



News Articles -Dance



Town and country: Dapto Public School students rehearse for the Rock Eisteddfod. (Front) Jesse Hyde, 8; (middle, from left) Alexandra Jurman, 11, Courtney Wallace, 8, Rianna Sepple, 12; (back) Ben Smith, 12 and Denni Perkins, 11.

Picture: GREG TOTMAN

Dapto kids movin' to the country

By DUNCAN ABEY

SWAPPING the urban rat-race for a healthier rural lifestyle has been a popular theme in TV and movies over recent years, and on Friday it will be transferred to the Rock Eisteddfod stage by Dapto Public School students.

Moving to the Country, which uses a soundtrack including songs from Dolly Parton and John Denver, is the result of six months' work for parents, teachers and students of Dapto Public.

The school's Rock Eisteddfod co-ordinator, Jane Rowsell, said it was the first time Dapto Public had entered the annual song and dance extravaganza.

"We've done the dance festival before but we're a much bigger school now and we decided to give more kids the opportunity," Ms Rowsell said.

More than 60 students will take to the stage at WIN Entertainment Centre (WEC) on Friday dressed in distinctive city and country garb, supported by a back-stage crew of 10.

Cast and crew will undergo a final dress rehearsal tomorrow in front of the entire school before spending the full day at the WEC on Friday culminating in the big performance.

"They are so excited. It's been a big ask but they can't wait to get on stage," Ms Rowsell said.

"It's been a positive experience for all of us - for the teachers and the kids."

Ms Rowsell said Dapto Public would definitely be making a return to the competition in 2006.



Hero with a health message

PRIMARY and high schools from the Wollongong and South Coast regions hit the stage last Friday night for the OxyGen 198FM Rock Eisteddfod Challenge® and J Rock.

Every school that performed received Awards of Excellence, recognising exceptional areas of their performance including set and costume design, drama and choreography.

The high schools will now be judged against 44 schools that perform in Sydney this week before the finalists for the Sydney Grand Finals are announced on Saturday on www.rockchallenge.com.au

The event's success in promoting health messages to young people is evidenced through the on-going sponsorship from Cancer Institute NSW, which encourages all participants to be part of a tobacco-free OxyGeneration.

Dapto Public's dance piece is entitled *My Hero* and is based on superheroes coming to the rescue of an imaginary city in the grip on a crime wave.

One of the co-ordinating teachers, Jane Rowsell, said students had been working on their performance since the beginning of the year.

HEROIC students from Dapto Public School taking part in the J Rock challenge.

2.8.07

Happy school trip turns into nightmare

The attack was one of four to occur in the region in the space of 48 hours, prompting police to step

Mrs Hesford was sitting on the back seat with daughter Brooke.

School P&C president Traybee McLean was awake when she heard a rock hit the side of her window, followed by another two "clunks" when rocks hit the bus.

Police are seeking to speak with two young males riding "pocket rocket" motorcycles.

"There was a big bang. It scared the hell out of me. My wife freaked out and it woke up the back," he said.

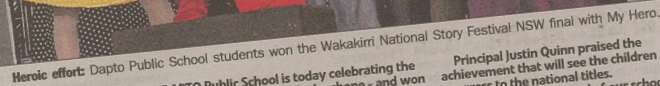
EDITORIAL
Close calls too close. Page 47

At 1.10am yesterday, police attended Shellharbour Rd, Warilla in response to complaints objects were being thrown at passing vehicles. Half a house brick was found on the road, together with egg shells.

Lake Illawarra Inspector Michael O'Toole said four juveniles were ar



The NSW Government will this week introduce legislation that will see offenders jailed for up to 14 years for throwing rocks at cars.



Performing *My Hero*, a colourful, modern production, the children delighted judges at the Sydney Entertainment Centre to win what was reportedly the first unanimous decision in the festival's 15-year history.

"I am immensely proud of our school's success. To win the premier division of Wakakiri is an amazing achievement and a tribute to the talent and dedication from our children and teachers, supported by a marvellous group of parents," he said.

Competing schools form a super friendship



Gold star

Showcasing the achievements of students, teachers and parents.

each other on, and share the same educational common ground."

Dapto's entry, *My Hero*, is a colourful, modern performance which will contrast with St Joseph's interpretation of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

"I think it's exciting because we're just there to have fun," Dapto Year 4 student Chloe Horton said.

