

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA)

NSW Branch Inc. Hunter



Book of Local Authors & Illustrators 2026



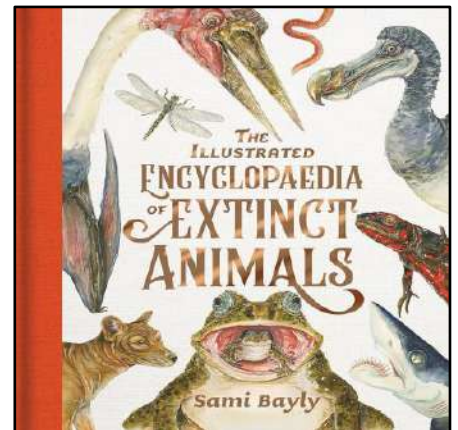
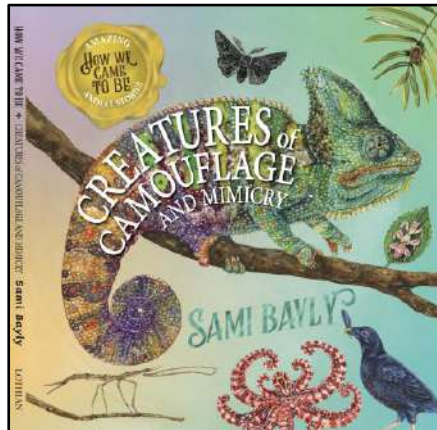
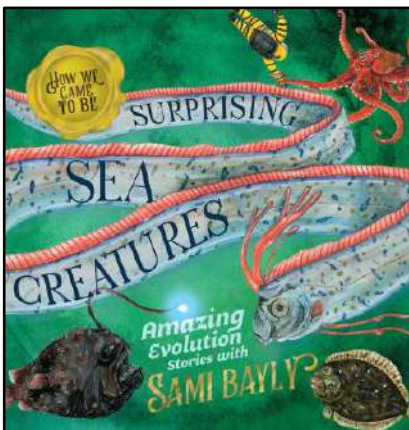
Sami Bayly

Illustrator and Author

Sami is a 29 year old international award winning author and illustrator who is based in Newcastle, Australia. She loves all things weird and wonderful and enjoys painting realistic flora and fauna with watercolours. Her favourite topics tend to be the ones most people like to avoid... such as 'ugly' animals, parasites, poo stories and more.

After studying at The University of Newcastle, Sami graduated in 2018 with a bachelor of Natural History Illustration (Honours). In her final year, she was approached by publishers and gained her first book deal, which kick started her career in publishing. Since 2019, she has published seven books and has been shortlisted for/won over 20 awards.

Five of her books are non-fiction and are part of The Illustrated Encyclopaedia series, while her other two are hybrid picture books in the How We Came To Be series. They focus on animal evolution stories for younger children.



Offerings

- School, Library and Festival visits.
- Illustration Workshops

Awards

Sami has won, and been nominated for, numerous awards including:

