

# CLANCY OF THE OUTBACK



PHIL KETTLE & BOB ANDERSEN

Illustrated by Shane McGowan

## Teacher Notes

**Introducing the series — this section can also be used by students**

The series title, *Clancy of the Outback*, is a play on the title of the famous and popular poem by AB (Banjo) Paterson, *Clancy of the Overflow*. Clancy is a famous name in Australian folklore largely because of that poem. *Clancy of the Overflow* also gets a mention in Banjo Paterson's iconic *The Man from Snowy River*. Clancy has since become popular as a boy's first name in modern day Australia.

Terms such as 'overflow' and 'outback' reflect the experiences of early European settlers in Australia. Overflow refers to areas subject to flooding by overflowing rivers, whereas outback refers to places kilometres away from the major cities or, as early settlers understood it historically, 'way out back'.

ROADKILL RESCUE

CHOOKSHED BLUES

SHEARING TIME

CITY SLICKER



# Contents

Introducing the authors

Introducing the illustrator

Introducing the editor

Book features

Plot features and themes

Teaching notes

Scaffolding and extending the writing experience

Blackline master sheets

Character profiles

Language study

Main idea

Illustrator's brief

Design your own campaign

Working with words

Newspaper report

Radio interview

## Introducing the authors



**Phil Kettle** was born just outside Mildura in north-west Victoria and is an author of multiple titles.

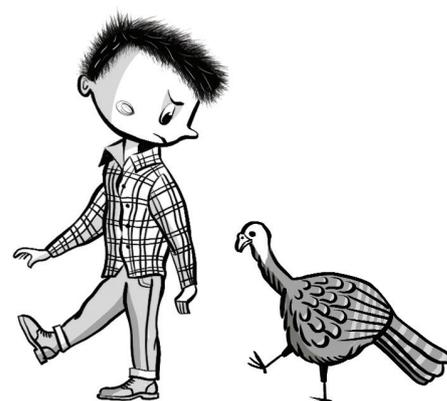
Phil writes:

‘I was born in Mildura in Northern Victoria and I grew up on a farm a few kilometres away from Mildura, in a small town called Cardross. Cardross is a town with only one shop, one garage, one school and a town hall. Our post office address was PO Box 1 and our telephone number was 12. I have spent most of adult life living in Melbourne, but in recent times have moved back to Mildura.

I am the author of many series, including the Toocool, Billy Kool, Boyz Rule, Girls Rock, Our Australia, Marcy, Get Real, Spike, Kids Rule, and the very new series Clancy of the Outback — some 220 books in total.

Phil spends a lot of time in schools in country Australia, and that’s where he came up with the concept of Clancy of the Outback. There were few books available for students in country schools that talked about their lives and the reality they were experiencing.

**Bob Andersen** is a writer and publisher. He has worked with Phil Kettle on a number of projects, and has been able to bring his own experience of rural life and living to the Clancy stories.



# Introducing the illustrator



**Shane McGowan** is a Melbourne illustrator who specialises in picture books. He has illustrated over 30 books so far. Some of the most recent are *Tiger's Roar* by Alex Rance, *My Bird, Bertie* by Amelia McInerney, *Get back in Your Books* by Rory H. Mather and *The Thing That Goes Ping!* by Mark Carthew, which was awarded Speech Pathology Book of the Year 2021 for the 5-8 year age group. Shane begins his work on any project by reading the story and imagining the characters and what is required to give shape to the written text. He spends a lot of time sketching a scene (these are called roughs) before committing to the final illustration.

