

## *A story of our bushland*

*By Sofia Sutton El Moudden*

Snakes slip between my roots peacefully like thread through silk. Birds chirp, awakening the forest as the sun rises. The sun warms my trunk; sending shivers down my spine, as the nearby waterhole in glistens in the rays of the new day as platypuses' skate through the water like figure skaters. Kangaroos bound through the bush looking for fresh grass to fill their bellies with as the morning light gently touches every leaf and creature in the bushland.

The creatures of the bush are oblivious to what is happening in the outside world; they are only focusing on their three-dimensional wonderland that they live in. I smile at the baby animals that wrestle on the bush floor, making the kookaburras' sing with laughter. My heart melts as I see the beautiful place I live in, with its wonderful smell after it rains, and the cute dingo cubs that chase butterflies until they cannot run anymore. Slowly, as the sun rises higher, an unsettling sound disrupts the harmony.

Without a warning, everything goes silent. The crinkling of leaves beneath the animal's feet stops, and the syrupy singing of the birds becomes a flutter of wings as they fly to their hiding place. The leaves that once hummed with life become quiet as if not wanting to be seen. Slowly, as the sun rises higher, an unsettling sound disrupts the odd silence.

An alien sound of metal raking wood, sends animals to scatter in terror. A thump shakes the ground as an old friend falls heavily to the floor lifeless, leaves floating to the ground like mournful confetti. More trees fall; betrayed by the humans that we keep alive by cleaning the filthy air that they carelessly pollute. The once serene bush now trembles under the horrible roar of engines.

A myriad of blood-curdling machines crawl into the bush; trees groan in protest as hundreds more rapidly drop to the ground. A mother and baby wombat wanders towards the danger, oblivious to what will happen. The growl of the feller bunchers as they roll through the forest scares the wombats sending it right into the jaws of death. My heart aches as I hear the cries of many animals being slaughtered mercilessly and selfishly.

At that moment, I start to remember the time when we lived peacefully in our beautiful bush, full of life and wonder. A time when leaves drifted in the soft breeze, casting dappled shadows on the bush floor, animals jump over tree roots, echidnas waddled, birds sang graciously as the sunset and raindrops sitting victoriously on foliage and pieces of bark and leaves that litter the forest floor. Gazing up to the sky seeing the stars twinkle brightly and the moon lighting up the silent forest at night and sugar gliders sailing from tree to tree. The rapid sound of baby animals pouncing through the damp under growth, frilled neck lizards scurry up my bark tickling me so bad that I giggle silently. Koalas slowly eating gum leaves up on my branches, buggies finding holes in my trunk, trying to make a home fit for a family. Suddenly, all of this is stripped away. I have watched over this land for centuries, holding its beauty and bearing witness to its trials, only for plants and animals to bloom with vivid

colours . I have watched animals being hunted - running to hide in my roots for protection and climb up to my branches. I have seen storms tear down our land with us only to reproduce; making up for all we've lost. Deafening booms as lightning hits the ground sending many animals to their houses that they have built. Many critters have made a home beneath my feet and high in my sweet-smelling canopy. Now beautiful creatures are being killed with no consideration to their lives or feelings.

Majestic trees drop their seeds, hoping that once they die their young children can bloom into handsome trees. I let them hope, but I know that we will never recover after what is happening to our earth. Great, big scribbly gums watch as the humans demolish our once tranquil home for money. Do you have any idea what it is like to watch something you love be destroyed before you?

I feel for all the plants and animals that are being obliterated and torn away from life like pages from a book. Humans are selfish and ruthless. They don't care about what happens in the process of making money. Cute critters being crushed beneath the wheels of monstrous machines. Young saplings are being laid to waste along with the flesh and bone of amazing creatures that once roamed the earth. Adorable, striped numbats used to dig in the dirt looking for food in the in the hot sun but are now endangered rarely seen anymore. Flying foxes used to glide in the sky soaring up to the moon at night but are now nearly extinct.

The once lush, green forest is now bare. Pink galahs flee as well as cockatoos'. Unfortunate animals' bodies litter the ground like sprinkles on a cupcake. Roaring of machines grow louder as they near me, the smell of gas closer. Memories warm my mind as a chainsaw slashes at my trunk tearing me in half. Can anyone see me? Can anyone hear me? Goodbye, goodbye.