

Animals Adapt-ability



A COMPILATION OF CHILDREN'S SHORT STORIES AND ARTWORKS
Part of Willoughby City Council's Wildlife Storybook Series

© 2020 Willoughby City Council

ISBN: 978-0-9944640-5-7

Front cover artwork by Darcie Little. Inside cover artwork by Haasini Ramesh.
Contents page artwork by Tatyana Mingazova. Back cover artwork by Merrian Liu & Sitian Chen.

Wildlife photography by Nathan Litjens, Meredith Foley, Andy Burton and Simon Brown.

All rights reserved.

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review,
as permitted under the copyright act, no part of this book may be reproduced without
written permission.

Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction rights should be directed to
Willoughby City Council's Wildlife Officer, PO Box 57, Chatswood NSW 2057.

Further information about Willoughby's local bushland reserves
and their wildlife is available from Willoughby City Council:
31 Victor Street, Chatswood NSW 2067
02 9777 1000 or www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au



Contents

Introduction.....	1
Artarmon Public School - Robber Fly	3
Artwork <i>by Annabel Li & Natalie Rowe</i>	
Comic <i>by Lukas Gillett & Kaelan Redgrove</i>	
The Robber Fly Rescue <i>by Akhil Bangalore & David Lu</i>	
That's My Prey! <i>by Natalie Zhang & Victoria Chang</i>	
Castle Cove Public School - Sugar Glider	9
Artwork 1 <i>by Harry Jiang</i>	
Artwork 2 <i>by Elsa Sun</i>	
A Sugar Glider's Memory <i>by Holly Zingel</i>	
Bottlebrush <i>by Edward Weir</i>	
Chatswood Public School - Longfin Eel.....	15
Artwork 1 <i>by Isabella Zhang & Chloe Liu</i>	
Artwork 2 <i>by Alexander Cantafio</i>	
On the Edge of the Coral Sea <i>by Angela Poole & Clarisse Tang</i>	
Journey to Home <i>by Rishit Vasudeva</i>	
Mowbray Public School - Large-footed Myotis.....	21
Artwork 1 <i>by Sophie Weaver</i>	
Artwork 2 <i>by Emi Shichinohe</i>	
Anna the Large-footed Myotis <i>by Kaia Sample</i>	
The Problem <i>by Victoria Campbell</i>	
Northbridge Public School - Australian Fur Seal.....	27
Artwork 1 <i>by Olivia Dillon & Chloe Sherar</i>	
Artwork 2 <i>by Livia Trpeski & Sienna Phillips</i>	
The Hunt <i>by Edward Dunnett</i>	
The Ocean Adventure <i>by Abigayle Howland & Riika Yamashita</i>	
Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary School - Laughing Kookaburra.....	33
Artwork 1 <i>by Hannah Williams</i>	
Artwork 2 <i>by Elise Fung</i>	
Olivia's Glorious Adventure <i>by Sophia Stipo</i>	
The Silent Kookaburra <i>by Farid Chammaa, artwork by Tessa Ang</i>	

St Philip Neri Catholic Primary School - Australian Pelican	39
Artwork 1 <i>by James Nicholas</i>	
Artwork 2 <i>by William Rusak</i>	
A Pelican's Adventure <i>by Sam Scoble</i>	
Charlie's Big Save <i>by Scarlett Phipson, artwork by Annabel Azizi</i>	
St Pius X College - Broad-tailed Gecko	45
Artwork 1 <i>by Michael Chung</i>	
Artwork 2 <i>by Lucas Tubman</i>	
Broad-tailed Gecko Man: Origin <i>by Nickolas Cheung</i>	
George and the Gecko's Egg <i>by Alexander Parissis</i>	
St Thomas Catholic Primary School - Tawny Frogmouth	51
Artwork <i>by Bianca Crisanti</i>	
Comic <i>by Rose Tannock</i>	
Terrific Tawnys <i>by Claudia Sidoti</i>	
Mary, the Tawny Frogmouth <i>by Martha Sullivan</i>	
Willoughby Public School - Neon Cuckoo Bee	57
Artwork 1 <i>by Jared Wong</i>	
Artwork 2 <i>by Sophie Staniforth & Evie Purtell</i>	
The Adventures of Nelly the Neon Cuckoo Bee <i>by Coco Gilleland</i>	
The Neon Cuckoo Bee <i>by Edward McDonald, Harvey Kam & Charlie Pobje</i>	



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. Or they can be downloaded via the Willoughby City Council website or Willoughby's Library BorrowBox app.

This year learning focused on the theme of animal adaptations. Students learnt how the structural and behavioural features of the species support their survival and considered how susceptible the species is to environmental change. For example, how does the Longfin Eel manage to survive prolonged periods of drought?



All these birds live in the Willoughby area and have very differently shaped beaks. Their beaks have adapted over time to help them source and eat the food available in their habitat.

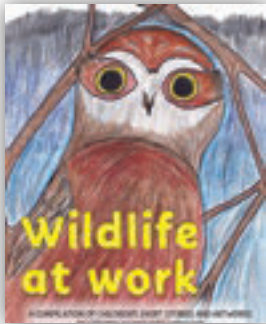
The carnivorous White-bellied Sea Eagle has a tearing beak. The seed eating Sulphur-crested Cockatoo has a tough crushing beak suitable to crack open Banksia pods. Insectivorous Superb Fairywrens have a narrow, pointed insect catching beak and nectar feeding Eastern Spinebills have a long probing beak to reach deep inside flowers.

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

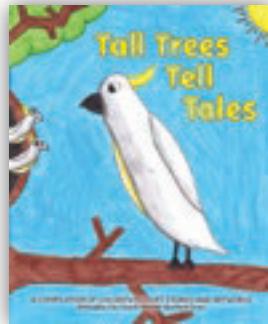
If you would like to learn more about Willoughby's environment, please contact Willoughby City Council on 9777 1000 or visit www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au to view our list of guided bushwalks, events and walking track maps.

Read the Full Collection...

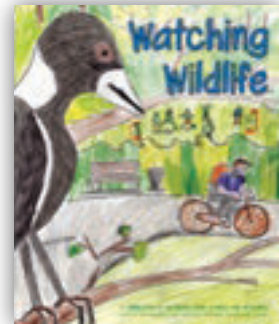
2019



2018



2017



2016



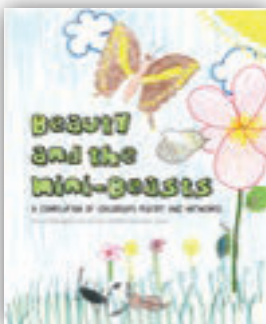
2015



2014



2013



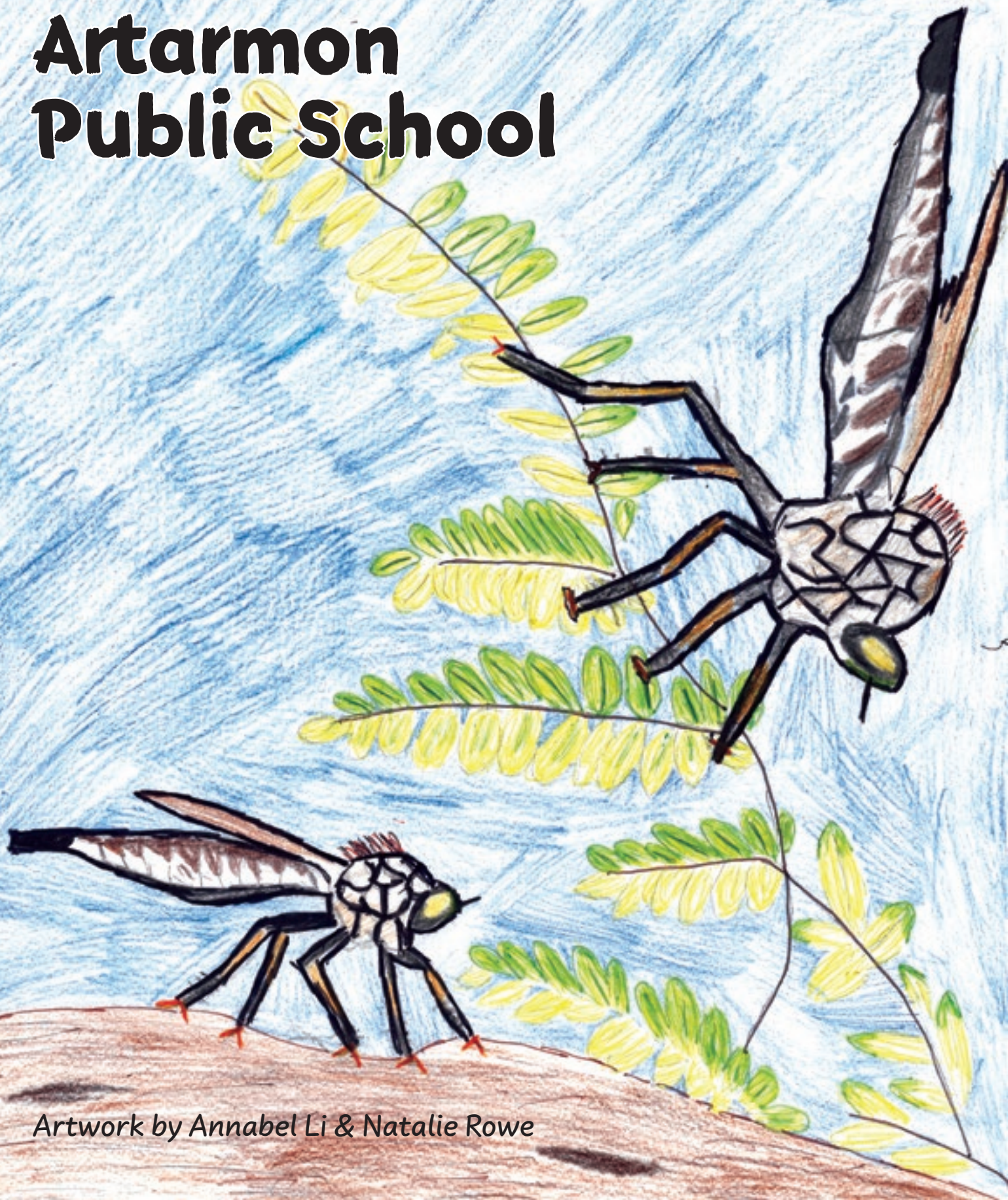
2012



2011



Artarmon Public School



Artwork by Annabel Li & Natalie Rowe

Matt the Robber Fly

by Lukas Gillett
& Kaelan Redgrove

Hi, my name is Matt and I come from a family called Asilidae. I can fly, hunt and capture my food in the blink of an eye.



My arms are adapted so that I can reach very far away, to hold dangerous prey.



