

Primary entry #56: Hinton Public School

The Hinton Voice



Jack Brooker at Wallalong Skatepark. Picture: Jackson Morris

Concern that park is going downhill

By JACKSON MORRIS,
TIM FARLEY and
BRANDEN POWER

WALLALONG residents are being discouraged from using their local skatepark by the smoking, littering and anti-social behaviour of others.

Opened in December 2014, Wallalong Skatepark was jointly funded by the state government and Port Stephens Council. Its aim was to improve community wellbeing through encouraging active, outdoor recreational pursuits.

Luke Burton, 15, regularly uses the skatepark. "It is the best thing that has been approved for Wallalong. It gives all variety of ages something to do in a town that is not near any public transport. It's great exercise and I learn great skills," he said.

Jack Brooker, 10, also skates at the park. "There is a whole lot of rubbish and graffiti at the park and some teenagers smoke there," he said.

Brendan Callander, community and recreation co-ordinator at Port Stephens Council said, "We are very proud of the Wallalong Skatepark. It is the first of its kind within the Port Stephens area and we have received a number of compliments regarding its design and usability." He said such a facility was usually a divisive topic but because it had been talked about for some time, there had been very little negative feedback.

Port Stephens Council has recently installed bins, and maintenance teams are on site at Bowthorne Park for weekly inspections.

Facing flood aftermath

By SARAH HAWKINS

THE floods that ravaged the Hunter Region earlier this year have had devastating financial consequences for many farmers. While government assistance was made available to some, not all have met the necessary criteria.

For 30 years John Rumbel was a dairy farmer in Bendolba. Today he helps out on his son-in-law's farm in Phoenix Park. Neither he nor his son-in-law, Arthur Hawkins, has ever seen anything to match the savagery of the April floods.

"Normally when a flood will happen, we have time to move equipment. We know when the river is going to break its banks. This time, however, with the ferocity of the rain, the paddocks were full of water and we couldn't move the machines," Mr Hawkins said.

"It was the highest level of water I have ever seen out here," said Mr Rumbel.

All their crops were destroyed, 37 round bales of silage were washed away and some machinery, including two tractors, were damaged, they said. They have not yet recovered.

The lucerne that was replanted has only just started to come up after the recent rain and will take up to six months to establish.

They plan to put summer crops in the rest of the property, and



John Rumbel works on his son-in-law's farm.

Picture: Sarah Hawkins

repair fencing and machinery.

During his visit to Woodville and Dungog following the storm, Premier Mike Baird confirmed that Hunter primary producers would be able to apply for additional disaster recovery assistance under a joint Commonwealth-state program. A \$15,000 "leg up" was promised.

For Juliet Clarke, a dairy farmer

in Wallalong, the money has been a welcome relief.

She said the application process was straightforward and the grant was available within a matter of weeks. However, she and her husband, Dallas, are still left with substantial financial costs.

Unfortunately, Mr Hawkins is not eligible for the grant, as his farm is not his primary source of income.

Karin Hines' farm is not her primary source of income. A beef cattle farmer in Nelsons Plains, Karin said 171 of her 176 acres went under water during the storm and the resultant loss of feed has forced her to sell the entire herd.

While their fortunes have varied in the aftermath of the flood, fine weather and fortitude will help all farmers with the recovery process.



Mrs Turner's labradors, Ted and Burt, proudly show off their home, Rosemount House. Picture: Indiana Morris

Heritage-listed Rosemount House

By INDIANA MORRIS
and SKYE JARDINE

AINSLIE and Matt Turner live in Rosemount House, a heritage-listed property in Hinton. They have restored the house to its former glory and added a large, stylish living area at the rear. The original silos and shed still stand amidst the picturesque gardens.

Rosemount House was

commissioned in 1825 by Robert Dillin, a trading and shipping partner, who, during Macquarie's governorship, secured 600 acres of land at the junction of the Hunter and Paterson rivers where he grew wheat. He named the area Hinton.

An impressive building with some original features such as marble fireplaces in several rooms, it has been heritage listed since the

1970s. Mrs Turner says of the heritage listing, "It's great for the house in terms of maintenance and preservation of a local historic home. But it does make it more difficult to do anything with the house like changes or renovations."

The house has been open to the public on two occasions for National Trust visits, which took some getting used to by Mrs Turner and her two chocolate labradors.

Funding applications close
16 October 2015



Noah Quinn (Technical Aid to the Disabled)

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To date, the Foundation has provided over \$14 million in grants for more than 350 important community projects. Applications for this round of funding close 16 October with grants announced in February 2016.

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