



Cartoon: Emma Welsh

## Torrents of trouble in illegal downloads

### EDITORIAL

By **PHOEBE PARKER**

AUSTRALIA is the worst offender of any country when it comes to online piracy. Over 2.7 million Australians visit torrent sites each month. These sites allow users to download files from movies and television shows, illegally. Some of the top downloaded media are TV shows such as *Game of Thrones*, *The Big Bang Theory* and *Orange is the New Black*.

By downloading content from illegal sites and not paying for movie tickets or boxed sets, the people in the movie and television industry are being treated unfairly and not getting the money they deserve.

However, as an alternative to downloading movies and television illegally, people can access content by subscribing to cable TV or online streaming services. Paying a small subscription fee allows you to access thousands of movies and TV shows from your choice of providers, such as Foxtel, Stan or Netflix. These providers have a wide movie and TV database, with programs having no advertisements or disruptions.

Illegal downloading also has

another downside – viruses. If you download a movie or show from a torrent site, you may also receive a virus on your computer that can destroy your hard drive and every file in your system.

Why would you want to risk being charged with a crime or getting a virus on your computer when, for a small fee per month, you can get a legitimate program that allows you to access the same content as illegal downloading sites?

Producers, directors and actors involved in making movies don't get the payment that they would receive if you download their work from an illegal torrenting site. This means Hollywood blockbusters have a lower success rate, therefore making the movie seem less popular than it actually is. This affects these professionals' ability to continue to make movies in the future. This, of course, affects the number of quality movies available for you to view.

So, in order to improve our international reputation, continue to watch quality content, eliminate your chances of being charged with a crime, and ensure that movie making professionals receive the dues they are owed: turn your back on torrents and piracy.

Subscribe to an entertainment providing service and receive all the content you desire... legally.

# Career change buzz for former journalist

By **TULIP CRANSON** and **MIA ZULUMOVSKI**

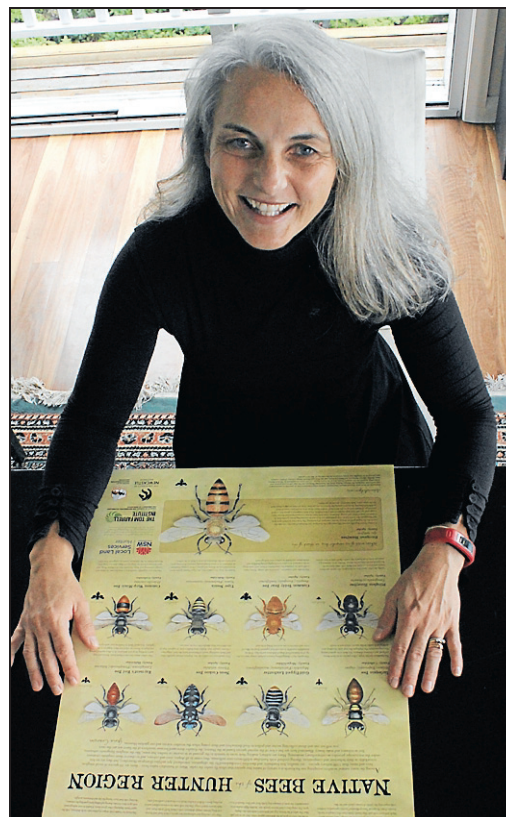
GINA Cranson had always considered herself a words person but when newspaper industry job cuts inspired her to try something different, she discovered a whole new world in pictures.

When Mrs Cranson, a former sub-editor and writer for the *Newcastle Herald*, opted for a voluntary redundancy at the end of 2012, she applied to study Natural History Illustration at the University of Newcastle. She had written a column for the *Herald* for years detailing her gardening adventures but had no experience in art, so it was much to her surprise that she was accepted into the course.

Since starting the course in 2013, Mrs Cranson has produced a poster on the wildflowers of the Awabakal Nature Reserve at Dudley, an illustrated alphabet based on native Australian birds and animals and, more recently, has undertaken several projects involving native bees.

These include a poster on the native bees of the Hunter Region, for which she spent time with entomologist Dr Michael Batley at the Australian Museum in Sydney, and illustrating a book on native bees by Brisbane entomologist Dr Tim Heard.

"I have always been in awe of the natural world but Natural History Illustration has taught me to stop



Gina Cranson shows off her beautiful bee paintings.

Picture: Youka Hosseini

Googled it – I discovered it was in fact a blue-banded bee (*Amegilla zonamegilla cingulata*) and that it was among some 1500 different native bee species in Australia.

