

Property agent breaks yearly sales record

BALLARAT'S Hocking Stuart office is setting unprecedented sales figures with property sales in the last financial year topping 600.

No Hocking Stuart franchise has sold more than 600 properties in one financial year.

For three of the five years in which the Ballarat/Daylesford office has been operational, it has topped sales across the Hocking Stuart Group.

Director Tim Valpied said the figures equated to about two sales a day during the year.

He attributed much of the company's success to the consistency of the Ballarat and Daylesford market place.

Mr Valpied said the Ballarat region was experiencing strong growth with many people moving from Melbourne or investing in substantial rural lifestyle properties.

Ratepayer details not accessed in IT breach

BALLARAT City Council has assured ratepayers that corporate databases containing confidential data have not been illegally accessed.

This follows the shut-down of council's information technology networks last Monday after a resident came forward with claims the system had been hacked.

Council chief executive officer Anthony Schinck said a thorough examination of council's technology networks by security specialists had shown that no confidential rate-

payer information stored in its corporate databases was accessed.

"To the extent to which it is possible, our experts have also determined that no viruses or other potentially damaging files were embedded in the system which might cause problems in the future," Mr Schinck said.

"Ratepayers can be confident that internal security measures within the system have protected all personal ratepayer information stored by council."

A 21-year-old Ballarat man was charged last Thursday with four computer-related offences over the incident.

His arrest came after a police investigation involving the E-Crime Squad and Ballarat Criminal Investigation Unit.

Mr Schinck said specialist information technology staff were currently rebuilding the system, which would include new security walls.

"We expect to be back online by today," he said.

"I am very proud of the way in which our staff have responded to ensure that despite this unfortunate incident, our delivery of services to the public has gone ahead without interruption.

"Computer crimes are a serious offence and council is working closely with Victoria Police on its investigation into this unauthorised entry into our information technology networks."

The 21-year-old man was bailed to appear at the Ballarat Magistrates

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TWO-PIECE: Ballarat Grammar junior pupils Elijah Dale, 12, and Lucy Ford, 10, kicked off the South Street instrumental section over the weekend with a second place win in the novice string orchestra event. Picture: **Jeremy Bannister**

Fiddlers usher in South Street instruments

By Erin Williams

IN WHAT is to be another week of high calibre performers, the instrumental section of the Royal South Street Society is under way.

The section includes the Freemasons Victoria Festival of Bands, starting on Wednesday, in which 12 schools will compete in afternoon and evening performances.

South Street instrumental chairman Brian McInnes said the talent in this section was always of good quality.

Adelaide cellist Ruth Saffir judged Saturday's performances.

"Our adjudicators are astounded at the performers. We value our level of adjudicators we provide. We get the best in Australia," Mr McInnes said.

Ballarat Grammar junior pupils Lucy Ford, 10, and Elijah Dale, 12, finished second in the novice string orchestra event on Saturday.

The pair performed two pieces, *Stringosaurus* and *Fiddlers Ahoy*, on their violins.

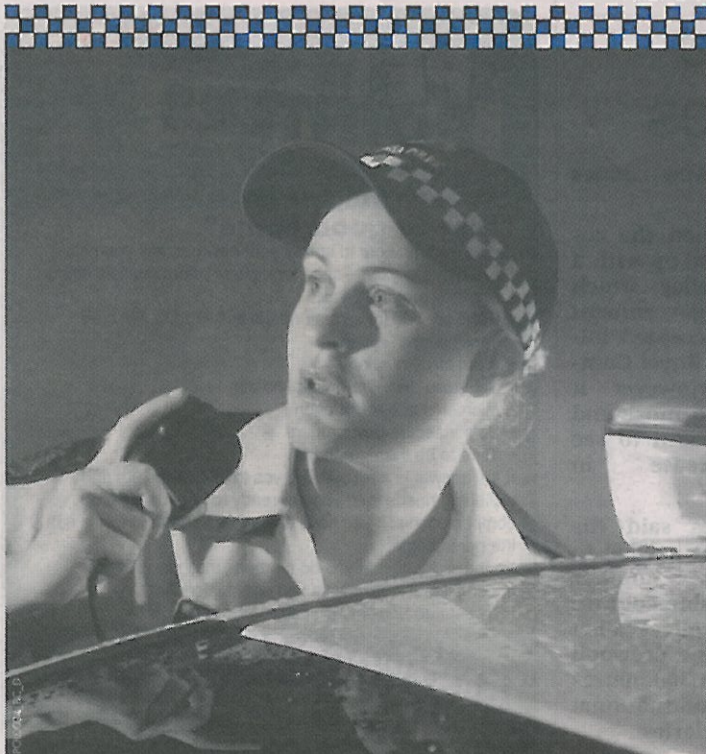
"I enjoyed the challenge," Lucy said.

Geelong's Christian College placed first in the event, while

Bacchus Marsh Grammar came third.

The instrumental section will end on Saturday with the senior and intermediate concert bands.

Freemasons Victoria has committed \$6000 a year over the next three years towards the festival of the bands section.



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