

Picture: Hayley Skewes

## A happier school is a better school

### EDITORIAL

By **LILY COLLINS** and **BRIDIE LONG**

KOTARA South has started a yarn bombing frenzy to make the school bright and colourful. One of the best parts is that it gets the community involved with the school.

Parents and residents have been knitting all sorts of things such as tree and pole warmers as well as little teddy bears that pop up every now and then, as new items are installed.

Three years ago the school developed an improvement plan to add to and beautify the school.

Many of the students and families have been involved. A sun cover over the playground was erected as the first project. A uniform shop was then built. The biggest project of all was a large covered outdoor learning area that was constructed in late 2014 thanks to the P&C's fundraising and government grants. Some colourful murals have also been installed with more to come soon.

Working bees involving students and their families have also been held. The sports field was renovated by laying new turf and

paths were laid to stop the mud flowing onto the quadrangle. We also have beautiful new gardens.

The yarn bombing idea was that of local parent, Susie Lewer, who organised a yarn committee.

Ms Lewer said: "I think it makes people happy and a happy school is a good school."

So, is a happy school a good school? We asked some kids from Stage 3 if they agreed. Ninety-five per cent agreed. We also asked them if they thought kids learn better when they're happy and the overwhelming response was 'yes'.

Students at Kotara South all agree and think that the yarn bombing makes the school look much nicer and more colourful.

Since the environment around them looks more colourful and happy then students should be in a better mood to learn. Kids will likely be more eager to learn in a school that has more inviting grounds and gardens.

The yarn bombing is a good way to decorate the school because while it doesn't cost much money, it still looks great.

Everything has made our school look great and as for the addition of the yarn bombing, everyone loves it!

We all think that it has given a fantastically friendly and more inviting look to the school.

# Hunter trains have run off their tracks

By **GEORGE MCNAMARA** and **ZACH GOWER**

ON December 26, 2014, the Newcastle trains stopped running from Newcastle to Wickham due to the NSW Government's plan to put in a new light rail and to remove the old train lines.

Closure of the heavy rail has caused a lot of public comment in Newcastle and the Hunter.

Former Transport Minister, Ms Berejiklian, signed a contract for \$73 million to build a new Wickham interchange. Work on the new light rail is expected to commence in late 2015 and the interchange and related train stabling facilities are to be finished in late 2016.

The new interchange will include access to buses, taxis and the brand new light rail. Shuttle buses will run from Hamilton station to Newcastle station and will leave every 10 minutes. Also in sections of the old train line near Newcastle station five new pedestrian crossings have been laid. Other work will include new kerbs, gutters and landscaping.

One of the reasons of the development was to give Newcastle views of the waterfront and provide more flow as part of the government's revitalisation plan.

The Awabakal Aboriginal Land Council has made a claim for Newcastle railway corridor, as part of a plan put in motion to stop further development in the railway corridor. This was because the Land



Kotara South Public School students Mackenzie John and Sage Kirkland at Kotara Train Station.

Picture: Hannah Fear

Council claims there is major cultural significance in the train corridor and surrounding area for the Awabakal Aboriginal people.

The trains being removed overall caused discomfort among the public and cost Newcastle a large amount

of money. Yet whether this is good or bad for Newcastle's future is purely up to who you ask.

At a local level, removing the train line has restricted access to the inner city, beaches, and the foreshore from Kotara.

## Furthering Aboriginal cultural knowledge

By **AVA WHITE** and **ASHLEIGH DELANY**

ON February 25, eight students and teachers from Kotara South Public School attended Lambton Public School to celebrate the signing of an agreement to share ideas about Aboriginal Education and to raise cultural knowledge.

The agreement between the Mulloobinbah Local Aboriginal Consultative Group (AECG) and Kotara-Lambton Community of schools brings together Aboriginal educators, prin-

cipals, staff, community members and Departmental representatives.

The event included a performance by students from Belair Public School of the national anthem in Awabakal. This was followed by afternoon tea.

Approximately 100 primary and secondary students, including representatives from Kotara South Public, proudly participated in the ceremony.

The schools are now collaborating to design an artwork so the agreement can be displayed. This



The students of Kotara South Public raising cultural awareness.

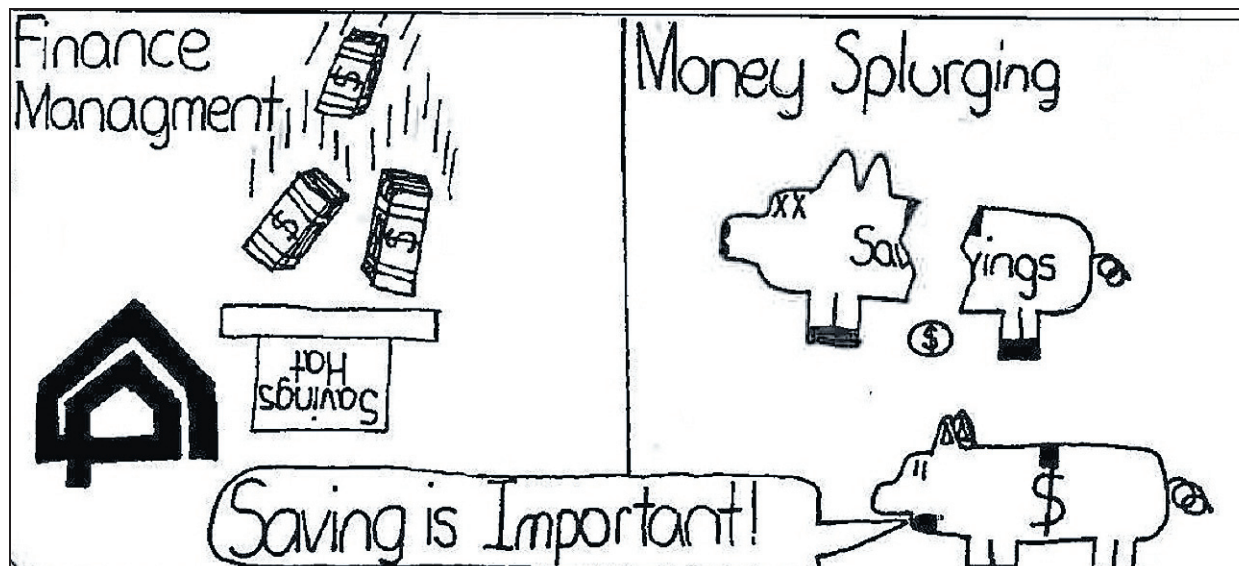
Picture: Ashleigh Delany

agreement will encourage and non-indigenous, increased understanding throughout local communities.

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