



# Did you get my message?

A COMPILATION OF CHILDREN'S SHORT STORIES AND ARTWORKS

*Part of Willoughby City Council's Wildlife Storybook Series*

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artwork by Kylie Kim & Lynn (Yue Lin) Soon.

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31 Victor Street, Chatswood NSW 2067  
02 9777 1000 or [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au)





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#### **Additional Featured Artists:**

*Storybook Front Cover – Jessica Nunes*

*Inside Front Cover – Vincent Yip*

*Contents Page Artwork – Harriet Suter*

*Whipbird Artwork p.65 – Jackson Hu & James (Chenhao) Li*

*Cicada Artwork p.66 – Kyla Moore*

*Storybook Back Cover – Kylie Kim & Lynn (Yue Lin) Soon*



# Willoughby's Wildlife Storybook Series

This book aims to facilitate a 'kids teaching kids' style learning activity for students and the wider Willoughby community. Year 5 students at each primary school were asked to research then write and draw creatively about a local species chosen for their school.

Educational presentations on the animals were provided to each school, allowing students to study the animal and understand how it fits into the local ecosystem. These presentations also provide a great opportunity for Council to communicate fundamental information about the local environment and how it is managed.

Children shared their learnings by reading their story or poem to other students and family members. Then to further spread the conservation message, this book and Storybooks from previous years are available at all local and school libraries within Willoughby and other Council libraries in the Greater Sydney region. They can also be downloaded via the Willoughby City Council website.

Students studied the physical features and unique behaviours of their animal, while also focusing on the theme of communication. It is critical for not only humans to have good communication skills but also for animals. Animals communicate with each other for many important reasons: to find and share food, look for a mate, defend territories, scare predators away and care for their young.

Although animals can't talk to each other the way we humans do, they have developed their own unique ways to communicate with one another. Unfortunately studies are showing some species with low numbers left in the wild are not learning their own unique communication methods. For example the Regent Honeyeater; these young song birds simply don't have enough of its species around in order to learn their own mating calls.

Animals have evolved to communicate in some truly incredible ways! Some will use visual communication techniques. Dancing, changing colour and changing size and shape. Others are masters of unique auditory communication. Singing, howling, chirping in the tree tops. Many will make use of super smelling abilities. Using pheromones to talk is called chemical communication. Our local wildlife is talking.

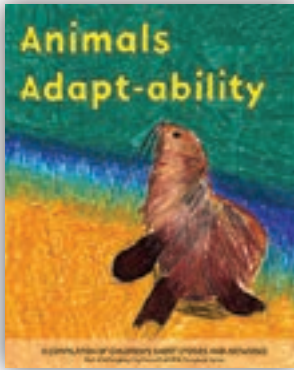
We hope this Storybook project and the guided walks program will encourage a greater understanding and appreciation of Willoughby's biodiverse local environment.

If you would like to learn more about Willoughby's environment, please contact Willoughby City Council on 9777 1000 or visit [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au) to view our list of guided bushwalks, events and walking track maps.



# Read the Full Collection

**2020**



**2019**



**2018**



**2017**



**2016**



**2015**



**2014**



**2013**



**2012**



**2011**



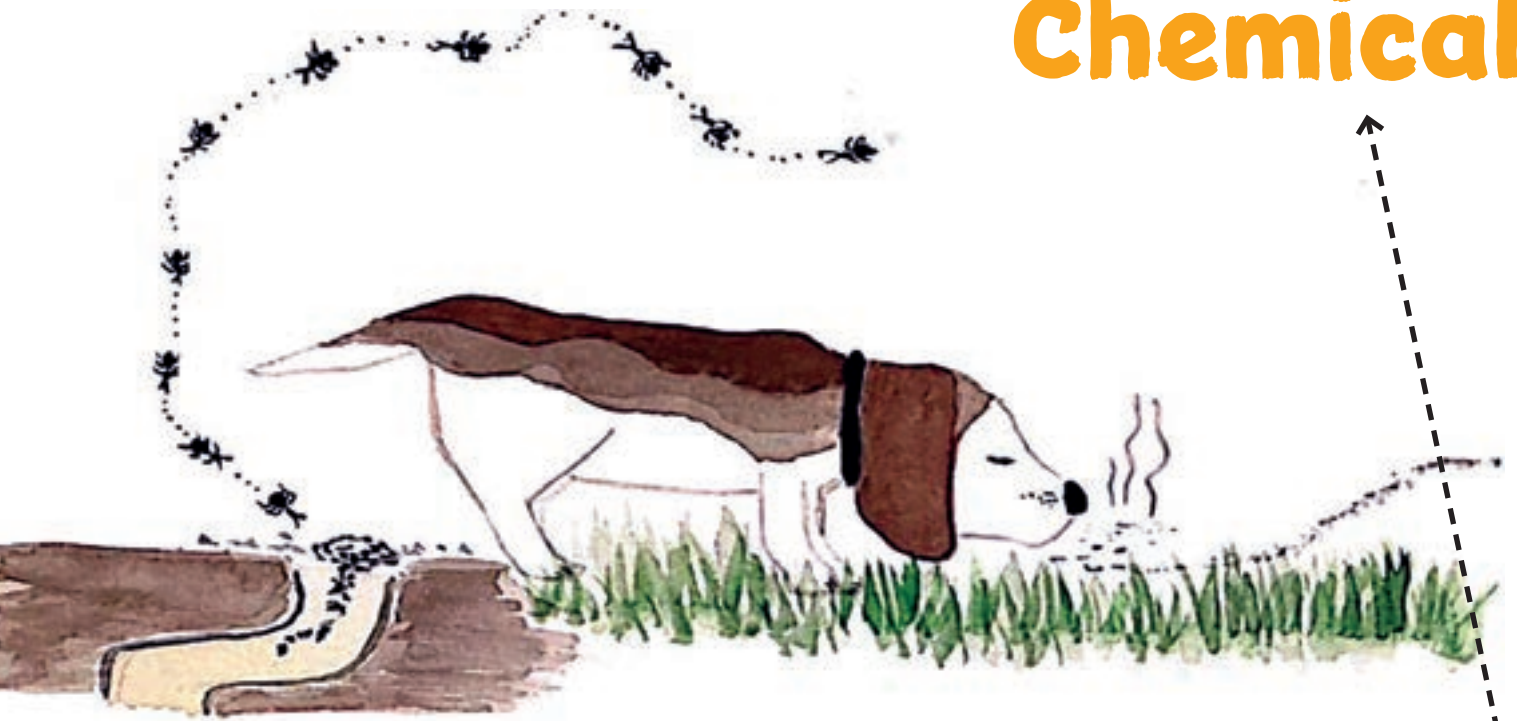
# Shhh...

the animals  
are talking!



They do this in some weird  
and wonderful ways.

## Chemical







Can you guess which form of communication these 10 local species use to talk to one another?

Hoot hoot!



Sound

Ribbit



Visual



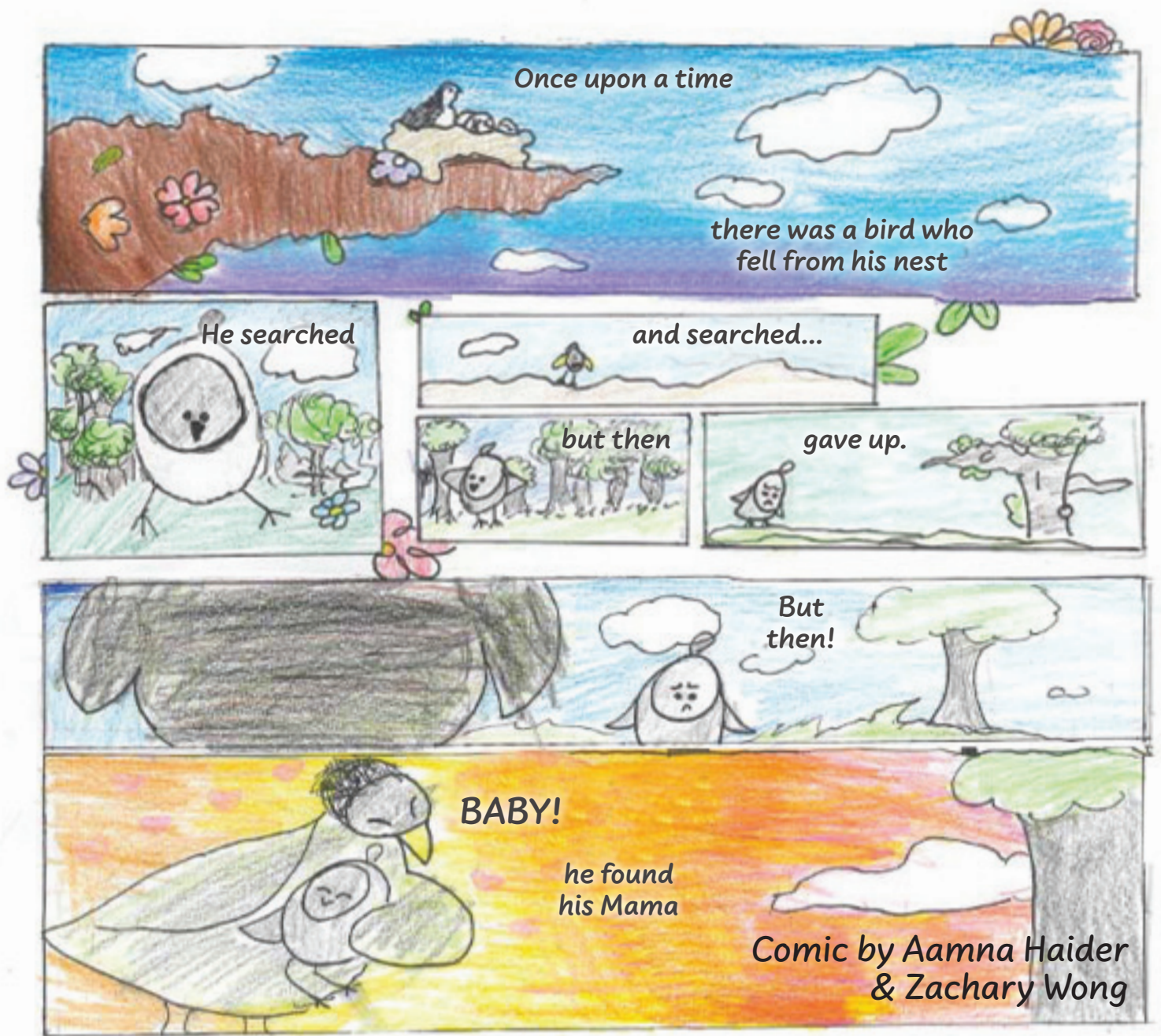
Hint: some use more than one method!

