

IN BRIEF

Powerball change:

Changes to the Powerball rules and licensing have not reduced the total prize pool for players, the NSW Government and NSW Lotteries say. The Government said that it had changed the conditions of the Powerball licence to increase the reserve jackpot, used for special draws or to replenish the pot of prize money after a series of big wins. Opposition Leader Peter Debnam has said that he believes the effect of this is to cut the Powerball prize pool by more than \$2 million a year.

Eating your work: TAFE

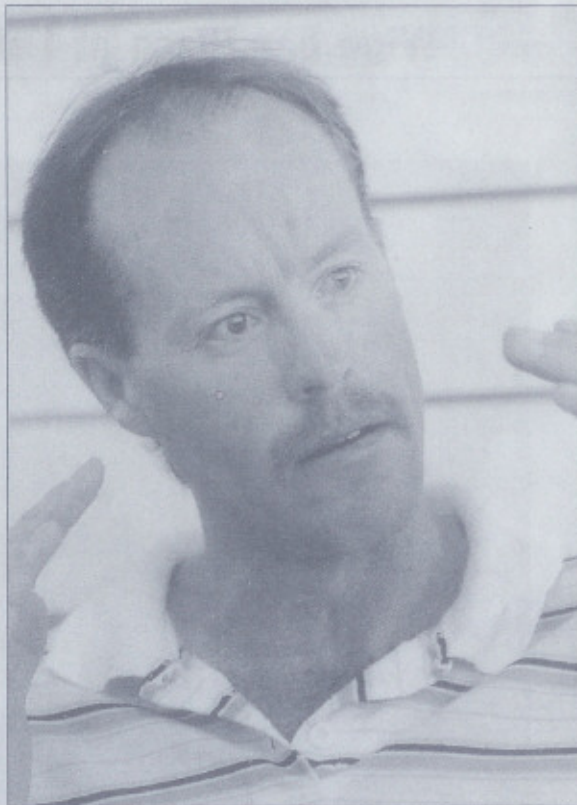
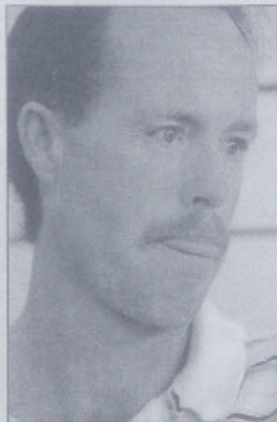
students at one NSW college were so poor they ate the cakes they had baked for an assessment task before they could be marked, according to a new inquiry. TAFE students were dropping out because they could not afford the fees.

Surfing USA: Australians

Jonathan Durrant, 25, and Stefan Hunt, 19, are on a mission to surf in all 50 of the US states — whether there's an ocean available or not. In the southern state of Arkansas, they stopped in the landlocked town of Lonoke to try their sport on a minnow pond. The two have been travelling for three months filming their surfing stops.

Monk disrobed: A

Cambodian Buddhist monk had been disrobed and placed in custody yesterday after a raid on his room in a local pagoda allegedly netted nearly a kilogram of high-grade opium, police said. The monk's double life was revealed after a local reported him for trying to sell him drugs.



John Turnbull shows some of the exercises he goes through to help curb his stuttering.

Pictures: Peter Lord.

John speaks up for plain talking

It only took five days to change a man's life, as Helen Kempton reports.

TWO weeks ago John Turnbull could not say his own name.

Today he can ask a woman out, brave a newspaper interview and ask directions from strangers.

Mr Turnbull has stuttered since he was five years old.

It made his childhood miserable, has stopped him applying for jobs and forced him to eat meat pies whether he has wanted them or not.

But an intensive five-day

course in Melbourne has lifted his life-long burden and the Shearwater man wants to share his experiences so others are motivated to get help.

"My stuttering began when we moved from Devonport to Latrobe," Mr Turnbull said in measured but confident words.

"It may not sound like a big thing now but it really affected me."

Mr Turnbull said that his school days were the worst days of his life.

"Even school teachers didn't understand and I was put into the slow class," he said.

"I wet the bed until I left school because of the fear.

"Stuttering affected my whole life, sports, the lot —

I would spend a lot of time trout fishing on my own."

Fear also stopped Mr Turnbull from talking in public and talking to girls.

And in food shops he would be forced to order a pie and sauce simply because he couldn't get any other words out.

"Talking to girls was the worst," he said.

But a trip to Melbourne and a course aimed at beating stuttering changed all that.

"I didn't speak to anyone on the way to Melbourne on the boat," Mr Turnbull said.

"But on the way back you couldn't shut me up. I even asked a girl out to dinner."

Mr Turnbull had tried a number of things to rid

himself of stuttering over the years, from the Smooth Speech programme to hypnosis.

But it was the McGuire Programme that changed his life.

"My dad saw the advertisement on television and I decided I had nothing to lose," he said.

David McGuire started the programme in 1994 and it has now gone worldwide.

"After the first day we would all say our name and

there were 65 of us there," Mr Turnbull said.

"You have to totally retrain the way you speak and I need to challenge myself. I keep a diary and do something challenging everyday like make five phone calls or approach someone in the street.

"I was really packing when I came in here but I wanted others to know how they can get help."

People wanting to get involved in the McGuire Programme can freecall 1300 134 543.