



Cartoon: Maddison Battese

## Rising disaster of the demountable

### EDITORIAL

By **EMILY GILMOUR** and **HAYLEY VAN TOL**

IN public schools across our region, there is a lack of new permanent structures. Demountable classrooms are increasing. The abundance and age of temporary structures is making the classrooms permanent learning environments. Ironically, these classrooms are not intended for permanent use.

Demountable classrooms have inadequate airconditioning, which not only encourages pests to take up residence in the rooms, but also results in unsuitable surroundings for students, with damp and smelly conditions, which are not suitable for children with allergies to dust and mould.

There are at least 5000 demountables in NSW and students on average are spending 10 hours a week in these appalling conditions. Classrooms like these do not encourage good behaviour and concentration, but, on the contrary, disrupt classes and compromise learning.

The demountables can be unstable and dangerously positioned, often restricting safe access. This facilitates risk to students and

staff travelling to and from the area. They're separate from the remainder of the school and its facilities, including toilets and water stations. At some schools, walkways to demountable blocks are not covered, resulting in exposure to all weather conditions.

Having classrooms isolated can result in the area being inaudible for students to hear things, such as school bells and alarms.

The temporary nature of these structures results in poor insulation, making the classroom a loud and echoing learning environment. The amplification of noise in the classroom can be very disruptive to students' learning.

There is a disadvantage when comparing private and public schools, with some public schools having demountables for over 18 years and only being used in private schools as temporary solutions for less than six months and in situations of rebuilding. All schools should have the right to some funding to improve their students' learning facilities. Demountable classrooms depreciate the professional appearance of the school.

A classroom that is freezing, stuffy, full of mould, dangerous, unstable, isolated and full of pests is unacceptable. Teachers and students all over the region want to see change, not disadvantage.

# The scourge of drugs is in our community



Maitland Grossmann High School students say no to drugs. Picture: Laura Watts and Selena Woodward

By **WILL LEWIS** and **ANDREW ROBERTSON**

ICE. The drug that everyone is starting to learn about. The drug that is all over TV and the newspapers. The drug that is killing Australia.

Teenagers and young adults. Impressionable, rebellious.

The thought of taking a drug that is the most dangerous substance available in common circulation is like an adrenaline rush to them.

"It's only one time, where is the harm in that?" or "I am strong enough not to lose control if I take

this". It is this mindset that is killing Australia.

Sydney is in the depths of an ice epidemic. However, it is the smaller cities and places such as the Hunter Valley and surrounding areas that are being hit the hardest, with different drugs becoming increasingly prevalent in younger adults.

One specific drug is marijuana, a depressant that gives the user feelings of pleasure and relaxation.

This drug is harmful to young users, however, one of the worst effects it has is that it is a gateway

drug to other, more harmful drugs, such as ice and speed.

Ice isn't safe to anyone. All it takes is one "sample" of the drug to permanently alter the user's brain and its function.

By taking this drug, users are not only ruining their own life but they are also putting the lives of everyone else in their community at risk.

This is a serious issue, especially in rural communities where funds are short and hospitals are scarce.

This ice epidemic must be hit head on, before it kills Australia for good.

## Students need better buildings to learn in

By **EMILY GILMOUR** and **HAYLEY VAN TOL**

STUDENTS in schools across the Hunter find themselves learning in unsatisfactory, provisional demountable classrooms.

They have been installed in many schools over the state in what has been described as a temporary solution, but, in fact, has resulted in a disregarded and unresolved matter.

Maitland Grossmann High School has been allocated 10 demountable

classrooms, with limited functional airconditioning, resulting in freezing conditions during the winter, and stuffy and smelly learning environments in summer.

These temporary rooms need to be removed as soon as possible and replaced with permanent buildings in order to provide a better environment for the students to learn in.

There are at least 40 schools in the Hunter that have demountables that are up to 10 years old,



Jack Morton stands among demountable buildings at Maitland Grossmann High School.

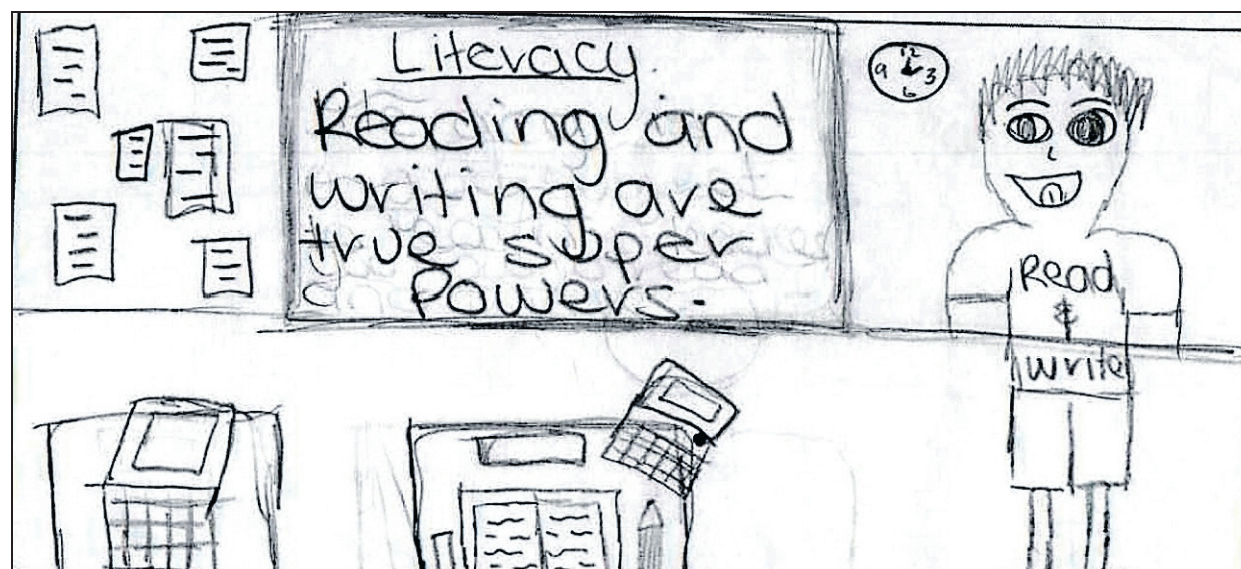
Picture: Selena Woodward and Laura Watts

some even over 18. State governments are discouraged from new development in schools by price, but the constraint of demountables is evident.

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