

Primary entry #23: Merewether PS



Quality Respect and Responsibility.

# Merewether Public Newswave



**WATER WATCHERS:** Jordy Bisby and Kimberly Whalley collecting water from the school water tank.  
— Picture by Charlotte Mahony

## No water, no crops

By CHARLOTTE MAHONY

PEOPLE living in Brisbane are currently on level five water restrictions with their water supply at just 19 per cent capacity.

Brisbanians are not permitted to water their gardens or wash their cars with hoses, and water must be bucketed out of showers.

Farmers throughout Australia are also suffering from the drought. This has led to increased costs at supermarkets as Australian products are, in some cases, being replaced by imported products because the drought has restricted the amount of crops grown domestically.

Newcastle's reserves presently stand at more than 80 per cent capacity while Sydney's are at just 29 per cent.

Novocastrians can't afford to overuse water, however, because their reserves are being shared with the Central Coast through a pipeline.

EnergyAustralia has designed a four-minute timer with a suction cup to encourage people to take shorter showers. Another water-saving product is the Hippo. This is a plastic bag that retains three litres of water from a normal 12-litre toilet flush.

At Merewether Public School, two large water tanks have been installed. One is being used to water the plants in the school greenhouse and gardens. The other tank will be hooked up to the preschool toilets.

## Learning ropes at 'big school'

By CASEY BISBY and EMMA HEARNE

PARENTS of children who aren't quite five at the beginning of kindergarten are becoming more aware of the need for early education.

The Department of Education is providing a program in public schools to match this growing need.

Only a few schools in a district are given the opportunity of providing a Young Starters program for children who are ready for school but are not quite old enough.

Children enrolled in a Young Starters program attend school every day from 9am to 3pm.

To help with the adjustment from preschool to "big school", young starters are allowed to leave school at 2.30pm for the first term.

Merewether Public School is one of the schools in the Newcastle district providing a young starters program.

The *Newswave* understands that parents of young starter children at Merewether Public School are happy with the learning processes and structure of the program.

Parents say it is giving their children the experience of being at school while still allowing them to be themselves.

These experiences include being a part of "big school" activities



**HEAD START:** Young Starter children enjoying a friendly game of snakes and ladders in the classroom.

including discos, dance classes, art classes, assemblies, carnivals, computer use and library use.

Parents and children agree that the school's teachers and the young starters' buddies are a large part of the program's success.

The young starter children are paired with year 6 buddies to help them make friends, find places in

the school and discover what they really love to do.

One young starter student said that the best part of going to school "is my buddies".

Many young starter children also attend Merewether Public's After School Care facility.

This service allows parents that work outside of school hours and

leave their children with qualified adults in a safe and familiar environment.

The young starter families of Merewether Public believe that there should be more young starter classes in both public and private schools so that those children who are ready for school have that opportunity.



**POSITIVE MESSAGE:** The school newspaper team with the Merewether PS sign.  
— Picture by Dylan Shelton

## School's popular sign of the times

By ZACK CALLAN and DYLAN SHELTON

IN 2006, Merewether Public School principal Richard Hartley wanted to see if the school sign would be missed if it was removed.

The sign, which fronts Glebe Road and is clearly visible to traffic and pedestrians, was installed originally to promote the school.

It quickly became an out-

let for cryptic messages, words of wisdom and riddles for passers-by.

Mr Hartley had the sign removed and the school received many phone calls from people who read it on a daily basis.

The sign was soon put back up and the first message was: "Back by popular demand".

Mr Hartley said the idea of the messages on the sign was

to put a smile on people's face and to occasionally have a school-related message.

The principal comes up with most of the messages himself and puts his own spin on some common sayings.

Mr Hartley said that people liked to be informed about happenings, but setting a positive tone was also very important.



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# LCD screens and plenty of green

**Editorial**  
By THE NEWSWAVE TEAM

CHILDREN with balanced, active lives who are doing the right things are being criticised and included in sweeping statements that just aren't true.

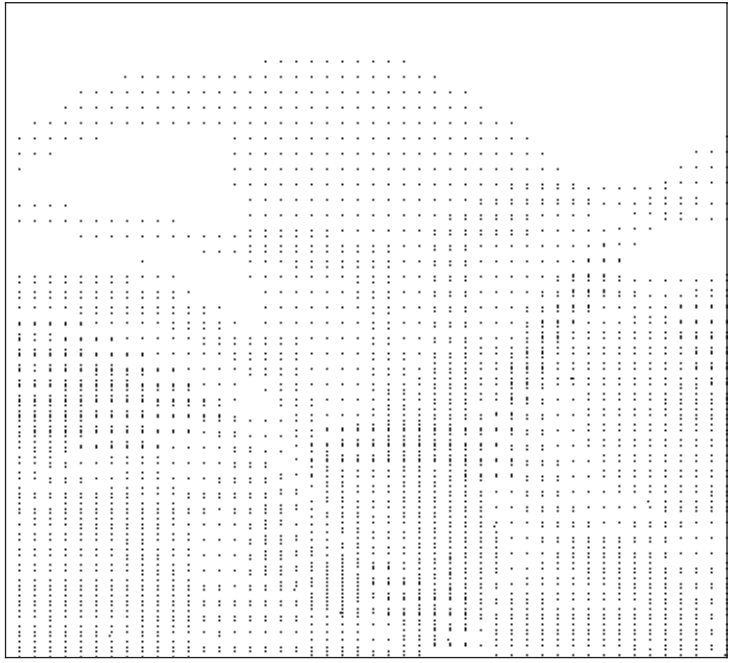
Merewether PS students reject the statements that children these days are over-absorbed in technology and not involved in healthy, active lifestyles.

