



Pete the Platypus and the **Trash Busters**



Holy Spirit Primary School, Kurri Kurri

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is a literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

Hunter Local Land Services

Hunter Local Land Services works with land managers and the community to improve primary production within healthy landscapes. We help people make better decisions about the land they manage and assist communities and agricultural industries to be productive and sustainable into the future.

The Hunter Local Land Services region covers an area of approximately 33,000 square kilometres, extending from Mid Coast Council in the north to Lake Macquarie City Council in the south and Upper Hunter Shire Council in the west.

The landscape ranges from estuarine wetlands and mangroves, rainforests and freshwater wetlands to open grasslands, woodlands, eucalypt forests, lakes and foreshores.

The region supports a wide range of industries, including agriculture, forestry, fishing, oyster farming, forestry, tourism, power-generation, and nature-based recreation.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/hunter

Pete the Platypus and the Trash Busters

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This book has been published as part of the Every Bit Counts Enviro-Stories program and involves schools learning about the importance of sustainably managing our farmland and natural resources and protecting them from biosecurity threats.

The Every Bit Counts Enviro-Stories program forms part of a collaborative project between all four coastal Local Land Services regions, including Hunter, Greater Sydney, South East and North Coast. This project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust.

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Enviro-Stories is a PeekKdesigns initiative, www.peekkdesigns.com.au.

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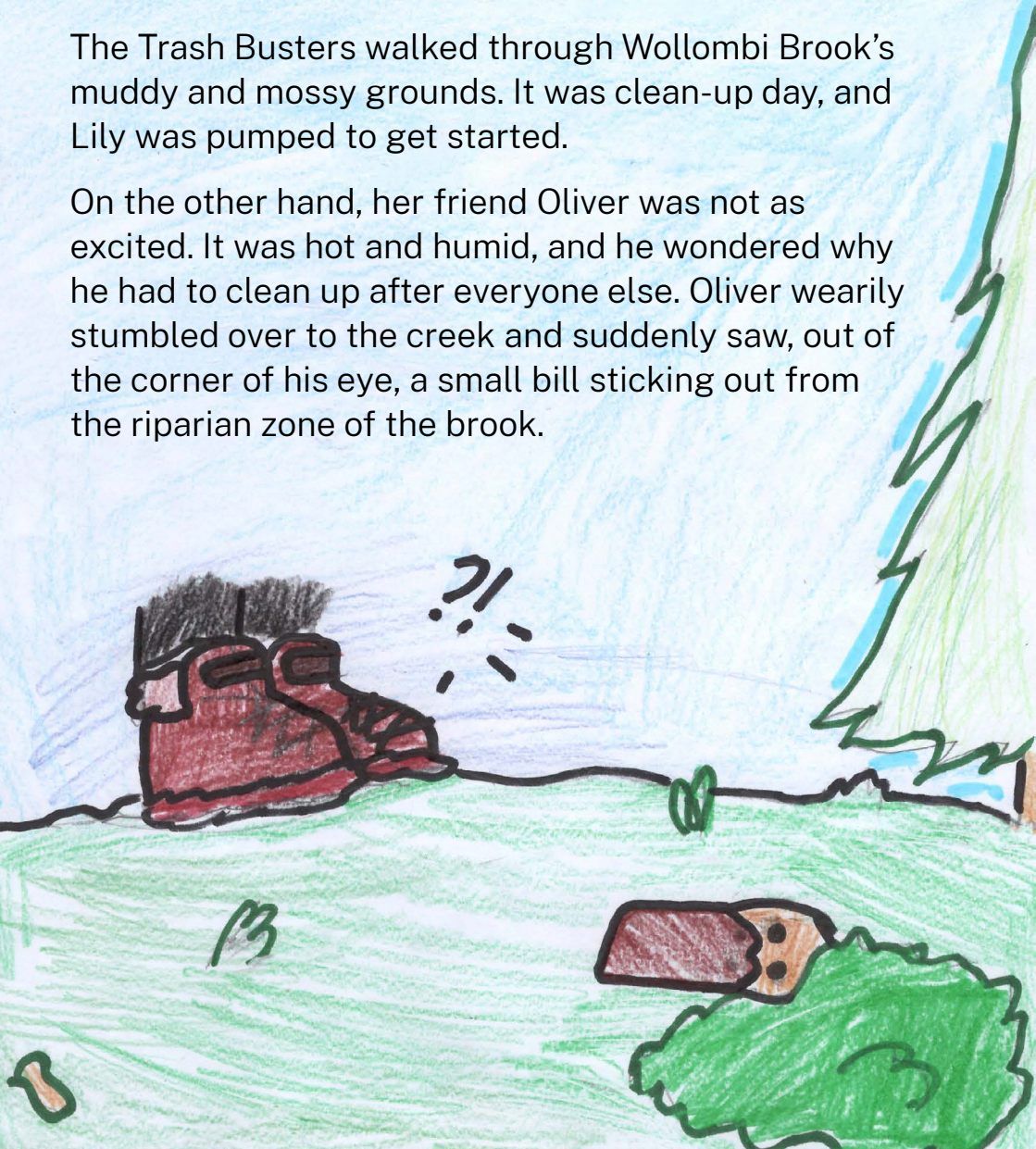
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Squelch, squish! Squelch, squish!