See below and following page for an example of how illustrators work, first from the editor's artwork brief, for each illustration:

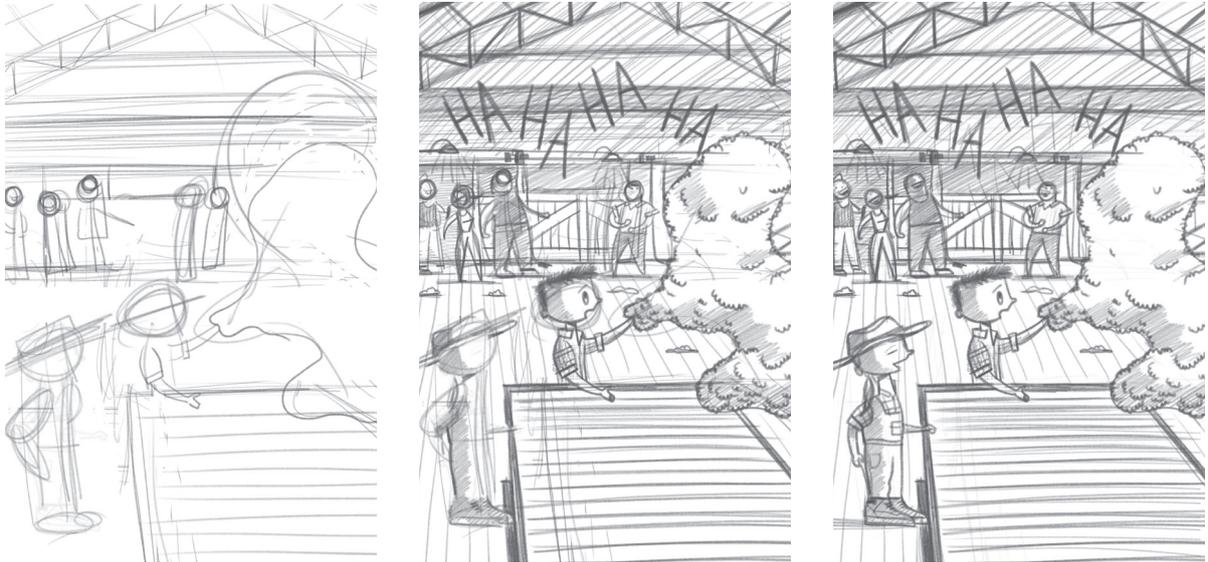
**Artwork Brief:** [A/W 10: Clancy throwing fleece awkwardly so it is half off his side of the table instead of spread out flat on top of it. Little Bill looking on laughing and shearers in background pausing in their shearing to watch, grinning.]

The illustrator often needs reference images for the topic of the picture, such as here, how a fleece is thrown on the table in a shearing shed. Here is one of the images Shane used as reference for the illustration:



The editor and authors then ‘approve’ the roughs, asking for any changes needed, and then the illustrator makes those changes and proceeds to ‘finished art’, reading for printing in colour or black and white, of the final image.

Here are Shane’s series of roughs and the final finished image:



# Introducing the editor

Helen Chamberlin has worked on books from all genres and for multiple audiences. Her contribution to ensuring that the Clancy stories work involves more than just checking for spelling and punctuation. She often has to rewrite big chunks of the text and she looks for inconsistencies or suggests improvements. She also has to brief the illustrator which means that she has to suggest to the illustrator where the illustration should be placed in relation to the text and what it might show or explain. She also has to liaise with the book designer on matters such as layout, headings, fonts and end matter.

Bob Andersen writes: 'As an author I always fear getting a message from Helen saying she needs 2000 more words!'

## Book features

The Clancy of the Outback series provides enjoyable and easy reading for newly independent readers. Usually these readers are aged between 7 and 10 years old.

The books have certain features that are specifically designed to assist early independent readers. These include:

- ♦ Chapters and explanatory chapter titles – usually 8 chapters per book
- ♦ Front matter including a contents page, and illustrations and names of the characters
- ♦ At least one illustration per chapter
- ♦ End matter which contains further information about the main topic, a poem or song
- ♦ Some outback jokes



# Plot features and themes

The plots centre around Clancy, a city boy, learning about living in the country. Much of his learning comes via Little Bill, the daughter of the farm manager, who takes Clancy under her wing.

