can you find that is lighter than an orange but bigger than it?

Children eagerly accepted these kinds of challenges, responding at their own level of understanding.

Effective teachers of mathematics focus on important mathematical ideas and make the mathematical focus clear to the children.

continued next page



“Teachers noticed during the interview that although many children could read and write two- and three-digit numbers, quite a few had difficulty ordering one-digit numbers.”



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- Functional Literacy and Numeracy
- Art/Craft
- Music/Dance
- Technology
- Travel Training
- Health and Human Relations
- Recreation/Leisure
- Community Awareness
- Pre-vocation/Work Experience

continued from page 9

Teachers noticed during the interview that although many children could read and write two- and three-digit numbers, quite a few had difficulty ordering one-digit numbers.

In school teams, they developed a range of games and activities that focused on this important mathematical idea.

One teacher asked children to cut up magazines and catalogues, taking out any numbers they could find. They then sorted these out from smallest to largest. The two examples give a sense of the range of children's responses.

Another teacher developed a card game, where the picture cards were removed from a standard pack, and children had half the pack each. At the same time, each child turns over a card, and the person with the larger of the two numbers takes both. Once

again, there was a clear focus on ordering numbers from smaller to larger.

Effective teachers of mathematics encourage children to explain their mathematical thinking/ideas and build on children's mathematical ideas and strategies.

ENRP teachers noted that they found themselves using many more questions than previously that probed children's thinking. Examples included:

- How did you work that out?
- How are these two objects the same, and how are they different?
- What could you do next?
- Can you see a pattern in what you've found?

Effective early numeracy teachers . . .

Mathematical focus

- focus on important mathematical ideas
- make the mathematical focus clear to the children

Features of tasks

- structure purposeful tasks that enable different possibilities, strategies and products to emerge
- choose tasks that engage children and maintain involvement

Materials, tools & representations

- use a range of materials/representations/contexts for the same concept

Adaptions/connections/links

- use teachable moments as they occur
- make connections to mathematical ideas from previous lessons or experiences

Organisational style(s), teaching approaches

- engage and focus children's mathematical thinking through an introductory, whole group activity
- choose from a variety of individual and group structures and teacher roles within the major part of the lesson

Learning community and classroom interaction

- use a range of question types to probe and challenge children's thinking and reasoning
- hold back from telling children everything
- encourage children to explain their mathematical thinking/ideas
- encourage children to listen and evaluate others' mathematical thinking/ideas, and help with methods and understanding
- listen attentively to individual children
- build on children's mathematical ideas and strategies

Expectations

- have high but realistic expectations
- promote and value effort, persistence and concentration

Reflection

- draw out key mathematical ideas during and/or towards the end of the lesson
- after the lesson, reflect on children's responses and learning, together with activities and lesson content

Assessment methods

- collect data by observation and/or listening to children, taking notes as appropriate
- use a variety of assessment methods
- modify planning as a result of assessment

Personal attributes of the teacher

- believe that mathematics learning can and should be enjoyable
- are confident in their own knowledge of mathematics at the level they are teaching
- show pride and pleasure in individuals' success

- Can you make up a new task using the same materials?

It is interesting to consider the extent to which the teacher behaviours (for effective early numeracy teachers) and characteristics applies to other grade bands and learning areas. It was a wonderful privilege to be in the classrooms of dedicated, mathematics education professionals. We have described classrooms where the enthusiasm, curiosity and strategies of young children are valued and built upon, with lasting effects upon their understanding, their attitudes, their love of mathematics and their confident views of themselves as learners of mathematics.

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Doug and Barbara Clarke's article "Catching them young" first appeared in EQ Australia Issue 4, Summer 2004, "Talking Maths and ICT". EQ Australia is a quarterly magazine published by Curriculum Corporation, www.curriculum.edu.au/eq



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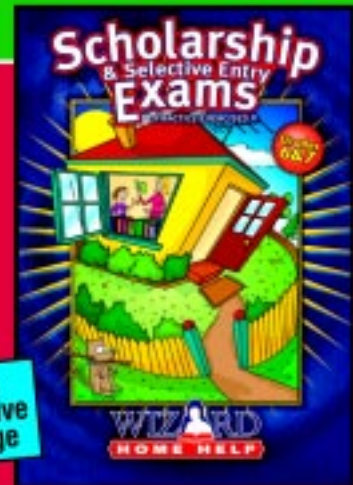
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AUSTRALIANS' HEALTH GETTING BETTER BUT THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT



Australians enjoy good health by world standards, but there is scope for further improvement and substantial inequalities remain, according to a new report released by the National Health Performance Committee (NHPC) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The *National Report on Health Sector Performance Indicators 2003* is the second report prepared by the NHPC, designed to help policy makers and others understand trends and patterns in health, and to identify areas for action. It examines 44 indicators of performance across the three tiers of the NHPC's National Health Performance Framework:

- health status and outcomes
- determinants of health
- health system performance.

