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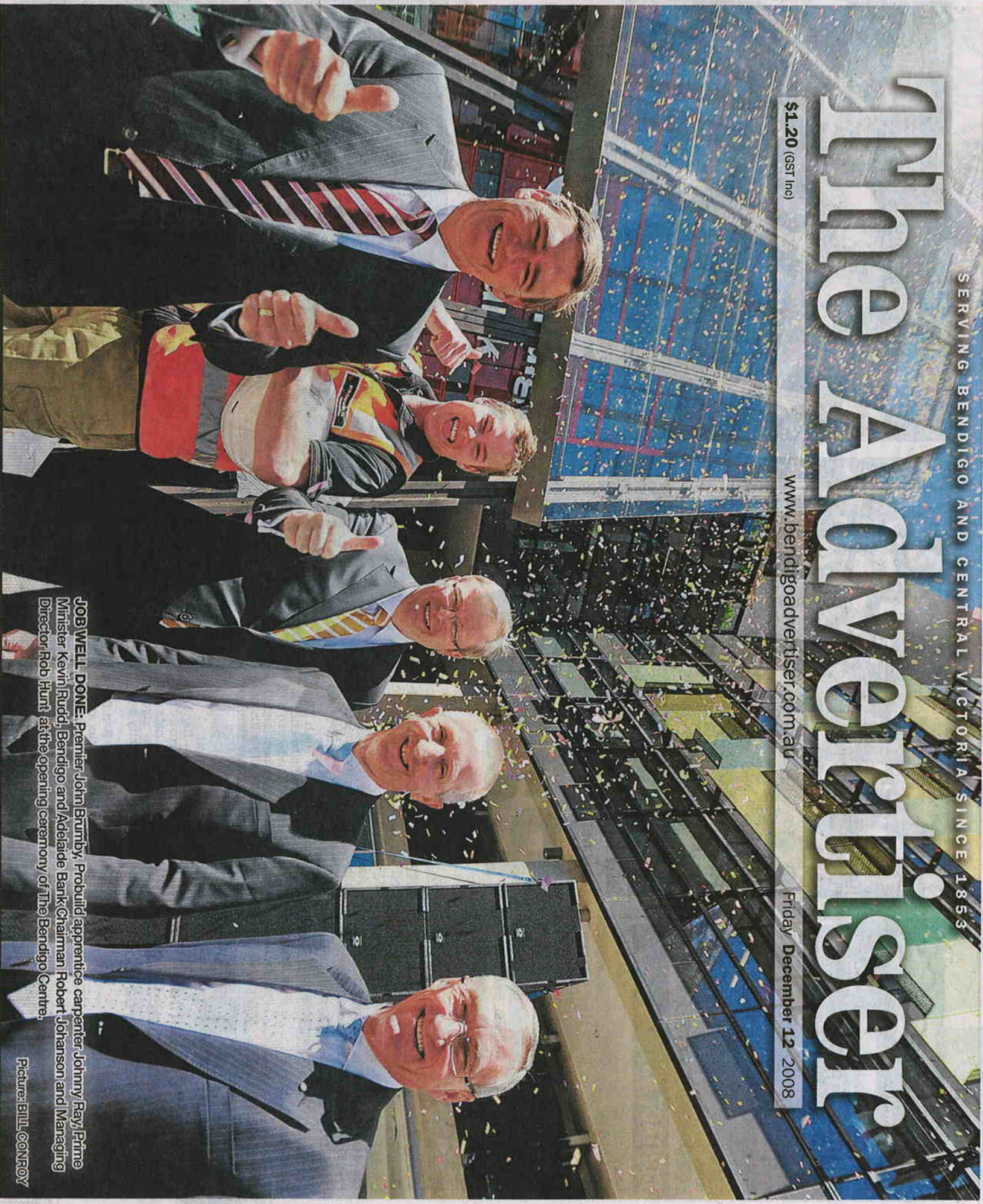
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Friday December 12 2008



JOB WELL DONE: Premier John Brumby, Probuilt apprentice carpenter Johnny Ray, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Chairman Robert Johanson and Managing Director Rob Hunt at the opening ceremony of The Bendigo Centre.

