

The Peculiar Platypus



Jasmine Steele-Park
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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

In 2014, the “Tools, Totems & Tucker” Enviro-Stories program provided local kids with the opportunity to write and illustrate stories about local Aboriginal cultural - in particular Wiradjuri culture. This program was sponsored by the Central West and Central Tablelands Local Land Services.

Central Tablelands Local Land Services

The Central Tablelands Local Land Services region is located in central New South Wales and covers an area of approximately 31,365 km². It includes the major towns of Bathurst, Blayney, Cowra, Lithgow, Molong, Mudgee, Oberon and Orange. It falls predominantly within Wiradjuri Aboriginal country and small parts of Dharug and Darkinjung country.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/centraltablelands

Central West Local Land Services

The Central West Local Land Services region is home to around 110,000 people and covers the central west slopes region around Grenfell, Forbes and Wellington to the western plains of Nyngan and Coonamble. The major Aboriginal nations that the central west region overlies are the Wiradjuri, Wailwan, Wongaibon, Kawambarai and Kamialroi. These nations also extend into other Local Land Services regions.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/centralwest

The Peculiar Platypus

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The “Tools, Totems and Tucker” Enviro-Stories Program has been proudly supported by the Central West and Central Tablelands Local Land Services.

The “Tools, Totems & Tucker” collection consists of the following books:

Sponsored by Central Tablelands Local Land Services

- Aboriginal Totems
- Our Living Land
- Aboriginal Animal Tracks
- Aboriginal Life
- The Dreamtime Trilogy

Sponsored by Central West Local Land Services

- Burnum finds his way
- How the Koala got his claws
- Storm Boy and Uncle Farren
- The Peculiar Platypus
- The Rainbow Serpent is back!

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Warra lived in the Lachlan area. He was part of the Wiradjuri Nation. Warra was only 8 years old and all of the older boys always pushed him around. He wanted to prove that he could be helpful too.



Warra decided to make a canoe. He wanted to go fishing and prove he could help the tribe. Warra found an old shady gum tree and started cutting into the trunk with a sharp stone-axe. By the afternoon, he had a roughly shaped canoe.



He dragged his canoe down to the river,
gathered his net and put it in the canoe. He
was about to push his canoe into the water
when the older boys came down the bank
with their own canoe.

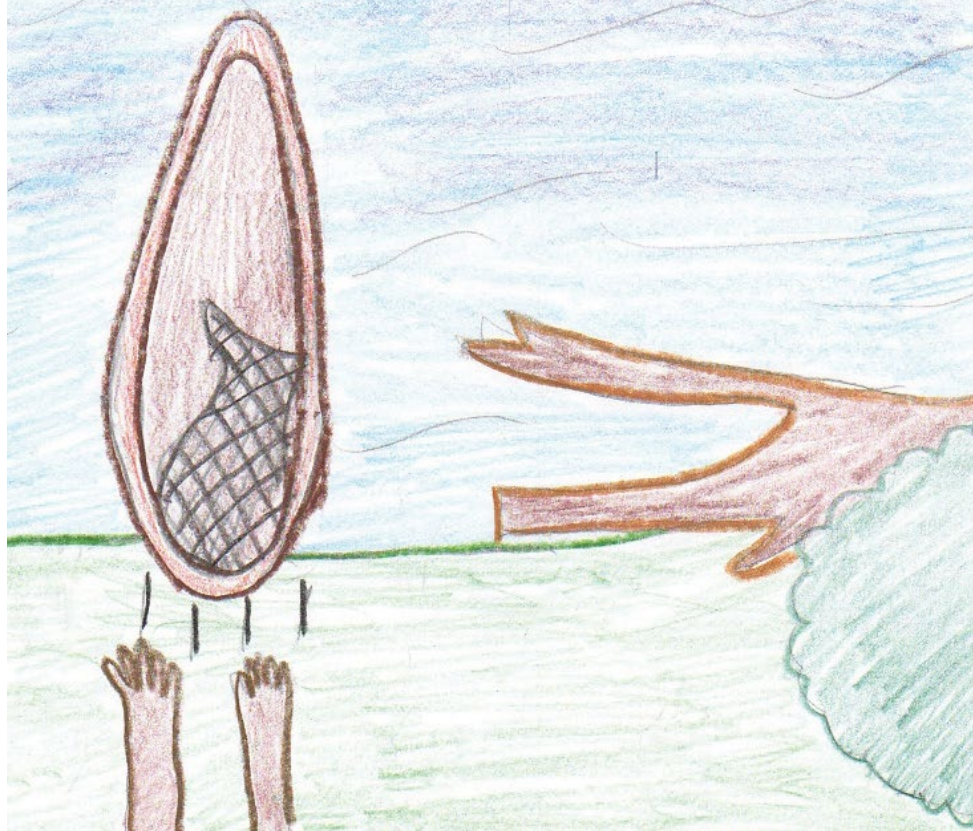


Warra didn't like these boys, especially Kurru who was the meanest boy of them all.

