

Primary school entry #40: Merewether Public School



# Merewether Public Newswave

Quality Respect and Responsibility



**ALMOST THERE:** Rusi Bainivalu and Genene Grugeon were once Olympic contenders.

— Pictures by Viana Bainivalu and Kaylea Meguyer

## Flame is still burning on the inside

By VIANA BAINIVALU and KAYLEA MEGUYER

WITH the Beijing Olympics about to start, a parent and an aunt of children at Merewether Public School know what it's like to be a contender for the games but miss out.

Mr Rusi Bainivalu gave up his chance to represent Fiji at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games in the 400m running event.

He had already represented Fiji in the South Pacific Games in 1979 and South Pacific Athletic Championships in 1984 in the 100m, 200m and 400m.

He was offered and took an eight-week trip to Australia that interfered with his training schedule for the Olympics. He still wonders what might have been.

But Mr Bainivalu, father of student Viana, is excited about the Olympic Games and has no regrets about coming to Australia.

He said almost getting to the Olympics was a great experience and he still dreams about it.

Another Hunter athlete, Genene Grugeon, 35, from Nelson Bay, and an aunt of student Kaylea Meguyer, was also an Olympics contender.

Ms Grugeon was a NSW champion, came second in nationals titles and as a teenager tied with Cathy Freeman.

A training injury ended her athletics career but she still enjoys pentathlons and triathlons.

# Hidden coastal pollution

By HANNAH PATRICK and JESSICA LANGAN

MEREWETHER Public School students have learnt that the biggest cause of pollution on their beaches is not sewage but rubbish washed down stormwater drains.

Many Merewether students enjoy the clean sand and clear water of the coastal stretch from Merewether to Bar Beach.

Newcastle City Council cleaners do a fantastic job each morning picking up the litter in car parks and along the popular walking track. A tractor grades the sand and cleans the golden strip so all people can enjoy a pristine coast.

But on the stretches of beaches that don't get a daily manicure there is evidence of how the coastline is being destroyed by pollution and neglect.

Wastewater treatment plants in the region have been upgraded at a cost of \$150 million to provide secondary treatment, which has led to cleaner beaches.

But a Surf Rider Foundation survey on Susan Gilmore Beach over one year uncovered a staggering truth.

The study showed it was not sewage going onto our beaches but rather rubbish washing down stormwater drains and being



**WASHED UP:** A study has shown that this type of rubbish, on Dudley Beach, is too common. — Picture by Hannah Patrick

thrown from boats off the coast that is polluting beaches.

"More than 3000 pieces of litter are deposited each month and almost half the rubbish was small pieces of polystyrene," the foundation's Mr Chris Tola said.

"Such small pieces of rubbish could be deadly for marine life if swallowed."

Other rubbish found on bea-

ches included glass, wrappers, bottle caps and takeaway food containers. The amount of plastic washed up on beaches indicated that large amounts were being illegally dumped at sea and on the beach.

"Our research has shown that discarded plastic such as water bottles and plastic bags have been found in our waters and

seabirds, fish and sea mammals are becoming tangled in it.

"Unable to free themselves, many suffer a long and painful death. Birds have become entangled in discarded fishing line and drowned, while lost drift nets are particularly dangerous to marine species, killing sharks, dolphins and whales off our coastline."



**OUT OF REACH:** Another property on the market in Merewether. — Picture by Matthew Paddison

## Priced out of a place to call home

By MATTHEW PADDISON

WITH a new record price set recently for the sale of a property in Newcastle, it is questionable whether young people growing up today will be able to afford a house in their town.

A new record was set with the sale of a Newcastle Hill property for \$7 million dollars and there have been other high

prices such as \$2.6 million in Bar Beach Avenue and \$2.3 million in Ridge Street, Merewether.

The median house price in Merewether is about \$580,000, compared to 15 years ago when it was about \$180,000.

If this trend continues in the next 15 years, the average cost of a home in the area may be \$1.74 million.

And in 15 years time

homebuyers' repayments will triple.

At \$1.74 million and with interest rates at almost 10 per cent, interest on the loan will be \$174,000 a year.

So with living expenses such as food, bills and entertainment, people will need about \$500,000 a year to afford a decent house.

They should start saving now.



