

Keeping Culture Alive: The Story of Will Hannah



Catchment Champion

Zachary Hyde, Jackson McDermott,
Josh Verstappen and Bronte Rix

Wentworth 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

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

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



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

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Authors: Zachary Hyde, Jackson McDermott, Josh Verstappen and Bronte Rix

Teacher: Jennifer Halls

School: Wentworth 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.



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Introduction

This story is about Will Hannah. He grew up in Robinvale and is part of the Yitha Yitha tribal group, whose region is between Balranald and Swan Hill. He then moved to Wentworth, NSW, where he has become a local identity.

Will was born in 1964 and is a local bushman, family man and enjoys educating children about Aboriginal culture as part of his role in the community. It is a role he is passionate about as he feels it is his contribution to continuing the story telling and information sharing that is so important in his culture.



Aboriginal Language Map

Family

Family is the most important thing in the world to Will. As an Aboriginal person, Will highlights that family is often big, extended and sometimes not even related by blood, but rather experience.

He is proud of his own family and their achievements.



Will and his partner Narelle



Education

Will spent most of his younger years at Wentworth Public School. At eleven, he moved to a Catholic school on the East Coast of Australia. It was here that he learnt to read and began to achieve more at school.

Although he did not appreciate it at the time, he now credits much of success in reading to the nuns at the Catholic school.

A Door Opener

Growing up, sport was an important part of his life. He found sport was a door opener for him when making friends, keeping fit and most importantly, having fun. He was involved in sports like basketball, cricket, football, soccer, swimming and diving. The importance of sport is a message he passes on to others.



