



Well-prepared: Evan Watt-Smith finished third in the senior competition.



Junior division: Corey Blyth with winner Niamh Brazil.

Third spot in the state for speller

By Murray Trembath

CONNELLS Point Public school teachers devised a game they called "Stump the Watt-Smith" leading up to Premier's Spelling Bee final.

Picking difficult words at random from the dictionary, they challenged contestant Evan Watt-Smith of year 6 to spell them correctly.

The initiative paid off; Evan, of Cars Park, took third place in the senior competition, for year 5 and 6 students throughout NSW.

Lian Yang from Ermington Public School was the winner at last week's state final, with Savannah Mandakini

VERY LITERATE BUNCH

- Corey Blyth, of Kyle Bay, a year 4 pupil at Gympie Bay Public School, was runner-up in the junior competition won by Niamh Brazil, from Annandale North Public School.
- Corey came unstuck on the word "assessor" in the 11th round.
- The competition started in 2004 with 800 pupils competing, and this year 115,455 took part.

Dissanayake from Wollongong Public School the runner-up. During the first 10 rounds, stu-

dents were asked to spell words from a list they had previously been given to study.

However, those remaining after round 11 could be confronted with any word in the dictionary.

Evan battled his way to round 20 before misspelling the word "propitious" in the sentence: "They hoped the weather would be propitious for the upcoming picnic."

Before that, he had successfully spelt the words, souvenir, fallacy, resplendent, osprey, buoyant, coalesce, baldachin, catamaran, espionage, unforeseen, mirage, salomonella, ferocity, millennium,

autopsy, spinnaker, colonel, cornucopia and kibbutz.

His mother, Faye, said Evan, who turned 12 in September, would not have been there without teachers Jenny Benson and Paul Cohen.

"Schools don't have to go into this competition, and Evan had this opportunity because of the work they put in," she said.

Mrs Watt-Smith said Evan had an excellent memory, was good at listening and had a strong work ethic. She said he had been in four previous finals, coming second last year, which had helped him this time by giving him confidence.

IN BRIEF

Robbery charges

TWO youths, aged 16, will appear in court next year after they allegedly attempted to rob a fellow passenger by using a piece of wood on a train between Rockdale and Hurstville on Monday. Police allege the youths threatened the victim and asked them to hand over money but were stopped by two transit officers. They were arrested just after midnight on Monday and were charged with attempted robbery.

Units approved

KOGARAH Council has approved plans for a six-storey unit block at 58-60 Gray Street, Kogarah. Two houses will be demolished to make way for a building on the corner of Gray Street and the Princes Highway, which will have 17 units and a basement car park. Plans for the development first went before Kogarah Council as a five-storey, 16-unit development without basement parking in July 2008, and have since been through several revisions.

Jumping library

THE stereotype of a quiet library will take a tumble on Friday at Kogarah Library. Children will not be hushed, but encouraged instead to jump for joy on a free jumping castle in the foyer. The inflatable fun fort will be free to use between 3.30 and 5.30pm as part of the library's summer reading program.