# National Literacy and Numeracy Week 2008
## Project Report

**Project title:** “Our Place” Creative Writing Day

**Project description:**
During 2006–7 Bournda EEC collaborated with the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority on the “Our Place, Southern Rivers” Project. A series of workshops, youth forums, natural resource expos and conferences allowed students to explore their natural environment and to discuss how they valued their local places. [http://www.bournda-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/OPSR/](http://www.bournda-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/OPSR/)

This literacy project aimed to create an opportunity for young writers to work on a piece of creative writing that developed further their understanding of connection to place in their local environment. Three local schools, Bega, Eden Marine and Bombala High Schools, were invited to send Year 7 students to a creative writing day at Bournda National Park. A local published author, Venie Holmgren, was invited to talk to the students about her work and the students had the opportunity to ask questions of the visiting author. The completed works were published and are being exhibited at Bega, Eden and Bombala High Schools.

**Person responsible for project:**
Doug Reckord, Principal

**School, region, diocese:**
Bournda Environmental Education Centre, Illawarra and South East Region

**Contact person’s email:**
Bournda-e.school@det.nsw.edu.au

**Number of students, teachers, parents, other community members directly involved:**
- 17 Year 7 gifted and talented students from Bega, Eden Marine and Bombala High Schools
- Deb Harris, teacher Bournda EEC
- Venie Holmgren, local published author
- Jan Lynch, administration Bournda EEC

**Intended literacy and/or numeracy outcomes to:**
- explore and express connections to place
- investigate language forms and features and to experiment with increasingly sophisticated language forms and features
- draw on experience, ideas and a variety of structures to compose texts
- organise, develop and compose texts using language appropriate to audience, form and purpose
- use, reflect on and assess individual and collaborative skills for learning
• foster links between students and community members within neighbouring country high school communities with a view to future co-operative learning.

Evidence of achievement of intended literacy and/or numeracy outcomes:
• A booklet was produced for each student to work through. This booklet included activities:
  1. exploring the Dictionary
  2. investigating a Thesaurus
  3. structuring sentences from simple to complex
  4. narrative and literary recount
• Students worked through five sessions which included:
  1. World of Words
  2. Structuring Sentences
  3. Meeting a Mentor
  4. Key Concepts and Structural Focus
  5. Planning, Drafting and Editing
• Students discussed writing with published author, Venie Holmgren. Questions were asked and the students gained an insight into the work of a writer.
• Each student wrote an outstanding piece of work and these have been published and put into a travelling display.
• Some of the work was printed in one of the local newspapers showcasing the high standard achieved.

Other information below:
• All works written by the students. (Please note that the display had photos of landscapes behind the written works.)
• Quotes were taken from the students. These were incorporated into the display.
• Copy of the booklet that was produced for students to work through on the day.
• Photo of the group taken on the day at Bournda National Park.
• Photo of Venie Holmgren working with students.
• Two photos of the display panels – front and back. This is the display that is travelling around to each of the three schools involved.
• Bega District News full page article with published works by the Bega High School students.

Budget expenditure:
• 3 days for teacher, Deb Harris ($301.71 per day = $905.13)
• 1 day extra to organise and develop program (301.71 – paid by Bournda EEC)
• Total for project $1206.84

Feedback about making grants available for such projects:
• Student evaluations were very positive in terms of the day and their participation in it. The
The vast majority indicated a wish to be involved in future activities of this kind.

- Feedback from staff at the schools indicated they were very pleased that the program was run. Comments included it being an opportunity to not only extend able students but offered confidence to those very interested in writing. There was positive support from an attending teacher who was observing through the day.
- The local author was both surprised and pleased by the questions the students asked.
- With support from grants Bournda EEC can see possibilities for linking gifted and talented students from a variety of schools with programs such as this in the future.

See materials below:
Welcome to Bournda

Bournda Environmental Education Centre would like to show our respect by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land, the elders both past and present.

Today we will explore the world of words and structuring sentences to develop your skills in composing.

You will meet a published writer and have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss writing.

We will consider ‘a sense of place’ and the features of a narrative literary recount. This will lead to composing a text for publication in a local exhibition entitled ‘Our Place’.

This workshop is part of National Literacy and Numeracy Week 2008 and has been made possible by a grant from the NSW Department of Education & Training through an Australian Government Initiative.

Bournda EEC has a motto of take only photos and leave only footprints.

We’ll take your photograph and publish your composing. We hope you take away good memories.

