



# THE BALLY BOMB

*Giving you the explosive action, news and entertainment from  
NBSC Balgowlah Boys Campus*



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## THE NEWLY BUILT AREA: A WASTE OF MONEY AND SPACE?

Recently, the school built a new environmental area located next to the canteen and the TAS staff room. It consists of two handball courts, a seating area and a great place to relax, but is it a waste of space and money?

We decided to interview Ms Fitzpatrick, Year Adviser and a member of the TAS faculty, to see what she thought of the new area. She seemed to like the area, noting the improved aesthetics. She loved the choice of colours, commenting that it was "bright and colourful". We explained that there were whispers of discontent among some staff and many students, yet she pleaded ignorance to this pertinent rumour.

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Unconvinced by Ms Fitzpatrick's glowing review, we decided to do a survey to see what students thought about the new area. The data was compelling.

While most students said they think the space is nice and an improvement from its previous incarnation, 100% of students surveyed said that they do not use the area. Furthermore, 76% of students failed to offer a reason as to why it was built, with one particularly confused young man declaring "I like the intention, but I think the idea falls short in terms of functionality".

From the data collected, we observed that students believe the area is visually appealing but largely impractical. Some other students complained that there was just too little space and that the school needed areas like that to be used effectively.

We decided to observe the area ourselves in recess and lunch and witnessed plants getting crushed, empty undersized handball courts with tumbleweed blowing across them, and vacant seats standing like lonely pillars in an abandoned town.

Mr Breheny said it was a far better utilisation of the area than previously, but perhaps the space could have been used more effectively. The school is clearly experiencing growing pains, and the Australian government needs to act to ensure our schools aren't becoming overcrowded.



Certainly, the current school improvement program is a very positive initiative for Balgowlah Boys. However, it is critical that we consult with the students before reconstructing precious landscape in a school already struggling with limited space.

The NSW Government has been contacted for comment, however, at this stage we are yet to hear from the office of Premier Berejiklian.





# CONTROVERSY WITH CHILDREN AND SCHOOL BUSES

Every morning an extraordinary 70% of students catch the bus to and from school. Sometimes in the afternoons, bus drivers leave students stranded at the bus stops, declaring their buses are full and are not taking any more passengers.

With most of these students' parents still at work and unable to pick them up, this creates a huge dilemma. But their patience, and trust, is running thin. With the amount of buses 'not in service' growing rapidly, even Transport NSW has claimed that the growing number of buses out of service are an increasing problem and will eventually cause major difficulty within the system. The question needs to be asked - where are the buses?

We interviewed the principal of Balgowlah Boys Campus, Mr Sheather, for his opinion on the matter. "The school has no jurisdiction in terms of ordering buses. The community needs to pressure State Transit to get more buses for the school and everyday use" says principal Mr. Sheather. "The school has been contacting Brookvale Bus Depot and State Transit about the bus shortage at Bally".



Out of 1,067 students at Balgowlah Boys, about 30% walk, ride a bike or get dropped off by their parents. This leaves about 750 students taking the bus to school each day. With only 4 buses to get children to school, this is a major concern to the entire Balgowlah Boys community.

One or two more buses should be put in soon, according to Mr. Sheather. In the afternoons the buses are jammed, forcing students to stand in the 'no standing' areas which is extremely dangerous.

When it is raining the amount of kids who miss the bus almost doubles. This is bad for most parents because they rely on the buses to get their kids home safely. This is also bad for the kids who missed the bus because when they finally get home, they are drenched, late, and without time to do their homework!

We see this as a state emergency, and are calling on the Government to act now before someone gets seriously injured.

# 14 YEAR OLD HIT BY TRUCK

If you don't cross the road on a pedestrian crossing or when the green man appears on the traffic lights, you're technically breaking the law. A Year 9 Balgowlah Boys student is lucky to have escaped serious injury after being hit by a truck while jaywalking across Sydney Road.

