



Picture: Charlotte Threadgate

More transport for less cost needed

EDITORIAL

By **DANELLE EVANS**

MEDOWIE is a rapidly growing community that has very limited transport.

It is a popular town for young, growing families. In 2001 the suburb had a population of just over 6000. Today that figure has exploded to over 9000. But while the population has changed, the amount of public transport available has not.

Public transport is not readily available to many of the 9000 residents. Most people in Medowie don't actually work or attend school, TAFE or university within the town itself, with many people needing to travel to Newcastle, or even the Central Coast, each day. But this is something that is made increasingly difficult for the residents of Medowie.

Buses from Medowie to Newcastle take over one hour and 15 minutes, but if you live in Medowie and are able to drive to Newcastle it only takes 30 minutes.

This increased time on the road affects a person's health due to limited exercise time, a person's stress levels due to lack of study

time and a person's social life due to increased travel time on a daily basis. Not to mention the amount of air pollution that could be prevented if more people were using public transport.

Not only is the limited transport slow but it is expensive. To make the trip from Medowie to Newcastle it will cost you \$4.50 or more every time and many people can't afford this. In one week an adult travelling to and from work could be spending \$45 to catch outdated transport. If this person and another member of their family are also travelling to and from Newcastle, that figure quickly balloons to over \$100 being spent weekly on top of all other necessities.

The only forms of public transport available to residents are buses and very infrequent taxis that cost a fortune because the taxi bay is located at the Williamtown Airport, 15 minutes away. Many people don't order taxis because they can't afford to spend \$70-\$100 every time they need to make their way into the city.

Newcastle is the seventh largest city in Australia, the second largest in NSW. With Medowie being on the outskirts of such a large city it is impossible to believe that residents are finding it so difficult to travel into Newcastle to enjoy everything it has to offer.

It's time for a high school at Medowie

By **CHARLEE LAWSON, BAYLEE HOLLAND and BROOKE LAWSON**

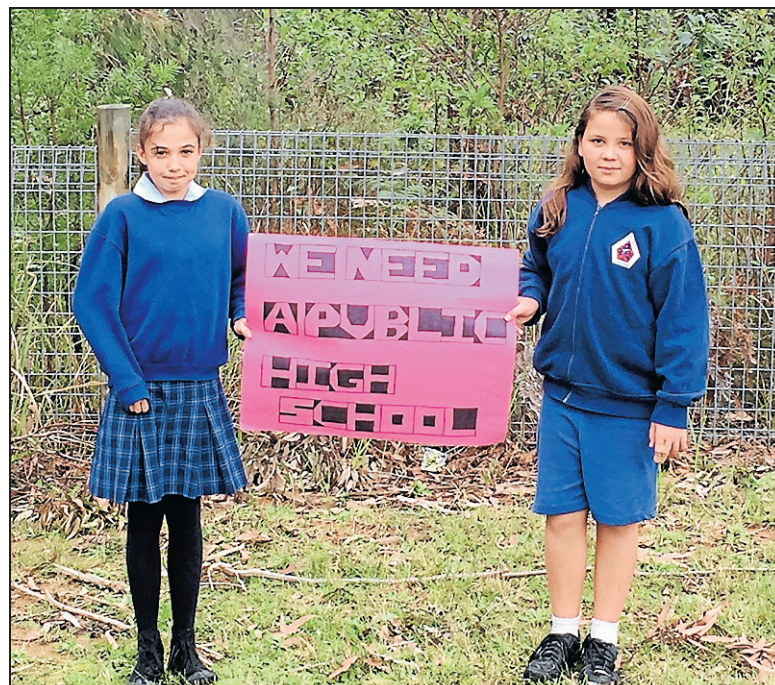
PRIMARY students in Medowie are without a local public high school to attend once their primary school education comes to an end.

Since 1983, residents have been promised a public high school in the town of Medowie. A large number of students have graduated from Medowie Public School and Wirreanda Public School during this time, hoping that it would be their cohort that would commence as year 7 at a local high school. Unfortunately this has not yet been the case.

Children in Medowie are forced to travel to areas such as Raymond Terrace, Nelson Bay and various suburbs in Newcastle to attend high school. The travel time from Medowie to most of these schools is more than 40 minutes, which is a concern to children with disabilities or health issues in terms of being on a bus for that long.

