

# Blocked creek a threat in flood

BLOCKING off the Murray Downs Creek increased the flood threat to Swan Hill, Police and Emergency Services Minister Pat McNamara was told yesterday.

At a meeting at the Swan Hill City Office, city engineer Frank Smith told Mr McNamara that blocking the creek from flood flows should never have been allowed.

The Minister was being briefed on Swan Hill city and shire's flood preparations, with the Murray River to peak here next week.

The Murray Downs Creek was blocked off when a bridge on the Swan Hill-Balranald road was removed and replaced by a causeway.

Mr Smith referred to a map which showed that in the event of a one percent flood, 80 to 90 percent of

Swan Hill was liable to flooding.

He said the city was bracing itself for a 1975 flood level.

"We're not concerned that water could come over the banks, but through the banks," Mr Smith said.

He said there was also a threat that floodwaters upstream and downstream of Swan Hill could threaten the city.

Mr Smith said the city was constantly monitoring seepage in levee banks.

"The longer the river stays up, the more chance there is of seepage."

He said pumps were on stand-by and a constant watch was being kept on the river gauge.

Swan Hill shire senior executive engineer Ian Mitchener said the river level could remain high for six weeks, which would create a dangerous situa-

tion with levee banks becoming saturated and sodden.

"The shire has never had a river that will be so high for so long."

"If a levee bursts it will cause lots of problems," he said.

The meeting was told Robinvale would have to cope with flood flows from the Murrumbidgee, Edward and Wakool Rivers on top of the water coming down the Murray.

Mr McNamara said he was aware of concerns by municipalities along the river as to whether they would be reimbursed for money they had spent to prevent flooding, as opposed to others in the north-east seeking reimbursement for damage already done.

He said this would be raised at a meeting of the Cabinet sub-committee this morning.

## In brief . . . In brief . . . In brief

### Koori carnival

THE Koori football carnival in Swan Hill last weekend was considered one of the best held in recent years, according to deputy town clerk Kerry Cramer.

Mr Cramer reported to Swan Hill City Council meeting on Tuesday that carnival organisers went to great lengths to protect the cricket pitches on the two sports ovals and police considered the behavior of the sportspeople and their followers exemplary.

### Severe frost damage

WIDESPREAD damage to Mallee field pea crops has been reported after a frost on Sunday night.

Agriculture Department field crops officer in Swan Hill, Rob Sonogan, said crop losses of up to 40 percent had been reported, but the full picture would not become clear until next week.

He said flowering cereal crops would also have frost damage, but the extent would not be known until heads filled.

### Monk vies for award

YOUNG Swan Hill inventor Christopher Monk is one of 21 finalists in seven categories nominated for the 1993 Channel Ten Young Achiever Awards.

The 21-year-old is one of the finalists in the running for the RACV Insurance Regional Development Award.

Mr Monk manufactures his CJM back-hoes from Pampa Engineering in Swan Hill.

## Pyap can't make Mildura voyage

EMERGENCY services stepped in to prevent the paddle-steamer Pyap from making a journey to Mildura along the swollen Murray River yesterday.

Tyntynder Flats Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Ron Atkinson said he was advised this week that the NSW Maritime Services Board had approved the trip.

This was despite the MSB announcing earlier this week that no boat travel would be permitted on the river near Swan Hill until the flood danger passed.

The Settlement board subsequently cancelled all Pyap cruises for the next five weeks.

Mr Atkinson said the decision to ban all boats was based on possible damage to levee banks, and particularly those in the Tyntynder Flats area

which he described as fragile.

He was angry that the MSB had so readily given permission for the Pyap journey.

"The banks are very unstable and if the Pyap ploughed into them we would never be able to stop the water," he added.

Mr Atkinson said Displan co-ordinator Chief Inspector Henry Button had stepped in to stop the Pyap journey.

