

# Number on paper a say in your future

## EDITORIAL

By **LAUREN WILSON-DANN**

THE upcoming federal election seems to be the subject on everyone's lips. Yet in spite of the constant enrolment and political ads from the Australian Electoral Commission, and the interviews with Labor and Liberal politicians on both television and the front pages of newspapers, one in two 18-year-old eligible citizens is still not enrolled.

In other countries (such as Libya, Egypt and Syria), people fight and die every day for the right to choose who is representing them.

To some Australians, this concept seems alien – after all, we have lived in a democracy since Federation. But we forget that people fought for the right to vote in Australia too. Only 111 years ago, women were not allowed to vote. And only 43 years ago, the Aboriginal people were barred from the vote.

Because we live in Australia, a safe country where freedom of speech and the right to vote are often taken for granted, unlike other countries in which politics can be a matter of life or death, we tend to leave the decision until a

few weeks before the election.

In the weeks leading up to an election we are bombarded with ads from both major parties, along with pamphlets and booklets from the minor parties – it can be very confusing.

Younger voters can get easily baffled. It's easy to become overwhelmed – it is a big decision after all. But it is very important for us not to take this freedom for granted, to have a say in our future.

We all use public transport, public facilities and venues. And we all pay taxes. And we decide what that money should be used for by voting for the party that represents us most. The decisions that we make today could affect us for the rest of our lives.

In the words of Oliver Cromwell: "No taxation without representation."

It is even more important for the 18-year-old voters to vote at this election. While the sudden rush of responsibilities can be daunting, it is important the responsibility to vote is not cast aside.

It seems younger voters are willing to spend money to vote on reality TV programs rather than on the people who may change their lives.

So when voting this weekend, remember the people in other countries fighting for their freedom, and that you are fortunate enough to have a say in your future.



Cartoon: Mahlek Ping

# Green thumbs harvest ideas

By **SAMARA O'KEEFFE**  
and **LILY HODGSON**

SUSTAINABILITY is mentioned a lot, but Waratah Public School is "walking the talk" when it comes to environmental issues.

Students, staff and community members have developed and grown two feature gardens – a bush tucker garden and a fruit, vegetable and herb garden.

Many hours were spent researching the right soils for the plants, especially for the Waratah flower, the school's signature plant.

Supported by a generous P&C committee and helpful families who have donated many Australian native flowers, fruit and vegetable seeds, the gardens are not only there to be looked at, they are a source of income as well.

Students sell their fresh produce every Thursday to raise funds for more gardening products.

Greg Younger, who runs an environmental program with targeted students, said the gardens helped students develop a sense of pride.

Leoni Butler, environmental co-ordinator, con-



tinues to work on making the school more environmentally friendly by involving classes in weekly gardening tasks, and plans to make Waratah a binless school.

Rochelle Irvine, parent and key part of the environmental group since its beginnings in 2012, sums it up: "I like seeing the smiles on the kids' faces about coming out and growing things in the garden."

**TO MARKET:** Students Mia Vallone and John Habaguirwa sell freshly picked produce from the Waratah Public gardens.

Picture: Samara O'Keeffe

# Getting to know our neighbours

By **LAUREN WILSON-DANN**

WORLD trade and world economies are interconnected to a degree that was unthinkable 20 years ago.

As our immediate neighbours are Asian countries, it makes good sense to get to know how their lives and belief systems are similar to, and different from, our own.

The introduction of a national curriculum for all students from kindergarten to year 10, with standard subjects and similar expectations across all of the states and territories, has taken on a broader view to incorporate changes in our current society, by including our partnerships with Asian countries, such as China and Indonesia.

Adrianne Haddow, ESL and Asian studies teacher at Waratah Public said: "A huge quantity of the clothes we wear, the appliances we rely on to cook and run our households, the cars we drive and the technologies we use are manufactured in Asia. As we understand more about our immediate neighbours and trade partners, our ability to interact socially and in business with them will grow."