Just after 8.30am on Monday, emergency services were called to Sydney Road following reports a truck had struck a pedestrian. The Balgowlah Boys student was then transferred to an ambulance and driven to the Royal North Shore Hospital where he is currently recovering from a few broken bones

We interviewed an eye witness who wishes to stay anonymous:

"I saw him walk across the road before the walking man was green and he obviously did not see the truck coming because he kept walking. He hit the side of the truck as it speed up the hill. He suddenly fell to the floor and hit his head. I then rushed across the road and knelt beside him. By then some adults had turned up and were bringing out first aid kits. One of them called the ambulance while I called Balgowlah Boys High School to report the incident. The student then told me his mum's number, so I rang her and told her what had happened. When the ambulance arrived, they wheeled him in and took him away to Royal North Shore Hospital. The boy is currently still in hospital but is recovering nicely".



We interviewed the school's Principal Mr. Paul Sheather and this is what he had to say about this tragic incident and the dangers of jaywalking.

Q: What was your reaction to the boy getting hit by a truck?

A: We found it very alarming when we found out a student at Balgowlah Boys was hit by a truck today. It was very alarming.

Q: Do you plan to talk to the school about the dangers of jaywalking and the impact it can have?

A: Absolutely. As you probably know we speak to you about crossing the road at Sydney Road nearly once a fortnight now. I think this is a very important message. If anything, if there is something good to come out of this accident it is that it will make people realize how dangerous it can be to walk across the road when you are not supposed to or not using the overpass. So, we'll definitely talk to the school about it and keep reminding the parents.

Q: Do you plan to give out Levels if a student is caught jaywalking?

A: Absolutely, it has always been the case that if students don't follow the correct protocol when crossing the roads the students will be punished with a Level 1. It is really important the boys realise the danger as some think they are bulletproof, but as we found out today that's not the case.

# MOBILE PHONE BAN

Here at Balgowlah Boys, students are notorious for being on their devices during recess, lunch, and sometimes even class!

Teachers, parents and even politicians have been calling for an all out ban! On December, 13, 2018, the government announced that mobile phones will be banned in NSW public primary schools, but for high schools this policy is optional.

We did a survey on how many students in Year 7 spend all their time on devices. These were the results:



When asked whether they thought students should be on mobile phones at school break times, 50% said 'yes' and 50% said 'no'. In one of the extended responses a student replied "I believe students should be on their mobile phones because it shows them the online world and expands their knowledge of our world."

Another student suggested "It is unhealthy and is dumbing us down."

When asked whether they play games on their phone, 30% replied 'sometimes', 37.5% replied 'yes', and 32.5% replied 'no'. When asked: How would they would feel if they left their mobile at home for a day, 33.3% replied that they 'wouldn't care at all', 25.9% replied that they would 'miss it a little bit', 25.9% replied that they would be 'annoyed', and 14.8% of students replied that they would be 'hyperventilating'.

We interviewed Ms Lepre, a Balgowlah Boys English teacher, to find out her opinion on the potential ban, and this is what she said:

"Students rely on their phones too much and in my experience, students use their phones as an accessory from which they just can't part."

We asked why she uses the word "sad" to describe people constantly using their phones, and she replied "when I walk past the library students just sit down and play on their phones rather than going out to play. Frankly, it is sad so I can't really not use that word."

Ms Lepre then claimed "In the Canteen area and the library I would say around 60-70% of Year 7 students are on their devices. I definitely think they are wasting their time. I am a big believer in socialising."

When asked if she thinks calling and texting on phones counts as socialising, Ms Lepre replied "being on your phone does not count as socialising. I believe socialising is face to face interactions. You know what's really sad? When you see two friends sitting next to each other texting each other, and I see that often!" Ms Lepre then summed up that students should not be allowed on their phones unless they have permission for educational purposes.

After further research, we found that mobile phones give off a radiation called MWR. This radiation from wireless devices can cause serious health problems if used for extended periods of time.

The message is clear - we must ban mobile devices at school.



## IS THE STUDENT POPULATION AT BALLY GETTING TOO BIG FOR THE SCHOOL?

Balgowlah Boys was in the newspaper recently. The article revolved around Bally's outstanding HSC English results, and this certainly caught the eye of the public. Many parents read this and wanted their children to go to Balgowlah Boys. A long time ago, Balgowlah Boys used to be a small school with only under 300 students. But now in 2019, Bally holds over 1000 students and is the 21st most populated school in Australia! The Year 7 class of 2019 has 260 students; the largest ever year at Bally.

