

# **Mrs Echidnas Dilemma**

## **A 4-in-1 literacy resource**

### **By Betty Johnston**

#### **About the Multi-modal Package:**

This multi-modal literacy resource features both narrative and information texts with tactile illustrations depicting Australia's unique fauna and flora. Additionally, this resource includes a DVD recording of Darryl Bellingham reading the short narrative, while children act out the story alongside him using finger puppets. The finger puppet patterns are also included in the package with easy to follow instructions. This resource comes neatly condensed and sold as one book called 'Mrs Echidnas Dilemma'.

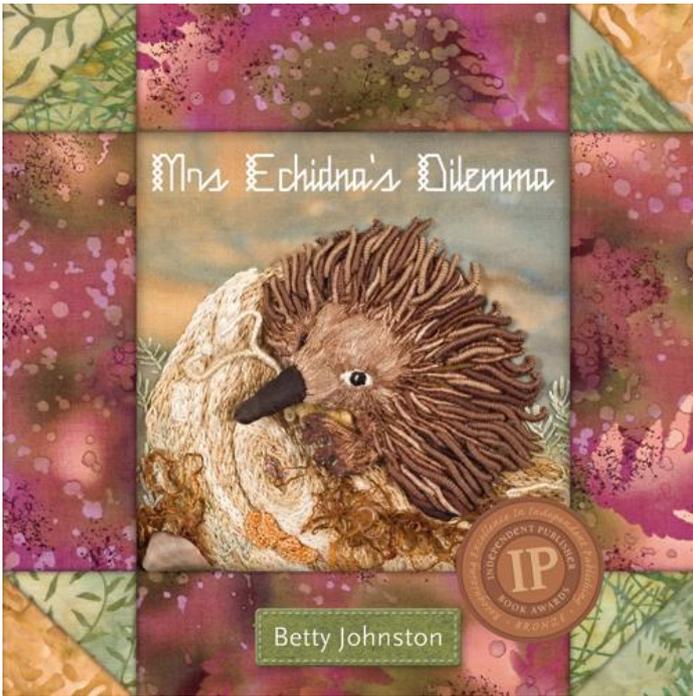
This literacy package was developed to engage and educate our young children (and adults too!). Therefore, the resource responds to each child's level of understanding and provides opportunities to facilitate a learning journey. For instance, a child can explore the texture of the illustrations as the story is read. Later, the child is captured by and participates in the re-telling of the story using finger puppets. A child's learning is further extended as they actively examine the pages of the information text. Mrs Echidnas Dilemma enables children to gain meaning through the multi-modality of the text as they develop awareness, appreciation and care for our natural environment.

#### **Australian Curriculum – English:**

Mrs Echidnas Dilemma lends itself to be embedded into the both English and Science strands of the Australian Curriculum. For instance in year 1 the students are 'Creating literature' by recreating texts imaginatively using diverse modes of communication. The finger puppets and simple pattern of the narrative, enables students to creatively perform and retell the story. In year 3, the students are asked to discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways, and speculate on the authors' reasons. Teachers have used the simple format of the storyline in Mrs Echidnas Dilemma, for deconstructing a text, as it holds such a strong sense of structure when discussing characters, setting, problem, events and resolution. Also, year 3 students have added additional characters, including additional dialogue to the story which enables them to explore the language features and patterns encountered in the text. The narrative, information and instructional sections also encourage the children to identify different text structures within the context of their different purposes.

#### **Australian Curriculum - Science Curriculum:**

Science teachers appreciate the way animal facts are integrated in the story line. The illustrations subtly take younger children on a journey from night through dawn and sunrise, to sunset and dusk. Interesting details about the animals are included in the narrative text, while additional scientific data is included in the information text, for those children who wish to learn more. This section, verified by renowned Echidna Research Scientist Dr Peggy Rismiller, includes the various animals' life cycle, diet, habitat, and adaptation to a changing environment. The format will encourage children to explore more information from other sources, or to undertake further research about other Australian animals. Discussions will arise as older children realise that the reptile (blue-tongued lizard) gives birth to live young, while two mammals (monotremes) lay eggs!



This award-winning literacy resource contains the narrative text on the right-hand pages, with information on the opposing pages.

The resource also includes patterns to make simple felt finger-puppets of the characters encountered in the story (instructional text) and a DVD with renowned story-teller Darryl Bellingham reading the story.

The coloured illustrations are embossed to encourage tactile association for the diverse learning approaches of younger children.