Waratah Public School has been ahead of the times – since 2012 the stage three technology gifted and talented class has been learning to speak, read and write Indonesian.

# Future has arrived with everyday robots

By **DAVID MARSHALL**,  
**BAILEY MYERS** and  
**JACOB BOYCE**

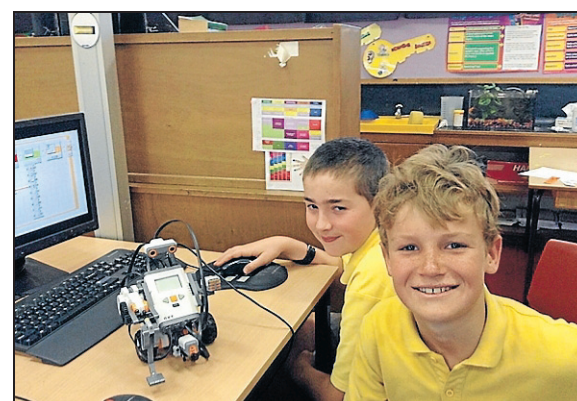
AT Waratah Public School, year 5 and 6 students have constructed Lego Mind Storm robots as part of an educational program.

A robot is a machine capable of carrying out a complex series of actions automatically, which allows it to somewhat resemble a human being or creation or animal. It can also replicate certain human movements and functions.

Robots are used all around the globe. There are robots all around us but you would never know, as they don't look like those in science-fiction.

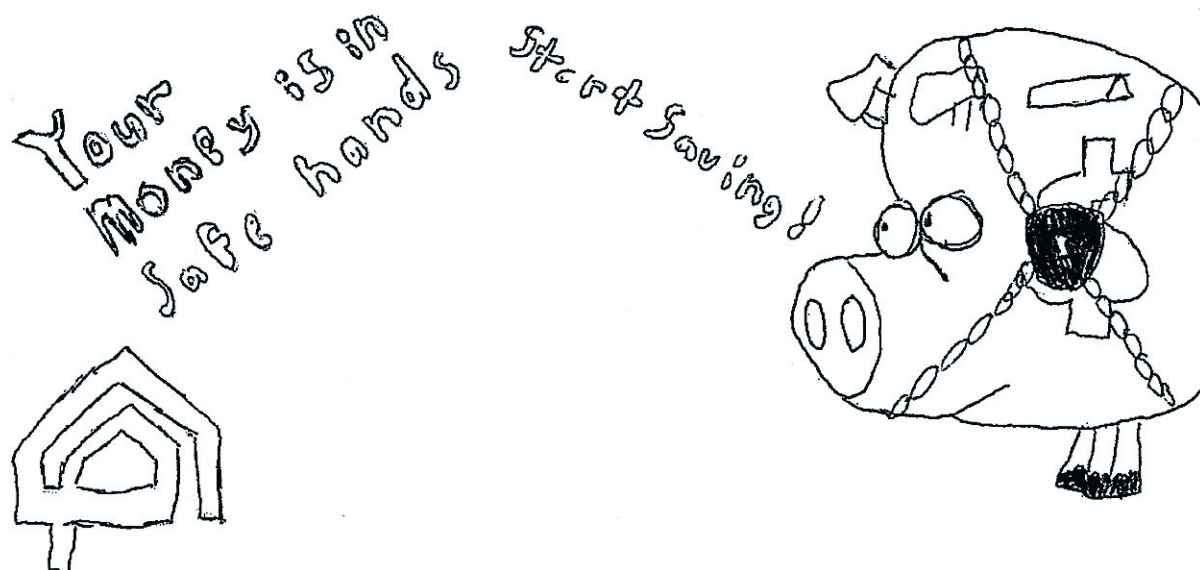
Everyday items such as dishwashers are hidden robots in our homes.

Building robots is a fun and inspiring way of learning. Waratah Public School assistant principal Robyn Christie believes the students will develop skills in co-operative learning and problem-solving, setting them up for a bright future.



THINKING: David Marshall and Bailey Myers develop problem-solving skills. Picture: Jacob Boyce

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