SYNOPSIS:
A non-fiction picture book about the life and times of Macquarie Island – a sub-Antarctic Island and World Heritage Site. This book traces the history of the island and the story of how its precious ecosystem has been damaged over the years and how recently attempts have been made to regenerate and restore it to its former pristine state.

*One Small Island* is a story of hope and renewal, paradise lost and found, and the life and times of one tiny island in relation to the whole planet showing us how Macquarie Island’s plight is a microcosm of the environmental issues facing us today.

WRITING STYLE
Drawing on historical journals, maps, archives, scientific notebooks and photographs of Macquarie Island, this picture book intersperses Alison Lester’s beautiful landscape paintings of the island with Coral Tulloch’s detailed artwork, recording people’s voices through time. The island’s story is told in text running across the bottom of the page, linking the illustrations of Macquarie Island’s beautiful landscapes and historical ephemera with a lyrical account of the island’s history and the struggle to preserve it today.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS
Alison Lester is one of the most popular and best-selling writers and illustrators of children’s books in Australia, and has won many awards, including the Children’s Book Council of Australia Picture Book Award for *Thing* by Robin Klein (OUP), and Honour Book for *The Journey Home* (OUP). Her career now spans more than twenty-one years, and in that time she has produced such classics as the Clive Eats Alligators series, *Magic Beach, Imagine* and *Our Farm*. In recent years she has also started writing novels, including *The Quicksand Pony* and *The Snow Pony*, and the Bonnie and Sam series with Roland Harvey. Her picture book, *Are We There Yet?*, won the CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award in 2005, and her most recent picture book *Running with the Horses* was an Honour Book in the 2010 CBCA Book of the Year Awards and 2010 Prime Minister’s Literary Awards.

Coral Tulloch has illustrated more than 50 books for children in both fiction and non-fiction, including *Antarctica: The Heart Of The World*, which won the Environment
Award for Children’s Literature in 2004. As well as having a passion for environmental education, Coral loves Antarctica, which she visits when she can as artist-in-residence on tourist voyages; but recently drawings of penguins have given way to tortoise shells. Coral lives in Hobart, Tasmania, with her husband, Peter and daughter, Tully.

Both Alison and Coral have travelled to Macquarie Island and Antarctica as Antarctic Arts Fellows. More information about their Arts Fellowships can be found at the links below:


From Alison Lester
When I went to Antarctica as an Australian Antarctic Arts Fellow in 2005 we stopped at Macquarie Island on the way home, dropping off personnel and supplies and picking up returning expeditioners.

I was gobsmacked to see the state of the island. I was expecting lush megaherbs and tussocked hills but the plants had been chewed to the ground by rabbits, leaving little shelter for the nesting birds and exposing the fragile soil to erosion.

It was very sad to see such a remote and beautiful place so degraded. I started to write the story of One Small Island then, describing the island’s rise from the sea floor and how, before its discovery, it had existed for centuries in a perfect balance.

I put it aside, for a future project, until one day when I was talking to Coral and we decided to do the book together.

From Coral Tulloch

I first visited the island as an Australian Antarctic Arts Fellow, too. But my first experience at Macquarie could not have been more dissimilar to Alison’s, as it was 1999 and when I arrived, the island came out of the mist, its peaks iced by snow, its flanks a luxuriant green. When I walked the beaches, weaving between large cabbages and tussocks that hid the bulky bodies of seals, the cliffs were spotted with sea birds.

Since this time, Alison and I have re-visited the island together, and seen the recent devastation. My last time on the island was distressing. So much destruction of the vegetation had occurred in these few years. The island’s peaks showed the scars of recent landslips and its flanks were covered by receding matted dry vegetation. The steep sides of the island were moving with a sea of rabbit ears, the birds precariously trying to find a foothold.

