

The Cow That Swam Out to Sea



Written by
Pamela Rushby

Illustrated by
Nicola Hooper



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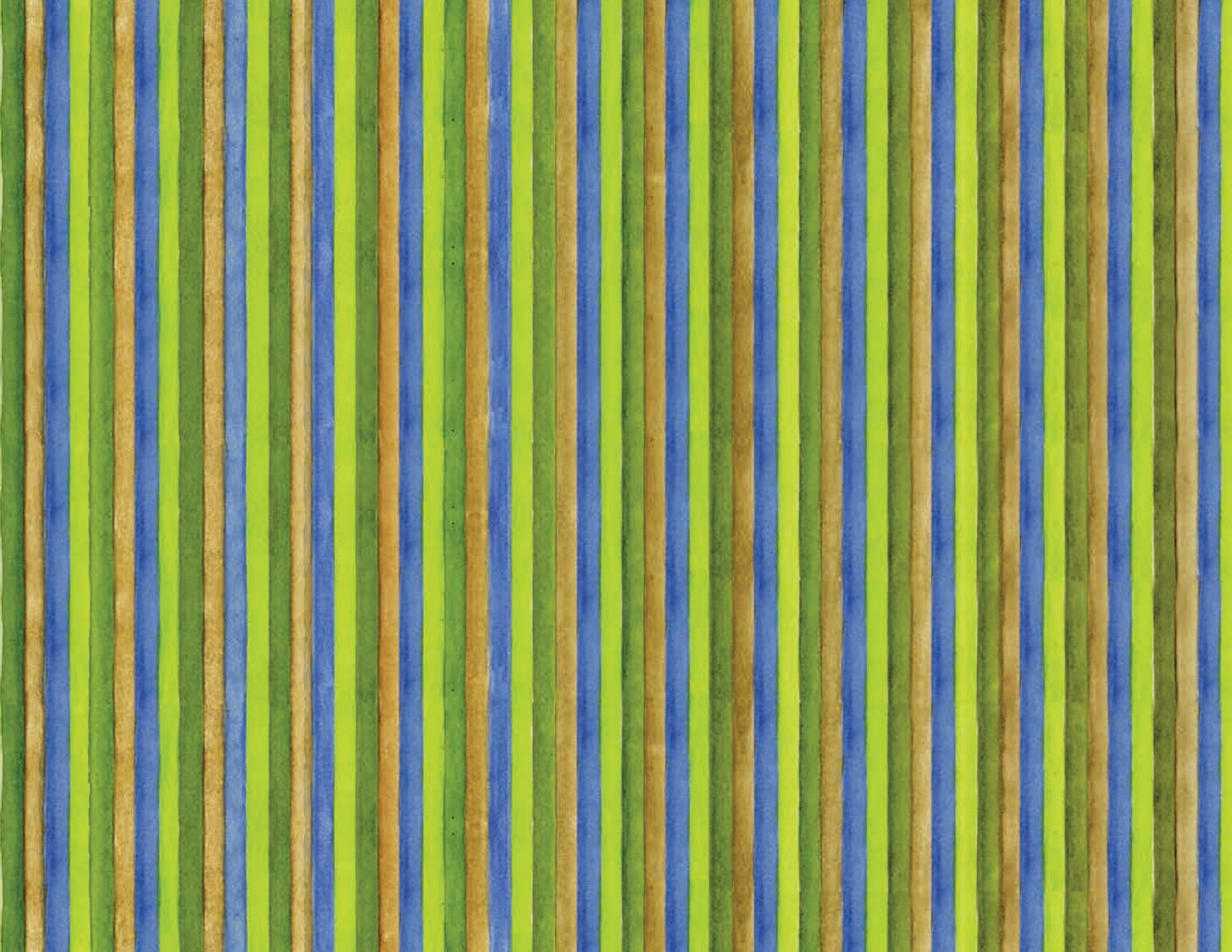
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Written by Kathryn Apel and illustrated by Janet Turner

The Cow That Swam Out to Sea



State Library of Queensland



For Danette, the real cow that swam out to sea. PR

To Declan and Ruby (and with thanks to Danette). NH



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The Cow That Swam Out to Sea



Written by Pamela Rushby  Illustrated by Nicola Hooper

Once, there was a cow that swam out to sea.
Her name was Matilda.

Matilda lived on a very quiet farm.
Twice a day, the farmer milked the cows.
Then the cows walked back to the paddocks
and ate grass. Occasionally, they said,

'MOO.'

Matilda, however, was a curious cow.
She often looked up at the mountain.
What was behind it? Sometimes, she
walked down to the river. Where did it go?
She did not expect she would ever find out.

