TUESDAY AUGUST 12 2014

**News**

**Failures hit PNG students**

A Northern Territory company has identified issues which have caused PNG’s Southern Highlands Province to be the poorest performing province in the education and health sector.

The Papua New Guinea Post-Courier newspaper reports that a lack of specialist teachers, teaching resources and poor maintenance to facilities and housing were contributing to the falling standards in the province.

A report conducted by Hill-Schane Consultancy Limited, an Australian consultancy company specialising in indigenous education in the Northern Territory, revealed malaria was a major health issue impacting students’ learning ability and the health sector was below the required standard to deliver effective services.

Proper screening of teachers and qualifications was also an issue and many qualified teachers were reluctant to work in rural areas.

**School in green initiative**

Students will be encouraged to study science and the environment in more depth under a new program set up in the Top End.

Growing Green Kids NT is an educational initiative between Territory Wildlife Park and neighbouring Berry Springs Primary School.

All primary school students will have the chance to take part.

“The program provides opportunities for students to discover the roles of compost, worm farms, garden creatures, photosynthesis and the importance of sustainability,” Parks and Wildlife Minister Bess Price said.

“It also aims to increase teacher confidence in using and accessing the park as a real-life learning resource to give children hands-on opportunities in an outdoor lab setting.”

Berry Springs Primary will supply the Territory Wildlife Park with fruit, vegetables, poultry and meats for their animals and sell produce in the park’s canteen.

**Marines face Top End exercise**

The US Marine Rotational Force will participate in Exercise Koolendong at Bradshaw Field training area near Timber Creek on August 21 and 22.

The exercise will host approximately 1500 US Marines and Australian soldiers.

Exercise Koolendong is designed to improve forces interoperability and improve capacity to effectively respond to regional crises.

The activities include the establishment of an expeditionary operating base, helicopter and ground live-fire ranges and a final manoeuvre exercise involving infantry, tanks, artillery and engineers.

More than 200 Marines will take part in a live-fire exercise.

**Grey nomads’ sub-plot to win race**

They designed Our Yellow Submarine and built it from late May to early June, when they began their journey – with the boat strapped to the roof of their vehicle.

“We have had a great time on the West Coast. People eager to be among the first people to run the Mitchell Street Mile can register online now, entry costs $20 for adults and $10 for primary and secondary students. Prize money for the fastest ‘miler’ will be $500 and second place will earn $250.”

**Chance to show who’s best runner by a mile**

A NEW mile-long running event has been announced for Mitchell St in Darwin – the only run of its kind in Australia.

The 16km race, named the Mitchell Street Mile, will begin at the Mitchell St/Bennett Street junction, just outside the Deck Bar.

Runners will then travel south along Mitchell St through to the Daly St intersection before the field turns around and runs back along Mitchell St, finishing where they started. The NT Government has spent $100,000 from its Festivals NT program to fund the inaugural event, which will take place on Sunday, September 21.

There will be 10 categories, including schoolchildren, defence celebrities, masters, elite and all-comers.

Organisers were hoping between 500 to 1000 people would strap on their joggers to make their way from the Gold Coast.

“Mitchell St will be closed to vehicles from 4am to 8pm and Sport, Recreation and Racing Minister Matt Conlan said the response from businesses had been “better than expected”.

“This is a fantastic new sporting event that will put Darwin on the map,” he said.

“The race will showcase the energy and vibrancy of Darwin’s city centre and provide a new event to look forward to outside of the dry season.”

At a press conference yesterday to announce the new addition to the Festivals NT program the minister said he was “totally confident” the event would be ready to roll in six weeks. The Mitchell Street Mile will be run in conjunction with Athletics NT and general manager John Bowden said fun runs were becoming more and more popular in the Top End.

“We have already had significant interest from interstate athletes in the event and expect some big names to come up for it,” Mr Bowden said.

One person who has already put his name down to have a crack at the title is 15-year-old runner William McClay.

“It’s a good opportunity to get out there and have a run,” he said. “It’s a great event for kids to have a crack at because it’s only 16km. Almost anyone can run that.”

Although Mr Conlan said he would give the run a miss and instead stick to starting gun duties.

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**Samantha Woodbridge and Darren Peacock are excited about the new Mitchell St Mile, which, inset, was first floated in the Sunday Territorian in January Picture: HELEN ORR**

By JILL POULSEN

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A US Marine gets local knowledge

ONE of the more unusual entries in the novel Henley-on-Todd has been brought all the way from the Gold Coast.

And the crew will be just as unique, being 250+ years young.

They are grey nomads Jaenette and Ken Cheney from Melbourne and Gold Coasters Keith and Denise Hodgson.

They designed Our Yellow Submarine and built it from late May to early June, when they began their journey – with the boat strapped to the roof of their vehicle.

“We have had a great time building OYS Friendship,” Mrs Cheney said.

The couples met while holidaying on the West Coast.