2022 Winner Environmental Award for Children's Literature Non-Fiction: The Wilderness Society

2022 Winner Sun Project Shadow Judging: Shadowers' Choice for the CBCA Eve Pownall Award

2021 Winner Children's Indie Book of the Year Award: Indie Book Awards

2020 Winner Best Designed Children's Non-Fiction Illustrated book: Australian Book Design Awards.

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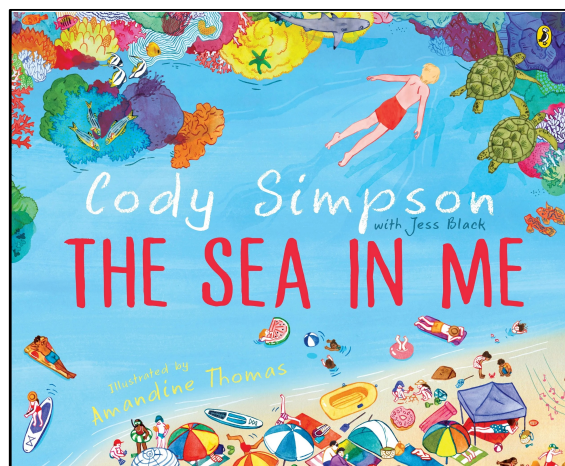
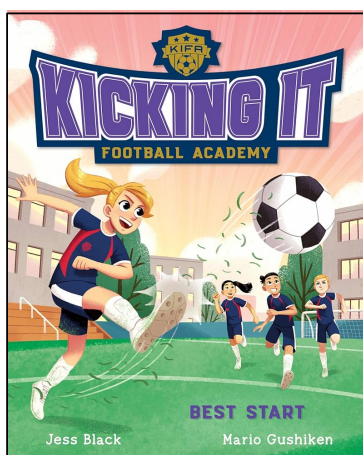
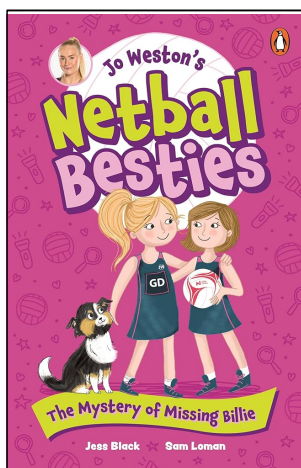
Jess Black



Author

Jess Black is an award-winning author of 70 children's books. Jess has written the Netball Besties series, the Kicking It series, the Mackenzie Arnold series, The Colourful World of Poppy Starr Olsen, Time Out! (Who Dunit, Eddie Woo? series), the Pepper Creek Ponies series, the Tales of Mr Walker series, The Keeper of the Crystals Series, and the Little Paws series.

Jess is the co-author of The Kaboom Kid series, The Bindi Irwin Wildlife Adventure series, and the Animal Tales series. Jess has written four picture books – The Bold Australian Girl, Moon Dance, Logan's Big Move and The Sea in Me. She has also released a high-contrast board book series. The most recent titles include Aussie Beach Babies and Aussie Garden Babies.



Offerings

- Author talks and school visits for any age
- Writing workshops for grades 2 - 8

Awards

- *The Tales of Mr Walker* Notable book CBCA Awards for Younger Readers 2019
- *The Tales of Mr Walker* longlisted for ABIA Award for Younger Readers 2019
- *The Tales of Mr Walker* longlisted for an Indie Award 2019

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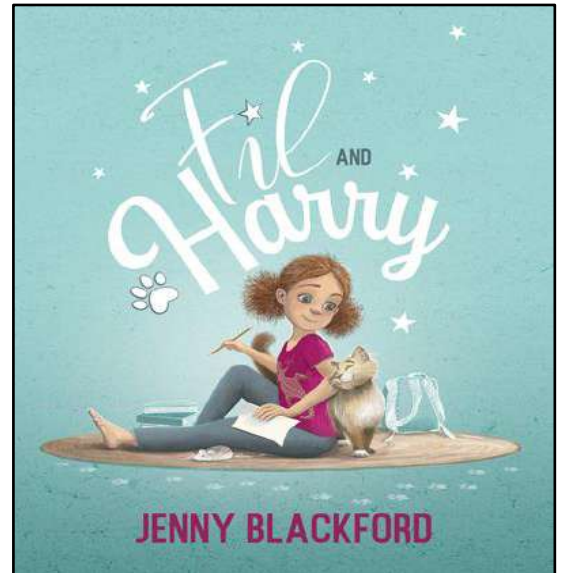
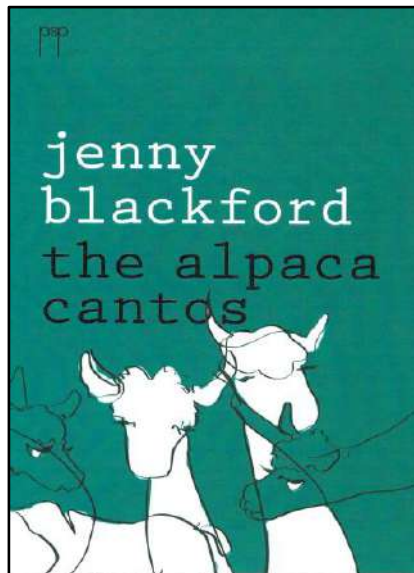
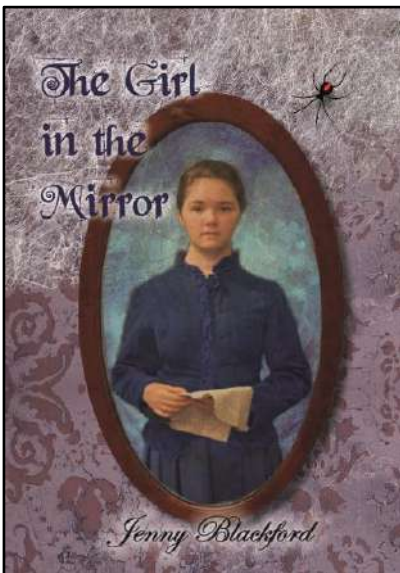