# Artarmon Public School



*Artwork by Helena Tuo*





## Eastern Whipbird (*Psophodes olivaceus*)

The song of the Eastern Whipbird is one of the most iconic sounds in the Australian bushland and is typically performed as a duet. The male begins its vocal communication by making a drawn out whip crack sound and if a female is nearby, she may quickly respond by making a sharp 'choo-choo' sound. This call is used by the Whipbirds to locate each other in the dense forest. They eat a diverse diet of seeds, fruits and insects, and therefore are important seed dispersers and pest controllers.



# The Singing Whipbird

by Peter Wang, artwork by Ryan Sun

The Eastern Whipbird soared overhead and opened its beak. A musical tune flowed out of its beak, much like a flood pouring past a flood gate. It sang of sorrow, pain and grief.

The bird sang everywhere, and the whole world stopped to admire the song, ringing throughout the night. Even the deaf heard the song loud and clear like a normal person and lost their disability. The blind regained their sight and old people felt young again. Robbers who lurked in the shadows heard the song and stopped in their tracks, begging for mercy and forgiveness.

The Eastern Whipbird changed its song. This time it sang of woe, war and death. Soldiers, ready to shoot, lowered their weapons and felt peaceful again as they apologised to their adversaries. Bullies, once loud and mean, stopped being unruly and helped the little children back on their feet. The world went silent as the proud Eastern Whipbird sang louder.

The Eastern Whipbird changed its tune again. It sang of joy, happiness and laughter. He sang of a utopian world and the world listened. Other birds chimed in and wolves howled in delight. It sang loud and true.

The Eastern Whipbird changed its song for the final time into a call for a mate. A whip crack rang around eastern parts of Australia and all around, the female Eastern Whipbirds crawled out of their nests and crooned a short choo-choo that ended the song that made the whole world sing.







# Lukas the Shy Whipbird

*by Josephine Wang*

Lukas moved to his new school not too long ago near the Lane Cove River. Lukas was a very shy Eastern Whipbird. He had black feathers on his head, white feathers around his cheeks, and olive-green feathers all over the rest of his body.

He hadn't made any new friends yet. Lukas felt alone. He sat by himself in class. No one wanted to be his partner, and no one played with him at recess and lunch. Every day he went home, he was crying and complaining about school. His mum just kept giving him advice.

His mother still had no clue that Lukas was shy, sad and lonely at school. When Lukas confessed his feelings to his mother, she thought hard about how to solve the problem.

Suddenly, she came up with a genius idea...

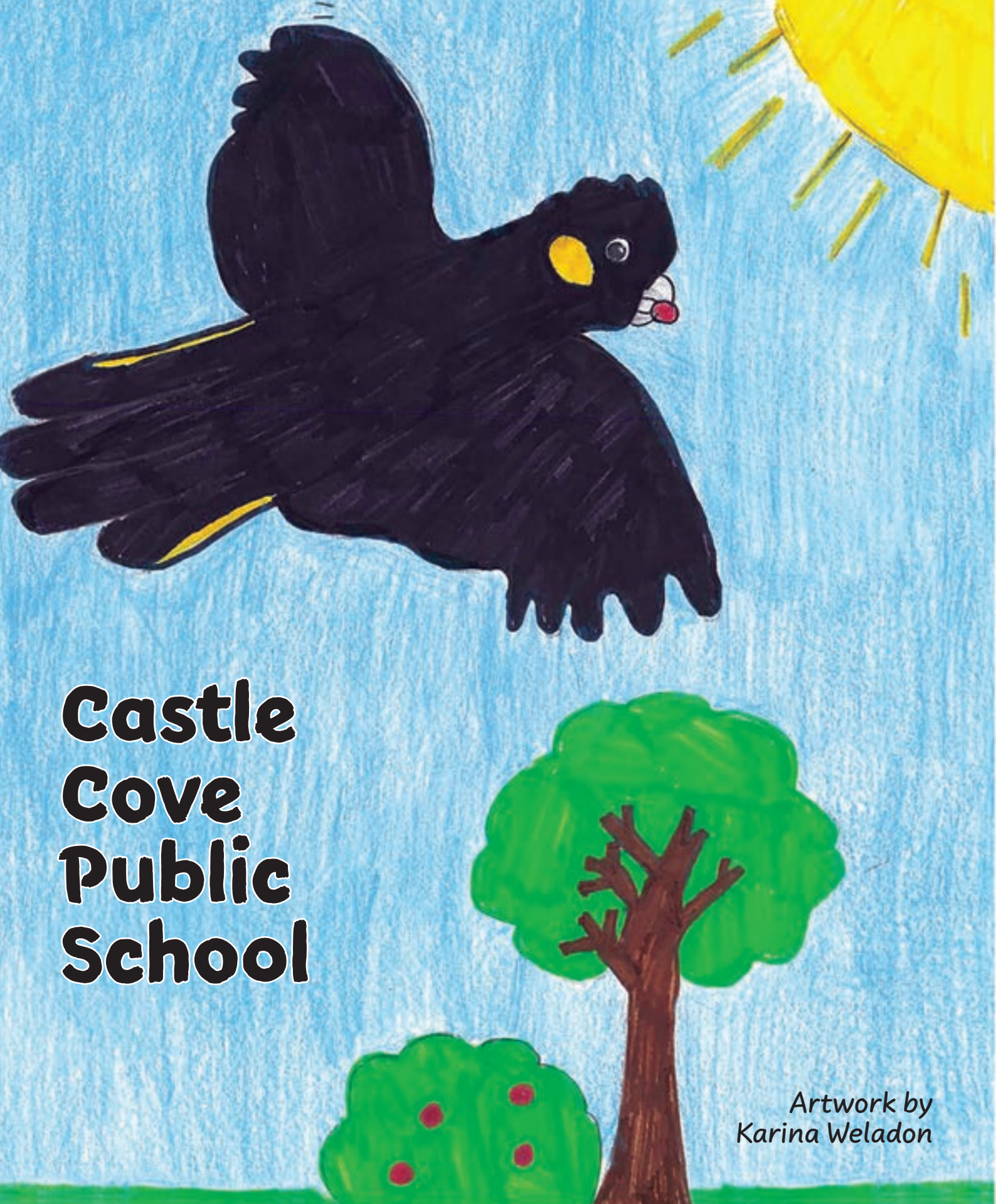
One day when Lukas came home, he saw a stranger standing with the music speaker on. "Mum, who is that?" wondered Lukas. "Starting from now on, you are going to learn how to sing." Lukas' mum smiled mysteriously.

As the days went on, Lukas kept practicing. "Whiiiiiiip CRACK!" One day, another Whipbird at school heard Lukas' voice. "Hi! My name is Tom. I heard your voice and I really liked it. Could we be friends?" asked the Whipbird. "I would love to!" said Lukas happily.









# Castle Cove Public School

Artwork by  
Karina Weladon





## **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo** (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*)

The Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos are visitors to the Willoughby area during the winter months and can be seen feeding on Banksia and Casuarina seeds. They are very noisy vocal communicators, using a loud distinctive “Kee-ow” call that can be heard from far away. They use this unique call when looking for food, defending territory or looking for a mate. Old trees that are at least 100 years old with large tree hollows provide important habitats for the Cockatoos to build nests in.



# Breeding Season

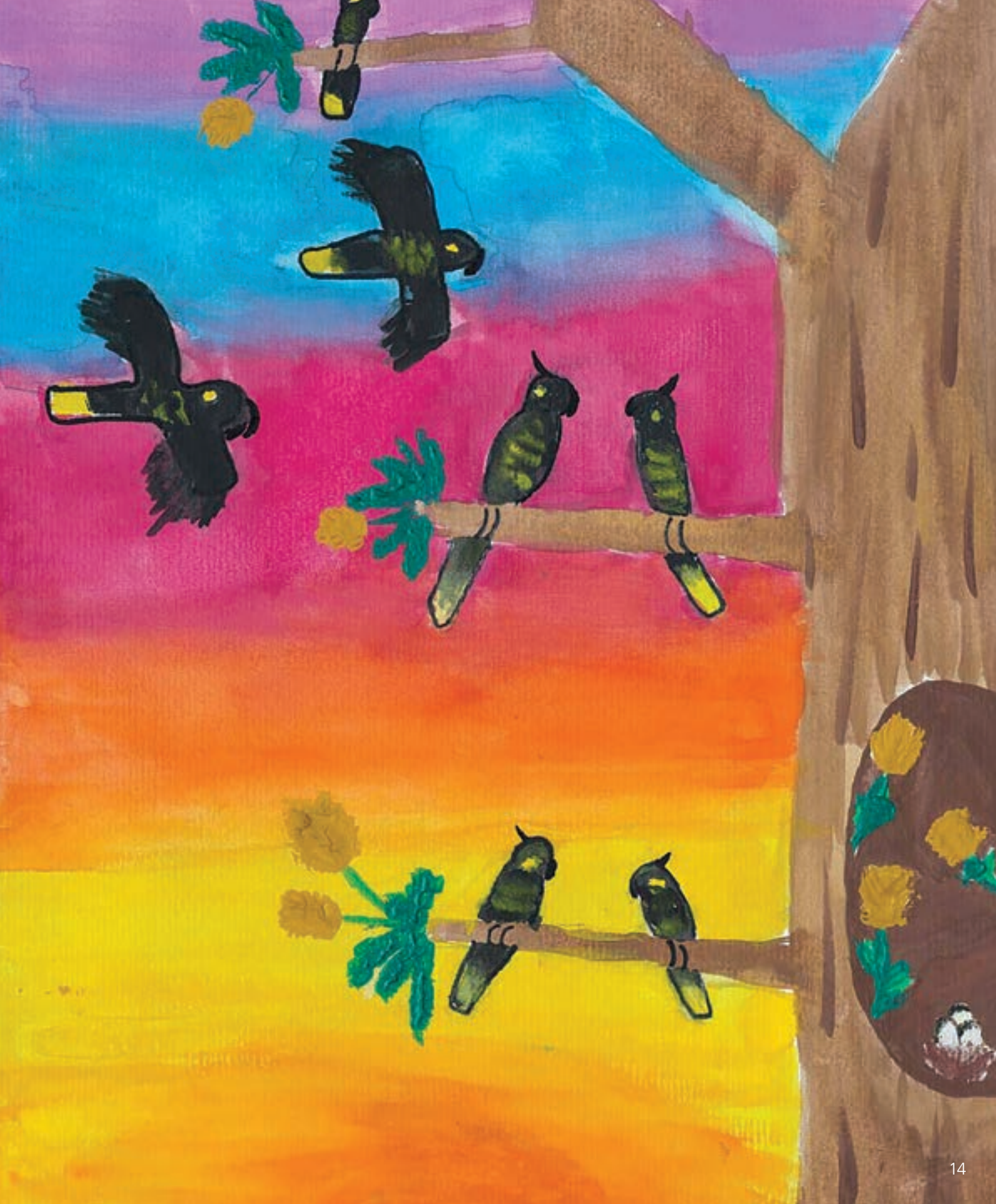
*by Grace Godfrey*

*Showing off my beautiful sounds  
Right in the sunlight at the top of the tree,  
Hoping that she will agree with me,  
Breeding season is finally here.*