Until one day ...



... it began to rain. It poured.
Water cascaded down the mountain.
The wet cows turned their backs to
the rain and grumbled,

'MOO.'

They hoped the rain would soon stop.

Matilda had never seen the river so high.
She ambled down to look at it.



Then, suddenly, there was a roar.
The cows looked up. A wall of water
came pouring and hurtling down
the mountain. The cows said,

'MOO!'

The water gobbled at the riverbanks
and spilled over. The cows watched it,
amazed. They were safe.





But Matilda was not.

Curious Matilda was on the riverbank.
The water snatched her up. In a second,
she was swimming.

The other cows ran backwards
and forwards in alarm, calling 'MOO!'
But the farmer was snug inside his house,
and could not hear.

MOO! Matilda called desperately.

'MOO MOO MOO MOO

Matilda paddled frantically in the **rushing, splushing, hustling** water.

She was soon very tired. Then, a great mass of tangled branches and logs and waterweed swept up beside her. Matilda thankfully heaved herself onto it.

The river kept rolling on. It rushed and splushed and hustled under a bridge, by a town, through paddocks. It was all very interesting for a curious cow. It was like being an explorer.



The river grew wider. It began to get dark.
Now, Matilda was in a city. She had never
seen a city before.

She tried calling for help — **'MOOO!'**
— but everyone in the city was inside, out of the rain.
No one heard her.



Except one person.

A little boy looked out of his bedroom window, high up in a tall building. 'A cow!' he said.

The little boy shouted to his mum and dad. 'Look! In the river! There is a cow!'

They came to the window, but by the time they reached it, Matilda had gone.



Still the river spread wider until Matilda could not see the banks.
She was all alone, in a great, wide darkness. *How far would she go?*
Matilda worried. *What might be under her in the water?*



The mass of waterweed bobbed on through the night. Matilda was afraid to go to sleep. And she was very hungry.

At last, the sky glowed golden. And Matilda found she had come to rest on mudflats, near an island. *Grass!* thought Matilda. She stepped eagerly onto the mudflats. At once, her hooves sank into mud.

Icky, thick, sticky mud.

She took a step. **Shloop! Gloop!**

Matilda managed two more steps. Then she was stuck. Stuck fast.

Matilda did not like that.

She shook her head and bellowed,

'MOOO!'



'Whatever is *that*?' someone said. A little girl and her grandfather were walking along the beach.

'MOOO!' roared Matilda.

The little girl and her grandfather waded out to Matilda.

'Hello, cow! How did you ever get here?' the little girl said.

Together, they helped Matilda pull her legs free of the

**icky, thicky,
sticky mud.**



They guided her through the mudflats. Matilda went straight to the green grass and took a great mouthful. She said gratefully,

'MOOOO!'

When Matilda had eaten some grass, the little girl and her grandfather took her to their home. Their yard had beds full of flowers, big and bright and delicious.

‘Oh, my flowers!’ said the little girl’s grandmother.

‘But she is so hungry, Granny,’ said the little girl.

‘Poor cow! Where could she have come from?’

Matilda had a tag in her ear.

‘This might tell us,’ the grandfather said. ‘It looks like a phone number.’



'Crikey!' said the farmer. 'You have never got one of my cows! That is nearly a hundred kilometres away!'

Matilda was famous. Her picture was in the newspaper. The farmer said it was a long way to send Matilda back.