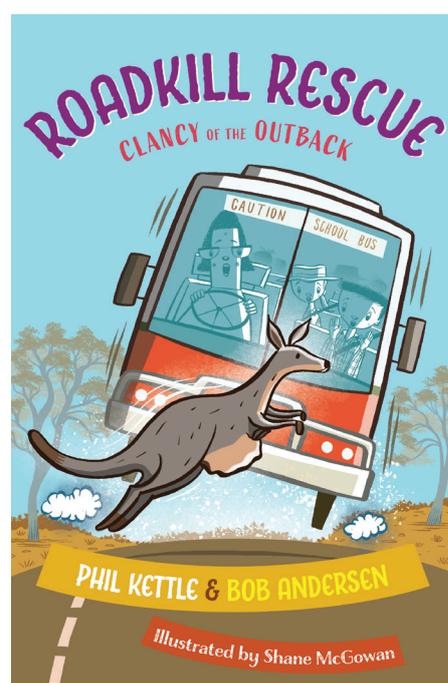
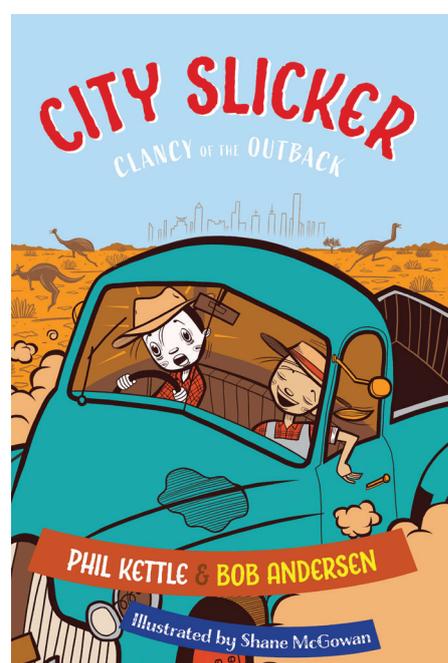
Themes include sustainability, conservation, animal welfare, family relationships, friendship, small-town life and institutions, colloquial language, food and cooking, machinery, country characters, country and small-town work, pets.

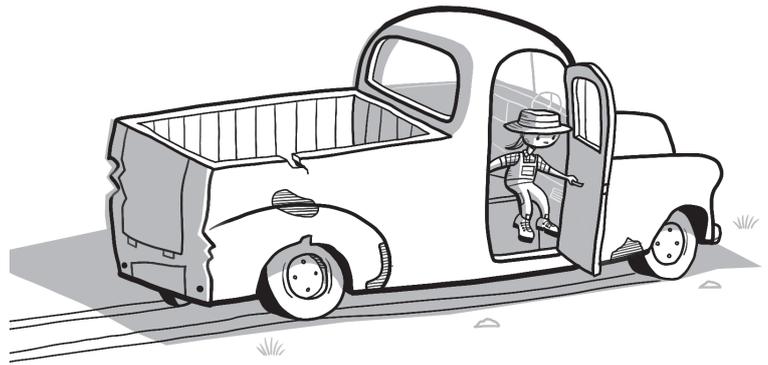
## CITY SLICKER

This book introduces Clancy and the rest of the gang, but mainly Little Bill, the daughter of the manager of The Overflow. Little Bill undertakes to help Clancy learn a few things about how to be a country boy. Clancy finds Little Bill condescending and fights her offers of help. However, when the opportunity to learn to drive in an old farm ute arises, Clancy is all ready to go. But is he ready? Apparently not.

## ROADKILL RESCUE

The school bus hits a mother kangaroo just outside the gate to the Overflow station. Little Bill and Clancy save the joey in the mother's pouch. They then have to set about looking after it and this turns out to be much more complex than the city family is used to. Not only that, but Big Bill, the station manager, is planning a cull of kangaroos on Overflow Station. How will Clancy and Little Bill handle this contradiction?