*But after a while my babies will disappear,  
Trying to find a perfect hollow,  
Hoping that Wedge-tailed Eagles don't follow,  
I'm waiting for my eggs to hatch.  
While whipping up a Banksia-flavoured pie batch.*

*I wake up and there are cracks in the eggs,  
After a while, I start to see heads,  
My babies start to appear,  
I can't believe it. They are finally here.*

*Their bright yellow cheeks  
And their beautiful beaks,  
I couldn't ask for more than this.*



# **Flying High**

*by Sophie Gault*

I fly so high above the sky on a sunny day  
Never sad, always happy, so much time to fly away  
At the end of the day, I hear my mother cry Kee-ow, Kee-ow  
That's the signal to journey home safe and sound.

The next morning with my belly empty, I go out  
To find some food, into the breeze I fly about  
Suddenly I see something out  
Of the corner of my small black eye.

Now what I see is the banksia tree!  
I swiftly fly to the top of the tree, way up high  
Where I can see the whole world from the sky  
Then I begin to feast which is delicious  
Soon my brother comes who is very ambitious  
I have found the food source so I squawk loudly  
And my parents congratulated me proudly.

My silky black feathers shone in the light  
And my dark yellow cheek shone out bright  
As I journeyed home back to the tree  
And now my belly was not empty!

I nestled down on my little pink claws and fell asleep  
From me there wasn't a peep  
Soon it was morning so there was little sight  
Not to mention it wasn't very bright.

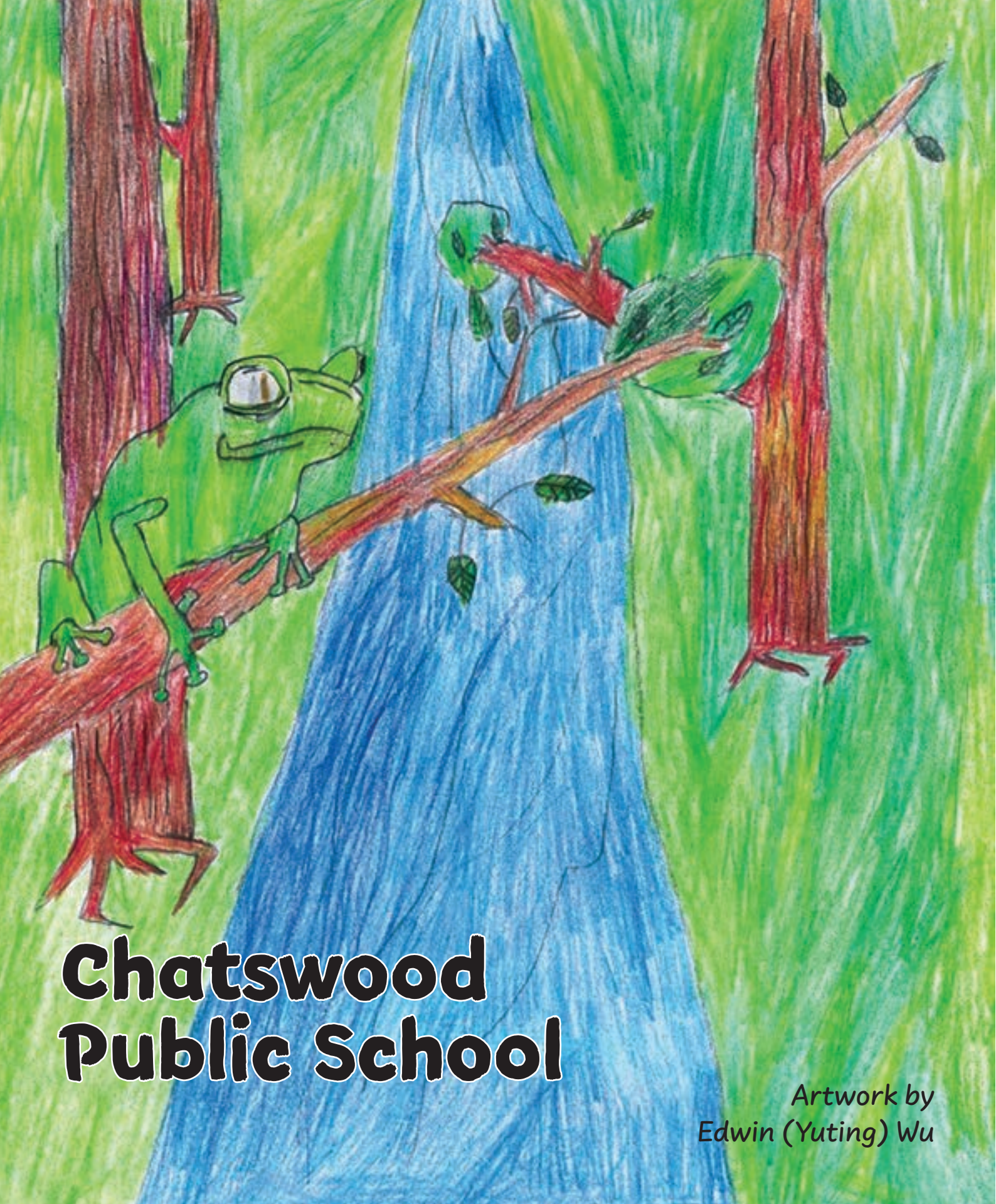
The sun began to rise above the trees  
And the usual morning squawks filled the breeze  
The air was cold and we knew the rain was coming  
Soon all the birds were excitedly humming.



Suddenly a strange buzz came from the trees  
Then I realized it was the bees  
In our bushland we all live together  
With our busy lives, like this, forever.







# **Chatswood Public School**

Artwork by  
Edwin (Yuting) Wu





## **Green Stream Frog** (*Ranoidea phyllochroa*)

Bright green with striking gold stripes across their eyes, the Green Stream Frogs have large sticky discs on their webbed feet to help them climb. These vocal communicators have unique mating calls which the male frogs sing to attract females. They also give out distress calls when defending their territories or are under attack by predators. These frogs have been spotted near the creeks in Flat Rock Gully, Blue Gum Reserve and Ferndale Reserve. Heavy stormwater runoff threatens the Green Stream Frogs' ability to survive in the Willoughby area.



# The Perfect Mate

*by Chloe Macri*

*Chirpcroaksquak! The mixture of deafening sounds echoed off the towering trees, leaving the almost silent erk ek ek derk of the Green Stream Frog unheard to most. Among the widespread leaves, a small, emerald frog leapt and climbed, following the sounds of its kind. It soon would be lonely no more.*

*Its shiny skin shone in the thin rays of sun as its sleek body bounced about. It splashed through a creek, then suddenly it halted. Eeeee! A distress call. The small frog scanned the area rapidly but didn't find anything. Then it heard another noise, this time an unfamiliar one. Hissss! The frog curled up into its defense pose and listened intently. The rainforest was quiet for a moment, it relaxed.*

*Rustle! Rustle! Another strange noise. The frog looked around, its narrow pupils widening and this time spotted a long, windy creature. The snake towered over it and opened its mouth wide, revealing sharp fangs. The helpless frog looked away, hoping like mad that the evil serpent would leave it alone, but it continued to move closer.*

*Suddenly there was a new sound. The sound the frog had been following. The snake whipped around searching for the creature that had made the noise, its body stiff with fear, then it disappeared into the bushes leaving behind its victim. The free prisoner looked around, searching for its hero and soon found him resting on a rock. The perfect mate.*







# Frog

by Alice Qi & Grace Zhang, artwork by Katherine Qi

"Grandchildren," Grandma Green Stream Frog whispers, as the two tiny obsidian tadpoles swam closer to hear their bedtime story. "Did you know, all frogs used to have the same calls?"

"Really?" Aspen squeaked.

"How did Daddy find Mummy?" Willow widened her eyes.

"That, my dearest," the elderly frog continued, "is another story."

"In the legends, every frog had the same voice, and any off-shoots with a strange call would be banished. But later, there was finally a frog alive with a different tone, named Pine. His parents kept him alive, and were successful for his childhood until he grew up and mating season came."

"The forest was loud, even at night. There were too many noises - the chirping of bats and owl calls seemed to echo off the leaves and bounce into his ears. How would he find a mate? His voice was so strange... who would want to be with him?"

"He had to try. He took a deep breath and sucked as much oxygen into his chest, blowing it up, then he croaked. A sweet sound replied, followed by a gorgeous female spinning out of the darkness."

"Grandchildren, can you guess what happened next?"

Willow and Aspen shrugged.

"Then, the two frogs fell in love and..."

"GOT MARRIED AND HAD LITTLE TADPOLES LIKE US!" Willow and Aspen cheered in unison.

"Yes," Grandma Frog sighs. "But what is the moral?"

The two juvenile frogs shrugged again.

