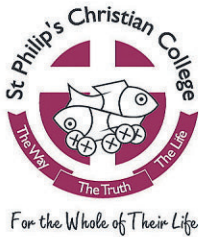


Secondary entry #10: St Philip's Christian College, Cessnock



The Saint's Sword



IN MEMORY: A tribute to an accident victim. Picture: Adam Kentwell

Hearts being broken on Lovedale Rd

By ADAM KENTWELL

ALREADY this year there have been two recorded deaths on Lovedale Road in the space of two weeks.

One was a hit and run, killing a 36-year-old man. The second was a head-on collision where a mother of five was killed and six people were injured, five of whom were children.

More problems are sure to follow after the new Hunter Expressway opens. There will be an interchange at Lovedale Road, increasing traffic flow and making it much easier for crashes to occur.

Not far away from Lovedale Road lies the notorious Broke Road.

Known for its terrible conditions, this road is now getting a major upgrade that is costing the government millions.

Local residents are demanding a similar upgrade for Lovedale Road on the grounds that it too leads tourists through wine country but is in such bad condition that it is an indictment on the government.

They add that the upgrade will not only boost tourism but will also save lives, especially now there have been fatalities in such a short amount of time.

The families burdened with the loss of their loved ones are calling for urgent change in the hope that no one else will have to go through the pain that they have.

A threat to waterways

By JACINTA BAUMANIS

HUNTER Valley residents, including those at Merriwa, are making their concerns about coal seam gas mining heard.

Lobbyists claim that, as part of mining operations, companies are threatening water quality through the use of toxic chemicals in the fracking process.

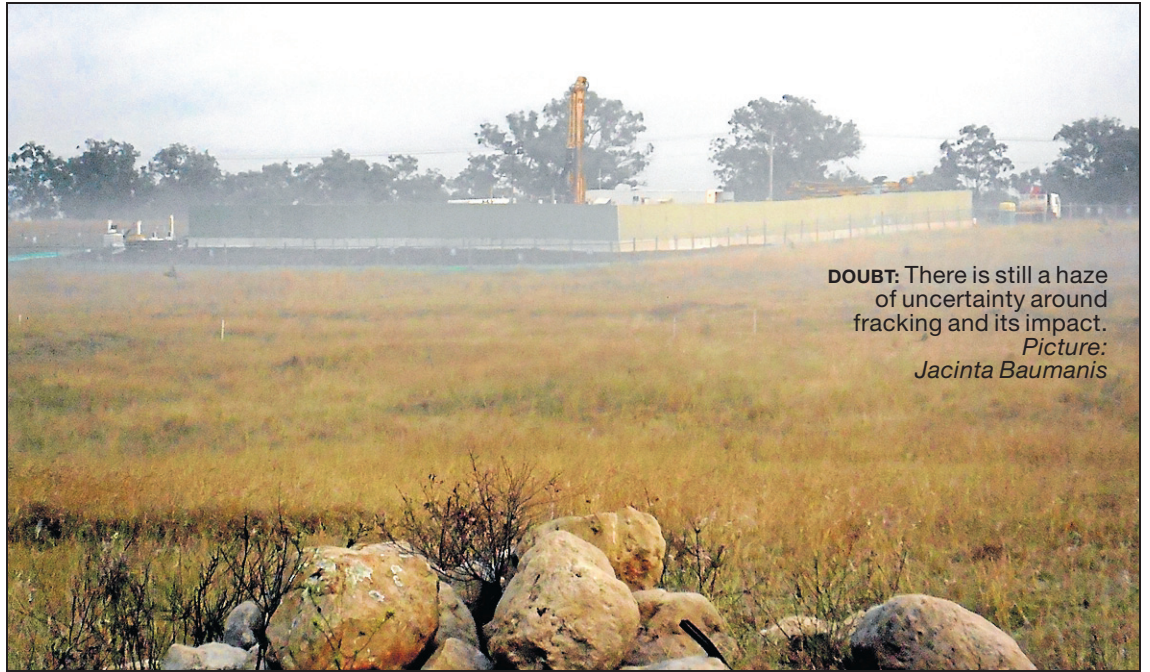
Fracking has been fiercely debated in recent times, even though coal seam gas (CSG) has been extracted in the United States for 30 years.

Ecological anxieties have been expressed about the potential leakage of toxic chemicals into the environment. There have been concerns over its possible impact on the water table.

The placing of these gas wells is also affecting agricultural land, as farmers fear they are losing control of their properties.

However, in a media release on February 19, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell assured the public that "a two-kilometre exclusion zone will be imposed around residential zones to prevent new CSG exploration, assessment and production activities (both surface and underground); exclusion zones will apply to identified Critical Industry Clusters - viticulture and the equine industry".

"These exclusion zones will



DOUBT: There is still a haze of uncertainty around fracking and its impact. Picture: Jacinta Baumanis

apply to any CSG activity that has not yet been approved under the EP&A Act or the Petroleum (Onshore) Act," he said.

And while the industry claims that coal seam gas emissions are significantly lower than other forms of mining, such as open cut coalmining and coal-fired power stations, many people still have

reservations towards these claims.

While coal seam gas production is providing more jobs, the impact of mining processes involved in its extraction remain a source of uncertainty, particularly with regard to the environment.

In simple terms, coal seam gas is produced by pumping noxious chemicals into underground coal

seams, which creates a chemical reaction and generates gas.

There is no doubt that coal seam gas will be a controversial energy source in the years to come.

For now though, residents remain fearful that the demand will outweigh concerns, regardless of the impact it has had on groundwater in other states.

BEWARE: Try to avoid infection this season through good hygiene and vaccination.

Picture: Rainey Sargent and Madalyn Faalua



Deadly flu could sweep Australia

By MADALYN FAALUA and RAINEY SARGENT

THIS winter is anticipated to be a killer flu season with the rise of H1N1, also known as swine flu.

The drug-resistant influenza is becoming increasingly common in Australia.

The NSW government has previously released a Get Ready for Winter plan, which is raising awareness

not only for swine flu but also H3N2 (Fujian) and B.

These strains will be floating around at the same time, making them more likely to be caught.

The main fear regarding swine flu is its easy transmission between people and the increase in infections that are resistant to the Tamiflu vaccine.

These characteristics and statistics are distressing

many influenza specialists.

Those aged 95 years or older may be the safest from catching this infection.

Pregnant women and young people are at a higher risk rate than any other group.

This concern has resulted in the establishment of a law that states children must be vaccinated, or have an exemption form, if they wish to receive childcare.



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