

# Bridging ties with China

Katie Grubb

'Stars! Look at the stars in the sky!' was what one Chinese youth who visited our region recently kept saying.

He is growing up in Shanghai, a city with 24 million people, which obviously has limited access to stargazing.

Southern Cross School of Distance Education recently collaborated with Brunswick Heads Primary School to support a Chinese culture exchange. Families from China doing a road trip from Adelaide to Brisbane spent a day visiting the school.

It was a really valuable learning experience for our young people here to develop global awareness and Asian literacy skills, a learning area that Brunswick Heads Primary School is taking seriously.

Mullumbimby High School also recently hosted students from China and has a strong focus on developing cultural awareness. Not so long ago, Mullum High student Jasmine Arnon learned



Kids and teachers from Bruns Primary School recently got to meet young Chinese kids as part of an exchange program.

Chinese through Southern Cross Distance Education and came third in the state in HSC Chinese Beginners.

## Unique position

Along with Southern Cross Distance Education, local community-focused organisation Mandarin Pathways fills the gap by offering Chinese learning programs to both adults and youth who are ineligible to attend Southern Cross Distance Education.

Mandarin Pathways also offers Asian Literacy pro-

grams to local primary schools and facilitates China exchange programs.

We are in a unique position in the northern rivers to be able to share our way of life and beautiful natural surroundings with Chinese youth, should we choose to keep the balance between development and the environment. For more, visit [www.mandarinpathways.org](http://www.mandarinpathways.org).

■ Katie Grubb is from Mandarin Pathways and works for Southern Cross Distance Education

## Surfers paddle to support West Papuan struggle

Surfers in support of West Papua's struggle for independence are planning a paddle out at Main Beach, Byron Bay on Saturday August 29 from 11am until 2pm.

## Human rights

Co-organiser Matthew Jamieson says the group 'aims to reflect upon how Indonesian human rights' abuse in West Papua has increasingly become a significant issue for countries of the Pacific Ocean.'

'West Papua is set to become an agenda item of the 46th sitting of the Pacific Island Forum on September 7 in Papua New Guinea.

'We can show support and gain more awareness of these crucial steps for the freedom of West Papua.'

He said the protest is a combined effort between Surfers for a Free West Papua and the Northern Rivers for a Free West Papua group, which recently organised a fundraising gig at the Buddha Bar.



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*Upholding human rights is not merely compatible with fighting terrorism, it is essential – Joichi Ito*

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# Imminent fluoride plans draw protests

Around 70 blockaded the Corndale dosing plant on Monday as anti-fluoride protesters step up their protests against planned dosing of the water supplies for three north coast councils.

On Wednesday they rallied outside Rous Water in Lismore, with about 60 people taking part.

Fluoride Free Northern Rivers spokesperson Kate Marson said further rallies would be held on the third Wednesday of each month, which is when Rous Water delegates gather for their meeting.

She said she was unaware when

the actual dosing of the water supplies would begin. 'I asked Rous Water that last week and they said they had to wait for a certificate from the NSW government but couldn't say when that would happen,' she said.

Ms Marson has also asked that Rous Water notify customers, and also issue warnings that fluoridated water was not suitable for bottle-fed babies.

'A lot of people don't want to drink it because it's got heavy metals... it's toxic waste,' she said.

Rous Water will soon fluoridate the

water it supplies to Richmond Valley, Ballina Shire and Lismore City councils. NSW Health has also directed Ballina Shire Council to fluoridate the water supplied from the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant to town-water customers in the Wardell area.

## Byron unfluoridated

Byron Shire's water supplies – along with Nimbin's – will not be fluoridated.

Town-water customers in the Richmond Valley township of Casino already receive fluoridated water.

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