

Secondary entry #5: St Paul's High School Booragul



The Spinnaker



INTO THE GROOVE: The Patriots performing at Groovin' the Moo.
Picture: Laura Geyer

The Patriots play hard for rise to the top

By **JONATHON BLEAKLEY**

LOCAL band The Patriots have recently been recognised for their musical talents on a national level.

After winning the Triple J Unearthed competition from an entry field of thousands, the band was selected to open the Groovin' The Moo festival at Maitland this year in front of 16,000 people.

"We've been working towards something like this for a while, and it's even more exciting than I imagined," said the band's drummer, Joseph van Lier.

"This step will elevate our position in the music industry, and take us where we want to go."

The indie-alternative band, consisting of Jordan Avellis (guitar), Joseph van Lier (drums), Drew Abell-King (bass guitar) and Joseph Geyer (vocals/guitar), have been together for nine years.

The Patriots describe themselves as having a "real freaky naughty" vibe when they perform.

The band has high aspirations: "Our goal is to be up with the best, which we consider to be Flight To Dubai, The Cure and Foals".

Dave Ruby Howe from Triple J said: "In a short space of time these guys have pushed their sound in a pretty ambitious direction. I'm stoked on this one; these boys are renowned for mobilising, bouncy indie-pop tunes, and engaging the audience in their enthusiasm."

Dredging gets approval

By **DAYNA NUGENT**

LAKE Macquarie residents are overwhelmingly supportive of the major dredging operation occurring in the Swansea Channel.

The NSW government announced on February 4 that \$2.5 million would be granted for the project to get under way.

There had been a rising concern regarding the deposition of sediment occurring in Swansea Channel, affecting the access of large watercraft in and out of the lake.

According to a 2013 report commissioned by the Lake Macquarie City Council into the dredging: "The lack of certainty about channel navigability affects the reputation of Lake Macquarie as a boating destination."

The dredging is expected to create a channel 60 metres wide and 3.5 metres deep, opening up the lake and eliminating hazards to large vessels, which had been a prominent issue for decades.

Furthermore, a long-term strategy has been put in place to maintain this standard.

Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services and Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Andrew Stoner, said: "This project is an important investment by the government due to the channel's regional significance as the entrance to Lake



OPENING UP: The dredger at work in Swansea Channel.

Picture: Dayna Nugent

Macquarie, which is currently used by 18,000 boats annually."

Former dredging operations have been slammed as a waste of public money and have been received negatively by the community.

However, the outlook of this dredging operation has transformed into approval and enthusi-

asm from residents and boat owners alike.

President of Charlestown Anglers Fishing Club, Scott Nugent, said: "I think it needs to be done, for greater access in and out of the lake."

Croudace Bay Sailing Club secretary Steven Gomboso also welcomed the operation after what he

described as "years of mismanagement of the channel and lake".

He went on to describe the benefits of the dredging.

"As a sailor, I have far more peace of mind being able to use the channel at all times of the day and tide," he said.

"We can now showcase our lake to the rest of the world."

Youth give their time to help others

By **TAYLA-ROSE CROSS**

LOCAL youth are making a valuable contribution to the community by volunteering at a variety of organisations.

Melinda Nay, 16, and Rachel Burgess, 17, are helping out anywhere they can.

Melinda's main volunteer work is for Down Syndrome Hunter Region. She was inspired to get involved in the organisation through her sister,

who has Down Syndrome and who recently competed in the Special Olympics. "I love watching their smiles, it doesn't matter if they come last, they will still high-five everyone and say congratulations," Melinda said.

Her role includes mentoring other volunteers, coaching athletes and also being a guest speaker at events.

Rachel Burgess started volunteering at St John Ambulance when she was only 15 and has

volunteered at the Asia Pacific Olympic Games, Newcastle Knights and Jets games, motocross events and the Tamworth Country Music Festival.

Over four years she has completed 450 hours of service. She receives satisfaction from knowing that she has made a difference and helped improve someone's life.

"You gain experience with clinical skills, people skills and communication skills," she said.



DRESSED FOR SUCCESS: Melinda Nay and Rachel Burgess wearing their volunteer colours.



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