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➤ HARRY'S VIEW



categorically say there is no lobbying of any government official involved in this, or any budget for this kind of activity. It is also incorrect to claim health funds are 'forcing doctors and hospitals to collude on prices and discount their services'. This is just not possible the way the health system works, as the Commonwealth Medicare Benefits Schedule underpins doctors' prices, and hospital accommodation prices are negotiated separately.

A robust system of contracting with providers is not only highly regulated, but is essential to inject market forces into the system and keep premium costs down. All health funds

need to sensibly invest funds over the course of the year to be able to function as regulated financial services. As our pricing cycle determines prices can only be altered once a year, funds need to wait until the following year to be able to pass any excess capital back to members. Across the whole spectrum of private health, health fund average margins of 4-5% are modest compared with private hospitals at 15-18% and medical procedural specialists at 25-30%.

— Dr Rachel David
CEO, Private Healthcare Australia

Footnote: We asked a number of questions on this reply, and did not receive an answer to some of them.

This included: How much access capital has been returned to fund members? The writer and Australian Medical Association stand by claims its members feel pressured to cut costs.

Escalator shock

REGARDING your story on Tuesday, with the 88-year-old woman Nell, hit by trolley. I was the person behind her, and in NO WAY was she hit by my trolley. She stumbled with her walking frame trying to get off the escalator. We had to use all our strengths to pull the trolley backwards up the escalator, as the escalator was still moving forward.

I was screaming out for someone to push the red

button to stop the escalator as she was still sitting on the moving escalator. A man jumped over from the opposite side and stopped the escalator. Another young girl ran down the side and reached out to stop Nell from falling backwards and hitting her head. I told my daughter to call the ambulance. We continued to attend to her cuts, kept her talking, asking how she was, until the ambulance arrived. Then we let them do their job. In no way did my trolley come in contact with Nell.

— Kristina Whittaker

Editor's note: I apologise for the error. This information was taken from an initial report of the incident before emergency services were on the scene.

➤ TEXTS TO THE EDITOR

SMS the Editor on 0428 634 025 with the word **ROCK** and a space in front of your message.

CR ELLEN SMITH: Anyone who thinks the council is Rocky-centric need to think again. Gracemere has had approx \$20M spent there in the last 5 years. From water and sewerage extensions in the GIA, road upgrades, footpaths, not to mention the Playground, Skate Park and soon to be constructed Water Play and Touch of Paradise Park major upgrade. Also, under construction is a unique Cemetery Ashes Garden. As for Mt Morgan, we have commenced a \$2M plus CBD upgrade. The School of Arts has had extensive renovations over the years, and is now a pride of place for Mt Morgan and district residents. To say former Mt Morgan and Fitzroy Councils have been forgotten is utter nonsense.

MICK, KOONGAL: Many travellers are now getting text messages that Virgin have pulled out of Rocky and services will be via the small Fokker 70 jets and operated by Alliance. Yet no Bully story informing the public about the downgrade in services. Too embarrassed after the recent "big jets coming" story, talking things up, I would guess. The sooner we get a paper that simply reports the news, rather than pandering to personal local political agendas, the better.

Don't worry Mick, your trip to Brisbane is getting faster...SMS Ed

RESPONSE FROM AIRPORT CHAIRMAN, NEIL FISHER: The Rockhampton Airport continues to go from strength to strength and I want to assure people Virgin Australia are absolutely committed to the Rockhampton market and are going nowhere other than their scheduled flights. What is happening is that Virgin is replacing their turbo prop 68-seat aircraft with a series of jets including 70-seaters, 100 seaters and 178-seat jets, which means faster travel times for passengers and more comfortable aircraft. Virgin has engaged Alliance to operate these faster jet flights with other Virgin services continuing as normal.

LONGTIME RESIDENT. Great to see the council road sweeper once a week in Mt Morgan town is looking great.

BBF. Good to see Bennet finally bit the bullet and dropped Ben Hunt. He has not regained that attacking form and Kodie deserves his chance to shine.

RAMP. Come on guys enough is enough. Petrol prices are just ridiculous and despite the public complaining continually nothing seems to happen. Must be about time we saw a push for a maximum price set for regions in line with the current oil prices. That means they can sell below the set price but not below. Politicians please listen.

SC. Latest move from Labor: one line apology for QR privatization, followed by five others spewing vitriol on LNP.

RM. BERSERKER. When will the Gov put some investment into Distance Education? Its growing faster than any form of schooling. The Capricornia School of Distance is at capacity & growing with little room to expand. This growth area could be a real plus for Rocky jobs wise. How about it Kate Jones, Anna P & Bill Burns?

QUEENSLANDER. YA, YA, I have now seen your bigger blues flag on the crane. But I hope you will be crying into your crane after the next two origin games. Go Queensland.

MO. YEPPON. I've been out of work since last August and in the last 8 days have applied for 26 jobs and still no job, is 55 to old? I don't think so, anything would do.

RAIL WORKER. Central Qld politicians have come out of the woodwork to say how they are sorry the railway was sold, how they care and how they are disgusted with Aurizon. But when it comes down to it, what they care about the most is this is a threat to their own jobs. As much as they say they care, absolutely nothing will be done. People will be thrown on the scrapheap, lose their houses, experience relationship and mental health breakdowns - I just pray everyone gets through this ok.

IN MONDAY'S MORNING BULLETIN

to happen fast

better off if we all simply decide to get on (and that's not evangelical spin, it's the simple and at the time revolutionary, message of the New Testament).

But deciding to get along, to be tolerant, to accept the ways of the West, all take energy. And so does standing up for what we believe in, in what we hold dear. Offending people and forcing them to turn from evil takes energy. And if they won't turn, because their own energies are so focussed, then we have to spend energy in managing them. It is not enough to try to step aside, to cower, to

appease, to say "oh, he's just a fruit loop". Energy needs to be spent on rooting out the evil, no matter how bad it might feel, how it offends others, how uncomfortable it makes the Government, or how such an endeavour cuts across popular but misguided 21st-century sensibilities.

With baby boomers retiring, the West will never again be as wealthy as in the past 60 years. Set against current wealth, and with active debasement of hard-earned prior learnings, the resulting disenchantment provides fertile ground for lazy thought; for

excuses not to exert energy to invest in and support the excellent, workable and embracing society that we have built. And paradoxically, our culture and freedoms provide the means for people to organise against it. The internet has no inherent moral compass. Social welfare funds evil as readily as it funds good. The legal system protects even those who repeatedly transgress the social contract that is the very basis for The West.

Perhaps we'd better reframe - it's us that are idiots, not them! It is an ideal time for attack.

➤ FACEBOOK

We asked readers on Facebook to share their 'thumbs up and thumbs down' for the week.

“Thumbs up to the Frenchville School star gazing last evening. What a great event for students and parents even if a little on the chilly side.”

— Bev Johnston

➤ PHOTO OF THE DAY



A dog waits outside a polling station in a guest house annex, as voters head to the polls across the UK to vote in the General Election, in Dogmersfield, England, Thursday, June 8. . PHOTO: ANDREW MATTHEWS