



Cartoon: Zoey Crockett

## Make child asylum seekers' lives better

### EDITORIAL

By **TIEESHA AHOY** and **ALYSSA LINDSAY**

COULD you imagine risking your children's lives to escape unimaginable dangers, just to see them caged away like animals at the end of it all?

This is the reality for many asylum seekers forced to flee their country. They come to Australia seeking refuge and a safe place to live in freedom, but without the correct papers parents and their children can be incarcerated in our immigration detention centres for up to four years.

Detention centres offer no help or hope to asylum seekers that have no papers. In these extreme environments children witness ongoing violence, suicide attempts and riots.

These children may then behave differently to other children their age because of everything they have been exposed to, including emotional, mental and physical abuse.

With indefinite periods of time in detention centres, children become frustrated, withdrawn and insecure as their basic needs for humanity are not met. They are tortured by sadness and their stories are heartbreaking.

How can we as a country stand by and let children be treated this way? Perhaps it is time we looked to our past to remind ourselves that we once treated children seeking a better life with compassion and dignity.

Over 50 years ago Australia welcomed and encouraged migrant families to call Australia home. Migrant camps, such as those in Greta and Albury, were a safe haven for families who had travelled from their own country. They provided housing, schooling, employment and a sense of community.

In the camps there were numerous nationalities. Many migrants had happy memories about the camps and their early lives in Australia. Migrants could go out into the community and bond with the citizens of the town they were in. Children would go to school in the camps. They learned to speak English, learned of the community and made new friends. Life was an adventure.

Just like migrants in the 1950s and '60s, today families have travelled halfway around the world to find safety and a better life. But when they get to Australia they are imprisoned behind razor wire fences.

Don't you think that as a country Australia should unite and welcome these people just as we used to?

# Kurri Kurri welcomes you back to the '50s

By **EMMA DOHERTY**, **SHARRA GIBSON**, **BRAYDEN JOHNSON** and **RILEY JONES**

KURRI Kurri hosted their eleventh annual Nostalgia Festival on March 27-29 with visitors from all over Australia enjoying the rock'n'roll atmosphere of the unique weekend.

Classic cars, hot rods, dancing, music, fashion and everything good from the 1950s and '60s inundated the heart of the town.

This year's festival boasted the biggest crowd ever with over 30,000 people attending events over the three days.

There were plenty of attractions for everyone including rock'n'roll dance demonstrations, feature bands, talent quests, best dressed competitions, markets and a side show alley.

A major drawcard for the festival was Shannon's Show and Shine which saw over 500 classic cars and hot rods line the town centre.

Over 150 retro market stalls filled Rotary Park featuring a range of themed merchandise, vintage clothing, rock'n'roll memorabilia and food.

One of the most popular events was the free Family Fun Night: a BYO picnic in Rotary Park featuring music, dance competitions and fun.

A new edition to this year's festival was the Rock N Roll Express, a steam train ride between Richmond Vale and Pelaw Main highlighting 1950s entertainment.



Kurri Kurri Public School student Josie Tranter shows off fifties fashion at the Nostalgia Festival. Picture: Memphis Mitchell-McGrail

Local schools were involved over the course of the festival with Kurri Kurri High School hosting a retro high tea and Kurri Kurri Public School holding a 1950s day on Friday with dress-ups, music and dance. The Primary school also held their bi-annual fete on Sunday to coincide with the festival.

The Nostalgia Festival is a project of Towns With Heart, a non-profit-making group of local volunteers. It is made possible through the hard work of many volunteers and community groups as well as the support of over 30 sponsors including Cessnock City Council, NRMA and 2NURFM.

## Kindergarten gets a cool, new playground

By **ELLEN CHENERY**, **MEILA CONNOLLY** and **EMMIE TRANTER**

AS you walk into the Kurri Kurri Public School kindergarten area, you will see pretty princesses and brave superheroes sliding down fast slides and playing with new toys.

It is all part of the school's new approach to play time. The updated area includes dress-ups, a cubby house, cups and balls, bikes, road signs and artificial grass.

The transition from pre-school to kindergarten is

massive for many students, which is one of the many reasons school principal Eve Field changed the playground.

"Pre-schools' playgrounds are exciting and ours was not," Mrs Field said.

Kirsty Brown, kindergarten teacher and assistant principal, said, "The kindergarten playground has been transformed into a creative, active and highly engaging area that



Kindergarten students enjoy their new play equipment. Picture: Emma Doherty and Josie Cain

children look forward to being in every day."

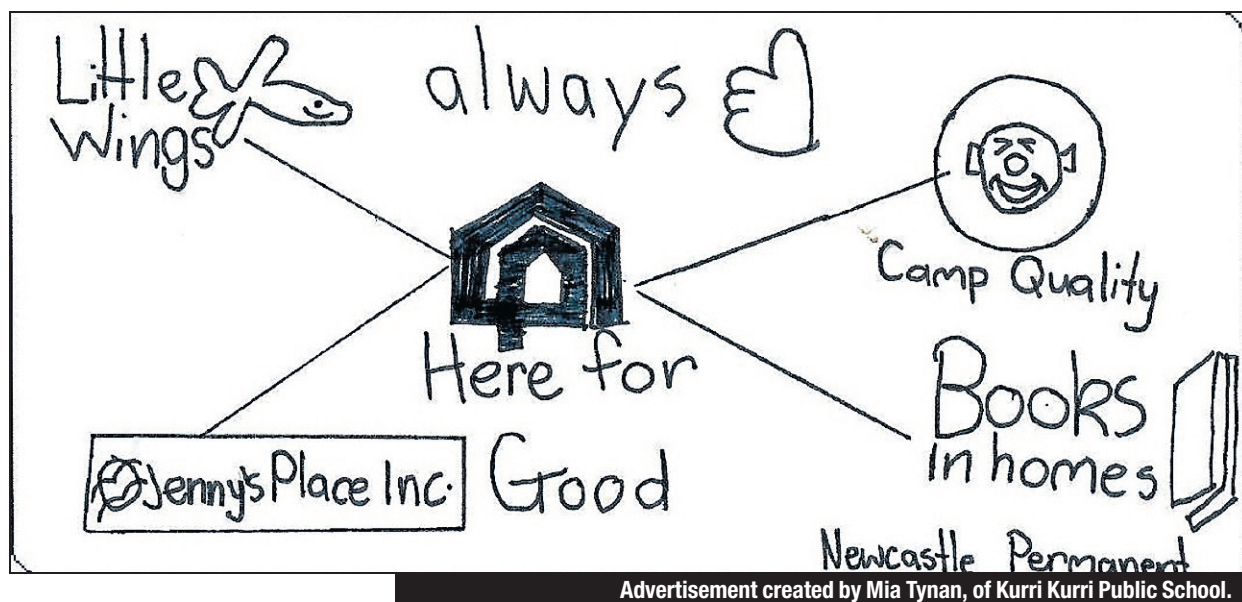
Mrs Field and Miss Brown have definitely

seen a lot of changes in the students' behaviour because of the new and improved environment.

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