

National invasion of the food variety

EDITORIAL

By **AMMON COFFEY, JACK EADES** and **JACK LINDSAY**

TOMATOES from Spain, olive oil from Italy, plums from Chile, salmon from Alaska, and green beans from Kenya. Are any Australians eating foods that aren't imported? How often might some of these ingredients end up in your basket?

In Australia, most people's shopping trolleys contain a significant proportion of imported foods. But wouldn't you prefer to get these foods from home and your local community rather than having them imported from who knows where and not knowing who is growing them, and what chemicals are in play?

You can buy the Home Brand peaches from your local shop or you can buy the SPC peaches for a few cents more. You may not know it, but SPC (Shepparton Preserving Company) is Australian-grown and Australian-owned, while the Home Brand is the imported food.

Australian farmers are having to give up what they love most; many are selling their farms because imported food is slowly

taking over. Peach growers have to strip down their trees and sell their land. Their food is rotting because they don't have any buyers and these people are our Australian farmers.

The plant closures of crop farmers would lead to job losses of around 325 permanent and 140 seasonal positions, leaving Tasmanian and NSW vegetable growers struggling to sell their crops and force more food processing offshore.

One in four Australians are eating imported food every day.

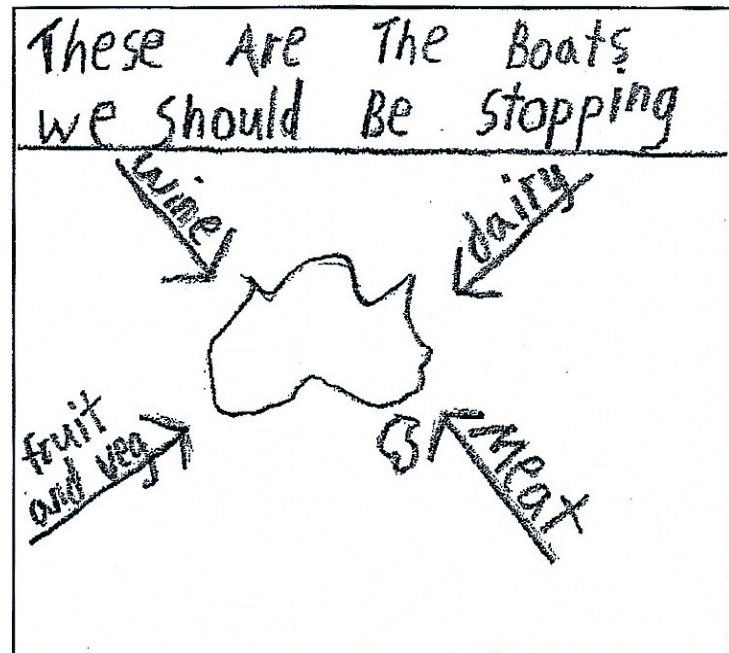
Some people still buy the cheaper milks which are imported instead of buying products which are Australian-made.

With 66 countries unable to be self-sufficient due to water or land constraints, imported food is necessary but do we really need it in Australia? Food grown overseas is not subject to the same level of scrutiny as food grown here.

The only food we should eat is Australian because it is the best quality. The foods we eat today come from more than 170 countries around the world.

Is it happening because it's cheaper to import than export, or are we too cheap to grow our own food?

Please buy from Australian farmers – you are what you eat.



Cartoon: Braydon Crockett



WHEN IT RAINS: A car stuck in flood waters near Kurri Kurri after a heavy deluge in March. Picture: Cody Guenthroth

Build a bridge and get over it

By **AMY HANSON, CODY GUENTHROTH** and **COOPER VASELLA**

WITH traffic levels through Testers Hollow expected to increase due to the imminent opening of the Hunter Expressway, finding a solution to the road's flooding problems is more urgent than ever.

It is inconvenient that the main road that links Kurri Kurri and Maitland is susceptible to flooding. Stephen Hawes from Maitland City Council said: "Funds to get the road fixed will come from the state government."

Maitland City Council resolved that the Roads and Maritime Services should consider fixing it because in an unfortunate event

Cessnock Road, Buchanan Road, Wollombi Road and Allendale Road could all flood at the same time which would make it hard to get to Maitland without a major detour.

Steve Coffey from Cessnock-based bus company Rover Motors said the council should fix the main road "because of the effect that it has on the community".

"Rover Motors have had to cancel some buses and also redirect other buses to go through Buchanan", he said.

Mr Coffey said this was a major hassle as the road was flooded for two weeks earlier this year.

"The answer is clear – build a bridge at Testers Hollow or raise the road to make life easier for the locals."