I eat many different types of insects such as wasps, flies, cockroaches, spiders and ants.



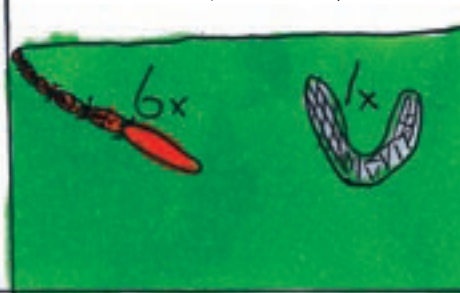
I also have a cool moustache protecting my face from dangerous insects



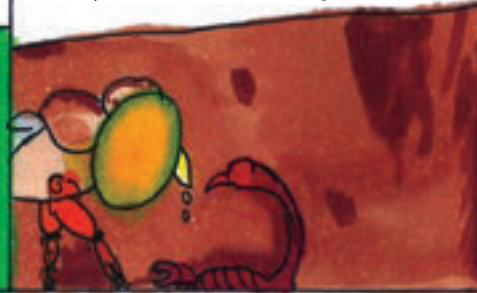
I can fly very quickly and have very good eyes so I can spot my prey very easily. This means that I can also run away from dangerous things quickly.



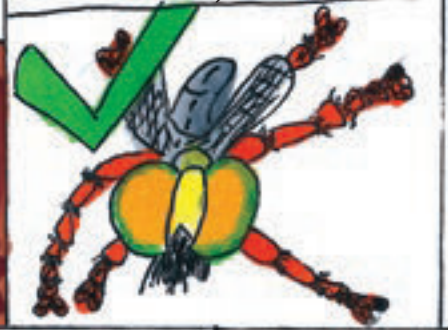
I only have one pair of wings, but I have six legs to crawl around with. I can be killed by insect repellent.



I have multiple lenses in my eye. I can also inject a poison into my enemies to stop them from eating me.



Yes, you guessed correctly. I am a Robber Fly.



Robber Fly (*Asilidae Sp.*)

Robber Flies are insects we sometimes see and think 'what is that?' Rest assured, it is definitely not going to suck your blood, but it will help control pests by eating beetles, wasps, flies and other insects. This apex predator has huge compound eyes with several thousand lenses of different sizes. Its precision vision, enlarged flight muscles, narrow body and wings allow it to catch prey with great speed and accuracy. Its long legs will safely grab their prey and its hard and sharp mouth parts easily pierce into the insect's body.

The Robber Fly Rescue

by Akhil Bangalore & David Lu

Alvin trembled. Fear seeped through his body as he stared at the many-legged horror creeping towards him and his sleeping brother.

The Huntsman spider was merely centimetres away from them.

From the moment he saw it, Alvin was flooded with anxiety. He glanced at his brother gently sleeping on the jade-coloured eucalyptus leaf. The spider's fangs missed Alvin by a hair's width as he darted in an effort to emancipate himself from the terrifying situation.

When faced with the true seriousness of the situation, Alvin began to question whether or not he should abandon his brother.

Flying away was the first choice that came to Alvin's mind as he moved his large compound eyes to search for a refuge. He knew that if he left his brother, he might very likely never see him ever again.

Alvin thought of searching for assistance, but by the time he found help his brother would have been consumed. Alvin was filled with mounting dread. He had only one choice left: to fend for his family and attack the spider!

There was no time to waste! The spider was now within reach of his brother. Without a second's hesitation, Alvin dived at the predator just as it was about to pounce. His long, spindly legs grasped the spider tightly before he terminated its struggles with a stab of his proboscis.

When Alvin's parents came home they were proud of him. Alvin was relieved that his brother was okay.

Alvin had managed to save his family and provide them with a celebration dinner!



That's My Prey!

by Natalie Zhang & Victoria Chang

Kelly the Robber Fly sat on his perch. The scent of rain wafted from dry soil and mixed with the smell of citrus coming from dried leaves. His compound eyes scanned the horizon and sussed out any signs of prey. Giving his giant wings a flutter, Kelly flew off the Scribbly gum and into the garden where a myriad of insects could be found.

From the corner of his eye, Kelly spied a black figure crawling on a tree. Food!

An Aphid made its way to a leaf. Kelly was poised to jump.

Suddenly, Kelly felt befuddled. Out of the blue, a red creature was on the tail of HIS prey. A Lady Beetle had swallowed the Aphid whole!

Kelly was enraged. As quick as a flash, Kelly was back on his perch, eyeing the next victim - the Lady Beetle. As Kelly's spindly legs were about to push off, a black figure darted past him and seized the Lady beetle.

Kelly was MAD!!! A spider had snatched away his prey!

Just a stone's throw away, the spider hung from its web, satisfied from its tasty meal.

The spider was oblivious to the very angry Robber Fly.

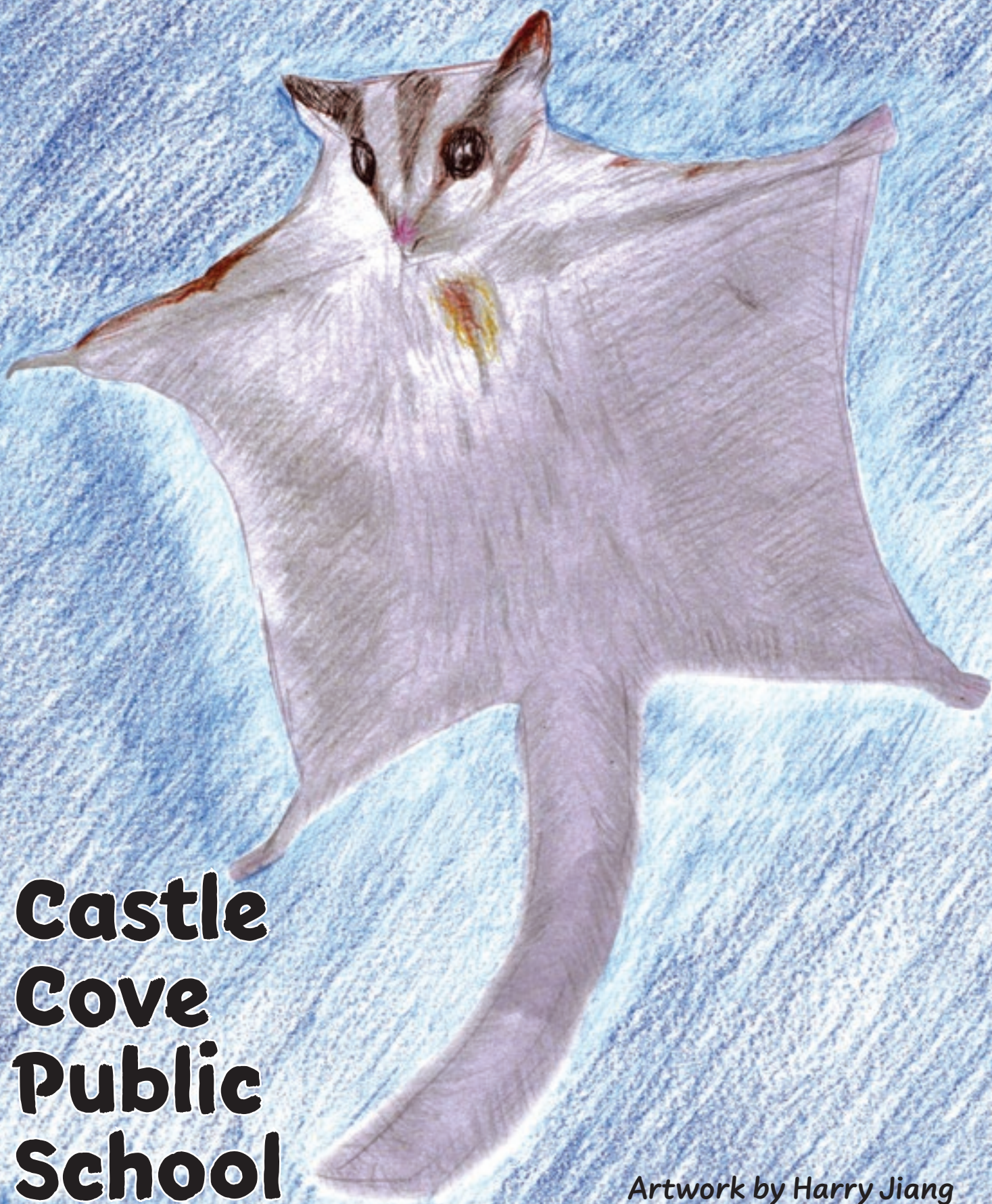
Kelly charged at the spider like a bull. In mid-air, Kelly grasped the spider and paralysed it.

What an adventure the day had been. Kelly had spied an Aphid that had been eaten by a Lady Beetle. He had seen a spider that ate a Lady Beetle. But the spider didn't see the Robber Fly that ate him.

Kelly jumped with jubilant mirth. He had caught his prey!

"Whoop!" Kelly breathed with a complacent smirk.





**Castle
Cove
Public
School**

Artwork by Harry Jiang



Artwork by Elsa Sun

Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*)

This small, cute, agile possum is relatively widespread in Willoughby's bushland. Our local reserves are places where trees are allowed to grow as large as they like. Old trees have hollows for Sugar Gliders to shelter and nest in. To avoid predators they only come out at night and can glide up to 90 metres. Large widely spaced ears and eyes allow precise triangulation for safe landings and location of prey. They have large, sharp teeth and long tongues for cutting and gouging open trees to extract sugary sap, resin and hidden insects. This allows them to remain in the safety of the tree canopy during winter, when insect and flower food sources can be scarce. Look out for scars on the rough barked Red Bloodwood (*Corymbia gummifera*) trees.

