

# THE LIFE AND LESSONS OF UNCLE ROY KENNEDY

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
HAY PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS



Sharing stories about  
the world around us

## CREATIVE CATCHMENT KIDS

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive, cooperative activities that encourage students to learn about and respond to, natural resource management and the importance of agricultural production.

**[wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/creative-catchment-kids/](http://wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/creative-catchment-kids/)**

## PETAURUS EDUCATION GROUP

Petaurus Education Group identifies, develops and delivers a range of learning and curriculum experiences, resources and initiatives for schools and community groups to connect with land, water, productive farming, sustainability and cultural issues at the local level. The group was established by Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre in late-2014 to support its operations and education activities.

**[wirraminna.org.au/petaurus](http://wirraminna.org.au/petaurus)**

## ENVIRO-STORIES

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.

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



# THE LIFE AND LESSONS OF UNCLE ROY KENNEDY

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**Art lesson with Mr. McClelland:** Shaune Gee,  
Blake Gray and Nikita Lauer

**Historical photos:** Supplied and permission  
granted by Uncle Roy Kennedy

## OUR CULTURE

In 2018, students from Hay Public School were involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program. They researched and wrote this book about a local Aboriginal Elder in their community. The program was generously funded by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

Creative Catchment Kids is partnered with Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.

### TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and thank them for sharing their knowledge and culture with us.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images and/or names of people who have since passed away.





Roy Lawrence Kennedy is a lovely old man who at the grand old age of 86 has achieved a lot in his life.

Uncle Roy was born on the 24th June 1932 at Condobolin which is on the Lachlan River. He was one of 17 children, his dad being married twice. Uncle Roy's dad was a sheep and cattle drover and settled his family at Marfield Station, which is an 80,000 acre property located 50 miles north of Ivanhoe. Uncle Roy's father's first wife died and he then had her sister come and live with him to help with the children. Eventually they got married and had more children, one of whom was Roy!

Uncle Roy has loved his life and has a great undying love for the Australian Outback and Ngiyampaa country.



