



## Deli demise a big blow

THE closure last week of the Doubleview Deli and Newsagency on Scarborough Beach road is another incremental blow to the social fabric of the local community.

A 'local deli' is much more than a place for last minute purchases and ice-creams. Studies indicate that people are more likely to walk and be physically active when there are shops within five to 10 minutes of their home. Moreover, the visible presence of people out and about walking in their community positively impacts on neighbourhood safety.

Recent research at the University of Western Australia also shows that sense of community is fostered by the presence of local shops and walkable destinations.

Residents in streets near to the Doubleview Deli can testify to this – people returning from the deli with a newspaper or carton

of milk were a regular sight, often stopping to chat to neighbours along the way.

For children, a walk or ride to the local store can also represent a significant rite of passage. For many it is one of the first places they are allowed to go without a grown-up and provides them with opportunities to feel independent, to run an errand for someone and to learn the hard way the importance of not losing your money.

As with the closure of schools, the demise of the local deli in Australian suburbs has a ripple effect on the social dimension of communities and is much more than just another retail statistic.

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**Star letter. The writer wins a \$10 coffee and cake voucher from The Coffee Club Innaloo. The prize will be posted.**