Have an excellent day!
LITERACY WORKSHOP AT BOURNDA

'Our Place' – A creative writing experience for Year 7 students

PROGRAM:

09:30   Arrive Bournda EEC
        Drive to Field Studies Huts in Bournda NP
09:45   Introduction
10:00-11:00  Fun with Fundamentals
            Session 1: World of Words
            Session 2: Structuring Sentences
11:00-11:15  RECESS
11:15-11:45  Session 3: Meeting a mentor
11:45-12:00  Walk to lookout and Bournda Beach
12:00-13:00  Composing for context
            Session 4: Key Concepts and Structural Focus
13:00-13:30  LUNCH
13:30-14:30  Session 5: Planning, Drafting and Editing
14:30   Leave from Field Studies Huts

THE WORLD OF WORDS:  Flexing Vocabulary Muscles
Activity A: Exploring the Dictionary
Find five 'unusual' words and write up their definition...
   words you've heard
   but don't know what they mean,
   words you've never heard
   and never ever seen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. quirky</td>
<td>1. full of quirks, tricky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. full of twists, turns or flourishes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LITERACY WORKSHOP AT BOURNDA

THE WORLD OF WORDS: Flexing Vocabulary Muscles
Activity B: Investigating a Thesaurus

Find synonyms for these words... words become familiar
   and sometimes lack joy,
synonyms are similar
and need to be employed.

LITERACY WORKSHOP AT BOURNDA

STRUCTURING SENTENCES: From Simple to Complex
(From Mastering Words by R.D. Walshe and P.M. Wheeler, Longman Australia 2000)
Step 10: Amazing flexibility of the sentence

The good news is that you do not have to be ‘stuck for words’—nor, indeed, for phrases or clauses or sentences! Why? Because every sentence you have to write offers you many choices. In the box below is the shortest possible sentence-base: a one-word subject + a one-word verb. Around it are just some of the many possible add-ons or extensions—words, phrases, clauses—for the front or middle or end of the sentence-base. And, for good measure, five simple sentences have been added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex-captain</td>
<td>, because a win had seemed unlikely,</td>
<td>spontaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relieved,</td>
<td>, although quiet till that moment,</td>
<td>uncontrollably.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprised,</td>
<td>, when the final whistle blew,</td>
<td>wholeheartedly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool, calm, collected,</td>
<td>, whom no one had noticed,</td>
<td>half-disbelievingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astonished, delighted,</td>
<td>, who had not thought it possible,</td>
<td>wildly, noisily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the sideline,</td>
<td>, unable to believe it,</td>
<td>then and there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorious by a whisker,</td>
<td>, the team’s keenest admirer,</td>
<td>elated by the victory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprised and thankful,</td>
<td>, dizzy at this success,</td>
<td>a relieved man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoarse from barracking,</td>
<td>, exhausted by shouting,</td>
<td>surprised beyond belief,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to believe it,</td>
<td>, with a gasp of relief,</td>
<td>along with his friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As if he knew the outcome,</td>
<td>—astonished, delighted—</td>
<td>as the final whistle sounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Though five minutes remained,</td>
<td>disbelieving,</td>
<td>while the team walked off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the final whistle sounded,</td>
<td>triumphant,</td>
<td>if shouting praise is applause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever his team showed spirit,</td>
<td>surprised,</td>
<td>though the final goal was disputed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because a win had seemed unlikely,</td>
<td>relieved,</td>
<td>like a man possessed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^Peter^ applauded^`

Added sentences:

and the whole team cheered.

but his rivals disputed the result.

yet a doubt hung over the game.

so his day was ending on a high note.

or, rather, he expressed his great relief!

Note:

