

LOCHINVAR LANTERN



TAKE ME HOME: There are many animals waiting to be loved at Rutherford RSPCA.
— Picture by Ashley Crebert

It's raining cats and dogs

By **ASHLEY CREBERT** and **MELISSA THOM**

RUTHERFORD RSPCA has marked its first birthday at its \$10 million, state-of-the-art facility and has celebrated this milestone by reflecting on its achievements to date.

Rutherford RSPCA, which incorporates a veterinary hospital, includes facilities such as consultation rooms, four surgical tables, five isolation areas, under-floor heating, an exercise area and an easy-access ambulance bay.

The centre now houses up to 80 animals at any given time.

The RSPCA also acts as the local pound. The veterinary hospital has separate rooms for pets of private patients so that they will not come into contact with stray animals, who may not have had all necessary vaccinations.

Kathy Monk, head of the volunteer branch of the Rutherford RSPCA and a volunteer for the past 18 years, said that it was a wonderful facility to work in and a great place of employment.

She says that the only downside to her job was putting down animals and this occurred because there was an over-supply of animals.

"It is really heartbreaking to be an animal lover and to have to put them down because they are unloved or unwanted," Ms Monk said. "It is the most distressing aspect of the job."

Hunter flood calamities

By **TIARNA ELEMENT**

MAITLAND residents who experienced the devastating floods of 1955 found that levee banks helped to ease the devastation during recent flooding of the Hunter River.

Many residents who have lived in the region for a long time feared the worst when media reports indicated that the Hunter River would rise to the levels it reached in 1955.

In 1955, the Hunter River peaked at 11 metres and almost every river system in NSW flooded. In 2007, the Hunter River peaked at 10.5 metres.

Dalwood resident, Edith McRae, has watched the Hunter River rise and fall during the time she has lived in the region.

"The 2007 flood was not as terrible to experience due to water levels not being as high because there have been many levee banks formed since 1955," Ms McRae said.

She also credited the work of the State Emergency Services volunteers in the recent floods.

"The SES was formed after the 1955 flood and may have helped to save lives. They certainly do incredible work," she said.

In 1955, the disaster claimed 24 people's lives, destroyed or washed away 58 homes and flooded more than 500 houses.



WET, WET, WET: Damaging flood waters blocked roads, but they didn't reach the peaks of the '55 floods.
— Picture by Tiarna Element

This year's flood claimed the lives of nine people, including five members of the same family.

Thousands of residents were evacuated from the city and resi-

dents experienced traffic chaos in the aftermath of the flooding.

The recent floods seem to have had a greater financial impact, presumably because more houses

and infrastructure exist today than in 1955.

The NSW Premier, Morris Iemma, estimated the damage bill to exceed \$10 million.

Web bullying - a threat in social networks

By **LAURA ROBINSON** and **REBECCA JOHNSON**

BULLYING on social networks such as My Space and MSN is becoming increasingly common among teenagers and young adults, and professionals are claiming that these internet net-

works are posing dangers that are extremely alarming.

Recently, many concerns have been raised over the use of My Space as a place for bullying and violence because harassment is not new. In 2006, teen magazine *Girlfriend* surveyed 13,300 teens and found that 42 per cent

had experienced cyber bullying.

In response to these findings, adolescent psychologist Dr Michael Carr Gregg said, "There is a belief that cyber-bullying isn't a big deal, but *Girlfriend's* survey confirms it's much more widespread

than first thought.

"Parents often don't realise that the capacity for harm in the cyber world can be much faster, more widespread and just as damaging as playground bullying," Dr Carr Gregg said.

According to experts, the adolescent that the bully

picks on may have done something to them in the past and they are getting revenge, or the bully may just see them as "uncool" or "nerdy".

Teenagers being subjected to any kind of online abuse are urged to seek help from parents or help lines.

THE LOCHINVAR LANTERN'S EDITING TEAM: ODETTE LAWLER, CHRISTOPHER ROSE, SEBASTIAN MEREDITH, JADE HARTIGAN AND CLAIRE BRADSHAW, of YEAR 10.



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The pressure to pursue perfection

Editorial

By TIARNA ELEMENT

BODY image has always been a hot topic and its effects are clearly evident in society. The recent controversy surrounding British alternative pop-singer Lily Allen and her comments on her My Space page clearly illustrate this.