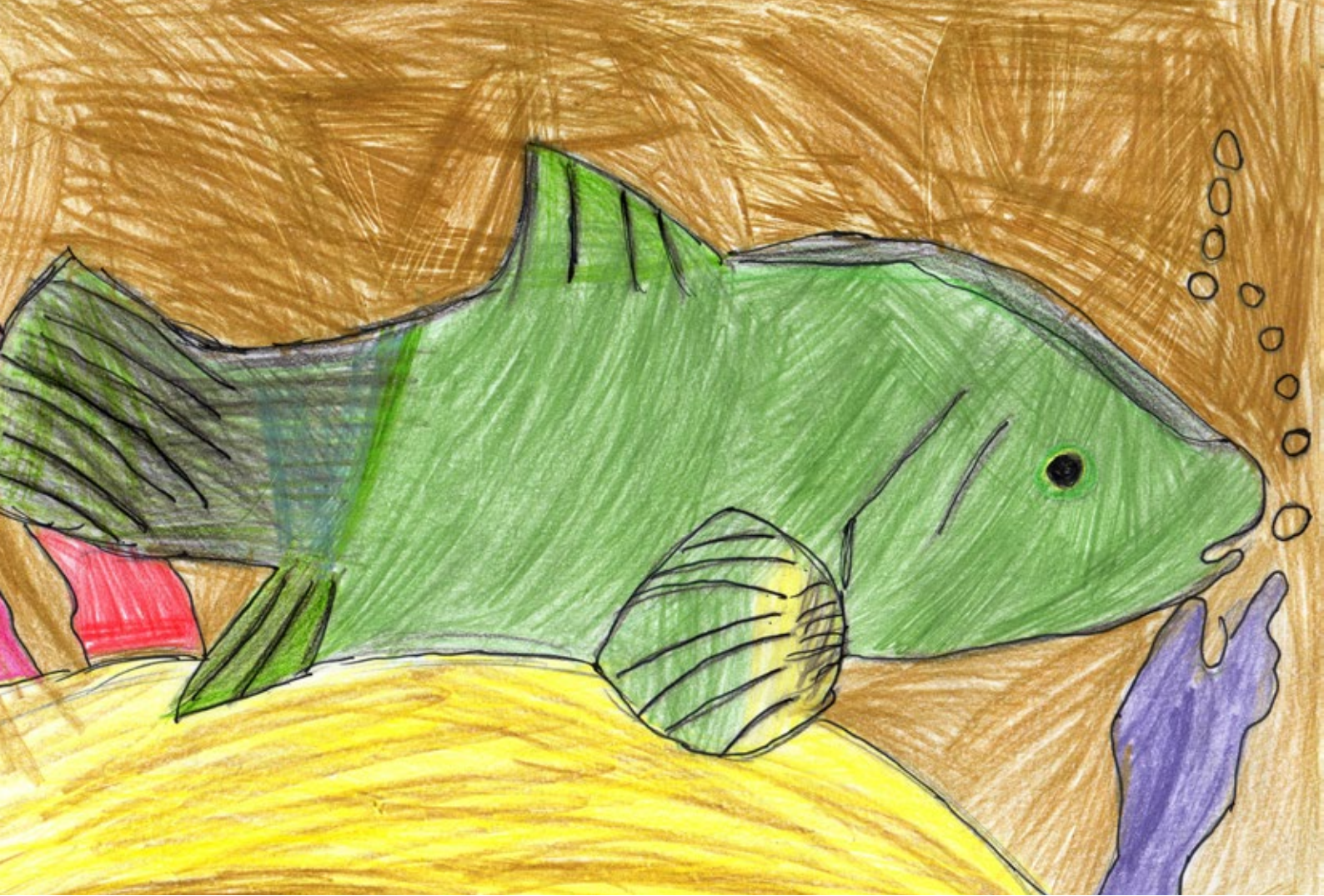


Uncle Roy is a proud Elder of the Ngilyampaa people. The Ngilyampaa people are the custodians of land which stretches from about 50 miles north of the Lachlan, up to Ivanhoe to Lake Mungo to Menindee to Cobar to Lake Cargelligo to Brewarinna and Bourke. The Ngilyampaa people are known as 'Dry Land People' and are basically one of the only Aboriginal people to not have country near a continuous waterway in New South Wales.

Uncle Roy loves the Ngilyampaa country because it is varied and beautiful. He said in past times going to Lake Mungo was very special for the Ngilyampaa people as there were water activities. It was also a meeting place, special events were celebrated there including weddings and it was also a great source of food which meant grand meals.

PHOTO: Lake Mungo National Park (Helen P. Waudby/OEH)





Uncle Roy said the variation in the country meant that the people could move around and adapt to different seasons. The southern region was fertile country with cool breezes during summer. However, when the freezing cold winds came in winter, the people could move to the north where there was more scrub and hills for protection.

There were crab holes which formed beautiful lakes when it rained. Some of the food in Ngiyampaa country included bush bananas, kangaroos, echidnas, seeds for medicine and of course, quandongs.



ARTWORK: Indyanna Wilson. PHOTOS: (L-R) Bush banana (Kelly Coleman/PeeKdesigns), Eastern grey kangaroo joey (Helen P. Waudby/OEH) and Quandongs (Merv Sutherland/OEH)





Uncle Roy told us about the ‘snotty gobbles’ or mistletoe. These are like a big bush that grows on other trees, such as mulgas. A ‘snotty gobble’ is sticky and has the sweet taste of a chocolate fantail.

He also told us about a medicine which was found on the leaves of the eucalypts (white box) found in the swamps near Ivanhoe. He said the people would scrub the white scum off the leaves, make it into a paste which would be used to help sore eyes and other pain.