Like anyone who had visited the island in this time, we both discussed its problems and its future. Alison wanted to tell the story of the island and she asked me to work with her to translate what we felt.
EDITORIAL COMMENTS

*One Small Island* is a beautifully designed and illustrated non-fiction picture book about the life and times of Macquarie Island – a sub-Antarctic Island and World Heritage Site – from award-winning picture book creators, Alison Lester and Coral Tulloch. It is a moving account of what happens to a beautiful, pristine ecosystem when its environment is exploited, and how subsequent regeneration is possible; so it’s ultimately a hopeful story about what can be done to restore our natural environment, which is one of the things I love about it. There is also an absolute wealth of information here for exploring in the classroom, both in the context of looking at the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic environments and the bigger picture need for a sustainable approach to our treatment of the environment, tying in with national curriculum sustainability topics. More generally, May 2011 to June 2012 is the Antarctic Centennial Year and there are many conferences and public events happening to coincide with this in and around Hobart and the rest of the world (see [http://www.antarcticcentennial.tas.gov.au/home](http://www.antarcticcentennial.tas.gov.au/home) for more information), so these would provide some great points of interest for studying this book in the classroom along with general Antarctic and sustainability studies.

STUDY NOTES/ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS

THEMES:
- Conservation
- Native vs introduced species
- Man vs nature
- Extinction
- Maintaining ecosystems in isolated locations
- Geographic and environmental challenges

PRE-READING:
- Locate Macquarie Island on a map.
- Lying half way between the coast of Tasmania and Antarctica, what environmental challenges would the island face?
- New vocabulary: subterranean; tectonic plates; lava ; extinction; ecosystems; native species; flora, fauna etc

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION:

*Page 2*
- What feeling do you get from this page – an image of an albatross flying over a green island in the midst of a glistening blue ocean?
- What would you expect to see on this island?

Activity
- Imagine that you are in a plane flying over Macquarie Island and this is the view you have from the window of the plane. Write a journal entry that describes how you are feeling and what you are expecting to see when you land.
Page 3

- Where does lava come from? Why do we have subterranean volcanoes?
- Can you think of any other islands that have been formed as a result of volcanic action?
- Discuss how new islands can be formed from a movement of the earth’s plates.
- What is the impact of having set this information out like this, similar to a school project? Does this make it easier to read and more interesting? Why?
- Looking at this information, does this support the predictions you have made in your journal entry? Volcanic earth tends to be very fertile. This research also shows the presence of a range of flora and fauna (plants and animals).

Page 4

- Why would sealers have gone to Macquarie Island in 1810?
- Why would the animals on the island not have been afraid of people?

Page 5

- The log entry indicates that the sealers were not originally heading for Macquarie Island at all. In fact, Macquarie Island was an ‘uncharted Island’. What does this mean? How did cartographers manage to chart various countries and islands on their maps?
- The island the men were heading for was actually Campbell Island, a New Zealand Island that became a popular seal hunting base. The Perseverance was blown off course, landing instead at the unknown land they later named Macquarie Island. Why would ships sailing south of Tasmania often get blown off course?
- Research why this newly discovered island was named Macquarie Island. Who was Macquarie? As a result, the island became governed by New South Wales and not the nearer state of Tasmania. Would this have made a difference to its history?
- Seals were hunted for their fur which could be sold overseas and made into expensive fashion items such as handbags, coats, hats and jackets. The government in New South Wales encouraged fur trading as they could levy a high duty or tax on traders who were supplying overseas markets. Fur seal trading was Australia’s first large scale overseas export. Should this practice have been allowed to occur? What were the advantages and disadvantages of the fur seal trade?
- Other than the seals, what animals were impacted upon by the arrival of men on Macquarie Island? The birds were eaten, as were penguins and sea elephants’ flippers. The men also ate wild cabbage that grew on the island. They also hunted elephant seals (sea elephants) for their blubber which could be made into oil for heating. What impact would this have had on the island?
- What does this suggest about people’s attitudes to nature?
- Did the men have a right to use up the native animals and vegetation in this way?
- Was the NSW government right to encourage this practise? What were the benefits of the seal trade for Australia? What were the disadvantages? Given that Macquarie Island was a small, uninhabited island, would that make a difference to your argument?
The sealers killed more than one hundred thousand fur seals, and after ten years there were none left. Why would there have been no fur seals left? What does this suggest about the practice of seal hunting?

Page 6
- What is an introduced species?
- What animals have been introduced into Australia? (eg rabbits, cane toads).
- What impact do they have on the native animals and plants?
- Is there any way to reduce the impact an introduced species may have on native flora and fauna?
- What predictions can you make about the impact of cats and dogs on the island?

