



## Feedback from the Selection Panel

### Overview

Whilst there are some excellent examples of quality writing in *River dreams*, the selection panel felt that overall the writing submitted was not of the usual high standard. Some of the writing lacked a final polish and contained spelling and grammatical errors.

The selection panel would like to see more variety in the texts submitted. Recounts, descriptions and poetry are the most common texts and whilst the first two are generally well done, the poetry was often let down by forced rhymes. Acrostic poems were over-represented in the work submitted.

Teachers are encouraged to think more broadly about the work they submit - maps, labelled drawings, charts or graphs with explanatory notes, science journal entries, reflections on environmental learning are all suitable for publication.

Many schools participate in Waterwatch, River Recovery, Water Wise, Waste Wise, and other sustainability projects which fit within the *Special Forever* themes, but these are not reflected in the writing submitted.

### Recommendations

The selection panel recommends:

- More writing based on environmental learning and participation in sustainability projects in schools and the community.
- Argument/exposition writing as in *Save the Murray* (page 56\*) and *Why are Trees Important to Me?* (page 69\*) should be promoted.
- Students are encouraged to use free verse rather than rhyming verse.
- Information reports be turned into narratives by weaving the facts into a story, see *When a Bulldozer Strikes* (page 73\*) or *Murky Water* (page 74\*).
- To avoid plagiarism students are required to list the sources they have used in researching their information report.
- Interviews like *Interview with Molly Lucas* (page 30\*) are encouraged.
- Real or imaginary diary entries about an environmental activity.
- All work should be checked for spelling and grammar before being submitted.

\* *River dreams: writing and art by children of the Murray-Darling Basin* published by PETA, 2006.