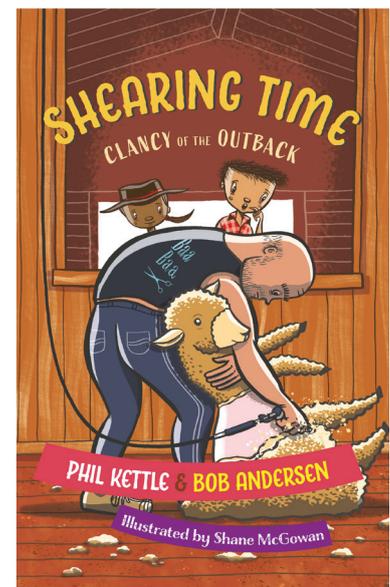
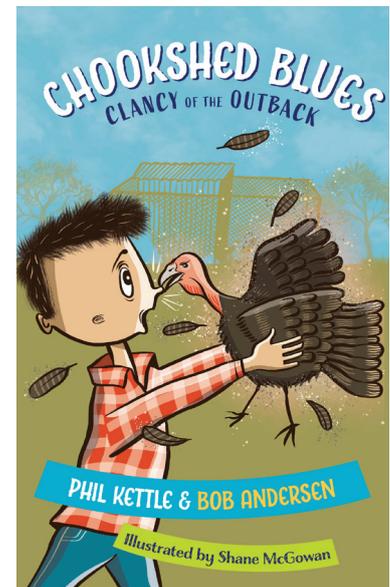


## CHOOKSHED BLUES

Clancy's dad decides to invest in some chooks and this involves feverish building activity involving a chookshed, as well as a visit to the market to buy chickens. The chookshed needs to be a strong structure to ensure that foxes can't get to the chickens or their eggs. Clancy's dad isn't much of a builder, which isn't surprising given he's just come from the city. It turns out he's also not much good at buying chickens.

## SHEARING TIME

This is really a story about food and cooking for a large group of hungry workers. The cook in the shearing shed is a very important person and at one stage it seems that Clancy's mum might have to do the cooking. At the last minute she's saved when an unseasonal storm comes and drenches all the sheep. The shearers fear a flood and leave. When they return Mum is much happier about the cooking job.



# TEACHING NOTES

## **Scaffolding and extending the reading experience**

### **Read aloud**

If you have only one copy of a Clancy of the Outback book then reading aloud will be an important strategy.

First introduce the series and the book by backgrounding the students on authors, illustrator and themes. Be prepared to stop to explain words or phrases or to ask questions of the students; e.g. why do you think the author calls the book *City Slicker*? Do you think Dad is capable of building a chookshed? Why would Mum put flowers in the shearers' quarters? Why doesn't Little Bill want to take the joey home to her place?

Students should be encouraged to interrupt with questions. Reading aloud to the class gives great opportunities for the teacher to model expression, phrasing and pronunciation.

### **Choral reading**

If you have multiple copies of the books then you can give an individual student or groups of students different characters to read. You could also give the role of narrator to a group of students.

For example, there are five main characters and, from time to time, new characters are introduced. The poems or songs at the end of the book will require special effort and practise.

### **Paired reading**

In pairs or in small groups, students take turns as the teacher by reading a short passage or even a chapter and then asking the partner or group questions about it. This gives students the chance to explore strategies such as questioning, summarising and clarifying or predicting.

## **Shared reading**

This would require access to the e-book so that it could be displayed for the whole class to read. This would be useful in an ESL class, but most probably not with first language learners.

## **Guided reading**

This is usually a one-on-one activity with the teacher identifying or guiding engagement with text features as the student reads. It can also work in very small groups.

The student is encouraged to read and, as they do, the teacher notes words missed or misunderstood, lack of recognition of punctuation and comprehension issues. These can then be addressed both during and after reading.

# Scaffolding and extending the writing experience

**All of the following activities require a short teacher discussion before students embark on the exercises.**

## **Creating a story plan (whole class or small group)**

Students are invited to come up with a topic for another Clancy story. The teacher suggests the story be about eight chapters and the students give chapter headings for each chapter. The teacher explains that stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. This is known as the story arc.

If the story line is a bit thin, then a sub-plot can be introduced.