Jenny Blackford

Author

Jenny is a prize-winning Newcastle-based author and poet. Her middle-grade historical mystery *The Girl in the Mirror* appeared from Christmas Press/Eagle Books in 2019, and won the 2020 Davitt Award for Best Children's Crime Novel. Christmas Press also published her middle grade novel *Fil and Harry* in 2021. Her poems and stories for children are regularly published in the *School Magazine*, and have appeared in *Our Home is Dirt by Sea: Australian Poetry for Australian Kids*, *Stories for Nine Year Olds* and other great

anthologies. Pitt Street Poetry has published three collections of her poetry: *The Duties of a Cat*, *The Loyalty of Chickens* and *The Alpaca Cantos*, all suitable for teens as well as adults.



Offerings

- Author talks
- Author workshops for prose or poetry
- School visits

Awards

- First place in the Long Poem category of the Rhysling Awards 2021
- The 2020 Davitt Award for Best Children's Crime Novel for her novel *The Girl in the Mirror*
- First place Thunderbolt Prize for Crime Poetry 2017
- First place Humorous Verse section of the Henry Lawson awards 2014 and 2017

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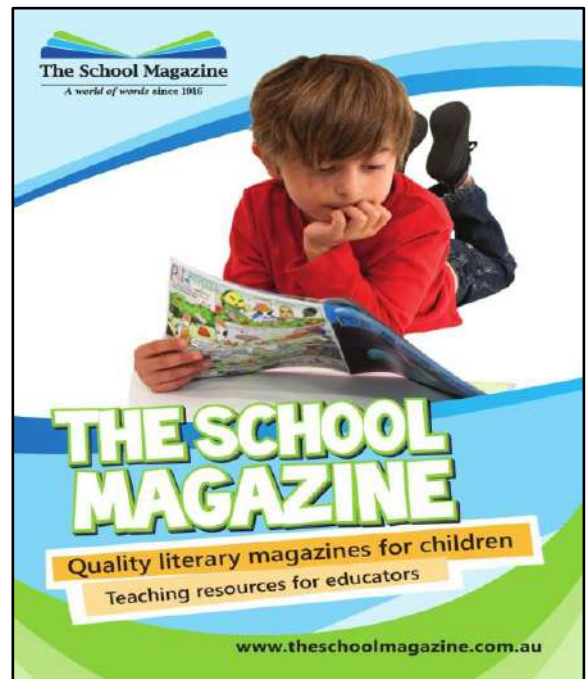
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Zoë Disher

Author

Zoë is a children's author who has written mainly for magazines and has over a hundred pieces published in The School Magazine. These are mostly nonfiction articles but also include poems and short stories. She is currently working on longer pieces of fiction in the hopes of one day actually finishing a chapter book.