A Sugar Glider's Memory

by Holly Zingel

*When I was young, I foraged with my mother,
We watched the bees fly and dance with one another,
The sun had started rising and winter was growing near,
A bird nearby shrieked and my fur bristled with fear.
I looked around for the bird that had made the warning sound,
But my mother grabbed my fur and flew above the ground.
Her arms were outstretched and I stretched out mine too,
Over to the next tree we glided as the owls flew.*

*I looked around with my giant black eyes,
My mother nudged me into a hollow which would act as a disguise.*

*I curled my tail around me and my body temperature dropped low,
I closed my eyes and got ready to sleep through the awaiting rain and snow.*

*My little ears swiveled as I got ready for bed,
My opposable toe was stretched forward and it bumped me in the head.*

*I opened my eyes again and stared at my foot,
I yawned with my mouth open wide showing my bottom teeth, they're slightly hooked.*

*I licked my mother's tail with my long pink tongue,
She was sitting at the front of the hollow which she overhung.*

*She turned and crawled towards me and licked me back,
We both groomed each other until my father leapt in, breaking a branch with a CRACK!*

*My mother walked over to him and nudged his cheek,
I called out to them with a small squeak.*

*We all curled up together and slept with no regret,
These are the days I won't forget.*



Bottlebrush

by Edward Weir

*The Red Bottlebrush swayed in the wind
As the cool night air thinned,
The little fuzz ball leaped then glided
She landed on the flower had a lick and tried it,*

*It tasted quite sweet but then turned sour
She looked up and saw there was a lot of this flower,
Her large black eyes swiveled with glee
She ate till full and then lay on the tree,*

*The sun rose and the stars ran away
She needed to go to bed she felt as sloppy as clay,
She fell she flew
She glided from a tree or two,*

*Finally she got there to the nest
She was ready for a really long rest,
She closed her sleepy eyes
And to her sleepy surprise,*

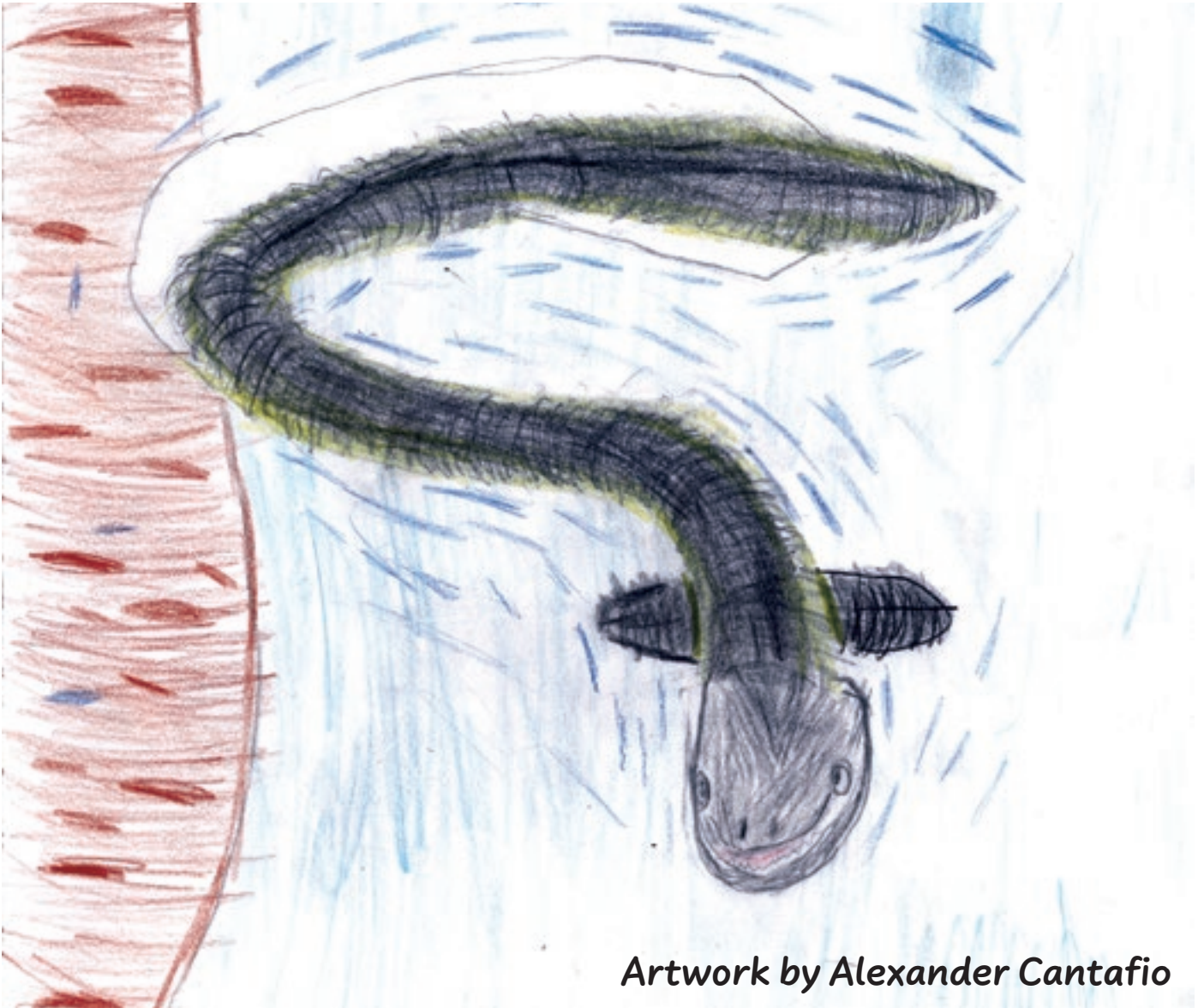
*With her belly full and a little bit crushed
She dreamt of the Bottlebrush.*



Chatswood Public School



Artwork by Isabella Zhang & Chloe Liu



Artwork by Alexander Cantafio

Longfin Eel (*Anguilla reinhardtii*)

Eels are great survivors! Breeding adult Longfin Eels adapt from fresh to salt water, as they swim thousands of kilometres to the Coral Sea where they spawn and then die. Baby eels somehow find their way back to their parents' inland waterways, and repeat the process. They can crawl up to 400m over rocks, up 100m high dam walls and swim to the depths of the ocean. Eels can tolerate bad water quality, surviving (most) pollution events, low levels of oxygen and dry conditions. Try looking for an eel in Swaines Creek, Ferndale Park, Chatswood.

ON THE EDGE OF THE CORAL SEA

by Angela Poole & Clarisse Tang

There was a group of eels travelling.
The smartest was Eeloise.



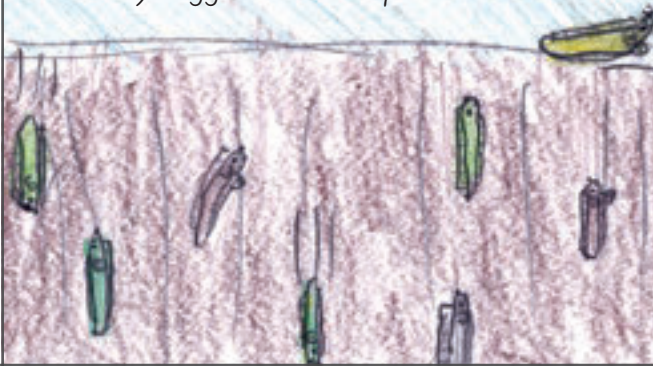
They were travelling to their
mother's old pond



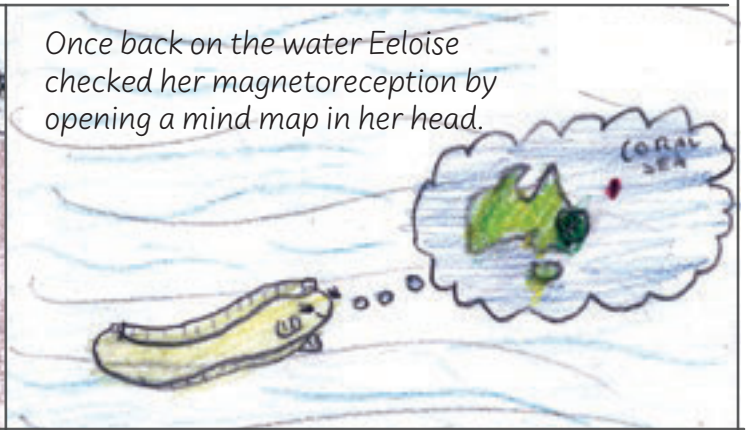
Soon they met a high dam.



But they wiggled to the top.



Once back on the water Eeloise
checked her magnetoreception by
opening a mind map in her head.



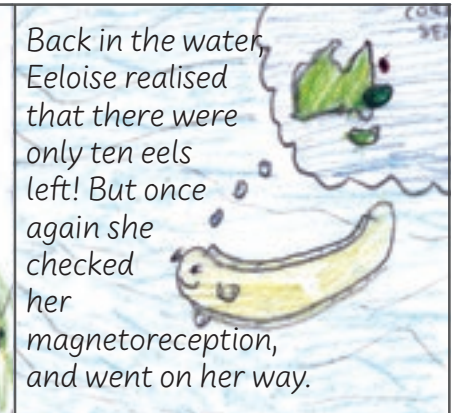
Then they met a long stretch of land.

