

Jet-skis threaten economy, serenity

EDITORIAL

By **MAKAYLA MYERS, BRIANA MYERS** and **JULIE BLAIR**

THERE is no doubt that many people ride their jet-skis up and down the Hawkesbury River at high speeds and sometimes, irresponsibly. This can be extremely dangerous to the numerous people who come out on their boat or go fishing.

The impact of the jet-skiers zooming past quiet fishing boats disturbs both the fisherman and his catch.

"While fishing the other day I noticed a jet-ski going past at an extreme pace that was very noisy and scared away all of the fish and gave me a massive headache," Makayla, a Spencer resident, said.

The Hawkesbury is known for its beautiful scenery and tranquil waterways. It is a major water catchment, an estuary as well as a nursery for fish stocks of the eastern seaboard. The river is also known for its oyster farming. Over 50 per cent of NSW oysters are produced in the Hawkesbury River. This is a major industry for the area. Many of these hoons who frantically jet-ski around the river are risking getting caught on the

oyster leases and damaging the growth of this prosperous industry. This could be financially crippling for the industry and with a flow-on effect to the residents of the area.

After the devastation of the Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome in the Hawkesbury River, the farmers now have to contend with hooning jet-skiers using the Hawkesbury River as their own personal speedway.

The infamous water-ski competition Bridge to Bridge is a 111-kilometre race from Windsor Bridge to the Hawkesbury River Bridge. This event brings people from all over the country to explore the beautiful river and has resulted in many jet-skiers and water-skiers trying to compete in their own personal Bridge to Bridge race.

Recently, a resident of Merewether noticed four humpback whales enjoying a swim and frolic while travelling north, only 100 metres offshore. To their horror, they noticed jet-skiers riding to within 10 metres of the creatures.

Many Spencer residents are outraged with the weekend jet-ski brigade who come with their terrifying sounding water crafts and subject the quiet tranquillity of the area to the noisy chaos of their speeding jet-ski races.



Cartoon: Makayla Myers



HOME GROWN: Dick Smith wants Australians to eat more local produce.

Chopper visit excites pupils

By **TYLER McGRAW** and **CHRYSTAL WEBSTER**

ON July 15, Dick Smith visited Peats Ridge Public School.

Dick Smith flew in his helicopter on to the oval at the school. This day was an extremely exciting event for the students, teachers and community of Peats Ridge.

Mr Smith is an Australian icon who is extremely passionate about farming and Australian produce.

He reminded the students of how lucky they were to live in rural Australia on farms, as many of the students from Peats Ridge Public School do.

Mr Smith is doing everything in his power to reverse imports of

produce from overseas countries and to encourage and support local use of fresh produce.

The students were lucky enough to listen to Mr Smith talk about what it takes to achieve in life and were motivated to achieve that goal.

"You're successful in life if you are able to put yourself in the position where you have the ability to do what you want to do," he said.

It was an inspirational talk and a wonderful opportunity for the students and community.

Julie Blair, a teacher at the school, said: "It was really cool to see Dick Smith flying and it only took him eight minutes to fly from his home in the Sydney suburbs to visit us out here at Peats Ridge."

Small schools gather for a winning athletics carnival

By **MAKAYLA MYERS** and **BRIANA MYERS**

ON August 9, seven small schools from the Central Coast mountain area gathered together at Mingara's athletic oval to participate in the Small Schools Athletic Carnival.

There was a fantastic turnout, with many parents and students coming to share in the wonderful sunny day.

Students from Jilliby Public School, Spencer Public School, Peats Ridge Public School, Central Mangrove Public School, Somersby

Public School and Wyong Creek Public School all joined together to compete in a range of activities from shot put to high jump to 800-metre runs.

Parents and the schools put on a barbecue and everyone filled up on delicious food.

The students all tried their best and there were some wonderful achievements made. Many will move onto zone level to compete in athletics as a result of this day.

Well done to all students, parents, teachers and helpers for making this wonderful day a success.

Pupil saves chook from jaws of dog

By **SPENCER PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS**

A YOUNG girl from Spencer on the Hawkesbury River made a heroic save on April 8.

Makayla, a year 4 student from Spencer Public School, was putting her work into her school bag when she saw a blue cattle dog in the school grounds.

As she walked through the playground, she heard a noise. She turned around to see the school chicken being chased by the blue cattle dog.

Makayla called out to the school principal, Mrs Raftery, to come and help. As she turned around, the dog had the small brown chicken in its jaws.

"Get away! Get away!", Makayla screamed, as she ran quickly towards the limp chicken that was sitting in the dog's mouth.

The dog was shocked from the noise and dropped the chicken onto the grass.

The chicken must have run away as fast as a bullet as she was nowhere to be seen.

The school looked around trying to find their beloved chicken, but she was nowhere to be found.

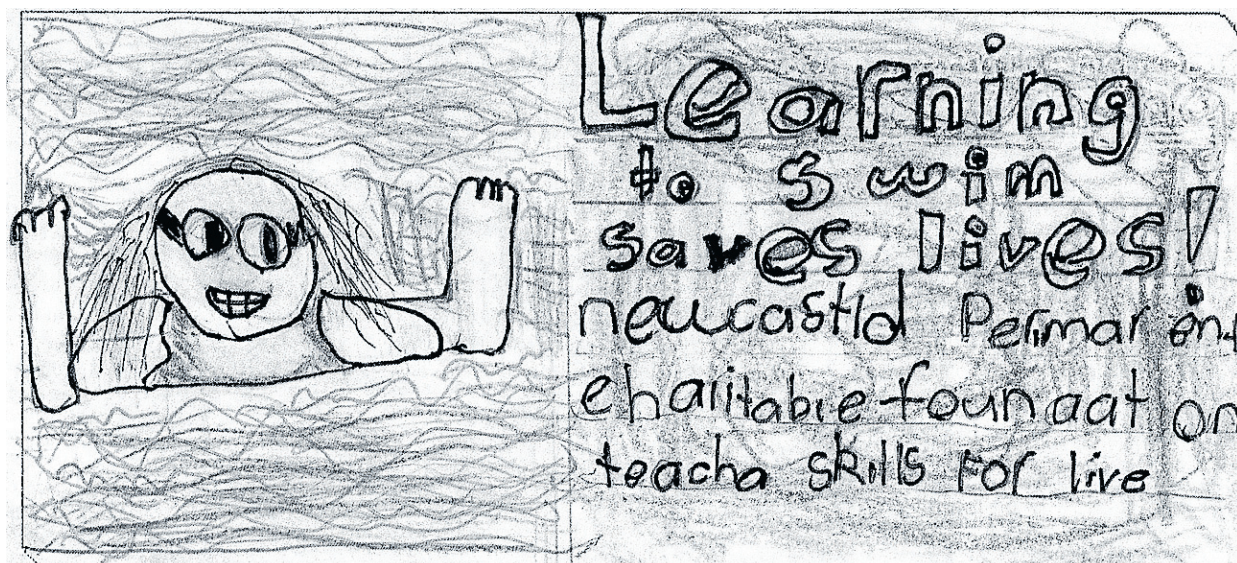
Gosford City Council's ranger was called later that day to help resolve this problem.

Luckily, the lively chicken was later seen walking around outside its coop by another year 4 student, unharmed, thanks to the schoolgirl's heroic efforts.



FOCUS: Ajay Marsh getting ready for shot put. Picture: Rosslyn Raftery

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