

# Tilly the Turtle searches for home



South West Rocks Public School  
Year 4M, 2025





## **Enviro-Stories**

Enviro-Stories is a 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)

## **Kempsey Shire Council**

Kempsey Shire Council's corporate vision is to lead and work with our community to build and inspired, connected Macleay Valley. Our community is at the heart of our decision making and plays an essential role in setting our strategic direction.

The Kempsey Shire Council Local Government Area is located within the NSW Mid North Coast and covers an area of 3,380 square kilometres with a population of approximately 30,000 residents.

The principal town in the Shire is Kempsey, located approximately halfway between the state capitals of Sydney and Brisbane, and between the regional centres of Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour.

[kempsey.nsw.gov.au](http://kempsey.nsw.gov.au)

## **South West Rocks Public School**

South West Rocks Public School is situated on the lands of the Dunghutti people, in a popular holiday area of the NSW Mid-North Coast.

Together, as a community committed to fostering respect, resilience, and collaboration, we empower South West Rocks students to become compassionate, confident, and forward-thinking leaders who positively impact the world around them.

[sthwestroc-p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://sthwestroc-p.schools.nsw.gov.au)

# Tilly the Turtle searches for home

**School:** South West Rocks Public School

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**Teacher:** Mrs Kristy Maynard

**Special thanks to:** Jessica Marsh and Chase Nolan-Eather from Kempsey Shire Council.

This book has been published as part of the  
Macleay EcoExplorers Enviro-Stories program.



*Crack, crack, crack! Pop!*

"Hello?" a small voice called as Tilly the turtle slowly came out of her egg.



## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

The gender of a sea turtle is determined by the temperature of the sand. Increasing temperature, as a result of climate change, means more females are born.



Tilly slowly made her way through the sand and into the waters of the beautiful ocean. She felt rather nervous and scared.

Tilly noticed the water was a lot warmer than she imagined and wondered why?



Tilly continued her journey into the depths of the ocean.

Her instincts were telling her to find a beautiful coral reef to live in. She couldn't stop thinking about it!



## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Our coral reefs are important ecosystems and support a wide range of marine life by providing habitat for many species.



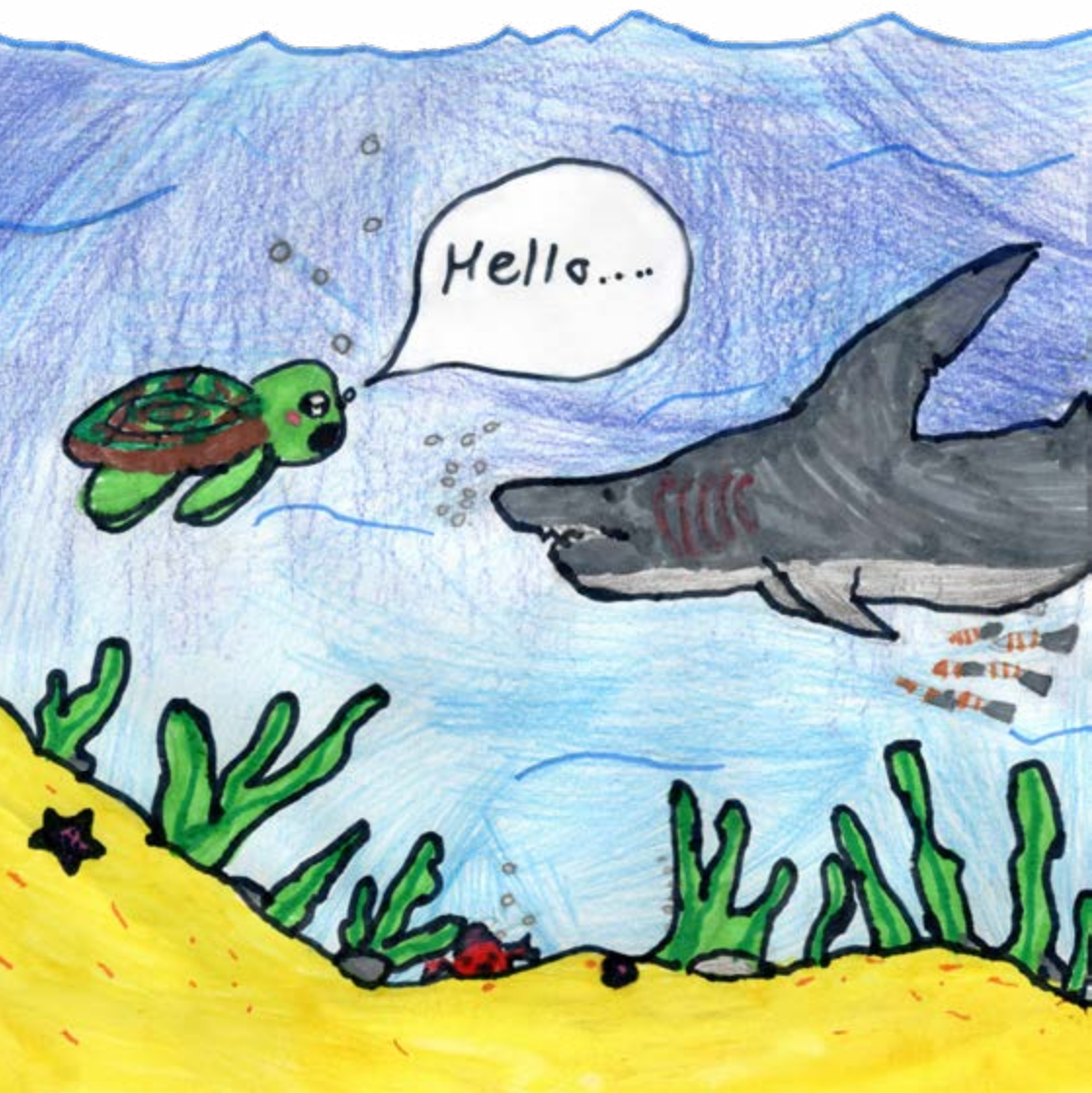
Her thoughts were interrupted by the movement of a creature much larger than her.