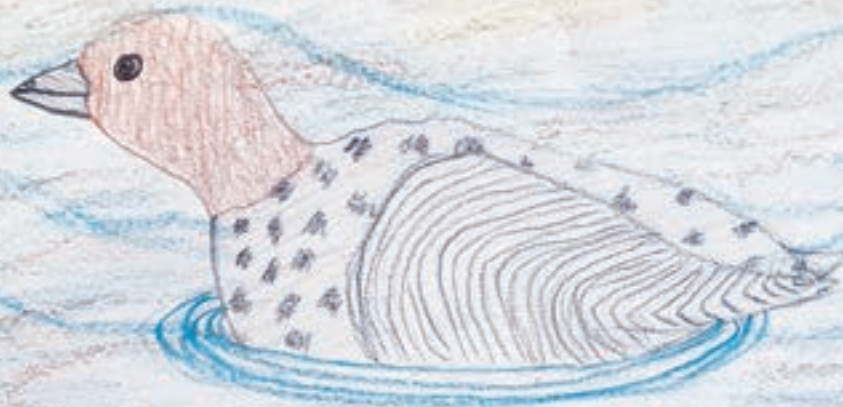
"Being different isn't a weakness, it's a strength!"







# Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School



Artwork by  
Scarlett Ferguson





Artwork by Eleanor Rush

## **Australian Wood Duck** (*Chenonetta jubata*)

The Australian Wood Ducks are sometimes called the Maned Goose because they have small, pointy goose-like beaks and the males have a small dark mane on their heads. Male and female Wood Ducks pair for life and are very protective parents. They build their nests high up in tree hollows and shortly after hatching, the ducklings have to leave the nest by jumping down to the ground (sometimes as high as 10 metres!). Wood Ducks are masters of vocal and visual communication methods. When threatened by predators, one parent can pretend to have a broken wing to distract the predator, while the other parent quickly gets the ducklings to safety.



# Victory

*by Rosie Hunter*

*As the sounds of the bush awaken  
And the sun begins to rise  
My furry body starts to stir  
And I open my tiny eyes*

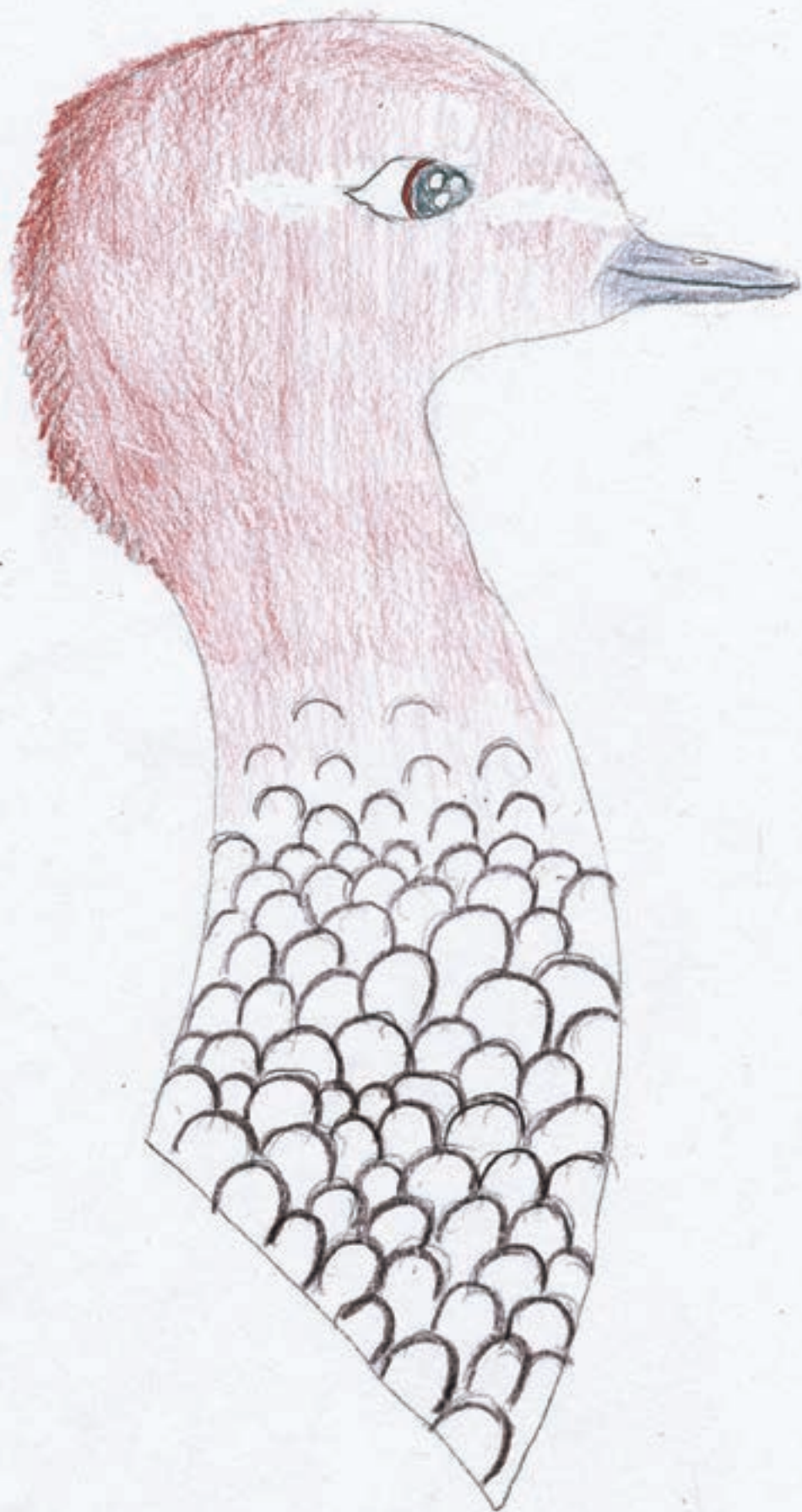
*Today is my big day  
When I finally learn to fly  
I shake my feathery wings  
And stare up to the sky*

*I walk out onto the branch  
And carefully look down  
Then I scan the shining horizon  
And see a miniature town*

*I take an ample breath  
And jump out of the tree  
Leaves and branches are rushing past  
But that's all I could see*

*But suddenly then up I fly  
And look down on my world  
I then sink back down into my bed  
And into a ball, I curl*

*Then I look around my home  
And I lie back in my nest  
There might have been a few mistakes  
But this day was the best.*





# The Emergency Call

by Maya Henty

Mother comes flying back to us, she is using her calling noise that says she has found a juicy worm. She slips the delicious worm into some of my sisters' and brothers' mouths first and then she flies off to find another worm for me and the others.

She calls out to me that she will be back soon and flaps and flies away. I cuddle up next to my sisters and brothers and slowly drift off to the sound of other wood duck noises and my youngest sister snoring.

The next day we are going to jump out of the nest! It's the first time my siblings and I have done it. Mum jumps down and Dad stays up to give us some help. I'm the last one to jump down. I jump off willingly and feel my wings slowly come out and the cold air rushing into my warm skin.

I look up and see an eagle trying to get one of my siblings! Dad gets in the way; his eye gets scratched and my other siblings run off in fright! Dad is squawking very loudly in pain and fright.

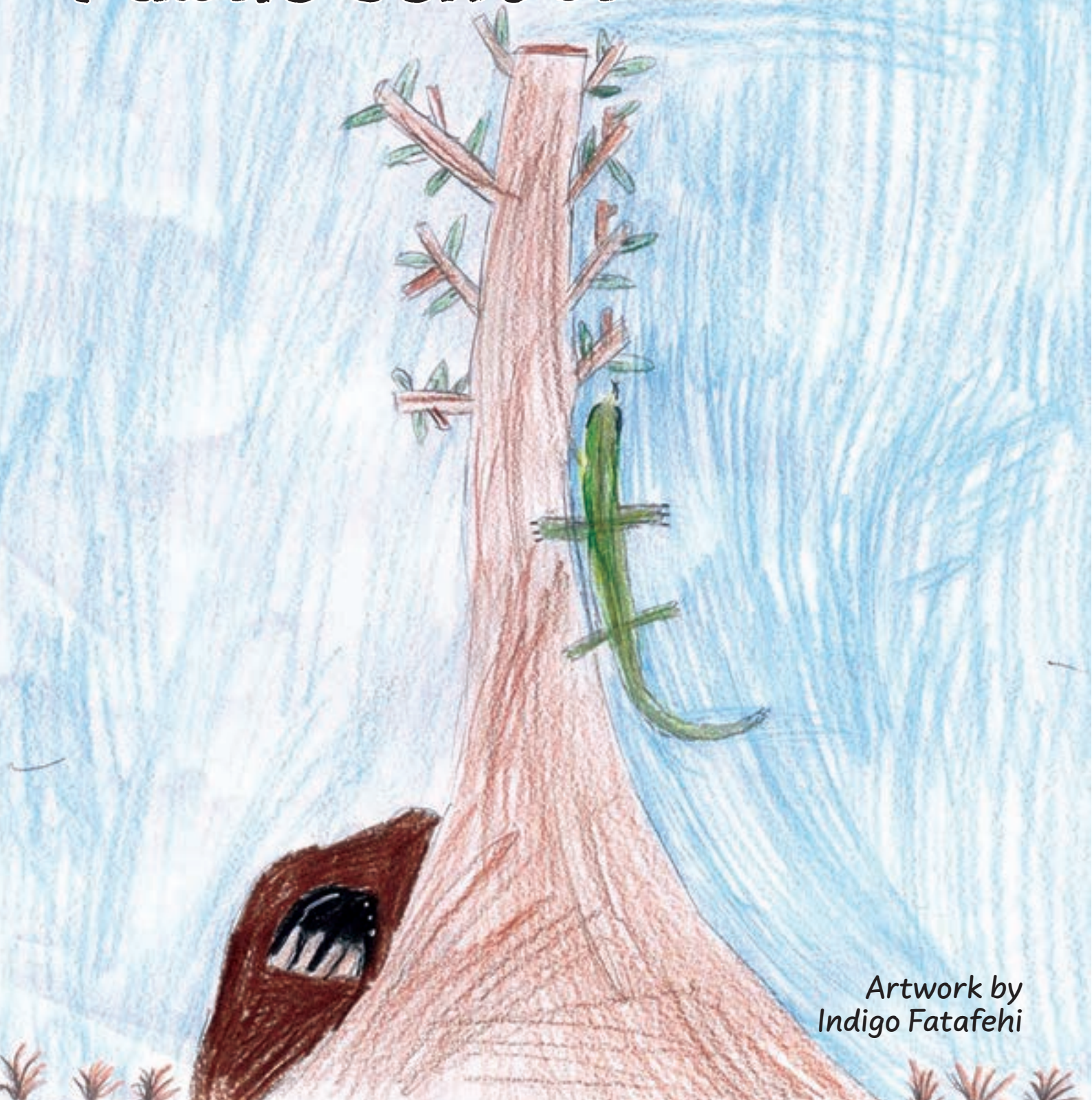
I gather all of my siblings and call out to Dad. At first, he can't hear us, so I use our special emergency call. Dad instantly comes walking over to us and finally he finds us. The next day Dad's eye is all better but he still can't see very clearly.

