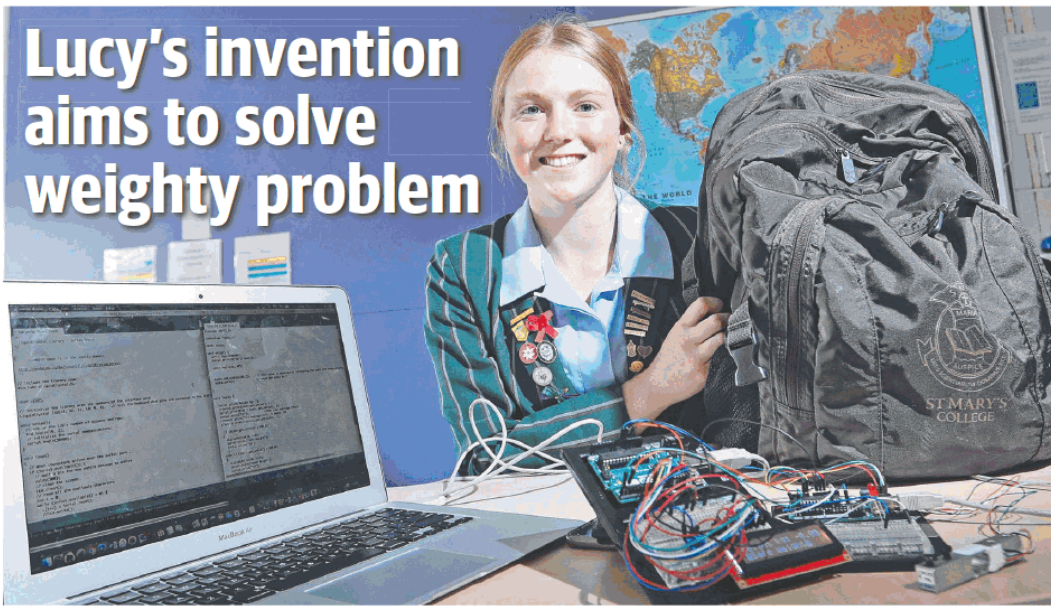


NEWSFRONT

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# Lucy's invention aims to solve weighty problem



PRACTICAL APPLICATION: St Mary's student Lucy Eade has designed a device to alert students when their backpack is too heavy. PICTURE: LUKE BOWDEN

**JAMES KITTO**

A YEAR 11 student's innovative backpack project looks set to give school kids a weight off their shoulders. St Mary's College student Lucy Eade's STEM project design aims to give students relief from carrying

overweight backpacks. After surveying students from her school, Miss Eade, 16, found that 87 per cent of them carried bags more than 10 per cent of their body weight. Her response was the creation of a purpose-built prototyping platform with an

LCD board displaying either a "safe weight" tag or an LED light when the backpack is too heavy. The design has been selected as one of 26 finalists from around Australia in the BHP Foundation Science and Engineering Awards. Miss Eade, who wrote the

device's code and created the LCD extension system, said the technology was about reducing the risk of injury. "There are many studies out there that prove children carrying backpacks more than 10 per cent of their body weight can receive serious injuries that not only

affect their current health, but also their long-term health into adulthood," she said. St Mary's Principal Helen Spencer said Miss Eade's project allowed students to see how STEM studies were rolled out from theory through to real-world practice.

# Lib donors, Cormann trip linked

ANTHONY GALLOWAY

THE Liberal Party has received more than half a million dollars from the group of companies tied to Finance Minister Mathias Cormann's free family trip to Singapore.

At Senate estimates yesterday, Senator Cormann revealed that on three occasions he had personally contacted Helloworld chief executive and Liberal Party treasurer Andrew Burnes to book Singapore flights.

Senator Cormann was forced to pay the \$2700 to Helloworld on Monday after media inquiries. The money related to a holiday booked in July 2017, weeks after Mr Burnes's company won a \$1 billion contract from Senator Cormann's department.

Helloworld booked tickets for Senator Cormann, his wife and two children on the company's "staff and family" account. Senator Cormann said yesterday he did not notice he hadn't been charged for the January 2018 trip to Singapore and repaid the money after finding out this week.

"[I] should have been charged to my credit card straight away as instructed by me at the time," he said.

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Pork Loin Roast .....	<b>\$13<sup>90</sup></b> <small>kg</small>
Pork Loin Steak .....	<b>\$13<sup>90</sup></b> <small>kg</small>
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FACTORY OUTLET - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

# Cabbie used in elderly care scam

CHRISTOPHER TESTA

DOZENS of vulnerable Tasmanians in aged care received pain relief treatment from unqualified therapists in a scheme for which a suspended physio now faces a maximum fine of \$480,000. Launceston Magistrates Court yesterday heard a taxi driver, chef and accountant were among 11 fake physios employed by Libero Health Care sole director Michael Sylvester Dempsey to treat residents at 12 aged-care facilities across the state. Dempsey, 44, of Murrumbena, instructed the unqualified practitioners using the names of qualified physiotherapists and occupational therapists from the mainland, only one of whom he had never met.

The court heard 78 patients, aged 67 to 99, received massage and pain relief treatment from the unqualified staff from March 1 to May 4, last year.

All the unregistered staff were migrants from India or Pakistan and many came to work for Libero at facilities run by Respect Aged Care and Southern Cross Care Tasmania in Hobart, Launceston and the North-West after chance meetings or through mutual connections with Dempsey. The court heard some expressed concern at being asked to use other people's names but were told they were using the names of their "supervisors". Those who questioned whether they needed qualifications to provide treatment were told they did not because they were "support workers". Dempsey yesterday pleaded guilty to 16 counts of knowingly holding a person out as being registered when they were not. Charges against Libero Health Care, which is being wound up, were discontinued.

The court heard Dempsey's scheme was exposed after a disgruntled former Libero employee, a registered chiroprac-

tor, found out the real identities of the workers by entering their phone numbers into Facebook. Libero also had 10 registered physiotherapists working for them at the time. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) began an investigation on May 7 and Dempsey stopped practising immediately after receiving a cease and desist letter from the regulator the following week. Prosecutor Kylie Walsh said the offending was among the most serious AHPRA had investigated. Defence barrister Simon Kelly said Dempsey had successfully run Libero for many years in Victoria but resorted to hiring unregistered workers after finding it "remarkably difficult to find qualified staff" in Tasmania. Magistrate Ken Stanton adjourned the case until April for further submissions and sentence.

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