"I thought it would be fabulous to draw them all, but it has taken me several months to finish just 12 watercolours for the poster. Perhaps I should have started the course before I was well into my 40s!"

Mrs Cranson is in her second year of Natural History Illustration but is also juggling several freelance editing jobs.

She is hoping that she can continue to combine her information-gathering and writing skills honed over decades in newspapers with her new love and understanding of art.

and really look at things. One day, while picking some rosemary in my garden, I noticed a bee with blue and black stripes on its abdomen," Mrs Cranson said.

"Upon further investigation – I

## Winners and losers in the streaming war

By **SOPHIA BELL** and **JASMYN STOJOKOVSKI**

DOZENS of video stores across Newcastle and the Hunter have closed down due to the decrease in people renting movies.

What used to be a Saturday night treat – going to the video store to get a movie or two – is gone.

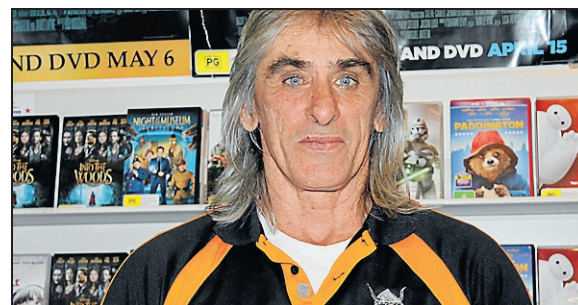
The main reasons for this are movies being available on the internet through providers like Netflix, illegal downloads and the rise of DVD kiosks.

A recent place that has closed its doors is Block-

buster at Waratah Shopping Village. Residents were lucky to have Blockbuster in their local shopping centre since 1995. Unfortunately, due to a sharp decrease in customers, it closed down last month.

The fall of the giants, like Blockbuster, means that some small independent DVD stores thrive.

Brian Penman, owner of DVD Storm in Alma Road, New Lambton is one such operator. "I have been open for nine years. This



Brian Penman of DVD Storm is happy with business.

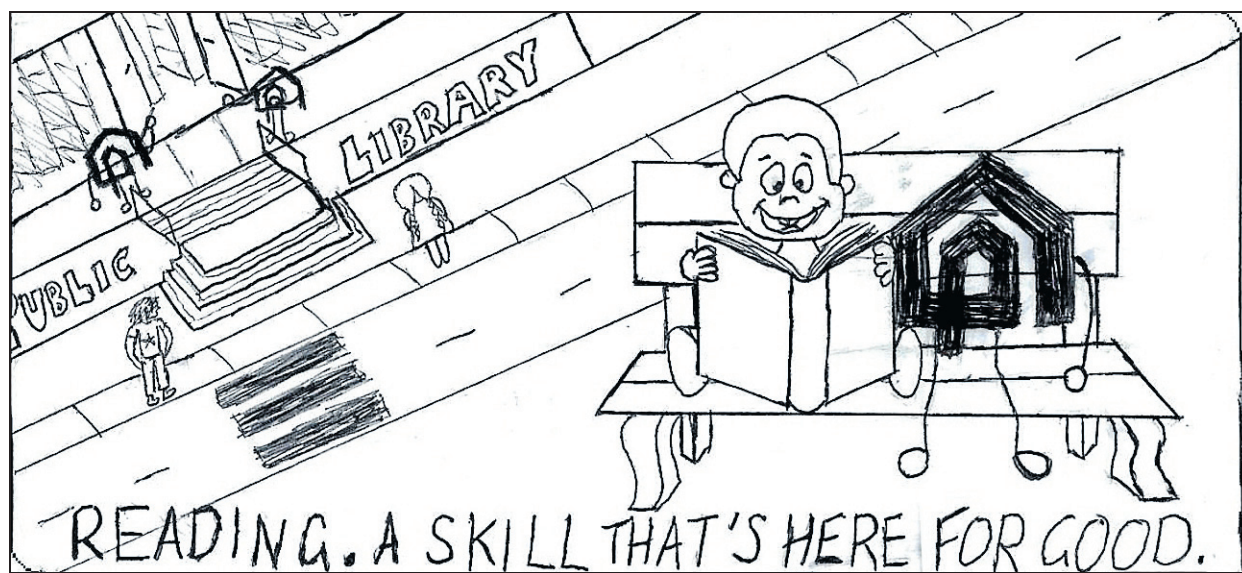
Picture: Julian Millgate

year I have actually noticed an increase in customers but I do have growing competition from Netflix and illegal downloading," Mr Penman said.

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Advertisement created by Emma Welsh, of New Lambton Public School.

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