1 These 5-5-5 columns show only some of the extensions possible.

2 Many of the extensions are movable to front, middle or end positions.

3 Each clause extension usually needs a connective (italicised).
LITERACY WORKSHOP AT BOURNDA

STRUCTURING SENTENCES: From Simple to Complex
LITERACY WORKSHOP AT BOURNDA

KEY CONCEPTS: ‘Our Place’
LITERACY WORKSHOP AT BOURNDA

STRUCTURAL FOCUS: Narrative and Literary Recount
(From K-6 English Syllabus)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Language features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>To entertain, create, stimulate emotions, motivate, guide, teach</td>
<td>Orientation,[Complication/Evaluation], Resolution, Codes (optional)</td>
<td>usually specific participants, time words used to connect events, action words predominate in complication and resolution, noun groups important in describing characters and settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recount</td>
<td>To tell what happened. Literary recounts are to entertain.</td>
<td>Orientation, Series of events sequenced in time (literary recounts), personal comments, reorientation</td>
<td>descriptive language, past tense, time words to connect events, words which tell us where, when, with whom, how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Literary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Procedural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Factual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>To describe a particular living, non-living or natural phenomenon.</td>
<td>Introduction, Characteristic features, eg. appearance qualities, Conclusion (optional)</td>
<td>particular nouns, variety of adjectives, use of similes, metaphors and other types of figurative language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>To summarise and respond personally to an artistic work.</td>
<td>Context of artistic work, Description of artistic work, Judgement</td>
<td>words which express judgements, descriptive language, present tense, persuasive language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>To classify or describe general classes of phenomenon.</td>
<td>General statement or classification, Description</td>
<td>technical language, simple present tense, generalised terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>To achieve a goal/outcome through a sequence of steps</td>
<td>Goal, Materials needed (optional), Steps</td>
<td>verbs usually at the beginning of each instruction, words or groups of words which tell us how, when, where, with whom, use of commands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>To explain how or why something occurs in scientific and technical fields</td>
<td>Phenomenon identification, Explanation sequence, Concluding statement (optional)</td>
<td>complex sentences, technical language, use of words such as 'because', 'as a result', to establish cause/effect sequences, passive voice, simple present tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>To persuade by arguing one side of the issue</td>
<td>Thesis, Arguments (1-n), Reinforcement of Thesis</td>
<td>words that qualify, eg. usually, probably, words that link arguments, eg. firstly, on the other hand, evaluative language, modals, eg. must, certainly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>To examine issues from more than one perspective and make recommendations based on evidence</td>
<td>Opening statement, Arguments, for and against, Conclusion</td>
<td>words that link arguments, varying degrees of modality, use of adverbials of manner, eg. deliberately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LITERACY WORKSHOP AT BOURNDA

PLANNING PAGE: 'Our Place' and a Narrative Literary Recount
QUOTES FROM PARTICIPATING STUDENTS – Year 7 Literacy Day at Bournda

Miriam Zweck (Bega High School): “Opening the mind, freeing the heart and cramping the hand are what writing does.”

Siobhan McKenna (Eden Marine High School): “Writing helps me think of possibilities …. The world and what happens.”

Emma-Jane Skeers (Eden Marine High School): “Writing’s a fun way to express yourself.”

Ruby Dein (Eden Marine High School): “Writing helps me to explore my thoughts.”

Lily Platts (Bombala High School): “Creating is a wonderful thing.”

Scott Hepburn (Bombala High School): “I can express my feelings through writing.”

Emily Chapman (Bombala High School): “It makes me feel like there’s endless possibilities.”

Zachary Bywater (Bega High School): “I don’t find the words, the words find me.”

Bonnie Hayes (Bega High School): “Everything becomes easy when I start writing.”

Andie Zarins (Bega High School): “One of my passions has always been writing.”

Polly Scott-Funaki (Bega High School): “My writing helps me describe the things I see and feel.”

Lindsay Ingram (Bombala High School): “Writing explores the world of knowledge.”

Jessica High (Eden Marine High School): “Leaving the world of reality is what writing can allow us to do.”

Brydie Wigg (Eden Marine High School): “Freedom is what I get from writing.”

Alice Hutley (Bega High School): “Writing gives me enjoyment and it’s a way to record my beliefs and experiences. I can express my feelings better when I write them down.”

Sarah Campbell (Bega High School): “I’m taken to another world by my writing.”

Angela Fletcher (Eden Marine High School): “When I’m writing I can go into my own world and anything can happen.”

What Is, What Was and What Will Be…

The mountains... Australia’s best to see, where a spectacular range of wildlife find their home. To some, this beautiful place really is like a second home. The only place where their minds truly settle and they find peace.

For me, that settled mind and peace used to be the case. Unfortunately, not any more. I once dreamed up wild fantasies where I lived there, with my horse and no-one would ever find me. Also, all the animals, especially the wild horses were my friends. Now, I don’t dream or think any more fantasies, for what use were my fantasies if there are no horses, if they’ve all been poisoned or captured?
People say they destroy wildlife and nature. I do know that they do leave tracks and they do
eat the grass. They are not native animals to Australia. But, what do you think kangaroos
eat? Who leaves the tracks where horses cannot fit?

What do you think of when someone says Australia? A lot of people would say the beaches,
however others may think of ‘The Man from Snowy River!’ What would that poem be without
the horses? Australia’s outback would, to me, be nothing, without the horses.

