

Primary entry #28: Congewai Public School

THE CONGEWAI LINE



The proposed fast food site directly opposite the school.

Cessnock set for more fast food outlets

By CAIN MUIR

THE recent report of the development application before Cessnock Council to build a service centre with a Hungry Jack's and the relocation and expansion of KFC has residents asking if the Cessnock region really needs it.

The report states that fast food outlets have been "relatively absent in Cessnock" but is this really the case? Cessnock already has several and it appears, all thriving, with KFC, McDonald's, several pizza outlets, cafes, service centres, pie shops and bakeries, coffee shops and take-aways, already servicing the junk food tastes of Cessnock residents.

While the proposed site does need refurbishment, does the area which has a primary school directly opposite and major high school beside it, along with a busy weekend sporting ground, suit junk food outlets, along with an increase in traffic which a service centre would bring?

An increase in jobs is acknowledged, with unemployment in the Cessnock area for June 2014, at 8.3 per cent, being significantly higher than the remainder of the Hunter, but generally jobs in the service industry are part-time or casual, with many going to younger age groups. The report states that "KFC and Hungry Jack's staff would provide a quick response to any issues that arise from anti-social or nuisance behaviour," but residents have concerns about young employees' abilities to deal with these situations.

Writing: love or hate it

By SEAN DOYLE

TEACHERS love setting writing tasks every day and in homework. The Department of Education has a big emphasis on writing in the curriculum and expects all children in NSW to be good writers.

NAPLAN has a literacy part in all its testing. Parents expect children to be good writers and to enjoy writing. We hear all the time in the media that Australian students are behind the rest of the world in many areas of learning – reading and writing is mentioned all the time. Employers often state that people applying for jobs are unable to write and spell up to an expected standard. Everyone wants children to write and to be good at it.

But what do children think? Do they enjoy writing? Do they think they are good at it? Has anyone ever asked them?

Students of primary age across three schools in the Hunter Valley, when asked if they liked it or not, almost all said they did, with the most common reason being the creativity it offered. When the question was reworded to include specific teacher set tasks with certain things to be done, the answer changed. Taking away choice was a big factor in whether the enjoyment remained in the task. If children were given a



Students Sean, Jade and Cain all enjoy writing.

choice of topic or theme, the likelihood of enjoying the writing process was dramatically reduced.

This is when the worry about correctness of format, spelling and punctuation increased, with enjoyment greatly impacted. One boy in year 5 shared his enjoyment of writing factual reports, but about

topics of his interest, rather than set topics. He said he enjoyed the researching behind the task as well as the actual forming of the report.

Another student in year 6 said that she wasn't any good at writing, having the "vocabulary complexity of a year 3 level," and that this took away the wish to write. When asked

in the lesson was something they should do. Most agreed it was more important to enable students to enjoy the process and encourage the writer to create. "All children are writers," said Ms Ledwos of Rutherford Public School, "We need to allow them to build that belief in themselves."



Agriculture teacher Craig Jarrett.

Lighting the way in agriculture

By JADE BLACKMORE

MOUNT View High School is one of seven schools chosen to be a Lighthouse School where new agriculture teachers will train and get professional advice.

Mount View agriculture teachers, Mr and Mrs Jarrett will help other teachers learn. Education Minister Adrian Piccoli introduced the Lighthouse School pro-

ject to make agricultural education better in NSW.

Schools were selected because of their expertise in agricultural education and its teaching to students.

Principal Desley Pfeffer said, "I am so thrilled that Mount View High School's Agricultural and Primary Industries' program has been selected. This recognises the talents and hard work of our exceptional teachers, Mr and

Mrs Jarrett, the very dedicated work by our farm assistant Mr Dearn and the hard work demonstrated by the students. Selection as a Lighthouse Program will allow us to share our experiences with other schools and teachers and challenge us to improve our program even further. Importantly, it will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning outcomes."



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