It also means less time for homework, fitness activities and spending time with friends and family. A public high school in Medowie would greatly benefit the defence force and RAAF families in Williamtown, helping them to get their kids to school on time and be part of a local community when they work very long, and sometimes irregular, hours.

A survey of local students showed that most believed the distance to



Medowie and Wirreanda Public students are hoping that a new high school will be built in the area.

travel would be the biggest benefit of having a local public high school.

On March 28, 60 families rallied in Medowie to demonstrate the need for a local high school, with Kate Washington supporting them. Kate is a health lawyer and mother of three children. She has said that she wants to be someone the community can

trust and someone who genuinely cares. At the last state election, the community got their say and elected Kate as their local member.

Now the issue stands that there are 1555 students wondering will they ever get their long-awaited public high school in the near future.

Wirreanda Public to get a little bit country

By **HOLLY KENNEDY and ASHLEY NUNN**

ON October 16, Wirreanda Public School's P&C are holding a school fair. The theme is Wirreanda Country Fair.

The community is asked to put on their boots, flannel shirts and hats and come and join in on the country fun. The fair will be open from 1pm-5pm.

Students, teachers and volunteers will hold class stalls. The stalls will include a variety of items to buy and create, food and

drinks will be available with many activities to be involved in.

The aim of the Country Fair is to bring together the whole community while raising money to refurbish the school's library. "To create an amazing learning environment for the students rich in technology would be just amazing," said teacher librarian Rachel Crossing.

In the past, school fetes at Wirreanda have been supported and extremely successful raising approximately \$17,000 each.



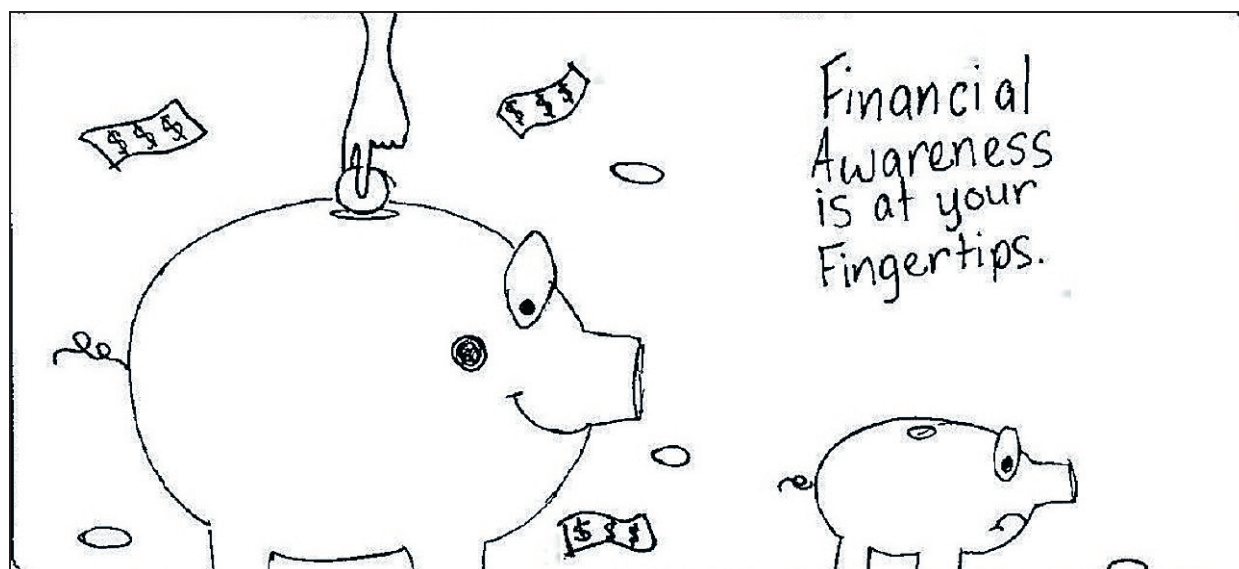
Students in the country spirit of the school fair.

The Wirreanda school community invites Hunter residents to come and support the school and take a step into the country to enjoy an afternoon of fun.

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