The Trash Busters walked through Wollombi Brook's muddy and mossy grounds. It was clean-up day, and Lily was pumped to get started.

On the other hand, her friend Oliver was not as excited. It was hot and humid, and he wondered why he had to clean up after everyone else. Oliver wearily stumbled over to the creek and suddenly saw, out of the corner of his eye, a small bill sticking out from the riparian zone of the brook.





Oliver thought to himself: *Could this be the shy, cheeky platypus everyone has been talking about but has never seen?*

He crept up cautiously, trying not to frighten it. When he reached the animal, it didn't swim away or jump in fear. It just lay there helplessly, breathing heavily. Oliver's stomach dropped, and he gasped as he shouted, "LILY!"



Lily, Lola, and their friend, Grandma Suki, ran over toward Oliver's high-pitched yell. When they arrived, they all stood in shock. Lola rushed over to help the sick platypus while Lily urgently called the vet to come to Wollombi Brook.

Once the vet arrived, Oliver stormed over to Lily, saying angrily, "The vet thinks the platypus has swallowed polluted water further down the stream. We need to do something NOW!"

Lily knew right away what to do. She called her co-worker Jane from Local Land Services to work out a plan to stop pollution in Wollombi Brook.

Together, Lily and Oliver, with the help of Jane and her team from Local Land Services, helped educate the local community on how to care for their waterways.



Lola and Grandma Suki talked to Fred, the farmer, about fencing off his cattle to keep them out of the river.

Lily saw Mackenzie mowing her lawn and asked her to stop blowing the grass clippings into the street and put them in the green bin instead.

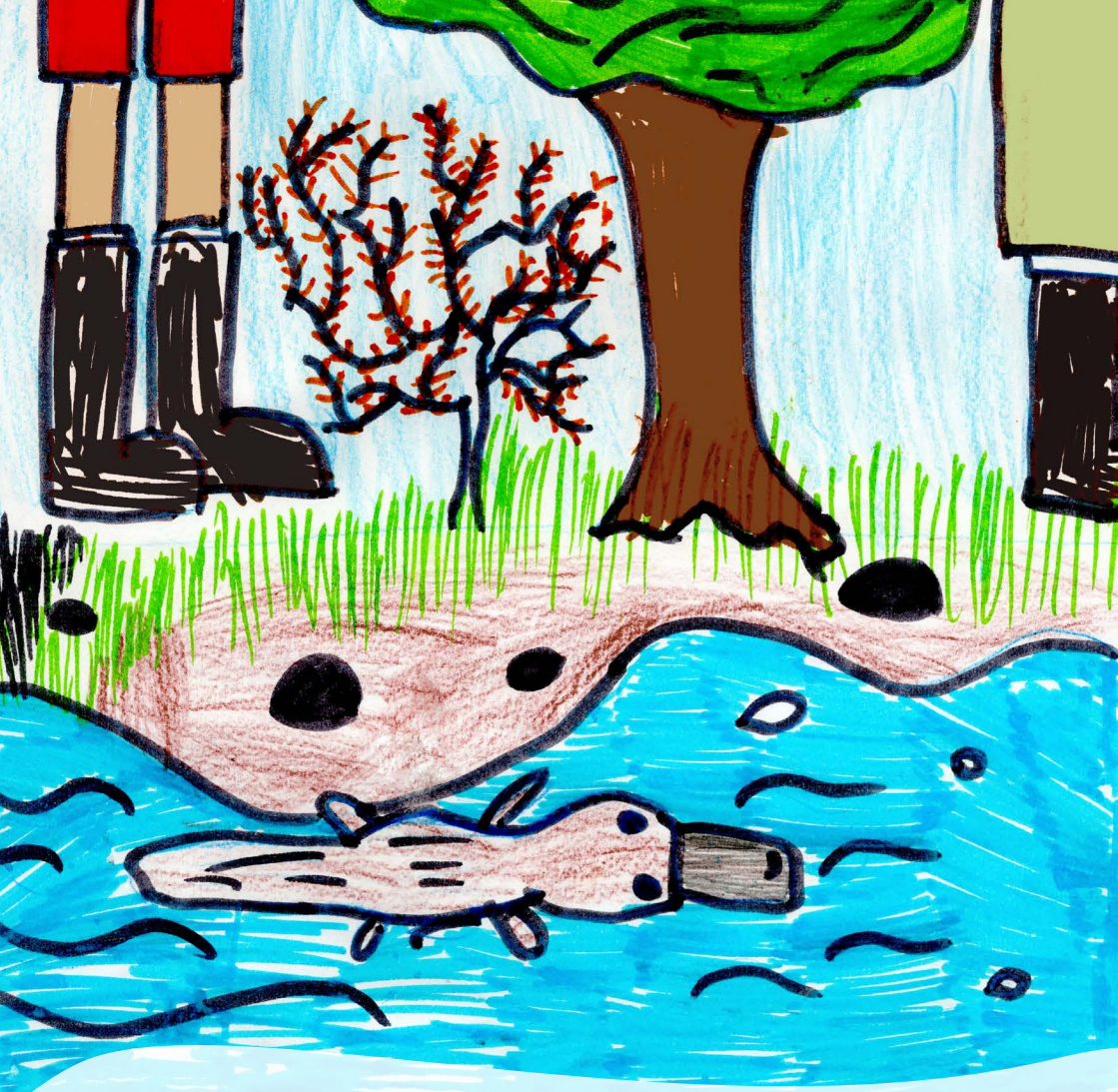
Jane spoke with Scott, a fisherman, asking him to take all his rubbish home instead of leaving it on the riverbank.






