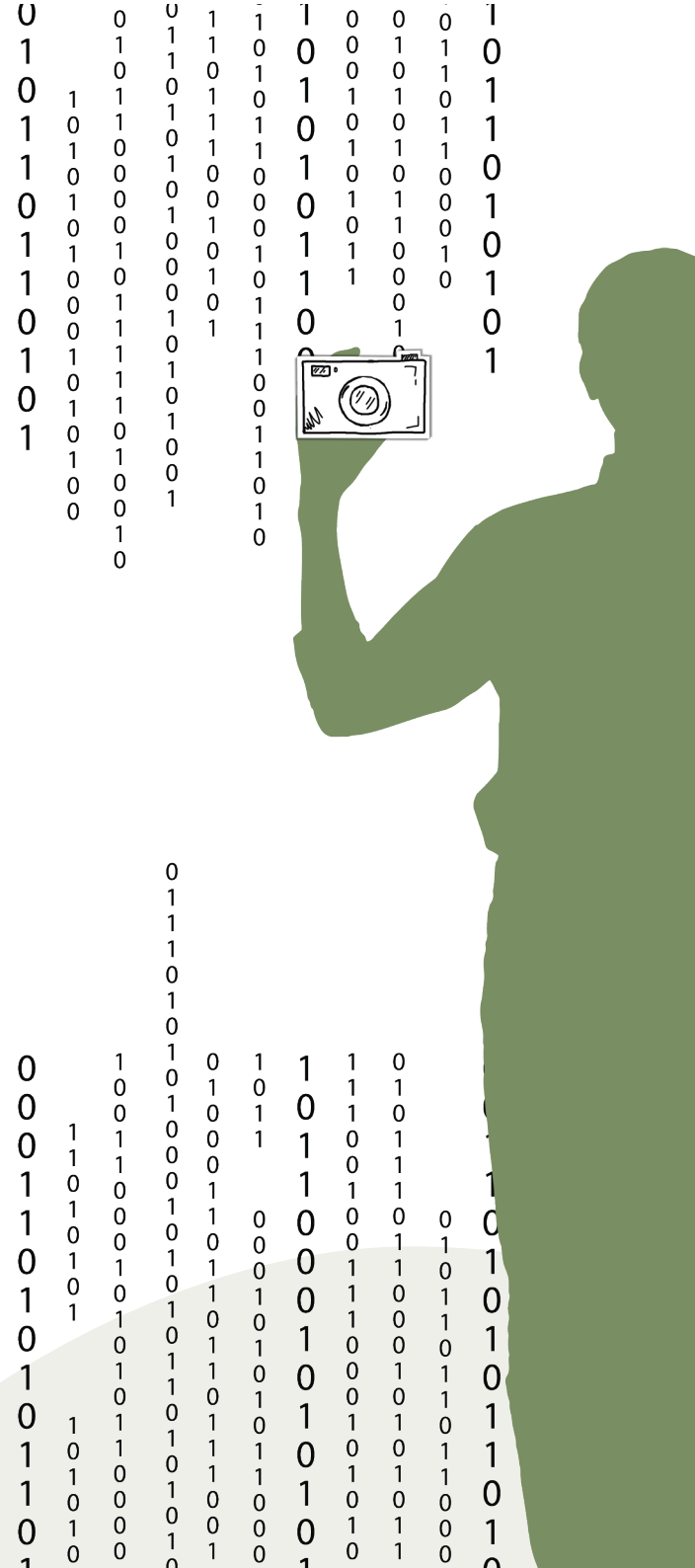


THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN <VIRTUAL> RACE



have assembled your team. Two of them were easy to convince. In response to your link to the competition website, Ruby sent just two words: I'm in! You know that Ruby's insane memory for facts is one skillset you need on the team. You also suspect that her gaming skills might come in handy - or at least her competitive nature.

Beau hadn't replied straight away because he was working on a playlist for his sister's birthday next weekend. He is obsessed with music. His headphones are permanently connected and some body part is always tapping - a foot, a hand, a knee. Recently he's been experimenting with mixing instruments traditionally used by Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders into other music. It is pretty amazing. But once he saw the message, he was in too.

Amari took longer to convince. He is a year below you and the others but he is tall. Everyone thinks he'd be great at basketball but the truth is, he hates sports. His passion is art. His sketches are incredible. But he's quiet and prefers to keep to himself, so you had to work a lot harder to get him to agree. You got there in the end -

after way too many messages and a whole lot of charm. Now you just hope he doesn't change his mind. Ruby, Beau, Amari and you as captain. The Dream Team!

'So, there are three main categories and they are all about Australian symbols,' you explain to the team as you eat lunch outside the art room. 'Anthems, flags and other symbols.'

Your phone vibrates in your pocket. Absent-mindedly, you pull it out and continue talking. 'We start next Friday. Beau, you're on anthems. Amari, you're flags and ...' You look at your phone.

A message from an unknown number: *Quit now, losers!*

You look up and see the rest of your team looking at their phones too.

'Losers? That's not very creative,' Beau laughs.

You laugh too but you can't ignore the worry that rises in your chest.

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