



Cartoon: Ruby Edgar-Jones

## Keeping the parks for all the people

### EDITORIAL

By **CAITLYN BENNETT**

BOOMERANG Park is one of the few remaining park lands in Raymond Terrace. There are major concerns from residents over a recent development approval by council. Plans are underway for the council to rezone a part of the park into a residential area for housing.

A group of residents have joined together to create Boomerang Park Action Group. They would like the park to remain as parkland now and in the future. A committee member for the action group, Jennifer Burton, said "I feel that once they start building, they won't stop. At the moment, Boomerang Park is one of the largest green areas left in our town."

Many years ago, this land was generously given to residents for use as community land. History shows that the park was used for army camps, farm plots and also a swimming area at the quarry. More recently, it has been used by local schools as a sports facility, for dog obedience classes and community services groups.

Raymond Terrace doesn't need our parkland to be turned into

more housing. We need more open spaces, playground areas and money spent on beautifying areas that we already have. For example, the quarry has been overtaken by weeds. Many years ago, this was a beautiful area where people could swim and spend family time, admiring the natural environment and breathing in the fresh air.

We need spaces to provide healthier living and areas for outdoor activities such as playgrounds and picnic tables.

The Boomerang Park Action group would like to see fitness stations all around the park, walking tracks around the water tower and the quarry, and definitely no housing.

The council should be encouraging people in the community to be outside by promoting healthier lifestyles.

There are major issues in our world today with associated health problems due to lack of exercise. Medical conditions such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease are on the increase and steps must be taken to assist with this problem. Recommendations to help would be developing supportive environments to encourage more physical activity and providing accessible playgrounds and facilities to participate in healthy lifestyle choices.

# A caring community

By **TIA HOCROFT**

THOU Walla Family Centre is a School as a Community Centre (SaCC). It is a cultural epicentre where local people can come together and is located in Irrawang Public School grounds.

Thou Walla Family Centre responds to the needs of local families by providing a range of activities such as supported playgroups, early literacy programs, transition to school programs, health and nutrition initiatives and TAFE outreach. Free child minding is also available for families to access when they are utilising some of the programs.

Gina Ascott-Evans is a facilitator who works at Thou Walla Family Centre and is exceptional at her job. In Worimi language, Thou Walla means: 'meeting or gathering place'. Thou Walla have two main priorities: promoting happy, healthy children with a positive start to school and supporting parents and increasing awareness of services available.

Assistance can be provided about important areas such as: housing, health, welfare and family support services. Many families are unaware of the available help options in the area, so Thou Walla is the perfect spot to go to gather more information.

Playgroup is held at Thou Walla and is where parents and children can come together and socialise. Children younger than school age are able to attend the playgroup with their caregivers or parents.

Multicultural/First Chance Playgroup runs every second Monday, Community Playgroup



Gina Ascott-Evans with Mai Huynh, who has participated in a number of courses at Thou Walla.

Picture: Michael Nguyen

every Tuesday and Port Stephens Parenting Playgroup every Wednesday.

Parents and children are involved in activities such as cooking, reading and craft activities.

People benefit from discovering ideas about other cultures.

One of the mums at Thou Walla

said "I love how Gina has different opportunities out every day. I also like how she's always child friendly. The staff are very helpful and thoughtful to all our needs."

Thou Walla Family Centre is an important area for the community of Raymond Terrace and is always there for your needs.

## It's time to get active at Boomerang Park

By **JACKSON ELLIOTT** and **ARAGON**

CHILDREN these days sit in front of the television, getting absorbed and inactive. Parents are complaining that children are not active enough, so now is the time to explore our backyards.

Raymond Terrace has a wealth of opportunity to discover the great outdoors. One place in particular that children could explore is their local park - Boomerang Park.

Families could have a

relaxing picnic with their furry friends. Take your dog for a walk, kick a football or just sit and enjoy the sunshine.

The history of Boomerang Park unearths a whole new world. During the major wars the area was a training ground for the Light Horsemen. It was once a racecourse, home to sporting grounds, tennis courts and even a grandstand. The quarry was used to supply stones for buildings - Anglican and Catholic churches - and in the 1800s won awards.



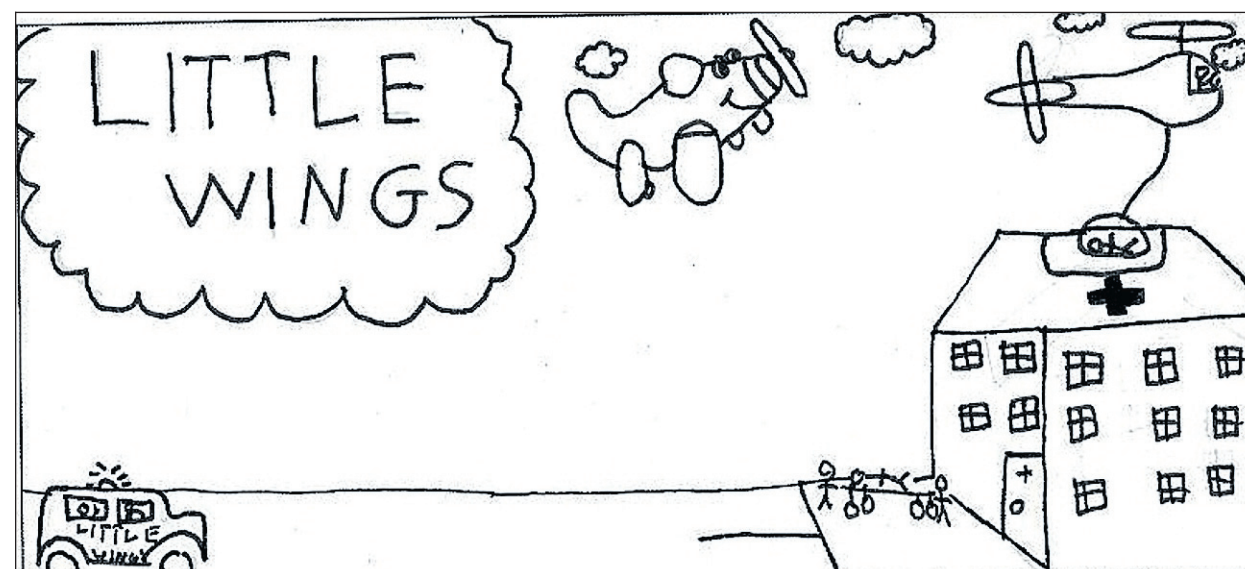
Boomerang Park has glorious parkland with many large spaces to explore.

Picture: Jackson Elliott

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