



Cartoon: Charley Kramer

## Heritage does grow on a suburb's trees

### EDITORIAL

By JORJA YARNOLD, AUSTIN KING and CHARLEY KRAMER

OUR community is currently experiencing a building boom, in West Wallsend and the surrounding area of Cameron Park.

We know that people need places to live but we also want our native animals and plants to have a home too.

Many of the new housing areas have been cleared of trees. The trees in the new areas are really small; too small to be useful as shelter for animals and birds, too small to provide shade for houses and people. So the houses just get hot.

Trees and plants are important because they provide oxygen for people to breathe. Trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. We need trees and plants for our own survival.

Without trees many of our animal species would have no food and no home, in other words, no life.

A world without animals would be a really sad and dull place. When there isn't much life there's not much to see.

In West Wallsend we often see

flocks of beautiful and loud black cockatoos. They can be seen and heard screeching in the mature trees in our community. Without them our skies would be empty and silent.

It's fun to watch the possums in the neighbourhood at night as they go on their evening stroll across the rooftops of houses. Although they can be noisy and make a mess, they're still cute.

West Wallsend is over 125 years old. During that time there have been changes to how the community looks. It is a beautiful town with a village-type atmosphere, with lots of mature trees and gardens. Many of the children at West Wallsend Public School appreciate the natural bushland surroundings of their community. It's not uncommon for students to talk and be excited about their encounters with the local wildlife.

Will the kids of the future still have those opportunities? Probably not if we continue to chop down trees without thought.

In West Wallsend we are proud of our building and mining heritage – you can see that by driving around our town. We are also proud of our natural heritage. We don't want to lose the natural beauty of our bushland. We have a responsibility to keep our environment healthy for people, plants and animals.

# Knit kit linking kids together in wool fun

By THOMAS ALDRIDGE

A KNITTING club operates at West Wallsend Public School five days a week for students from all grades. It was started two years ago by Mrs Houliston, one of the teachers, as a way to engage students in fun and social activities, and to build fine motor skills. Plus it's in the library and out of the cold.

Mrs Houliston organised donations of wool and needles to the school in the form of knit kits. There is now almost every colour whether it's blue, green, pink, purple, brown, black or even multi-coloured balls.

Students are being taught to complete different projects such as beanies, scarves, friendship bracelets or fingerknitting chains.

At first the students found knitting to be a little tricky but with the help of Mrs Houliston and Mrs Waygood many have been able to make excellent progress. In fact, some students have become so good at knitting they have been able to help and teach other students who are new to the group. It is a great exercise for fingers although sometimes they can get sore.

One of the benefits of the club has been the social progress made by students in the group. It doesn't matter if you are a boy or a girl you can still have an enjoyable lunch or recess relaxing in a warm dry place. Kids are able to make friends and build social skills while having fun and learning valuable skills.



One of the knitted beanies made by the West Wallsend Public School Knitting Club. Picture: K Houliston

The kids have been the most enthusiastic about knitting club. One student said, "I joined knitting club when I broke my arm and found I couldn't play running games for a

while. I started by finger knitting but have now made a beanie, bug and started a scarf. Best of all, I have made friends with people who are interested in the same things as me."

## A game of chess fun for days and knights

By BEN EVANS

CHESS is a great game for your brain that makes you think a lot. If you practise you can become really good.

Chess boards come in all different sizes, but they are always a chequer-board pattern. The chess pieces are all different and include pawns, knights, bishops, rooks and a king and queen. The aim of the game is to force your opponent into checkmate and capture the king.

At West Wallsend the

students are lucky to have a person-sized chessboard painted on the school grounds. Mr Sara, one of the school learning support officers, leads the students at lunchtime and recess through the rules of the game. Students are encouraged to have a go. Some have gone on to compete at other chess tournaments.

Students have the option to play checkers on the same board. One student said "It's fun and challenging. I get to use my brain while playing with friends."



The West Wallsend Public chess board not quite ready for play. Picture: Lee-Anne Burke

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