

# Boots 'n All



*Catchment Champion*

Julia Brooksby, Emily Littlechild,  
Darcy Rixon and Katrina Saunders

Tumbarumba Public School



## *Creative Catchment Kids*

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Murray Catchment Management Authority and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to natural resource management issues. [www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html](http://www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html)

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## *Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre*

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. [www.wirraminna.org](http://www.wirraminna.org)

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## *Murray Darling Association*

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. [www.mda.asn.au](http://www.mda.asn.au)

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Enviro-Stories is an innovative 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](http://www.envirostories.com.au)

# Boots 'n All

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School: Tumbarumba Public School

## *Catchment Champions*

In 2013, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about 'Catchment Champions', people who have made important contributions to managing natural resources in their local community. The program was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee catchment management authorities.

The Catchment Champions books are part of the Enviro-Stories Education Program.



**Catchment Management Authority**  
Murray



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



**Catchment Management Authority**  
Murrumbidgee

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This inspiring story follows the life of Ian Rolf Eggleton, Tumbarumba’s very own environmental hero. Ian is named after his grandfather Rolf who died when Ian was very young. In Tumbarumba, Ian is known as ‘Boots’ (most people would not even know his real name). This nickname was given to him by his boss Lenny Perkins many years ago.

One night Ian went to a ball and wore his fancy boots (as he fondly calls them). He had a late night and went straight from the ball to work but didn't have time to change into his work boots. Ian climbed under a Land Rover to catch up on sleep. Lenny found him with his fancy boots sticking out the side of the truck. From that day forth Ian was known as 'Boots'.





Boots was born on the 19th of August 1956. His family were some of the early settlers of the Blowering Valley in Tumut. They were forced to move when Blowering Dam was built. Boots moved around the area a lot before finally settling in Tumbarumba in 1990. Here he met his wife Mandy whom he has been happily married to for 20 years. Boots and Mandy both agree that their wedding day was the first and last time Boots has ever worn a formal suit.