Allen caused a furore when she expressed a negative self-image.

The situation reflects a growing problem: celebrities expressing opinions that influence the perceptions of teenagers who admire them. This can have strong negative impacts on self esteem, self respect and, in some severe cases, people's health.

This is particularly evident in young teenage girls today. How people see themselves is mostly influenced by the media, fashion trends, peer groups, family and advertising.

With so many airbrushed, glossy pictures of idols and heroes, the young of today constantly compare their images to those that have been subject to special photo manipulation and make-up.

The people in the photographs do not look like this in reality, yet there are many out there trying to replicate the look; the look that is perfect skin, stick-thin figure and most definitely not realistic.

Print media isn't the only suspect. Film also poses a lot of negative influences. Switch on to *Rage* or *Video Hits* and you'll see a

lot of artists selling a lot more than their music. Girls dressed in short skirts, high heels and rolling around in water. Male artists such as 50 Cent and Eminem teach boys that you aren't with the trend unless your pants are hanging down around your ankles.

These influences guide the thoughts of teenagers by creating an image of what they believe they ought to look like and what bodily parts they desire to change.

The ultimate reality is that no one can do anything about height, skin colour, and basic body shape, though many celebrities with plastic procedures try to prove this wrong.

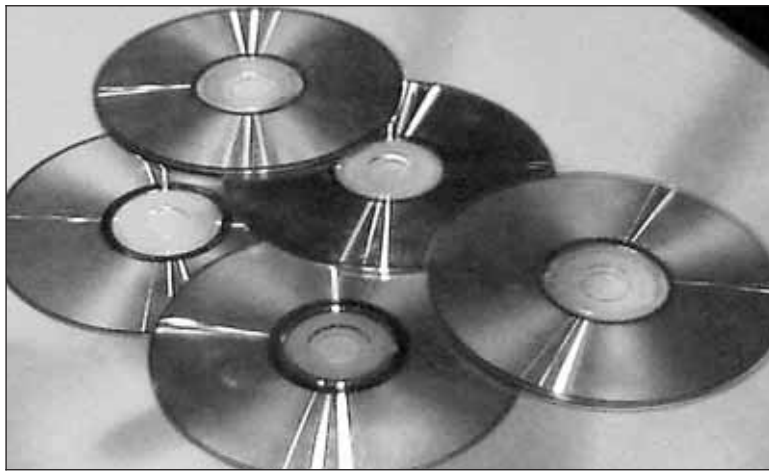
How people wish to be seen by others should go beyond looks. Some wish to be seen as happy, popular and, a growing phenomenon in young girls; mature.

Girlfriend features writer Odette Walker said, "more and more girls write in to our magazine concerned with their looks. They are getting younger, it is really sad. Kids need to have a childhood."

Lily Allen may have brought this issue to the forefront again, but it is one that needs to be addressed. The worrying trend of pro-anorexia internet sites needs to be regulated by the government.

We all need to remember that different bodies are what make us different and focus on developing our personality and talents.

As Lily Allen ultimately concluded, "I really am incredibly lucky". We all need to remember to look at what we do have, rather than focusing on images that will negatively affect us.



ILLEGAL: Piracy is becoming a big problem for video and DVD outlets. — Picture by Matthew Kelly

Pirates of the cyber-world

By MATTHEW KELLY and JOSHUA WALKLING

PIRATED movies are becoming increasingly common and the difficulties faced in attempting to regulate this situation are resulting in the effects of piracy being felt by businesses in the Hunter Region.

Brendan, an employee of Movie House, a DVD rental outlet, said that although movie rental companies were very aware of the situation, they seemed to have no way of stopping it.

"DVD companies are constantly inventing new ways to attempt to counteract DVD piracy – for example, encrypting special codes on discs, which stop DVDs from being burnt," Brendan said.

"People, however, somehow seem to keep bypassing these measures. In fact, we have even had people return a burnt copy of a DVD and keep the real copy for themselves!"

In a survey conducted by *The Lantern*, 46 out of 50 people admitted that they burnt DVDs on a regular basis. Thirty-seven out of 50 admitted to, at some stage, having pirated movies from the internet.

When asked if they felt any guilt about pirating DVDs, only two people replied that they did. More than 10 people claimed that they didn't even realise that DVD burning was against the law.