Soccer



Football



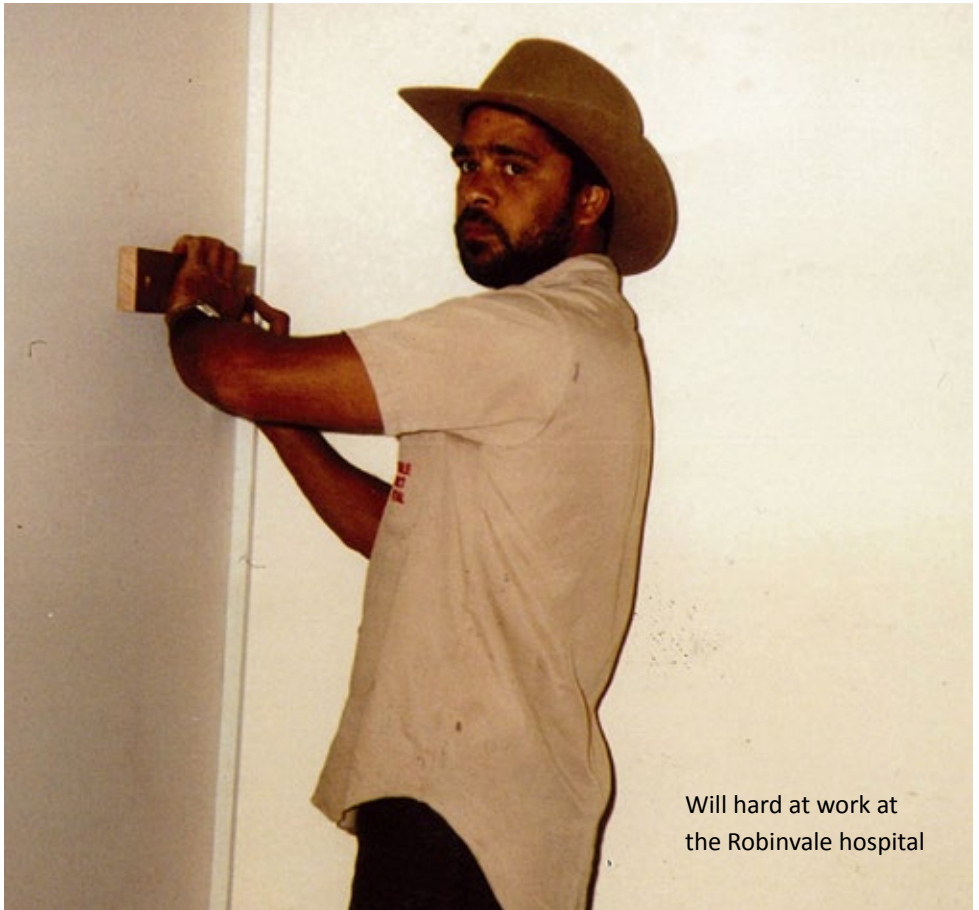
Netball



Basketball



Cricket



Will hard at work at
the Robinvale hospital

His Earlier Jobs

Will left school at 16 and began work as an apprentice on a vineyard. He worked there for three years, but got sick of doing that type of work. He secured work at the Robinvale hospital, where he did general maintenance work. He even helped out in surgery with the nurses sometimes.

The Turning Point

When Will was a teenager, his friends would go out to drink and smoke, but he didn't want to. He remembers every time his mates looked away he would pour his drink over his shoulder.

Will stopped drinking after an incident involving fighting and alcohol. He sees this as a turning point in his life; a point where he began to take control of his life and work towards making better choices for a more positive future.