"What on Earth was that?" Tilly wondered.



Suddenly the large creature was face to face with Tilly. She wasn't sure what to do. Should she swim away as fast as she can or stay still and hope it didn't notice her? Eventually she decided to confront the creature.

She spoke in a quaking voice, "Hello. My name is Tilly! What's yours?"





A large mouth with a smile containing a lot of very sharp teeth started moving. "I'm Greg and I am a grey nurse shark."

Greg seemed friendly enough thought Tilly.

"Please don't be scared of me like most others," he continued.



## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Grey nurse sharks are classed as critically endangered because there aren't many left. We are lucky to have some grey nurse sharks at Fish Rock, right near South West Rocks.

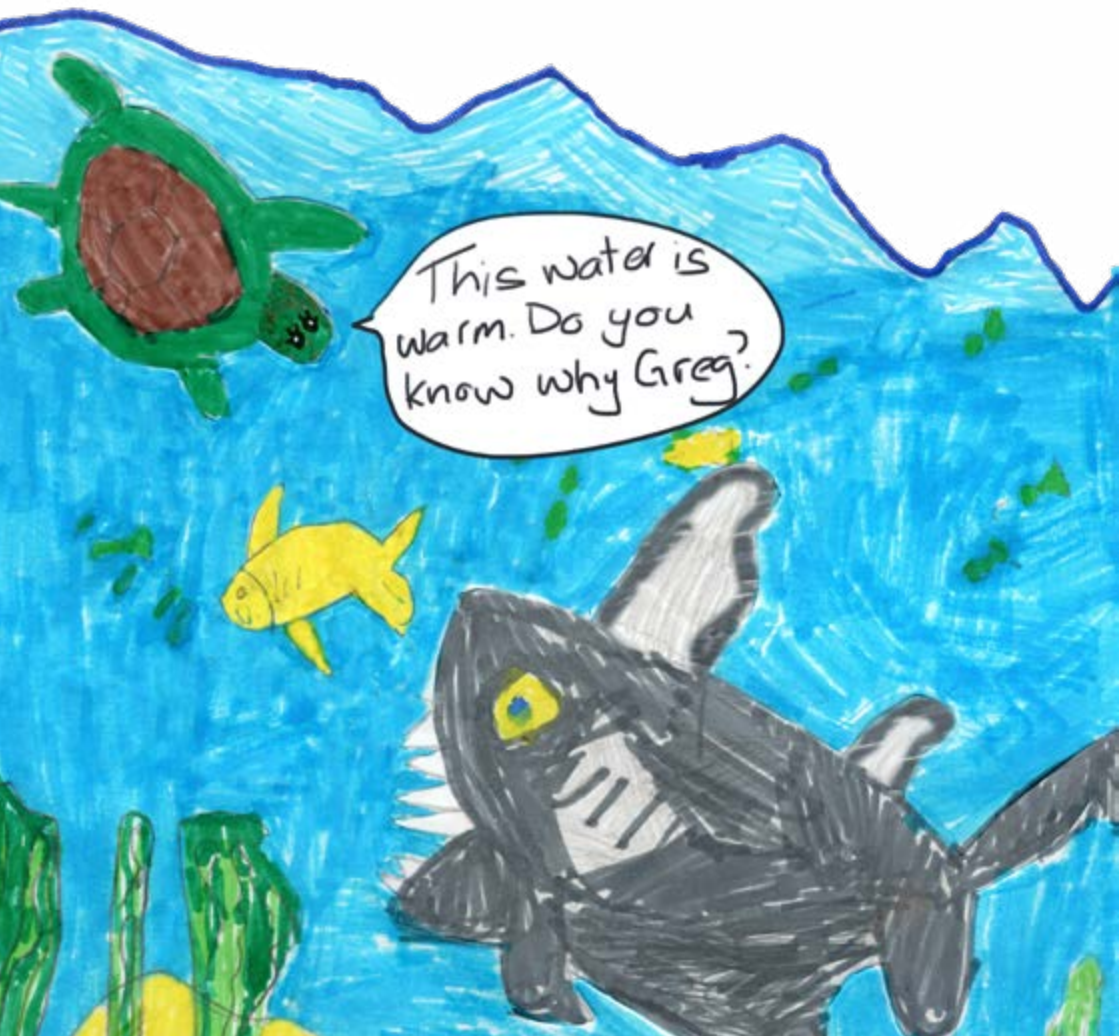
"I'm on my way to find a beautiful coral reef," said Tilly.