Mother teaches us to climb and catch all sorts of prey because soon we will have to leave the nest and start our own families.





# Mowbray Public School



Artwork by  
Indigo Fatafehi



*Artwork by Yohanna Puzny*

## **Lace Monitor** (*Varanus varius*)

These prehistoric looking animals are the largest reptiles in the Willoughby area, growing up to 2m long. Lace Monitors have been spotted in Mowbray Park, Harold Reid and North Arm Reserves but are not a common sight in the Willoughby area. Their large tails have many uses and can be used for balancing when climbing, acting as a rudder to steer when swimming and as a whip for defence. They are chemical communicators, leaving their scent to mark their territory or find a mate and will make a hissing sound if threatened. Their sensitive forked tongue and special sensor organ called the Jacobson's organ, allow them to detect the faintest scents from as far as 11km away when looking for food and a mate.



# My Mate Search

by Catherine Shen

As a dazzling, yellow orb rose into a beautiful background of light blue, the sky became clouded with soft, white wisps. I sighed wistfully because another lonely day had arrived. I didn't feel like any food as I was desperate to find a mate.

My marvelous nose sniffed a variety of scents. It picked up particles of food and the whereabouts of predators, but not a single atom of a female Lace Monitor. I rubbed various body parts onto wherever I went so if a female came across them, she would pick up my scent and hopefully follow my trail. I sniffed the floor of the surrounding woodland in case a mate had left pheromones or their scent hanging on the ground.

An abrupt raindrop plopped onto my tail with a resounding SPLASH. Soon, the sky was wailing, and I was getting wetter by the second. A bone-chilling gale ripped through the area.

Then the roaring, forceful monster-like wind carried the distant scent of a female Lace Monitor. A surge of excitement zapped from my snout, down through my body to the tip of my tail. I hurried toward the opposite direction of the wind.

My increasing energy and excitement helped me fight against the stubborn force of the storm. There, slinking around a termite mound was an adult female. I immediately knew that I had found the love of my life.





# **A Lace Monitor's Tail**

*by Yuhansa Jayakody*

As I nestle in the comfortable trees,  
I stare at all the buzzing bees,  
Looking for my prey,  
The forked tongue saves the day!

Through the massive forest of Mowbray Park,  
I see my treats gleaming in the dark,  
They all come and call to me,  
My tongue flicks and then I see.

I chomp away all the eggs and bugs so quick,  
As I hear the trampling of a stick,  
I then quickly scurry and have a rest,  
And in the morning, I feel my very best.

I pounce around, smell and sing,  
Then I feel extremely shy about the humans visiting,  
They come, scream and shout,  
Ooh I'm scared as they are moving all about.

They point, laugh, and make extremely rude faces,  
Now I just hiss, and they scramble to their car spaces,  
I smile, snigger raising my small snout,  
That's what they get for messing about!

My nose twitches, my scales sense the direction of home,  
I go looking for my termite mound, a perfect size,  
I'm thinking about our world, where terrible humans rise.  
I shudder feeling numb, getting really scared.

Temperatures getting higher, ice caps melting, leaving the Arctic bare.  
How could brilliant humans like you help and share?

Care for our precious environment, stop cutting down the towering trees.  
Be very friendly to animals like us Lace Monitors that you see,  
Be kind and have a big generous heart.

We believe in you, especially the hopeful ones at Mowbray Park.







# Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary School



Artwork by  
Sunny Choi





## **Cicadas** (*Superfamily - Cicadoidea*)

The loudest insects in the world, the sounds of cicadas in summer can be deafening. There are over 3,000 species of cicadas in the world, with at least 6 species living in Willoughby, including the Black Prince, Red Eye and Greengrocer. After spending many years living underground, adult cicadas emerge from the ground to breed. As they moult, they shed their skins and leave behind empty shells that are often found on trees. In the summer months, male cicadas make unique loud calls and sing tirelessly to attract females in order to breed.



# How Bob Got His Song

by Anya Francis

Buzz! A long time ago, there was a Blue Moon Cicada called Bob. He was zooming through the vast, lush forest looking for the perfect tree sap. As he was looking, he heard the most beautiful melody coming from a distant tree. Bob went to find it.

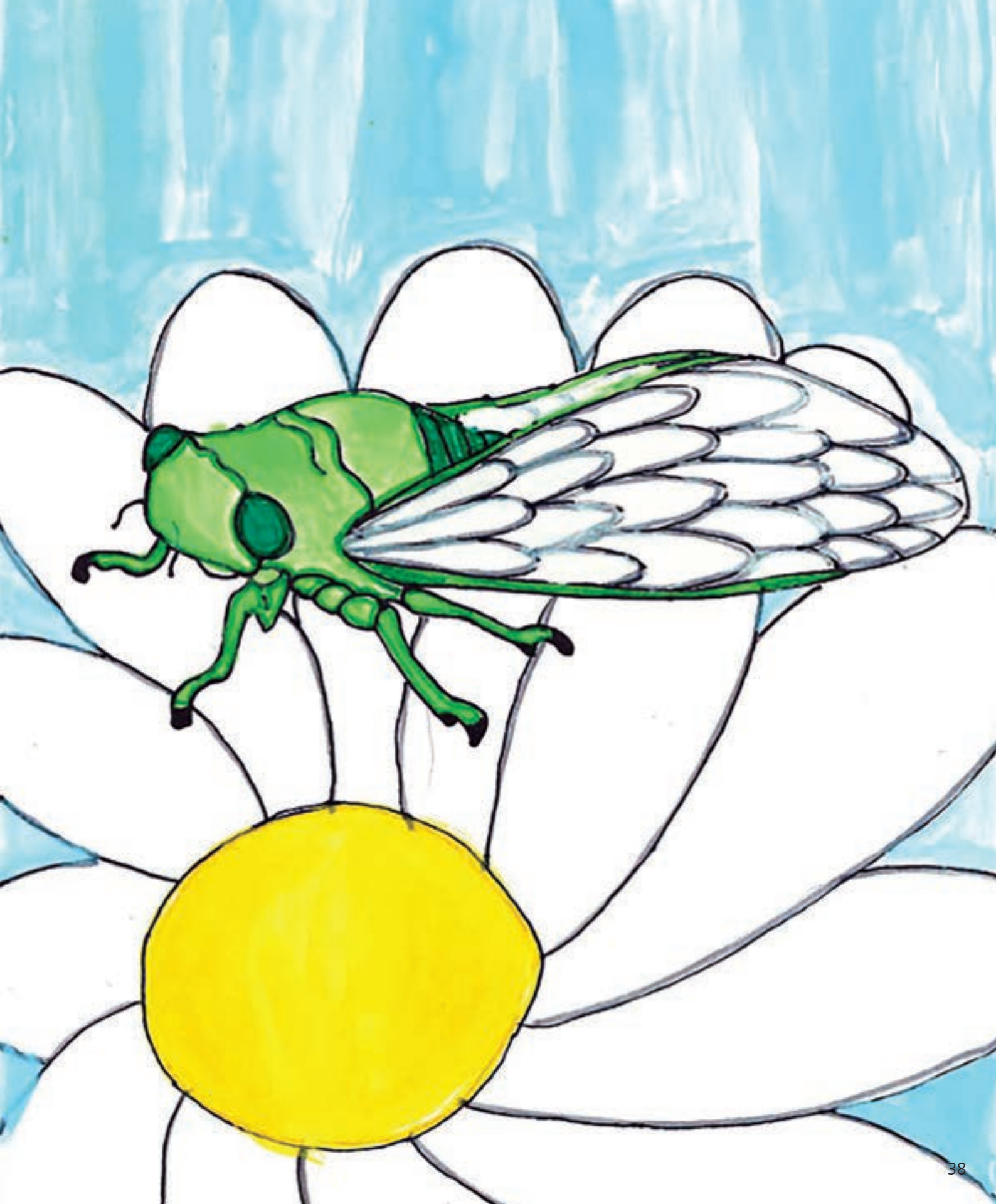
He was looking around as the song kept getting louder. He followed the song and it turned out to be Kate the Kookaburra! "Hmmm" pondered Bob, "I think I need to find my own song."

Bob flew along to find his best mate Greg the Green Grocer Cicada. He wanted to see if he had a song. When he arrived at Greg's, he asked if he had a song. Greg said "Yes!" and sang the song. To Bob's horror, Greg's song was like a tremendously loud screeching which made him shake! Bob then decided to go meet his other friend Callie the Cherry Nose Cicada instead.

He found Callie and asked her about her song. It was a soft, flowy song which nearly made Bob fall asleep! It was too slow and besides, Bob could never sing this high. Bob was really upset that he couldn't find his own song, so he flew off to go find some delicious tree sap like he had before.

Bob's head hung low as he flew slowly around until, "BANG!" he had bumped into a tree. He was super hungry at this point, so he started drinking the sap. It tasted like the purest liquid sap in the world, it had a hint of scrumptious sweetness.

As soon as he finished... "Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!" Bob had made a sound he had never heard before! He tried it again and it was the most amazing sound ever! "I found my song!" he exclaimed. Bob showed off his new song to all his friends, who loved it! Bob was the proudest cicada in Australia ever.





# Lenny, the Cicada

*by Charlotte Wong*

*As Lenny the Cicada came out from underground one summer morning, he went out on a safari to find a mate. As he went, he found the perfect place to sing - on a tree leaf. He was trembling with fear as he kept on taking another step forward.*

*Then suddenly Lenny heard a strange sound which almost sounded like a Kookaburra but it couldn't be.*

*"SQUARK! SQUARK!"*

*He knew now that it was a Kookaburra! But it wasn't just any Kookaburra. It was Strong Mike the Kookaburra. He was known for his greatness.*

*Lenny flew for his life but he just wasn't fast enough. Strong Mike swooped up Lenny the Cicada like a scoop of ice-cream. Strong Mike then dropped him down in a burrow that he had made. Lenny remembered that he had a powerful voice and he used it now on Mike. It was a loud, high-pitched sound.*

*Strong Mike was terribly frightened by Lenny's sound and wouldn't dare try to eat him.*

*Lenny crawled out of the burrow and flew away. He was safe.*





# St. Philip Neri Catholic Primary School



Artwork by  
Indigo Rudd





Artwork by Grace Moir

## **Common Sydney Octopus** (*Octopus tetricus*)

The Common Sydney Octopus can be found lurking in tidal pools and rocky shores across Sydney Harbour, including Middle Harbour. They are masters of camouflage and can quickly change the colour and even texture of their skins to match their surroundings, often camouflaging as a piece of seaweed or rock. They have a strong parrot-like beak, useful for crushing open shells to feed on crabs and molluscs. Normally living a solo life, males and females come together once a year to breed. Females lay over 15,000 tiny eggs and will stay with the eggs and guard them until they hatch.



