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Sunraysia Daily

Wednesday, March 26, 2008

\$1.10



INSIDE TODAY YOUR 7-DAY TV LIFTOUT

PLUS
BRAIN
TEASER

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ICE STORM

Hail leaves trail of destruction

By Nat Cavallaro

SUNRAYSLA was counting the cost yesterday after Monday night's dramatic end to a 58-day dry spell.

It was chaos in Mildura as torrential rain whipped the streets.

Tree branches littered Deakin Avenue and hail stones pounded cars forced to drive at a snail's pace.

The State Emergency Service was kept busy with 13 callouts including a four vehicle accident at Yatpool, and Mildura Rural City Council cleanup crews collected debris left over from the storm.

Crops in some areas were pummeled and the hail which fell in Merbein at Belvedere Fruit Growers' property attracted curious onlookers yesterday.

Rain totals varied from 10-17mm although the official total was only 0.4mm recorded at the Mildura.

About \$1 million damage was caused to one fruit property alone at Karadoc as the storm swept through on Monday night.

Michael Hellwege, SES Mildura controller said the crew attended calls all over Sunraysia on Monday night, most notably an accident at Yatpool.

A heavy dust storm reduced visibility and resulted in the pile up of a B Double truck loaded with grain, a Toyota sedan, a station wagon towing a drag car and a Landcruiser towing a speedboat.

Mr Hellwege said: "We were called out to the scene at 6.30pm. No one was hurt or needed to be cut out of any of the vehicles ... they were all very lucky."

The SES had callouts in Mildura, Merbein and Red Cliffs.

"Most of them were for things such as fallen tree branches, nothing too serious," Mr Hellwege said.

"At a house in 15th Street, Irymple, a tree had fallen onto two parked cars in a driveway and there was some damage done there, but no one was injured."

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GREAT CATCH

MERBEIN grower Paul Scopelliti watched his innovative shade cloth save his fruit orchard on Monday evening when a vicious hailstorm ripped through the district. Even by noon yesterday the tonnes of hail still hadn't fully melted and in many places the shade cloth was still sagging under the weight of the mountains of ice from the sky.

Full story – Page 2.

Picture: Stuart Quinn

weather

22°



Mildura Possible shower

Mallee Partly cloudy

Possible shower or two. A partly cloudy day with winds tending moderate to fresh southwesterly.

Thu 21°



Fri 24°



Sat 24°



Full report P21