## **1. Exploring Book features (whole class, small group or individual students)**

The Clancy of the Outback series provides opportunities to discuss book features. The following activities can be done by an individual student or in pairs, small groups or even whole class.

- ♦ Series title, book title, author(s) and illustrator. Come up with your own series or book. Illustrate the front cover yourself.
- ♦ Contents page. Create a title page and contents page for your own book.
- ♦ Character pages with illustrations. Create your characters and write a brief thumbnail about each of them. Illustrate if possible.
- ♦ Introductory chapter – welcome to the subject of your story. Describe the setting.
- ♦ Outback Facts. Research an information section for your book and write it up using report-genre features.
- ♦ How it works. If your story involves machinery or some complicated process you could write a procedural text explaining how it works.
- ♦ Poems or songs. Using the poems in the Clancy series, write your own poem about one of the themes.
- ♦ Outback jokes. Can you make up a new joke? Research jokes related to your story.
- ♦ Back cover copy. Write a short blurb for the back cover. What is a blurb? Students could also discuss the possibility of characters, settings and themes.

## 2. Exploring structural devices

*Engaging with Clancy of the Outback through story writing*

- ♦ Settings - The Overflow and Chance. Discuss these and come up with your own story setting.
- ♦ Characters – The gang, and also characters like Mrs Pengelly and Miss Aphrodite. What are each character’s strengths and weaknesses? Come up with your own family of characters.
- ♦ Animal characters – Brutus and Butters. What are their strengths and weaknesses? Come up with your own pets. Describe them and their characteristics.
- ♦ Discuss the use of colloquial language, e.g ‘sizzled like a sausage on a barbecue’, ‘tinny’, ‘genny’ and many more. How many can you find in the Clancy book you are reading? Does your family use any of them?
- ♦ Brainstorm language that might be used that is unique to your story line or setting.

A moral or ethical slant. For example, in *Roadkill Rescue*, Big Bill is planning a kangaroo cull. And the poem, *Brumby’s Run*, is about culling feral horses. What do you think about this?

- ♦ Invite the students to think of a positive ‘message’ that comes out of the story.
- ♦ Discuss the importance of basic rules of English such as sentences, paragraphs and punctuation.

## 3. Identifying text types — a genre approach to student writing

Genre – discuss into what genre the expected writing will fit. Explain that the Clancy series is a recount or retell. What genre is the end matter, e.g outback facts? This genre is explanation.

As referenced above, the end matter in books of this nature could also contain procedural texts explaining how something works e.g, farm machinery.

### **Recount text structure**

The beginning or orientation

A series of events

A closing statement or conclusion

## **4. Guided writing.**

**Teachers can conduct a guided writing lesson and select from the following ideas.**

For one-on-one or small group teaching.

- ♦ The teacher may assist a student with a story map (for recount)
  - First
  - And then
  - Later
  - Finally
- ♦ The student writes points under each of the following headings, guided by the teacher. Note that they are text features for recount/retell.

Writing in the past tense

Series of events in order

Personal comment (note Clancy's observations)

Dialogue (this gives a good idea of character)

Background information or setting

Details (about food or machinery or people)

Account of an incident or incidents

Suitable adjectives

Linking words (later, afterwards, following, next, after that)

Colloquial language or language reflecting the setting

## **5. Reading/writing activity**

With an individual student or small group, and using one of the books the student(s) has read, brainstorm the content under the headings above then ask the student to write down the points under the headings. Bullet points acceptable.

Students then share with the whole class using their notes as discussion starters.

## 6. Speaking and Listening

The Clancy of the Outback series provides many opportunities for classroom presentations and the use of oral English.

### 1. Prepare a review

Individual students prepare a review of one of the books and include issues as below to present to the whole class.

- ♦ Strengths/weaknesses
- ♦ Themes
- ♦ Learnings
- ♦ Plot
- ♦ Characters
- ♦ Illustrations

### 2. Speaking activity

A group of students choose either a character, plot or theme to review and then do a group presentation to the whole class. Use the headings above.