Oliver visited Carol, the car washer, and asked her to wash her car on the grass instead of letting the soapy water flow down the storm drain.

When they had finished visiting the local community, the Trash Busters nervously walked back to Wollombi Brook to check on the platypus. They saw the vet bending over, holding the platypus in the water.



With worried expressions, they looked to the vet. The vet slowly looked up, and they saw his face light up with a big smile of relief.

The Trash Busters rushed over just in time to see Pete the platypus swim happily back to his home.



“Why do we have to stay here instead of at a billabong or a lake?” Pete complained.

His mother sighed and didn't reply. Pete already knew the answer... the brook was blocked downstream, so they could only stay in this small part of the river.

Why do we have to stay here?

Sigh!



Pete went to lie on his back in the water but spotted a large rock just in time where he could rest.

“I wish it wasn’t so dry!” he whined, nudging a rock along the ground with his snout.

“It will have to do for now,” his mother replied, looking dejected as she stared at the ground.

Pete pushed the rock again, but suddenly he slipped and was quickly washed away by a strong current. His blurry vision faded to pure darkness as the water carried him further up the previously dry river.

As he began to wake up, he realised his surroundings were completely different from where he lived. There was fresh water, green leaves, and new life, making him feel even more curious and adventurous, but he couldn't see his mum.



A lizard darted toward Pete, and he moved closer to say hello, but the lizard beat him to it. “Let me introduce myself. I am Lenard the Lizard, and I love bugs,” the lizard explained.

“I’m Pete the Platypus. Nice to meet you, Lenard!” Pete replied. They began to talk about how Pete needed to find his mum and maybe even convince her to stay and live here!





Lenard understood and took Pete to his closest friends, Bria the Butterfly and Bernard the Bee. After many hours of walking on their exhausted, stubby feet, they finally stumbled upon Bria and Bernard, the kind step-siblings.

Lenard exclaimed, “We need as many animals as we can to help Pete find his mum!”

Bria and Bernard agreed to help them gather more animals that could track down Pete’s mum and bring him to her.

“We have to go back downstream to find Karrie the Kookaburra and Kelsy the Koala!” Bria said kindly.

As they walked downstream, Pete spotted a sign that read, “Welcome to Wollombi Brook.”

Pete whispered to himself, “Hmmm, Wollombi... that’s a nice name!”

The new friends heard a galah in the branches of a eucalyptus tree squawking as many “squawks” as possible in a minute.





Pete and the others went over to the galah and Bria flew up to her elegantly and told her the situation.

“I’m Gertie the Galah. I can obviously handle this,” Gertie boasted.

Pete replied, “Thank you so much! Do you think you’ve seen a bigger version of me around?”

Gertie said, “I’m pretty sure I saw one west of here. I’ll take you, if you want?”

Pete was so excited that he would soon be back with his mum! He exclaimed, “Yes! Thank you so much!”

The new friends hopped on Gertie's back and flew west. A small brown dot appeared beneath them.

"Mum! It's me, Pete!" yelled Pete. A faint voice called back; it was his mother! They picked her up, sobbing with relief.

"You're getting my back wet," said Gertie, annoyed.

"Sorry!" Pete replied. "Mum, let me show you a special place. It's called... Wollombi!"



Platypus Fun Facts



The name platypus comes from the Greek word for 'flat-footed'.

The name for a baby platypus is a puggle.

Platypus can grow up to 60 cm long. Males can weigh 3 kg and females 1.7 kg.

They have two layers of fur that trap a layer of air next to their skin to remain buoyant and dry when they're underwater.

A platypus' bill is flexible, rubbery and feels like suede. It's used to dig up food from the riverbed. Their bill is also highly sensitive having electroreceptors to detect moving prey.

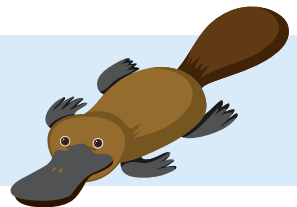
Despite being a mammal, the platypus lays eggs—making them a monotreme. They also secrete milk to feed their young.

The strong claws are used for burrowing and moving on land.

They are expert swimmers. Platypus use their webbed feet to propel themselves and use their broad, flat tails to steer through the water.

Males have a horny spur on their ankles, which is connected to a venom gland in the upper leg, making the platypus one of the few venomous mammals.

Find out more about platypus at adventuresatyourplace.com.au/platypus/



ENVIRO stories



Holy Spirit Primary School, Kurri Kurri , Year 5 2024