PHOTOS: (Top) Mistletoe flower and female Mistletoe bird eating Snotty Gobble fruit (Kelly Coleman/PeeKdesigns), (Below) *Eucalyptus albens* (White box) leaves (EUCLID).

Uncle Roy spent his whole childhood on Marfield Station. He was brought there straight from the hospital after he was born. He loved his childhood on the property. They had everything that they needed. There was always fresh produce and lots of things for kids to do. His dad was a stockman on the property and had a great way with animals.



Uncle Roy was born just before the start of the Second World War. Most of the food and supplies were being sent to the soldiers fighting the war overseas. This, combined with the fact that a lot of men were missing from the workforce back home, meant that food was in short supply. The government issued ration books that contained coupons you would present at shops to get food. It didn't matter how rich you were, everyone got the same amount of coupons. If you ran out, you had to wait until the government handed out more or you could try and buy some from other people.



Uncle Roy and his family were lucky because they lived out on a property where there was food and produce so they didn't depend on the coupons as much as the people in the city. Uncle Roy said "We lived like Kings" compared to city people, who were often starving and, at times, searching for food in bins. Other people would purchase Uncle Roy's mum's unused ration tickets. With that money, she would buy clothes for the family.



Uncle Roy's mother (pictured above) used to wake up early in the morning and milk five cows. She would let the milk set and then scrape the cream off the top of the milk. Next she would scold or boil the milk to a certain point and then pound it to make butter. She grew yeast and would make the best bread Uncle Roy has ever tasted in his life. They always had beautiful butter and bread every day.

Uncle Roy's schooling at Marfield Station was taught by a travelling school teacher. The teacher used to go around the properties and stay at each station. He would leave work for the children to do, then move onto the next property. Uncle Roy had a green book in which to write, a lead pencil and an eraser. Uncle Roy really loved being taught this way and said the teacher was terrific.



Uncle Roy has lots of great memories of Marfield Station. He remembers his favourite dog Sandy when he was a child. Unfortunately Sandy was a sheep dog who didn't like sheep. However whenever Uncle Roy was out working with his dad and they would camp somewhere for the night, Sandy would always sleep at the end of Uncle Roy's swag and often creep under the blankets.

