

MR BEACH, PRINCIPAL OF
NEWCASTLE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL.



Cartoon: Lilli-Ann Ellway

A need to notice our bicentenary

EDITORIAL

By SOPHIA SUTERS, LILLI-ANN ELLWAY and EVIE MEE

NEWCASTLE East Public School is the oldest school in Australia and is having its 200-year anniversary next year, but it isn't getting the recognition it deserves.

The ability to read, write and count is essential in everyday life, but before our school, children in Newcastle got no education.

Newcastle East School was set up by Governor Lachlan Macquarie as a charity school for all children. It was to be free for everyone, not just the rich and privileged, and it is still to this day.

Governor Macquarie believed that education, and religion, could change convicts and other bad people into good citizens, by giving them a new start in life. He was a very modern man, believing that women and Aboriginal people all deserved the same opportunities in life as everyone else.

The school was established by Henry Wrenford, a convict, in 1816 with only 16 students aged from three to 13. Lessons took place in one of the government-owned slab huts now occupied by Bolton Street.

For some years the school was

part of a church school system, but in 1888 the school became public again, open to everybody, no matter their religion.

From the 1860s through to 1900s kids rode their horses to the school, and installed them in a paddock to the west of the school.

There were bomb shelters built during the Second World War, after the bombing of Newcastle, which are still used today as music rooms and sheds and we also have our bell, which is the same one that was used 200 years ago.

After World War II, the school was the regional centre for the education of deaf children, who came from all over the Hunter to be taught at NEPS.

So as you can see we have a lot of history, but we are still not being recognised. We want more people to know about our school's history, and its importance for Australia.

The school offers lots of extra-curricular sports/recreational activities to students of all ages, such as sailing, surfing, European handball, athletics and many more.

But the 200-year-old school still isn't known throughout Newcastle. People should donate to the school to raise money for the bicentenary so more people get to know the school and its history.

Cloudy coal concern is hanging in the air

By LILLI-ANN ELLWAY and AREN BARBER

OVER the years, coal dust has been spreading through Newcastle, affecting wildlife and people.

This problem has been caused by coal trains, steaming across Australia. Studies have shown that coal dust levels increase up to 13 times as coal trains pass through suburbs. The Coal Terminal Action Group has discovered that unloaded coal trains are worse than loaded coal trains.

Some people say that they should cover the trains so the dust doesn't get out, though others say they should spray the coal with "veneering" chemicals to keep it sealed. There is no real proof that veneering actually works, but coal exports through the Port of Newcastle are expected to significantly expand over the next decade.

Stockton seems to get the worst of it, with new data showing that most of the dust settles there.

People have reported their window frames being completely black from the dust.

Dust samples collected from three homes along the Hunter's coal corridor contained up to 20 per cent coal dust.

Environmentalist Dr James Whelan says, "The main solution to stop coal dust spreading is to cover stockpiles and wagons."

"It is a very serious problem as



Students Lilli-Ann and Aren examine a coal dust sample.

there are more deaths every year due to fine particle pollution than car accidents in Australia."

However, David Frith, from NSW Mining, argues that the problem is not serious.

"Both the industry and the government have taken community concerns about air quality seriously and have commissioned a series of air quality studies to better

understand it. These studies have shown that air quality around Newcastle is good and that coal trains are not having a significant impact," Mr Frith said.

As the Hunter has the largest output of coal in the country, it is important to provide ongoing monitoring of the dust levels to ensure it presents no future risk to residents.

NBN is rolling out all across the Hunter

By ARI FOGGO and HARPER WARREN

HAVE you noticed the strange green boxes suddenly appearing on street corners all around Newcastle? They are the "hubs" for the National Broadband Network, a computer network which will make the network run four times faster.

They are appearing all over Australia, and will connect every home and business. Originally, all the homes in Australia were only connected by thin cop-

per cables, and that was going to be replaced by fibre-optic cables, but the federal government realised it would cost too much money. So instead they rolled out fibre-optic cables that connected to the copper cables, straight from the depot.

Kelly Stevens from NBN said, "All Australians will get access to fast and reliable broadband through the NBN including those in and around Australia."

According to Kelly Stevens, 35,000 homes and businesses in the New-



Jason and Logan can't wait for broadband.

"The difference in broadband will be noticed, and will make our lives better in many ways, like extending learning

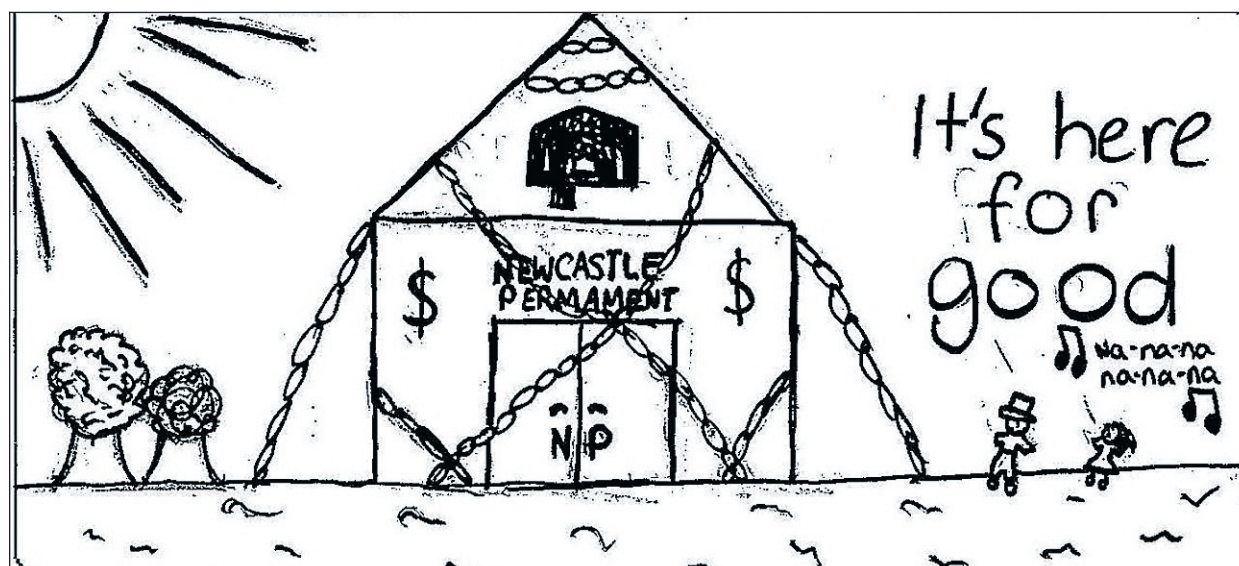
castle area have work underway, and it's expected they'll be able to connect to the NBN early next year.

opportunities beyond the classroom, and working at home becoming an actual option," Ms Stevens said.

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