



# FERN BAY FLASH



**BOTTOMS UP:** Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, at Fern Bay PS.  
— Picture by Jack Dagger

## Every cup counts in cancer fight

By **ARRON VENDT**  
and **CHEYENNE VENDT**

AUSTRALIA'S Biggest Morning Tea is an annual fund-raising event for The Cancer Council.

One in three Australians are diagnosed with cancer in their lifetimes and participation in this event aids in the fight against cancer.

More than one million people were expected to take part in morning teas at homes, schools and offices across the country during May.

During 2005 so many people took part in the event that it earned a Guinness World Record for the largest simultaneous tea party.

By taking part in Australia's Biggest Morning Tea people help to build awareness, raise money and enjoy a social get-together.

Progress is being made in the fight against cancer and now more than 50 per cent of people survive the disease due to advances in detection, diagnosis and treatment.

The Cancer Council hoped to raise more than \$8 million from Australia's Biggest Morning Tea in 2007. This money has been earmarked to fund future research, clinical trials, health education programs and campaigns, advocacy and support services such as the Cancer Council Helpline and Cancer Connect.

# Waste not wanted

By **GRANT CUNNINGHAM**  
and **MATHEW GRIFFITHS**

DIANA Korving, education officer for Solo Resource Recovery, presented a waste education program to students at Fern Bay PS.

The presentation was interactive and students were provided with opportunities to discuss, ask and answer questions and sort and classify products into recyclable and non-recyclable groups.

Relevant facts and their ramifications for the future were also disseminated.

Of critical importance was the fact that Australia produces 1660 kilograms of waste per person per year, which makes Australians among the highest waste-producers in the world.

Students were told that, as individuals, they could change their buying habits and look for environmentally sensitive packaging.

They were also alerted to the fact that items in shops were often over-packaged. This over-packaging might make an item look better than it really was, make the item more expensive and also create more waste.

Stage two students Zachary Donnelly and Jaymie French said they found the presentation informative.

It made them realise their



**CONSUMER AWARENESS:** Students learn to shop to recycle.

— Picture by Rhiannon Williams

responsibilities in regards to matters concerning waste, and the importance of shopping with recycling in mind.

They said that awareness of certain products and packaging was essential and that people should only buy what was needed not what was purely wanted.

Helpful hints they suggested

were to borrow books from the library, share or trade CDs and DVDs with friends, buy in bulk, buy rechargeable batteries and energy-efficient appliances, and buy goods made from recycled materials or with recyclable packaging.

All these strategies resulted in less demand for goods to be made, required less packaging, saved

energy, reduced transportation, produced less waste and used less raw materials and natural resources.

Other things people could do to reduce waste included buying things which would last or could be fixed, and buying things that didn't have to be imported from another country.



**IN PROGRESS:** Sewerage improvements at Fern Bay.  
— Picture by Kandice Ling

## Environmentally friendly sewerage scheme

By **HARMONY MACHIN WALKER,**  
**LUKE CUNNINGHAM, JAYMIE FRENCH**  
and **ISABEL LAUINA**

WORK continues on a multi-million dollar sewerage scheme at Fern Bay.

Hunter Water manager Kevin Young said the Fern Bay scheme would be particularly beneficial to the environment.

"That's a really important area, with respect to sewerage," Mr Young said.

"It's an environmentally sensitive area so we expect the sewerage scheme there will not only be good for the local environment but will also allow further growth to occur in that important area."

The works at Fern Bay will convert disposed septic tank wastewater to reticulated sewage.

The Flash visited the site to interview workers and residents about the works in progress.

Workers at the site felt that even though they had faced a lot of

challenges that work was progressing well and was still on track. Local resident Sue Threlfall said that she had been affected by street closures and the noisy equipment.

She is looking forward to their septic tank not having to be pumped out and to ground water returning to its normal condition.

"Although a long-winded project, it is a good thing that's being done and upgrades our small village," she said.



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# Down the drain

## Editorial

By ZACHARY DONNELLY,  
KANDICE LING  
and GRANT CUNNINGHAM

AUSTRALIA is in the grip of a water crisis. In NSW and other states, water restrictions have been introduced to combat the shortage.

Australia is currently experiencing a long drought – the second in a decade.

Water is a precious resource and attempts to use it more efficiently are always welcome.

However, any serious discussion of water shortages needs to identify where it is going, and it isn't mostly down domestic sinks, into our gardens or swimming pools.

Some key issues are being glossed over in the current climate of water panic.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian households consumed only 9 per cent of the 25,000 gegalitres consumed in 2004.

