

# Desi and Freddie Firetail



Mac McFarland, Jameah Ost, Simon Craft,  
Mackenzie Rolls, Leah Raschke, Susie  
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Corowa South Public School





Enviro-Stories is an environmental education program that has been developed by PeeKdesigns.



**[www.envirostories.com.au](http://www.envirostories.com.au)**

This program provides an education and learning experience for kids through their active engagement with natural resource and catchment management issues. The final product is a published story written about local issues, by local kids, for local kids and future generations.

# Desi and Freddie Firetail

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Teachers: Mr Graham Hyde and Mrs Pam Fredericks

School: Corowa South Public School

## “Biodiversity of the Murray Catchment” Enviro-Stories Education Program

In 2012, the Creative Catchment Kids program delivered the “Biodiversity of the Murray Catchment” Enviro-Stories Education Program. The project was initiated by the Murray Darling Association and Burrumbuttock Public School. It was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authorities, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and Teys Australia, Wagga. Additional support came from the Wirraminna and Riverina Environmental Education Centres.



Catchment Management  
Authority  
Murray



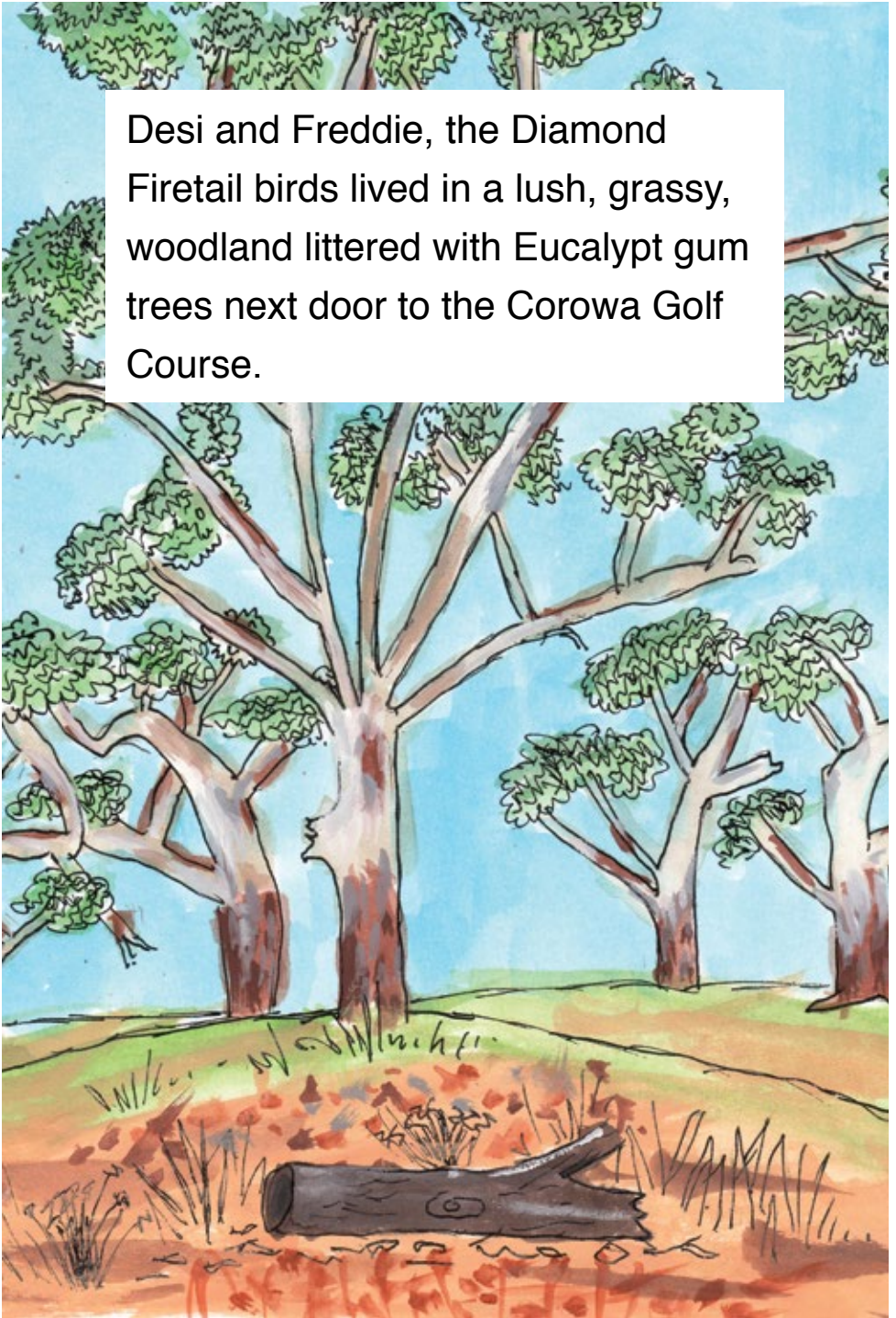
CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY



