

'All I want is for someone to be moved by my work'

By Jess Layt

HE'S a sales director by trade, but Edward Labbad has another side.

When the proud Campbelltonian isn't tied up with his job as an importer, he moonlights as rapper New Age Poet — and has just dropped his first track, *WarZone*, on Youtube and iTunes.

The former Ambarvale High School student collaborated with his brother Roger Labbad to write *WarZone*, which the pair had been working on for more than two years. "My brother does the backing and the beats and then I got the idea for the song and wrote the first verse, then he wrote the next two verses," Edward said.

"We actually recorded it two years ago but it's a long process to get everything right."

Part of that long process involved the search for a female singer.

"I was looking everywhere online, on social media, and I couldn't find anyone who sounded right but then I was on a plane coming back from Melbourne one day when I saw this

girl walking down the aisle and I thought 'She looks like a singer, I hope she sits next to me', and she did," he said.

"I asked her if she was a singer and if she wanted to be on the track — now, I'd never spoken to her before, never seen her — and she ended up doing the hook for *WarZone*.

"That's fate."

That singer was Kimi Aviso, who also appeared in the video.

WarZone is about the trauma of combat, the training and the quick decisions that can stay with a soldier long after the battle is over.

"I think it's coming out at the perfect time, with everything that's happening in the Middle East. I think it's a really important message to get out there."

Edward doesn't have any plans to become New Age Poet full-time but he's happy his work is available for people to enjoy.

"If I can share my art out there and somebody likes it or is engaged by it or is moved by it — I know it sounds corny but that's all I want."

In the zone: Edward Labbad (right), aka New Age Poet, with brother Roger and Kimi Aviso. Picture: Jeff de Pasquale



Youth parliament

HIGH school students who want their voices heard can become part of next year's YMCA Youth Parliament. Passionate teens, in years 10 to 12, will be chosen to represent their peers at the parliament from January to July. They work in committees to propose solutions to problems. Nominations close November 30.

Details: ymcansw.org.au.

Women tradies

TAFE Southwest Sydney Institute will offer a five-day program to give young women a taste of trades like plumbing, electrical work, bricklaying and landscaping. The institute received \$25,000 from the state government to run the course for 60 women. Campbelltown MP Bryan Doyle urged local candidates to apply.

Details: tafensw.edu.au/trade-readiness.

Volunteer awards

THERE'S just three weeks left to nominate a worthy volunteer for this year's National Volunteer Awards Macarthur. Federal MP Russell Matheson, who will host the awards, said the ceremony is on December 5. There is a wide range of categories.

Nomination forms are at Russell Matheson's office, 47 Argyle Street, Camden or russell.matheson.mp@aph.gov.au or 4655 7600.

Section by section

AS WORK continues on widening the M5, Campbelltown MP Bryan Doyle said the speed limit would return to normal for one section, at least. Motorists can again travel at 100km/h between Prestons and Liverpool: "The opening of the third lanes in both directions between Camden Valley Way and the Hume Highway overpass is improving traffic flow and saving time for commuters."

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