The NHPC chair and Director General of the NSW Department of Health, Ms Robyn Kruk, said Australia had performed well over the past few decades, particularly in relation to life expectancy and mortality rates.

"In 1970, Australia's life expectancy was ranked 16th for OECD countries and by 2001 it was third behind Japan and Switzerland and equal with Sweden at 80 years.

"And our mortality rate has fallen 50 percent in the period 1970 to 1999, which is faster than for every other high income OECD country apart from Japan," Ms Kruk said.

In general, Australians are living healthier as well as living longer,

with significantly lower rates of heart disease, stroke and injury compared with a decade ago. However, diabetes, mental illness and psychological distress are all more common.

There are also still substantial health inequalities in Australia. People living in the most disadvantaged areas have avoidable mortality rates 54 percent higher than those living in the least disadvantaged areas.

But the starkest health inequalities are between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Infant mortality for indigenous Australians is twice as high and, for older people, their chances of dying from circulatory disease, diabetes and injuries due to accidents, suicide and assault are much higher than for other Australians.

The report looks at determinants of health - those which have protective benefits, such as fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity, and those that are hazardous to health, such as overweight and obesity and tobacco use. For example, in 2001, 46 percent of Australians were sufficiently active to achieve a health benefit and 16 percent of adult Australians were obese. Health system performance information in the report includes indicators of effectiveness (such as childhood immunisation rates), responsiveness (such as waiting times in emergency departments) and safety (such as adverse events in hospitals).

"IF A MAN KEEP MY SAYING, HE SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH."

John 8/51.

If we believe in God and His Beloved Son Jesus Christ, should not we also believe in God's Word through His Son? Yes, we should. Are we Hearers and not Doers of His Words? In lot of cases, Yes. Do we Love God and the Son Jesus Christ? Most people say they do. But do they really. Most people Love themselves First, then God and the Son, Second. The Lord states to Moses in Exodus 16/28, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" Fear God, and keep his Commandments for this is the whole duty of man. Eccl 12/13. But God knows that we of ourselves cannot fully keep the Law, so he brought his Son into the World, as the Saviour of the World to show us how to keep the Law and the Gospel with Love, and if we Love our Neighbour, Jesus Christ as ourselves, we shall accept **His Sayings** and **Believe** what he says in John 11/26, "**And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never Die. Believest thou this?**" Yes, we as Christian Israelites do, so please send for your **Free Booklet** on our **Faith**, that you may also be able to say **Yes, I Believe**.

CHRISTIAN ISRAELITE CHURCH

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APADESIGN04

"Every Man Must Bear His Own Burden"

Even To The Son of God JESUS

The Wagers of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life

God, so Loved the World that he gave the Blood of His only begotten Son Jesus, as a sacrifice, (doing away with the blood of animals) to Bear the sins of the world, by letting him be Crucified.

Jesus was born into the world with a two fold mission. A light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of his people Israel. He was born in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet as the Son of God, he had no Sin. Jesus knew what his burden was before he was crucified. All mankind is born in sin, and shapen iniquity, therefore they have to bear their own burden.

Even Jesus was tempted as all other men, after Christ left him. Did He not then bear his own burden. Did he not say to His Father God when he was praying, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me? Not my will, but thy will be done. He as a man did not want to die! When Christ withdrew, then Satan came. Did they not smite him on the face, and spit upon him? Yet He bore it. Then Jesus bore it from the time that Christ left him, then did He not bear the Sins of the World. Here was an innocent man being condemned to death because he called himself the **Son of God**. Some might say. Why did God allow this to be done? But it was all done, for the good to come.

