

Bendigo Advertiser

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REFUGEES TAP IN TO THEIR FUTURE

May and Mu Moo are among 17 Hazara and Karen students to receive a donated laptop to help refugees improve their digital literacy skills. STORY - P2

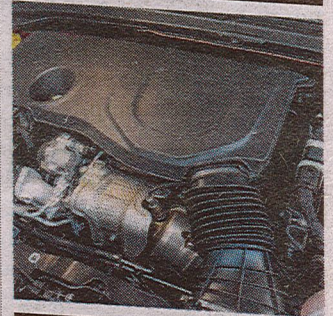
Picture by Darren Howe

Inside today



ROAD TEST

HYBRID HERO: ALFA ROMEO TONALE



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JAIL FOR RAMPAGE

BY LUCY WILLIAMS

A BENDIGO man whose crimes disrupted countless veterinary patients, forced a man to move and endangered the lives of police and members of the public has been sentenced to four years and 10 months' imprisonment.

Timothy Walker, 39, told

a psychologist he was "off his head" on methylamphetamine, xanax, GHB and buprenorphine during six weeks of criminality which the County Court heard had occurred from September to November in 2020.

Walker received a non-parole period of three years and six months and will be suspended from driving for

three years after pleading guilty to a raft of charges including burglary, vehicle theft and three charges of dangerous or negligent driving while pursued by police.

Walker has served 966 days in pre-sentence detention.

Judge Anne Hassan said Walker's offending involved "commercial burglaries,

multiple thefts, ongoing unlicensed driving ... which culminated in the events of November 2, 4 and 5".

The court heard police thought Walker's dangerous driving, particularly on November 2 in Melbourne, would "kill someone".

He sped through residential and commercial areas in suburban Melbourne, drove

estimated speeds of between 130km/h and 140km/h on the Eastern Freeway and drove on the Maroondah Highway on the wrong side of the road at high speed.

On November 5, 2020, Walker and a passenger were observed by the police airwing speeding in a stolen vehicle in Eaglehawk.

Continued - P2

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NEWS

Donation of laptops help refugees

BY JONATHAN MAGRATH

KAREN refugee Paw K'Mwee Wah says having a laptop will help with her studies, job opportunities and sponsoring her family to come to Australia.

She is one of 17 Karen and Hazara students who have been gifted donated laptops as part of a digital literacy course run by Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services.

Wah, who works at JL King and Co, said the laptop would help her with her Bendigo TAFE English language course, communication including email, and writing a resume.

She arrived in Australia seven months ago after her cousin sponsored her, and said she was glad to be in Bendigo and not in her refugee camp at the Thailand-Myanmar border.

"I really wanted to be here," she said. "Compared to camp, we had less opportunity and not really good education as here. There is more than a lot here as there is at the refugee camp."

According to the 2021 census, there were just under 1600 people who spoke Karen at home living in Bendigo. There have been more than 100,000 Karen people living in camps on the Thailand-Myanmar border, displaced as a result of insurgency against Myanmar's military dictatorship.

It was estimated in 2021 there were about 150 Hazara refugees living in Bendigo, who have fled Afghanistan as a result of the Taliban persecuting Hazaras.

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services team leader for education Robyn Matthews said the organisation was committed to supporting new arrivals to Bendigo.

She said the digital literacy program was designed to support Karen and Hazara people through things native English speakers may take for granted.

"They've learnt things that we take for granted like copy and pasting links and pictures, and attaching things to emails to be able to send," she said.

"We've been working in Google Docs as well to be able to create documents and projects that can then tie into employment skills, such as creating a resume or writing a cover letter."

Ms Matthews said without laptops the digital literacy program couldn't run.

"We've been wanting to run a digital literacy program for multicultural communities, but it's been really hard to get off the ground because it's hard to teach skills that there's no continuity of them being able to use at home," she said. "Most of the community have a phone, but it's really hard to teach on a phone because every phone's different, and we as an organisation simply didn't have enough laptops to be able to teach those skills within the office itself."

Laptops were donated by Elders Rights Advocacy and the state government's Department of Education, and were handed over to the graduates of the 10-week digital literacy course at a ceremony yesterday.



Timothy Walker has been sentenced to four years and 10 months' imprisonment for a drug-fuelled rampage across Victoria. Picture by Brendan McCarthy

Jail for drug-fuelled rampage

From - P1

Walker reached in excess of 120km/h in 60km/h zones and drove through four red lights at speed.

After colliding with a gate in Epsom, Walker was taken to Bendigo hospital where he tested positive for methylamphetamine.

The County Court heard Walker had a lengthy criminal history with prior convictions for drug and dishonesty offences. "The most striking aspect of your criminal record is, however, your truly appalling driving history," Judge Hassan said.

The court heard there was

a "real risk of institutionalisation" for Walker who was partly raised in foster care and has spent much of his adult life in prison. Walker suffers from an acquired brain injury and lives with a mild intellectual disability, ADHD, major depressive disorder and PTSD.

INSIDE TODAY

News	1-6	Weather	14
Opinion	8	TV Guide	15
National	9-10	Horoscopes	15
World	11	Comics	16
Business	12	Classifieds	17-19
Cars	13	Sport	20-24

WEATHER

TODAY	TOMORROW
Partly cloudy	Possible shower
Min: 2°C Max: 11°C	Min: 6°C Max: 13°C

CONTACTS

The Bendigo Advertiser is published six days a week and can be read online at www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au. We welcome your inquiries on the numbers below.

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 Division 4: \$496.70.
 Division 5: \$66.70.
 Division 6: \$32.25.
 Division 7: \$19.85.

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