Dressed as a fluorescent-green goblin, Chloe is one of the many children enjoying the chance to

Friendship rather than rivalry will be at centre stage this week when two Illawarra primary schools take part in the Wakakirri National Story Festival grand final in Sydney.

Dapto Public School and St Joseph's Catholic School, Bulli may be competing against each other but they have been sending each other notes of encouragement.

"We've become good friends with them (St Joseph's) because we see each other at lots of different performances," Dapto Public School teacher and performance organiser Jane Rowsell said.

"We always watch each other's rehearsals and we cheer each other on; there's definitely a friendship there. So we're hoping that they do really well as well."

St Joseph's Wakakirri coordinator Robyn Menghi said, "I think it's a nice thing when it doesn't matter what education system you come from - Catholic or public - and you can support each other and cheer

and act in front of an audience of thousands.

Dapto Year 6 student Jennifer Mee said, "I just like doing dancing for the experience of getting up on stage and having fun."

Ms Rowsell agrees that fun is the key to the success of the production. Featuring superhero cartoon characters this year was the solution to keeping the children interested, she said.

"There's an obvious interest in kids with any cartoon heroes and of course the old good triumphing over evil is always a good story to tell," she said.

"The kids are getting really into the story so they're telling it better on stage. They know what the story is about so they just throw themselves into it."

However, Ms Rowsell admits that organising the performance can be quite hectic. It has been the support of the school community that has kept the project on track.



Superheroes will be the theme of Dapto Public School's Wakakirri performance in the grand final on Friday. Picture: SYLVIA LIBER

"We've so much help from parents and so much help from all members of our staff," she said.

"The kids have been so enthusiastic; they've really pulled

together as well. It's just something that has been really good for the whole school community."

BREE FULLER

18.9.07



Winners are grinners: Dapto Public School students Jayden Faraday, Riley Murphy, Rebecca Abernethy, Brenda Tekkol, Zoe Taylor, Sophie Zirogiannis, Courtney Robinson, Danielle Mori, Taylor Missingham and Jessica Spoljaric. Picture: SYLVIA LIBER

Dapto tastes sweet success at Wakakirri

By JODIE MINUS

THE children of Dapto Public School were overjoyed to win the state final of the Wakakirri National Story Festival on Friday night.

"We were all grouped together and everyone was screaming," nine-year-old performer Chloe Horton said.

"My mum nearly went

deaf and I nearly lost my voice.

"It was just so exciting and I just thought I would have to get my friends to slap me across the face because I thought I was dreaming."

The 120 students from Dapto knocked out 15 other schools from across NSW to win the grand prize for their seven-minute performance, My Hero.

