

It's time to put all bullies on notice

EDITORIAL

By **HAYDEN REGAN**

OVER the country we are always hearing stories about incidents involving bullying. Parents are having to deal with their children coming home in tears. Kids are feeling depressed, lonely and worthless.

Kids shouldn't have to worry about these things; they should be out playing happily. Instead we read and hear about children fighting and teasing one another, all because of bullies who do it for reasons of power – to make themselves look bigger and feel better.

Although bullies think they're tougher than the rest of us, in reality they are not tough at all.

Being a bully creates a lot of drama for the victim and those around them. Not to mention the trouble that the bully themselves could get in if they are caught or brought to account in other ways.

Victims are often scared to go to school or sometimes out of their house. If its cyberbullying, they could be scared to continue an online presence, open messages or even check their device for fear of it continuing.

If people continue to get bullied over a long period of time they could begin self-harming or enga-

ging in other unhealthy activities.

We've all heard of the strategy to ignore a bully and hope they go away, but the reality is some bullies see this as continued weakness and don't stop. It certainly is a major issue for children and their parents to tackle.

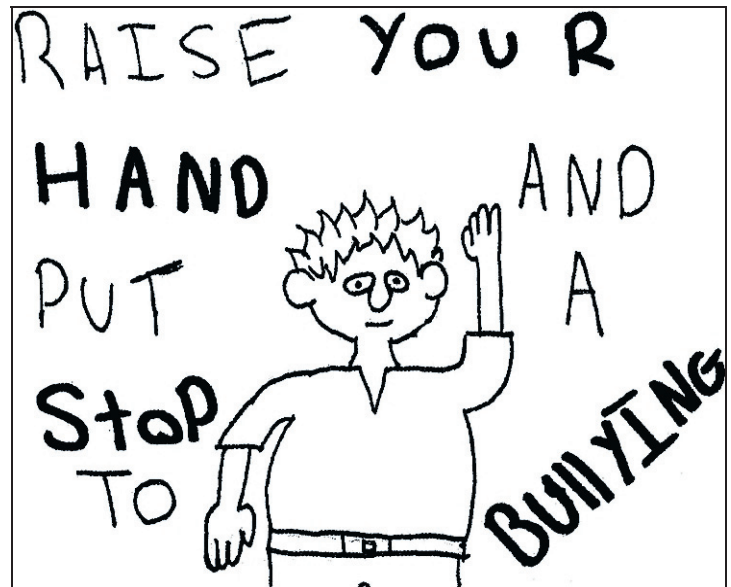
Perhaps the answer is solidarity. Where everyone stands up together, where everyone works together to stop bullying when they see it.

At Rutherford Technology High School, staff and students have implemented the method of stopping bullying by all standing together and pledging together to cut bullying out.

They're have been guest speakers and members of staff spending dedicated time talking about bullying in all its forms, about bullies and what makes them tick, and different strategies to deal with bullies. Some of these have since been dramatised by the school's drama ensemble.

Teachers have been requested to be proactive on incidents of bullying, and students have a secure and private electronic method of reporting a bully to the designated bullying co-ordinator.

However, nothing is as powerful as the show of unity by 99 per cent of students who stood up to be counted and subsequently have helped in real terms to put bullies on notice.



Cartoon: Jayden Baldwin



NETWORK: Year 11 students Sam Currie and Tayar Harrower, back row, and year 7 students Ella Paton, Bella Anderson and Tiffany Wilde.

Picture: Tara Toth

Support from within school

By **TARA TOTH**

THIS year Rutherford Technology High began a program of peer support involving year 7 and year 11 students. Peer support is not a new idea, but it hasn't been used at the school for more than a decade.

The decision was made by the teachers of the school to reintroduce the concept of peer support as it has shown to reduce the incidence of bullying and improve classwork, said teacher Nella Clarke.

Peer support also helps students become more independent and bounce back from any situation. This can have an impact on student lives beyond school as they build res-

ilience in preparation for life.

The program was held at the beginning of every week for most of term one. In highly structured and organised groups, year 11 leaders helped year 7 through a series of activities designed to empower students verbally, emotionally and express themselves in a secure and safe environment. It also involved a number of physical activities that supported the self-reflective material in a fun way.

From the program Year 11 become more responsible towards themselves and others, while the year 7 students learn about respect, responsibility, commitment, working together and personal values.

A cruising chance at gold gloves

By **ABBEY COLLYER**

YOUNG Maitland boxer Paulo Cruise works hard at his sport, but with hard work comes reward, and recently for Paulo it was the achievement of reaching the position of Golden Gloves in Sydney.

Paulo has had about four years of boxing experience, after beginning at the age 10.

Paulo first got interested in boxing when he moved into the Maitland area, and now he fights every fortnight. Paulo's boxing history currently stands at 11 fights, including seven wins and four losses.

Paulo trains for two hours, four days a week, Monday to Thursday, at the Maitland City Boxing Club and is trained by his family who help him in every way possible.

Paulo has luckily never had any major injuries and "I hopefully never will," he said.

Paulo's proudest moment in boxing is fighting up to the level of Golden Gloves in Sydney.

One thing every boxer is asked is in relation to their ability in the art of fighting. When asked if Paulo has ever used his skills outside the ring, he said, "I will never have to."

When asked about the future and what it could offer, he said The Australian Titles will be his next big chance to claim a worthy prize.

Maitland region continues to grow rapidly

By **GEMMA APPS**

WHEN driving in and around Maitland, it's not hard to see that the area is expanding.

Mark Roser from the Maitland City Council Planning Department agreed but added that Maitland's growth is concerning for council as it is costing millions of dollars.

Mr Roser noted the western sector, where a significant amount of houses are being built, require an equally significant amount of infra-

structure to support these communities.

He said the Maitland area is growing at a rate of between 2-5 per cent and that a good portion of Maitland's growth will take the form of redevelopments. This growth is significant as many other towns in Australia are experiencing a decline in population.

Mr Roser said even with the increase in developments, council will ensure adequate green space, such as parks, playgrounds and other recreation areas, are created.



SPREAD: The urbanisation of Maitland's western sector is astounding. Picture: Gemma Apps

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