



Cartoon: Skye Duncan-Lindley

Keep the cruelty away from animals

EDITORIAL

By **SKYE DUNCAN-LINDLEY**

THE shocking number of animal cruelty cases reported daily is only the tip of the iceberg. Every year, hundreds to thousands of animals are rescued from miserable situations, from being abandoned, engaging in forced fights to becoming victims of an abusive owner.

Although there is no national reporting system for animal abuse, media reports suggest that it is common in both rural and urban areas. Most cases are never reported, and most animal suffering goes unrecognised and unabated. The cruelty complaints received related to 15,568 different types of animal cruelty per year.

The most common investigations involved animals without sufficient food, water or shelter, underweight animals and the failure of pet owners to provide a sick or injured animal with the appropriate veterinary treatment.

In Western societies during festive times (such as Christmas) animals are sometimes given as presents. Sadly enough though, many of these animals are soon forgotten, abandoned or sold off.

Founded in 2009, the Yulin Cat and Dog Meat 'Festival', is an

annual celebration held in Guangxi, China, where during the summer solstice festival goers eat the meat of both cats and dogs. Over 10 days, as many as 15,000 dogs and cats are consumed. The festival has been criticised world-wide, mostly in Europe and the United States, on animal welfare grounds.

Different forms of animal cruelty can include overt and intentional acts of violence towards animals, but it also includes neglect or the failure to provide for the welfare of an animal under one's control. Within Australia many organisations have taken action to tackle animal cruelty, the most renowned being the RSPCA.

The RSPCA is Australia's oldest, largest and most trusted animal welfare organisation. With this privileged position comes great responsibility. In 2013-14, the RSPCA cared for 127,304 animals.

In the past few years, organisations and individuals have been using the power of the internet to spread awareness of animal cruelty – a great sign considering animal abuse will only continue on a massive scale until enough people come face-to-face with the statistics and accept the responsibility that people have to stop abusing their relationship with man's best friend and animals in general.

Planned extensions of Stockland Glendale

By **CHELSEA PRIESTLEY** and **BRAD CARBERRY**

STOCKLAND Glendale Shopping Centre is planning to spend \$60 million on a near-doubling expansion that involves adding 50 new retail stores, adding to the current number of 53.

A major component of the upgrades will be a dining precinct linking the existing shopping complex with the cinema. Lake Macquarie City Council is assessing the plan, which is expected before the Joint Regional Planning Panel soon. Planning documents show the shopping centre plan will create an extra 278 retail jobs and 330 construction jobs. Stockland's development team had refined its plans over the past year to "improve the centre's design and take into account feedback from council and others".

Stockland says it is aware the upgrades will put pressure on the local road network. But there are plans for the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange to take the pressure off of the main roads and surrounding areas, hopefully easing traffic congestion.

The Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange project would see the installation of approximately two kilometres of new road, with improved intersections, and pedestrian, cycling and bus facilities. Once constructed, the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange will be a major



A traveller waits: when will the new transport interchange become a reality?

Picture: Rebekah Green

of the interchange will comprise of a railway station and other transport needs. This is not yet funded and the Baird government has made no commitment to this.

Panel member Mr Evans says the transport interchange will help to ease traffic congestion around the shopping centre. "We think that that'll make a significant difference to the amount of pressure that's put on both the Main Road and Lake Road roundabouts by allowing people who are out to the east to avoid those roundabouts when they come through the centre and they're not forced to queue up," he said.

connection between Glendale and Cardiff, providing an important piece of infrastructure to meet the future transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region.

It's hoped Stage One of the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange will be operating when the new shopping precinct opens. Stage Two

MUNA: debating for the fate of humanity

By **CHELSEA PRIESTLEY**

WEST Wallsend High School has again participated in the Model United Nations Assembly, otherwise known as MUNA.

In 1980, MUNA was introduced to Australia when Rotary Clubs throughout NSW were invited to sponsor a team of two students from years 10 to 12 to represent a nominated country at an assembly, similar to the format and function of United Nations meetings.

The aim of the event is for high school students to develop an awareness of the United Nations and the countries that the students represent at this simulated UN Assembly. They address and debate problems and issues of international concern.

This year, three students from West Wallsend High School participated in MUNA at Muswellbrook, representing Spain.

"Throughout the time spent at Muswellbrook, not only have I gained a greater awareness of the



Team Spain at MUNA: Rosemary Herman, Chelsea Priestley, Skye Duncan-Lindley, Brad Carberry.

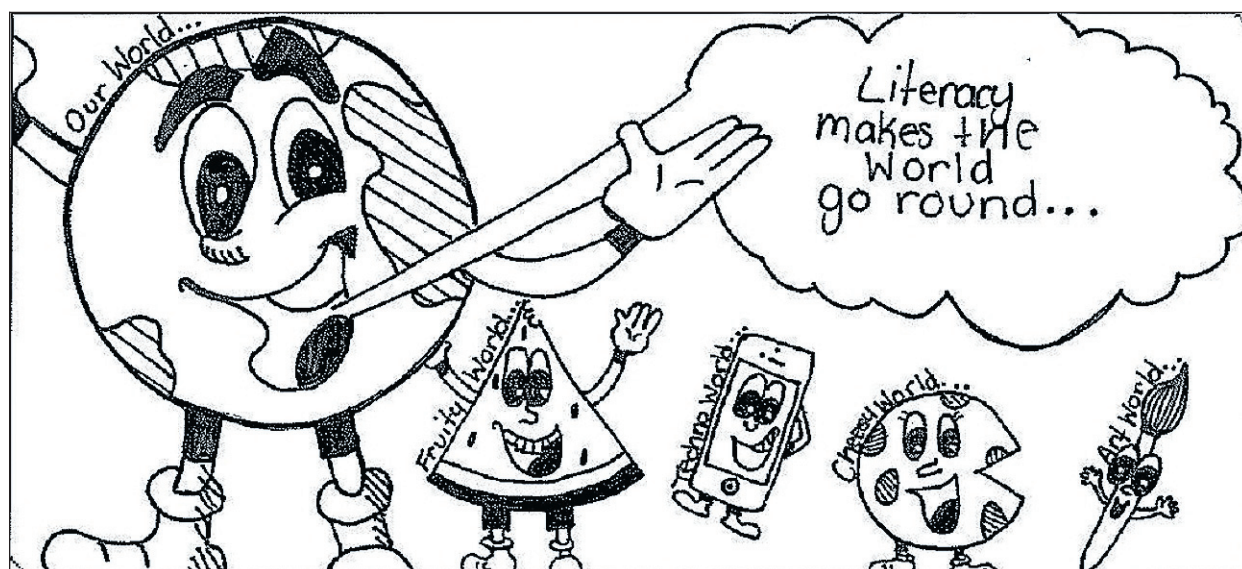
world... but I have also formed wonderful friendships with the other people participating. Overall,

the experience was memorable and valuable," said Skye Duncan-Lindley, a student participant.

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