But I am only a twelve year old girl. Who would take me seriously? What can I honestly do?
Maybe they won’t all die, maybe they’ll just be forgotten. What is, what was and what will be
are three totally different things.

Brydie Wigg
Eden Marine High School

The Flood

Everyday we went down to the creek. It was the perfect place to stop fighting and have fun.
There was a swimming hole with a waterfall coming into it. There was the tree house in the
old oak tree. Everything was perfect.

The second week of the summer holidays my sisters, our dogs and I went down there early
in the morning. We had been there all day when my older sister noticed huge, black
thunder-heads in the west. She told us we should leave for home. I said when it started to
rain we could leave.

We waited a few minutes then the wind picked up. Pretty soon it was bucketing down rain
along with gale force winds. The water was rising with extreme speed. We were racing
back home when the oak tree blocked my sisters at the creek. I couldn’t decide whether I
should go for help or try to help them. All of a sudden something collided with my skull.
Everything went black.

I remember waking up in a hospital bed with my dog’s head under my hand. The first thing I
blurted out was, “are Kate and Sara OK?” Mum came up to me with tears in her eyes and
told me we would get through this. Every time I asked everyone kept avoiding an answer.

Late the night before I was due to leave to go home, I overheard Mum and Dad revealing the
dreadful news. Kate and Sara had drowned in the flood. After the flood I didn’t talk to
anyone but my dog. I cried myself to sleep and broke into tears in the middle of class. No
matter what anyone said I knew it was my fault and nothing could change that.

A year after their death, I went back to the creek to see what had happened to our childhood
spot. I had to clamber over the oak tree to get to the creek. After a year it still looked as if it
had been hit by a cyclone. Looking for hours, I eventually spotted Sara’s necklace and
Kate’s rag doll wedged under the oak tree. I burst into tears at the sight of them. Memories
flooded my mind at the sight of them.

That night I had a dream of them telling me to move on in my life. These days I still miss
them but I have learned to live with it. But not matter what I do I can’t ever bare going back
to the creek.

Emily Chapman
Bombala High School
Wallagaraugh Lake

When I arrived at Wallagaraugh Lake with my family for the first time, I felt like I was going to have some of the best times of my life. I looked around and carefully scanned my surroundings. It was a beautiful day and the sun was shining brightly; the lake was sparkling like a diamond, it looked very welcoming.

We met our friends at the well looked after cabins. Dad took our bikes off their trailer and then I started exploring. I found a track in the bush and decided to ride through it. The track, which wasn’t very long, led to an enormous patch of flat land; there was a mat of trees in the distance, it looked beautiful. The colourful birds in the nearby trees were happily singing. I thought to myself, “what a wonderful place!”

I started to head back to the cabins for a refreshing drink of water. After this I headed to the canoes where I would paddle around the lake to explore some more. The lake was very calm and friendly. I closed my eyes for a while and listened to all of the sounds. There were fish splashing in the water, birds up in the trees singing and the lapping of the waves against the edge of the surface. By now it was beginning to turn to dark; the sun setting was a picturesque view. The sky was full of orange and red clouds, it was beautiful.

I slowly paddled back to the shore and walked up the steep hill back to the cabins. I had dinner which was just sausages on the barbeque and then went and sat by the fire outside. Everyone was laughing and socialising with each other, I joined in as well. After a couple of hours I began to feel very tired and suggested to myself that I should go and get some sleep.

I reached the cabin and got my pyjamas on and I plonked onto my bed. I pulled my flowery blanket over my body and moved around until I was comfortable. I was so excited to see what tomorrow would bring that I couldn’t sleep. I thought about what I had done today and realised that this was my place, a home away from home.

Angela Fletcher
Eden Marine High School

Deciding

There’s nowhere to go, nowhere to be. It was like there was nowhere to go and nowhere to be. My life was in pieces and I couldn’t go back to change what happened and to bring all the pieces together. This is my story of how one little walk with the fresh air could make me think and see how the rest of the world copes.

I’d stormed out of the house wanting to get away, away from everything. I just kept on walking down to where the jumping river floods out and on to the windy beach. I sat and looked at the end of the world.

That’s all I did for 5 hours; sat, thought, made difficult decisions and realised how important life is and how lucky I am.

The wind was rushing into my face. I got up fast and ran thumping my feet on the sand. I had no control. I jumped into the shallows of the white tumbling waves. I swam around and freed myself from all the bad vibes that had stuck to me. Sunset came and I was still thinking what I would do with my life.
I decided to look at the whole world. I figured I was really lucky to have a family and be able to chose what I did with my life. Paul would be proud and so would Nanna. I walked home wet but in deep thought. I told myself to not worry and take chances.

