FISHWRAP

Things you might have missed out on

City Public's 150th in the news

By **JANENE CAREY**

'FISHWRAP' is a regular column in the Extra highlighting the most engaging, interesting and important stories that ran in *The Armidale Express* last week. These are just some of the stories you missed if you depend on the free papers to provide you with your local news...

The Express, Monday June 13:

■ Armidale City Public School celebrated its 150th birthday in style over three days, with speeches, singing, dancing and a parade up Faulkner St. Hundreds of past and present students, teachers and friends braved the cold weather to join in the festivities.

■ A crowd of around 250 packed the Town Hall to demonstrate their enthusiasm for renewable energy initiatives to Federal Member for New England, Tony Windsor. A farmer, an activist and a school student were among those who explained why they thought it was important to push renewables as part of the deal on carbon pricing.

■ We ran a page of colour photos from the celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the handover of Saumarez to the National Trust.

■ The New England Nomads are off to a flying start four matches into the season, sitting pretty in second place on the Tamworth Australian Football League ladder.

The Express Wednesday June 15:

■ Lamb from Armidale has been judged the best in the land at a Food and Wine show in Queensland. Two local producers took out the gold, silver and bronze medals.

■ Deputy mayor, Jim Maher, rejected claims by people from the Netherton Estate that Armidale Dumaresq Council had not adequately consulted with them about putting a 30m Telstra tower nearby. He said the plan had been discussed in front of a gallery packed full of residents, and 177 letters about the matter had been posted to landowners.

■ Jim Belshaw was one of the many former students who returned to Armidale for the City Public School sesquicentenary. In his regular column he reflected on his memories of attending the Dem School in the 1950s. We also ran another page of colour photos from the 150th anniversary events.

■ Thirteen New England players have been selected for Country representative honours following the 34th Country Schoolboys Rugby Championships at TAS.

The Express, Friday June 17:

■ We reported on the state of the New England Highway, which has been hit by a double whammy of surface-deteriorating rain and heavy vehicles diverted from the flooded Pacific Highway. Travellers to Armidale are reporting 'potholes most of the way from Tamworth'.

■ An empty shop on Dangar St has temporarily become a place where the community can gather to reflect on what home means and turn their ideas into a collaborative art installation.

■ Over three pages, we listed the names of everyone who came first in an Armidale Eisteddfod event, together with a selection of colour photos and congratulations to the winners and all who participated from their proud schools.

Bailey Mitchell enjoying the spirit of the ACPS sesquicentenary parade

■ In sport, we profiled rising young stars Ashley Waters (hockey) and Tajo Quaife (rugby union), both in Year 6 at Armidale City, who've been selected to play for State and North West teams respectively.

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Dad refuses to face the problem

art.influence.change beyond empathy

'IN MY shoes' is a serial story written as part of Armidale's Just One Less project. Just One Less is a robust and sometimes confronting community conversation that seeks to raise awareness about alcohol and its place in our community; risk-taking behaviour in young people; why some young people fare better than others; and what inspires parents to become positive role models.

Through this project, Armidale-based arts organisation Beyond Empathy (www.beyondempathy.org.au) has focused on highlighting the things that connect us and not those that divide us.

The story so far...

Jess has just started uni and her dad is worried she is partying too hard, given high school issues with alcohol and parties. They argue, with dad reminding her of her problems with underage drinking and Jess reminding him of his own 'secret' drinking. Jess appeals to her mum to get her dad to give her some space as she has an assignment due. Dad becomes increasingly annoyed at getting no response from Jess. Jess finally tells him all is well and she'll be spending some of the uni break with a friend before coming home for a brief visit. Dad responds that she must come home immediately after exams as there are serious matters to discuss. Jess tells him she's spoken to mum and he's overreacting – and that the serious matter to discuss is his drinking problem. Dad accuses her of projecting her problems onto him and says that he's coming to see her. Jess again appeals to her mum to intervene.

Mum,
Did you get my message? What's Dad doing?
J
* * * * *
Mum,
Where are you? Answer your phone! What's happening?
J
* * * * *
Jess sweetie,
Sorry, I left my phone in the car. I've just been at the police station. Dad was caught over the limit by a RBT on the edge of town. Lucky, really, that they got him. But it's his third drink driving charge in the past three years and they say he might go to jail. Certainly he's lost his licence for a very long time. I really don't know if I can do this any longer. Never mind, you just concentrate on your exams. We'll be fine.
Love, Mum
* * * * *
Hang in there, mum. I can be there in three days. Maybe now dad will admit he's got a problem and do something about it. Love you.
Jess
* * * * *
Dad,
How could you be so bloody stupid? You could have killed someone! You need help. I hope now you'll go and get it.
Love, Jess
* * * * *
Jess,
Yes, I was stupid. I was angry with you and had had a couple of glasses of wine with dinner. I was barely over the limit. This doesn't mean I have a problem. Enjoying a glass of wine with the evening meal is quite normal. Hope the exams are going well.
Love, Dad

To be continued next week …

NBN opens world of opportunity

FROM, page 1

He also noted that the NBN would mitigate issues of distance with education - a claim championed by Member for New England Tony Windsor when he backed a Labor Government and their NBN following last August's hung parliament.

"These kids now, don't really need to travel to Sydney and go to a planetarium - we've brought it here," he said.

"The future is about seeing video screens in all of these classrooms, we want to see them talking to world experts all over the globe in instantaneous real time like they're just in the classroom.

"You'll see leading schools like Ben Venue, pushing the boundaries and they'll be the first schools - and that's why it's beautiful that it's in Armidale and near the NBN - to drive the newer technologies that are coming down the pipeline."

BUPA beat rocks Armidale facility

ACROSS Australia and around the world and even right here in Armidale, Bupa Aged Care homes have been holding community dance events.

Be it ballroom or belly dancing, the Bupa Dance Challenge has aimed to 'activate' as many people as possible - so they can live longer, healthier, happier lives.

The 'Honky Tonk Girls Line Dancers' kicked up their heels at Bupa Armidale. A troupe of 15 dancers performed and then led the gathering of residents, staff, family and friends in a line dancing routine.

Fringed vests, check shirts and Akubra hats were the order of the day, with the aged care home decorated in country barn dance style complete with streamers and hay bales.

Bupa Armidale general manager Helen Kinder said dancing is a great way to stay active, no matter your age.

"It is important for everyone to be fit and healthy. Lack of physical activity is a major contributor toward so many chronic diseases prevalent in our society," Ms Kinder said.

Armidale Honky Tonk Linedancers

"Dance events are great because they can be tailored to meet the physical capabilities of the participants and incorporate our rich cultural diversity.

"As people age they tend to slow down but there is growing and compelling evidence suggesting that physical activity improves both the longevity and health of older people.

"While many older people may not feel motivated to go to the gym, dance is an enjoyable and social form of exercise which is widely enjoyed. Older people who dance improve their stability and reduce their risk of falls. Line dancing also engages our minds, requiring concentration and promoting mental alertness."

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