Because it was all part of God's plan, to show and to give with Love, a Spiritual Celestial Body, a Life after Death, to the world, the repented before death, at the first resurrection, and then the unrepented, a thousand years later at the second resurrection. And He used His Beloved Son as a witness that this can, and will be done, by raising him from the grave and showing to the world, this Light to Lighten the Gentiles, this wonderful Gift of a Spiritual Celestial Body, (Soul and Spirit only) which Jesus showed to Mary, after his resurrection. He said to her, touch me not, (she could see him, but would not be able to touch him, because he was Celestial) for I have not yet ascended to My Father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.

Later, behind closed doors, he showed and fulfilled the second part of his mission, (The Glory to his people Israel) by showing to the disciples, the Natural Terrestrial Body. He said handle me and see, for a Spirit hath not flesh and bone as ye see me have. He said to the doubting Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord my God. Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

By the resurrection of his adopted son, God has shown to the world his love, and promise to them of a Spiritual Salvation of a Life after Death. Which is the Soul forming a Celestial body for the Spirit to dwell in, because the mortal body has returned to dust. Thou sowest not that body that shall be. By Grace are ye saved, (Jew and Gentile) not of works, lest any man should boast, it is the Gift of God.

But to him (Christian Israelite) that worketh, (Faith and Works) is the reward not reckoned of Grace, but of debt, which has been owing to man, since the creation of man, which was marred by Satan.

So God will now in these latter days, show the victory, by overcoming sin, hell and the grave, in His Elect, the 144,000 in whom will be no guile. They having received the Glorified Natural Terrestrial body, the same as the True Son of God received after his ascension, being changed from Mortal to Physical Immortality, without the death of their bodies.

Full Redemption of **Spirit, Soul and Body**.
As Jesus said, **As I live, so shall ye**.

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GARDEN ALERT: WARNING TO HANDLE POTTING MIX SAFELY

Victorian Health Minister Bronwyn Pike has stepped in to warn Victorian gardeners about the little-known but potentially deadly risks associated with everyday potting mixes, following what is believed to be the first-ever suspected cases of potting mix-related death in the State last year.

Ms Pike said three Victorians died last year from *Legionella longbeachae*, a bacteria commonly found in potting mix. In at least two of the three cases, the victims had been exposed to potting mix before their deaths.

“To many gardeners, potting mix may seem harmless, but it can actually be very dangerous unless the correct procedures are followed,” Ms Pike said.

Legionella longbeachae is a form of Legionnaires’ disease. It is found in minute quantities in the general environment (including soil) and is not a health hazard. But the ingredients and moistness of potting mix make it the ideal breeding ground for the bacteria.



TIPS TO OBSERVE WHEN USING POTTING MIX INCLUDE:

- Wear a particulate disposable mask to avoid breathing in dusts. These are available from large hardware stores;
- Wear suitable eye protection such as good quality sunglasses, or goggles/safety glasses;
- **Do not** shake the bag before opening it, as this will produce dust particles;
- Moisten contents of bag by spraying lightly with water upon opening. Do this by making a small opening and insert a garden hose to dampen potting mix to avoid creating dust;
- Always open potting mix bags at arms length in a well ventilated place with care to avoid breathing in airborne particles;
- Store potting mix products in a cool dry location to limit growth of bacteria;
- Clean up by sweeping whilst the product is damp to reduce dust;
- Wash hands on completion of use of potting mix and wash work clothes regularly.

“In recent years, infections have been on the rise. During 2004 there were 27 cases of related illness, typically pneumonia, in Victoria. This figure includes the three deaths. Contact with potting mix was believed to be the cause of illness in many of the cases.”

Legionella longbeachae is different from *Legionella pneumophila*, the more well-known form of Legionnaires’ disease found in poorly maintained cooling towers and spas.

Ms Pike said gardeners using potting mix should always follow the manufacturer’s safety instructions on the bag. Victoria’s Acting Chief Health Officer Dr John Carnie said the different types of legionella bacteria all cause a rare form of atypical pneumonia.

Early symptoms include fever, chills, headache, shortness of breath, sometimes dry cough, muscle aches and pain.

“Most people who breathe in the bacteria do not become ill. The risk of disease is increased with age, smoking, and in people with weakened immune systems,” Dr Carnie said.

