



Cartoon: Nathan Low

Make sure we are not thunderstruck

EDITORIAL

By **HAYDEN BAZIC, BAILEY MEIR and LACHLAN MCDERMOTT**

WHEN an east coast low pressure system is forecast the people of the Hunter know that chaos is on its way. During the recent wild weather we have seen the loss of life, property and personal belongings, but what has the emotional cost been?

When wild weather is predicted our parents make sure that property and possessions are secure and essential supplies are topped up. But, what about preparing kids for severe weather? Do adults know that kids should be emotionally prepared for extreme weather events?

Often after a severe weather event our friends come to school and share stories of how their family coped through the frightening conditions, property destruction, the fears they felt and of the aftermath.

Communities need to lessen the mental distress some children experience from a natural disaster by helping them to understand how to prepare emotionally before, during and after an event.

Parents, carers and educators can assist children to manage the stress and fear by teaching them the skills to be emotionally resilient. According to the Australian Psychological Society "being psychologically prepared can help in coping with the stress of the unfolding situation and can help reduce the distress after the disaster has passed."

Professor Matthew Sanders from the University of Queensland and co-author of the Triple P Positive Parenting Program has said that leading up to a bad weather "one of the important tasks for parents is to help their children feel prepared, not scared."

Educators also have an opportunity to support the development of emotional resilience in their students.

The Australian Emergency Management Institute has developed an online teaching tool called 'Disaster Resilience Education for Schools.' This site provides opportunities for teachers and students to investigate how severe natural disasters occur and how they can stay safe.

We don't doubt there will be future wild weather events in our area. However, the adults in our lives must not disregard the importance of preparing children to deal with the potential trauma associated with it.

Barnsley: from bark to brick and beyond

By **CAITLAND HILL, REBECCA HUMPHREYS and VERITY BEVAN**

FROM a bark roof hut with earthen floor, to modern environmentally sustainable brick buildings; Barnsley Public School has experienced many changes in 150 years.

Barnsley Public School started from very humble beginnings on Duncan Cherry's property in 1865, thanks to the efforts of business man, Henry Fenwick, Joseph Knotley and miners John Holmes and William Humphreys. These four men recognised the needs of a growing community and formally made an application for a non-vested national school.

The first school building was a bark hut with a bare floor and consisted of a table, 29 students and one teacher, John Gillespie.

Unfortunately it closed in November 1873 due to inconsistent enrolments. This was largely due to heavy rain, flooding and insufficient road access to the school.

A new school was built with money partly raised by residents, but it was inadequate.

Barnsley School continued to have a very insecure future due to settlement in the district and coal mining developments. When this building began to deteriorate a new larger modern building with three rooms was erected in a more central location. This school was known as



An early 1911 photograph of students at Barnsley Public School. Picture: supplied by Mrs Lillian

"Teralba" until April 13, 1891, when its name was changed to Barnsley.

Over the years the school has been forced to relocate several times due to floods, fire and even termites.

Finally, in 1995 the school was relocated to its present site in Cliffbrook Street, Barnsley. The school now has 13 classrooms with the latest technology, computer lab, library and hall. What has remained is the way in which the school employs its motto of co-operation to ensure the successful education of Barnsley students.

In the past few years, the school

has undertaken a journey of improvement to ensure the success of all students.

It is evident in the playground that Barnsley's students are happy at school, the teaching and learning programs are of the highest quality and the positive relationships between staff and students are very supportive.

Barnsley students have a history of leading successful lives. Former students have become Miss Universe, professional golfers and some have even returned to teach the next generation of students.

A new place for friendship and reflection

By **ZAC FORD and TIRONNE BENNETT**

NAVIGATING the highs and lows of playground politics can be overwhelming. With the introduction of the Barnsley Bench, students at Barnsley Public School have all the support they need.

Evidence suggests that being happy and having positive relationships are essential factors to ensure student success. With this in mind, the staff and students have worked together to provide a place

in the playground where students can sit that is calming and friendly.

Staff have noticed an increase in positive behaviours and the development of new friendships in the playground as a result of the introduction of the bench.

The students view it as "a happy seat where they can go when they need someone to talk to." Students often stop at the bench and ask "Do you need someone the play with?"

The bench is also utilised as a quiet reflective



Barnsley students have welcomed the new benches.

place if something has happened in the playground like an argument or if students feel like having some time to themselves.

The Barnsley Benches are positioned in the shade of the lovely bushland playground and have quickly become popular.

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