All owners of rental outlets contacted by *The Lantern* said their profits were affected by movie piracy.

Residents assert that Hunter GP numbers still insufficient

By TIARNA ELEMENT

SOME Hunter residents claim that GP numbers are insufficient in the region, although some statistics do not support this assertion because they do not account for problems in individual suburbs.

A Lorn resident, who only wished to be known as Harriet, claimed that she has difficulty in securing an appointment to see a doctor.

"Sometimes I feel as though I have to anticipate any illness so that I can get an appointment at the time that I am sick," Harriet said.

While figures vary from region to region, the Hunter is generally above the average doctor-to-patient ratio.

However, in areas such as Maitland and Cessnock, numbers are around one doctor to every 1900 people.

The recommended ratio is one doctor for every 1200 residents.

Earlier this year, Labor Deputy Leader, Julia Gillard, said that if Labor won the election, it would look at introducing an incentive program to get doctors where they were most needed.

Fitting in: is it the new black?

By ALEXANDRA JAMES and GIVERNY CHOMISZAK

BRITISH alternative singer, Lily Allen, has had to retract statements posted on My Space expressing negative self-image and considerations of cosmetic surgery following extensive media attention during her latest tour of the US.

Employees at *Cosmopolitan* magazine face the issue of body image in their day-to-day work and fashion editor, Nicole Adolphe, certainly sees it as a topical issue.

"This is a tough era of life when everyone wants to fit in and it's easy to say just be yourself when you really don't know who yourself is," she said.

Celebrities are also part of the driving force of this dilemma; pop idols such as *The Pussycat Dolls* encourage an emphasis on looking sexy and behaviour that could be considered derogatory to women.

Media reports indicate that Hollywood socialite, Nicole Ritchie, allegedly held a recent party with "No girls over 100 pounds (45 kilograms) allowed in. Start starving yourself now" in the invitation email.

On her website, Allen stated, "Seeing my picture in so many papers next to Kate Moss made me feel grotesque momentarily." She concluded: "I really am incredibly lucky. I guess it just shows how much of an effect the media can have on us young ladies."

The need to be thin is demonstrated clearly in the rise of "pro-anorexia" websites. These include tips on tricking doctors and psychiatrists.

Editorial, at left.



WEIGHTY WORRY: The internet can have a negative effect on the body image of teenagers.

— Picture by Giverny Chomiszak



— Illustration by Nadine Dauner

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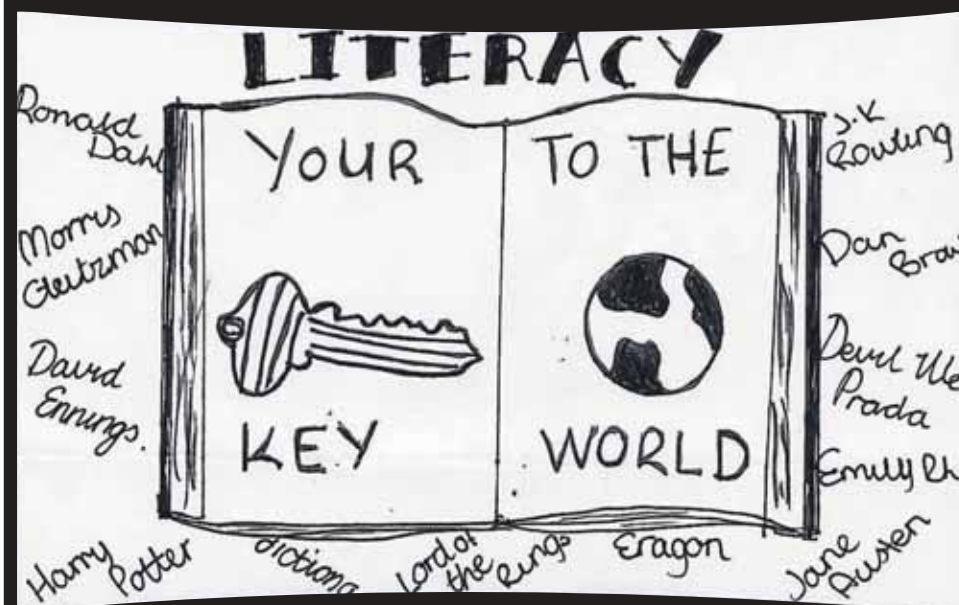
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