Catchment Management  
Authority  
Murrumbidgee



Desi and Freddie, the Diamond Firetail birds lived in a lush, grassy, woodland littered with Eucalypt gum trees next door to the Corowa Golf Course.





They were beautiful small birds with a bright red beak, eyes and rump, an ash brown head and back and a white underbelly.



Desi and Freddie feed on the ground. They like to eat the seeds of grasses and weeds. They also like chewing on termites, maggots, small crickets, aphids and any other small insects that they find.

It was almost breeding time at the beginning of October. Both parents built their nest together in the dense Golden Wattle foliage.

Desi decided that it was time to lay her eggs.



Both birds were chirping loudly and happily when they heard a large commotion coming from some trees nearby

“What was that noise?” asked Desi.

“Not sure”, answered Freddie, “I’ll go and check”.

Suddenly two Noisy Miners swooped down ferociously onto the two birds sheltering in the Silver Wattle.







The Firetails had to flee their nest and hide in a nearby Kangaroo Thorn bush.



While nervously waiting and worrying about their nest, they heard a wise old Barn Owl talking to some of the local birds.

He announced, “I know of a lovely native vegetation garden at a picturesque site beside the Murray River.”



“Corowa South Public School has many wonderful wattles, salt bushes, Kangaroo Grass and Chocolate Lilies.”

