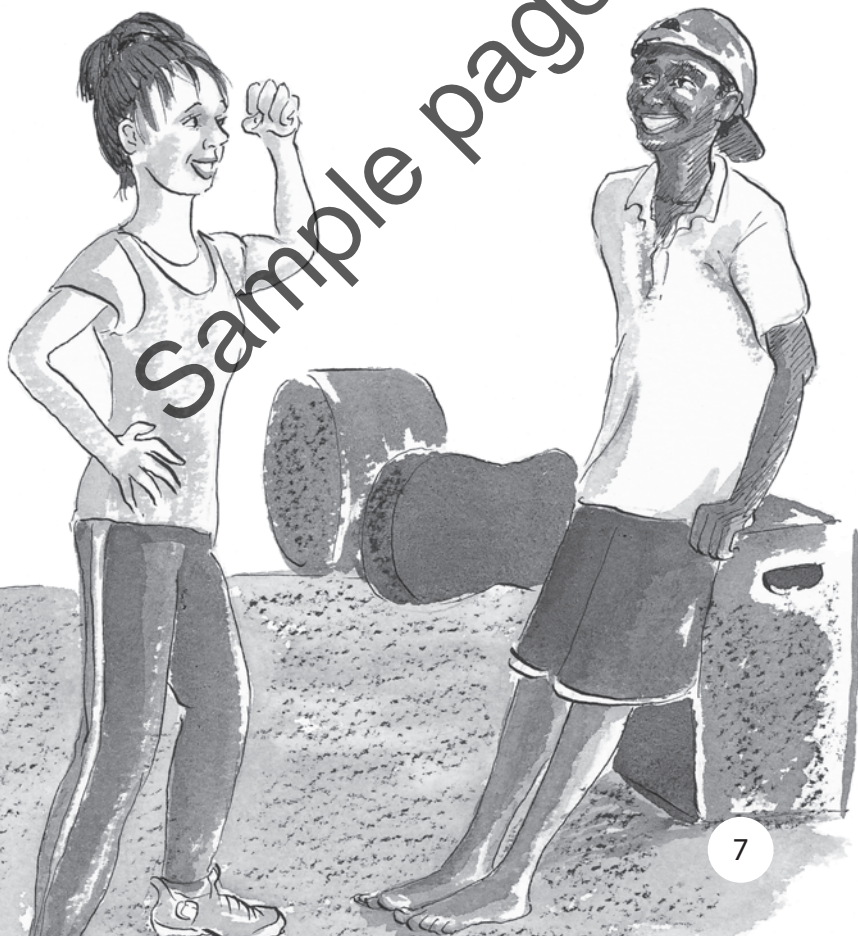


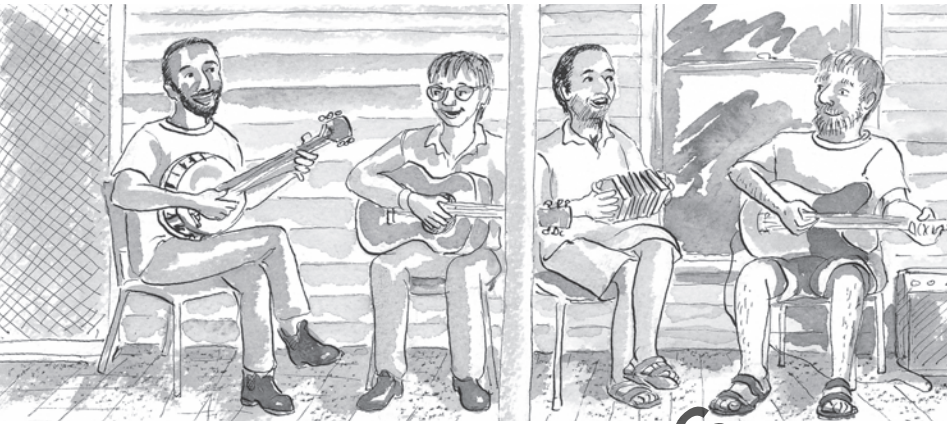
Ned and the Kellys

When it's a weekend, or school holidays, Nick and I get to go with Ned and the Kellys, as roadies. Nick is Dave's son. He's 14, one year ahead of me at school.

What does a roadie do? Well, mostly roadies carry things. Things like instruments and amps and lights and the audio desk. You develop great muscles, working as a roadie!



A Song for Fred



Nick and I help to set up the lights and position the microphones and amps, and sometimes we help out with the audio desk. It's a lot of fun, travelling with Ned and the Kellys.

But since Dad's name isn't Ned, and no one's a Kelly, why is the band called Ned and the Kellys? Good question! A couple of years ago, they were just a group of mates who got together every so often to play some music, just for fun.

One night, after it had been raining for a week, they all came over to our house to play. All the creeks were up, people couldn't get in and out of town, and the weather was messing up the TV reception. Everyone was looking for something to do. That night, Mr Roscoe, who runs the caravan park in town, happened to

Ned and the Kellys



pass by our house. And he heard Dad and his friends playing. Well, you couldn't miss hearing them, even with the rain. They were playing up a storm, and Dad was roaring out the words of *The Queensland Drover*. He sang:

*Oh I come from the Northern plains
Where the girls and the grass are scanty;
Where the creeks run dry or ten foot high
And it's either drought or plenty.*

Then everyone joined in:

*So pass the billy round, boys!
Don't let the pint-pot stand there!
For tonight we'll drink to the health
Of every overlander!*



A Song for Fred

Mr Roscoe stopped his ute, listened for a while, and then he came in.

“You guys aren’t bad,” he said. “What about coming down to the caravan park one night, and giving the tourists a bit of bush music?”

Dad and his friends laughed and shook their heads. “We couldn’t do that,” they said. “We just play for fun.”

“Well, I’ve got about 40 tourists stuck in the caravan park right now who could do with some fun,” Mr Roscoe said. “They can’t get out of town until the creeks go down. They’re getting bored, and I want to keep them happy. We’re having a campfire on Friday night, and I’ve got Lorna Mitchell coming to read some of her bush poetry. Your music would go down a treat with that. What do you reckon? Could you help me out?”

Dad and Renzo and Kev and Doug and Rory and Dave looked at each other, eyebrows raised. They weren’t sure, I could tell. But I knew they’d like to help Mr Roscoe out.

“Well, all right,” they said at last. “As long as the tourists don’t expect anything fancy.”

Ned and the Kellys



“They don’t need anything fancy,” Mr Roscoe said. “They’re so bored, anything would make them happy.” He grinned at the group. “No offence.”

After Mr Roscoe had gone, Dad and the others started to panic. It was only two days until Friday. They had just two days to try to make themselves sound like a real bush band, instead of just six mates sitting on a verandah having fun. A real bush band, good enough for tourists to enjoy. Could they do it?