



Cartoon: Paul Jimenez

Smoke fills skate park with danger

EDITORIAL

By **JACK ROSS** and **SHANEN BILBY**

IN what should be a safe place for young people to have fun, Kurri Kurri Skate Park has become dangerous due to people smoking there. This smoking in the skate park needs to stop for health and safety reasons.

Children who skate at the park are exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke, which is unsafe for anyone visiting there as passive smoking has been proven to cause cancer and damage different parts of your body.

The reason the skate park has become an unsafe place for children to play is because teenagers are regularly smoking cigarettes in the bushes, or near the skate bowl.

The majority of the time it is these teenagers who are smoking at the park and are risking children's, not to mention their own, lives by inhaling dangerous cigarette smoke.

Second-hand smoke is highly dangerous for the children at the park because they do not have a choice in the matter; the smoke spreads rapidly throughout the

environment, surrounding the children playing, trapping them in the smoke and allowing it to enter their bodies.

Due to all this passive smoking, children are inhaling carcinogens and chemicals, which can cause cancer later on in life, including lung, larynx and pharynx cancer varieties. It isn't fair.

Studies have demonstrated that cancer is extremely common amongst those who smoke tobacco, and those who are exposed to second-hand smoke.

If you were unfortunate enough to inhale the second-hand smoke whilst visiting the skate park, you have a higher risk of developing lung, larynx or pharynx cancer. This is why it is so important that the teenagers need to stop smoking harmful cigarettes at the skate park.

According to the Cancer Council, tobacco smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Australia. Cancers associated with tobacco use can be easily prevented through simple lifestyle changes and avoiding exposure to tobacco smoke.

It is important that smoking is discouraged from happening in an area where children should be able to play without dangers to their health.

Deadly cooking takes over school kitchen

By **JADE McTEGG**

KURRI Kurri and Cessnock areas have poor statistics when it comes to health and diet, including Aboriginal health.

The Deadly Cooking Walkabout Kitchen program has been introduced to help children learn better ways of eating.

Deadly Cooking gives young students the opportunity to use hands-on equipment to learn to cook traditional Aboriginal meals that look good, are healthy, don't cost a lot to buy the ingredients and taste great. Recipes include traditional spices, like lemon myrtle, and kangaroo meat. All the meals do not take long to cook and children are provided with recipes to take home to share with their families.

Selected schools in the Kurri Kurri and Cessnock areas participated in this cooking program, and students reported that they have enjoyed learning how to cook new meals.

An Aboriginal student in year 5 at Pelaw Main Public School, Jannali, said her favourite thing to cook was the "chicken munchies", and also said she "liked Deadly Cooking because it is fun, awesome and exciting to learn how to cook".

The Aboriginal community liaison officer for Department of Education, Sonya Sharpe, who is also one of the Deadly Cooking instructors said the main message behind the kitchen is "to teach kids healthy cooking on a



Aboriginal students, Bryton Sarsfield and Aydan O'Driscoll, experiencing the Walkabout Kitchen.

Picture: Jade McTegg

good budget then taste how good the meals are". Mrs Sharpe believes that it is important to make the same foods that kids love at fast food outlets but made healthier and cheaper. The program encourages children to "eat a rainbow" to eat healthily. By eating five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit

each day, children can live a healthier life.

There are different health and cultural messages in each session. By teaching Aboriginal students healthy food habits, there is a hope that they will be healthy in the future and as adults, they will know the best foods to choose to keep fit.

Mindfulness matters in and out of class

By **ALLY-JANE HUGHES** and **HANNAH HARRIS**

MINDFULNESS is a way for someone to focus on what their body and mind is doing in the present. It can be applied when someone is feeling strong emotions like anger or sadness. When people participate in mindfulness, they immediately calm themselves down.

Children, and adults are encouraged to use mindfulness when something is bothering them or when they are constantly thinking about something.

Mindfulness can also be used in the classroom. When children practice mindfulness, it can help teachers as students settle and pay more attention. It is recognised by Kids-Matter as a tool for children to manage their stress, in and out of the classroom.

The moments where a person is fully awake and present, for instance while watching a sunset or playing sport, can keep people calm before they react to emotions.



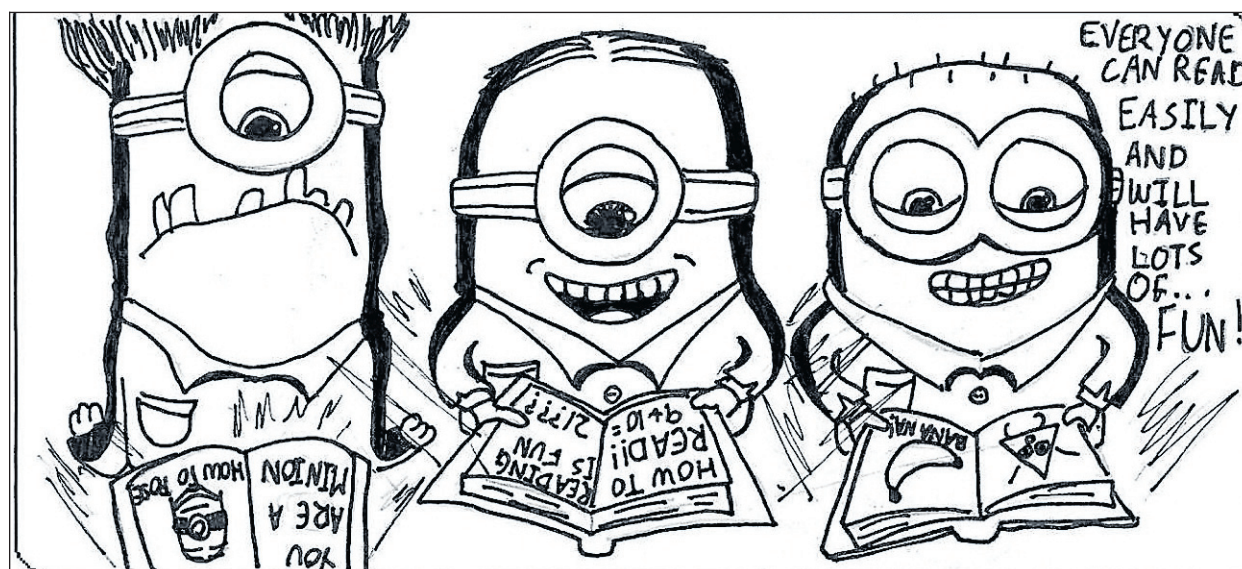
Trevor Hamilton, of Pelaw Main Public, practicing mindfulness.

Picture: Rani Dowdell-Reddy

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