Picture: BILL CONROY

THUMBS UP

Thousands of people packed Charing Cross and Bath Lane yesterday to witness Prime Minister Kevin Rudd officially open The Bendigo Centre. **REPORT & PICTURES PAGES 2-3**

SUSPICIOUS KANGAROO FLAT CHURCH FIRE

REPORT P5

Harvey Norman

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THE BENDIGO CENTRE OPENING

WEATHER
 TODAY: Heavy rain
 Min: 14 Max: 19

Details: Page 47

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LOTTO RESULTS

Last night's Powerball draw 656 numbers: 10, 22, 6, 34 and 23. Powerball: 33.

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Groves speaks out

BRISBANE — Former ABC Learning boss Eddy Groves has spoken out on his failed childcare empire, saying the company should never have gone into administration. "I think people have different opinions of situations, and so consequently I just absolutely didn't believe that this was a necessary step," he said yesterday.

He said did not agree that 241 of the company's childcare centres were unviable. "I'm disappointed for the families and the children that have had to go through this, and the staff that have had to go through this," he said.

National — Page 16



PACKED: Crowds watch the opening ceremony.



BIG DAY: City CEO Craig Neumann, Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan and Member for Bendigo West Bob Cameron.

Party in streets

By NICOLE FERRIE

THE Bendigo Centre has added a splash of colour to the city's skyline.

And yesterday, that colour spilled into the city streets as thousands flooded the CBD for a day of celebrations.

Charing Cross and Bath Lane were closed to traffic to encourage the people of Bendigo to be a part of one of the most significant events in the city's history — the opening of The Bendigo Centre.

And the people of Bendigo welcomed the invitation.

From the moment Bendigo teenager Elizabeth Barrow took to the stage to sing the national anthem, there was a strong sense of a true community celebration.

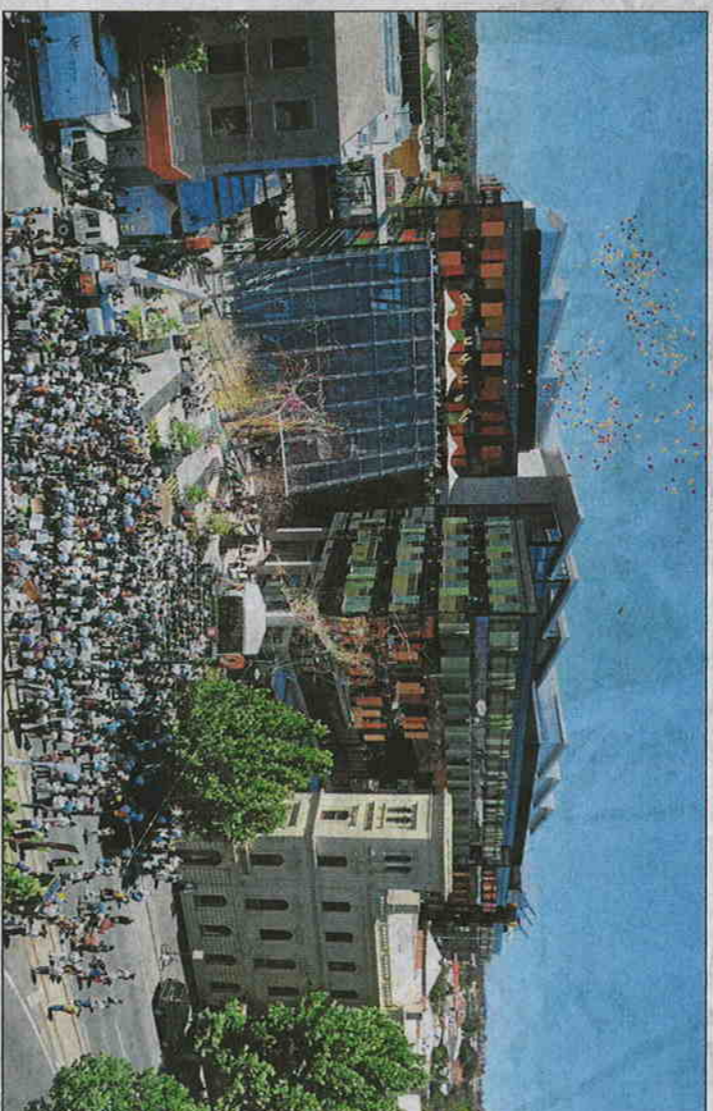
With stage acts by the Bendigo Youth Choir, Short Circus and a stunning fashion parade, the locals played a big role in the bank's special day.