Contact

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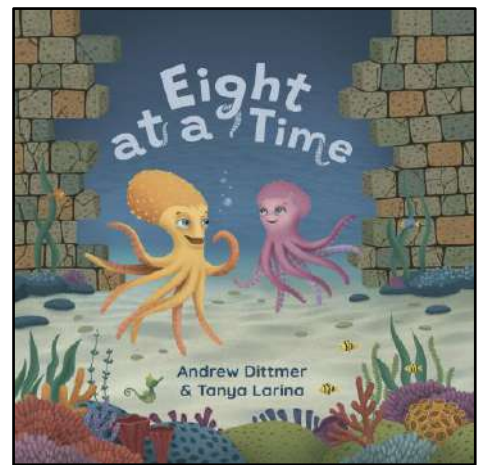
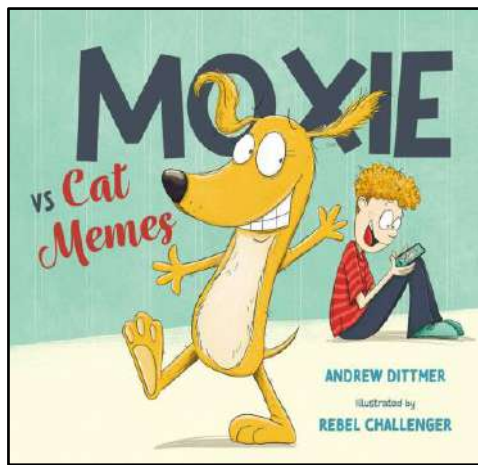
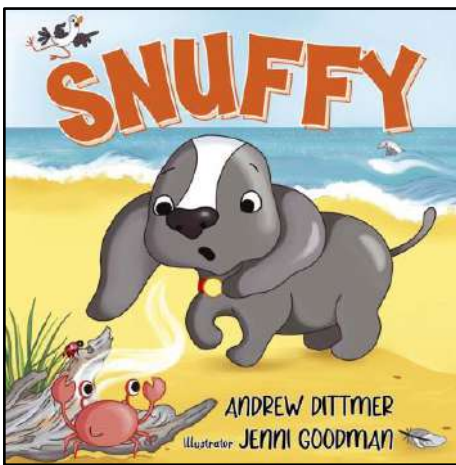
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Andrew Dittmer

Author

Andrew Dittmer writes stories for you to share with your loved ones from picture books to middle grade fiction. He writes about the value and capability that children have.



Offerings

- School Visits
- Workshops

Awards

- *Snuffy* - Shortlisted for the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards, 2022

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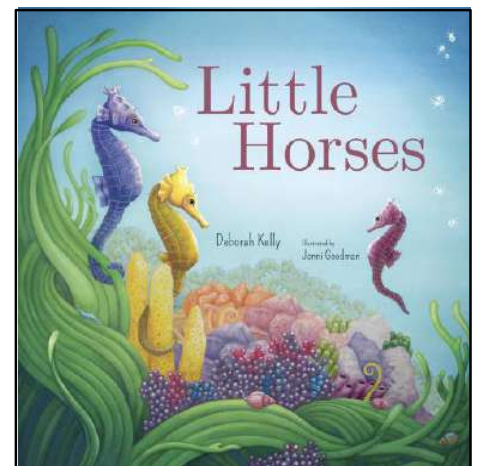
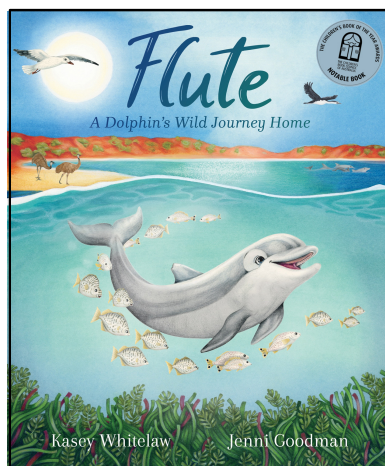
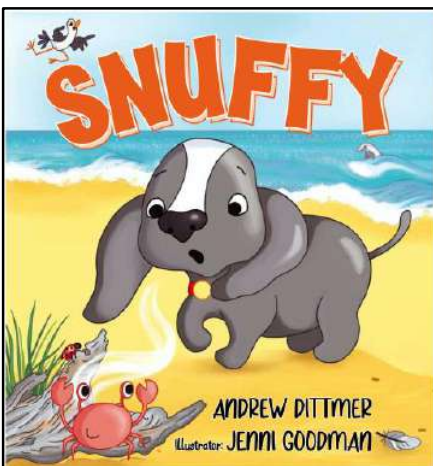
Jenni Goodman