Further information about Legionella, legal requirements and the analysis of samples can be obtained at www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas/downloads/leg_facts.pdf or [www.legionella.vic.gov.au](http://www legionella.vic.gov.au) or by contacting the Legionella Program on 1800 248 898.

Ms Pike said three Victorians died last year from *Legionella longbeachae*, a bacteria commonly found in potting mix. In at least two of the three cases, the victims had been exposed to potting mix before their deaths. “To many gardeners, potting mix may seem harmless, but it can actually be very dangerous unless the correct procedures are followed,” Ms Pike said.

WORLD-FIRST CAMPAIGN GIVES THE FACTS ON FAD DIETS

A world-first advertising campaign that warns women about the health impacts, and ineffectiveness, of fad diets was recently launched by the Health Minister, Bronwyn Pike.

Ms Pike said the \$300,000 campaign, believed to be a first for any government in the world, would aim to educate women about diets, which take a load off Australian women's wallets while putting their health at risk.

"With obesity at alarming levels in Australia, many people are turning to unhealthy, quick-fix solutions to shed weight," Ms Pike said.

"Through this campaign the Bracks Government is attempting to raise awareness about the dangers of fad diets among Victorians tempted to use fad diets to lose excess weight.

"Up to 200,000 Victorians are estimated to be on diets, such as the Atkins diet, that cut down on or exclude carbohydrates.

"Fad diets may provide short-term results but are difficult to sustain and ultimately they deprive you of essential nutrients only balanced eating can offer.

"They can cause dehydration, weakness, fatigue, nausea, headaches and constipation. Aside from these immediate effects, many of the long-term health dangers of fad diets are still unknown."

Ms Pike said the initiative, part of the Government's *Go for Your Life* health and fitness campaign, uses the tagline, 'Over the long term, fad diets won't work'.

"Australians spend about \$1 million a day on weight-loss programs, drugs and aids in an often futile bid to lose weight," Ms Pike said.

"Our public health campaign will provide information about how Victorians can enjoy a wide range of healthy foods, be physically active and feel better about themselves. A healthy lifestyle can be more effective than a fad diet and it is easier than most people think."

The campaign, which is supported by the Australian Medical Association, highlights the negative effects of fad diets, such as energy loss, putting on more weight than you lost and bad moods.

One in four primary school children have dieted to lose weight, while 13 per cent of young women use extreme weight loss measures weekly.

Ms Pike said fad diets were easy to spot. They promise dramatic results and promote 'magic bullet' solutions such as eating half a

grapefruit for each meal. They often exclude food groups such as carbohydrates and have rigid rules such as only eating one food or food group at a time.

Australian Medical Association (AMA) Victoria weight management and eating behaviour spokesman, Dr Rick Kausman, said the key to healthy weight loss was for people to look at the reasons why they might have gained weight and examine how they can change their behavior.

"The AMA advises against the use of fad or crash 'diets', which make claims of dramatic weight loss or performance enhancement, are often not nutritionally balanced and do not promote healthy eating habits," Dr Kausman said.

Ms Pike said fad dieters will lose weight in the first few weeks, but most will put it back on.

"Thousands grapple with fad diets, mistakenly thinking that they themselves are the problem, not their diet," Ms Pike said.

"It is estimated that 95 per cent of dieters will put the weight back on after a year."

Brochures, and posters will be distributed to all GPs, community health centres, universities and TAFE colleges. The campaign will also spread the word in shopping centres, pubs and clubs and on public transport. A comprehensive website has also been developed.

Ms Pike said, as Health Minister, she had an obligation to warn Victorians about the impacts of fad diets, in the same way as the public had been educated about the risks of smoking and alcohol abuse.

"In many cases, people are putting their long-term health at risk by adopting damaging and extreme dietary habits - we need to inform people about the implications of their actions," Ms Pike said.

DR KAUSMAN'S TIPS INCLUDE:

- Decreasing the "non-hungry" eating;
- Divide food into "every day" food and "sometimes food", rather than "good food" and "bad food";
- Advising people to take time to nurture and look after ourselves; and
- Looking for opportunities to enjoy things that involve moving our body, such as dancing and walking.

"The AMA (Australian Medical Association) advises against the use of fad or crash 'diets', which make claims of dramatic weight loss or performance enhancement, are often not nutritionally balanced and do not promote healthy eating habits."

AMA Victoria weight management and eating behaviour spokesman, Dr Rick Kausman.

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