More than 700 people enjoyed tours of the building, 5500 sausages were consumed, 45 people attended a talk on the building by architects Bill Dowzer of Bligh Voller Nield and Nik Taban from Gray Pukсанд, 4000 bottles of water were distributed and 500 Bendigo Bank staff enjoyed breakfast on Oscars Walk.

More than 1000 balloons were given away, 700 snow cones and 2000 gingerbread stars.

Bank spokesman Owen Davies said the day was "plenty of fun and hard work for our staff and they really appreciated the way in which the community responded".

"The bank was overwhelmed by the support we received and



COMMUNITY SPIRIT: Thousands poured into the centre of Bendigo to join the celebrations.

we're sure it would have made a huge impact on the Prime Minister and Premier, who saw firsthand how strong the connection is between the bank and its home community," he said.

"It was particularly heartening to hear the cheers for the Prime Minister, who had flown back from Bali overnight and made a huge effort to help us celebrate. I am sure the people of Bendigo appreciated him coming to our city today.

"The bank would like to thank

everyone who made the day such a great success."

The Bendigo and Adelaide Bank is hoping the community will see The Bendigo Centre as a welcoming place for all.

The centre has been designed to draw people in.

It features two open-air laneways, Lally Lane and Perrow Walk, named after former employees Frank Perrow and Doug Lally.

The centre also includes a piazza, Lyric Square where the former Lyric Theatre stood, and

Oscars Walk, a pedestrian link along the Bendigo Creek.

In the words of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank managing director Rob Hunt, The Bendigo Centre is a statement of this era.

"The Bendigo Centre, like the bank, stands out for its difference, not its size," he said. "And like us, it's determined to be relevant, connected and valued."

"The building is courageous and innovative and a strong statement of belief in ourselves and our home city."

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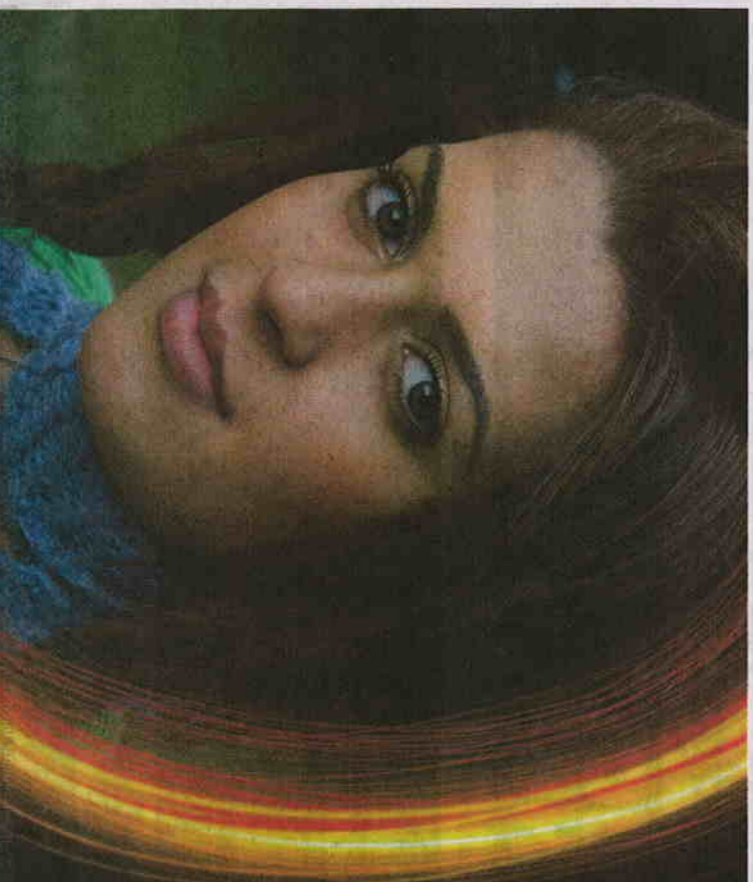
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Rochester Secondary College	Monday 15 December	1.30pm-3.00pm
Girton Grammar School	Tuesday 16 December	1.30pm-3.00pm
Kerang Secondary College	Tuesday 16 December	10.00am-12 noon
Catholic College Bendigo	Wednesday 17 December	9.30am-12.30pm
Bendigo Senior College	Wednesday 17 December	1.00pm-4.00pm

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City's proud day

Home where heart is

By NICOLE FERRIE

"IF we become just another bank, we, too, will disappear ... but we are not just another bank — we are The Bendigo."