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# Council rules are going to the dogs

## Editorial

By THE NEWSPAPER TEAM

NEWCASTLE City Council's unleashed dog areas are appreciated but not adequate enough for dog owners in Merewether.

Dixon Park Reserve is the only unleashed area and it closes at 9am. Many people in the suburb use the area between 7am and 8am before work and school.

As this is the only time of day available, the reserve is often crowded with dogs and scary for children. There is more chance of dogs fighting because the area is crowded, making it unsafe for children.

Many locals risk the council's ridiculous \$110 off-leash fine and take their dogs to safer and quieter areas around the suburb. After 9am even unleashed dog owners at Dixon Park Reserve become lawbreakers.

Years ago dog owners were given more options such as the southern end of Merewether Baths and Burwood Beach. Maybe these were abused by a few but after years of heavy policing and restricted areas, dog owners are more aware of rules and regulations and these areas should be opened again.

It makes sense that the more areas available the more benefit there will be to the healthy lifestyle

of many Merewether families.

Council regulations are all wrong on this matter. Dog owners should be given the right to make their dog a loved member of the family in all outdoor public places. The areas available to dogs should not be restricted because this leads to responsible dog owners being forced to break the law.

A better way of regulating dogs is to punish dog owners for irresponsible behaviour. For example, if a dog is running free in the street without an owner, the owner should be contacted and fined. For a dog being off the leash near a busy road the owner should be fined because the dog is in danger.

The wellbeing of the dog is the key and owners should take responsibility for the care of their pet and provide a healthy and loving environment. If dogs were treated this way, there would be no need to restrict dogs from outdoor public places.

By banning dogs from so many public places the council is breaking the bond between pets and their owners. Dogs should be allowed to go to any beach for a morning or afternoon swim with their owner or a run in any park before or after school.

Dogs are the owners' responsibility, just like the child is for its parents, but the council doesn't ban children from public outdoor spaces, even though they can be very irritating at times.



Illustration by Noah Harland



WINNERS ARE GRINNERS: Merewether Public School Pink Diamonds aerobics team with coach Kathryn Nagle.

# Pink Diamond group shines

By THOMAS WILLIAMS

MEREWETHER Public School Pink Diamonds aerobics team won the state championship at the University of Technology and Science in Sydney on June 22.

They trained three days a week for two terms to compete against private and public schools.

Teacher Mrs Kathryn Nagle has coached the teams for the past four years.

"We've always placed very well but winning first in the state has been a huge confidence boost for the team, who will now compete in the national titles in Melbourne this month," Mrs Nagle said.

She believes intense training and

attention to detail is what made the Pink Diamonds so good.

"We have a great support team of parents who do hair and costumes and the girls really nail their steps time after time."

The team is Josie Gardiner, Skye Richardson, Alli Whalley, Rebekka Forster, Ayla Kaan, Victoria Stafford, Ashleigh Prince and Gabbie Loades.

Principal Mr Richard Hartley said a large group of supporters would attend the national finals.

He is encouraging local businesses to support the team and said some had already given financial donations. "If there are any associations who wish to support healthy, active children fulfil their dream, this is a great opportunity to do so."

# Pining to save the Wollemi-o-saurus plant

By JAYDEN BAKER

THE Wollemi Pine, which was believed to have been extinct, was rediscovered in 1994 in Wollemi National Park, just outside Sydney.

Sadly there are fewer than 100 adult wollemi pines, from a 200-million-year-old plant family, known to still exist in the wild.

But to help this fragile prehistoric flora survive, seedlings were put on sale to the public in 2006 to help replenish its numbers.

Its scientific name is *Wollemia nobilis* and it is related to the Norfolk Island kauri pine, hoop pine, bunya pine and monkey puzzle pine.

Now is the time to plant the pine.

A good feed with a combination of fertiliser and warm winter sun should produce a growth spurt of the main stem in spring.

By buying a wollemi pine you can be part of one of the world's most dramatic comebacks in natural history.



JURASSIC CLASS-IC: Merewether Public School students with dinosaur tucker. — Picture by Thomas Williams

Opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the competition sponsors.

Who is on the \$20 note?  
See page 46 for answer



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Advertisement created by Kaylea Meguyer of Merewether Public School.

