

NEWS

# School ethics questions

BY DAVID STEWART

LAKE Macquarie was among the first regions in NSW to roll out the primary school ethics program in local classrooms in 2011.

A public forum to be hosted by local think-tank, the Newcastle Institute, next week will consider what the community has learned since then.

The forum will discuss the growth of philosophical ethics in the classroom and the challenges and rewards of implementing the Primary Ethics program.

At Bonnells Bay Public School, parents are given the option of having their children take scripture classes, ethics classes, or neither.

Volunteer ethics teacher Paul Foster said that as more parents discovered that ethics classes were an option, and once they investigated what's involved in an ethics class, more were choosing for their children to attend the classes.

In ethics classes children discuss a diverse range of scenarios and stories, but the common link is devel-



**MORAL REASONING:** CEO of Primary Ethics, Leonie Johnson, will be among the guest speakers at the forum on Wednesday, October 12. The program's challenges and rewards will be examined. **Picture: Supplied**

oping their skills in moral reasoning.

Younger children might explore topics such as being left out, keeping promises, sharing and bullying. Older children reflect on issues such as homelessness and child labour.

Mr Foster estimated that about half of the 400 children at Bonnells Bay now attend-

ed ethics classes.

Next week's forum will be held at Souths Leagues Club, Merewether, on Wednesday, October 12, from 6pm to 7.30pm. Speakers will include John Beach, a recently retired principal and one of the first to implement the Primary Ethics program in a Hunter school.

Two former ethics stu-

dents, now both in year 10, will reflect on their introduction to philosophical ethics.

Hunter woman Leonie Johnson was appointed CEO of Primary Ethics in March after being involved in the not-for-profit organisation soon after it was established by the St James Ethics Centre (now The Ethics Centre) in 2010.

Ms Johnson will discuss how ethics is taught, the process of ethical reasoning, examples from ethics lessons and the importance of individuals developing evidence-based ethical reasoning skills.

■ Visit [primaryethics.com.au](http://primaryethics.com.au). Entry to the forum costs \$5. No RSVP required. Visit [newinstitute.org.au](http://newinstitute.org.au)

## Children rescued from rip by police

POLICE saved three children caught in a rip and at risk of drowning at Caves Beach on Thursday.

About 6pm, two girls aged 15 and a boy aged nine were swimming at Caves Beach when they became caught in a rip. A 47-year-old man, who is the father of the boy and one of the girls, entered the water to assist and also became caught in the rip, with all four persons being taken out about 70 meters from the shoreline.

With lifesaving services on the beach closed, a witness contacted Triple Zero.

About 6.15pm two senior constables from Lake Macquarie Local Area Command attended. They removed their appointment belts and obtained two body boards from civilians and entered the water.

The officers reached the children and towed them back to shore on the body boards. The father made his own way back safely.

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