



Cartoon: Freya Bond

## Naive nutritional needs not helping

### EDITORIAL

By ELIJAH CANTWELL

WE in Australia need to end our lazy ways. Even if we are not realising it, the diets of our citizens are changing for the worse. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare states that "almost two in three Australian adults (63 per cent) are overweight or obese, and one in four Australian children (25 per cent) are overweight or obese."

As a society, it's time for us to show greater concern for what we are allowing to happen to our diet, our food choices and the general health of our population.

"Healthy eating has a long-lasting and positive impact on a child's growth, development and health," according to the Victorian Government's health website. Parents may need to reconsider their family's diet, refocussing on healthier, more beneficial eating habits.

We need to take a stand and make changes to the way we educate our population, to making choices about what we eat, and the dietary habits adults are passing on to the impressionable next generation.

Schools are educating students about healthy eating habits but a

percentage of parents are still struggling to provide the right types of food for their children. We need to make it a priority in 2015 to better educate parents in the importance of providing the right foods.

Some struggle to provide healthy food for their children because of the time it takes to prepare and cook nutritious food. The easy alternative is to buy cheap, quick meals which don't provide the nutritional benefits, but save time and money.

Parents must place greater importance on preparing healthy meals for their children because children deserve the benefits a healthy diet provides.

The Australian Department of Health says "typically, chronic diseases are long-lasting, and have persistent effects." This is where education is important because eating the wrong foods will increase the chance of developing heart disease, high blood pressure and some cancers. The cost on our health system to deal with the increase in these conditions are alarming and will only escalate.

We need to get outside and exercise more; lazy, sedentary behaviour will further increase the chance of disease or of becoming obese. If changes are not made now, we will all become unhealthy and sick.

# Learning outdoors can grow education

By JIMMY SKELLY, KYLE McSEVENEY, HUNTER GRANGER, MILES DRADY and EMILY FOY

SCHOOLS around Australia are providing outdoor areas for students to learn in different working environments and connect with the nature around them.

Outdoor learning offers many opportunities for students of all ages to link learning across educational areas, in different environments and a variety of individual learning abilities.

Environmental spaces have been shown to "measurably improve" the personal and social aspect of education as well as "academic achievement," said Dr Sarah Long, deputy director of learning and teaching at Bond University.

Outdoor education areas provide schools the opportunity to come together and learn as a group while being in a different working space.

These outdoor areas may include open spaces, natural settings including plants and trees as well as more structured areas which includes seating.

St James Kotara South has built an outdoor educational area named after Fr James Doran, a former parish priest.

This area can be used for many different learning areas as well as being a resource for environmental activities.

Mark Twohill, principal of St



Hunter Granger and Emily Foy measuring the success of outdoor education.  
Picture: Jimmy Skelly

James Kotara South said "being outdoors improves student wellbeing." Nature can be a calming influence which can improve children's overall mental focus.

There may be some downsides of

schools having an outdoor area. The April storm was a concern for St James due to the danger posed by the large fallen trees which littered the Fr Doran area, only a few metres away from classrooms.

## Ripples of relaxation help staff and pupils

By RONAN CUMMINGS, MICHAEL BYRNES and BAXTER MCGINTY HOLDEN

EDUCATION is an important part of any student's life, taking many hours each day both at school and at home.

With a greater focus on improving academic outcomes for all students, schools are increasingly looking for ways to assist teachers to connect with students individually.

Staff at St James Kotara South are attending yoga sessions after school to "improve energy levels"

and to "assist when working with children in learning situations," said Maria D'Andrea. Mrs D'Andrea added that participating in yoga was indeed a benefit to students because it assists teachers, keeping them "focused on the important learning, both academic and social, that takes place in the classroom and on the playground every day."

Each day, students rely on staff members to be co-



Children reading for the good of their education.  
Picture: Michael Byrnes

learners. Joanne Simes, a learning support teacher at St James feels that the yoga sessions helped

"maintain a positive energy to better assist children in their learning."

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