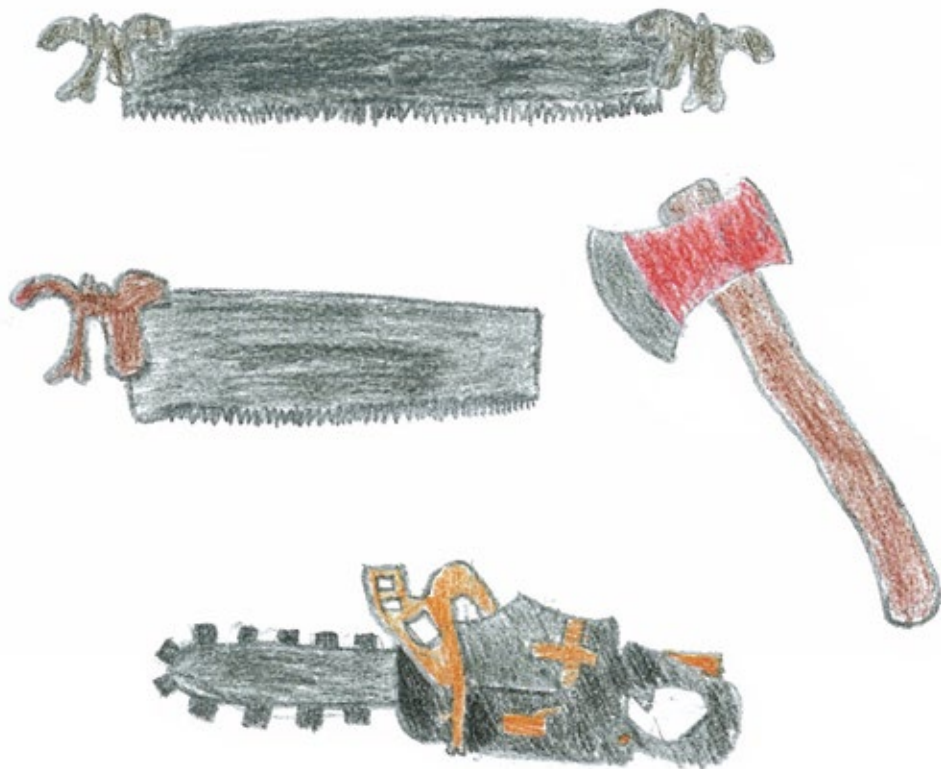
His Job Today

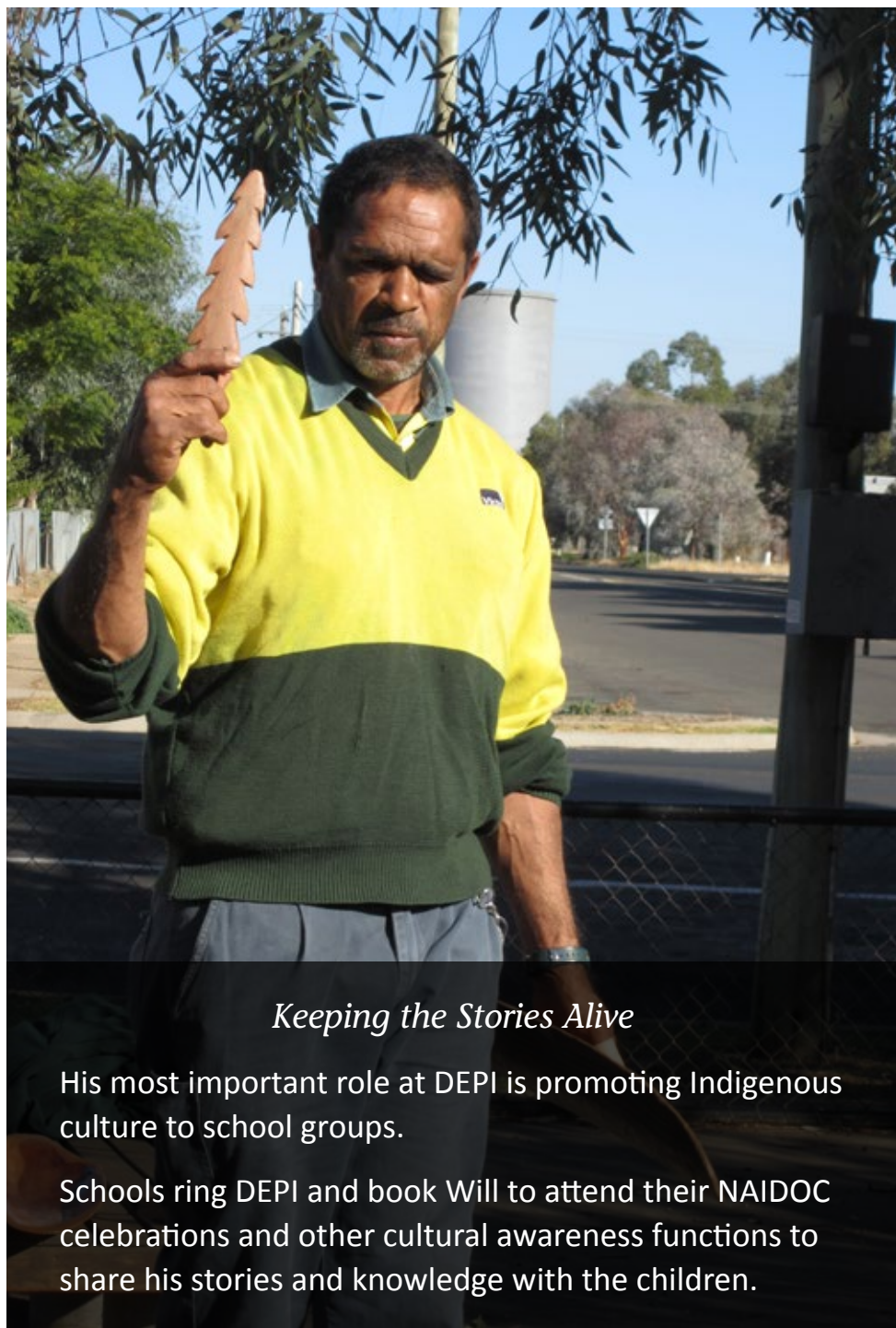
As part of his job at the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), Will completes a range of tasks that help promote the environment. This includes preserving national parks and protecting them from the threat of fire and promoting Indigenous culture.



Tools of the Trade

For Will to do his job at DEPI he has to use a lot of tools, such as axes, chainsaws, handsaws and big machinery to help the environment. He uses these tools to help preserve areas in the national parks and also to create fire breaks.