# The Escape

by Charlotte Cahill

Like any other normal day, a Common Sydney Octopus named Knot was lurking in the rock pools. When he heard noises, then he felt something on top of him, humans. They thought that Knot was a rock and they only found out he wasn't a rock when he moved and gave them the fright of their lives.

Knot moved around the other rock pools, looking for somewhere that would be welcoming for him. A place where those people couldn't get near him. He also needed a good place for mating, and food. Then he saw it. It was perfect, even better than the one before.

Knot took himself and his tentacles over just next to it, ready to lurk in. When something popped up! It was another octopus and not just any other octopus, it was another Common Sydney Octopus. It was changing colour, signalling that this was her den not his.

Knot knew how good this den was, way better than his, so he wasn't going to give up without a fight. The other octopus was now bright green, desperately trying to tell Knot to go away.

All of a sudden Knot leaped at the octopus, which was caught unaware and too late for her, as Knot had wrapped himself around her. He held on tight while the other octopus struggled.

He had won! Finally, it was his den and it was perfect. This would be his den for as long as he lived, unless of course someone tried to take it.





# The Hungry Octopus

by Patrick Ghattas

Splat!! My sensitive tentacles grab onto the moist rocks as I prowl around Sailors Bay in search of some tasty crabs. From my hungry point of view, I have been wandering this area for what seemed to be hours.

Curiously I pull up a rock to see what lurks under its mysterious hidden underground chamber. I yank it up quickly to find two big male crabs sleeping in their shells. I had finally found food, let's eat!

There is no way that these critters are getting away. 3, 2, 1. Oh that was quite crab-delicious. Anyway, it's time for my nap so I will see you again at sunset.

Sneaking in the burrows I couldn't hear anything or see any other fish or crabs. I was wondering why it was a ghost town, when suddenly a humongous object went over the top of me. I went as pale as paper when I saw it.

There was an adult Port Jackson shark roaming the waters in search of food. I frantically hid under a rock, even though it was uncomfortable. It was totally worth it. I could have been eaten!!

Finally, I got home to have a nap. It was a rough day, as usual for an octopus. Except it's not every day that I stumble upon a 175cm shark. See you for another adventure, bye.





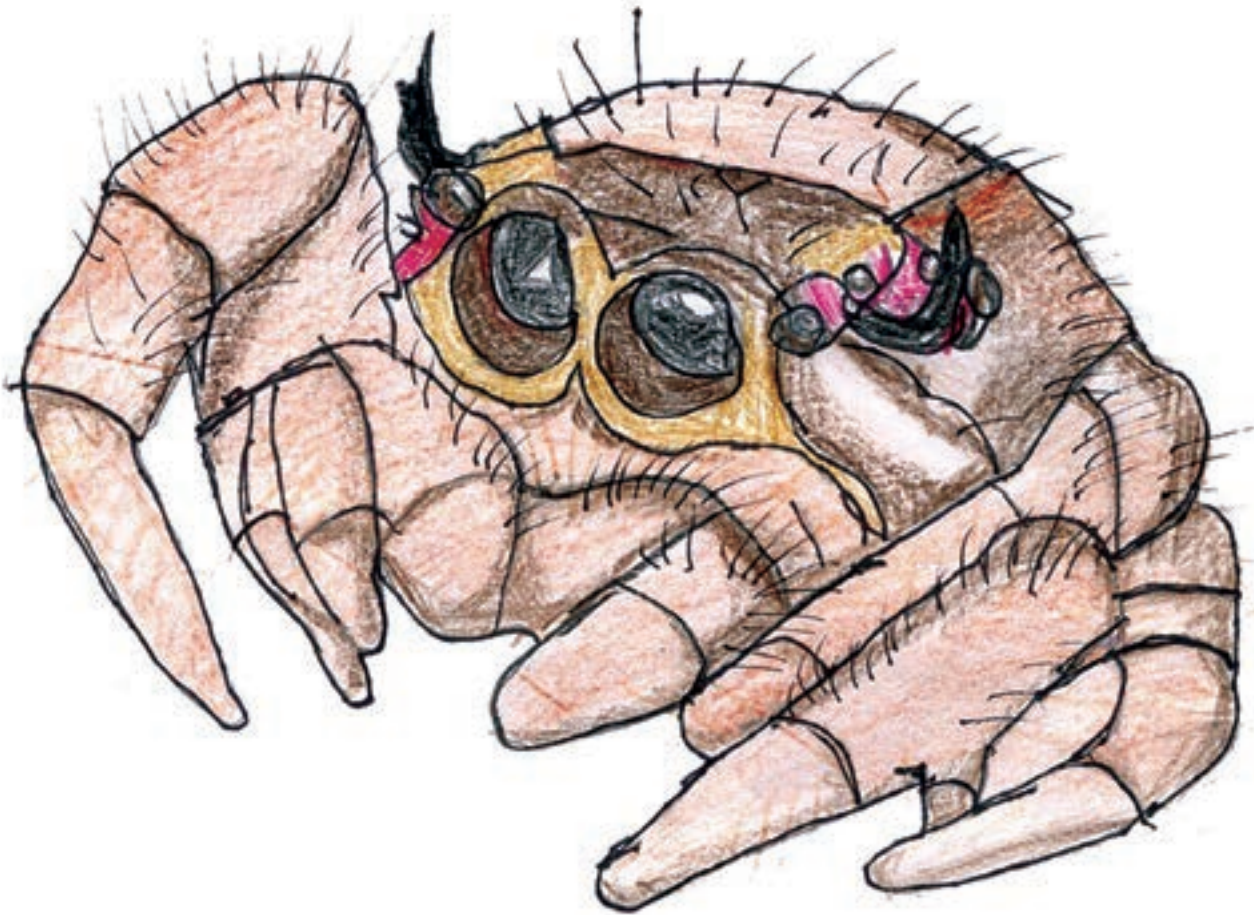


# St. Pius X College



Artwork by Toby Wilson





*Artwork by Oliver Ibrahim*

## **Jumping Spiders** (*Family - Salticidae*)

There are over 6,000 species of Jumping Spiders in the world, some of which are commonly found in Willoughby. These small but mighty creatures are mostly harmless to humans and like to feed on small insects such as flies, moths and mosquitoes. By eating other insects, they play an important role in the ecosystem as natural pest controllers. Jumping Spiders can jump several times the length of their bodies, making them excellent ambush predators. These visual communicators are fantastic dancers. Male Jumping Spiders perform an elaborate courtship dance by waving their arms around and moving side to side to attract females. This dance is often accompanied by drumming sounds created by beating their legs and abdomen.



# Jumping Spiders vs Humans

by Hamish Sullivan

*"Quickly get the insect repellent!!!" yelled Max's Dad. "Here we go again! The battle of Willoughby's Jumping Spiders VS Humans has begun."*

*For years now we have been under huge threat. Humans have been cutting down our home and many of our families have been killed during the cutting down of trees. We are very angry and scared. We will start a war against those deadly humans.*

*Anxious and frightened is what I feel when I see a Jumping Spider. I'm sick of those spiders that keep raiding my house, hiding in unusual places, contaminating my food, drinks and ingredients. For years, those annoying spiders have been invading Willoughby's homes. The shopping centres have been infested and store stock has been destroyed.*

*I've been running into spider webs everywhere and I even ran into an egg sack that went all over me. A few times I've run into a web and spiders have landed on my face. It's terrible and it's so frightening!*

*Our habitat and shelters have vanished. We've lost our families! It's a disaster! It's time we start a war against those humans. We will destroy them. We must begin our training for Battle Day.*

*"Hello, is anyone out there?!" cried Max.*

*"Who is that beast?! Whoever it is, GO! Get it, or you shall die," yelled Zip*

*"Please, I don't mean any harm. Don't start a war. What if I could promise that we could come to some sort of mutual agreement?" yelled Max. "I have a plan that will help the Willoughby Jumping Spiders and us humans to get along. We will stop killing you guys and destroying your habitat," explained Max.*

