

IN BRIEF**Ferry builder cracks Japan**

Australian builders of high-speed ferries, which have supplied vessels to Europe, China, South America and the Middle East, have extended their successes to an important new market, Japan.

Western Australian shipbuilder Austal Ships signed a \$10.7 million contract to build a 43m passenger catamaran for the Diamond Ferry Co of Japan. It will operate between Shikoku Island and Kyushu Island.

Exports of high-speed ferries, virtually unheard of a decade ago, reached \$325 million in 1993 and are tipped to hit \$550 million in 1995.

Cannonball

DARWIN: The widows of the two Japanese entrants in the Cannonball Run killed on Tuesday have visited the crash site in central Australia to pay their respects. Speaking through interpreters, the widows said their husbands died doing what they loved.

TAB contract

MELBOURNE: The Victorian Government's decision to sever a TAB contract with its Vanuatu betting agency, Chung Corporation, would not cost taxpayers a cent, Parliament was told yesterday. Racing Minister Tom Reynolds said there was no penalty clause in the Chung contract.

The Opposition renewed its call for the Government to release the names of the secret partners behind Chung Corp.

Race hazard

SYDNEY: Nine school children were taken to hospital and another 36 were treated for ailments ranging from respiratory problems to dehydration experienced during an inter-school cross-country run in Parramatta Park yesterday. The

Parramatta Park yesterday. The run, involving 2225 children, was held in unseasonably warm weather and at a time when a massive dust cloud was still lingering over the city. All nine had been released by last night.

Health protest

BOMADERRY, NSW: Protesters disrupted the official opening of a new train service to the south coast town of Bomaderry, attended by eight government ministers. About 50 people gathered outside the station yesterday to protest against cuts to health and welfare services when the new Endeavour train arrived carrying the ministers.

Petrol burns

SYDNEY: A 54-year-old man is in a stable condition in hospital with petrol burns to about 40 per cent of his lower legs after an industrial accident at Prospect Reservoir in the city's west yesterday.