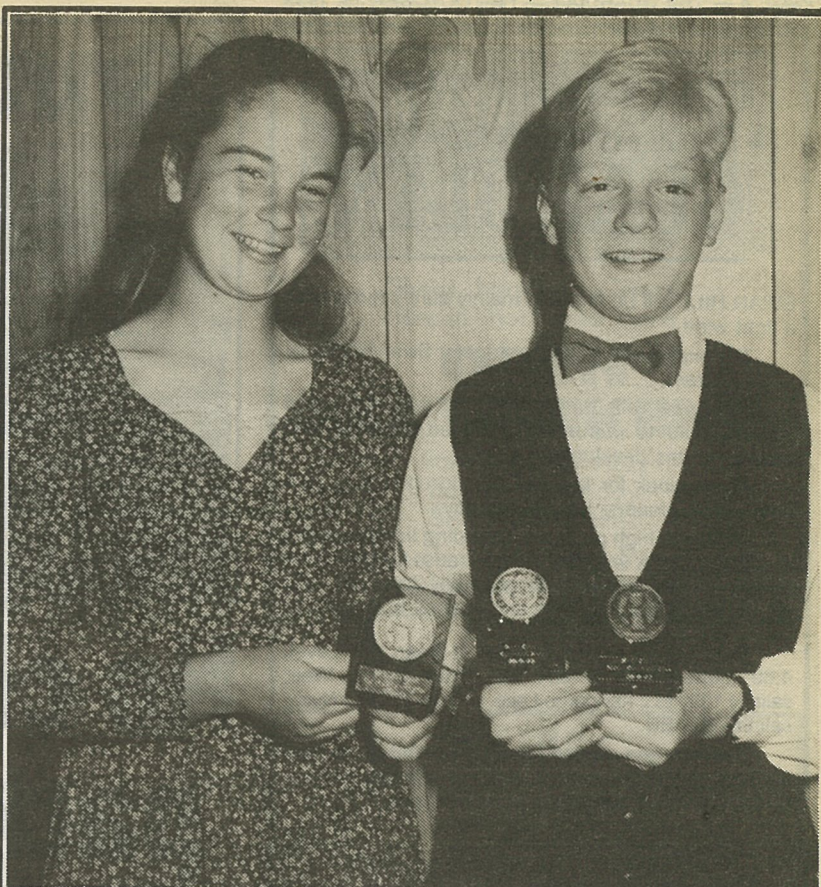
The MSB also officially revoked permission yesterday morning.

Settlement board chairman Cr Peter Lenon said the Pyap had to be dry-docked for repairs by February.

"Because it won't be offering cruises for the next five weeks, due to the river level, the captain thought this would be a good opportunity to get the work done."

MSB operations supervisor Roy Cornwall said MSB permission was given, on the understanding that Pyap captain Perc Robinson first obtained approval from the Wakool and Swan Hill shire councils and the SES.

Both shires have denied giving any approval.



## 'Strictly Ballroom' dance resurgence

ACTOR-dancer Paul Mercurio can take much of the credit for the resurgence of interest in ballroom dancing, following the release last year of the movie "Strictly Ballroom" in which he starred.

Since then, Swan Hill's Ross Dance Studio has enjoyed the renewed interest — among both young and old.

For many of the students the lessons have been purely for fun, while others hope to continue developing their skills in competition.

A number of dance devotees presented for exams this year.

Last weekend, around 25 pupils — who passed their exams in August —

were presented with their medals.

Dance instructors Ken and Judy Ross made the presentations, while the students showed off some of their new skills in front of family and friends.

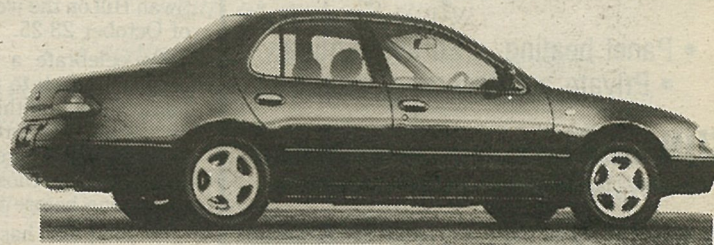
Mrs Ross said she and her husband taught all styles of dance, with Latin American and New Vogue being the most popular choices this year.

She said licensed examiners travelled to Swan Hill to conduct the exams.

Pictured receiving their medals were Kylie McKee and Simon Cahill, both of Swan Hill.

## Invitation

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