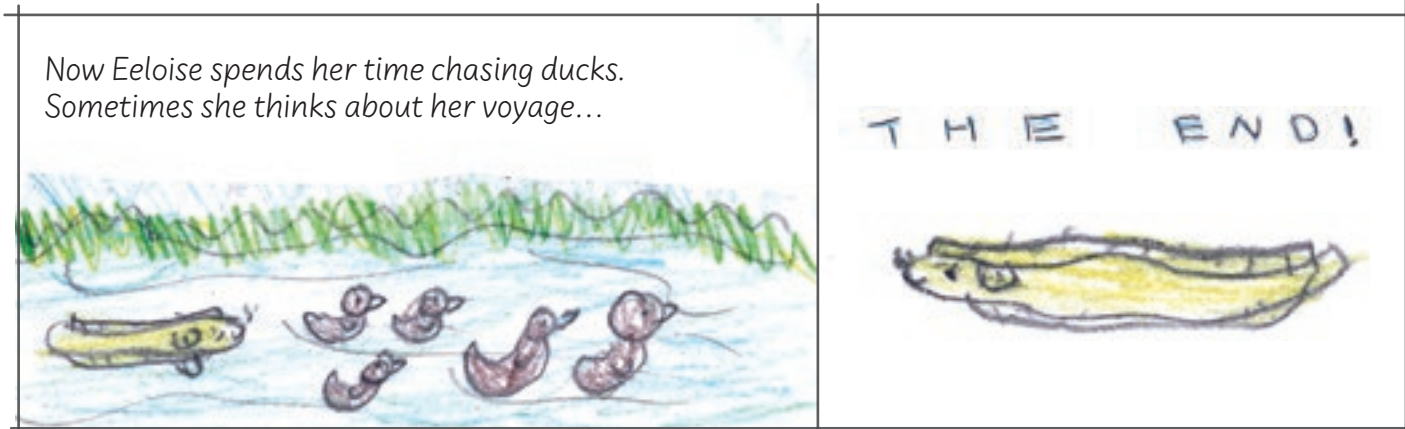
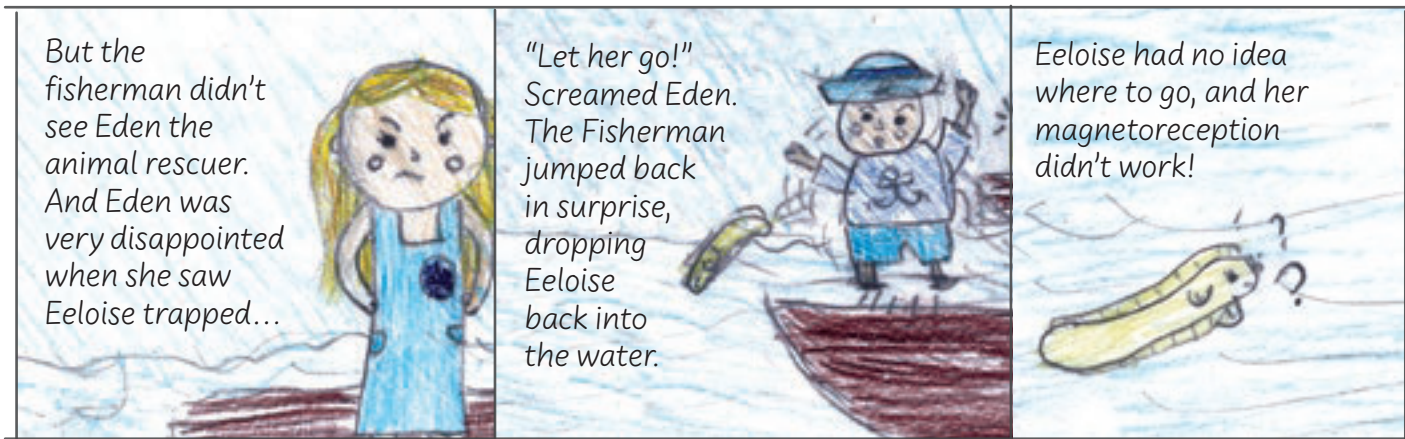
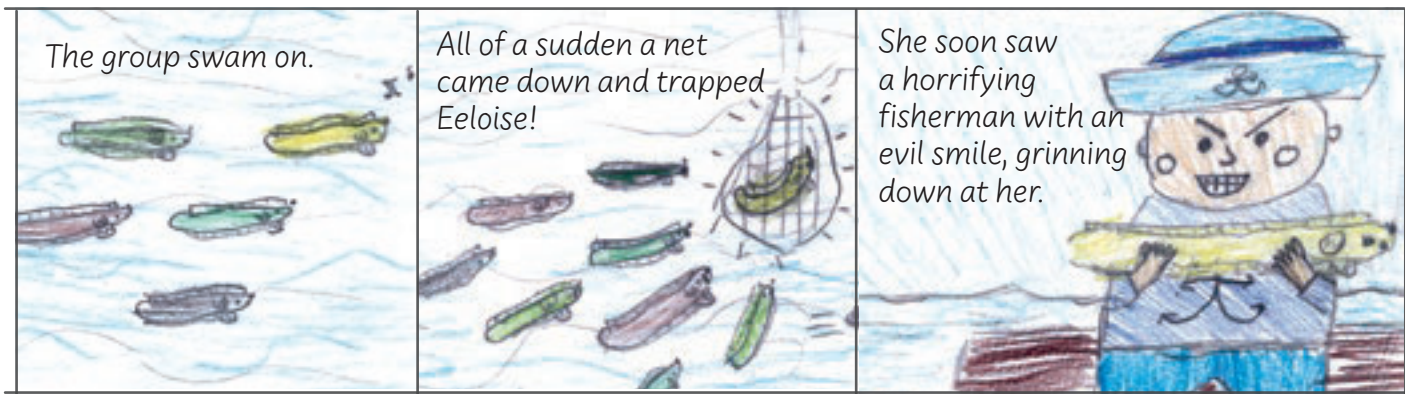


But they wiggled on.



Back in the water,
Eeloise realised
that there were
only ten eels
left! But once
again she
checked
her
magnetoreception,
and went on her way.





Journey to Home

by Rishit Vasudeva

"Franklin, wake up!" My dream of swimming across the world was disrupted by the grunts of my siblings who were eagerly waiting for me to wake up. I snuggled in my bed as I opened my sleepy eyes.

Yippee! I slithered in excitement as I remembered that today was the day when my dream would become real. I got ready, put on my swimming glasses, splashed on sunscreen and rushed to the breakfast table. We had molluscs, snails and insects. I gobbled up extra worms too. I needed energy for the journey.

Our family of 'Glass' Longfin Eels began swimming to our parents' home in the freshwaters of Cranbrook. "Franklin," my sister Elisa called. "Hurry up, don't be left behind." She rolled her eyes as I stopped to explore sea urchins.

My brother Marlin regularly stopped to check if we were on the right track according to the map. "I have yet to see the jellyfish, pygmy seahorses and all these other fish." I mumbled as I flipped through the Encyclopedia of Sea Life.

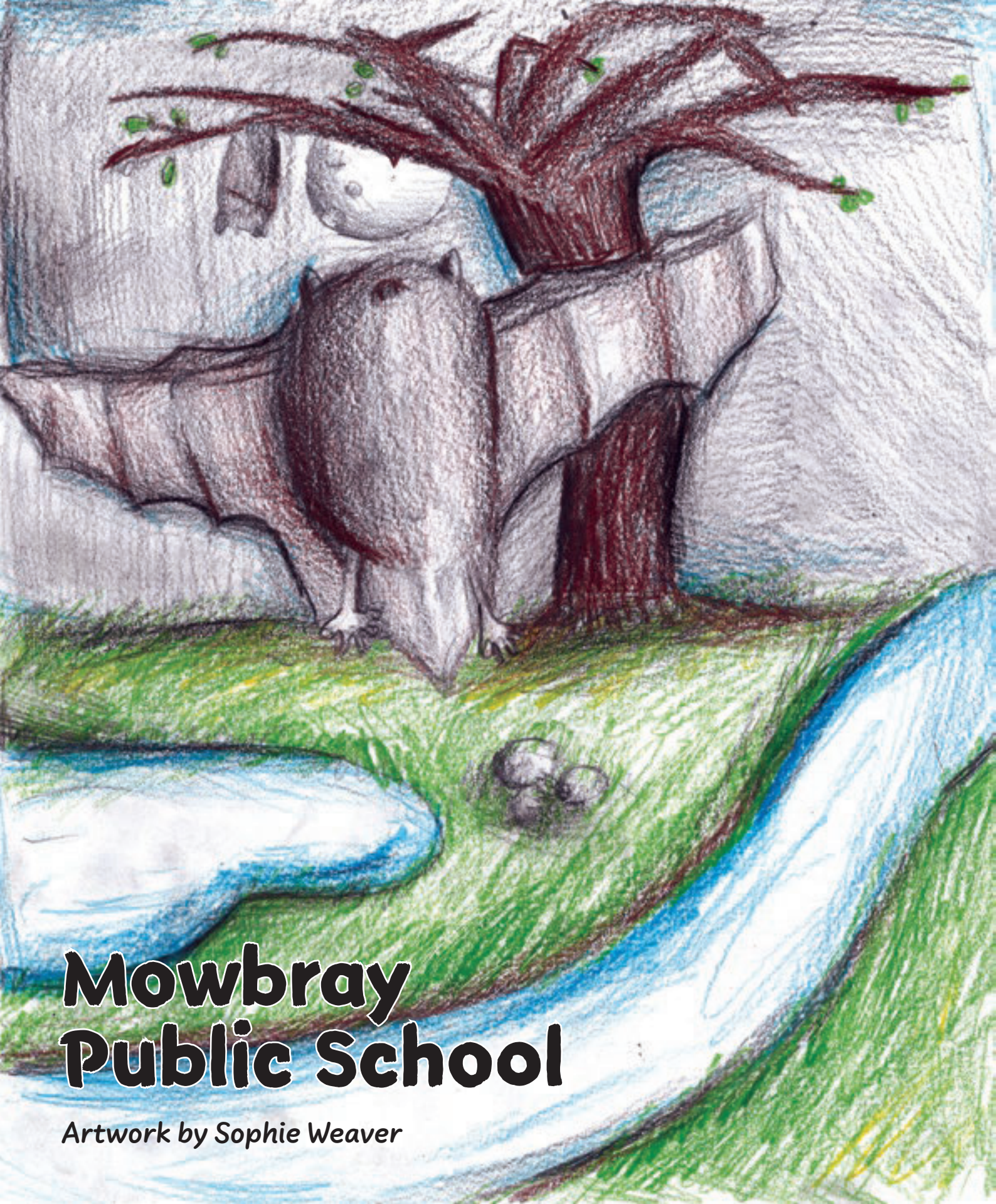
As we swam for two years to our home, funnily our eyes had shrunk due to adaptation features.

The water was becoming less salty as we neared home.

Our extra-sensitive noses guided us all the time.

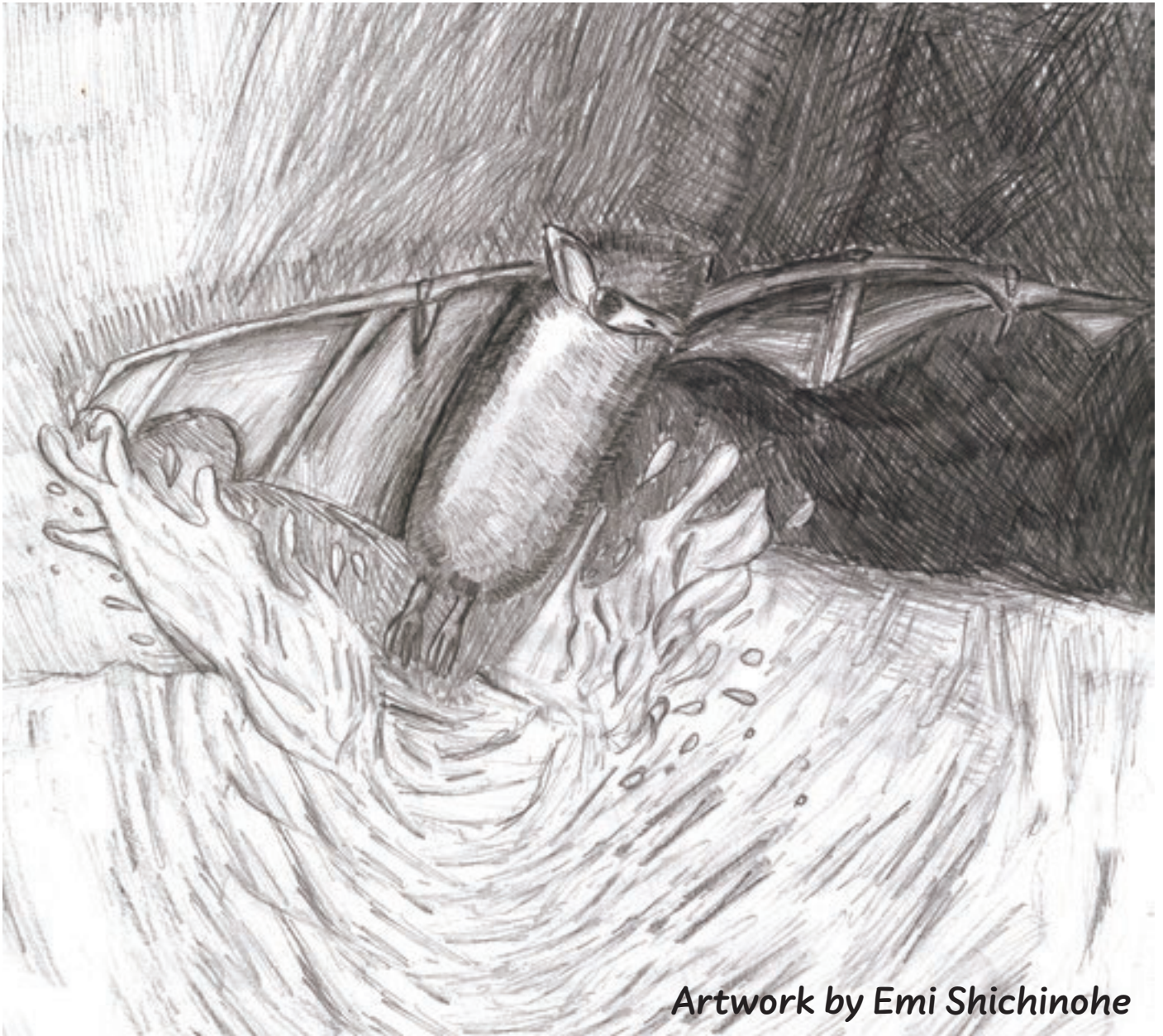
Finally, we reached home in the fresh waters of Lane Cove River. It felt great. We also climbed a fifty metre wall, but that's a story for another day.





