



Cartoon: Rory Flanagan

Social media has a big impact on us

EDITORIAL

By JESSILYN MAHER and CAITLIN SMITH

WHY has social media become such a critical part of our lives, and even more importantly, what are its impacts on students in our community?

With over 2 billion active accounts, social media is currently one of the most popular forms of internet use. In 2016 it is expected that this number will rise to be more than 2.13 billion users.

Facebook is the most used social media site with approximately 1.5 billion profiles and an age limit of 13. An Australian user survey showed 52 per cent of eight to 16-year-olds admitted ignoring this age limit, without fully understanding the dangers of being online.

Social media helps us to be more aware and informed, with news, advertising, current affairs, health, and lifestyle information, but for others, it serves the purpose of making hurtful comments.

While we can contact anyone in

a matter of seconds with just a few taps of our finger (and what's not to love about that?), we are also exposed to its negative consequences without protection – cyberbullying being one of the most widespread.

Australian research suggests that 10- to 14-year-olds report cyberbullying most frequently, with 15- to 18-year-olds following close behind.

When there are problems with social media where can you turn? A look online will point you in the direction of websites such as *Bullying: No Way* and *Stop Bullying*.

These websites tell students to speak to an adult, tell the bullies to stop in a calm voice and walk away.

Users are also encouraged to report abuse to the social media site and to a trusted adult.

It is clear for many students that social media is a great way to help connect with family, friends and people around us.

We can interact with anyone in the world and learn more about their cultures, countries and communities.

It is a great tool for communication, but like any tool it can be dangerous if used recklessly.

Let's make sure we use it wisely.

Animal and RSPCA: who is rescuing who

By ISABELLA GEDDES and LILY MOSES

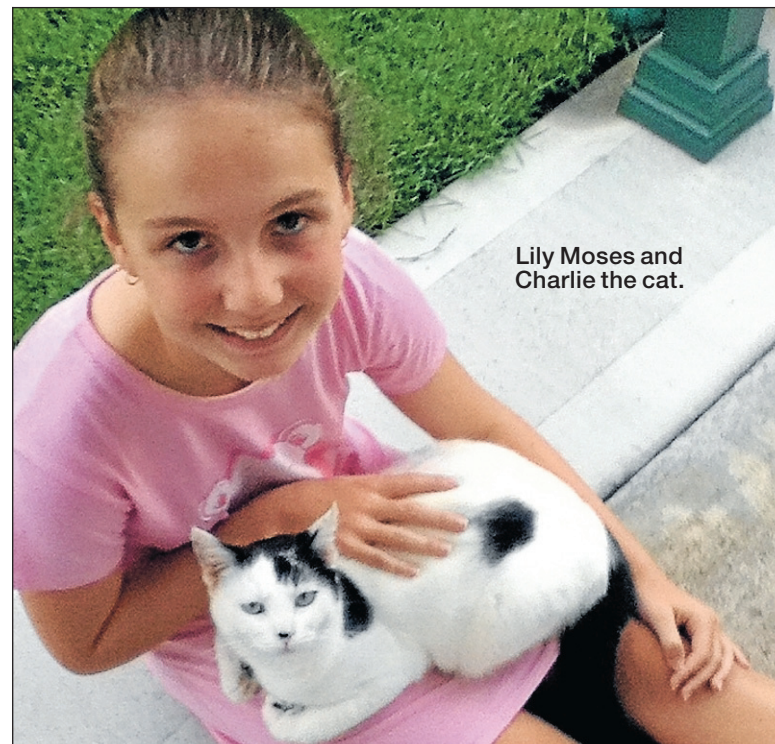
IN the past 10 years the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) has rescued over 600,000 sick, injured and unhappy animals no matter where from and what type of animal. They also provide an adoption service for people who are looking for an animal companion.

With this great service however, no one knows the answer to who really rescues who. Does the animal rescue the person? Or, does the person rescue the animal? Maybe both.

The RSPCA has a proud history which started in 1871. The ill treatment of horses in Victoria is what brought together a public meeting to discuss the problem. This was followed by the formation of Australia's first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Soon it became a national organisation within Australia. Since its introduction to Australia, the RSPCA has and always will, cater for all creatures' great and small.

There are lots of benefits in adopting for both the pet and the owner like companionship, loyalty and friendship.

Your new friend may start off all cute and cuddly, but a few weeks later when your favourite slippers are torn to shreds and there are holes in your garden you need to have commitment. Even when your pet does things like that you still



Lily Moses and Charlie the cat.

have to look after them properly and make sure you're a responsible owner.

If you are thinking of adopting a pet you have to make sure that it is the right decision for you and your family. Approximately 130,000 people last year surrendered their pets when they realised that the

animals were no longer cute and cuddly.

Animals benefit from being adopted because they find companionship, friendship, love, happiness and most of all, a home. A home is most important because the pet feels like it has a place where it feels comfortable and relaxed.

Elderly and young get a new lease of life

By ISABELLE LANE and SAM LYNCH

MANY schools visit nursing homes at various stages to entertain and relate to residents. But some kids feel a bit awkward and uncomfortable around the 'old folks' on these gazetted visits.

Despite these initial feelings, both old and young have benefited from the visits.

Many students have learnt from and enjoyed listening to the resident's stories. Each primary class

at St Joseph's visits the Living Care Nursing Home at Greenhills once a year.

Mr O'Brien from St Joseph's promotes primary class visits because he says, "It's a chance for the kids to put their faith into action, and make a contribution to the broader community of East Maitland."

While at the nursing home, "We sing songs and talk to the residents," said Luc, a student at St Joseph's.

On a recent visit to Greenhills by class 6W, Evelyn Richardson, a resident,



Nursing home resident Evelyn Richardson with student Isabella Duck. Picture: Jacob Standing

said "I like the students coming to the home because it gives us an idea

of the outside world and I like sharing what life was like when I was their age."

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