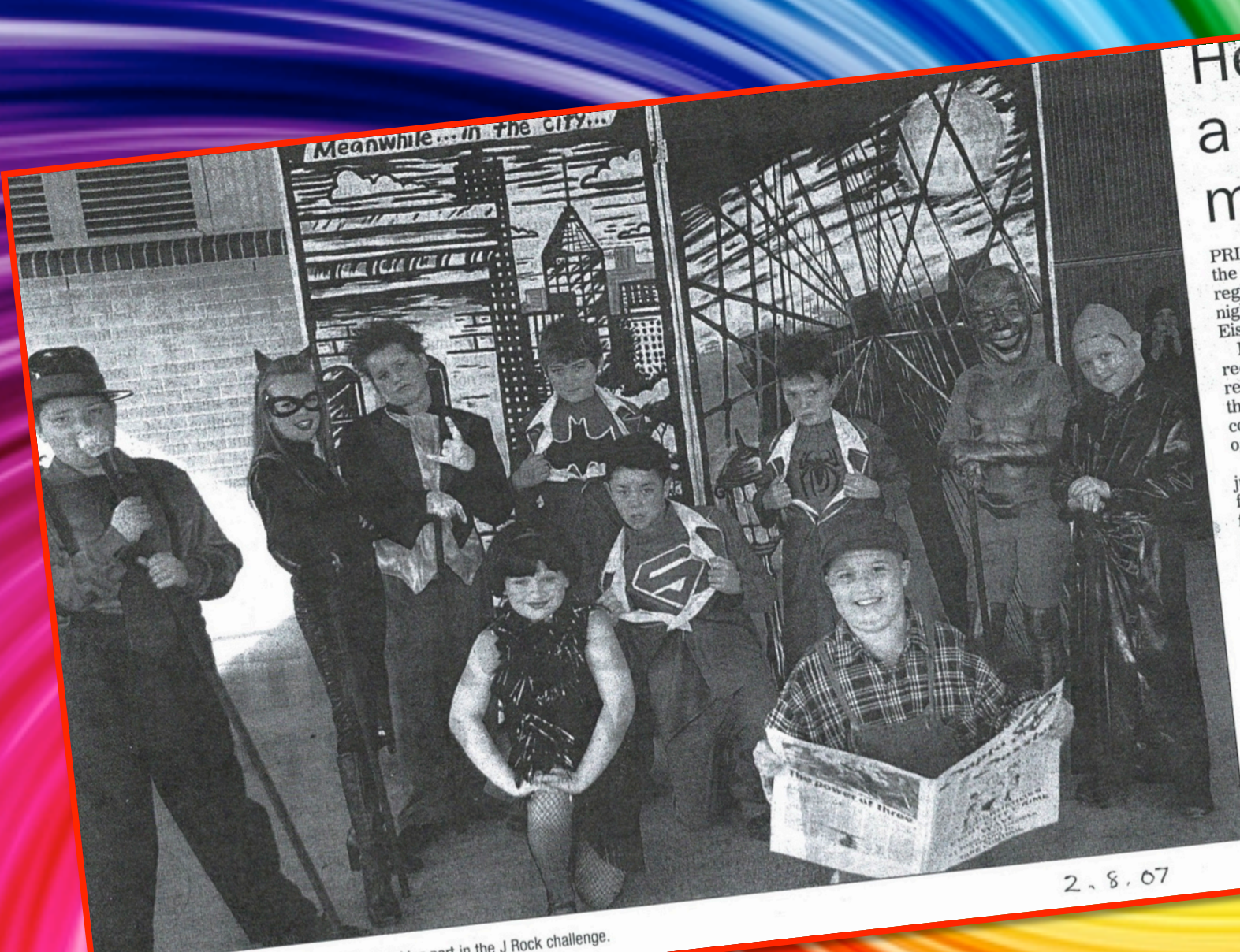
They walked away with \$500, a trophy, and their fingers crossed that they win the televised national finals in December.

Chloe played Spiderman's archenemy, the Green Goblin, in the superhero-themed show.

"We took all the superheroes, villains and their girlfriends from the show and made it all our own creation," Chloe said.

"The villains take away the girlfriends from the superheroes and then the superheroes save the day by rescuing their girlfriends and saving the city."

Teacher Jane Rowsell said the show would not have gone ahead without the help of parents and carers. "We work as a team - and that's our school motto too," she said.



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together as well. It's just something that has been really good for the whole school community."

BREE FULLER

Students jazz up an Idol moment



Talent shows: Dapto Public School students practise their stage version of Australian Idol for the Wakakirri dance festival at WIN Entertainment Centre.
Picture: ORLANDO CHIODO

By MICHELE TYDD

THESE youngsters are hoping for a "touchdown" today when they face the judges.

Ninety cast members from Dapto Public School have transformed Australian Idol into a stage show for the Wakakirri National Story Festival dance competition at WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong.

Teacher Jane Rowsell, who

also choreographed the show, is a big Australian Idol fan.

"I think it is the ultimate talent quest where ordinary people can showcase their talents. The kids really relate to it and that makes for a better performance," she said.

The show, named Idol, has it all from a wailing Marcia (Melangeli Stett) to dazzling costumes and pint-sized performers.

"The theme is striving for success and the children demonstrate that can be achieved just as well as a team as it can on an individual level," principal Ann Henniker said.

"There are also the quiet achievers in the background who will be under real pressure organising the sets - two minutes to put them on stage and two minutes to remove them," Mrs Henniker said.



class action

education



Winners, one and all: Dapto Public School students (back) Heidi Paiola, Kasey Garcia, Ashleigh Mears, Holly Severn, Maeghan McCauley, (front) Libby-May Priest, Aidan McLean and Tess Crawley enact a scene the school's Junior Rock Eisteddfod-winning performance *A Piece of Straw*.

Excellent at folk tale

FIVE THINGS THAT MAKE A SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE

1. Community support

Dapto Public School has a large community of parents, grandparents, teachers and office staff that help put the performances together by sewing costumes, supervising rehearsals and making props.