Mowbray Public School

Artwork by Sophie Weaver



Artwork by Emi Shichinohe

Large-footed Myotis (*Myotis macropus*)

The Large-footed Myotis is a microbat that drags its large feet through water to catch tiny fish and insects. They live in tree hollows, caves and man-made structures near creeks, rivers and other waterways in the Willoughby area. They make ultrasonic sounds and have acute hearing to observe their nocturnal surroundings using echolocation. Their call frequencies are perfectly suited to locating movement on the water's surface. Through sound they can determine direction, proximity, motion and size of an object.

Anna the Large-footed Myotis

by Kaia Sample

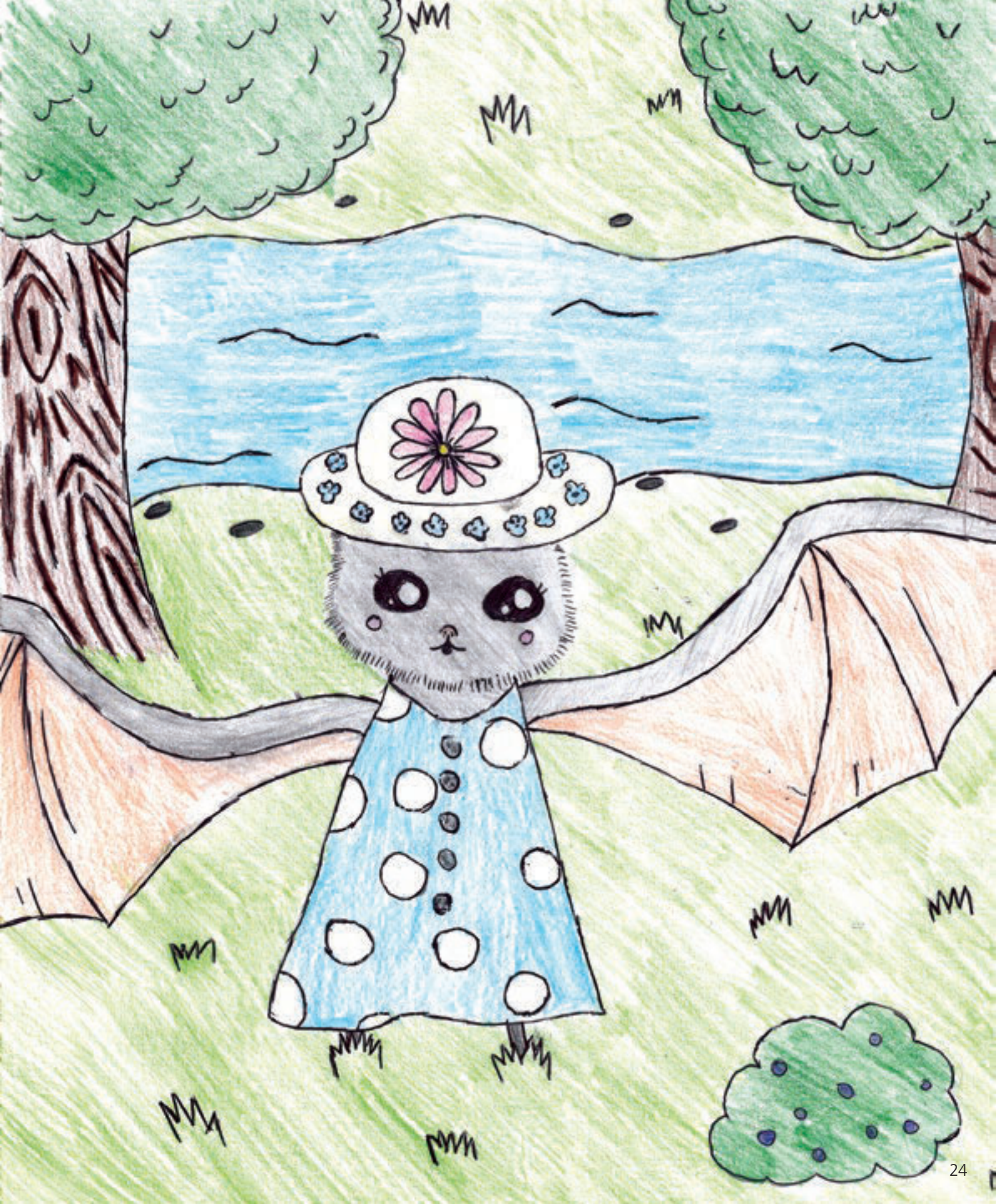
Hi, I'm Anna the Large-footed Myotis. My family and I had to move to a new area in Sydney Cove because of habitat loss (when humans cut down trees). Our home was destroyed along with many other homes for creatures like us.

Its night time and we're going on a family picnic. But this environment is different and we need to adapt while we go on the picnic. Mum and Dad decide that we should have the feast at the Lane Cove River. We pass a school called Mowbray which is near the river. We don't like the bright lights of Mowbray, because we don't want to be spotted.

When we get there, it is dark, which is what we love because we are Large-footed Myotis. We are nocturnal animals. Now we need to catch our food! Like other microbats (bats as small as mice), we use echolocation to catch our meals. Echolocation is where we make a high pitched sound and it echoes off the insect so we know where the food is.

We all fly into the air and make a noise. I don't know which small insect to eat! Maybe I could go fishing in the river. I love small fish! We all eat and have fun and then we go back home.

We decide to sleep in a warm, cosy cave since its really cold outside in the trees. We sleep very well in our new home. Good night family!



The Problem

by Victoria Campbell

*As clouds begin to gather,
And rain begins to fall,
We huddle together,
And watch as owls call.*

*When we close our eyes,
Blinking out the light of day,
We realise and remember,
All that's gone away.*

*When night comes alas,
We blink our tiny eyes,
We wake up and fly away,
Despite our tiny size.*

*It matters not how big we are,
Or how weak some may be,
What seems to matter most,
Are animals like you and me.*

*But as people start polluting,
And poisoning our world,
We can run and hide,
But eventually the truths unfurled.*

*As the skies begin to darken,
And the world begins to die,
We must be prepared,
To finally say goodbye.*

*Unless our kind can change,
And adapt in record time,
We must be prepared to hear,
The final goodnight chime.*

*We have abilities,
That may not be enough,
Though we can fly and soar,
The world is just too tough.*

*We must use our powers,
Our flight and jets of air,
We must use them to our advantage,
Or there may be nothing left to spare.*

*I hope to see the world again,
As it used to be,
The forests and valleys and mountains,
And the one big vast blue sea.*



Northbridge Public School



Artwork by Olivia Dillon & Chloe Sherar



Artwork by Livia Trpeski & Sienna Phillips

Australian Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus*)

Seals often come into Middle Harbour to rest on rocks and jetties. Australian Fur Seals are well adapted to wet, cold and rough environments, with a thick layer of blubber (fat) covered by skin and two layers of fur, keeping their skin dry and insulating them. Seals can sleep with half of their brain at a time, keeping the other half awake so they can monitor for threats. They use their long sensitive whiskers, powerful flippers, flexible spine and large teeth to catch prey and escape from predators.

The Hunt

by Edward Dunnett

It was on, Daisy was about to catch her first meal. Her first squid to prove she could do it. To be considered part of the group.

She swished and shimmied her way through the tight gap close behind the squid. She was getting tired but she kept on going. Daisy was falling behind the squid now. She throws her front flippers to propel herself forward to go faster, then uses her back flippers, to assist her steering and turning abilities.

SMACK Daisy felt dizzy, she had not paid attention and hit the hard cold rock. This knocked her around, but she found the courage to go on. But still, she had lost it. But she had to get it one way or another.

She put her long whiskers down to the ground. Daisy felt movement, not much, but at the same time it still was movement. Daisy crept closer and closer to the sound.

TUG! Daisy tugged the fish from its hole. Suddenly she felt a rush of happiness, she had accomplished it. She gracefully glided her way to the surface. Her face met her father's, he was smiling. It was great!



The Ocean Adventure

by Abigayle Howland & Riika Yamashita

Summer and her big brother Lewis were bored of their home. "I want to explore the world!" cried Summer. Lewis agreed. "Let's go see the beautiful reefs!" he declared.

Later that day, they swam away from their home. They swam up and down, looking at the coral reefs. "How pretty!" Summer said, touching the coral with her fin. They stayed for hours. It was getting dark. "Let's go back, Summer." Lewis whispered. "We'll get lost!" Summer ignored him. She swam further and further away. 'I won't get lost' she said to herself.

Lewis was getting worried. Summer hadn't come back yet, and it was late. Lewis couldn't leave his little sister, so he swam after her. He wasn't afraid of anything. At least, he thought so.

Meanwhile, Summer was being chased by a baby shark, named Tomer.

Tomer growled at Summer. "I will eat you, little seal!"

Summer had always come first in swimming races, but Tomer was much faster than her. He caught her, and Summer tried to break free.

