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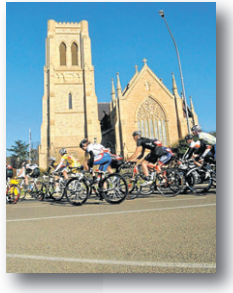
Ph: 4827 3500 | Classifieds: 02 4827 3555 | Friday September 14, 2012 | $1.60 including GST



CLASSIC READY TO ROLL

See Sport

TAFE students targeted

By **TOM SEBO**

LOCAL TAFE students will feel the pinch in the coming months as the NSW Government ramps up its aggressive cost saving campaign.

The government this week announced it would be cutting $1.7 billion from the State's education budget over the next four years.

It will attempt to make up for lost GST revenue by increasing TAFE fees by 9.5 per cent. This means local apprentices will have to fork out an extra $42 a year and students studying for an advanced diploma an extra $150.

In addition, student concession fees will increase from $53 to $100 from January 1 and fine arts courses in "non-jobs growth areas" - such as Visual Arts, Sculpture and Ceramics - will no longer be subsided by the government, instead, pupils will be forced to pay full commercial rates.

Member for Goulburn Pru Goward told the *Post* she recognised price hikes would have an impact on locals but that they were necessary to stop the State from plummeting into debt. If that happened we would lose our AAA Credit Rating, which would inturn mean we'd have to pay more interest on every dollar we borrowed and that would end up affecting everybody, she said.

"I feel terrible and so does the Minister but these were the cards we were dealt," Ms Goward said.

"These are tough times but unfortunately we have a collapse in (GST) revenue by $5.2b. When that happens, like in any household, when revenue goes down you have to cut your expenses, this was the fairest way we could do it.

"We know that increases in any fees are hard on households however it should be noted that the increases will result in fees that are still within national averages for TAFE fees.

■ Continued page 3

A TIGER STRIKES

THESE dramatic photos taken by Alex Mortensen on his Quialigo property on Wednesday show a hungry Tiger Snake engorging itself on a rabbit.

"It was doing its best to swallow the oversized meal," Mr Mortensen said.

"It was fascinating to watch as the Tiger writhed around with the rabbit which was well and truly dead. It even picked it up a couple of times, and changed angles and direction in its efforts to get it right into the mouth. "Lesson to learn - there are some big and active Tigers and Browns out and about at the moment."

• GOULBURN MULWAREE & UPPER LACHLAN COUNCIL ELECTION LATEST: P3

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