2. Teamwork

"Our school motto is to work as a team so we do that really well," Ms Nordstrom said. "I'm so proud of our kids because they have pulled together as a team

and they do it all the time and that's how they can do these things."

3. Dedication and expertise

Ms Nordstrom said many Dapto teachers had expertise in the creative arts and a passion for putting together these performances outside normal school hours.

She also said students could see the value of rehearsing and putting in hours of hard work.

"They have worked out the importance of being dedicated and

committed to something and that helps them to work towards something great."

4. Talented students

"Lots of our kids have a very strong ability in the performing arts," Ms Nordstrom said.

"We have a good talent base and we really encourage them to develop that at school."

5. A school environment that encourages excellence

THE talented students at Dapto Public School won the state Junior Rock Eisteddfod competition last week, beating teams from all over NSW at the J Rock finals at the Sydney Entertainment Centre.

More than 116 young dancers and actors wowed judges with their Japanese-themed performance, *A Piece of Straw*, to take the 2012 title.

Dance group co-ordinator Jane Nordstrom said her students were thrilled by their win.

"It was unbelievable and probably one of the most exciting things that has happened to our dance group," Ms Nordstrom said.

"The whole Dapto school community has been ecstatic all week because we haven't been in the Sydney J Rock competition before."

"The standard was amazing and we would have been proud to have placed, so we really didn't expect to win."

But she said her students were deserving winners and had received more than just one award of excellence during the J Rock judging process.

"We got three awards, which means we scored really highly in

those areas, in visual enhancement, concept and performance skill," she said.

This is not the first time the school has impressed judges at a petition.

The school's high-energy depiction of Jessica Watson's round-the-world sailing trip won first prize in the primary school story-dance division of the Wakakiri competition last year.

Dapto's J Rock performance was based on the book *A Piece of Straw*, by Japanese author Junko Mori-moto, which children read during Book Week last year.

It tells a folk tale of a peasant who starts with a piece of straw and, by being kind to strangers, eventually ends up being given a house.

"The book has got such a lovely message about what you put into the world you get back in terms of

kindness and love," Ms Nordstrom said.

She said creative and performing arts were highly valued at Dapto Public School, which had helped them to succeed.

"While literacy and numeracy are always the focus, at Dapto we are really good at finding other ways for kids to shine," she said.

"So our art, dance group and sporting achievements are important as well."



Turning Japanese: Dapto students (from back) Kasey Garcia, Taylah Davis, Mykenzie Covington, Heidi Paiola, Maeghan McCauley, Aidan McLean, Amos Luck, Libby-May Priest and Tess Crawley.
Picture: GREG TOTMAN

Japanese fairytale inspires Dapto school dance troupe

KATE McILWAIN

AFTER winning a national Wakakirri Arts Festival prize last year, Dapto Public School students are already preparing for this year's competition.

The school's high-energy depiction of Jessica Watson's round-the-world sailing trip won first prize in the primary school story-dance division in 2011.

"We're trying something completely different ... and our win last year means we're in a position to do that," dance co-ordinator Jane Nordstrom said.

"I'm not worried,

because we're going to be wonderful no matter what the outcome is."

When Wollongong's Wakakirri performances start at WIN Entertainment Centre in August, Dapto students will dress as samurai, peasants and geishas for their adaptation of a traditional Japanese fairytale.

Their inspiration was the book *A Piece of Straw* by Japanese author Junko Morimoto, which children read during Book Week last year.

"The book ... has just got such a lovely message about what you put into

the world, you get back in terms of kindness and love," Ms Nordstrom said.

Dapto's Wakakirri troupe will include 116 children dancing, singing and behind the scenes.

"The kids get so much from the whole journey because they are part of the planning, the ideas and the artwork and they can see the commitment it takes to produce this type of performance," Ms Nordstrom said.

"They sometimes roll their eyes when they have to keep rehearsing ... but in the end they can see the commitment and the rewards of hard work."

Students step up to win national dance competition

ATE McILWAIN

LAWARRA primary schools moved they were top of the pops over the weekend, as Dapto Public School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Bulli took out first and second place in the national Junior Rock Eisteddfod dance competition.

The J-Rock finals were televised on Saturday with winners announced throughout the show. Dapto Public School's moving dance *A Piece of Straw* - about a Japanese peasant who is rewarded for her kindness - was declared the winner, while St Joseph's beautiful, colourful piece *The Power of One* came second. Dapto dance group coordinator Jane Nordstrom said she and her 20 students, who also won the NSW finals of J-Rock earlier this year, were blown away by their national win.