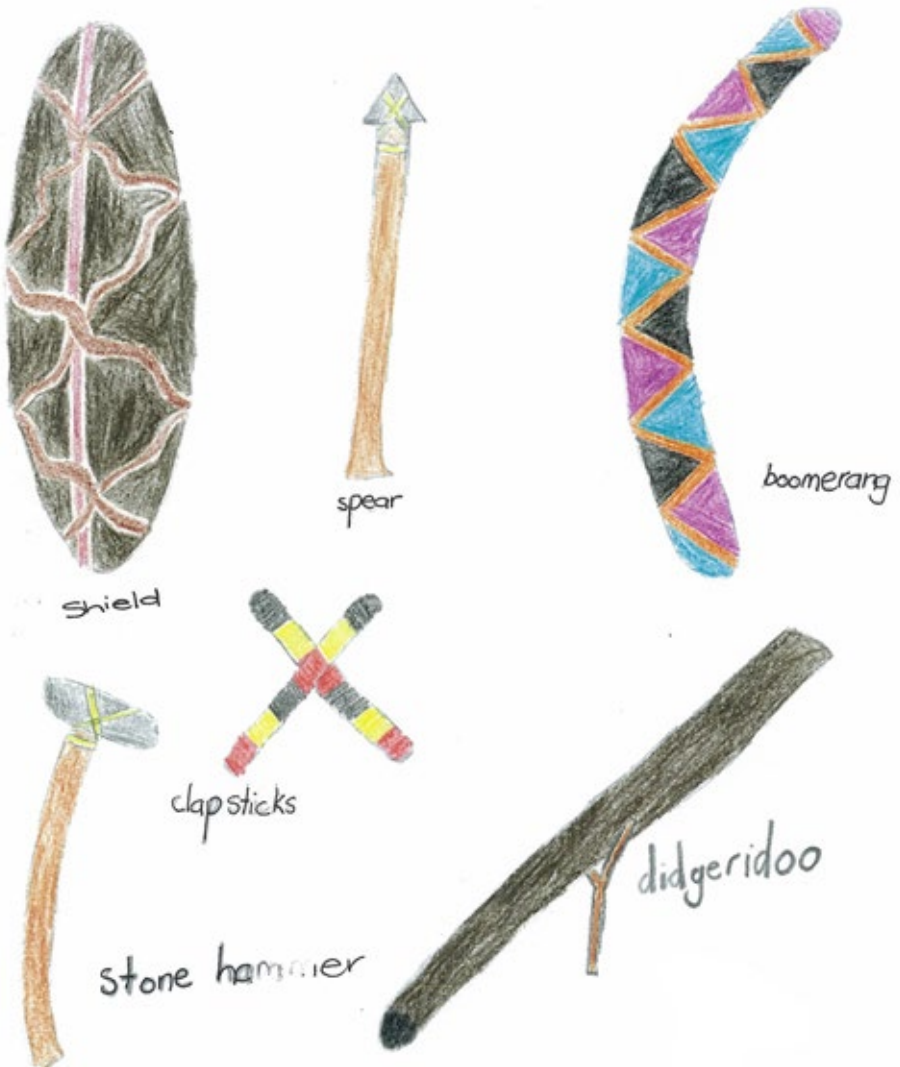
Keeping the Stories Alive

His most important role at DEPI is promoting Indigenous culture to school groups.

Schools ring DEPI and book Will to attend their NAIDOC celebrations and other cultural awareness functions to share his stories and knowledge with the children.

School Sessions

During school talks he shares Aboriginal culture through storytelling and by demonstrating to students a range of Aboriginal tools and how they were used.





We would like to thank Will for his amazing story telling abilities and for sharing his time and photos with all the children in 4/5H at Wentworth Public School.

He has given the whole class a wonderful insight into his life and into his role as an ambassador for Aboriginal people and their history.



Bronte Rix , Zachary Hyde, Will Hannah, Jackson
McDermott and Josh Verstappen

2013 Year 5, Wentworth 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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