"I can show you the way," replied Greg.

"Oh really? That would be wonderful!" exclaimed an excited Tilly.

The two new friends set off on their journey.

"This water is warm. Do you know why Greg?" asked Tilly.





"I sure do," he answered. "Unfortunately, it's because of something called climate change."

"I have never heard of that," said Tilly. "What is climate change?"

"It is caused by humans creating greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere," replied Greg. "This can then cause the ocean temperature to rise as water absorbs heat. Changes in our long-term climate can also occur with more frequent serious droughts, wind and rain events."

The two animals continued on, hoping the water would not get much warmer and that they would soon find a healthy beautiful coral reef.



## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Climate change is different from weather. It is the change in temperature, rainfall and wind patterns that happens over decades or more.



As Tilly swam beside Greg, her mind was racing. She wondered what other effects were being caused by humans and climate change.

"How can we stop humans causing climate change?" she eventually asked.

Before Greg could answer her, he stopped swimming. Tilly thought she noticed a tear in his eye as he replied, "I just hope it is not already too late."





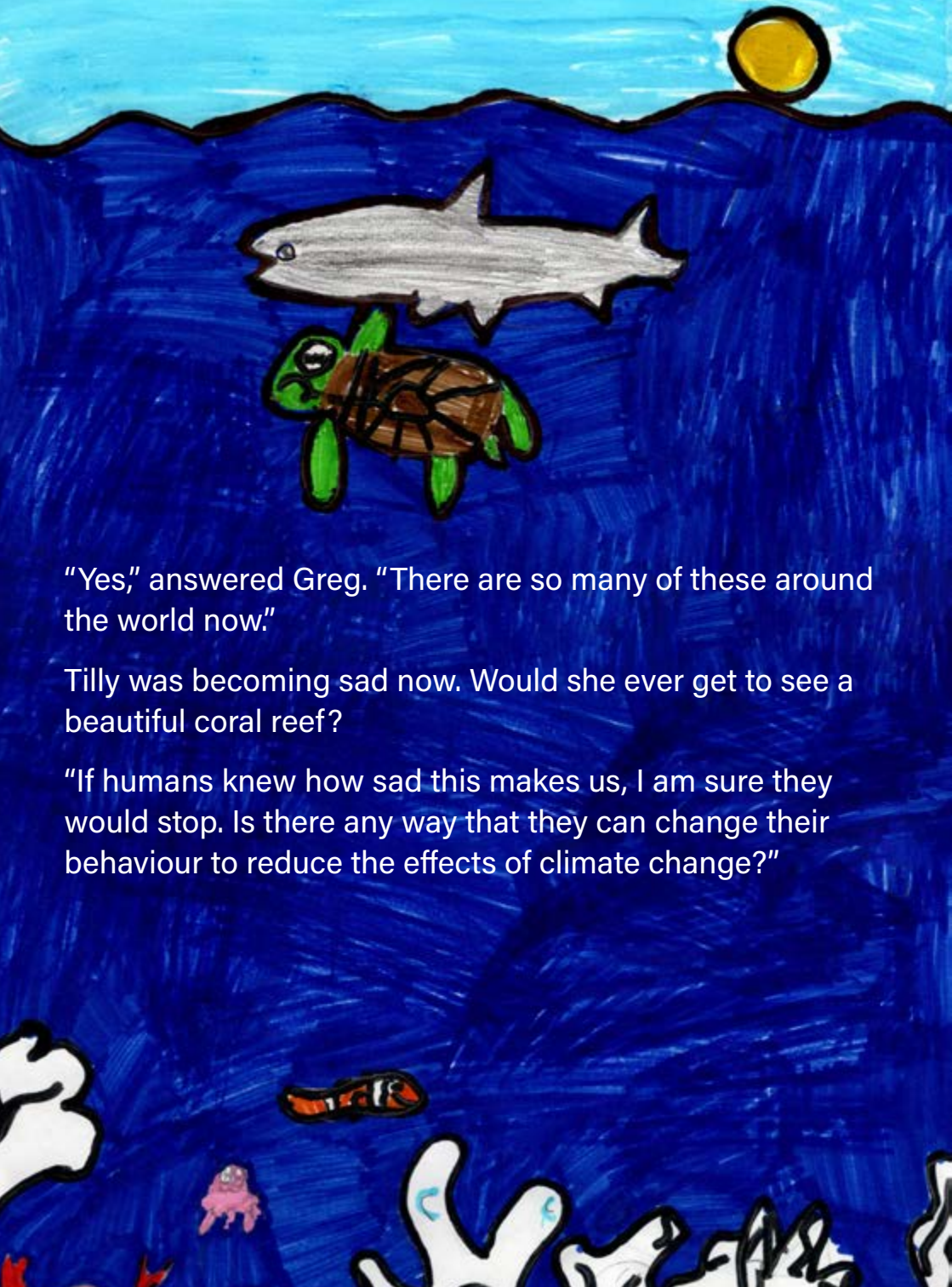


Tilly strained her eyes as she looked around towards a shape in the distance. Tilly thought she could see coral, but it didn't have any colour.

"What is this?" she asked, hoping Greg didn't mind all of her questions.

It took him a little bit to answer, but eventually he said, "Yet another reef that is bleached."

By now Tilly thought she knew the answer, but still asked, "Is this from climate change too?"



"Yes," answered Greg. "There are so many of these around the world now."

Tilly was becoming sad now. Would she ever get to see a beautiful coral reef?

"If humans knew how sad this makes us, I am sure they would stop. Is there any way that they can change their behaviour to reduce the effects of climate change?"



Greg started swimming away from the beached coral reef and Tilly followed.

