

Blorey and the Birds of the Bidgee



Molly Christensen, Katie Arandt,
Georgia Mijok, Charly Moorhouse,
Emily Headon and Gemma Tassell



Hay 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 Local Land Services and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

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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Charly Moorhouse, Emily Headon and Gemma Tassel

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School: Hay Public School

Local Land Heroes

In 2014, students involved in the **Creative Catchment Kids** program researched and wrote stories about 'Local Land Heroes' - people, businesses or industries who contribute to productive agriculture and healthy environments along the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes acknowledges the United Nations
2014 International Year of Family Farming.
www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en/

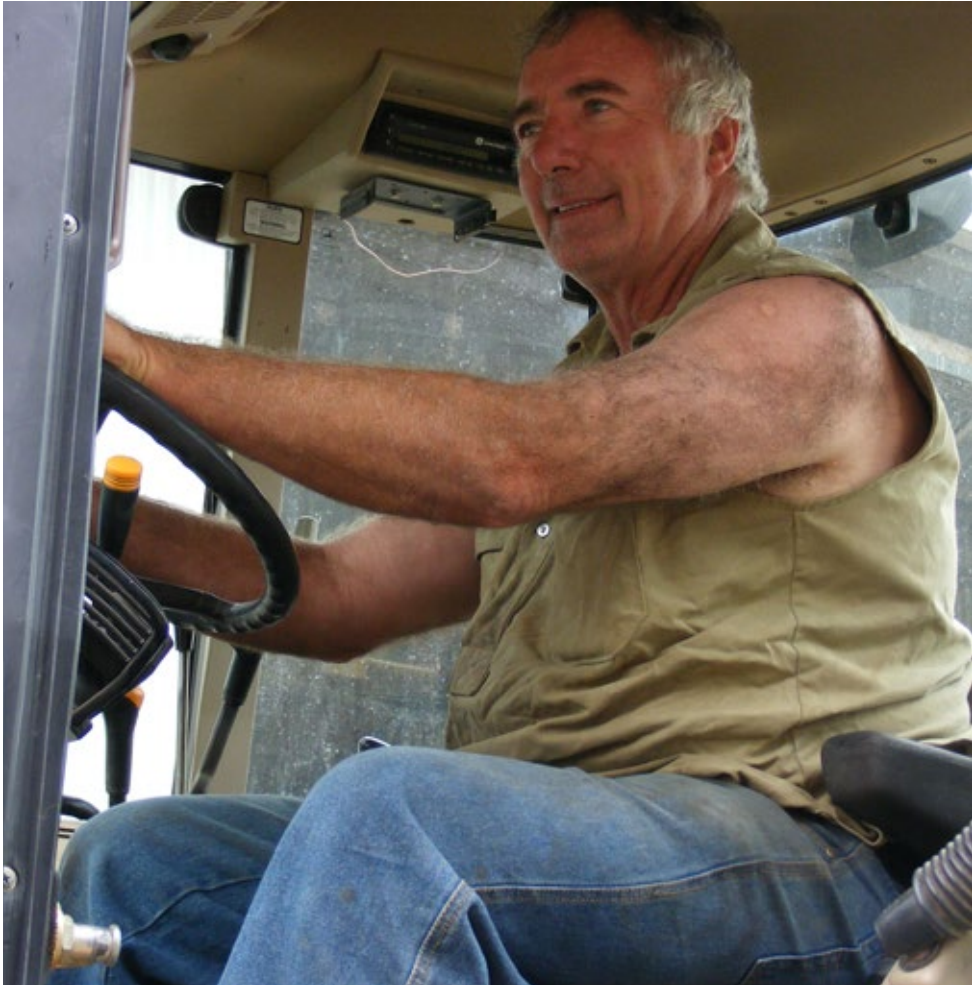


Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



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Steve Blore, also known as Blore, was born in 1954. He spent his childhood growing up in a small country town called Tooleybuc. He went away to boarding school then ventured up to the Northern Territory. Finally, he went farming and eventually found himself on the Lowbidgee Floodplain in 1981. Steve has been up and down with the floodplain seasons ever since.



Torry Plains is located 80 kilometres west of Hay. It is situated on the Lowbidgee Floodplain which runs from the township of Maude to Balranald. 30 000 acres of Torry Plains are used for cropping organic grain, mainly wheat and also barley and safflower. Cattle are also agisted on the property. Of the remaining undeveloped 15 000 acres, 10 000 acres is protected wetland.



Torry Plains is a certified organic cropping property. This means it is regularly assessed by NASAA (National Agency for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia). All crops therefore on Torry Plains cannot be sprayed with chemicals. This means that the farmers must ensure they continuously work their soil with their tractors to stop the weeds from growing. This allows the crop to flourish after planting.



Blorey always had an interest in wildlife. Torry Plains has a system of channels and earthworks which have been built for agricultural production. This system allows for flood irrigation. These earthworks allow the creation of man-made bird sanctuaries. During the drought Blorey and his mates Michael and Frank were able to acquire water which allowed farming production and sustained the sanctuaries.



Thanks to Blorey and his partners campaigning for more water the sanctuaries and the crops thrived when the rain came. It brought plagues of grasshoppers, native hens and crickets. This brought thousands of birds to the Torry Plain wetlands. Species of ibis, spoonbill and bitterns arrived and had up to three hatchings of chicks. Their colonies gave Torry Plains the name the 'Kakadu of the South'.