You might think this is strange, to go and think at your own special place but try it. Take everything and turn it around. You might not know what will happen next but you’ll always be able to decide. The future is yours.

Siobhan McKenna
Eden Marine High School

Confrontation

I was walking past the bright blue sea, thinking what my life would be like if I hadn’t discovered my true ability, when all of a sudden I heard a cry for help. I ran as fast and I could to the place from where I heard the voice coming. The sand I was running on was soft and dry.

When I finally got there I saw a young girl around the age of five drifting out to sea. Her hands were waving about trying to get my attention. I jumped in and swam to her, the water was freezing. When I reached her I found out it was only a dummy. Someone had been tricking me.

I looked up on shore only to see one of my arch-enemies, Queen Wehallenia, standing there in her black sparkling ball gown. I went to start swimming back, but my body was completely frozen. It was a trap, Queen Nehallenia knew I couldn’t leave someone who needed help. What was she going to do to me?

I could feel a sudden tightness in my body. Then it hit me she was going to crush my body using her dark magic. I had to find a way out of it. I focussed my energy on my strength of power, building up enough energy to break free.

I started saying some magic words like ‘Metra Morphic, Talla Tam, the power of stars I command.’ Then my power was unleased. I broke free of Queen Wehallenia’s magic and flew quickly up into the sky and started shooting star bolts at her.

My star bolts came from my hands, glowing green circles with incredible power. She fell to the ground. After I had finished throwing I went up onto shore but when I reached her she had disappeared.

Well, that was exciting but where did she go? I wonder what will happen next? I continued walking along the sea and thought my life would be terrible without my ability. Life wouldn’t be so much fun.

Emma-Jane Skeers
Eden Marine High School

Memories

Enduring the hot summer sun on your face while the cool breeze blows past your soft skin, you listen to the crashing waves of the clear blue waters. You hear the vague sound of children laughing, enjoying themselves in the sea.

You close your tired eyes and rest near the shore while you think back to the memories of your childhood spent on the beach. You dream of the days you were a child on the coast and long to relive those memories when you were at your happiest.
You miss diving into the ocean with your cousins and building sand castles when you were younger. You begin to miss the summer days spent at the beach and camping. You think of the smell of food cooking and burning fires out in the open. You remember the special smells that remind you of your holidays.

Suddenly you awake from your memories and see the harsh sun and blue water crashing onto the tanned sand. You realise you are still on the beach, but now it is time to head home. As you drive out of town, you remember the happy memories you have had and think of the memories that are still to come.

**Polly Scott-Funaki**  
**Bega High School**

**Surrounded**

I take off my sweaty shoes impatiently and bury my feet deep into the sand. The wind blows my hair about wildly around my face as I stare at the landscape around me.

I look up at the trees in front of me, standing tall and proud, as they stare back down on me with blank faces. The waves on the beach break continuously on the golden sand, further and further up the sand dunes each time. I stare up into the sky and watch the fluffy white clouds slowly make their way past the world.

The marram grass beside me continues to prickle my skin if I move too close towards it. I look over into the distance to see hundreds of trees grey and bleak with green hair-like leaves all compact with each other like a giant barrier. I watch the tiny twittering birds desperately try to find food for their families and they make me think how lucky we are.

I accidentally slide my foot, letting the sand roll down the sand dune like a rockslide. I close my eyes and I listen to the rumble of the waves behind me, soothing my soul. I watch the ripples on the lake spread out, run into each other and fade as the lake flows past.

I feel nature around me.

**Jess High**  
**Eden Marine High School**

**Lizard**

I am sitting on a grey, lichen covered rock, staring at the sloped, brown dirt track zigzagging down the steep slope. I just came up, but nothing, nothing in the world can compare to this. I'm lonely.

Nothing. Nowhere. No animal is here. And quiet. Horror is the only world to describe it.

I look up at the bright blue, cloudless sky. There it is! A sound that cannot reach the inferior human ear! Away from the noisy chaotic human world. A secret sound! That sound of quiet!

The creature who made it peeps out at me with beady, black eyes from its hole. Warm and fuzzy. Long, brown, fluffy tail. A blue bird with white wings and a black tail is twittering, high above. Beautiful! It’s what I’ve been searching for! That sound! There is a stream nearby trickling.
I close my eyes. I follow my ears and hands which lead me across soft green and brown moss and dirt. The stream is down a hole. Almost. Almost. But my body can't quite fit. I lift my head from the hole.

