



Friendly leg-up: Footscray West Primary pupil Deng, 11, carefully holds a green tree frog, a barometer for the environment. Picture: IAN CURRIE

Jumpy times ahead

Kate Rose

WHAT did the frog say when he heard about environmental pollution? Nothing, he had already croaked.

Deng, 11, of Footscray West Primary school, yesterday came to grips with one of the earliest indicators of pollution, the frog.

The size and health of frog populations are among the first indicators of environmental decay, especially in streams and waterways.

Some frogs moved into Federation Square to spread the message to primary school students for World Environment Day yesterday.

But sustainability is nothing new to Footscray West students, who have already built a vegetable garden, taken part in Clean Up Australia Days, introduced litter-free lunches and started a water-saving program at school.

And water is the key, with Water Minister John Thwaites warning yesterday that saving water was the best buffer against steep price rises.

Mr Thwaites was commenting on a CSIRO and Monash University report saying water prices would rise 500 per cent in Melbourne and 600 per cent in Sydney in 25 years.



Heather McCartney

No Lady Madonna

SORDID photos of Sir Paul McCartney's estranged wife Heather Mills have allegedly surfaced.

The ex-model posed in a series of pornographic shots for a German book, according to British newspaper *The Sun*.

The explicit shots are said to show Mills naked and smothered in baby oil in a series of sexual poses for a lovers' guide.

The book *Die Freuden Der Liebe (The Joys of Love)* was published in 1988 — five years before Mills, 38, lost her leg in an accident, and well before she met Sir Paul.

— Fiona Hudson

Beaten boy's case tears heartstrings

Geoff Wilkinson

THE horrifying case of a five-year-old boy viciously beaten by his father has touched the hearts of Victorians.

Herald Sun readers moved by yesterday's story of Brandon's physical and emotional abuse have offered to send clothes, toys and money to show him that people care.

Two mothers of boys the same age were so concerned they offered to adopt Brandon.

A factory worker said he wanted to give \$50 a week to help give Brandon a better life.

But the treatment of the boy, and of the man responsible, moved many others to anger.

The *Herald Sun* revealed yesterday that Brandon's father, Damien Paul Ripper, was sentenced to only 18 months' jail for recklessly causing seri-

ous injury to his son. Ripper, 30, has 349 convictions, including many for crimes of violence.

Residents in Morwell, where the abuse occurred, are planning a petition to demand an appeal be lodged and a heavier sentence imposed.

And a nurse who treated Brandon after he was rescued by police said she was disgusted by the light sentence.

She was "sick and tired of seeing these people get away with what they do to defenceless children".

She said on 3AW: "When is the court system going to listen to public outrage and consensus on these issues?"

Ripper's sister branded her brother a liar for blaming a



Damien Ripper

difficult childhood and a beating from his stepfather for turning him to violence.

Lisa said Damien was "once again using his lies to get away with hurting this little boy".

"I want it known clear as a bell



Brandon

... Dad never ever laid a finger on any of us. Never," Lisa said.

"What Damien did is the lowest of lowest form. For the courts to say he took (Brandon) in and they should credit him for that is a crock. Damien only

took him in to get extra benefits so he could get more drugs.

"Please don't let him get away with blaming everyone else for his choices. Isn't it about time someone got what they deserved?"

The Director of Public Prosecutions is believed to be considering an appeal but would not comment yesterday.

A Department of Human Services spokesman said yesterday the boy was now in good care. He is believed to be with responsible relatives in a safe home.

The County Court has expedited publication of Judge Fred Davey's sentencing remarks.

Net link: www.countycourt.vic.gov.au

ANYONE wanting to help Brandon should call the Australian Childhood Foundation on 9874 3922 during office hours.

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