

Turning the pages on

At Tongala Primary School, storytelling has become more than just an English assignment — it's a whole-school celebration of imagination, creativity, and voice.

Now in its second year, the Story Book Competition has fast become one of the most anticipated events on the school calendar, thanks to the innovation of Grade 6 teacher Deena Pridham, the commitment of Principal Rob Hogan to read every storybook, and the coordination of Curriculum Coordinator Liana Haw, who oversaw the publishing of each student's work.

What began as a simple writing project has grown into a major creative milestone for every student — and a showcase of what happens when young minds are given the freedom to dream, write and illustrate their own worlds.

"All 142 students took on the role of author, illustrator and editor to complete their own narrative as part of the competition during Term 3. The quality of the final products was simply amazing," Mr Hogan said. There were no restrictions on length, and students spent the entire term planning, drafting and publishing their books. From Foundation to Year 6, classrooms buzzed with the sounds of brainstorming, typing, colouring and the occasional debate over



Lucy Gledhill, Thomas Grinter, Tait Ohlsen, and Oscar Watson with their story books.



Imogen Bockholt and Jed Brennan.

character names or plot twists.

Mr Hogan, who had the enviable but enormous task of reading every single book, said each class brought something special to the table.

"We judged the stories in three categories — Best Narrative, Most Creative and Best Illustration — and I was blown away by the thought and effort that went into every entry," he said.

The winning narratives will now be professionally bound and added to the school library, allowing students to borrow and read the works of their classmates for years to come.

Each year level worked to a theme. The Foundation to Year 2 students were free to let their imaginations run wild, while Years 3 and 4 created animal-inspired stories.

The senior students in Years 5 and 6 took on a special challenge — writing their own Dreamtime-inspired tales, linking creativity with cultural understanding and respect. And the results were as diverse as they were delightful.

There was humour, heart, deep thought, and even a touch of scientific research woven through the pages — proof that storytelling is alive and well at Tongala Primary. Among this year's winners were some familiar names.

Thomas Grinter, a Year 4 student, picked up the Best Illustration prize for the second year in a row with his striking work on *Tristan the Tasmanian Tiger*.

Lucy Gledhill won Best Story in Year 3 with *Envy*

imagination at TPS

the Dingo, while Ava Dove-McCabe's *Quiet Quokka* and Anika Haas's *How the Wombat Got Its Claws* topped their respective grades. The school community came together for a special assembly to celebrate the young authors, with each winner presented their award in front of cheering classmates and proud families.

"The joy on their faces said it all," said Mr Hogan. "They didn't just write stories – they created something lasting. And for many of them, it's only the beginning."



Grade 5/6 winners Tippi Holyman, Annika MacKenzie, and Anika Haas.

2025 Story Book Competition Winners

Foundation

Best Story: *Lilly the Koala* – Mia Kleinsman
 Most Creative: *Robots vs Machines* – Maverick Rosete
 Best Illustration: *Indi and Rosie* – Indi Hoyman

Grade 1

Best Story: *Fluffy the Kitten* – Amber Campbell
 Most Creative: *The Chipmunk* – Kaitlin Watson
 Best Illustration: *The Sand Cat* – Sophie Gledhill

Grade 2

Best Story: *Ruby the Lost Puppy* – Penny Buchanan
 Most Creative: *The Adventurous Little Capybara* – Emma Webb
 Best Illustration: *The Rattlesnake* – Maya Forde

Grade 3

Best Story: *Envy the Dingo* – Lucy Gledhill
 Most Creative: *T-Train the Amazing Wombat* – Kase Tucker
 Best Illustration: *Sally the Little Sea Turtle* – Tilly Emonson

Grade 4

Best Story: *Walter the Stocky Wombat* – Oscar Watson
 Most Creative: *Cooper the Cassowary* – Tait Ohlsen
 Best Illustration: *Tristan the Tasmanian Tiger* – Thomas Grinter

Grade 5

Best Story: *Quiet Quokka* – Ava Dove-McCabe
 Most Creative: *King Brown Learns a Lesson* – Jed Brennan
 Best Illustration: *How the Short Neck Got Its Long Neck* – Tippi Holyman

Grade 6

Best Story: *How the Wombat Got Its Claws* – Anika Haas
 Most Creative: *How the Cod Got Its Big Belly* – Imogen Bockholt
 Best Illustration: *How the Angry Koala Became Angry* – Annika MacKenzie



Back (from left) is Maya Forde, Ariyah Van Eijk, Kaitlyn Watson, Penny Buchanan, while front (from left) is Sophie Gledhill, Amber Campbell.