"We weren't expecting this at all, we were obviously watching but we weren't expecting to win so it's a bit mind-blowing," she said.

"It's all abuzz at school this week."

The students performed at Sydney Entertainment Centre in August for the state finals and were then automatically entered into the national televised final.

Ms Nordstrom said a strong storyline, coupled with a visually and musically exciting performance, sealed their win.

"Our story was very strong, our characters were excellent and they looked amazing - the costumes and our wonderful backdrops and set just pulled it all together," she said.



Rewarded: Dapto Public School won the national J-Rock competition with a dance about a Japanese peasant. Picture supplied by ROCK EISTEDDFOD

"The whole production was a result of help from kids, parents, teachers and grandparents - so it's a whole school community effort. It was lots of hours and lots

of effort but it paid off." Ms Nordstrom said the school now had the daunting challenge of following their award-winning performance next year.

"We've all had a bit of a joke, just saying 'what on earth are we going to do?' and we don't know at this point but we're going to have to think very hard," she said.

"But we might have a bit of a breather and celebrate this win."



ONLINE GALLERY
illawarramercury.com.au

Dapto adaptation of Mem Fox tale wins Wakakirri

By KATE WALSH

Aug. 23, 2013, 4:02 a.m.



Festival winners Kasey Harford, Katie Haldane, Talia Rogan, A touching story about a small girl who helps an elderly woman find her memories won first place at the Wollongong series of Wakakirri.

Dapto Public School adapted Mem Fox's well-known picture book Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge into a story dance called What's A Memory? for the nationwide performance challenge for schools. The 116 students in the cast and crew of the school's production found they won last Friday via an announcement on Wakakirri TV.

They performed their story dance at the WIN Entertainment Centre on August 8.

The school has been competing in Wakakirri since 2007 and came second in the Wollongong series last year.

Dance group co-ordinator Jane Nordstrom said she knew the students had done great job but they were up against some tough competition.





Storytellers: Dapto Public School's

Picture: ROBERT PEET

Dapto kids ready to shine

By ANTONY FIELD

Dapto Public School students are hoping six months of hard work will pay off when 116 of them compete at the Wakakirri Primary School Story Dance Challenge.

The Wollongong region finals will be held at WIN Entertainment Centre this Thursday from 7pm.

At Wakakirri, students tell a

story using music and dance and this year, the Dapto Public School group has created *What's A Memory*, based on the Mem Fox book, *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*.

Co-ordinator Jane Nordstrom said the story followed a girl who befriended an old lady who'd lost her memory.

"No-one else seems to care except for the girl who brings the old lady a collection of

things that start to jog her memory," she said. "The message is that it takes someone who cares to take an interest in that person and help them."

Dapto's 2013 Wakakirri group have been practising since term one.

Dapto Public won the 2011 Wakakirri national story dance final, came second in 2012 and also won the J Rock national finals last year.



Noticeboard

WAKAKIRRI FESTIVAL

Students at Dapto Public School are awaiting a blessing from children's book royalty in the lead-up to their Wakakirri festival showing.

The school's 2013 festival performance, *What's a Memory*, is based on the Mem Fox book *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Since devising the performance, the school has written to the famous author, telling her of the tribute.

Wakakirri is on August 8 at WIN Entertainment Centre.

mercury

Panic as rock hits bus

news

By MICHELLE HOCTOR

Happy school trip turns into nightmare

A TRAUMATISED parent has told of the panic after a rock attack on a school bus that resulted in a 10-year-old child being sprayed with shards of glass. Catherine Hesford, School mother in the back seat of the bus returning home from Sydney on Saturday when a window exploded over sleeping student Josh Ford.

"I was scared. I panicked. I grabbed Josh and pulled him out of his seat and screamed 'Get up! Wake up!'"

The attack was one of four to occur in the region in the space of 48 hours, prompting police to step

up their patrols of rock throwing hotspots in the region. Celebrations turned to trauma for children and parents of Dapto Public School who were returning home from their win in the 2007 Wakakirri National Story Festival state final in Sydney, only to have their bus window shattered by a rock.

The bus was less than 500m from the school on Bong Bong Rd, near a skate park, when three rocks were hurled at it at 1am on Saturday.

Mrs Hesford was sitting on the back seat with daughter Brooke, 11, son Mitchell, 9, and 10-year-old Josh when the rock crashed through the back, driver's side window.