ARTWORK: Jasmyn Sowman



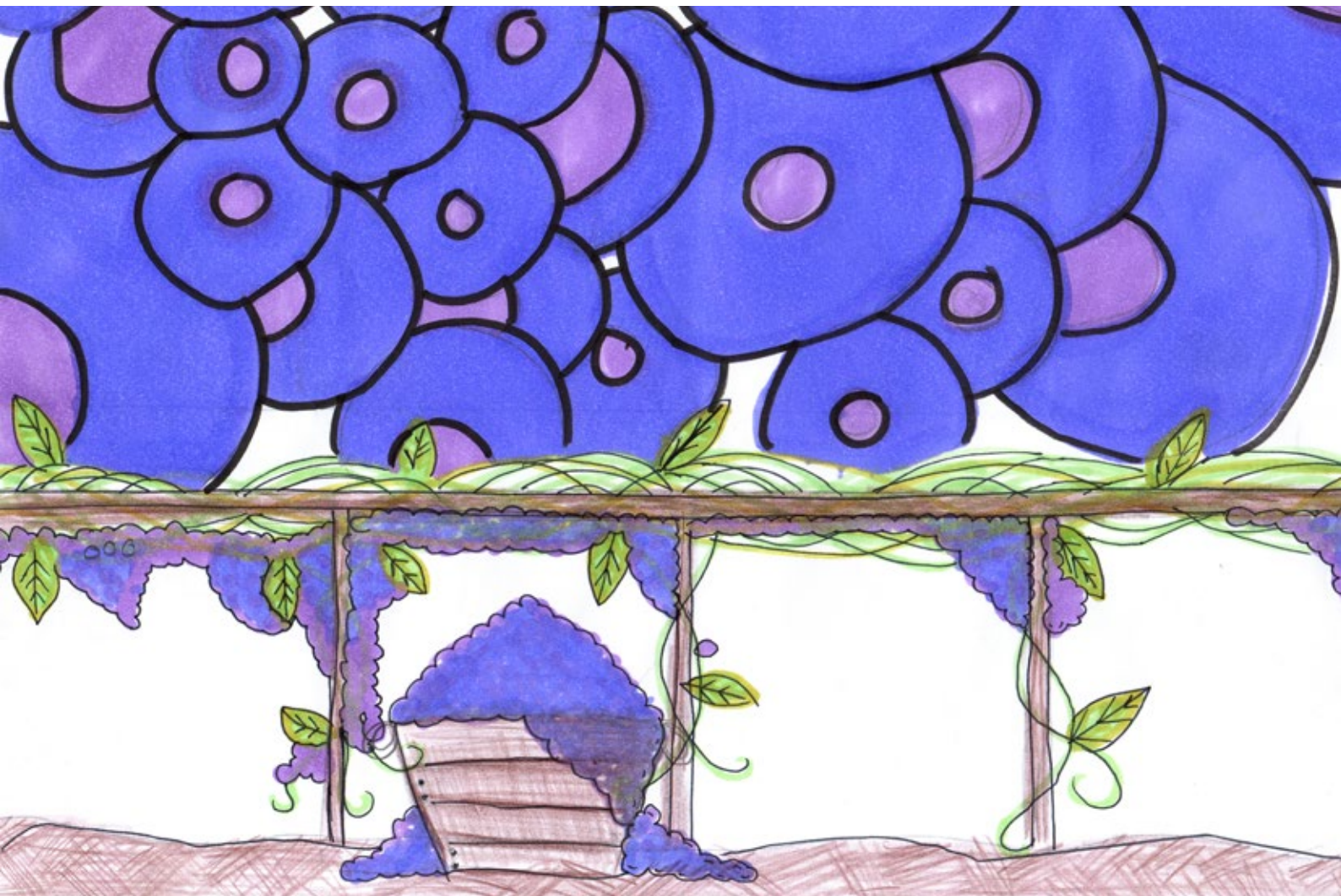
After he left Marfield Station Uncle Roy continued his schooling at Ivanhoe Public School. In those days the school was just an old wobbly weatherboard building. He couldn't wait to get out of school and start life.

When Uncle Roy finished school, his uncle set him up with a job picking wine grapes near Griffith. Uncle Roy jokes that he barely picked enough grapes to make one bottle of wine. He didn't like picking grapes, and found it hard to understand the Italians and their language. He got on his bike, cycled to the train and caught the train back to Ivanhoe. He couldn't wait to get back home to his family.



Roy (right) with his brother Jack (centre) and father David, known as 'King', in 1953.