### 3. Recount or retell

Invite students to describe an event that has happened to them.

Encourage them to make 'speakers' notes, ie words that trigger longer thoughts or ideas. This would be a retell or recount.

### 4. Explanation

Using the Outback Facts section of the books, invite students to talk about something that they know a lot about. Invite them to make 'speaker' notes and then present to the whole class

## 5. **Pitch the series**

You are an author's agent and you have been approached by Phil Kettle and Bob Andersen, the authors of the Clancy of the Outback series. They have asked you to find them a publisher in return for a percentage of their royalties.

Use the "Introducing the series" notes from the beginning of this teacher guide and ensure that students have access to this information.

Students then do their individual whole class presentation using this information. The presentation should cover author, illustrator, editor roles. They should also cover plots, themes and characters. Enhance the experience by suggesting that they are pitching the series to a major publishing house. Encourage exaggeration and creative additions to the information provided.

The audience/class then participates in a Q&A where they quiz the presenters about the project and the content.

Who would buy the books and why?

What would be a retail appropriate price?

How would they suggest you promote them in the market place?

## *Black line master sheets*

## BLM Character profiles

Write key words in the space alongside the character's name. List not only how they look but also what they do and say. Select the adjectives that you think describe them best.

Little Bill	
Clancy	
Clancy's Mum	
Clancy's Dad	
Big Bill	
Uncle Buck	
Brutus	
Butters	
Mrs Pengelly	
Miss Aphrodite	

# BLM Language study

This series uses language unique to the story setting. See if you can write a definition of each of the following:

ute	
city slicker	
yabbies	
tinny	
joey	
chooks	
veggie patch	
shearing gang	
paddock bomb	

# BLM Main idea

Choose one of the Clancy of the Outback titles you have read recently and write down the main idea in each chapter. You can write more than one sentence.

Chapter 1	
Chapter 2	
Chapter 3	
Chapter 4	
Chapter 5	
Chapter 6	
Chapter 7	
Chapter 8	
Chapter 9	

# BLM Illustrator's Brief

You are the editor of the Clancy of the Outback series. You have to brief the illustrator. Write a short illustrator's brief for each chapter (there is one illustration per chapter). This brief should say which characters to include and which event should be illustrated. Choose alternative incidents to the ones in the actual book.

Cover picture	
Preliminary pages	
Chapter 1	
Chapter 2	
Chapter 3	
Chapter 4	
Chapter 5	
Chapter 6	
Chapter 7	
Chapter 8	
Chapter 9	
End matter – glossary, information, etc	
Back cover	

# BLM Design your own campaign

The campaign is to save something endangered or at risk – for example, it could be an animal or a plant or even a type of machine. If nothing comes immediately to mind, research an endangered species. Include the following:

Campaign objective	
Thing you want to save	
Description	
Key words	
Key illustrations	
Who will you enlist for help?	
What media will you use?	
Other means of getting people's attention.	

# BLM Working with words

Use the Clancy of the Outback title you are currently reading and:

Find and list three different sentence beginnings.

Find and list four verbs.

Find and list four adjectives.

Find and list four nouns.

How do you know when one of the characters asks a question?

Find and list two colloquial (special to the characters in the book) phrases or terms.

Find four words you would put in your glossary.

# BLM Newspaper report

You work for the newspaper in Chance as a reporter and you've just heard that there's a big cyclone in Queensland and that the Darling River is likely to flood in about one week's time. Write a report that will bring this to the attention of the local farmers and the residents of Chance. Think about what it could mean to the community. You might also like to research cyclones and what effect they have before you start writing.

Remember to gather and list your facts.

Do your research.

Talk to people who might be able to explain what might happen.

# BLM Radio interview

You are a radio presenter on Radio Chance, the local radio station. You have the opportunity to interview Phil Kettle about his new series. What questions are you going to ask him? Think about his story, what he's published, why he chose the concept behind the stories, where he gets his ideas.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Question 5

Question 6

Question 7

Question 8

Question 9

Question 10