These were the proud words of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank chairman Robert Johanson that boomed across Lyric Square yesterday as a crowd of thousands turned out to witness history.

They were there to celebrate their Bendigo, their bank — an organisation that had made one of the biggest commitments to their city.

And they were there to watch as the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Victorian Premier John Brumby opened their Bendigo Centre — a building designed to merge business and community.

"The great thing about communities like this is that you stick together, you work together, you have a civic pride, you have a community pride, you believe in building local institutions and you believe in adding to them year on year, decade by decade, generation by generation," Mr Rudd said.

"It's that great sense of continuity and commitment that I believe is the lifeblood of regional Australia."

The Bendigo Centre uses half the energy of a typical office building. Its potable water use will be reduced by more than 50 per cent, the recycling water treatment plant saves 20,000 litres of waste water a day and solar panels reduce black power use.

The building also incorporates one of the first, large-scale applications of under-floor displacement air conditioning in Australia.

This system provides fresh, clean air at a low pressure with individual vents controls at every workstation. The building also has automated lights that dim or turn off when there is sufficient natural light.

Mr Rudd said the building had moved Bendigo from a city celebrated for its history to a role model for other regional centres.

"Bendigo has always had a special grace and a special grandeur

steal items valued at more than \$256.

Nine DRU officers worked in plain clothes throughout the afternoon yesterday, targeting shoplifting in the marketplace.

The effort was made in conjunction with the loss prevention officers for the various stores.

"It's sort of surprising to get eight people in one day who are stealing from shops ... if that's happening on a daily basis, that's significant," the DRU spokesman said.

Police have warned they plan to continue the operation.

The eight people arrested for shopsteal had allegedly attempted to

— SACHA McDOUGAL

Sting nabs shoplifters

Man drowns saving sons

SYDNEY — A man has died after going to the aid of his two teenager sons when they began to struggle in rough surf at a NSW south coast beach.

The two boys managed to swim to safety but their father then got into trouble at the Mollymook beach, near Ulladulla, about 5pm yesterday, police said.

The 50-year-old man from Sydney was pulled from the water by other surfers but they could not revive him.

"We understand the father of the boys has attempted to resuscitate them or help them," a police spokesman said.

The man was pulled from the water by surfers at the beach near Ulladulla, but they weren't able to resuscitate him.

— AAP



HISTORIC MOMENT: Kevin Rudd cuts the ribbon during the opening ceremony, flanked by Rob Hunt, John Brumby and Robert Johanson.

Pictures: **BILL CONROY**



ADDRESS: Mr Rudd praised Bendigo's sense of civic pride.

On jobs losses at Thales and in the mining industry:

"First and foremost, the \$10.4 billion economic security strategy goes right across Australia; for example, in the past few days we have had payments go out already to pensioners and carers."

"Yesterday and today we've got millions of dollars going out to pensioners and carers in Bendigo, pensioners and carers and families right across the country."

"It's really important because guess what? Every local shop, every local supermarket, every store needs to be supported by Australian consumers going out there and using these funds that the government has provided through the economic security strategy."

"Secondly, recently I convened a meeting of the council of Australian local governments ... what we've done through that is provide a \$300 million upfront stimulus package to go to local authorities right across the country, including here."

The Bendigo super clinic:

"We will honour fully our pre-election commitment, absolutely and fully."

"It's difficult doing the organisational work on the ground to get it ready and to make sure expressions of interests are done properly and done thoroughly, but let me tell you we are absolutely determined to honour in full that commitment to every local community."

ABC Childcare centres:

"This is a really tough challenge for working families with little kids right across the country."

"The previous government has allowed ABC Learning to control 25 per cent of Australia's childcare centre market."

"Therefore when that company gets itself into trouble, guess what? A huge slice of mums and dads and kids have found themselves in real trouble."

"Our belief is this: that it's really important to support mums and dads and kids at this time."

Care Leavers' Australia Network's plea for an apology to the half-million Australians raised as wards of the state or in institutions:

"I'm sure the government through the appropriate minister will make the appropriate statement."

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