Illustrator & CBCA Newsletter Coordinator



Jenni Goodman Jenni Goodman is a children's book illustrator who lives in beautiful Caves Beach, a lovely seaside town just south of Newcastle, Australia. Jenni uses different mediums to create her artworks including watercolour paints, coloured pencils, graphite pencils and digital media. She enjoys capturing the beauty of nature and expressive characters in her illustrations.

Jenni loves that her recent illustration work has been used to champion wildlife conservation with titles such as *Have You Seen A Tree For Me?* (2020), *Little Horses* (2024), and *Flute: A Dolphin's Wild Journey Home* (2025) bringing attention and awareness into homes and classrooms. She is currently working on her eleventh book - another colourful celebration featuring beautiful wildlife!



Offerings

- School Visits
- Illustrator Talks
- Storytimes/Book Readings
- School Holiday Workshops

Awards

- *Flute: A Dolphin's Wild Journey Home* - Notable Book, 2026 Children's Book Council of Australia Awards, Eve Pownall Category
- *Snuffy* - Shortlisted for the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards, 2022

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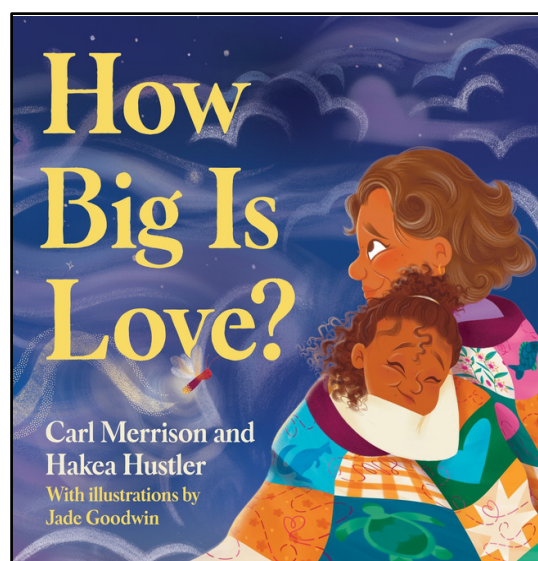
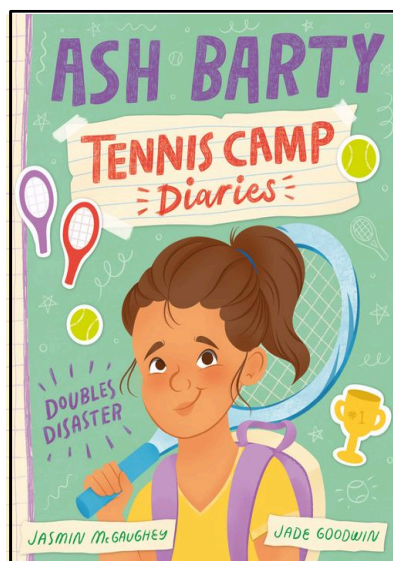
Jade Goodwin

Illustrator

Jade Goodwin is a children's book illustrator based on Wonnarua Country in the Hunter Valley, NSW. Since 2022, Jade has illustrated 24 published books, with another ten (and counting!) currently in progress, spanning picture books, chapter books and junior fiction series.

Her published work includes the popular series Little Ash, Tennis Camp Diaries, Yarn Quest and Your Next Read: The Missing Pencil Case, as well as picture books My Dream For You, Let's Try Again Another Day, Aslan & Benny, Earthspeak: Boodjar Wangkiny, How Big Is Love?, Gooramindi the Crocodile, and My Dream Holiday.

