

# Slithering slabs ...

Concrete walls destined for a multi-million-dollar building project on Cottesloe's Marine Parade fell off the side of a truck this week.

As the 18-wheel vehicle took a corner from Stirling Highway into Eric Street at lunchtime on Monday, the five big blocks went over the side.

They took out part of a sign and the dentist's wall on the corner.

Traffic into Eric Street was blocked for more than an hour.

The slabs were due to be delivered to a big building project on northern Marine Parade.

Supervisor Angus Harrison said work had been held up for a couple of days until fresh slabs were delivered.



**Crushing ...** Passers-by said it was lucky no one was on the corner when this accident happened on Monday. Photo: Billie Fairclough

# Boat-tow is safe: Abbott

Tony Abbott believes the Australian navy can safely tow refugee boats back to Indonesia without putting the boats and their occupants in danger.

He was asked in Subiaco this week how our navy would do this after the Italian navy had abandoned the practice because of fires, sinkings and loss of life.

Mr Abbott said our navy had turned around illegal refugees boats before and would do it again.

Asked how it would implement his tow-back-the-boats policy as opposed to attempting to turn them back, he said the navy was no less professional now than it had been under the Howard government.

Q: "But they didn't tow the boats back?"

Mr Abbott: "Boats were successfully turned around. It happened successfully under the Howard government. What's been successfully done before can be successfully done again."

In the infamous children overboard affair just before the 2001 federal election, an inquiry found that the SIEV4 carrying 223 people had either sunk from the strain of being towed or had been deliberately sunk by its occupants.

The government convincingly won the election weeks later.

The subsequent Senate inquiry found that no children had been thrown overboard.

In 2009, the SIEV 36 was deliberately blown up off Ashmore Reef killing five people, after some refugees on board wrongly believed their vessel was to be towed back to Indonesia by an Australian naval vessel.

# Hit-man label is hurting: Montani

Johnny Montani is angry he is still being portrayed as a hit man with suggestions of involvement in the Rayney murder case.

He said this week he had no doubt he would have been charged with the murder of Corryn Rayney had he not provided a watertight alibi for the night she died.

"If I had been home asleep in bed alone, that would have been the end of me," he said.

Instead, he was having dinner at the Orient Hotel in Fremantle with two friends and the wife of one of them.

"At about midnight, Adam Melvin and I went to Adam's mother's house in West Swan, where we had a few drinks and stayed the night."

He said police who had told him they had information that he was a hit man who had killed Corryn Rayney in 2007 later confirmed his "rock solid" alibi, using CCTV footage and by interviewing witnesses.

He said the hit-man label wrongly came from three trials he endured for the shooting murder of bikie Kevin (Mick)

Woodhouse outside a Bayswater aquatic centre in 2004.

He said when he heard on the radio that morning Mr Woodhouse had been shot, he knew police would come looking for him because the men were friends, working together on a Jim's Mowing contract.

He had thrown away gear connected with his recreational shooter's hobby and denied doing so.

The only forensic evidence linking him to the crime was said by prosecutors to be a piece of glass in the cuff of his trousers.

The prosecutors said had come from the smashed door where Mr Woodhouse had died.

But it was not tested until the third trial, when it was found to be plastic, not glass.

The third jury acquitted Mr Montani, who said he had been home asleep when the shooting happened.

He said he was not a bikie and had never been one.

Mr Montani said that a year after police found that his alibi for the Rayney murder checked out, they offered him a deal in the Woodhouse case, still wait-

ing for its third trial.

They said if he gave evidence against Lloyd Rayney, who had been his lawyer at his first trial he would get a reduced sentence for the Woodhouse murder.

"I told the detectives 'it never happened, mate' because it hadn't, then I told my new lawyer about the conversation and offer of a much-reduced sentence."

Mr Montani said he had complaints about only two of the many detectives he had dealt with.

"But to read in the newspaper that a police theory about a hit man was unused at Lloyd Rayney's trial, and that I was the supposed hit man, is just crazy. It's out of control.

"I had a very good job in the oil

and gas industry before all this happened. The only work I can get now is as a labourer for a roofing contractor.

"Those three trials cost me and my supporters \$600,000 to prove my innocence.

"Now this hit man label keeps coming up in the press, with no mention of my alibi, and it's stopping me getting a decent job.

"I will be taking it further."

As a result of his treatment, his brother, accountant Paul Montani, started Justice WA, an organisation that has brought many high-profile wrongfully convicted men, including Ruben "Hurricane" Carter, to Perth for conferences.

## Vandals torch forklift

A forklift was burnt by vandals at the Claremont Showgrounds last weekend.

The machine had been hired by Sunset Events, which was going to use it at this Sunday's Stereosonic concert.

The forklift was set alight between 6pm Friday and Saturday morning.

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