It's late. I watch a glowing, red sunset in a gleaming, bright yellow sky. The grass catches the last rays of the dying sun and glows a beautiful pink in contrast with the now dark as night blue rocks. Clouds are coming to hold in the heat of another sunny day. I climb under a rock for sleep.

Alice Hutley
Bega High School

In the Rainforest

The water droplets fell dramatically but calmly towards the ground, as I took steady but slow steps around the rainforest's path. The path was set up in a unique way so that everything in the rainforest would be seen at some stage while on the path. I felt a wave of calmness as the water trembled gracefully over the mossy rocks. Strips of sunlight ripened the ground as it squeezed through the gaps between the leaves. Excitedly I looked at the wombat that trudged slowly but was keen to get out of my way.

The path took me across the little wooden bridge that had a surrounding of lily pads floating in a green mush. The trees sang with happiness as the rainbow parrots awoke from their evening snooze. The dirt path was smothered in brown dead leaves, damp with the usual shower during the night. The pink, purple and white flowers poured over the undergrowth of the rainforest. The early morning mist floated gently through the air like a smooth gust of wind blowing across the creamy coloured sand dunes at the beach.

My own curiosity led me down through the beautiful fragrant flowers towards the main attraction in the rainforest, the waterfall. My eyes glimmered with glee as the water spilt over the jagged rocks. Sticks and lily pads slid over the waterfall into the deep washing machine below. The waterfall would have been about ten metres high. The cold, sparkling water ripped rapidly around the corner of the now green rocks.

The crashing of the waterfall was still heard as I walked back into reality.

Lindsay Ingram
Bombala High School

Adapting

As I walked in the front door of our new house, I threw my school bag onto the floor near my younger sister Abby's. I was angry. My family has moved five times within four months. This time I hated my new school.

“Mum!” I yelled. “Why did we have to move again?” Mum walked slowly in off the back verandah carrying a washing basket.

“Cassie, honey, calm down, it's not that bad. We moved so your father could get a decent job,” Mum explained.

“But it's not fair!” I yelled. I stormed out the door and ran down to the beach. I sat and watched as thrashing waves broke onto the shore. The wind was blowing my hair onto my face. I whipped it away. I lay down on the soft sand. A crab nipped me on the toe.

“Ouch!” I exclaimed sitting up. Next thing I knew I was running. Well, I thought I was but I didn't seem to be going anywhere. All I could see was the endless stretch of golden sand in
front of me and all I could hear was the sound of waves breaking on the dunes. I could taste and smell the salty water. I stopped and looked around.

My eyes were attracted to the masses of fern-like leaves in the treetops and the rich white foam left on the wet sand as the dark mysterious looking blue water retracted out to sea. I sat down, confused. Why aren’t I going anywhere? I rubbed my eyes and opened them when I felt water on my feet. I sat up.

The tide had come in. I looked around and realised I had fallen asleep. Thank goodness. I jumped up and ran back through the dunes with their prickly marram grass and the mounds of sand straight back up to our house.

There I found Mum, Dad and Abby sitting on the verandah laughing giddily.
“Oh! Mum, Dad, Abby, I’m so glad to see you!” I exclaimed.
“Cassie! Where were you?” Mum asked.
“I was down at the beach, it’s beautiful!” I said enthusiastically. “Let’s stay here!

Ruby Dein, Eden Marine High School

Pambula River Live

It was a day in paradise for me. The sun reflected off the crystal clear water in many different colours. The graceful trees swayed to the gentle breeze which came and went. The raging waves roared when they crashed against the white gold that lay on that untouched beach. This was normal for Pambula River with its many oyster leases, which are spread throughout the amazing waters and its many inhabitants. Eagles soar freely above and fish swim cautiously below.

We were all ready to go. The boat was in, the ski gear packed. Before I knew it we were half way up the almost perfect channel which had been formed over many, many years by the water flowing freely to go wherever it pleased, just like the eagles in their own smug world. I was first. I jumped in and eventually got my feet in the binding of my perfectly shaped ski. It was almost a shame to start the boat and block out the sound which mother nature was giving us.

Then, I was up, gliding on the clearest water you would have ever seen. Suddenly everything seemed to slow down at an agreeable pace. The humming noise from the boat was drowned out. The birds sang their amazing songs louder, the sound of the ocean’s wave got louder then everything stopped, except mother nature herself. That sound was as if you were listening to your favourite music live.