"Look at that! The baby is trying to fish!" yelled Kurru. His bunch of friends laughed. They laughed at all of his jokes.

“I can fish just as well!” cried Warra.

He gave his canoe one hard shove and it slid into the water. Warra nearly cheered in delight but the other boys were still smirking behind him, so he kept quiet.





Warra started to paddle into the middle of the river. When he got to the middle he realised the current was very strong. His paddling failed him and he was gradually carried away from his camp.

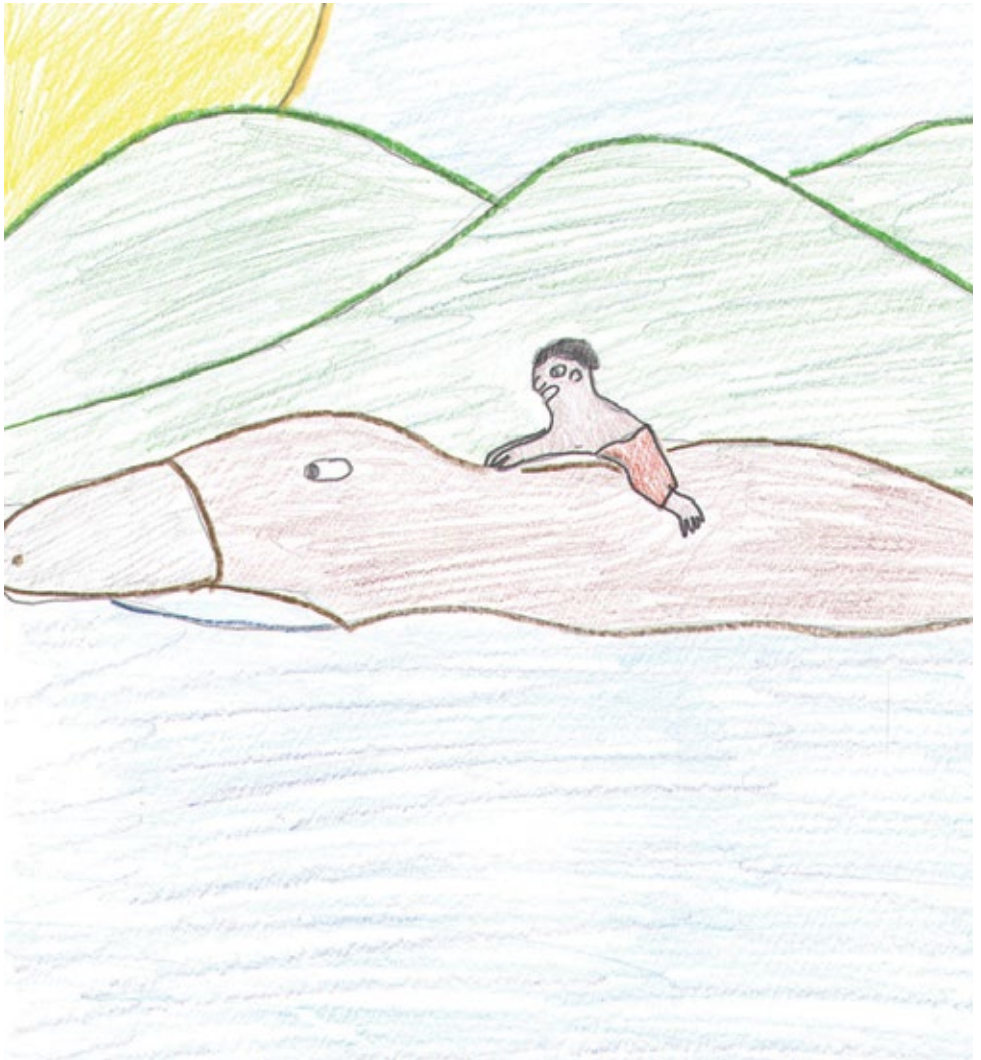
He looked around for the other boys, but they had disappeared. Suddenly, he heard a splintering noise coming from his canoe. There was a loud crack and to his horror the canoe started to sink.