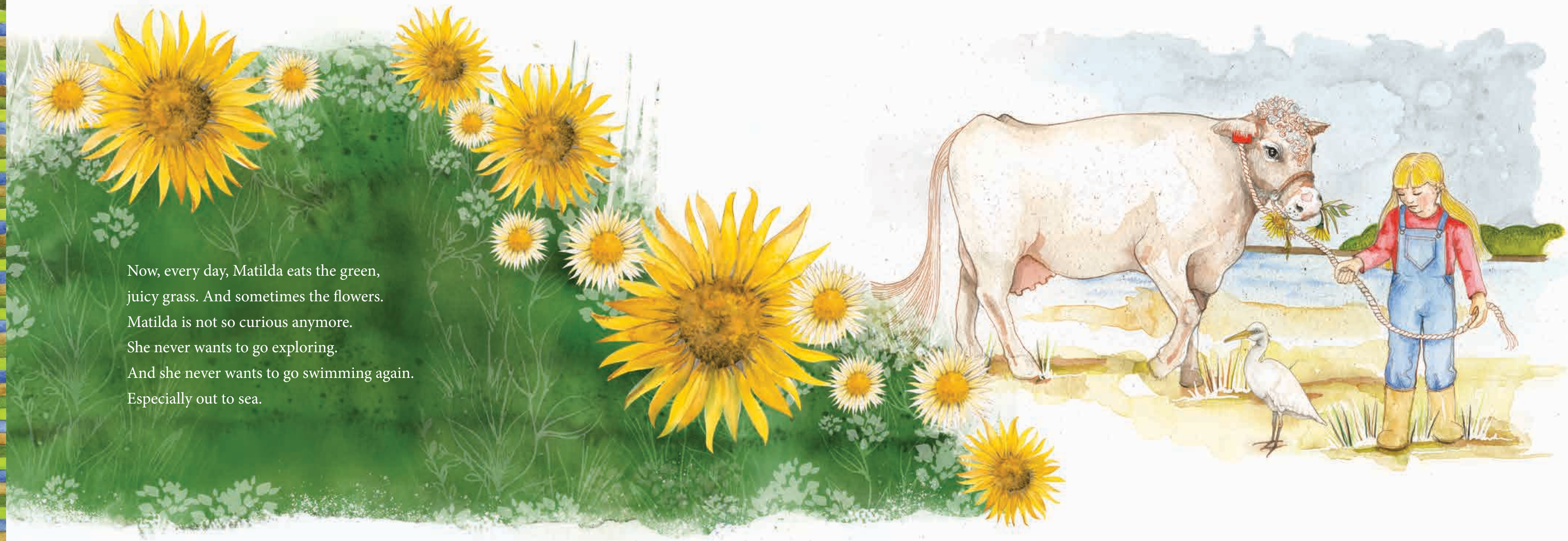
'You can keep her if you like,' he said.

'Really?' the little girl said, and she hugged Matilda. 'Would you like to stay?'

'MOOO!' agreed Matilda.



Now, every day, Matilda eats the green,
juicy grass. And sometimes the flowers.
Matilda is not so curious anymore.
She never wants to go exploring.
And she never wants to go swimming again.
Especially out to sea.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pamela Rushby is a writer and a producer of educational television, audio and multimedia. She has written over 200 fiction and non-fiction books for educational and trade publishers. Her historical novel, *When the Hipchicks Went to War*, won the Ethel Turner Prize in the NSW Premier's Literary Awards 2010.

Other awards include being twice short-listed in the Queensland Literary Awards; five CBCA Notable Book Awards; and a bag of gold coins at a film festival in Iran!
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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Dr Nicola Hooper is a Brisbane/Logan based artist, and arts educator. Her studio practice explores human and animal relationships through the mediums of drawing and lithography. Nicola creates artists books, wallpapers, lithographic paper sculptures, 2D lithographic prints and drawings. With the completion of her Doctorate from QCA Griffith University, her research led to the exploration of zoonoses and the re-telling of associated local animal stories through fairy tale and rhyme. She also explores perceptions of both vilified and revered animals, with the intention of portraying a more balanced viewpoint of our natural world.
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ABOUT FIRST 5 FOREVER

In the first five years, little moments make a big difference.

Children learn best from those closest to them – and by talking, reading, singing and playing together every day, families support their child's brain development and help them build a lifelong love of learning and discovery.

First 5 Forever is an early literacy program supporting families to make the most of this time. The program offers free sessions for children 0–5 and their families throughout Queensland's public library and Indigenous Knowledge Centre network, and provides fun, informative and hands-on tips and advice online.

First 5 Forever is an initiative of the Queensland Government, coordinated by State Library of Queensland and delivered in partnership with local government. Each year, public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres across Queensland welcome thousands of families to First 5 Forever activities.

To find out more about First 5 Forever, visit www.slq.qld.gov.au/first5forever

ABOUT THIS SERIES

State Library of Queensland has published twelve new children's picture books for Queensland's littlest readers as part of First 5 Forever. The books promote strong early literacy foundations through a range of subjects and styles: the amusing antics of Queensland's faunal emblem, the koala; educational aids such as counting and alphabet books; stories of belonging; journeys of discovery; true-life tales; and much more.

Produced exclusively for State Library of Queensland and First 5 Forever, this series reflects the diversity of Queensland, celebrates the uniqueness of our state, and aims to inspire a love of reading and discovery in a new generation of little Queenslanders.

The books also showcase writers and artists with a Queensland connection who are based throughout the state. They feature emerging and established talent, as well as First Nations writers and artists whose books were developed with State Library of Queensland's black&write! editorial team.





Matilda dreams of new places and things, away from her ordinary life on the farm. But she never expected to see them by being washed away in a flood!

Based on a true story of a cow's journey down the Brisbane River, this is a book about finding courage and being brave.