It was truly amazing, seeing all of Pambula River’s inhabitants come to life. The fish jumped higher than before. The birds flew longer. The land loving animals came to the glistening water’s edge and then the most amazing thing happened. It was huge, as big or even bigger than me. It was an eagle that swooped down and with a look of determination in his eye, grabbed a jaded looking fish and flew away into the bush which surrounded me, with its short stocky shrubs and its tall, graceful trees that swayed gently with the breeze. That was the most breathtaking thing of all, the scenery.

But before I knew it I was admiring the underwater scenery. When I got back up to the surface normal life kicked back in, the humming of the boats, the laughs of the people on the beach and the noise from the highway nearby. Those few moments of admiring the untouched scenery were truly amazing.

Scott Hepburn, Bombala High School
A Different World

I look out over the treetops, over the vast landscape before me. I listen. The birds are chirping happily, the smell of the fresh, salty air is very refreshing after walking down the long, rocky slope to finally arrive at the welcoming sandy beach.

The faint sounds of children laughing and talking goes in one ear and out the other as I behold the beauty the landscape possesses. I listen to the crashing of the waves and as I look out over the sand dunes, I see the beautiful crystal-clear ocean.

The massive waves crash down onto the stretches of yellow sand. The water glides up the bank bringing with it the shells and stones and as it retreats it steals some back. The toddlers run to the safety of their mums and dads lying peacefully on the beach as the water chases them like a dolphin chasing a school of fish before returning to the depths of the ocean.

The beach is a different world.

Zachary Bywater
Bega High School

Remembering the Farm

Rosey Apples had been orphaned at the age of twelve. She’d had a hard life since then and was now ninety-four. Rosey wanted to remember all her good memories before she died.

She was taken by a friend to visit a farm. Rosey decided to take a walk around and remember the farm she grew up on. First she walked along the long, dry paddock and remembered trying to ride on sheep in a similar paddock with her brother when she was six.

Rosey continued walking to a huge old tree with a trough not far off. This gave her memories of climbing a tree on her farm. She remembered her brother trying to follow her once but slipping and falling into the trough. She remembered him limping back to the house, soaking wet.

Walking to the end of the paddock, Rosey opened a rusty old gate. Memories about a gate when she was young flashed back into her mind. She recalled her dad driving her to the gate and she would get out, climb over the gate and run. No matter how long her dad tooted the horn so she would open for him, she never turned back.

On Rosey walked, thinking of the last memories until she almost stumbled into a dam. She remembered losing several pairs of shoes near the water’s edge as a child so she dared not go there again.

Soon she was at the end of the farm where the paddocks met the mallee-scrub. There was a tall tree and here she sat down. She looked at the paddocks, at the gate and she looked at the dam.

For the first time in 80 years, Rosey Apples smiled.

Miriam Zweck
Bega High School

Discoveries
Exploring, my favourite thing to do in the whole world. Exploring when I’m older, the one thing I want to do is to explore Australia.

Hi, my name is Lucy Bridges. I am 12 years old. I live with my mum and dad and my sister Mandy. I just decided something today (which is quite amazing because I can never make up my mind about anything). I am going to explore our 50 hectare backyard. I know, a bit out there, but that’s who I am, an ‘out there’ girl who loves exploring.

I grabbed my backpack which is black with ‘Bolt Babe’ written across it in pink, and packed it with bandages, a massive water bottle and my mobile phone. I also packed some food including 2 apples (red, of course), a muesli bar, a sandwich and a piece of cake. I said a quick goodbye to my family, told them that I would be back around dinnertime and off I went.

As soon as I set foot out of the door, I knew this journey was going to be amazing.

To get to the bushland I wanted to explore with the hills and the never-ending trees, I had to go down a gully and across a creek trickling with sparkling blue water. I finally got there, and boy, was it beautiful! The trees were touching the clouds and swaying in the light breeze with such elegance. There was the sound of leaves crunching under my feet whenever I moved, and the sound, the sound was amazing, absolute silence. The odd bird here and there, but apart from that, there was silence.

There was a dam with the reflection of the sun in the water shining in my eyes. Just beyond it there was an old wooden tree house in an old gum tree. This place was beautiful.

Just as I was about to take another step, I heard a bird. It was so different sounding and that’s why it caught my attention. When I looked up, it was a bird that I had never seen before. It was white with one black wing and one light brown wing. But the thing that really caught my attention, was that it was staring at me. I started walking up to it but then it flew away. I couldn’t let this mysterious, amazing bird fly away so I followed it.