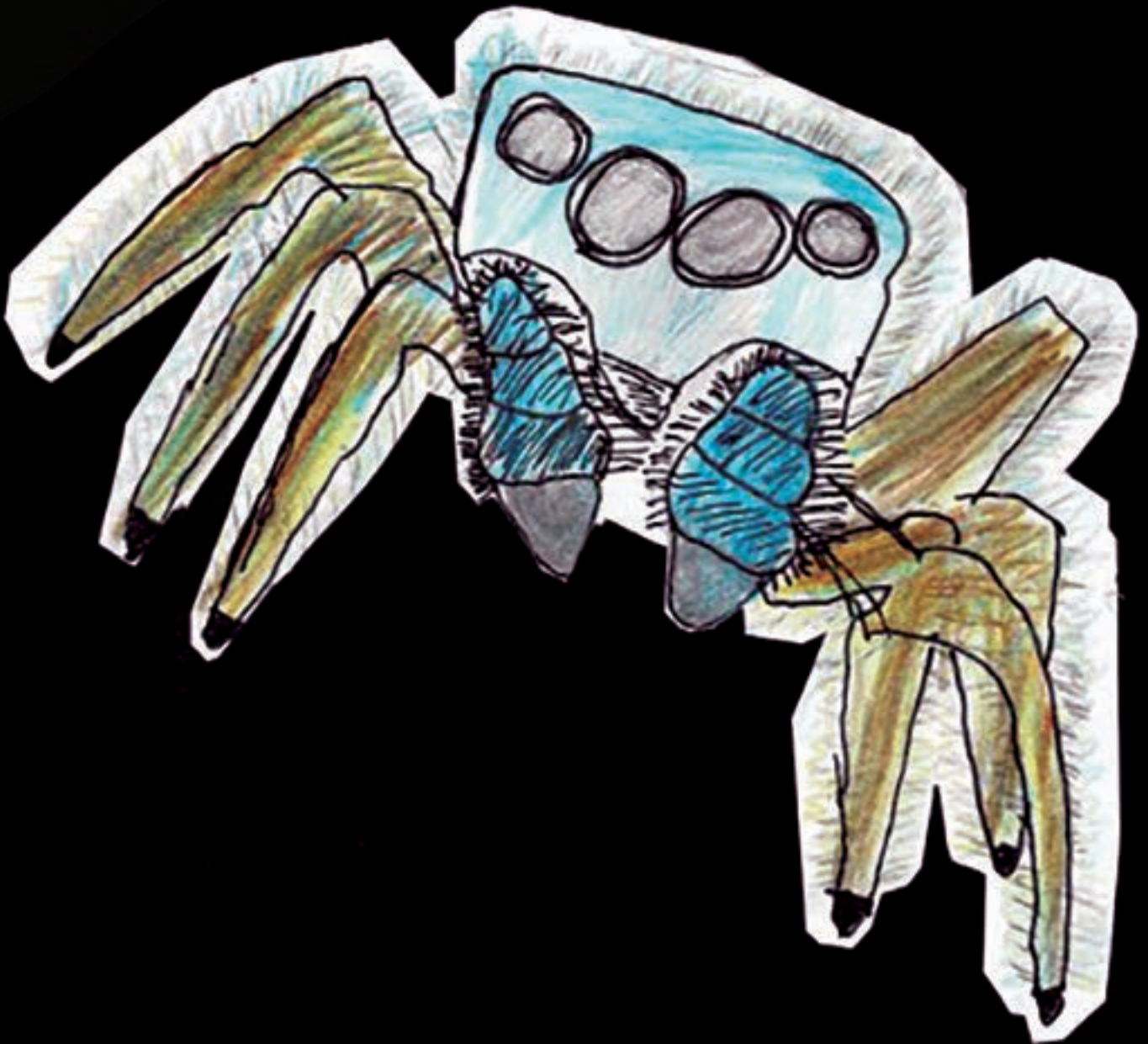
*"I'm only interested if you're actually looking out for us!" warned Zip.*

*"If we work together, we can build a sanctuary for the Jumping Spiders to live. Just imagine, copious amounts of shelter, trees, other insects, water, space for*

all the Jumping Spiders to live safely and happily. There will be plenty of food and you won't be harmed by humans because you will be protected in your own unique space," explained Max.

"This is a brilliant idea! I can't wait to share it with my friends and family," replied Zip, as he jumped off the window sill, ready to share the wonderful news.

"Got him!" shrieked mum, as she struck her shoe over the Jumping Spider.  
"NOOOOOO!" screamed Max.





# Larry The Jumping Spider

by Ryan East

Larry the Jumping Spider lives at 202 Hollywood Street, Willoughby. He is just your average Jumping Spider, but he is afraid of heights.

Why? You may ask.

In the past, when Larry was only 5 days old, a large gust of wind blew him off a leaf. But lucky for Larry, his mum jumped up to save him. However the whole experience had scarred Larry.

Now let us jump to 5 weeks later, to the present day...

"Come on Larry, it will be fine. Don't worry!" said Larry's best mate Johnno.

Larry and Johnno were going to the school disco to finally get a female partner. Well Johnno was excited because he was trying to get the most popular girl in school, Brittany. But Larry on the other hand just wanted to chill.

When they arrived, Johnno ran off looking for Brittany and Larry went off to the insect bar to have a snack. Johnno was approaching Brittany but he should have known something about Brittany. She had a reputation for eating boys who did not impress her with their dancing.

When Johnno came up to Brittany, he said "um, hi Brittany. Look at these moves." Johnno started dancing his heart out like a champ. His moves really started to impress Brittany, though he soon got tangled up break dancing and pandemonium broke loose.

Brittany kicked poor Johnno super far, totally off the dance floor and started charging at him. When Larry saw what was about to happen, he sprang into action and ran over to save Johnno. Larry ended up at the edge of a rock with a huge gap between his rock and the dance floor. Brittany was getting closer to Johnno. Larry could see her getting ready to bite him.

Larry said, "I can make that jump, I can do this!" He closed his eyes and leapt as high and far as he could. Everyone else was watching what was about to unfold.

Brittany got even closer. Larry pushed out his third leg on his right side, ready to give Brittany a good kick. Larry's foot met Brittany and he yelled "BACK OFF BRITTANY!"

Brittany lost her balance and fell off the edge of the dance floor, tumbling all the way down to the bottom of the garden. All the other spiders were cheering and chanting "Larry! Larry! Larry!"

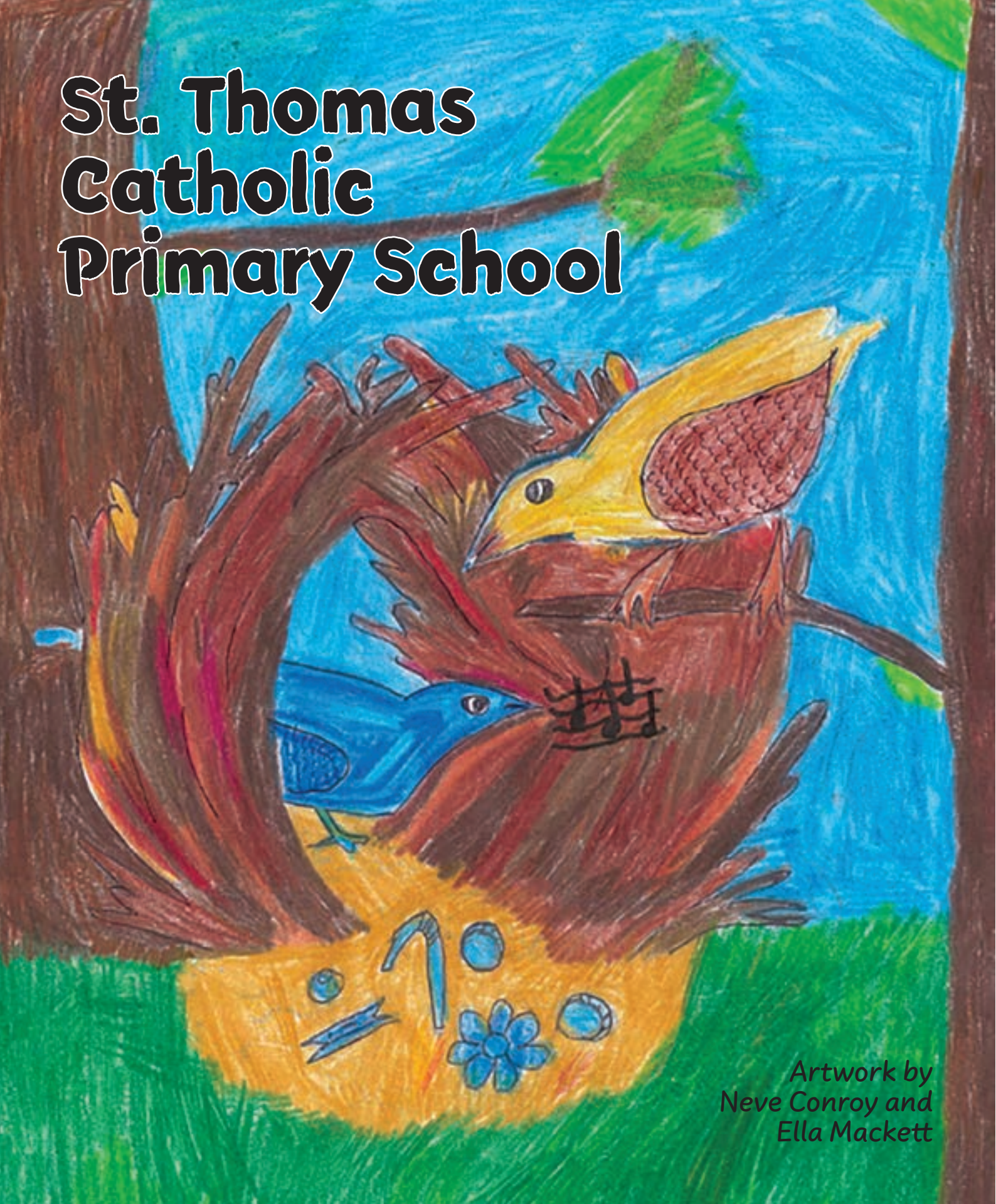
Larry did it! He saved his friend and conquered his fear of jumping high. Johnno said "wow you saved me, and did you see how high you jumped?"

And from that day on Larry was treated like a hero.





# St. Thomas Catholic Primary School



Artwork by  
Neve Conroy and  
Ella Mackett





## **Satin Bowerbird** (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*)

The Satin Bowerbirds are nature's architects. The male Bowerbirds build intricate bowers out of sticks and twigs and decorate them with different bright blue objects they can find, including feathers, flowers and even artificial items such as clothing pegs and bottle caps. The bowers are used to attract potential mates. The males also perform a complex courtship dance and song in order to win over the females. The Satin Bowerbirds are important to the ecosystems because they help disperse seeds, allowing different plants to spread and grow.



# **The Satin Bowerbird**

*by Max Quinnell*

*The male Satin Bower is an intriguing bird,  
some of his habits are awfully absurd.  
Often sighted in our own Willoughby neighbourhood.*

*The male is blessed with a deep, blue colour,  
which helps him to attract his female lover.  
He works busily all day, to create his bower,  
which is a complex and intricate twig and stick tower.*

*He'll search high and low and collect anything,  
from keychains to straws, to a milk bottle ring.  
He's especially attracted to all things blue,  
but he will also gather some natural things too.*

*The male Bowerbird loves to dance and sing,  
to convince the female that he's her king.  
Any object that's blue, he'll add to his nest,  
to ensure she's attracted and truly impressed.*

*When his work is done, he moves on again,  
to make a new bower, a new mating den.  
This beautiful bird is really quite perfect,  
an animal that's worthy of our most loving respect.*







# Call of the Bowerbird

by Stephanie Williams

Hello! My name is Maddie  
I am a Satin Bowerbird  
A green chest, though I love the  
colour blue  
I know, it sounds absurd

Well, I wish I was blue like the males  
Their tall, handsome stature  
But I'm green and brown and weird  
I can't even make a bower

But the love nest is blue  
It is so beautiful  
Our spirit colour draws us in  
So irresistible

And when males sing  
Oh, what a beautiful song  
High and low and loud  
They practice, they do nothing wrong

And next, they perform  
A highly aggressive prance  
But somehow, we are not startled  
Is this truly romance?