Suddenly, Lewis came in swimming like a shark. "Aah!" Tomer cried. "Another shark!" And with that, Tomer swam away. "Thank you, brother!" Summer said. "No problem, little sis. But next time, don't go too far!" Lewis said.

At home, their mum and their dad were standing in front of the door, looking worried. "Where were you?" they asked. "We were so worried!" Summer and Lewis smiled. "On a wonderful adventure" they said. "We definitely didn't get chased by a Great White shark!"



Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary School



Artwork by Hannah Williams



Artwork by Elise Fung

Laughing Kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae*)

Found throughout the Willoughby area, the iconic Laughing Kookaburra lays eggs and cares for their chicks inside tree hollows and termite nests. Their 'laugh' is a sonic adaptation to let other Kookaburra families know where they live and demonstrate the strength and numbers of their family. The juvenile Kookaburras stay close to their family groups to help hunt and care for the next generation of chicks. The Kookaburra's large, heavy beak enables them to break into thick termite mounds, catch dangerous prey like snakes and defend their territory. And their excellent eyesight allows them to spot small prey on the ground. It is important to never feed Kookaburras, as it can make them ill and aggressive.

Olivia's Glorious Adventure

by Sophia Stipo

One beautiful, bright, sunny morning, Olivia crept outside into the street. One foot in front of the other, she raced down the hill to Harold Reid Reserve to go for an adventurous walk. Strolling through the beautiful old orange tinted gum trees and admiring the wildlife around her, Olivia pressed on. She loved how the variety of grass trees looked like water spouts and how pretty the Wonga-wonga vine was.

After thirty minutes of ambling through the bush, she realised she didn't remember how to get back! Olivia started to feel a little scared and upset. Tears started to roll down her cheek and her heart began to pound like a drum. All of a sudden she heard a tiny voice. "Are you OK?"

Olivia looked up and saw a strong looking white bird with a large head, sharp beak and beautiful brown and blue feathers on its wings and back. She rubbed her eyes to make sure she wasn't dreaming. Was this happening?!

"I don't know how to get back out," Olivia sobbed.

"Well, lucky I found you then. I'm Katie the Kookaburra" the bird said. "Let's get you on your feet and I'll show you the way."

Katie the Kookaburra hopped onto Olivia's shoulder. "I love this place," exclaimed Katie. "It has the most amazing trees, grasses, shrubs and flowers. Look over there!" Katie continued. "Did you know that tree is a Scribbly Gum? It's been here longer than all my family." "Wow" exclaimed Olivia as she looked on in awe.

Before she knew it, Olivia had made it back to where she had started her walk. As Katie flew away, Olivia could hear the distant sounds of her trills, chortles, belly laughs and hoots, echoing throughout the Australian bush.



The Silent Kookaburra

Poem by Farid Chammaa & artwork by Tessa Ang

Two Kookaburras came together
Each of them louder than the other
Trying to scare a Magpie away
This is our territory and you cannot stay

The Kookaburra lost his voice
And after that he had no choice
He couldn't beg for food
This put him in a gloomy mood

He learnt to forage for himself
There and then in a mysterious fog
He saw under a shelf
A tiny little dog

Out jumped the dog to say
"Thank you for saving me
Oh my, is that your tree?"
"Yes," said the Kookaburra

"And you are welcome to stay
If you scare those magpies away!"
"Yes I will, friend
and I can tell our friendship will never end"

The dog scared the magpies away
And there in that tree he could stay
The dog and the Kookaburra looked out for each other
And never would let down one another.



St. Philip Neri Catholic Primary School



Artwork by James Nicholas



Artwork by William Rusak

Australian Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*)

The Australian Pelican is our heaviest flying bird species, requiring a huge wingspan of up to 2.6m. They have the largest bill in the bird world, with a huge pouch that is like a net for scooping up prey, and a hook at the end for gripping slippery food items. The bill is sensitive and helps locate and snatch fish in murky water. Travelling long distances in search of food, Pelicans are excellent soarers. They can use thermals to travel hundreds of kilometres with minimum effort. Look for Australian Pelicans around Middle Harbour, especially Tunks Park, Northbridge. If you ever go fishing, make sure you collect any loose fishing line and hooks because Pelicans can swallow hooks or get tangled in line.

A Pelican's Adventure

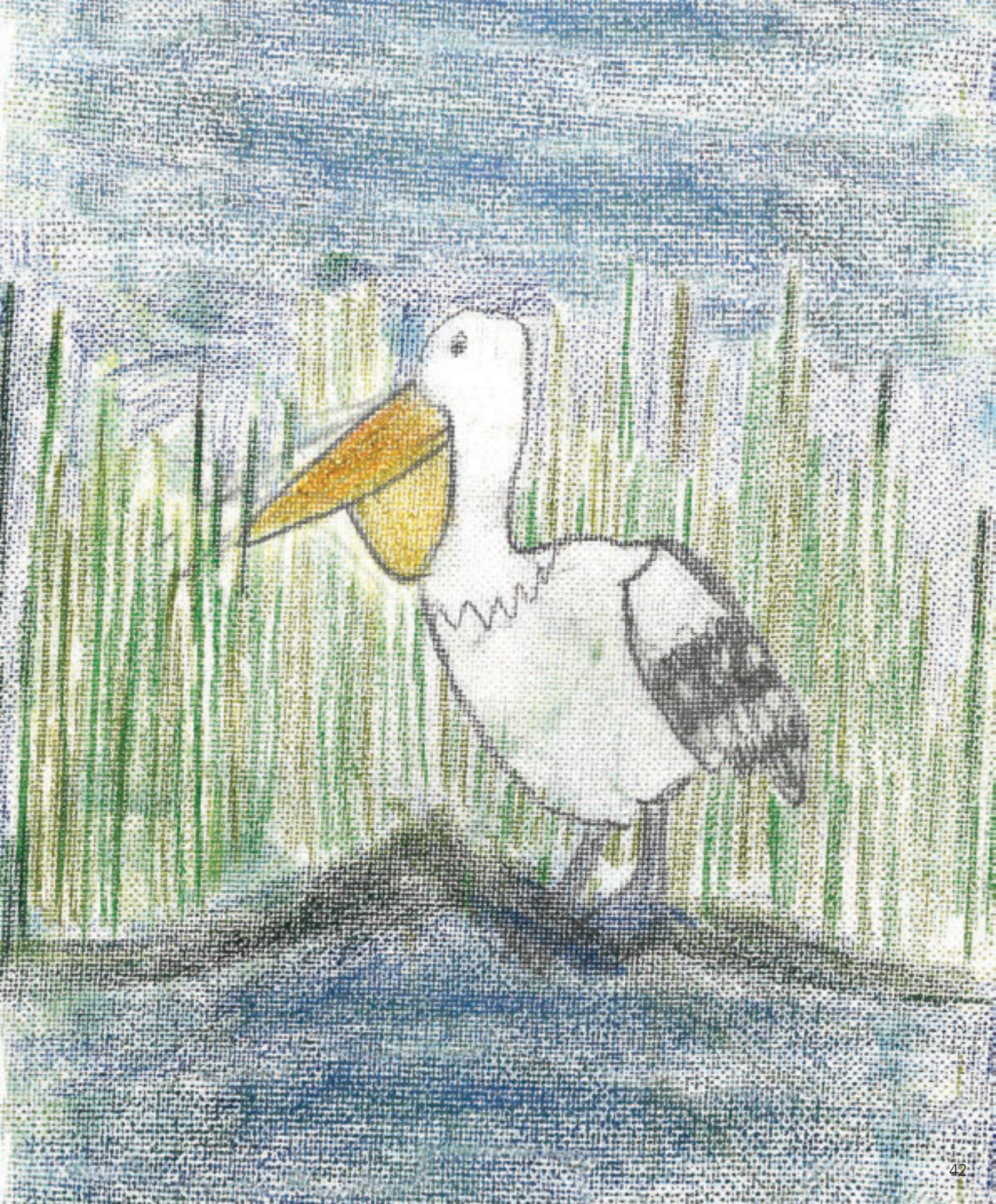
by Sam Scoble

Splash! My webbed toes hit the water as I landed from a twenty hour soar over majestic Sydney Harbour. My three metre wingspan, the largest of all the flying birds in Australia, got soaked from my heavy landing. I swam to the large group of Pelicans I live amongst, which is called a colony.

Today, I felt the urge to explore. I swam and I swam till I could swim no more and I discovered that... I was lost! I spotted a small silver fish called a Bream sparkling in the deep water. It was a chance I could not miss because it would be dark soon, so it would be nearly impossible to find fish when I could not see! I was hungry from my flight. I plunged my massive forty centimetre bill, the longest bill of all birds in the world, into the water. I gulped thirteen litres of water and the small Bream that I was eyeing.

I found a rock formation in a calm spot to roost under the stars. I would have rather liked to be at my roosting spot on top of a wooden post, but this would have to do. Rotating my long neck, I nestled my head into my soft white feathers.

At dawn, I uncurled my long neck, stretched my wings and searched for my colony of Pelicans. While I was drifting down the harbour I saw something familiar: it was my post, my colony must be near. Nesting in the reeds were my fellow Aussie Pelicans. I was just so happy, I was finally home.



Charlie's Big Save

Story by Scarlett Phipson & artwork by Annabel Azizi

Charlie flapped his wings as he prepared for a crash landing in the salty water. His feet skimming it, his body covered in salty spray. The water here was deeper, it was more dangerous. In a sudden movement he changed his mind when he saw the shark silently waiting in the water.

It was unusual to sight a shark, but not completely rare. Charlie flew desperately back to his warm nest and told the other Pelicans what had happened. They didn't believe him. Of course they didn't. They thought he was a show off, a liar. He wanted to show them. Make them believe. So he dived back down near the salty spray and sat on the old pillar waiting and watching.

He could sense something was wrong. There was a hint of danger in the air and he could see his little sister Misty, hurt on the sand. He knew why. He opened the sharp side of his large bill and bit the shark's fin, hurting its back so much that it surrendered. Misty cheered and flew to the nest to tell the others.

They had an amazing party that night. The Pelicans celebrated their mighty bills and Charlie's big save. They feasted on chips and a rare half burger. They even decided to build a small shelter on top of the big branch to have this season's eggs. Feeling happy and proud, Charlie dived and quickly caught some more sparkling silver fish with his bill. All was well.



St. Pius X College



Artwork by Michael Chung



Artwork by Lucas Tubman

Broad-tailed Gecko (*Phyllurus platurus*)

Broad-tailed Geckos can be found in sandstone, trees and human structures such as fences, walls and homes. Their reduced activity during cold weather is an energy conserving adaptation. They are ambush hunters, relying on camouflage and patience to catch prey. Their eyes are so large relative to their heads (to see at night) that they don't have eyelids. Instead they lick their eyes to clean and moisten. If they fear for their lives, they can 'drop' their tail as a decoy - adrenaline will animate the tail and distract the predator while the Gecko escapes. They regrow their tails if they drop them but they need the energy and nutrients stored in their large tails to sustain themselves during winter and cold weather.