Page 7
- The Russian explorer, Thaddeus von Bellingshausen mapped the island in 1820. What impact would this have had once people were more aware of the existence of the island?
- He reports that the men there were unable to work and had little in the way of supplies. Why were sealers often stranded on the island with no supplies?
- Between Bellingshausen’s arrival in 1820 and the 1890s the animal life on the island underwent great change. Make a note of the animals that were recorded as being on the island at the different times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1820 Animals on the island</th>
<th>1890s Animals on the island</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- What factors caused the animal numbers to be depleted? What other introduced species had affected the animal population?
- Without killing these animals for oil or food, the sealers would have perished. How did the sealers make use of each of the animals on the island? Were they justified in killing the Macquarie island animals in order to survive?
- Why might the Macquarie island parakeet have disappeared forever? What other animals in the world have become extinct? What animals are currently in danger of becoming extinct?

Page 8
- Who was Douglas Mawson and why was Macquarie Island important to him?

Page 9
- The letter from Dr Edward Wilson to his father, written in 1911, shows how appalled he was by the practice of boiling the King penguins for their oil. He recommended intervention from the Prevention of cruelty Society. As a doctor, would Wilson really have had a good understanding of the need for this practice to continue? Would he have been biased in his account?
- Similarly, the Otaga Daily Times describes this practice as being driven by the greed of a few individuals. Who really benefitted from the hunting of seals and penguins for their fur and oil? Was it just a few greedy individuals?
• By the 1930s, the hunting of penguins had stopped and Mawson’s account is much more positive. What animals does he mention in his account?
• Why would the baby seal numbers have increased?
• What predictions can you make about the impact the rabbits may have on Macquarie Island? What problems has the Australian mainland faced with regards to rabbits?
• What methods have been employed on the Australian mainland to cope with the rabbits? Have these been successful?

Page 10
• Macquarie Island was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1933. What would this have meant?
• Why would the penguin and seal populations have grown at this time?
• Why were the cats and rabbits still able to cause so much harm?

Page 11
• In 1948, the Australian government established a research station on Macquarie Island. What do the images on this page suggest about the way the island has been treated in more recent years?
• Would the introduction of sheep have harmed the island?
• The cartoons suggest that rats, cats and rabbits remained a constant problem on the island. What is the myxoma virus? Why would the reduction of the rabbit population have had such a significant impact on the island?
• Why would Macquarie Island be such a good location for a research station?

Page 12
• This illustration shows the Aurora. What is this phenomenon?

Page 13
• Why would the cats and wekas have been such a problem on the island?
• Tourism has both a positive and a negative impact on the island. What are the advantages and disadvantages of tourism on Macquarie Island?
• Why do tourists have to walk through a bath of disinfectant and have their pockets vacuumed out before landing on the island? What does this reveal about our increased knowledge of the dangers of introduced species?
• Should the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife services be allowed to remove or destroy the cats on the island?
• What problem has been caused by the eradication of the cats?

Page 14
• Why would the rabbits have added to the erosion problem on the island?

Page 15
• What are the problems associated with the planned eradication process of rabbits, rats and mice?
• Are the dangers worth it?
• What would be the problems associated with leaving the rabbits, rats and mice to go unchecked on the island?
Page 16

- What lessons in conservation can we learn from the story of Macquarie Island?
- Make a series of posters encouraging others to help protect our environment.

Activity:
- Select another location and study the issues that region has faced with regards to conservation.

For discussion:
- Should people ever be allowed to damage land in order to advance their own society?
- What sorts of things do we do even in our local community that can damage the environment?
- Is it possible to stop all of these things from happening?
- How can people and the environment co-exist successfully?
- How have our attitudes to the environment changed over the last century?

MARKETING AND PROMOTION:

ADVERTISING & PUBLICITY

Select interviews on ABC and community Radio nationally.

Select press interviews.

Review mailing to major newspapers nationally.

EDUCATION MARKETING

Feature in Penguin Catalogue.

Alison to appear at Professional Development Day for Primary teachers in Melbourne.

Advertising in Magpies and Reading Time

Review copies to be sent to Education Consultants and reviewers

Feature on Penguin Teachers' Corner blog.

ON-LINE

Feature title on puffin.com.au