

Primary entry #33: New Lambton Public School



New Lambton Notebook



BUSY: Previous lord mayor, John Tate. *Picture: Arthy Mukunthan*

Catching up with former lord mayor

By MAXIMILLIAN WEINZERL

ALTHOUGH his time as Newcastle lord mayor has ended, New Lambton resident and former New Lambton Public School student, John Tate, is still a very active member of the community.

Mr Tate is the chairman of the Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment (NCCCE) and is the deputy chairman of the Regional Development Australia Hunter Committee (RDA).

He is also a proud member of the Hunter Rugby Union Board.

Mr Tate manages his family's automotive repair business, ATS, and is in the process of introducing the servicing of hybrid automatic transmissions to Newcastle.

When asked about his proudest achievements as lord mayor, Mr Tate listed the new Newcastle Museum and the introduction of the yellow top recycling bins.

But he was disappointed that plans for the redevelopment of the Newcastle Art Gallery were abandoned after his term ended in 2012.

Even though his civic tenure is behind him, Mr Tate is having difficulty catching up with his grandchildren.

"They are very busy with their own activities," the grandfather of eight said.

His goals for the future are to spend more time cycling on the Fernleigh Track, to go travelling and to hang out with his grandchildren.

Blackbutt strikes back

By JOSEF MILAN

ON the long weekend in June 2007 the Newcastle area was hit by a massive storm which had a devastating impact on the environment and the city.

One of the places worst affected was Blackbutt Reserve.

The reserve, a popular recreational destination for tourists and locals alike, was a mess.

Hundreds of trees were blown over and there was major erosion of walking trails and tracks. Four small bird aviaries and one macropod enclosure were destroyed, as was the perimeter fencing.

Recovery works began immediately. The first priority was removing hazardous and fallen trees.

Over the next three months, various sections of the reserve were reopened to the public.

On September 24, 2007, Lookout Road car park and picnic area were formally reopened.

Six years on, it seems Blackbutt Reserve has made a full recovery.

Penelope Francqueville, administration assistant at the reserve, believes it has.

"The storm damage provided the reserve the opportunity to change elements based on community feedback, making it more user-friendly and able to offer more programs and animals," she said.

Ms Francqueville said that in



BIGGER AND BETTER: One of Blackbutt Reserve's new enclosures.

Picture: Josef Milan

some areas, fallen trees had made space for new habitats for different animals.

The last exhibit fixed was exhibit eight, which houses two Eastern Water Dragons. The red-chested dragons, which run like dinosaurs, are entertaining to watch and are excellent escape artists.

"It has taken up until this year to repair all exhibits. Repairs were done by council staff to keep costs down," Ms Francqueville said.

Aside from the improvements to the animal enclosures, Blackbutt is now equipped with barbecue facilities and shelters, and a new children's playground.

Kotara resident Julie Davies believes Blackbutt Reserve is a lot better now than before the storm.

"It is a great tourist destination and it would have been a shame not to see it fully restored," she said.

The new improved Blackbutt Reserve will be a part of the community for many years to come.

From New Lambton to Antarctica

By MAC GILLIGAN, JOSEF MILAN, ALICE HOLLOTT and HARRIET BRINDLEY

ANTARCTICA is a topic of study for most stage three students across Australia, but very few can invite their father to school to share his Antarctic experiences. Alice Hollott can.

Alice's father, John Hollott, travelled to Antarctica in February for the trip of a

lifetime. He recently spoke to Alice and her fellow students about his adventures.

Year 5 were treated to an afternoon of Mr Hollott's treacherous tales. He shared stories of skiing down mountain tops, scaling Mount Francais, trekking through the bitter cold wind and kayaking through dangerous waters.

Mr Hollott was in Antarctica for four weeks, accom-

panied by a party of three Britains, one American and one Chilean.

"We liked to call ourselves the Anglo British, American, Chilean, Australian Antarctic Expedition 2013," Mr Hollott said.

He would rate Antarctica 11½ out of 10 as a travel destination. Mr Hollott also said that the highlight of the trip for him was just being out there on the ice.

INTREPID TRAVELLER:

John Hollott and his daughter, Alice.

Picture: Amy Tan



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