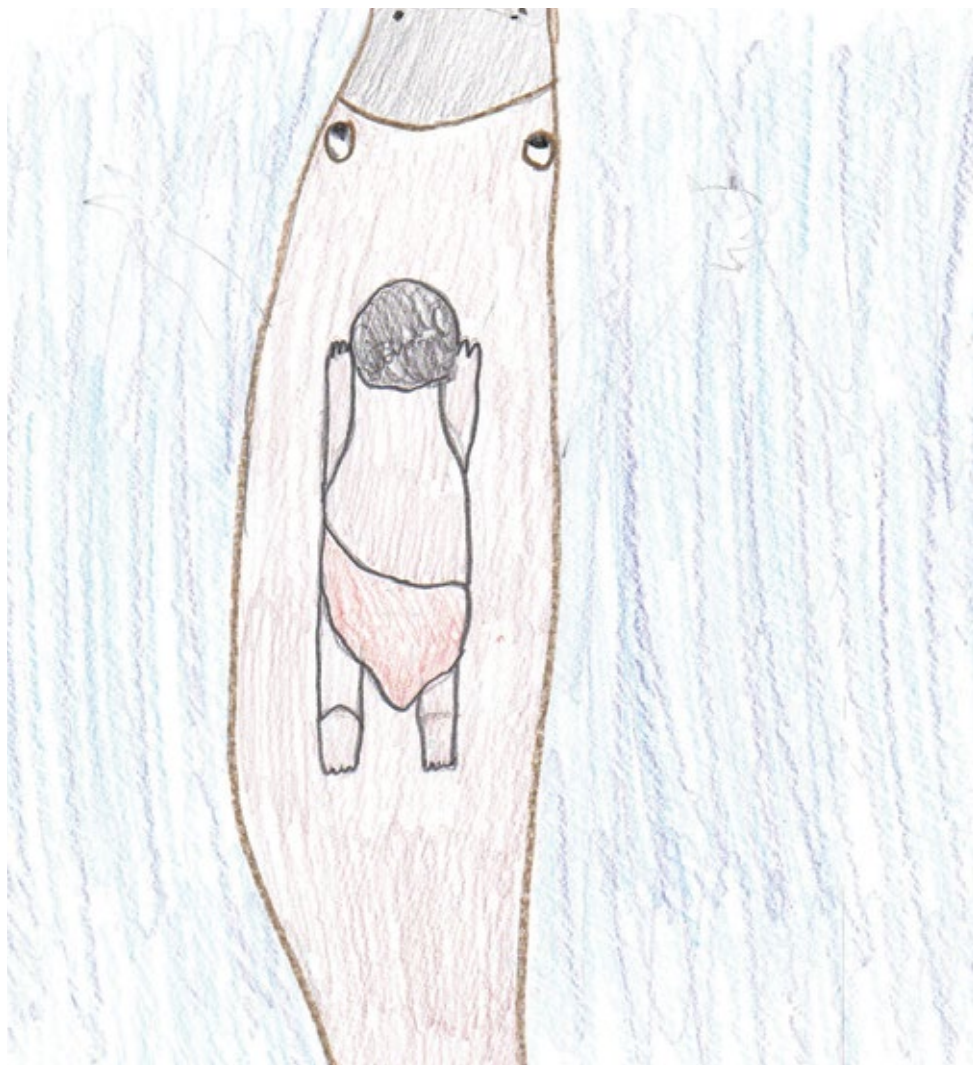
Warra started to panic. He wasn't a very good swimmer but he knew what he had to do. Diving in, he tried his best to get to the river bank but he was tiring quickly. He sank below the surface.



As he sank, Warra started to have a strange dream. He saw himself being lifted up to the surface. He looked down and saw a giant platypus carrying him to the bank.



The platypus was the areas totem. Warra had seen many of them in the river but he had never seen a giant platypus. But of course it was a dream, wasn't it? He was sure it was a dream...but everything seemed so real!



They reached the edge of the river. Warra hopped off and asked, “Who are you and why did you help me?”

