

Hazardous road disaster in waiting

EDITORIAL

By **HAYLEE WILSON** and
CHEYNE BRYANT

SAFETY of students, staff and parents is of paramount importance at Charlestown East Public School and that extends to outside the school gate.

The school has busy streets on three sides which children, parents and teachers have to cross, but only one zebra crossing and there is no crossing supervisor.

Many schools in safer situations than Charlestown East are better served both with zebra crossings and crossing supervisors.

Facing danger at such young ages for students who are simply just trying to get to school or home is unfair. The school has been asking for this situation to be dealt with for the past two years but nothing has been done.

The Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), in reply to a request, said the school now meets the minimum criteria for a crossing supervisor. However, no commitment has been made.

A crossing on Bula Street is the responsibility of Lake Macquarie City Council but it did not answer a request for a comment.

Since the school started its

requests, an after-hours school activity care centre has been established in the new hall which is close to Bula Street.

Children arrive and leave using Bula Street, making the need for a crossing even more important.

Every Friday afternoon students attend sport on the Charlestown netball courts.

However, they face a dangerous walk having to twice cross Bula Street with no zebra crossing.

It is fortunate that so far there has not been an accident – mainly because of the supervision of the teachers.

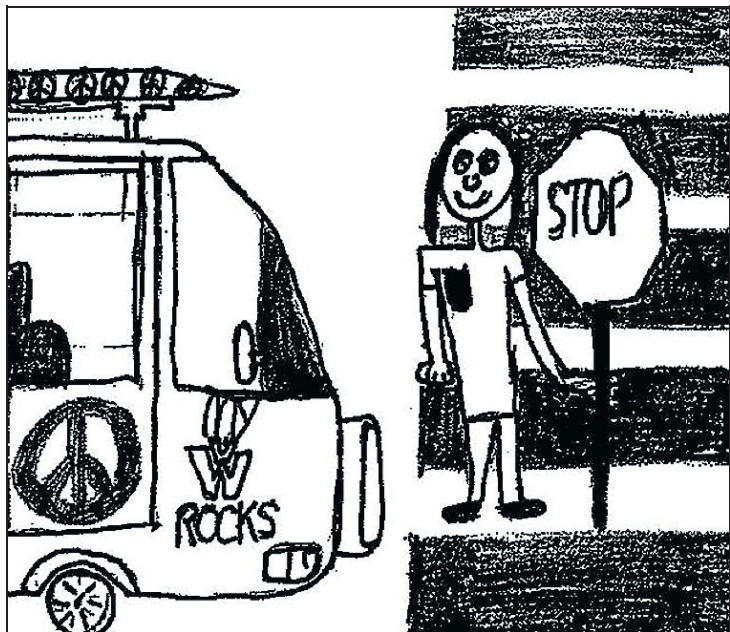
Three buses drop children at school each morning and pick up in the afternoon and this poses another problem.

Two buses stop on Bula Street, on the school side, but many parents park on the far side to collect their children.

One day it is feared a child is going to step from behind a bus and in front of a car.

A zebra crossing, well away from the bus stop, would provide an additional safety measure and would alert drivers to be aware of pedestrians.

Charlestown East was opened in 1953 and fortunately there has never been an accident on Bula Street. However, the number of cars using the street is increasing. How much longer will this luck last?



Cartoon: Olivia Robinson



NEW SKILL: Miss Josie Yan explains symbols to one of her Chinese classes. She visits Charlestown East fortnightly. Picture: Georgia Hall

Learning the Chinese way

By **SKYLAR SCOTT** and
SAFFRON DONALDSON

THEY'RE speaking Chinese at Charlestown East Public – occasional words anyway.

The school's year 6 students are learning Chinese through a collaboration with Whitebridge High school's language department.

Chinese teacher Josie Yan, who came to Australia from Mongolia 10 years ago, visits the school fortnightly to teach her language and culture.

The students have learnt about Chinese festivals such as the Chinese New Year, Blue Moon festival and the Spring festival, the symbols of numbers and greetings.

Miss Yan said she loved teaching Chinese and believes Charlestown East's year 6 students are mature, respectful and interested in learning about the Chinese culture.

"There are many benefits of learning Chinese," Miss Yan said.

"Researchers have found that people speaking Mandarin use both sides of their brain while only one side is used with other languages.

"This then means that learning Chinese can help develop brain power, better memory and overall intelligence.

"This, of course, can help with the future careers of these students as more than one third of businesses employ people specifically for their language skills," she said.

Dancing to the beat to become fit

By **JASMINE WOOLGAR-ROBE** and **KELILAH SMITH**

STUDENTS at Charlestown East Public are fighting fit through the Dance2bfit program and their new skills will soon be transferred to the stage.

Every year for the last three years all students have taken part in this program, led this year by Newcastle-based dance teacher, Keira Frost.

It involves an hour of instruction each week for classes from kindergarten to year 6.

When school principal, Neil Sneddon, mentioned to Keira that the school's concert would be held at the end of this term, the people from Dance2bfit offered to help.

Each class is adopting a dance from a different country within the theme "Cultures Around The World". Students are taught the steps to their particular dance.

These range from dances such as Zorba for Greece to the Haka for New Zealand, to an Australian bush dance with matching costumes to be worn.

The manager of Dance2bfit, Trent Taylor, said the program was a great initiative and had been developed specifically for NSW primary schools under the PDHPE syllabus.

"It is an energetic, innovative and fun way for students to get fit and funky learning the latest dance styles to the hottest music tracks," Mr Taylor said.

Workings of a real parliament

By **EBONY WOOLGAR-ROBE** and **AMBER DIPPER**

CHARLESTOWN East Public School's year 5 and 6 students participate in parliament sessions on Thursday afternoons and according to school captains, Demi Bootland and Jasmine Woolgar-Robe, it really works.

"It is enjoyable, we are taking part in the decision-making process and we take it seriously," Demi said.

"We have a system in place where suggestions are brought by the senior

students to the Parliament and we consider them.

"If we think they are good ideas we take them to the teachers and if they agree then we set about making them work.

"When we first set up this year's Parliament Mr Janetzki was a big help in guiding and advising us."

Meetings begin with the student executive reporting back on the previous weeks' business before general business is then opened. It is during this

session that students can put forward ideas.

Many of these ideas include activities such as student discos and fund-raising for the school and its charity, Stuart House.

"The students really enjoy the fund-raising and find it quite exciting to collect the money for an idea they put forward," Demi said.

While Parliament is for years 5 and 6, others are not forgotten with a suggestion box in the school office opened each week for discussion.



GUIDANCE: Demi Bootland and Jasmine Woolgar-Robe, under the tree of values.

Picture: Georgia Hall

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