

Shooting concern raised by residents

EDITORIAL

By SHAYNA KILDEY,
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DORA Creek residents sometimes have to remind themselves how lucky they are to live in an area so wonderful.

Around our lovely Southlakes village, we have the winding creek, expansive blue lake, a variety of sporting facilities and access to everything from mountain bushwalking to city shopping centres. All of this is not so far away, but not too close either.

That is why many residents were dismayed to hear the state government passed an act in June 2012 to introduce recreational shooting and hunting into national parks and state recreational areas.

Recreational shooting has been allowed on some state-owned land since 2006, yet the decision to allow hunters into national parks is frightening.

Do we want bullets flying around the Watagan Mountains where walkers, motorcyclists, trail runners and bird watchers frequent?

Some Dora Creek residents living near the foot of the Watagans have reported hearing gunfire echoing around the valleys of heavily wooded bushland.

Shouldn't we leave our national parks for citizens to explore and enjoy? The possibility of spending leisure time roaming a national park, only to be confronted by armed hunters, is alarming.

It appears that this decision was due to a deal to expedite support from minority parties to assist the sale of state-owned power stations. If harnessing votes from the Shooters and Fishers party is required to privatise power infrastructure in NSW, then questions should be asked of the premier.

Currently it is planned to open 779 reserves and parks to hunters. It is a concern that the hunters will not only shoot and kill feral animals, but also target anything that moves, mainly kangaroos and other native species.

Evidence suggests that recreational hunters do not lower feral animal populations and that pest eradication programs are best left in the hands of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The strong pressure from the Shooters Party is serving its own interests, but what about the interests of the native animals, the families and individuals who visit and travel through these areas, and even the feral pests who deserve to be eradicated humanely by professionals?

Recreational hunting in national parks and reserves sounds like a bad idea for everyone concerned.



TIMEBOMB: A turn for the worse could lead to an accident at the Dora Street intersection, which is a traffic black spot. Picture: Shayna Kildey

Drivers avoid danger roads

By KALEA WALSH and
ZOE PHILLIPS

DESPITE being set in a picturesque township at the base of the majestic Watagan Mountains, the intersection of Wangi Wangi Road and Dora Street is not a pretty sight.

Several thousand cars and heavy vehicles cross the bridge each day at Dora Creek, heading north past the railway station. Due to the poor maintenance and design of the intersection, a major accident is likely to occur, leading to casualties or fatalities.

Already there have been serious accidents at Dora Creek in recent times with some residents avoiding this black spot by driving around the

block and leaving at a safer intersection 500 metres to the north.

Possible solutions include a roundabout or even traffic lights to slow down traffic in both directions.

The state government and the Roads and Maritime Services require three documented casualties over a five-year period before individual sites are scrutinised for changes or improvements.

Police are taking on average 19 minutes to respond to accidents in the Southlakes area, further escalating the vulnerability of motorists. Residents are frequently caught in snarls as traffic heads north.

The community is calling for a proactive approach to improve safety at the intersection.

Town seeks boost after ATM stolen

By RENEE KUMAR and
SEAN ADEMA

THE streets of Dora Creek are like any rural village after dark, peaceful with very few people out and about late at night.

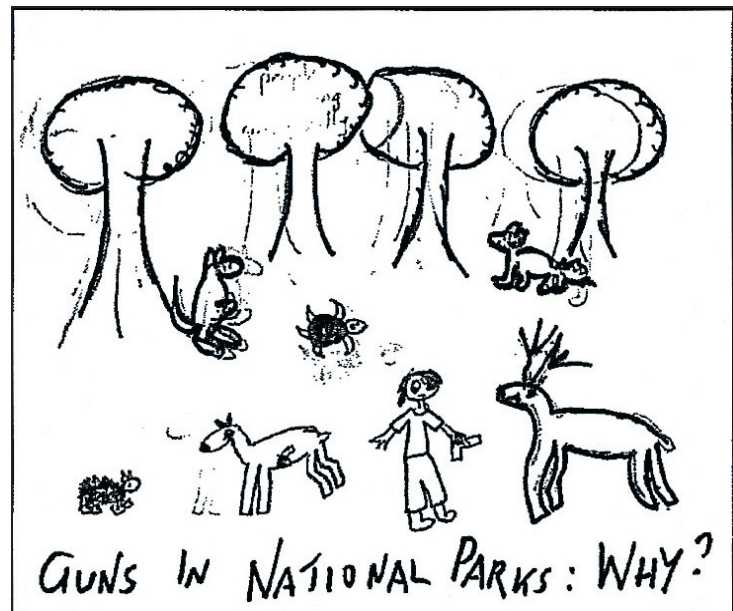
But on November 26, 2012, the quiet was shattered by organised thieves who were responsible for making an incredible amount of noise while committing a robbery.

