SYNOPSIS
Whitney and Britney are two gorgeous chooks who live with their friend Dora von Dooze the fox. To Dora’s dismay, they spend their days snoozing and napping and are no company for her at all. The chooks, you see, have a secret. Every night they dress in fancy costumes and head to the theatre to perform in front of admiring crowds. How Dora investigates and discovers their secret lives is an entertainingly whimsical trip through a fantasy world where chooks wear feather boas and foxes are their best friends.

WRITING STYLE
Gifford utilises a scene-limited third-person omnipotent voice, so the revelation of Dora’s abilities and secret life comes as a delightful surprise for both the reader and the Chicken Divas. Consisting entirely of verse, the language used is as dramatic as the characters who star in this story, and is ideally suited to reading aloud. Plot tension is consistently maintained throughout, with revelations of exciting chicken behaviour and antics present in the last line of several verses, supported by a layout placing the final word or phrase over the page. Rollicking, flamboyant, and rich with exciting adjectives to excite the young and endear the characters to older readers, this is the perfect book to share for National Simultaneous Storytime.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE
Consisting of a mix of full and half page spreads, vignettes, and multi-panel illustrations, Gifford’s artwork is as colourful and bright as the characters. The characters are presented as anthropomorphised versions of the various animals, wearing (glittery) clothes, and with brightly coloured fur, feathers or scales. The visual narrative parallels the textual narrative throughout, and Gifford’s deft use of texture and highlights illustrate the glitter, sparkle and shine that her words describe.

BEFORE READING
Before reading the story, look carefully at the cover and title. Ask: Who do you think Whitney and Britney might be? What is a diva? What do you think a Chicken Diva might be? Why do you think the chickens are such bright colours? Do you think Chicken Divas might behave differently to backyard chooks? How?

ACTIVITIES
Create a feather-patterned art design for Foxy and the Chickettes’ poster advertising their next performance.

Make Chicken Diva handprint art.
Carefully paint the palm of one of your hands with non-toxic washable poster paint, and make a handprint on a clean piece of paper.

Once your handprint has dried, use a felt-tipped marker to draw a beady chicken eye and a beak on the thumb, a wobbly line for the wing on the palm of the hand, and draw lines on the fingers to form the chicken’s feathers.

Don’t forget to draw legs underneath as well!

Decorate your Chicken Diva with brightly coloured markers, paint, or glitter glue.

Make your own feather boa out of strips of crepe paper.
Cut a piece of A4 construction paper lengthwise into 6 strips.

Glue, tape or staple the strips together to form one long piece of paper to make the spine of your feather boa.

Cut crepe paper into strips approximately 2cm wide and 15cm long.

Glue or tape one end of each piece of crepe paper to the construction paper spine so the crepe paper strip is at right angles to the spine.

Continue gluing the crepe paper strips along the spine, alternating sides, until the entire spine is covered.