

Primary entry # 3: Floraville Public School



FLORAVILLE Frontline



OLD AND NEW: Institutionalised vs alfresco. — Pictures by Connor Armstrong and Kody Dale

Business is booming in Belmont

By TAYLOR ALLEN

SUBSTANTIAL changes are under way in Belmont. Apartments, new supermarkets and fast food outlets are all bringing a modern look to the suburb, which caters for a growing community of more than 50,000 residents.

Interested developers in the Lake Macquarie area include Scott Shafren, who was one of the first to take advantage of Lake Macquarie City Council's Lifestyle 2020 strategy on Belmont Bay.

Mr Shafren believes that people are realising Belmont is a sought-after area in Lake Macquarie. This is because it is within most people's price range and amenities are available within a short distance.

The new Belmont Central and Santorini Apartments add a cosmopolitan feel to the suburb with their contemporary style.

The re-development of Belmont Bowling Club incorporates a Woolworths supermarket, which will give consumers choice and add competitiveness to the local market.

"When Woolworths and the bowling club are completed, the chamber would like to review the speed limits along Brooks Parade as additional trucks will have to service the area," said Lake Macquarie Chamber of Commerce town co-ordinator Jenny Barrie.

She added that the chamber would also look at the effect of development on power, water and the lake.

New rules costing jobs

By RACHELLE PIPER

NEWCASTLE, like many other cities, has recently been experiencing a rise in anti-social behaviour. The reasons are largely being attributed to a combination of binge drinking and drugs.

Statistics show that one in 10 16- to 18-year-olds binge-drinks every week.

Binge drinking also appears to be a generational issue, with 16- to 18-year-olds more likely to drink or take drugs than ever before. In the past year 1700 children, some as young as 10, were treated in hospital for alcohol-related issues.

Parental behaviour may be influencing the trend as 450,000 children in Australia live with alcoholic guardians.

One solution aimed at stopping trouble-making binge drinkers from walking the streets in Newcastle is the introduction of a 1am lockout and earlier closing times.

Police liaison officer Senior Constable Tony Tamplin says that educating teenagers about the dangers of binge drinking and drugs is another strategy that could help solve the problem.

"The only concern the community may have is the cost of this program," Senior Constable Tamplin said.

One program being trialled in the Sutherland Shire requires



SNAPSHOT: A still shot from a television advertisement aimed at curbing binge drinking.

— Picture courtesy of Fairfax Digital Collections

parents to attend counselling with children who drink under-age.

If they fail to turn up twice they face a fine of \$500. The counselling sessions are already being attended by 140 under-age drinkers and their parents.

Toby Craggs, a patron who goes into Newcastle regularly, believes the new rules are succeeding.

"I think it is a good thing that they

are closing the pubs earlier," he said. "It's the beginning of many changes that will occur until patrons learn to act like young adults. I definitely feel safer now."

While some may feel safer, there is a downside. On Monday, April 7, *The Herald* reported that a number of hotel staff faced job cuts. Many of these people are university students who work as security

guards and bartenders.

Despite the new regime, two men were bashed and robbed during the early hours of Saturday, April 5.

"I don't believe that the lockout is working very well," said Jade Beentjes, of the King Street Hotel.

"It is putting people who would usually be in the bar outside on the streets and people are losing their jobs, as patron numbers are down."



REFURBISHMENT: An example of what Floraville PS may soon look like. — Picture by Jackson Attenborough

Floraville expands and improves

By ALEX BROWN

THE 580 children at Floraville PS will benefit from a multimillion-dollar expansion and refurbishment of their school.

The school's previous principal Lance Marsh worked hard for many years to lobby various government departments to highlight the need for improvements to the 40-year-old school.

In March, 2007, Mr Marsh and the school community were elated to learn that their application had been successful and the school was to receive a multimillion-dollar upgrade.

After many years of waiting, the students will be happy to see tractors and bulldozers arrive in late September to begin work.

The Floraville school community will benefit

from six newly refurbished classrooms, a new hall, library, staffroom, administration and computer room. A lift will also be installed to enable access for people with disabilities to the library and computer room.

The current school principal, Nielsen Oxenford, says having a hall will greatly enhance the school's ability to hold quality performances and assemblies.



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Creating a teenage no-man's land

Editorial

By CONNOR ARMSTRONG

CHILDREN are losing their childhood at an alarming rate.

They are confused by the mixed messages and traumatised by images, ideas and sounds.

The worst culprit of all is movies. Today's audiences aren't satisfied if there's not tons of action, violence and/or swearing.

A recent survey of more than 60 students and their families in the Floraville community showed that one-third of the children's favourite computer or video games were rated M or MA.

Another one-third of Floraville children had snuck "under the radar" and watched movies that they were not meant to see.

Children are able to access MA 15+ and R 18+ rated games with little fear of repercussion. According to a year 6 school-based survey, the PlayStation game *Grand Theft Auto* is most popular. This game is rated MA 15+ and has guns, theft, drugs and violence.