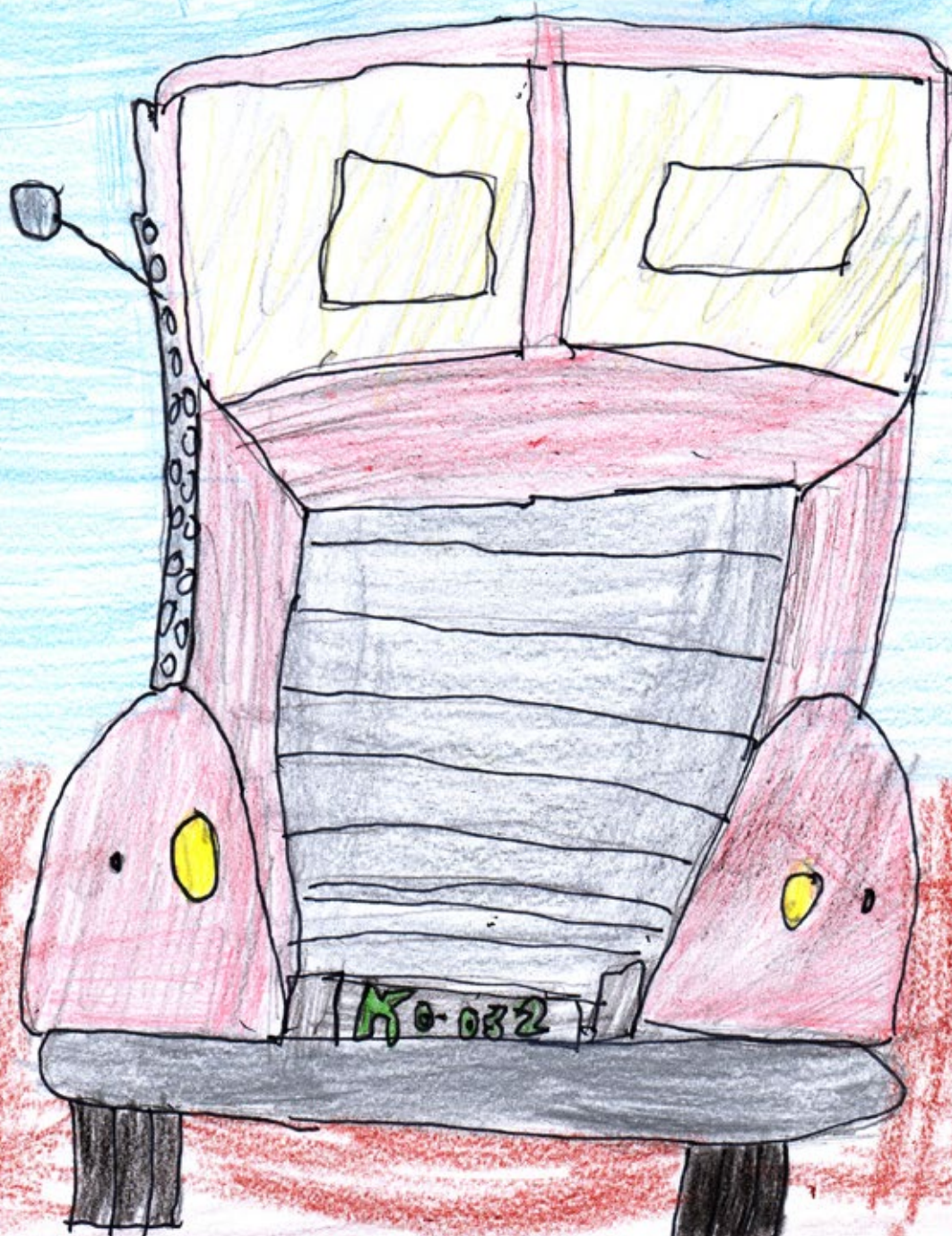
ARTWORK: Jasmyn Sowman



Uncle Roy tried his hand as a stockman and as a shearer but he hated sheep! He also spent his years at National Service which he really enjoyed. He was sent to Woodside and Murray Bridge in South Australia and also did camps in the Hunter Valley in New South Wales. It was around this time that his love for motorbikes really took off. During his life he has owned about 15 motorbikes.







Uncle Roy decided he would buy a truck. He got into his RM Williams gear, took himself to town and bought a table top Ford Thames truck. He took on the mail run from Ivanhoe to Wilcannia dropping labelled mail bags, fresh produce and parcels to all the stations along the way. He carted wool from the properties to the Ivanhoe train station. Uncle Roy was also happy to cart passengers from Ivanhoe to Wilcannia and return for two pound a trip, so long as the passengers didn't mind sitting on the tray of the truck which was freezing cold in winter and really hot in summer. Sometimes he carted passengers who had had too much to drink, which made for very interesting trips.



ARTWORK: Trevor Hodge



It was during his time as a truck driver that Uncle Roy met the love of his life. Beryl Murry was a head waitress working at a café in Wilcannia, which was owned by an old Italian man. Uncle Roy used to stop and get his meals at the café. He thought Beryl was a pretty good sort and would make a “good truckie’s wife!” So he threw her a ‘dandy line’ (dandelion) and he caught her... hook, line and sinker. They have been married for sixty three years and he reckons he just can’t get her off the hook!