"There was a loud bang and then the glass, I didn't know what had happened," Mrs Hesford said.

"It scared the life out of me. I just thank God Josh had his eyes closed otherwise the glass would have gone in his eyes."

School P&C president Traybee McLean was awake when she heard a rock hit the side of her window, followed by another two "clunks" when rocks hit the bus.

"The bus driver pulled over and we quickly got Josh off the bus and checked he wasn't bleeding. He wasn't cut, just really itchy - there were lots of little shards in his hair."

Ms McLean said the incident caused distress among parents and children. "Some of the kids were really upset and crying."

The attack was exacerbated when parents returned to their cars on Fairwater Dr to find the tyres of six cars had been slashed.

Police are seeking to speak with two young males riding "pocket rocket" motorcycles.

Meantime, some expert driving by a Helensburgh paramedic on Friday night saved his family from serious injury after a rock crashed the windscreen of their Subaru Liberty.

The attack occurred at 7pm as a 32-year-old man, his wife and six-month-old baby were travelling north along the F8 at Unanderra. The man, who asked not to be named, said a rock crashed through the windscreen, causing a hole the size of a 10c coin.

"There was a big bang. It scared the hell out of me. My wife freaked out and it woke up the young bloke in the back," he said.

EDITORIAL

Close calls too close. Page 47

Attacks stupid and cowardly: Campbell

POLICE will step up their patrols of rock throwing hot spots in the region following four attacks within the space of 48 hours on the weekend. The latest spate of rock attacks could be copycat offences of other recent, cowardly acts, said NSW Minister for Police David Campbell.

Mr Campbell expressed his alarm following attacks on a Dapto school bus and a Helensburgh family.

Within 12 hours another two attacks occurred.

Alarmed: Minister for Police David Campbell. rested and action against



Dapto school dancers are truly inspirational

Dapto Public School will showcase their award-winning performance True Inspiration at Sydney Entertainment Centre on Friday night in the lead-up to the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge.

More than 120 Dapto students participated in the JRock and the Wakakirri dance festivals at WIN Entertainment Centre. Their winning performance was inspired by Jessica Watson's solo sail around the world. Jessica herself emailed them with words to inspire them before they performed.

Last week students gave two performances at the school with a gold coin donation going towards Jessica's cause, Food for Hunger.





Students sail through eisteddfod



Gold star

Showcasing the achievements of students, teachers and parents.

After impressive performances at the J Rock event and the Wakakirri National Story Festival, Dapto Public School wowed audiences again as the opening act at the Rock Eisteddfod Premier Division at the Sydney Entertainment Centre last Friday evening.

Dapto's performance, titled *True Inspiration*, was inspired by Jessica Watson's solo sailing voyage around the world.



Dapto Public School students Katie Haldane

The Rock Eisteddfod event was for high schools and Dapto Public,

the only primary school to take part, was invited to be the opening act.

In a special moment for the 120 Dapto kids who took part, a message recorded by Jessica Watson was played on the the big screen.

Jessica congratulated the students on their performance and offered them words of encouragement.

True Inspiration came first in the Wakakirri competition at the WIN Entertainment Centre in August. It also achieved the "Spirit of J Rock" Award, which is voted by all students and teachers in participating schools and presented to the school which best displays the qualities of teamwork, encouragement and commitment towards other schools.

The students and their teachers have been working on the performance for eight months and have spent many hours making props and costumes, rehearsing and performing.



Dapto Public School students preparing for their appearance in the Wakakirri final. Picture: GREG TOTMAN

Dapto public can tell a story

Gold star

Dapto Public School maintained its strong tradition in dance and performance events, competing in the state Wakakirri final at the Sydney Entertainment Centre last week.

Wakakirri is a national story-sharing arts festival that challenges schools to "make a positive impact on the world around you".

Although the school wasn't able to repeat its 2007 success when it won the state final, it did manage to come third in its division.

A team of 121 students took part, with a support team of teachers, parents and grandparents helping with sets and costumes.

The Dapto entry was titled *The Midas Touch* and told the story of a girl who gets everything she wants but still wants more, until she discovers the true meaning of life.

The story contained a strong environmental message about looking after the world.

Other Illawarra schools in the finals were St Brigid's and Nazareth Catholic primary schools, and Albion Park Rail, Nowra East, Oak Flats and Windang public schools.