Broad-tailed Gecko Man: Origin

by Nickolas Cheung

CHAPTER 1: ORIGIN

THERE
WAS ONCE
A HERO ...

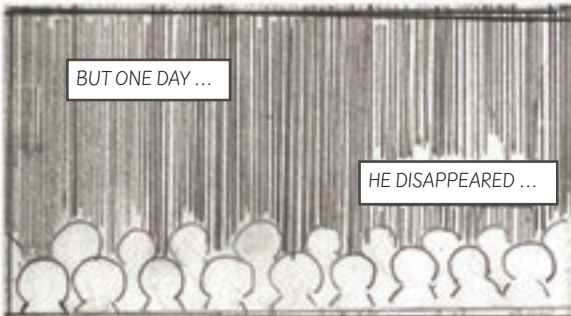


HIS NAME WAS MR.
ZERO, KNOWN FOR
HIS UNBELIEVABLE
STRENGTH ...

AND COUNTLESS
VICTORIES ...



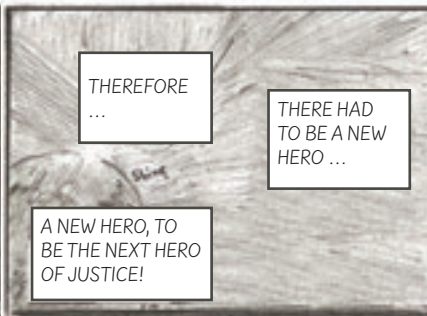
BUT ONE DAY ...



HE DISAPPEARED ...

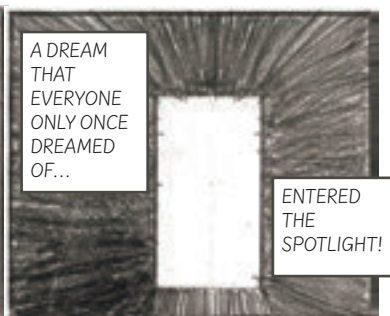
THEREFORE
...

A NEW HERO, TO
BE THE NEXT HERO
OF JUSTICE!



THERE HAD
TO BE A NEW
HERO ...

A DREAM
THAT
EVERYONE
ONLY ONCE
DREAMED
OF...



ENTERED
THE
SPOTLIGHT!

CHAPTER 2: THE EXPERIMENT

BUT THAT ...



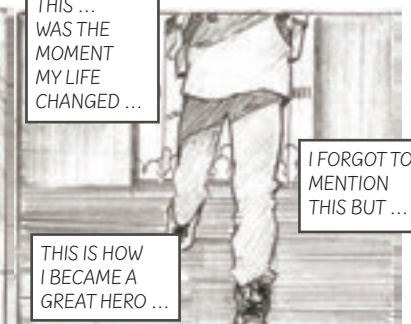
WOW

WAS A LONG
TIME AGO ...

A NEW
EXHIBIT!

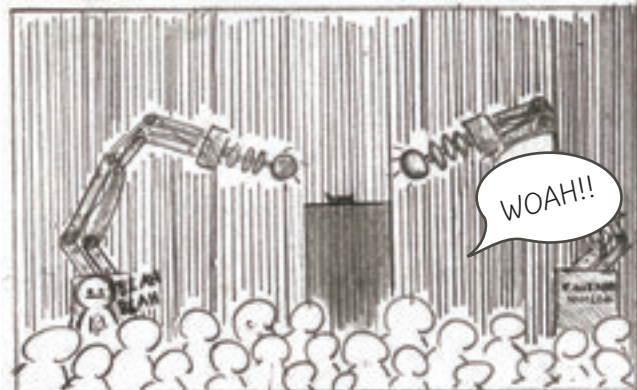


THIS ...
WAS THE
MOMENT
MY LIFE
CHANGED ...

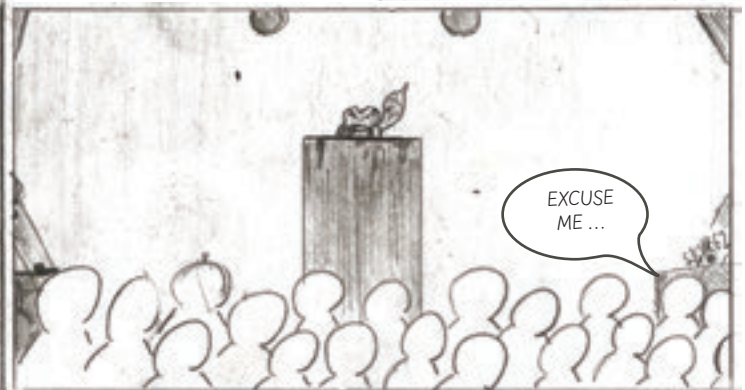


I FORGOT TO
MENTION
THIS BUT ...

THIS IS HOW
I BECAME A
GREAT HERO ...



WOAH!!



EXCUSE
ME ...

SWITCH!

FASCINATING!

BUT BE CAREFUL, AS NUCLEAR RADIATIONS ARE DANGEROUS ...

WE WILL START OFF WITH THE COMMON BROAD-TAILED GECKO ...

BA-DUN!

OOPS, GUESS I SHOULD'VE PUT GLASS AROUND IT ...

BA-

YEOW!

THE CHILD HAD JUST SAVED TIMMY'S LIFE, WHILE FRACTURING HIS HAND ...

YOU'RE MAKING IT WORSE

FEAR NOT KID!

WHERE'S THE NEAREST EXIT?

MY HAND!! WHY!?

BA-DUN!

WALKING HOME WITH THE FRACTURED HAND, HE DECIDED TO MAKE A COSTUME ...

WELL THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY WHEN YOU GET BITTEN BY A NUCLEAR ANIMAL ...

AFTER WEEKS OF HARD WORK, TIMMY HAD FINISHED THE COSTUME

FILE DELETED.

IT TOOK HARDSHIP, COURAGE AND DETERMINATION, BUT IN THE END, HE FINISHED IT ...

AND BROAD-TAILED GECKO MAN STEPPED INTO THE WORLD!

FINALLY ... I'M DONE ...

George and the Gecko's Egg

by Alexander Parissis

It was a nice summer's night the stars were shining brig.."AAH!" screamed a boy.

"What is it? It's 3 am in the MORNING" said a woman angrily. She walks in and turns on the light. The boy picks up something on his face. "It's a Gecko, this has to be about 15 centimetres and its tail is as flat as a leaf" the boy said nervously.

"George YOU... you woke up all of CHATSWOOD" the woman said in an irritated voice.

"But mum, it was on my face" said George.

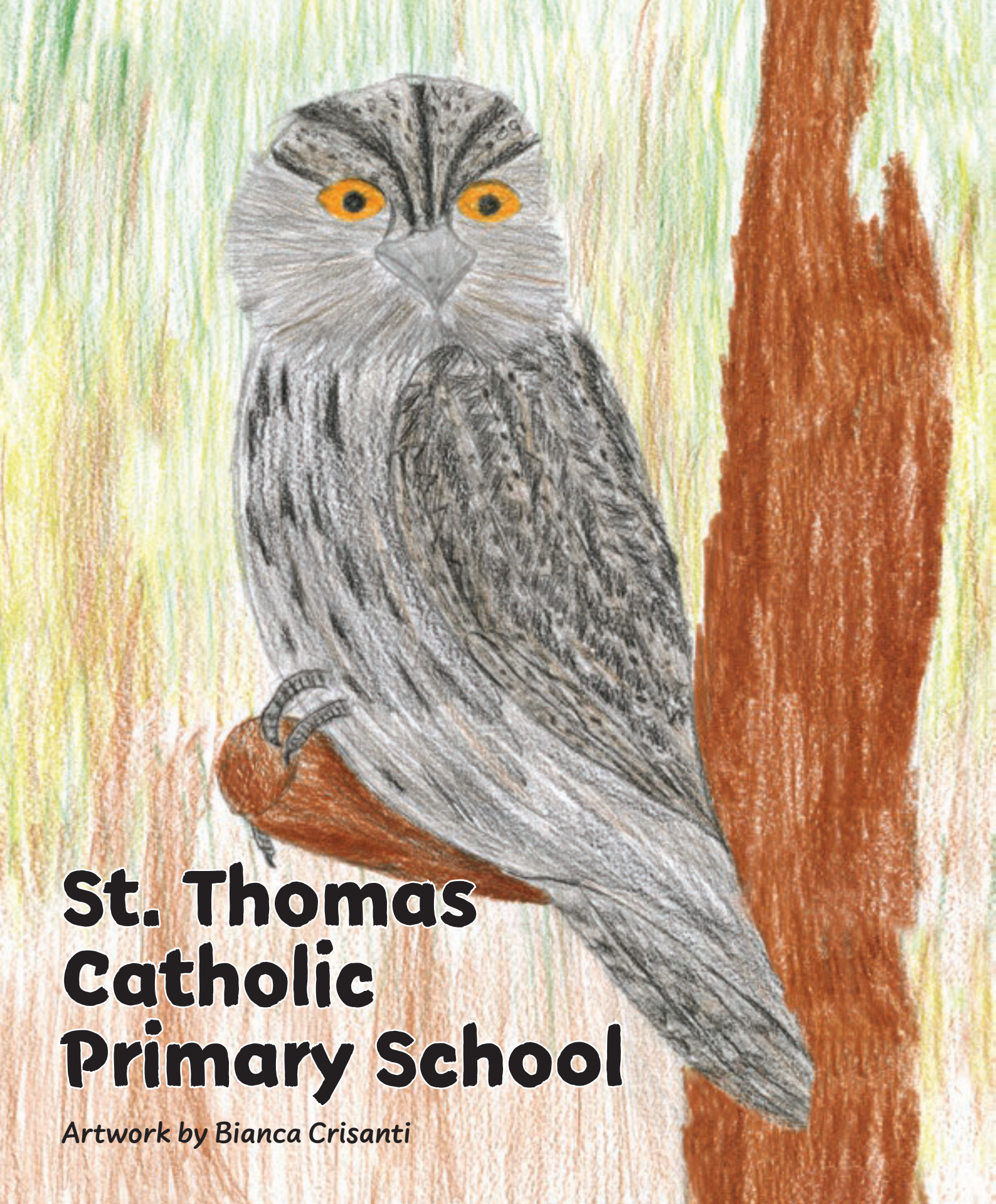
As she was slamming the door, I saw a little white 'rock' that was the size of a coin. That's not a rock, that's an egg, I thought to myself. Did the Gecko want it?