The flight of the Great Australasian Bittern

*From the drought ravaged, South Australian Coorong to Torry Plains,
'Kakadu of the South'.*



The barren South Australian Coorong danced like red fire across the bones of the parched land.

The cruel wind, swept away the remains of the beige, thrashing sand.

Grey matted tussocks cursed the forgotten earth that crumbled like an old, stale chip.

The blinding sun swallowed the dead, shriveled water and ate the crusted silt.



The great, majestic Australasian Bittern lay in the whispering, shredded reed beds.

The world was as still as concrete and the blood of the earth was stolen.

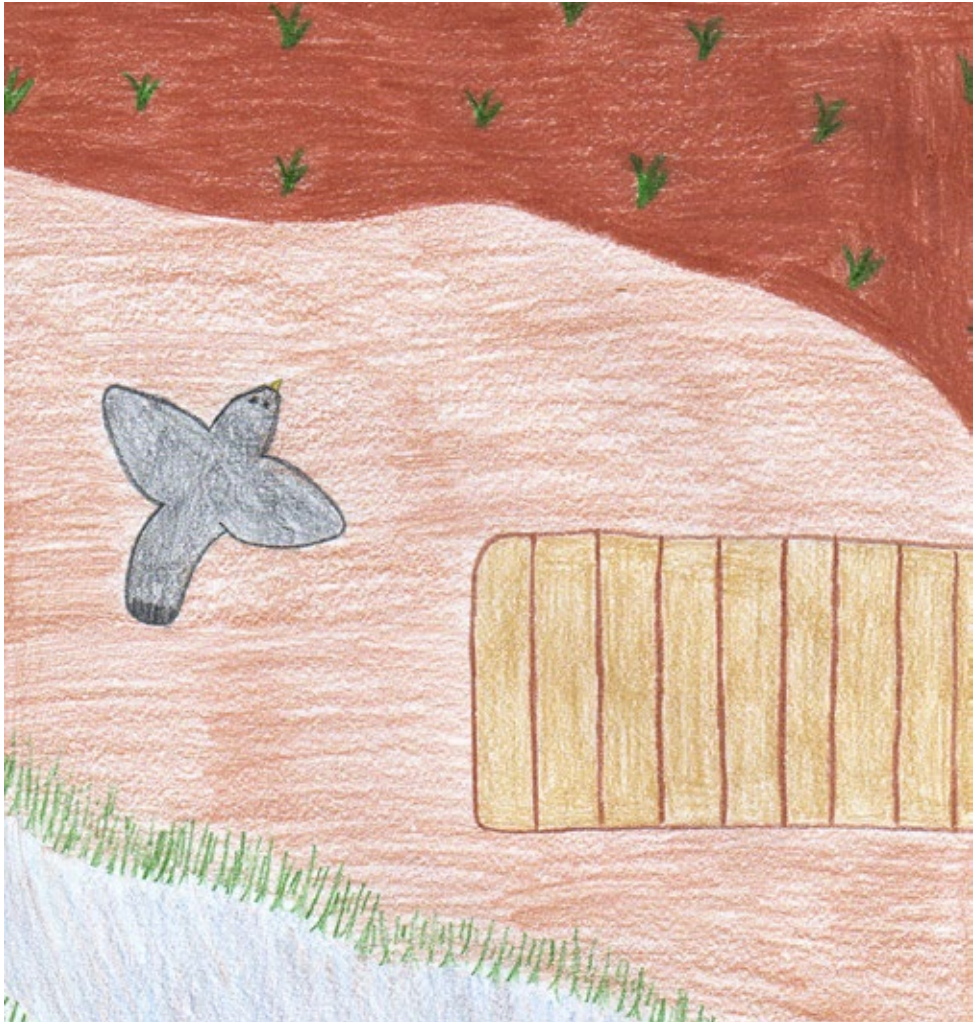
The splintering, belting wind stung the Australasian Bittern's eyes.

Patterns cascaded down the bird's cluster of feathers rippling through the touch of misty clouds.

Drought clouded the land for endless miles murdering the world.



*Finally a glimpse of wheat watered the land,
Barley webbed beneath and grain dusted the damp ground .
Heaven lay beneath the Australasian Bittern where lignum sprouted out of
the ground.
Cumbungi grew as thick as red gums and as green as the ripest lime.
The bird's saviour, Blore, had filled the wetland with clear, calm water.*



The warm summer wind ran from the rusty horizon and onto the sandy bank.

The ‘bunyip of the birds’, the Australasian Bittern’s “BOOM” rang through the flooding plains.

At the crack of dawn the world was woken.

Another treacherous “BOOM” rebounded through the crusted, golden lignum.

A slim female bunyip of the birds suddenly tore through the stalks of cumbungi.



*The two Australasian Bittern mates soared off into the blue curtains of
silky sky*

Rising in harmony, through the everlasting, cumulonimbus clouds.

Never seen but always heard, the great Australasian Bittern,

The bunyip of the birds, safe at last, in the Lowbidgee Floodplains,

Protected and cherished by the custodians of Torry Plains.





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2014 Year 6, Hay Public School

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designs



Local Land
Services
Murray



Local Land
Services
Riverina



Australian Government