Roy and Beryl married on the 17th September 1955.





Eventually Uncle Roy sold his table top and started working for the Department of Main Roads (DMR). During this time, the DMR helped build the well know Hay roundabout.

Uncle Roy moved his family from Ivanhoe to Hay and bought a block of land in South Hay. They lived in a caravan before they bought their first house. Uncle Roy left the DMR and worked for the Hay Shire Council. He was then asked to return to Ivanhoe and work for the Shire Council there for ten years. When Uncle Roy retired, he and Beryl returned to Hay, where they now live in Keble Street.







They have six children: Gail is a writer in Sydney; Sharon (pictured below) is a teacher in Hay; Shane works in the mines; Victoria works at St. Vincent's in Sydney and Jacqueline lives in Wagga Wagga. The saddest time of their life was when they lost Clem, their eldest son, in a car accident when he was eighteen years of age. They all miss him every day.

Uncle Roy and Beryl are very proud of their children.







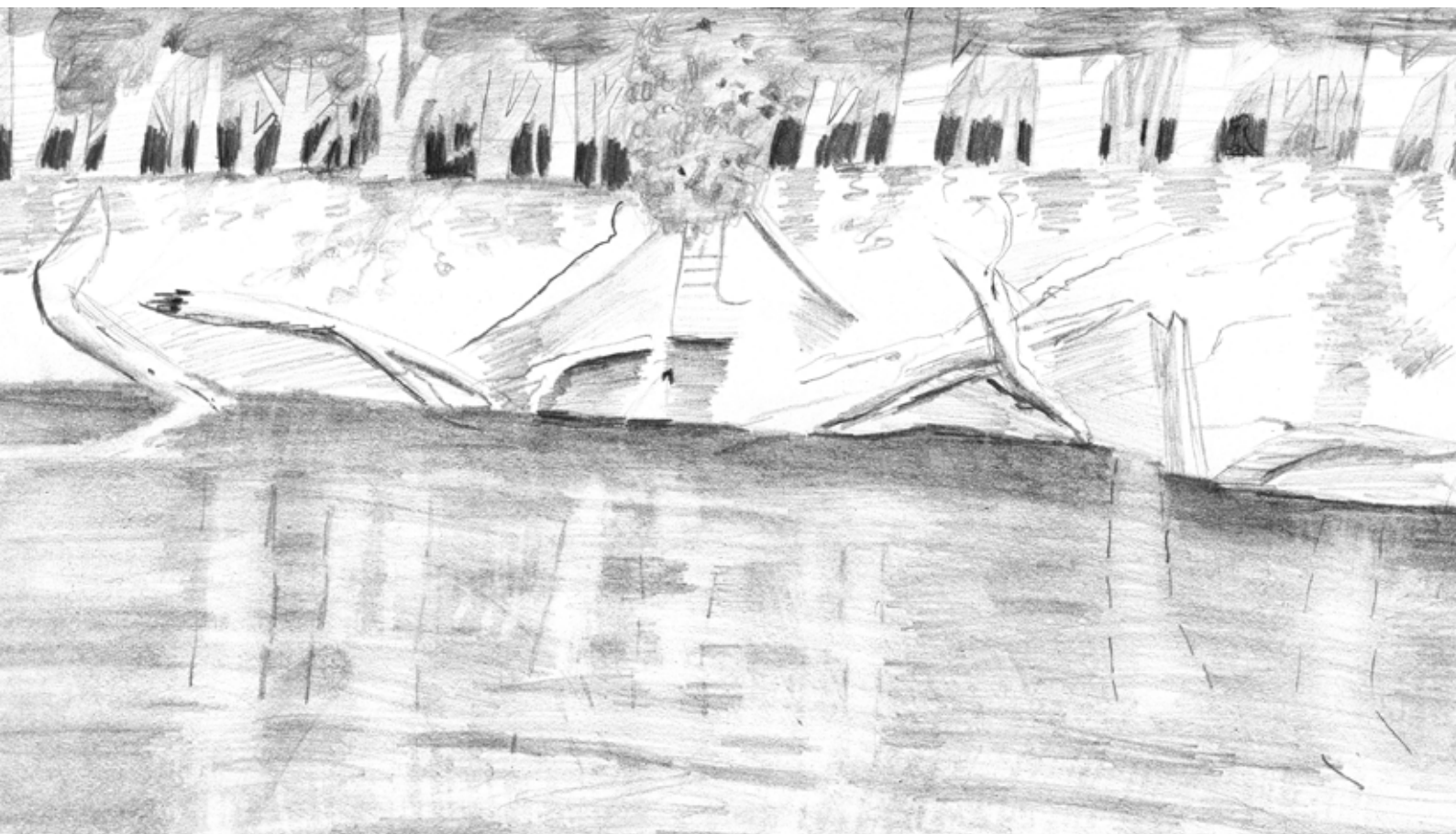
Uncle Roy is an inspirational man. He is proud of his cultural heritage and believes he has had a wonderful life. He told us many important things about life; love our family no matter what, be a caring individual, respect our teachers, care for our country. He told us about Ngiyampaa Country and described its beauty. Uncle Roy told us to love sport (he loved marbles and boxing). He told us to always be well dressed and to respect our elders.