The school is clearly struggling to hold the number of students, with hallways overflowing with students trying to get to their classroom.

Canteen lines at lunch are massive and the bus stop across the road after school is packed with students just trying to get on, with many missing out due to a lack of space.

Students only have one main outside area to engage in physical activity, the quad, which at recess and lunch can become extremely dangerous.

Year 7s wanting to get across to the already flooded canteen have to literally dodge and duck between older students' rugby and football games just to get their lunch.

Some students have compared this to the video game 'Crossy Road', where one has to get across the road (quad) avoiding cars (Year 12s). With all this chaos going on, the question needs to be asked whether the school is big enough, and will it be able to hold next year's Year 7 cohort?



We interviewed Principal Mr Sheather who told us that, according to the Government, the school can 'technically' hold over 1200 students, but we find this very difficult to believe.

In 2020 he wishes to expand the area of the school as he is concerned about a lack of space.

Last year, Bally needed three new classrooms and were luckily granted money to make them, but this still shows that the school is indeed not big enough. We even received a new demountable this year, but it takes up space and is a waste of money.

Mr Sheather told us that he is having to decrease the catchment area, much to the dislike of the community.

This clearly shows that the population of the school is affecting the community. He also told us that he predicts next year's Year 7 to be 200-240 students. If this is the case, we will have 1200 students at Bally in 2020.

We surveyed both students and staff on the school's population. 60% agreed that the school's population was too big, 25% disagreed and 15% said maybe.

We then asked our surveyors whether they thought the school was big enough in size. 80% stated 'No', with only 10% of people stating 'Yes', and 5% percent declaring 'Maybe'.

The evidence is clear. The people have spoken. Balgowlah Boys is at capacity and in desperate need of more space.

# SCHOOL SPORTING STANDARDS SKYROCKET

On the 8th of March 2019, records which had been set as long as 40 years ago were smashed at the zone swimming carnival. Leading the charge was Alexander Smith who shattered several records on the day.

While Balgowlah Boys has always enjoyed a rich tradition of sporting success, more recently the school has been acclaimed for its outstanding academic results in both NAPLAN and the HSC. The recent success of Balgowlah Boys sportsmen, however, has sent a resounding message across the Northern Beaches that the school is still a force to be reckoned with in the sporting arena.

At least 70% of Balgowlah students represent the school at a zone level. This is one of the most remarkable achievements on the Northern Beaches. Complementary to this are the record number of students going to Sydney North which is an even higher honour. Many sports, including lacrosse, ultimate frisbee, European handball, softball and netball have been introduced to the Balgowlah Boys sporting program recently. Every student has enjoyed the privilege to be able to participate in these sports.



## THE DARKNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART

In the upcoming week, the Balgowlah Boys Drama club will be performing an adaptation of William Golding's 'Lord of the Flies'. Positive reviews have already been pouring into our newsroom.

"The talented minds, voices and acting skills of the Year 7 choir and the Year 8 and 9 performers are amazing," said one teacher. "The kids at Balgowlah Boys have fantastic acting skills and I can't wait for their next performance," said another.

'Lord of the Flies' is a tale about a group of stranded boys on a deserted island in the middle of nowhere and their fight for survival. This book is a bestseller and has been acknowledged around the world for the depth of its ideas. There have been dozens of movies and re-creations of this play, but none have been as outstanding as the Balgowlah Boys drama groups' production.



We had an exclusive interview with Patricia Herman, Director of Drama Productions at Balgowlah Boys.

She spoke of her "tremendous pride" in what the boys have accomplished. Preparation for the performance, however, was "rigorous".

She said the boys rehearse Thursday from 3:30pm to 6:00 pm and Saturday from 11:00am to 3:30pm.

The performance week will be the culmination of hours and hours of incredibly hard work. The play will be held on Wednesday, March 27 at 7:30pm and on Thursday, March 28 at 7:30pm in the school hall.

A gold coin is required to attend this once in a lifetime play.

The play will leave you breathless and questioning what exactly is the inherent nature of the human condition.