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Neighbours at war

Squabbles over fences and trees head conflict issues in Whitehorse

Disputes | Bridie Byrne

CONFLICTS over fences and trees are the major gripes for residents with hundreds unable to tolerate their neighbours in Whitehorse.

Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) figures reveal repairing or replacing fences were the top squabbles with 142 calls for assistance in the past financial year.

It was followed by 135 calls for tree complaints, 60 for behaviour

including intimidation, and bullying, 16 property issues and 15 for contracts.

Drainage, financial debt, noise and vehicle damage were also high on the argument list.

The DSCV helps neighbours negotiate their problems in a bid to reach an agreement, rather than wading through an expensive and timely court process.

Spokeswoman Fiona Ung said the process was effective in solving problems as all sides had their say.

"The best outcome for clients is to resolve conflict without need for mediation or litigation," she said.

"However, six cases from Whitehorse did proceed to mediation while a further 25 were resolved by the Dispute Settlement Centre acting as a go-between."

Ms Ung said there had been a rise in the caseload across Whitehorse.

"This is due to a range of factors, including a new regional

presence of DSCV at the Box Hill Justice Service Centre, outreach provided at the Ringwood Magistrates' Court, and a general desire by the public to resolve disputes rather than take them to court," she said.

Manager Gina Ralston said the most common conflict in Victoria was the behaviour of adults. "Often the issues around adult behaviours are intertwined with, or result from, other neighbourhood disputes such as fence disputes," she said.



Jodie's art continues to grow

NUNAWADING artist Jodie Goldring has spent the last two years creating a new world to display as part of Melbourne's Fringe Festival.

Goldring's work is inspired by fungus which grows out of insects, call Cordyceps.

She has created a piece titled *Dining With Cordyceps*.

"I've collected a room full of furniture over the years and have drilled holes into it and the Cordyceps are growing out of it," she said.

"*Dining with Cordyceps* is concerned with changes to our domestic environment and consumption habits over the last century.

"Past attitudes of domestic thriftiness that curtailed waste have been replaced by a proliferate society seemingly oblivious to the waste produced by excessive consumption.

"Simple pre-World War II wooden furniture is used to refer to past attitudes which have been rendered skeletal and non-functional by holes that are drilled into it."

Goldring's work is on display at Off The Kerb, 66B Johnston St, Collingwood until October 7 as part of Melbourne's Fringe Festival. Admission is free

Nunawading artist Jodie Goldring with some of her creations for the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

Picture: STEVE TANNER N12WH604