

MORDIALLOC-CHELSEA LEADER December 10, 2007

# **Sad loss of Cliff Jr**

A VISITING seal that many southern Kingston residents had taken under their wings has died.

In recent weeks the young male seal had become a familiar sight as he fished, swam and rested in sand around Patterson Lakes and Mordialloc Creek, and off Carrum, Chelsea, Mentone and Mordialloc beaches.

But early last Thursday morning the seal, who

Kingston local laws officers had dubbed "Cliff Jr", was discovered drifting in the shallows at Aspendale beach.

He died shortly afterwards, en route to Melbourne zoo for medical treatment.

AWARE wildlife rescue carer Michelle Thomas, who had been monitoring the seal since he arrived in Kingston, said he had been feeding well before sud-

denly starting to lose weight a couple of days before he died.

She said an autopsy would be carried out to determine the cause of death.

"He took a really rapid downturn and we don't know why," Ms Thomas said.

She said possibly a fish-hook had become embedded in the seal's throat.

— FIONA SEXTON