Eventually he answered her, "There are a few ways, Tilly. Some are using renewable energy, protecting forests and reducing waste. I just hope they get the message very soon."

Tilly decided not to ask any more questions for a while.



The two friends kept swimming. There was a long silence between them.

Tilly knew why Greg was so sad, but she held on to hope. Surely the ocean was so big and home to so many different animals and plants that it could recover.

She knew this because they met lots of creatures on their travels.





Suddenly Greg stopped swimming.

"Not again," Tilly thought, checking Greg's eyes for tears.

To her surprise, Greg was not crying, and he had a huge smile on his face. He looked down and Tilly followed his gaze.

She saw the most amazing, colourful coral reef and did a little happy dance.





Tilly and Greg swam gracefully in and out of the reef. She was so happy to have found a healthy reef to call home, and she knew Greg was too.

As she kept swimming, Tilly secretly said to herself, "Please humans, reduce climate change. We don't want to lose any more of our magnificent coral reefs."



# Climate change in the Macleay region

Even in the Macleay region, climate change is a big challenge. By learning, preparing and working together to take action, we can build a safer, cleaner and more sustainable future for everyone.

## How climate change affects us

- Hotter temperatures and heatwaves.
- Heavier rainfall, floods, and droughts.
- More intense storms, including hail and strong winds.
- Sea level rise, which can damage coastal areas.
- More bushfires and days with high fire danger.
- Impacts on plants and animals, including where they live and how they survive.
- Changes to our health, water supply, and food production.

## What can you do to help?

- Save energy by turning off lights and using less electricity.
- Use clean energy like solar power, if possible.
- Walk or ride your bike instead of using a car.
- Eat local food and don't waste it.
- Recycle and compost to reduce rubbish.
- Plant trees and look after your garden.
- Get ready for extreme weather by learning what to do in a fire, flood, or heatwave.

**Small actions, when done by many people,  
can make a big difference!**



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