Child obesity, learning problems and anti-social behaviours are more common because children are playing more video games, not sleeping enough, not active enough in their free time and eating too much junk.

Statements like these are related to minority groups and at Merewether PS we are standing up for our quality lifestyle.

It's rare to read or see positive news stories about children with balanced lives and healthy outlooks. Instead we are constantly reminded of the negatives.

Reports spreading the country lately paint a dim picture of kids in Australia. Guy Leech, the former Ironman, has made it his mission to help Australian kids get fit and live healthy lifestyles because of the health crisis kids face.



— Illustration by Alli Whalley

A recent current affairs program reported a child was going to be taken away from his parents because he was too fat.

We hear endless reports about child and adult obesity levels increasing in Australia.

A survey of students at Merewether PS found that students were balancing their spare time by participating in recreational activities and having quality time with friends and families.

When a wide variety of students were surveyed in the playground at Merewether PS about their leisure activities outside of school, it was discovered that students split their time evenly between inside and outside activities.

Video games, TV/DVDs, internet/email/MSN and reading took up an average of 24 hours a week for each child in comparison to organised sport, socialising and playing outside, which took up an average of 22 hours a week.

At Merewether PS we believe that we are the silent majority in this current spate of negativity towards children in the media. We are standing up for our good health and balanced lives by involving ourselves in equal amounts of indoor and outdoor activities.

It is a shame that the media doesn't focus on positive children's news stories and be responsible for role modelling balanced, healthy lifestyles.

# Scoop the poop

By JORDY BISBY and KIMBERLY WHALLEY

REMEMBER the television ad where the man turned on his sprinkler as a dog stopped to poop on his lawn?

Lots of people in Newcastle can relate to having a strange pooch poo on their lawn.

In Newcastle, dogs are lucky because there are lots of places that are especially designated for them.

Owners are permitted to let their dogs off the leash in these specially designated council areas.

The areas in Merewether's immediate vicinity are Dixon Park, Nesca Park and Horseshoe Beach, which attracts hundreds of dogs and their owners to the harbour foreshore every week.

Scooping up the poop, however, seems to be the biggest problem in these areas, as some owners refuse to take the responsibility for their pooch's business.

Council attempts to encourage this, including providing biodegradable plastic bags and waste bins, are not entirely successful and Newcastle City Council cleaners are sometimes left to clean up after irresponsible owners.

There are large fines for not



RESPONSIBLE: Jordy Bisby walking her dog, Lily.

— Picture by Kimberly Whalley

cleaning up after your dog.

Council suggests that you take a disposable bag with you when you take your dog on a walk, and make sure you put the bag in the bin once it's used.

Council's website states that if someone in control of a dog fails to clear up its mess immediately, the person is committing an offence.

It does not matter if it is in long grass, in the gutter or on the footpath. It has to be cleared up.

So remember – dog's business is our business.

# Defender in a squad of champs

By JORDY BISBY and KIMBERLY WHALLEY

TRIALS for Newcastle Netball Association's development squad were held on Sunday, April 29, and girls who played in the Newcastle competition were eligible to participate.

Many of these girls showed exceptional skill, strength, speed, determination and accuracy.

Twenty girls were hand-picked for a squad.

Representative netball is designed to help and train children reach a level where they can compete with other district representative teams from around the State.

One of the girls chosen for this squad was Merewether PS year 6 student, Jordy Bisby (pictured above in action).

"It's very exciting to be chosen to represent Newcastle against clubs from around the State," Jordy said.

"It's going to be a lot of hard work and training but I'm looking forward to it."

Jordy was selected to play goal defence. Her role on the court is to stop the opposition from getting the ball into the goal circle and taking shots.



# Survival guide to trying sport

By KIMBERLY WHALLEY

IF you like swimming, riding and running then triathlon could be the sport for you.

The first leg in a triathlon involves swimming and for children it is usually a swim of 50 to 200 metres.

The second leg is a bike ride, and distances vary from 2 to 6 kilometres.

The third and final leg is the run, which is usually between 500 metres and 2 kilometres.

The swimming leg is not as easy as jumping in and swimming laps in a pool.

You have to swim in a group so you might accidentally have your swimmers pulled down or be kicked in the head.

When you're doing the bike leg, remember to slow down at turns, be careful when overtaking and ride fast.

The run is quite simple – you just run to the turning point and back to finish. Just don't go out too hard too early.

If you're interested in getting more information about triathlons, go to [www.newcastletriathlon.org.au](http://www.newcastletriathlon.org.au)

Go on, try triathlon.



SPLASH: People competing in a Newcastle Weetbix triathlon event.

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