Suffice to say the residents of Dora Creek were shocked that just a few weeks before Christmas a robbery had taken place when thieves allegedly smashed a car through the glass doors of Eats on the Creek, the local owner-operated café. The target was an automated teller machine.

The thieves had allegedly stolen a car earlier in the night and according to local police, drove from Cardiff to Dora Creek, before commencing their violent raid on the café.

As a result of the break and enter the town is now without an ATM. There are several places where residents can withdraw money through eftpos, however withdrawing funds from a personal account has been lost for the time being. The closest ATM is located at Morisset or at Bonnells Bay, an inconvenience to residents who want to access funds quickly.

Dora Creek businesses would appreciate a new ATM to boost the shopping precinct.



Cartoon: Renee Kumar

Life is returning to south side of the lake

By LOGAN WHITTEN
and ETHAN WHITE

THE health of Lake Macquarie immediately improved after heavy industries in northern Lake Macquarie closed and a ban on commercial fishing was put in place.

Photographs of commercial fishing in Dora Creek and surrounding areas show many families earning a living from the well-stocked waterways as far back as 1910.

However, as fish populations plummeted, restric-

tions and eventual bans to commercial fishing became necessary.

The lake is now recovering and in seemingly good health, however reports of shark sightings have caused some concerns.

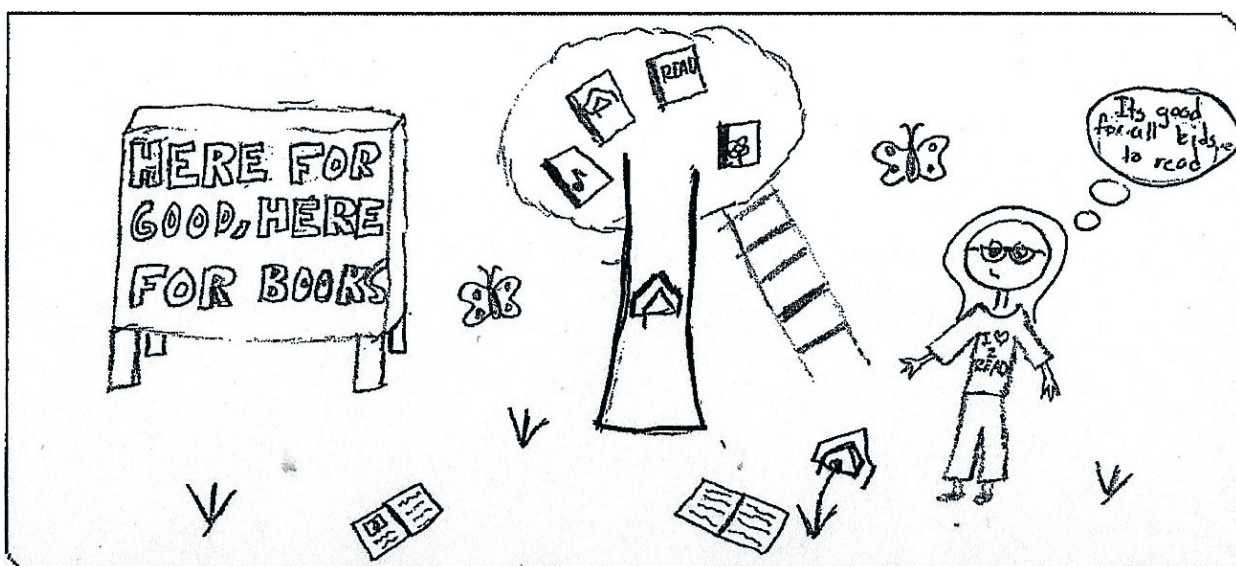
Fisherman may want a return to commercial fishing to help eradicate a potential shark problem, but the presence of sharks may prove the lake has been transformed and that creatures are coming back to Lake Macquarie, which was desolate of life just a decade ago.



BRIMMING: The health of Dora Creek is attracting some big fish.

Picture: Max Ferguson

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