Uncle Roy showed us how to live life and be happy. He really loves Hay, which made us feel very proud. Being with Uncle Roy made our small town feel very big. Uncle Roy made us see how beautiful our world is with our river and redgums and he made us realise how lucky we are to live where we live.

ARTWORKS: (above) Blake Gray, (below) Shaune Gee and Blake Gray, (opposite page) Nikita Lauer.







When Uncle Roy and his family left Marfield Station they moved to the outskirts of Ivanhoe. Uncle Roy's family built tin huts which they lived in, on an area known as the 'common'. Uncle Roy wrote a song when he was older called 'The Old Wilga Tree', in memory of the fun times he spent at the common.

## THE OLD WILGA TREE

My memory goes drifting back when I was young and free  
We lived out on the common near an old wilga tree.  
We were all so happy there my family and me  
And we often sang together around those old wilga trees.

We would have our parties there and nothing would go wrong  
We'd sing and dance together to a good old country song  
But now those days are over 'cos we had to move away  
And I am always dreaming of those good old happy days.

I can still remember when the stars were twinkling bright  
And the moon would shine down brightly on a long summer's night.  
Then you'd look around you and the bright lights you'd see  
As campers lit their fires around those old wilga trees.

We didn't have no rent to pay and life was such a dream  
And when we lit our lamps at night they burnt on kerosene  
And our clothes were always sparkling white and our camps so neat and clean  
Oh, how I miss those good old days when life was such a dream.

Now often when I go that way, I wander out to see  
Where we were all so happy around those old wilga trees  
But one thing haunts my memory when I look around and see  
'Cos all that's left is ashes around those old wilga trees.

The drovers' horse bells ring no more for they've all drifted on  
And I feel so lonely as I sit out here alone  
So, now the moon is rising and I feel the summer breeze.  
I think I'll leave with memories of those old wilga trees.

Lyrics by Roy Kennnedy, 1988.







ARTWORK: Jasmyn Sowman





Photos: Nikita Lauer, Shaune Gee, Blake Gray and Mackenzie Lawson on their excursion with Mr. McClelland for his art workshop.





THANK YOU UNCLE ROY  
YOU ARE AN INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US!





Charlie Boyd, Oscar Booth, Uncle Roy, Holly Gash, Indyanna Wilson,  
Jarome Cooper, Joyce Hussain, Trevor Hodge, Jasmyn Sowman,  
Dimity McLean and Sean Johnston

2018 Year 6, Hay Public School

