

Primary entry #50: Gillieston Public School

**"Forward"**

# CAPTAIN GILLO'S GAZETTE



Students at breakfast club fuel up for a big day of learning.

Picture: Kerrie Fry

## Gillieston pupils now get toasted

By **HOLLIE WINTER** and **MADDISON GOODCHILD**

IN 2014 Gillieston Public School introduced a Breakfast Club that provides a free, quick, nutritious and easy to eat breakfast for all students. Staff found that some students were coming to school without having eaten anything, for all different reasons.

The canteen now opens each morning from 8.35am, in time for the arrival of students from the first bus.

The school provides cereal, toast, fruit, juice or a warm drink for anyone who has missed breakfast.

Our school also has a chicken coop. When the hens are laying, eggs on toast are also on the menu.

As well as giving the students an opportunity to have a relaxed breakfast without having to eat in a hurry and rush to catch a bus, they now have a chance to sit and talk to their friends around the "breakfast table" and head to class with a full stomach, happier to start their day.

Research has shown that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Children who skip breakfast may lack fibre and sufficient vitamins that help provide the energy needed to get through the day.

It has been proven that students learn and retain more information from having a nutritious start to the day.

By **SAM FOX** and **JAYDEN GIBSON**

ON April 21, parts of the Hunter Valley were hit by a devastating super storm that affected many communities, including Gillieston Heights. The result of the storm – and the unusually high rainfall – led to major flooding, blackouts, damaged houses, shops and cars and many families being stranded or isolated.

Rising flood waters forced State Emergency Service workers to open floodgates to control the flow and level of water. The floodgates were raised just a few hundred metres from where Gillieston Heights resident Anne Jarman lost her life. On Wednesday morning she tried to drive home along Cessnock Road from Maitland, but the fast flowing flood waters washed her car off the road.

In some areas the flood water levels exceeded those previously recorded.

The Community Centre on Cessnock Road provided a meeting place for Gillieston locals where food, fresh water and basic medical supplies were given to those needing them. The media referred to it as "Gillieston Island".

The SES brought supplies in by boat because the town was completely cut off. Gillieston Heights residents were lucky enough to



Volunteers taking Gillieston Heights residents across Testers Hollow by boat. Picture: Hayley Weber

have a local supermarket donate some supplies such as bread, milk and bottled drinking water. The Community Centre was also a place for people needing a place to stay if they were without power or water or if their homes had been damaged during the storm.

Schools in the area were closed, some for up to a week. Gillieston

Public was closed for two days. Many school students in the area had another week of school holidays because schools were without water or power or had trees down in playgrounds. Students who usually attended other schools had to go to their closest school until roads were cleared and safe to use again.

Some of Gillieston's students had to travel to school from Kurri Kurri but had to travel via East Maitland until the water over Testers Hollow was shallow enough to drive through safely.

Gillieston Public School students raised over \$300 to give to the SES to thank them for helping the community in a difficult time.



Students tending to chickens, feeding them scraps from morning fruit break. Picture: Sam Fox

## School with chooks and a garden

By **DOM BLANCH** and **ASHAN PARSONS**

AT Gillieston Public School students keep chickens and grow vegetables. The chickens are kept in a coop that a teacher built with help from parents and the garden is beside the coop. In the coop are hens and one rooster.

When the hens lay eggs the school sells them to school families. The money is used

to buy feed and straw. To help with recycling and to reduce the amount of rubbish put into bins, classes feed the chickens the children's daily food scraps.

To keep the chickens healthy and ensure they have variety in their diet, students make sure that they have plenty of fresh water and laying pellets. They change their straw regularly. Jake, Jayden and Kaleb of

the Silvertails classroom care for the chickens. The kindergarten students love to go and look at the chickens.

Members of the school garden club grow vegetables for students to taste or to sell. Gardens are a wonderful way to use the schoolyard and reconnect students with the natural world and true source of their food. They enjoy weeding, watering, planting and tending the plants.

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