The agriculture industry consumed 60 per cent of this total.

In NSW over the same period, the agricultural industry consumed 78 per cent of the total water volume and total household consumption was just 7 per cent.

The figures are fairly even across the states.

These figures raise new questions: why is the government and media campaign focused on household consumption? And is the solution really a new shower-

head and a brick in the cistern?

What is needed is more planning and democratic control of vital resources like water.

The focus of concern needs to be shifted from household consumers to the real guzzlers of Australia's most precious water supply – the agriculture, mining and manufacturing industries.

Where household consumption is concerned, governments should be supplying and installing free of charge the showerheads, grey-water systems and other water saving devices that it promotes.

More importantly, federal and state governments need to make more concerted efforts to reverse the key environment crises making Australian extremes even more extreme.

During climatic extremes those on the land feel it the most.

Agriculture suffers severely – yet it impacts on everyone. Drought disrupts cropping programs, reduces breeding stock and threatens erosion of the capital of farming enterprises. Declining productivity affects rural Australia and the national economy.

The risk of serious environmental damage, particularly through vegetation loss and soil erosion, has long-term effects on the sustainability of our agricultural industries.

There's little doubt that people are increasingly conscious of water being a precious resource.

Householders are being water-wise and it is now time for industries to be environmentally responsible as part of the solution to the problem. Water saving must be a joint effort of industry, households and government.



ON SHOW: A chance to perform.

— Picture by Jake Dickinson

# Love of learning

By GRACE WILLIAMS  
and KIRSTY-LEE DEVEREUX

THE theme for Education Week 2007 was: "A Love of Learning" but the staff and students at Fern Bay Public School embody this theme on a daily basis through hard work and enthusiasm.

Staff and students at Fern Bay believe the most important thing at school is learning how to learn.

Education Week is a chance to showcase the quality of public education and to acknowledge the contribution of parents and communities to the success of public schools.

Fern Bay celebrated Education Week by holding an open day at the School. Members of the community arrived in large numbers to join in the celebrations.

All stakeholders were engaged and had fun, according to parent Michelle Ling.

The students performed musical items and senior students presented PowerPoint programs on values including care, fairness, respect, integrity, democracy, responsibility, participation, excellence and co-operation.

Michelle Dickinson noted the amount of effort and creativity demonstrated by the students.

An information session on reporting to parents was also presented by the school's principal, Joanne Farmer.

Parents Nicki Cunningham and Leah Robertson said that the new reporting system gave them a better understanding of how their children were doing at school.

Education Week also provided an opportunity for all to reflect on school policies and practices and ensure that education was not only about learning how to learn, but loving learning now and in the future.

# Plane crazy day

By RHIANNON WILLIAMS,  
JOSHUA TERRY  
and JASPER LAUINA

PLANE Crazy Day is an invitation for young Australians to combine fun with an education about the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

On May 18, Fern Bay PS held a Plane Crazy Day to raise funds for the RFDS.

The Reverend John Flynn started the RFDS in 1928. The RFDS is the third-largest airline in Australia, with 50 aircraft.

The RFDS is available for all Australians who are living, working or travelling in country towns, farming communities or outback areas across Australia.

The RFDS also transfers patients between Australia's largest cities when they need specialist surgery.

The RFDS helps people all over Australia and provides many different services including emergency flights, air ambulance, primary health clinics, radio and telephone consultations and medical checks.

Raising money is very important for the RFDS as it enables the organisation to pay for maintenance of aircraft and medical equipment.

There are many ways that the RFDS raises money to keep its vital service going.

Students at Fern Bay PS wore their craziest outfits to school and made a gold coin donation to help the flying doctors save lives.



— Illustration by Callen Reddish

# School prospers from workers' generosity

By JACK GRAY,  
JAKE DICKINSON  
and TARA LYNCH

A PROJECT based on Kooragang Island, which employed 700 locally based workers during the past 15 months, made a substantial donation to Fern Bay PS during Education Week.

The project donated \$8000 to the school for playground improvements.

The donation came from the proceeds of vending machines on site.

Project manager Dave Elsdon made a presentation to the school community.

The donation will be used to purchase a basketball hoop and backboard, soccer posts and nets, and a laptop computer to run the school's new electronic whiteboard.

The playground improvements will have a positive impact on all students as they learn how mind power, health/nutrition and physical fitness contribute to a balanced life.



DONATION: Dave Elsdon, project manager, and his team.

— Picture by Callen Reddish

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