

Laser beam blinds driver

Nicole Monshing

A YOUNG woman momentarily blinded by a laser beam while driving fears the next victim could be killed.

Jess Meyer, 20, of Shelford, was driving along Shelford-Teesdale Rd with her 17-year-old brother in the front passenger seat when she was hit in the eyes by the red beam.

Jess said the loss of vision caused her to drift into the gravel shoulder, narrowly missing a power pole, before she pulled the car back on to the bitumen.

The incident has left Jess shaken and calling for justice.

"It was a stupid thing for that person to do," Jess said.

"It was pretty scary and I'm just glad I didn't have my five-year-old brother in the car because it could have been awful if I'd hit the power pole."

"I want to see the person responsible punished by the police because someone else could run off the road further than I did and actually be killed."

Jess said the offender appeared to be standing in the shadows of a tree near the bridge in Teesdale about 11pm on Saturday, August 25.

"They didn't really seem like they were hiding as such, they waited till you were right there," she said.

Jess said she stopped about 300m down the road, turned around and drive back past the site to try to spot the offender while the police were called.



Jess Meyer

She was then targeted with the laser beam again before the offender fled.

Jess' mother, Marianne Meyer, said she was angry about her children's safety being put at risk.

"It's as bad as kids throwing rocks off an overpass bridge," Mrs Meyer said.

"It potentially could have ended up quite a bad accident, especially with the bridge being right there."

Bannockburn police's Sergeant Tim Bolitho said the report from two weekends ago was not the first case of a driver being blinded by a laser.

"About five to six weeks ago we had a report of the same thing, and we patrolled on that occasion but we didn't find anything," Sgt Bolitho said.

He said the first case of laser blinding had happened near the bridge in the township.

Sgt Bolitho said anyone with information on either of the two cases should call Bannockburn police on 5281 1260 or Inverleigh police on 5265 1211.



Take that: Six-year-old Benjamin Daglas at training. Picture: TONY KERRIGAN

Putting his best foot forward

MEET six-year-old Benjamin Daglas, one of Geelong's youngest martial arts students.

Benjamin was just five when he started learning martial arts, and a year later the pint-sized student has already achieved his yellow belt.

And if he trains hard enough, the Bannockburn youngster's teacher, Chris Oakley, is confident he

will achieve a junior black belt within four years.

Benjamin, who learns Issai Ryu Bujutsu through the Martial Journey academy of martial arts, said he enjoyed learning breakfalls the most.

His mum, Lorna, said Benjamin also loved punching and kicking during his martial arts classes.

"I cant keep him away,"

she said. "If he misses a week he gets upset."

Lorna said she wanted Benjamin to learn martial arts from a young age because it taught discipline, respect, self-defence and fitness.

The school will run an open day this Sunday at Western Heights Uniting Church, Douglass St, Herne Hill, between 10am and 1pm.

Deakes on top of the world

NATHAN Deakes' name has been forever etched into athletics history books after becoming world champion in the 50km walk last weekend.

The Geelong-raised walker took out gold at the 11th IAAF World Athletics Championships in Japan on Saturday, stopping the clock at 3:43.53.

The gold medal performance follows Deakes' outstanding walk over the distance in Geelong in December 2006, in which he set the world record.

The double degree law/commerce student is only Australia's third male athlete to become a world championship gold medalist, following Rob de

Castella's marathon victory in 1983 and Dmitri Markov's pole vault win in 2001.

Deakes, who played football at under-18 level with the Geelong Falcons, now has his sights set on winning gold in the 50km walk at next year's Olympic Games in Beijing.

Unfortunately Geelong's other athletics star, Craig Mottram, didn't fare so well in Osaka.

The 27-year-old finished a disappointing 13th in the men's 5000m run.

The middle-distance specialist took out bronze in the event two years ago at Helsinki and has held the Australian 5000m title for four consecutive years.

Workers fail in bid to meet Abbott

MORE than 40 unionists converged outside Deakin University's waterfront campus on Monday night in an attempt to confront Health Minister Tony Abbott.

Braving wet and cold conditions, the committed group chanted, "The workers, united, will never be defeated" as they waited outside the university's doors, hoping to confront Mr Abbott as he arrived to give a speech inside.

Australian Council of Trade Unions Corangamite campaign coordinator Andy Richards said the Your Rights At Work protest would make sure Mr Abbott knew that workers across the region were not happy with the Howard Government's WorkChoices laws.

"Tony Abbott voted to take away our rights at



Worker power: Andy Richards and David Ball.

work, not once, but seven times and we are here to let him know that he can't get away with it," Mr Richards said.

The protesters were unsuccessful in confronting Mr Abbott, who slid through another door to gain entry to the university.

Course for volunteers

GEELONG volunteers can now undertake a free course to give them a better understanding of mental health and its impact on the community.

The course is part of a Mental Health Volunteer Network project launched by Minister for Mental Health Lisa Neville during a visit to Geelong's Lifeline office yesterday.

"The Brumby Government has provided

\$150,000 to health services in the Geelong region to help volunteers to access the Mindlink Mental Health First Aid course," Ms Neville said.

"Mental illness affects one in five Victorians and this course provides volunteers with the skills to help a person better manage a potential or developing mental health problem."

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