The next morning I went to return the egg to the Gecko, but as I was leaving I heard a little high pitched scream. I then remembered that a scream like that only comes from a Broad-tailed Gecko. We learned all about it in school.

So I ran with the egg over to the noise, but when I was running I dropped the egg. I tried to catch it in time, but I didn't make it. "What have I done" George said in a sad voice almost crying. 'Pop' a little noise of sticky feet walking around came from over his shoulder. I looked and saw... a "baby Broad-tailed GECKO!" George said with excitement. The egg must have hatched while I was running.









"Hi little guy" George said to the Gecko. It then let out a high pitch scream so I took him back to his mother. She was so happy to see him and I was so happy that I rushed to tell my Mum. She was amazed.





St. Thomas Catholic Primary School

Artwork by Bianca Crisanti

<p>Mega Tawny by Rose Tannock</p>	 <p>It was a fine day in the wonderful woodlands of Willoughby. Breeze swayed the long, curvy trees and waters sparkled and glistened. The sun beamed down on Bicentennial Park. Terry was enjoying the nice day resting in his small tree.</p>	 <p>Terry's best friend, Tristan, was out hunting for a meal. He just adored the sweet taste of grasshopper guts, frog legs, rat tails and oh so juicy mice brains! He chewed loudly, the disgusting mess in his mouth sloshing around as if Tristan was drinking green water.</p>
 <p>Just as Tristan was about to wash it down with some creek water ...</p>	 <p>BAM!! Reggie the neighbourhood cat scurried out of nowhere!!</p>	 <p>But Terry had super hearing and he used his ULTRA power to sense disturbance in the area around him!! He spun and bounced. Soon, he was...</p>
 <p>MEGA TAWNY!</p>	 <p>Mega Tawny swooped in, knocking Reggie to the ground before he could even take a bite out of Tristan!!</p>	 <p>They fought and fought. Then, Mega Tawny realised he could use his SPEED-PECK BEAK to fight off Reggie! Reggie was pecked and poked. He ran off back to his house, Mega Tawny had won!</p>

Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*)

The Tawny Frogmouth is not an owl. It is a type of nocturnal bird. Masters of camouflage, their feather patterns help them to look just like dead bark and branches. They have adapted to survive extreme temperatures. Wide mouth panting when hot, short hibernation and basking in the sun when cold. Large eyes and sensitive hearing allow them to accurately detect prey and hunt at night. Their soft owl-like feathers allow for silent, stealthy flight. In Willoughby these birds often come back to the same place each year to nest. Avoid using poison baits, Tawny Frogmouths have been known to die after eating a rat or mouse that has swallowed rat bait.

Terrific Tawnys

by Claudia Sidoti

Some people think I'm an owl
So I call those people foul
Isn't that bizarre
I am a type of nocturnal bird.

I'm a beautiful Tawny Frogmouth
I'm in most places, even our state's South
I come out to hunt at night
If you see me you might get a fright.

I can camouflage in trees
In the snow I never freeze
I can lower my body temp and hibernate
It's almost like I meditate.

We breed for life
Me and my wife
I have big yellow eyes
We fly through the skies.

We fly over the raging fire
We never stop to admire
We fly to a new home
There we will roam.

My nest skills are poor
Even though I've built four
They are not very sturdy
Not even fit for a birdy.

My beak is very wide
I say it with great pride
My lifespan is up to fourteen
My hearing is supreme.

We pant when it's hot
But dogs we are not
We lay 2-3 chicks
But somehow never six.



Mary, the Tawny Frogmouth

by Martha Sullivan

I'm a Tawny Frogmouth
And my name is Mary
I eat slugs, worms and snails
But definitely not dairy

I might look like an owl
But I'm a nocturnal bird, closer to a nightjar
I might make weird noises
But I'm a real superstar

I'm very good at camouflage
And staying still in trees
I act like dead bark
It's like I nearly freeze

I've always hated being hot
But I have found a little trick
I open up and I pant a lot
It never makes me sick

I live in beautiful Australia
It's the best place to be
I sometimes go to backyards
Oh I love being so free!

Not everything is great though
Like I'm slow when catching prey
So my predators can catch me
I don't want to think of that day

So instead I think of my food
And where they are right now
Will my great hearing let me down
Or will I find them somehow

So sorry I need to go now
And make a nest for my babies
I really want three baby boys
There are already enough ladies

Oh how I want my little babies
To have big yellow eyes like me
That would be so magnificent
Hey, don't you agree?

Now I really have to go
And fly back to my tree
It has been a great time
Talking all about me!



Willoughby Public School



Artwork by Jared Wong



Artwork by Sophie Staniforth & Evie Purtell

Neon Cuckoo Bee (*Thyreus nitidulu*)

Neon Cuckoo Bees can be found in Willoughby's bushland and gardens, close to Blue Banded Bees, where there is lots of pollen and nectar. They use tiny branched hairs on their body to feel and hold pollen. Neon Cuckoo Bees' hair is coloured shiny black and dazzling blue so they can pretend to be Blue Banded Bees. This tricks the Blue Banded Bees into thinking they are one of them and not a threat. Cuckoo Bees are parasitic brooders. When the Blue Banded Bee is not watching, the Cuckoo Bee sneaks in and lays eggs in the Blue Banded Bee's nest. Its larvae eat the nectar, pollen and resin supplied by the Blue Banded Bee.

The Adventures of Nelly the Neon Cuckoo Bee

by Coco Gilleland

*It was a beautiful sunny day
and Nelly the Neon Cuckoo Bee
was sitting in her tree!*

*Willoughby Park
- what an amazing home...
So many places for Nelly to roam!*

*She's pretty and shiny,
an amazing metallic blue bee.
Who would think that Nelly could be such a pest
and lay all her eggs in the Blue Banded Bee's nest!!*

*Poor old Blue Banded Bee.
She did such a good job.
She made such a nice home
full of pollen for my babies to rob.*

*I don't try to be mean,
but I just can't help being sneaky.
Please forgive me,
after all I'm just a little bit freaky!!!*



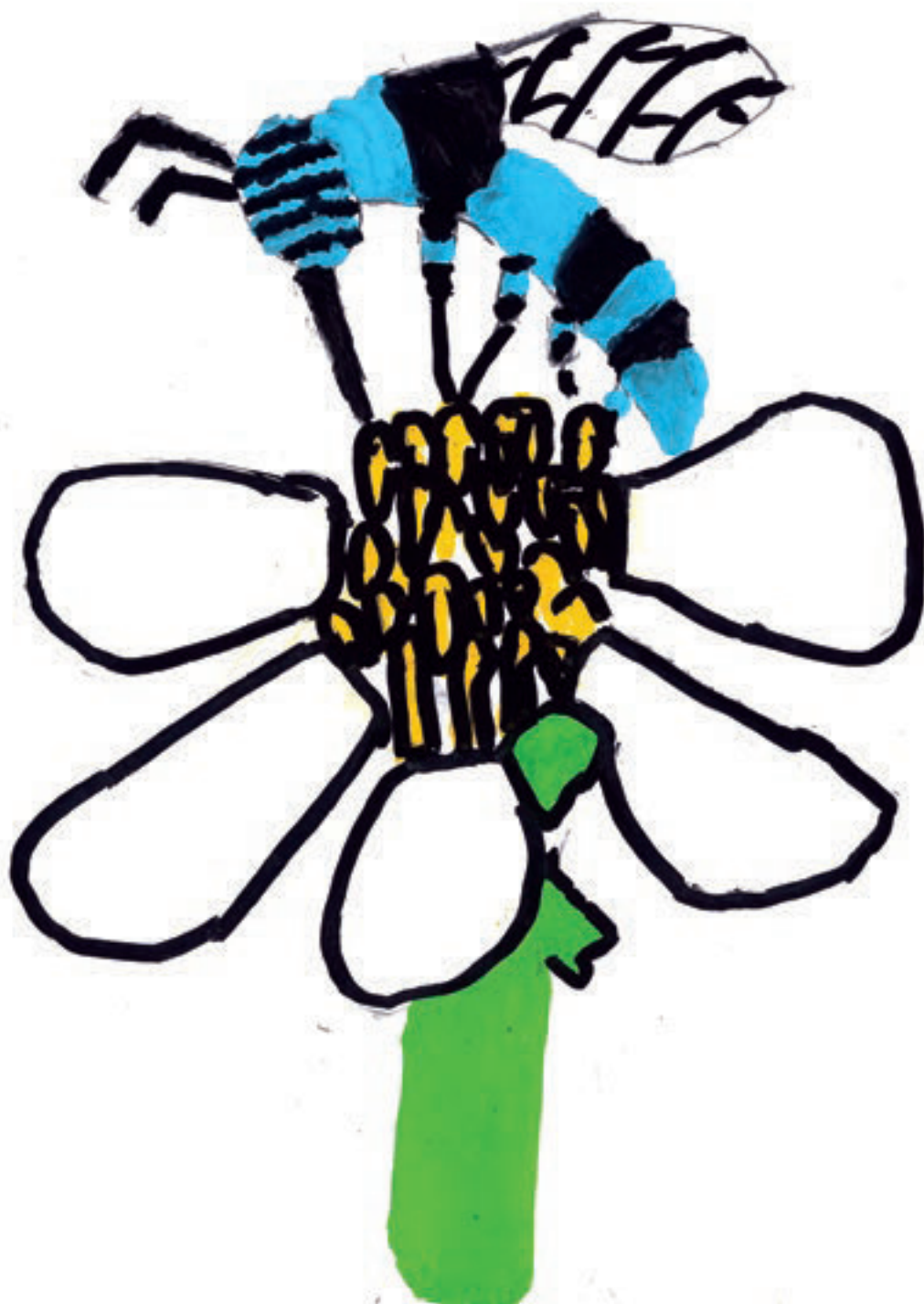
The Neon Cuckoo Bee

by Edward McDonald, Harvey Kam & Charlie Pobje

The Neon Cuckoo Bee is a wonderful creature that is always moving around. This bee is a special bee that lives in urban areas. This cheeky bee flies at 17 km an hour and is as long as your fingertip.

One day this innocent little Neon Cuckoo Bee was flying around. One moment she was flying and the next she was in the nest of a Blue Banded Bee. The little bee creeps around the cell of the nest and in the blink of an eye the Neon Cuckoo Bee starts to lay eggs.

Oh shoot, the Blue Banded Bee has trapped a small little bee in the cell! Luckily the bee had an idea and was able to dig her way out of the cell. The little bee started to dig, dig and dig until she emerged and flew away as fast as she could.



This book was created by Willoughby's









kids and is dedicated to our local wildlife.



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





A Willoughby City Council Wildlife Storybook