

# Tablets signal new vision for learning

## EDITORIAL

By **ELLIE PRITCHARD** and  
**CHARLOTTE GILMOUR**

IN a bold vision of what schooling might be like in years to come, year 5 students at St Mary's Primary School, Warners Bay, are using individual tablet computers in a pilot "Contemporary Learning" project.

With the support of parents and the Catholic Schools Office, 75 students spread across three classes are using the tablets as a tool to engage in 21st-century learning practices.

St Mary's principal Linden Jones-Drzyzga says it is vital for our children to be trained in the use of these technologies so they can participate in the workforce of the very near future.

As an example, she says Microsoft alone has more than 4000 unfilled jobs due to a skills gap. By 2020, 60 per cent of school-based learning will be delivered online and many of the workplaces they will join have a large online component.

"What they need are employees with skills in knowledge building, self-regulation and assessment, problem solving, global awareness, collaboration, and communica-

tion," Ms Drzyzga said. "Using these new tablets, teachers at St Mary's can involve students in innovative learning activities that build these skills and prepare them for today's economy."

Some of the applications on the tablet are cloud-based so teachers can maintain constant supervision of what students are working on, and can provide written and verbal feedback via voice recording.

The tablets are linked via the school's Gate 21 home page, meaning all files are stored and can be shared through email to other students. Multiple people can contribute simultaneously to a project, which increases collaboration during group work tasks.

Ms Drzyzga also believes one of the many wonderful features of the tablets is the enhancement of the home/school partnership.

"Teachers, students and parents can access work from home. Parents can see daily what their child has done at school in all subject areas. No carting heavy books... a lightweight tablet is all that is needed," she said.

Students are understandably very excited about being involved. Hudson Blanch, 10, of Valentine, says that it is great to be among the first to try this new style of learning.

"We feel really lucky to be participating because it is a fun way to learn new skills," he said.



**GOING GREEN:** Most Lake Macquarie families are excited about the new green waste service to the Lake Macquarie area.

Picture:  
Joshua  
Gesell

# Greens waste now at Lake

By **LILY FLETCHER, BETHANY CONLAN** and **ELIZABETH FOSTER**

LAKE Macquarie residents can now access a new fortnightly green waste removal service.

More than 72,000 240-litre bins were delivered to Lake Macquarie homes during February and March of this year.

The response from local residents has been positive about the new service. Mark Conlan, a Warners Bay resident, agrees.

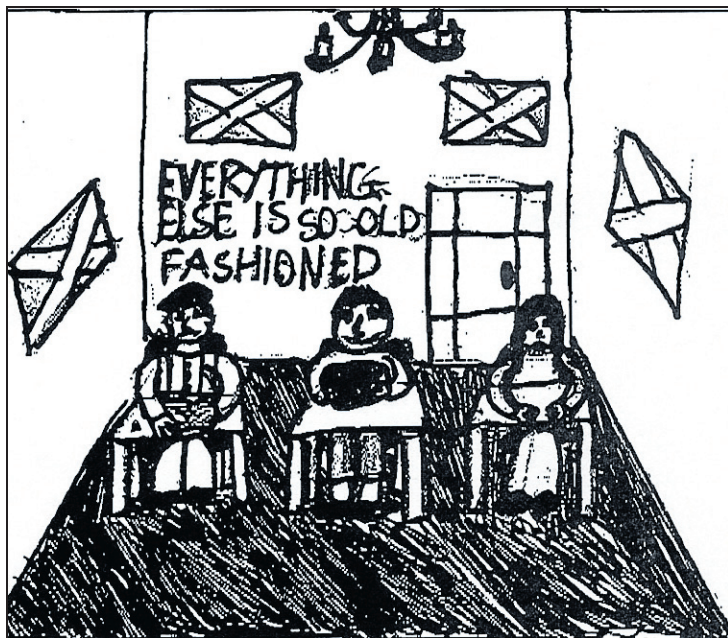
"I think it is a great idea because we have a lot of green waste and it is just going in the rubbish bin and not getting recycled. It is much better for the environment for it to be processed and reused," Mr Conlan said.

With the landfill site at Awaba filling up quickly, Lake Macquarie City Council believes that organic resources can be reused as high grade mulch and compost for the benefit of the local community.

Other residents have voiced concerns that they have no need and no room for a third bin, while some already manage their green waste through worm farms and composting.

Despite these concerns, the Lake Macquarie Council has remained firm on the issue, and has reassured ratepayers that next year's domestic waste management charge is unlikely to increase.

If residents don't want or need a third bin they can contact the council and ask for the bin to be removed.



Cartoon: Adam Foster

# Dogs stolen for an apparent fighting ring

By **THOMAS FAIRLEIGH, MACKAELA GILLIGAN, HOLLY VINCENT, ELLA MURPHY** and **MATTHEW POTTER**

SEVERAL bulldogs in the Lake Macquarie region have been stolen in recent months, sparking fears they are being taken to participate in illegal dog fights.

Skye Mitchell said her 10-month-old Staffordshire Bull terrier was stolen from her Boolaroo backyard in February.

While reporting the

theft to the police she was told the dog may have simply run away.

"I rang the council rangers and they said that other dogs had been stolen in the surrounding area," Ms Mitchell said.

She turned to social media to spread the word, and following media coverage - and an offer of a reward - the dog was returned a week later.

Police have requested locals look out for a truck with a 16-cage trailer that has been reported to be scoping the area.



**ABDUCTION:** Greer Gillies is thankful that her dog has not been a target of recent abductions in the Lake Macquarie area.

Picture:  
Leisel  
Gillies

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