It took me a long way away from the house, but when I saw where it had led me, I was speechless, standing there before me was an old cave with ancient drawings on the dusty walls. They were old cave drawings. The walls were orange with many series of drawings. Some of the drawings included koalas and men with spears. There really isn’t a word to describe how amazing they were. This was truly the greatest discovery I have ever made. It was getting late and it was a long way back to the house, so I decided to head back.

When I got back home I told my family about what I had found, and I showed them the pictures I took with the camera on my phone. They were astonished.

Sarah Campbell, Bega High School
Walking the Ravine

It was just past dawn – the sun’s radiant glow bounced off the dew covered hills, making a shimmering appearance, like ripples in a pool. I scanned the barren hill that I was to walk down. As this part of the country was dry, the trees were sparse in quantity. The surviving trees were bent and shrivelled to the point that they had the appearance of a bush, it’s weak roots searching blindly for the water that resides in the ravine.

I walked down the hill, the tall grass bent in my wake, only to spring back half-heartedly. The warm breeze on my skin felt like utter bliss, only until the wind picked up a small rock. I chose my steps carefully as one mistake meant rolling down the hill into the ravine.
Eventually I passed a couple of dishevelled trees, their leaves pleading with me like a sad child’s eyes. I stood precariously upon the edge of the ravine, looking down the three metre drop with the utmost care. I spotted a willow a few yards away, it was bent into the ravine, like an old man over a newspaper. I climbed the branch with ease and stepped onto a small flat moss covered rock.

As I scanned the horizon I slipped off the rock into the freezing, glistening water. The cold seemed to eat away at my flesh, momentarily paralysing me. I snapped back to my senses as I witnessed a big snake entering the water, the perfect stalker, sliding easily around. I swam to the willow branch, but it snapped under the combined weight of me and my saturated clothes. I waded to the edge of the ravine, easy enough to climb.

I slipped a few times, falling back into icy water where surely, the snake was lying in wait. With all my might I pulled myself out of the ravine and trudged exhausted back up the hill to my cabin to warm myself up. As I stood at the door, I turned around to behold the beauty of the land once more.

Andie Zarius
Bega High School

Longing

Just sitting there, looking up all the amazing snow covered mountains, reminded me of all the fantastic times I had had there. It was all just so magical watching the white, delicate snow falling upon the already snow covered trees, rocks and mountains.

I wonder if I’ll ever be able to see those snow covered mountains from the top ever again. Skiing used to be my favourite thing to do, but now all I can do is sit around in my lodge and watch everyone else ski.

I just wish I had never gotten in that car. It was the biggest mistake of my life. That car accident killed my best friend and I may never be able to walk again, never be able to ski again. It’s so scary to think about it, another thirty years in a wheelchair. If only I could turn back time, I would. I would never have let my best friend drive me home that night, I would change so much.

After my mum, little sister and big brother died in a plane crash, I had promised myself that I would never put myself or anyone I cared about in danger, but I broke that promise to myself and look what has happened. I may be in wheelchair for the rest of my life.

Even if I can walk again there is a very slim chance I will ever be able to do the thing I love most, ski. I would give everything just to be able to ski one last time, to be able to see those magical snow covered mountains one last time.

When I was up there I felt so wonderful, so powerful, like I was on top of the world and nothing could change that. But then when I got back home, to my city life everything went back to reality. If I never walk again, all I want is to be on the top of those mountains one last time.

Bonnie Hayes
Bega High School

Drought
The sun belted down on the harshly sunburned country. There was nothing alive in sight. The country was vast but not a blade of grass was to be seen. Only one thing has survived this terrible drought – farmers, and even they were dying out. The rivers dried up and it didn’t rain. The Evans family were the only living things for miles. Soon they would be another casualty on the farming list.

“But I don’t want to leave!” Lucy screamed. She was a tall girl with long brown hair and freckles.

“We have no choice,” Lucy’s mum said trying to avoid another screaming match.

“But…..”

“Lucy, we are going and that’s final.” She couldn't believe it, why would they want to leave, this was home, this was their home.

Everything was packed ready to go, everything except Lucy.

Lucy’s father was standing on their path, he had a strange way about him. There was sadness written all over him. His usual tall strong figure looked sad and weak. She’d never seen him like this before and then it hit her like a slap in the face. He didn’t want to go either but she had brain-washed him to thinking that they “had no choice.” Lucy wasn’t going to stand for it.

That night Lucy began planning a way to make a stand. When she heard something coming from the kitchen, she walked out to see what it was. There was Mum sitting, her body outstretched on the table, crying. Lucy hugged her.

“Please Mum just one more chance.”

Lily Platts
Bombala High School