



Cartoon: Zhao-Mei Zheng

Who's responsible for homelessness

EDITORIAL

By LARA HARRIMAN

THE term homelessness refers to lack of a stable, or adequate dwelling to live in. For a country known for its social welfare and a fair go, the lack of support in Australia for these highly vulnerable 100,000 people is puzzling.

Social welfare plays a vital role not only in creating a stable and happy society, but ensuring more people are participating in and helping the economy. Thus, it seems errant that charities and non-government organisations (NGO) such as Coast Shelter on the Central Coast, are expected to bear the brunt of gaps in social infrastructure.

The Central Coast is considered to be in a housing crisis. However, the direness of the situation became apparent when last year the availability of suitable social housing was declared to be the worst of in NSW. It was estimated 2500 families were on a waiting list for social housing.

Families are sleeping in caravan parks and cars. With the ABS Census finding a 20 per cent increase in homelessness in NSW from 2006 to 2011, this is expected to worsen.

Homelessness can affect us all regardless of education, career, past economic or social status.

Charles Boyton, program manager of Coast Community Centre, describes it as a "series of circumstances". He has found that increasingly the cause of homelessness on the Central Coast is neither drug nor alcohol-related, but financial difficulty. Unexpected financial hardship can result from situations including relationship breakdown, loss of a loved one, or workplace injuries.

What needs to be done? Community charity events such as "Zoo and Snooze", donations and volunteering at NGOs such as Coast Shelter, are absolutely vital. However, it is the state and federal governments who need to step up, and our job is to make sure it happens.

We need to fight for sustained government support, rather than accepting budget cuts and selling of social housing.

Government initiatives such as "Going Home, Staying Home", which has taken money out of refugees, need to be challenged. Instead, services to aid NGOs, need to be created.

Communities such as the Central Coast have proven they care about ending homelessness, so it's time to make the government know we care.

Gosford to be great with new lease of life

By ALEESHA CALDWELL

THE current rundown capital of the Central Coast, Gosford, will see a dramatic difference in business and events by 2025 once a multi-million dollar development storms in.

The site comprises approximately 345 hectares, from Brisbane Waters in the south to Showground Road in the North and from Racecourse Road to Rumbalara.

The five precincts under development are: the waterfront, the arts and entertainment precinct, the city core, the railway precinct and the hospital precinct.

The four phases that will see the transformation indicated by the master plan are: inception and team formation, project positioning - the design brief, master plan completion and implementation in which community participation and involvement has been integral.

Quantum Towers, a major residential development set for the CBD, will see 101 apartments, six home office apartments and two commercial suites bringing more people in to Gosford.

These homes right in the core of the city will provide a perfect mix of business and leisure with new proposed cycle paths around the city as well as a link between Point Clare and the waterfront.

Also set for the waterfront is a \$30 million performing arts centre that will bring much-needed entertainment and performing



Gosford cyclists look forward to improved waterfront facilities.

Picture: Aleesha Caldwell

opportunities to the city. This centre is one of many developments that is set to bring a community spirit to the Gosford Marina.

The federal government plans to move 300 Australian Taxation Office jobs, along with 300 other government jobs to Gosford to lessen the commute for hundreds of people, but also to bring more job

opportunities to the Coast.

Along with residential apartments that are going up this will turn Gosford from a gloomy city into a great city.

It will accommodate everybody, from families to students, in a place that boasts stunning natural beauty and a relaxed community atmosphere.

A farm fresh food journey for Central Coast

By TAMSIN CALDWELL

ON May 3, the Gosford Farmers Markets moved from Kibble Park to a new home under new ownership at The Entertainment Grounds in Gosford.

It will now be a weekly event open every Sunday from 8am to 1pm.

Speaking to the Little Creek Cheese stallholder, it is evident that this is a wonderful community-minded event for the wider Central Coast.

It provides an opportunity for small businesses to

get much needed exposure for their products.

This is significant for fresh food stall holders such as Little Creek Cheese who bring their handmade cheese on ice to keep it at the right temperature and offer tastings to try before they buy.

Little Creek Cheese acknowledges the benefits of this new location as their stallholder said it "attracts customers as they drive past" and the market is now in a "central position and is undercover".



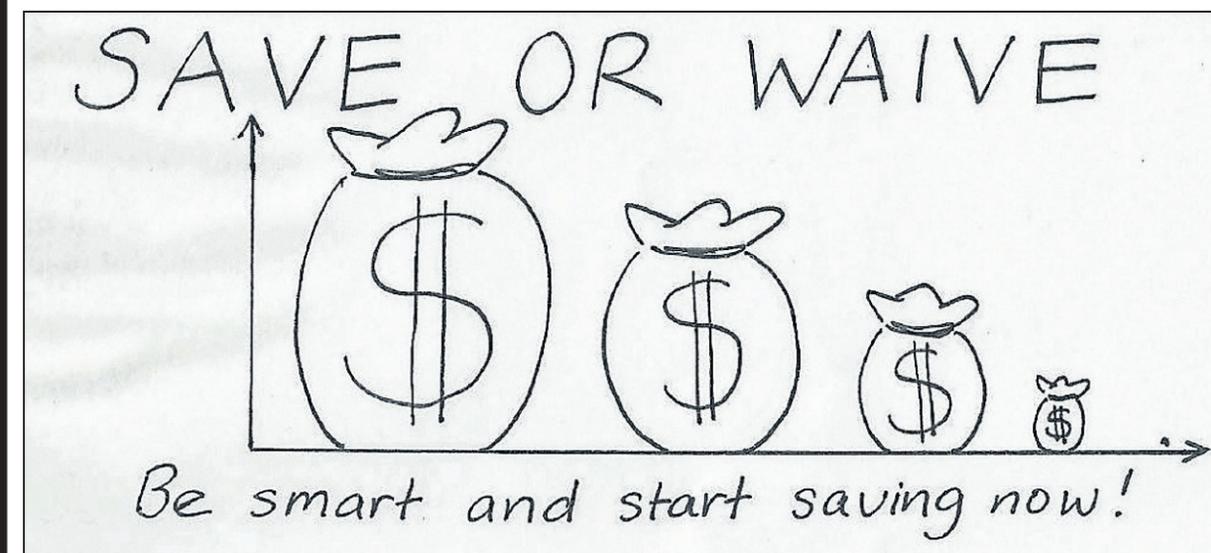
Sue from Little Creek Cheese serving her specialist cheeses. Picture: Tamsin Caldwell

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