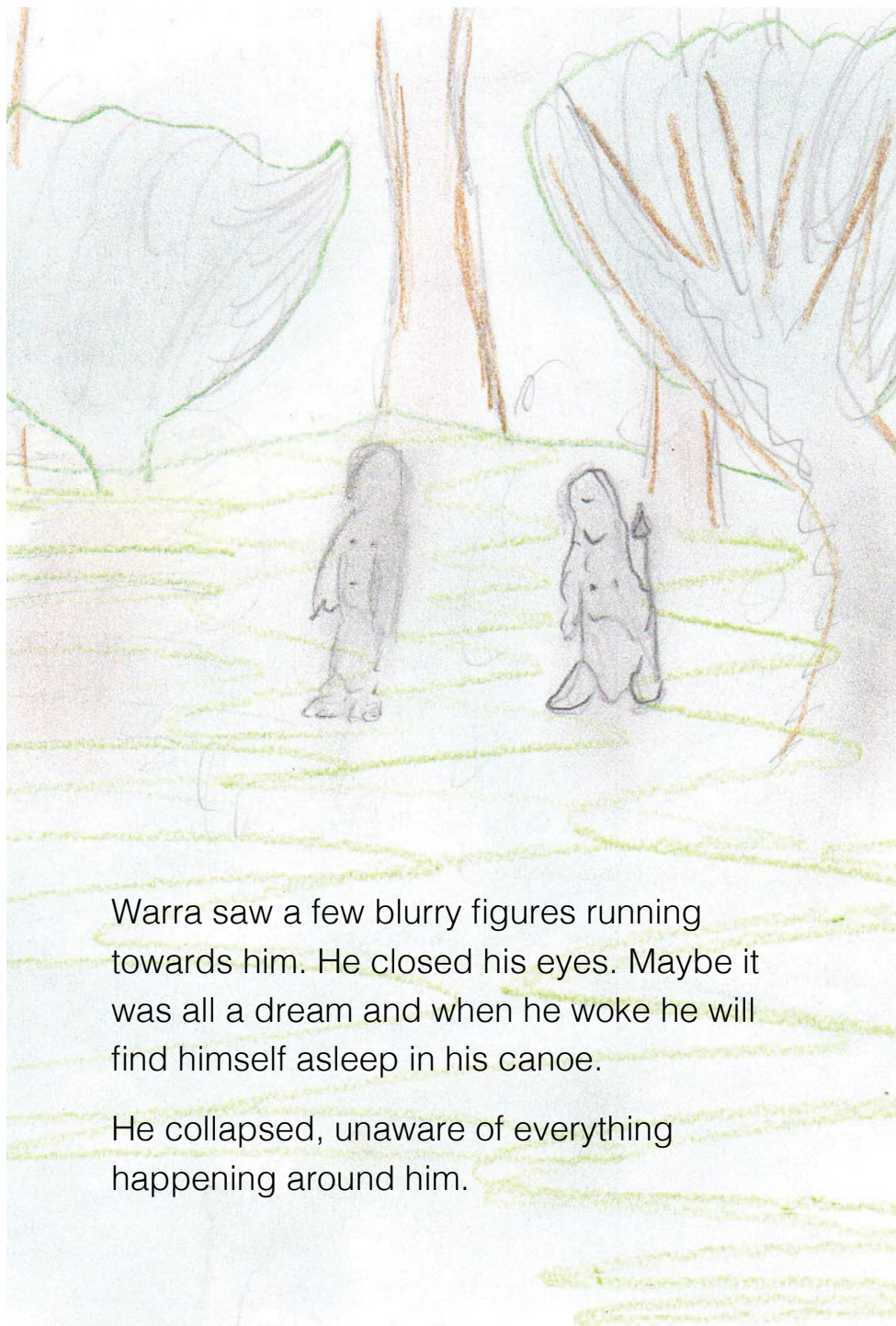
“I am the mighty totem of the Lachlan area. I watch over all the platypus, Wiradjuri people and other animals,” answered platypus proudly.



“You may be clumsy and a little foolish now, but I can see that you have a good heart. You will become a Wiradjuri warrior who is very brave, fair, knowledgeable and helpful to your people and country as you get older,” said the platypus.

Warra was about to reply but the platypus had disappeared.





Warra saw a few blurry figures running towards him. He closed his eyes. Maybe it was all a dream and when he woke he will find himself asleep in his canoe.

He collapsed, unaware of everything happening around him.



Warra woke up.
But he wasn't in his
canoe. He was in a
hut in the camp. How
did he get there?
Wasn't he in his
canoe going out
to fish?



Then he remembered the dream. “Was it real or was it a dream?” thought Warra to himself.

Either way, Warra knew what he must do. He was determined to become the person his totem platypus could see in him. He would learn his culture and take care of his people to become a brave, fair, knowledgeable and helpful Wiradjuri warrior.





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Forbes Public School, Year 6 2014

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