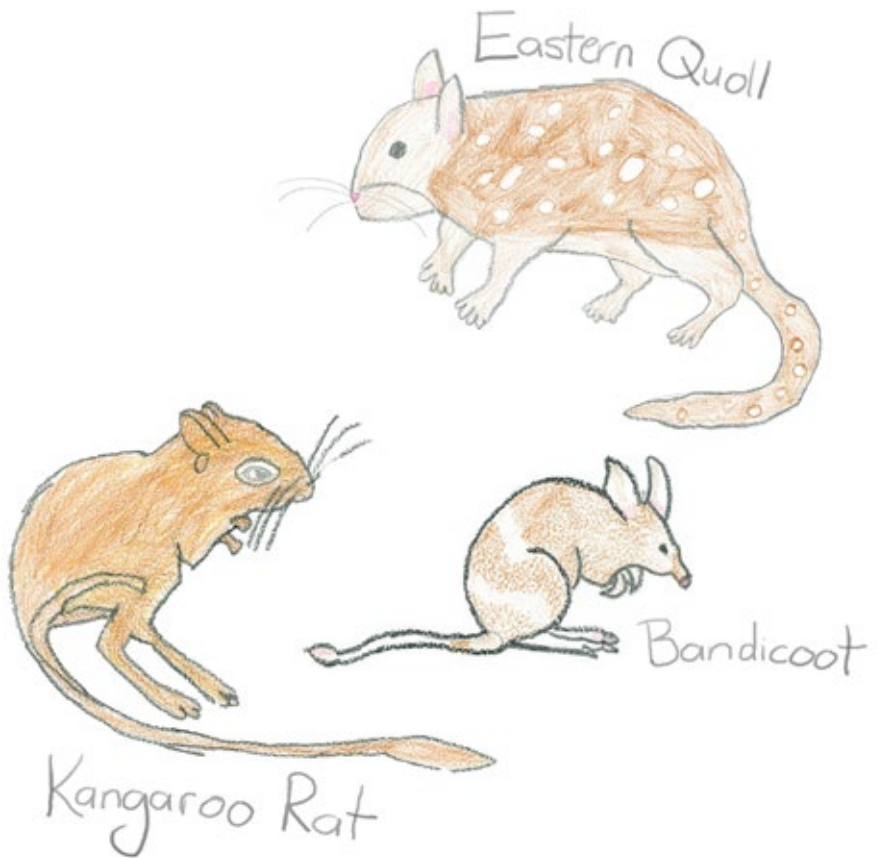


Boot's youth was spent fishing, camping, doing cattle work and farm chores. His great love was animals and the environment. From a young age Boots and his family took in and cared for injured animals. Even today he and his family do the same. They have taken in emus, wallabies, echidnas, birds, lambs, poddy calves and Teddy the Turtle, whom they had for five years.

Boots is a Pest Animal Contractor for New South Wales National Parks. He has been in the industry since he was 17. His work is centred in the Kosciusko, Blue Mountains and Wollemi National Parks. Boots is saving the natural environment by trapping and killing pest animals like foxes, cats and wild dogs that are destroying the environment by killing native animals. Boots believes nature is about holding the balance.







He also traps and relocates possums, wombats and brumbies. In doing this he is saving many endangered animal species from future extinction. At the top of Boots 'to save' list is the Pygmy Possum, Bandicoot, Eastern Quoll, Smokey Mouse, Broad-Tooth Rat, Kangaroo Rat, the Rock Wallaby and many native frog species.



Boots has been involved with the National Parks for 42 years. He says he doesn't just work for them, he fights for them. To him his work is not just a job, it's his passion. He works 7 days a week, on average 18 hours a day and is on call 24/7. He believes anyone can do his job but it takes passion to be good at it.

Boots is too humble to see himself as an environmental hero. He says, "I am just doing what I think is right for the environment and the world. We have to think beyond us; if we look after the environment, it will look after us."

Boots is so good at his job his knowledge and skills are sought after country wide by politicians, lawyers, judges and environmental agencies. He is currently advising the NSW Minister for the Environment, the Honourable Robyn Parker MP, on protecting State National Parks from being irrevocably destroyed by hunting enthusiasts.



Boots believes in humane trapping. He uses rubber jaw traps (see photo below), rather than poison or metal jaw traps because he doesn't like to see any animal suffer. He says, "It doesn't matter if it's an ant or an elephant, they all still feel pain." Boots believes we all need to respect animals whether they are pests or not. He says, "you don't have to be cruel in this job to be good at it."



One of the things Boots loves about his job is that he never stops learning about animals. He thinks animals are like people in that they all have different personalities and you have to work them out in order to catch them.



Boots requires lots of equipment to do his job well. In addition to his traps, he uses decoys with special scents and his expert and loyal dog Rip who helps by sniffing out the animals. His 4WD is stacked with traps, spotlights, cages, cameras, GPS and video equipment, rifles, bullets, setters and decoys. Boots also takes a buggy, motorbikes and a trailer out with him.



Boots takes few creature comforts with him to the bush. He has a swag, cooking gear, food and lots of warm clothes especially thermal wear to keep him warm. Even Rip needs a coat on cold nights.

Boots sometimes sleeps in huts but he likes to sleep out in the open and look at the stars. He also listens to the environment and the animals. He howls to the dingoes and waits for their reply.



We really enjoyed our time spent getting to know Boots. He is a kind, gentle and funny man. His passion for the environment is inspiring and we learnt a lot from him.

Thank you Boots for letting us into your home and sharing your amazing stories with us.

Thank you Mandy for helping us source the fantastic photos for this book and for your award winning cupcakes.





Boots Eggleton, Julia Brooksby, Darcy Rixon, Katrina Saunders  
and Emily Littlechild

2013 Year 5, Tumbarumba Public School

The 2012 and 2013 Creative  
Catchment Kids writing  
program was showcased  
at the Seventh World  
Environmental Education  
Congress, held in Morocco  
during June 2013.



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