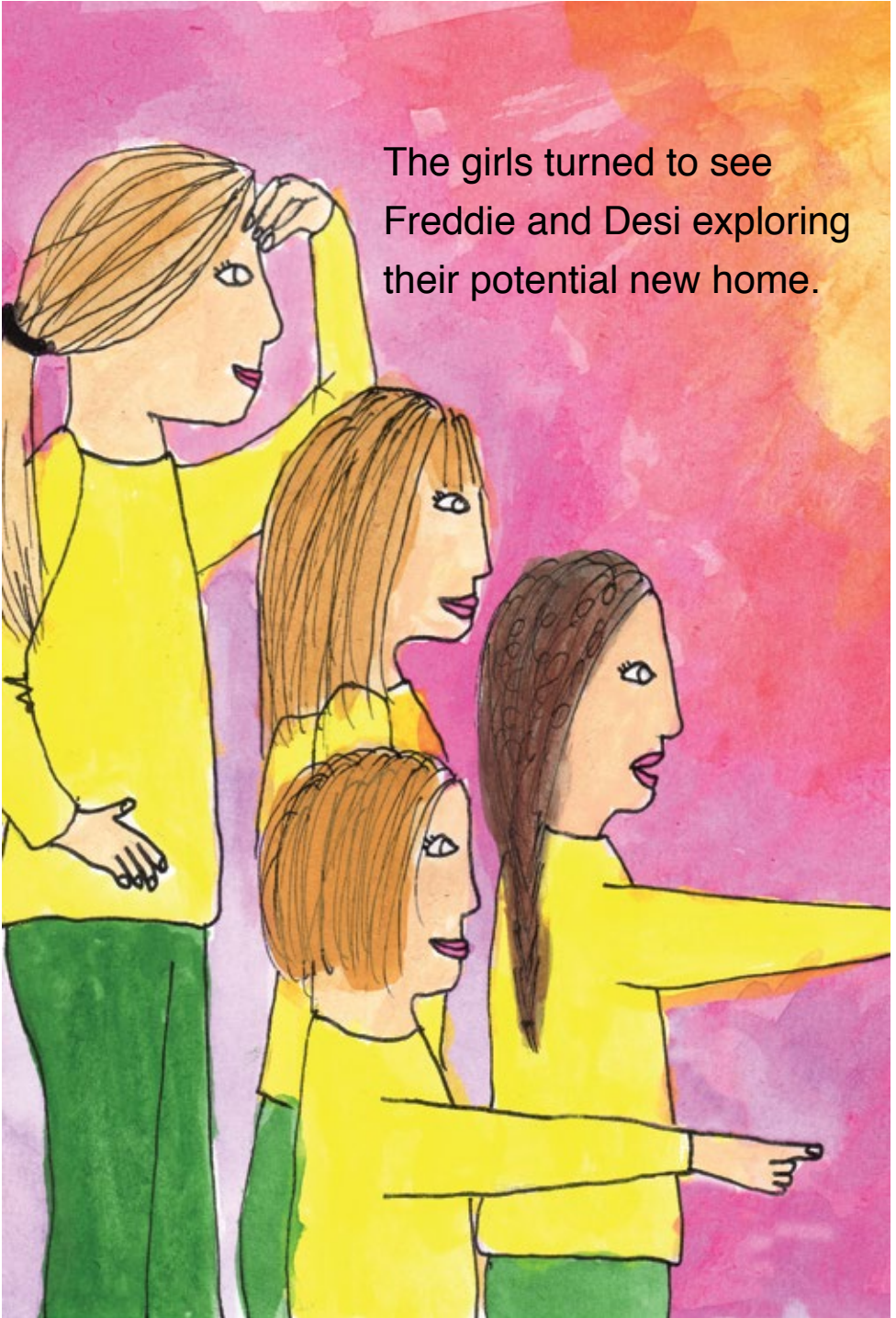


The Barn Owl said, “I’ve heard that the kids really care about the environment. They have been weeding and planting new bushes, shrubs and trees in their playground. In fact, they won the 2011 NSW Landcare Award, which recognised their work in the Creative Catchment Kids Bird Garden Project and their positive attitudes and actions towards improving the environment.”

Becky, Georgia, Zoe and Bronte were watering and weeding the Wallaby and Poa grasses in the school grounds when they heard the chirping and whistling of the Diamond Firetail.



The girls turned to see  
Freddie and Desi exploring  
their potential new home.





Freddie held a long stem of grass in his beak and hopped up and down on his perch with his feathers held out calling Desi to join him in the Mistletoe on the Yellow Box gum tree.



While Freddie and Desi were deciding whether to move, they talked to the wise old owl.

He said to them. “The kids will look after you and there are no noisy miners. The best part is there are Chocolate Lilies in the garden.”



That confirmed it for Freddie and Desi.  
They happily settled into their new  
home convinced that this would be a  
great place to raise their young.



# All about the Diamond Firetail

The Diamond Firetail is a large striking finch with a bright red bill, red eyes and rump. The white throat and lower breast are separated by a broad black breast-band that extends into the strongly white-spotted, black flanks. It has a grey back and head and ash brown wings.

The Diamond Firetail is 10-13 cm in length and weighs up to 17 grams.

They live in grassy areas, open forest, creeks and rivers.

They are also known as the Diamond Sparrow.

After mating the female lays 4-6 eggs.



The Diamond Firetail is native to south-eastern Australia.

It is widely distributed in New South Wales.

In captivity the bird will eat lettuce, spinach, chickweed, egg, broccoli tops, sprouted seed, mealworms cockroaches and small crickets.





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