Then they fly off  
They leave us with the hard work  
Make us take care of ourselves  
They fly away with a horrible smirk

The lovely ladies have the chicks  
But only three at a time  
Spring and Summer is when we lay  
At least our kids' behaviour is prime

We all love the rainforest  
Our exquisite, wonderful home  
Delicious plants for rare meals below  
Us animals are one: free to roam

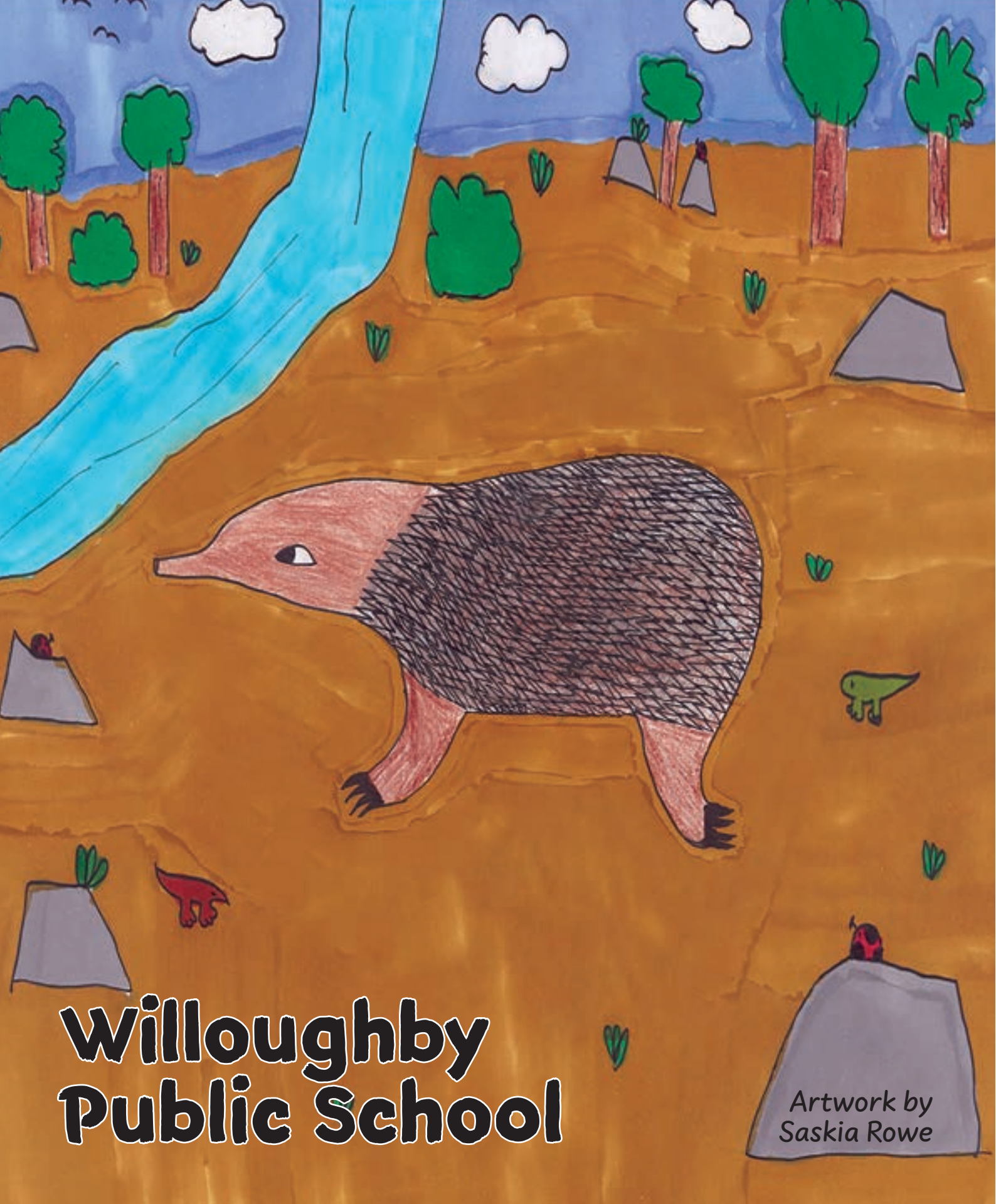
Make the most of your 100-year life  
The years we have are restricted to nine  
So, use your life wisely  
We choose to live divine

Since we can't make perfect bowers  
We raise our young in a nest  
High in a tree, safe and sound  
So beautiful, our young are  
truly blessed

I must go now  
To feed my little hatchlings their dinner  
A selection of seeds and nuts  
Then fall asleep, dreaming of  
blue shimmer.







**Willoughby  
Public School**

Artwork by  
Saskia Rowe



Artwork by  
Heidi Smith

## **Short-beaked Echidna** (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)

Echidnas are truly unique animals. They are monotremes, meaning they are mammals that lay eggs. Their spade-like claws are excellent tools for digging and tearing open termite mounds and logs. They then use their long sticky tongues to slurp up an estimated 40,000 ants and termites each day. Echidnas communicate with chemicals, scents or pheromones. During the breeding season, male Echidnas use their excellent sense of smell to seek out a nearby female and together they form a long line behind her, known as the "Echidna Train". They will follow her around for up to 6 weeks until she is finally ready to mate. Although very shy, Echidnas are spotted in the bushland reserves of Lane Cove, Chatswood West and Castlecrag.



# Story of a Short-beaked Echidna

*by Lotta Vagnerova*

*As an Echidna comes out of the ground,  
She pokes up her head and looks around.  
She clambers out of her deep, deep burrow,  
And soon other males start to follow.*

*This happens because of a chemical scent,  
And so, the males followed her wherever she went.  
They do this so they have someone to mate,  
This is how they communicate.*

*Up to 11 males she will gain,  
This is called the Echidna Train.  
She will soon stop at a bush or tree,  
And there she will start to dig with glee.*

*She sticks her head and front paws into the bowl,  
Then she starts to dig up a hole.  
The males dig a moat around the tree or bush,  
Then they start to PUSH, PUSH, PUSH!*

*They push and shove until there's only one male left,  
And that lucky male, the female he gets!  
Then, suddenly after twenty something days,  
Something happens, an egg, the female lays!*

*She and the Platypus are the only mammals that hatch,  
And after ten days in a pouch, the egg cracks!  
Baby Echidnas are called Puggles,  
And after hatching, in the pouch it still snuggles.*

When she is out, she drinks some milk from her mum,  
And the baby's so transparent, you can see it from her tum!  
Then mum will teach her how to use her sticky tongue,  
To scoop up food to eat, yum!

After a year she leaves her mother,  
And starts her journey with no other.  
She will make a new Echidna Train,  
And it will happen again and again!





# **The Day in the Mating Season**

*by Audrey Lee, artwork by Xavier Zagari*

*One day, on a particularly breezy autumn day, Ellie the Short-beaked Echidna went over to her neighbour's house. They were going to have a picnic. Her neighbour Elena waddled out with a picnic bag and a colourful mat hanging from her spikes.*

*Elena gasped with happiness. "Oh Ellie! You brought guests!"*

*Ellie gasped in horror as she turned around to find a male Echidna! "Aaaah!" She screamed! "What are you doing here, sir?"*

*Her head filled with curiosity. Then the male Echidna replied "maybe you should be noticing the wonderful smell wafting through the air. I woke up and this very same smell, started to smell fresh, so I followed it."*

*Ellie wondered if she must have become famous or something. Ellie quickly started to run away but he continued following her.*

*As she ran through The Burrow Village, more and more male Echidnas joined the line. "Why is everyone following me? Stop it!" sobbed Ellie.*

*The same male Echidna came up to her and spoke. "It's Mating Season!" Ellie was shocked. She smiled and said, "oh dear, this was a misunderstanding. I won't forget next time!"*

*A few weeks later Ellie laid an egg. Ellie was so happy. She named her Emma.*







# Did you get my message?

Thank you for reading and learning about some of our local species. Next time you hear a noisy Cicada or Whipbird make its mating call, think about how critical communication is for the survival of all species, including us.

Always use your senses when bushwalking, just like the animals do. Be silent and still, then listen.

Follow the chirps, the rustling of leaves, and look.

Seek out the different textures, and touch.

Take slow deep breaths and smell everything around you.

Thank you to all the year 5 children in our Willoughby schools who have written hundreds of stories and created incredible artworks about our local wildlife.

All our local species are very grateful for your messages.













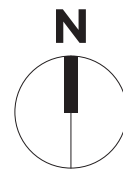


# Explore the wilds of Willoughby

The Willoughby Walks App is a gateway for you to explore Willoughby's beautiful bushland reserves. You can read about the bushwalks online or use the app as a guide as you explore on foot.



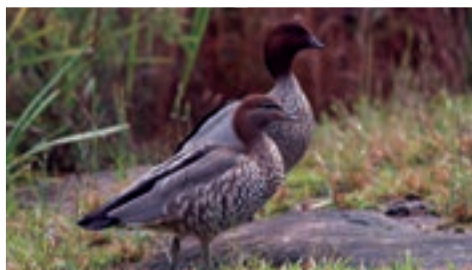
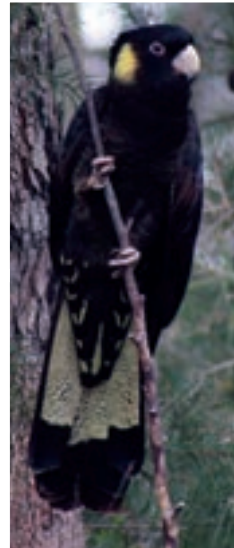
-  Bushland Reserves
-  Open Space and Sports Fields
-  Residential/Industrial Areas
-  Water Catchments
-  Bush Walking Tracks
-  Participating Schools



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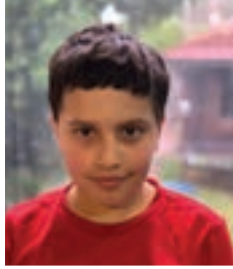
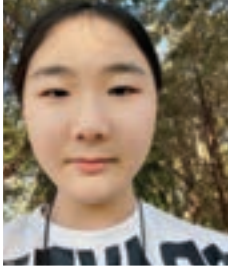


# This book was created by Willoughby's





kids and is dedicated to our local wildlife.







A Willoughby City Council Wildlife Storybook