Link road is on track for big opening

By **LOGAN CONNOLLY, CHANTELE HERBERT, RYAN WOODBINE** and **DOMINIC SWINTON**

THE \$1.7 billion Hunter Expressway project is expected to bring many benefits to the Hunter in addition to an improved flow of traffic.

The project is jointly funded with the federal government providing \$1.5 billion and the NSW government contributing up to \$200 million.

When finished, the 40 kilometre expressway will be a four-lane freeway, connecting the M1 near Seahampton to the New England Highway west of Branxton.

The expressway will support predicted growth in the region and is a more direct route for heavy vehicles travelling between the Upper Hunter and the Port of Newcastle, cutting costs for freight operations.

Hunter Expressway communications manager Hudson Bawden said: "The Hunter Expressway is expected to reduce traffic between 15,000-30,000 vehicles per day on the New England Highway, based on traffic forecasts."

The expressway has had eight glider crossings installed to ensure that wildlife can safely cross the road.

The project is providing the construction industry with a major boost, supporting over 1500 direct jobs.

Fresh breakfast gives students up and go

By **BRAYDON CROCKETT** and **COOPER SARGENT**

SOME kids don't have the opportunity to eat breakfast before school.

Kurri Kurri Public School and Kurri Kurri Rotary Club have joined together to support them by running a breakfast club.

This allows kids to have toast and a drink of juice before school starts, giving them a great platform to begin the day.

Kurri Kurri Public School teacher Zoe James,

one of the organisers, said: "Breakfast club was a great chance for students who do not get to the opportunity to eat breakfast for a variety of reasons."

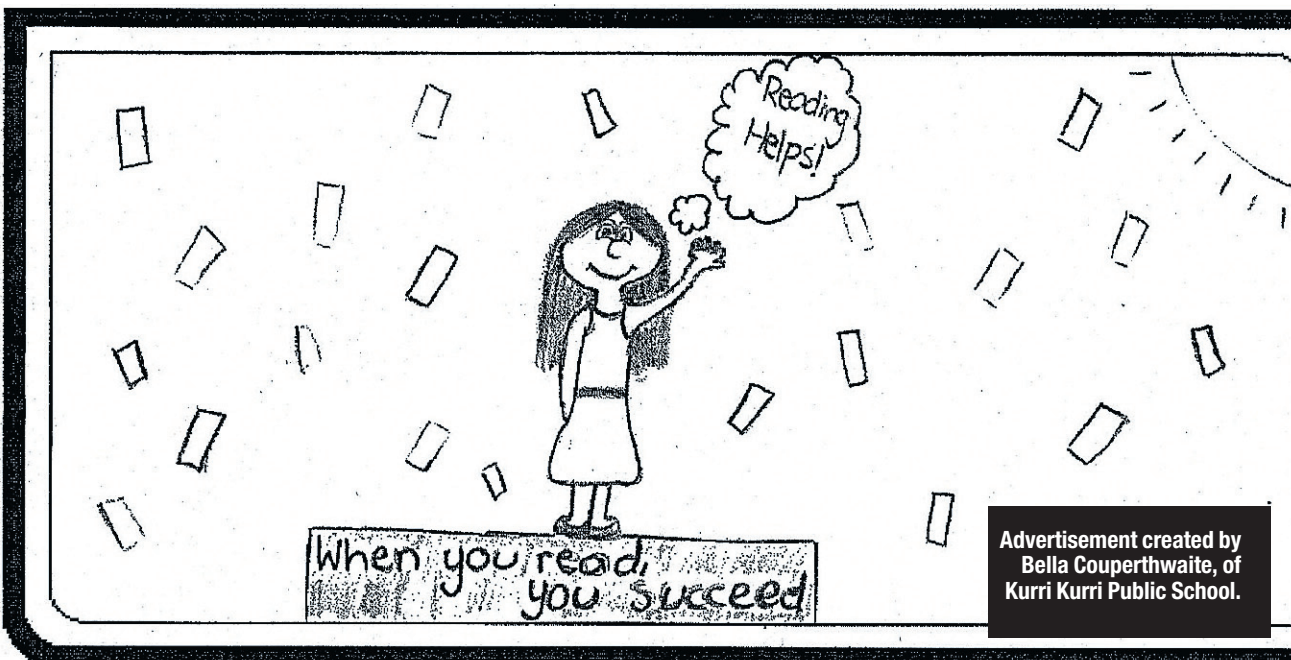
Kurri Kurri Public principal Eve Field said: "Our school wouldn't be able to run breakfast club without the help from the Rotary Club. Rotary provides all the supplies and is essential in the club's success."

This program has been running for two years. With continued support this initiative will allow all children a fresh start.



OUR KITCHEN RULES: Staff volunteers prepare food for the breakfast club. Picture: Braydon Crockett

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