

Your State



1. HAMILTON Farmer scheme gets thumb up

A **FARMER** health and safety program run by the Western District Health Service has received a ringing endorsement from Victorian auditor-general Des Pearson.

The only thing the \$5 million Sustainable Farming Families program needed to do was lift the number of farmers participating, Mr Pearson said in a report.

Chief executive of the WDHS, Jim Fletcher, said the program would be "fine-tuned" in the light of the AG's recommendations.

"That we were still able to achieve such a strong result, and high number of participants, during these incredibly tough, dry and difficult years reflects the value farming families and their support networks attach to the programs," Mr Fletcher said.

3. BENDIGO Skilled migrants help boost region

A **SKILLED** migration program has generated \$65 million in benefits to the Bendigo region in the past few years.

The direct economic impact of skilled migrants was more than \$36 million a year since the start of 2008, found a report commissioned by the City of Greater Bendigo and prepared by Compelling Economics.

It also calculated that the Greater Bendigo Skilled Migration Program had generated an indirect stimulus of more than \$28 million a year.

The extra demand for local goods and services had created an extra 106 jobs locally.

More than 130 migrants had found work since 2008 as a result of the program, the report said.

2. RUTHERGLEN Pre-nup keeps farm in the fold

ELIZA Brown has revolutionised the succession at wine giant Brown Brothers with the stroke of a pen, *The Weekly Times* reports tomorrow.

The feisty face of the fifth generation at Brown Brothers, of Milawa, is planning to marry in March next year and in late August signed her own pre-

nuptial agreement with her husband-to-be.

After the death of her father Peter in 2005, Ms Brown inherited a share of the family business and was determined to be able to hand it intact to her children, rather than it being potentially torn apart by divorce lawyers.

Compiled by *The Weekly Times*



4. GIPPSLAND Big water reductions faced

A **DRAFT** water plan for Gippsland says the region is facing a 50 per cent reduction in river water as a result of climate change, but rules out new dams as a way of tackling the problem.

The Victorian Farmers Federation is concerned about aspects of the plan and is urging Gippsland farmers to attend public meetings and briefing sessions

organised by the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

"The VFF is very concerned the draft strategy considers potential reductions in water availability as a result of climate change over the past few years, with reductions in stream flow of around 50 per cent," VFF Water Council chairman Richard Anderson said.