Video music clips thump and grind themselves into children's eyes, ears and minds. Sex, drugs, swearing and violence become normal viewing. Music clips are shown everywhere: TV, restaurants, shops and even on the popular PlayStation game *Sing*

Star. How can a child escape?

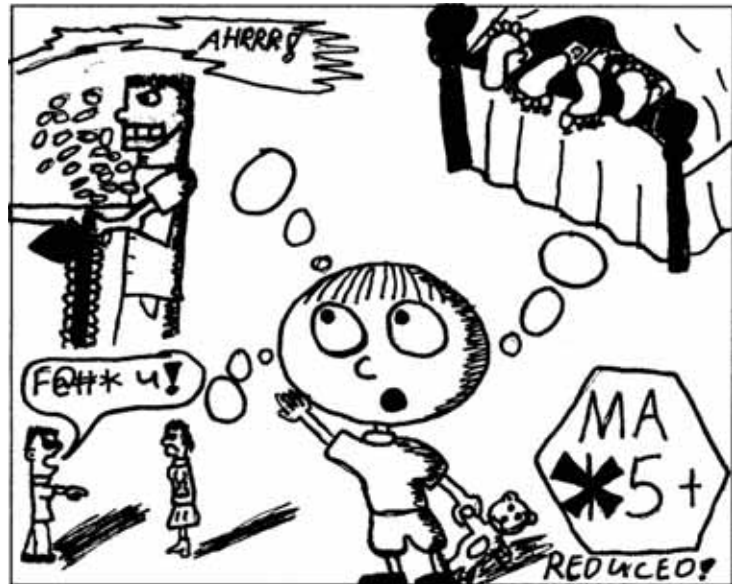
Children are bombarded with images of youths drinking on TV and in magazines they can read about the latest incident where a boozy celebrity has made a scene.

The general message is that it's cool to be "smashed". It was reported recently that hospital emergency rooms had treated up to 1700 children, some as young as 10, for under-age drinking in the past year. This flies in the face of the government's latest idea of lifting the legal drinking age to 21.

Is the government contradicting itself by allowing increasingly sexual and/or violent movies, music clips and video games into children's lives, while at the same time considering increasing the legal age to drink alcohol? Are they not just creating a big "no-man's land", a period of many years where youths spend idle time, armed with an overload of adult knowledge and images, with nowhere to go?

The result will be an even longer time for an adolescent to be in limbo. Evidence of this is seen in the Corey Worthington example, where a teenager achieved "legend" status for trying to "fill in" time until he and his mates were 18 by throwing parties and getting into trouble. Imagine if Corey had to wait until he was 21?

Governing bodies need to put childhood on their agenda in future, because it's worth protecting.



— Illustration by Daniel Stuchbury



COMMENDATION: Jye Cuskelly and Connor Armstrong interview Robert Coombs on his views about a current Floraville Landcare project.

Landcare cut way through

By JYE CUSKELLY

IN Coronet Close, Floraville, there is a special place where an enormous project is coming into being.

Floraville Ridge and Rainforest Landcare have been given a special grant by the Environmental Trust group, through the Department of Environment and Climate Change, to make a track to a rainforest area.

Lake Macquarie City Council Landcare co-ordinator, John Hughson, said the track was a fabulous idea and would offer people the opportunity to look after a bit of beautiful bushland.

"It's great to see the local community looking after the environment," he said.

Volunteers will cut through lantana, privet, bitou bush and honeysuckle, being careful not to disturb the endangered wildlife.

Co-ordinator of the Landcare group, Winsome Lambkin, said the rainforest was home to a powerful owl and the barking owl, both of which were classed as vulnerable.

Landcare vegetation officer Carl Fulton praised the initiative.

"It's part of a program to protect all the endangered ecological plants such as the magenta lilli pilli," Mr Fulton said.

"It's a wonderful project that we have ignored for too long," said Robert Coombs, member for Swansea. "Activities such as this can only be commended."

Harmony Day: together we are united

By BRITTANY PRYCE and MICHAELA FRATER

ON Wednesday, March 19, members of the Floraville PS community came together as one to celebrate diversity.

On Harmony Day, children were encouraged to accept one another and celebrate individuality.

The students concentrated on Australian values such as respect, difference, acceptance, equality and having "a fair go".

Floraville had a special guest, Mohammad

Komara, who is a refugee from Cambodia. He came to share his own personal journey about the torture and hardship he had suffered throughout his life.

On this special day, children were given the chance to wear orange clothing and were asked to bring a donation to raise money for Cambodian educational programs.

A total of \$408.40 was raised.

"I was touched by Mr Komara's speech," said Sam Harden, of year 6.



DIVERSITY: Mohammad Komara with students on Harmony Day. — Picture by Kody Dale

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Advertisement created by Sam Harden of Floraville Public School.

