

Cartoon: Sophie Percival

Fast food fears are eating at Cessnock

EDITORIAL

By **LUCY SAYWELL** and **CHELSEA WEBB**

CESSNOCK has a massive problem, and unfortunately it seems to be growing.

According to an Adelaide University study Cessnock is currently the sixth most obese town in Australia, with approximately 23 per cent of the population considered obese.

It has the second highest rate of deaths from stroke and heart disease in NSW. Seventy-two per cent of residents do not meet the physical activity recommendation of 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times per week; 85 per cent are not eating the adequate five vegetable servings per day.

Yet, currently before council is a proposal to move the existing KFC franchise to Aberdare, bringing with it a newcomer to the fast food choices of Cessnock – Hungry Jack's.

Smack bang in the middle of two schools, tennis courts, soccer fields, a youth drop-in centre, netball courts and the Little Athletics field.

While this area has sat dormant for years following a fire that closed a bowling club, is this the best choice for the town?

The move for KFC seems a logical choice due to the congestion at its current location on Wollombi Road, where 10 cars spilling out of its driveway is a common occurrence, but the choice of location and the decision to build another petrol station and general store in this hub seems unwise and dangerous to the citizens of Cessnock.

The 150 jobs that the development will create is a big positive. But do we need another petrol station when there are two existing petrol stations within 500 metres of the proposed site? Does the town need a food alternative in Hungry Jack's when we already have so many other fast food choices on our front doors?

This possible development is concerning to the owners, operators, clubs, principals and community of schools and local sporting clubs that will be greatly affected in the worst ways by this hub of junk food.

In a worst scenario, some sport clubs claim they may have to close their doors if this development goes ahead, while others are concerned of the impact that it will have on their financial sustainability. Do we sacrifice our local sporting clubs for deadly fast food shops that Cessnock already has?

Cessnock City Council has a big decision ahead of them. More importantly, so does its citizens.

In search of 'forever' homes for all dogs

By **CHELSEA WEBB** and **CHLOE DAVIDSON**

DOG Rescue Newcastle is a group of volunteers dedicated to the rescue of abandoned, neglected or abused companion animals. They rescue dogs and cats from death row at local pounds and put them into loving foster homes until they can find permanent homes for them.

Nulkaba school teacher, Lauren Gray, decided to get in touch with the organisation and become a foster carer for dogs after seeing a notification on social media by Dog Rescue Newcastle volunteers that a local pound was full and a certain number of dogs faced being euthanised.

This struck a chord with her and she decided to do something about it. "The dogs have been mistreated or they have been surrendered because their owners can't care for them any more," Ms Gray said.

"There are a lot of dogs in need of a new home. Sadly not all can be saved but at least I can play a part in trying".

Ms Gray is an animal lover, with a strong affection for dogs. She keeps the dogs at her home and cares for them until she finds a permanent home. The length of the foster care varies depending upon the dog that is taken in.

"It can take from about a week to several months but it depends on the shape and health of the dog. We take them in and care for them, making



Lauren Gray and her foster dog Asher enjoying their time together.

Picture: Lauren Gray

them healthy and happy as well as getting them ready for the day that they are permanently adopted."

So far Ms Gray has fostered one dog, which she had for a month, until it found its 'forever' home.

Other times she has helped in the

transfer of dogs from areas to ensure they stay out of the pound and have a chance at a new life.

"It is very difficult to give up the dogs, but it is nice to know you've saved them and played a part in finding them their forever home."

Animals putting a smile on every kids' dial

By **ABBEY PEARSON**, **ILLYANAH GEORGE**, **RAYA COSTELLO** and **SOPHIE PERCIVAL**

HUNTER Valley Zoo owners, Jason and Leanne Pearson, volunteer their time and animals to bring some joy and happiness to the children in the Starlight Express Room at John Hunter Hospital on the last Monday of every month.

Starlight Foundation was established to "brighten the lives of seriously ill children and their families."

Jason and Leanne take a selection of animals in pet

packs and crates and travel in their show trailer to spread their form of cheer.

"We've taken all types of animals down, from guinea pigs to snakes – even a baby alligator," Jason said.

But the animal that gets the best response, according to Starlight's very own Captain Funky Town is "The baby wombat! The kids just love them."

Jason and Leanne are happy to take their animals to brighten the lives of



Starlight spreading their cheer with the help of Hunter Valley Zoo.

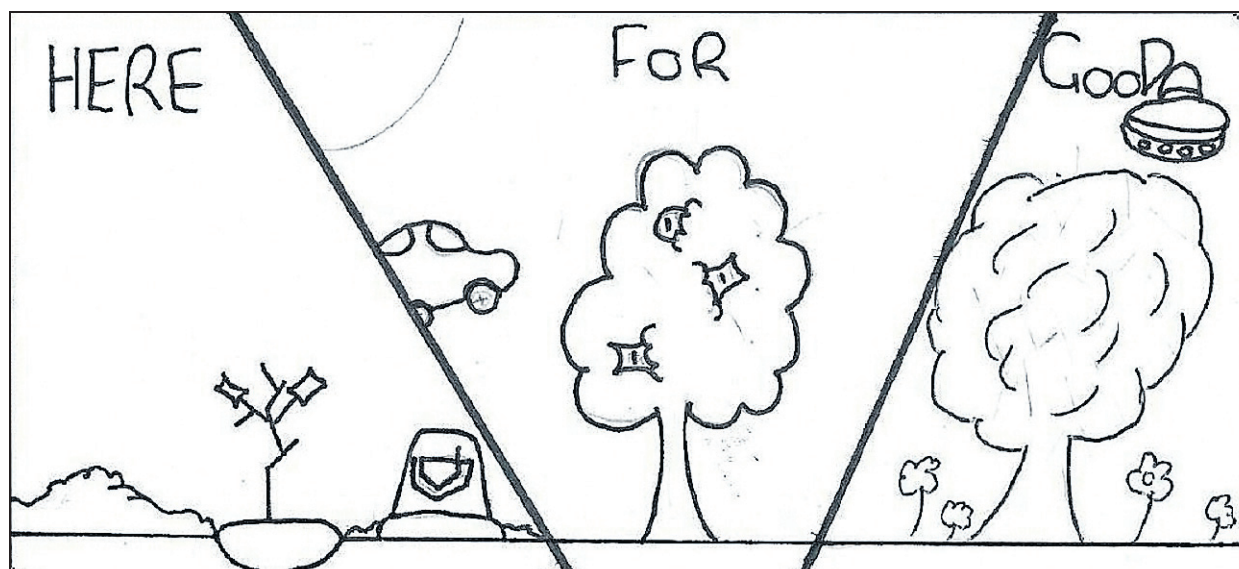
Picture: Abbey Pearson

others. "Sometimes these kids are in hospital for months on end so we give them something different to see and do rather than their rooms."

OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS SCHOOL NEWSPAPER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE COMPETITION SPONSORS



SEE THE ENTRIES ONLINE AT theherald.com.au/community/newspapers-in-education/



Advertisement created by Lilly Stace, of Nulkaba Public School.

Here for you, here for the community

13 19 87 newcastlepermanent.com.au

Here for good. **NEWCASTLE PERMANENT**