Jade believes in making art that feels warm, accessible, and full of heart. She hopes her illustrations spark curiosity, courage, and a lifelong love of stories. When she's not drawing, you'll find her drinking coffee, planning her next project, or being "assisted" by one (or all) of her three mischievous studio cats.



Offerings

- School, library & festival visits
- Storytimes / book readings
- School holiday workshops

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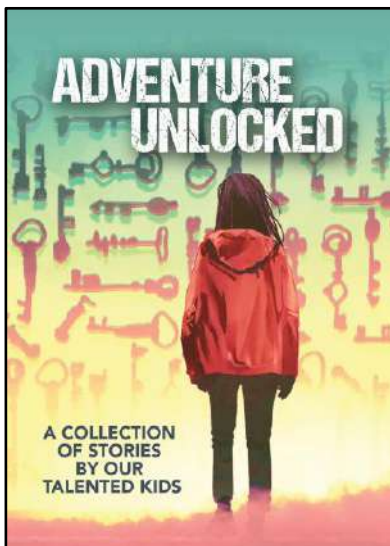
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Karen Hughes

Author

Karen Hughes is a former corporate lawyer, the mother of four fabulous young adults and the author of four mythic fantasy books in the *Kalika Magic* series, now listed on the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge. Her most recent book is *The Howling Sands* (2017). As the director of Hunter Valley Writers in Maitland, Karen runs the popular Talented Kids Program, publishing an annual anthology of stories written by local kids and delivering author talks, school visits, and creative writing workshops all over Australia. She is passionate about inspiring kids to live a creative life and believes that every child should have the opportunity to shine. Karen has just finished writing an adult science fiction novel as the creative component of her PhD (English) at the University of Newcastle and is currently working on her fifth *Kalika Magic* book.



Offerings

- Author talks / workshops / readings
- School / Library / Book Club visits
- Weekly creative writing sessions on Zoom
- Talented Kids Program in our Maitland studio
- Writers Festival workshops / panels
- Homeschool creative writing programs
- School holiday workshops

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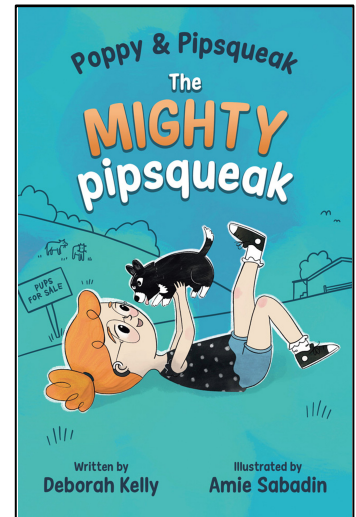
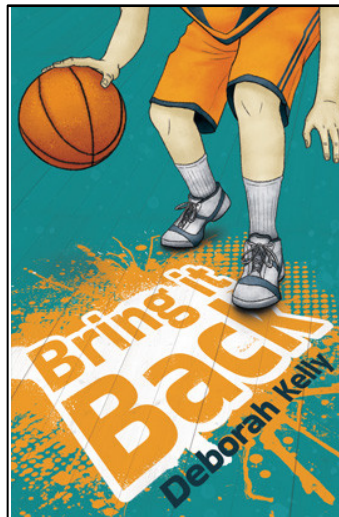
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Deborah Kelly

Author

Deb Kelly is a multi award-winning, internationally published author of picture books, junior fiction and middle grade. Deb visits schools, libraries and festival events (including Newcastle Writers' Festival and Sydney Writers' Festival) to share her books with children. Many of her books are included in Premier's Reading Challenge lists around Australia. She is a Role Model for *Books in Homes* and reviews children's books for *Reading Time* magazine.



Offerings

- School visits
- Readings K – 6
- Festival appearances

Awards

- *The Thing About Oliver* – winner Australian Association of Family Therapists Award in 2021
- *The Thing About Oliver* – shortlisted for CBCA Younger Readers & Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year 2020
- *Me and You* – winner Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year 2017
- *Ruby Wishfingers: Skydancer's Escape, Me and You & The Thing About Oliver* – CBCA Notable books

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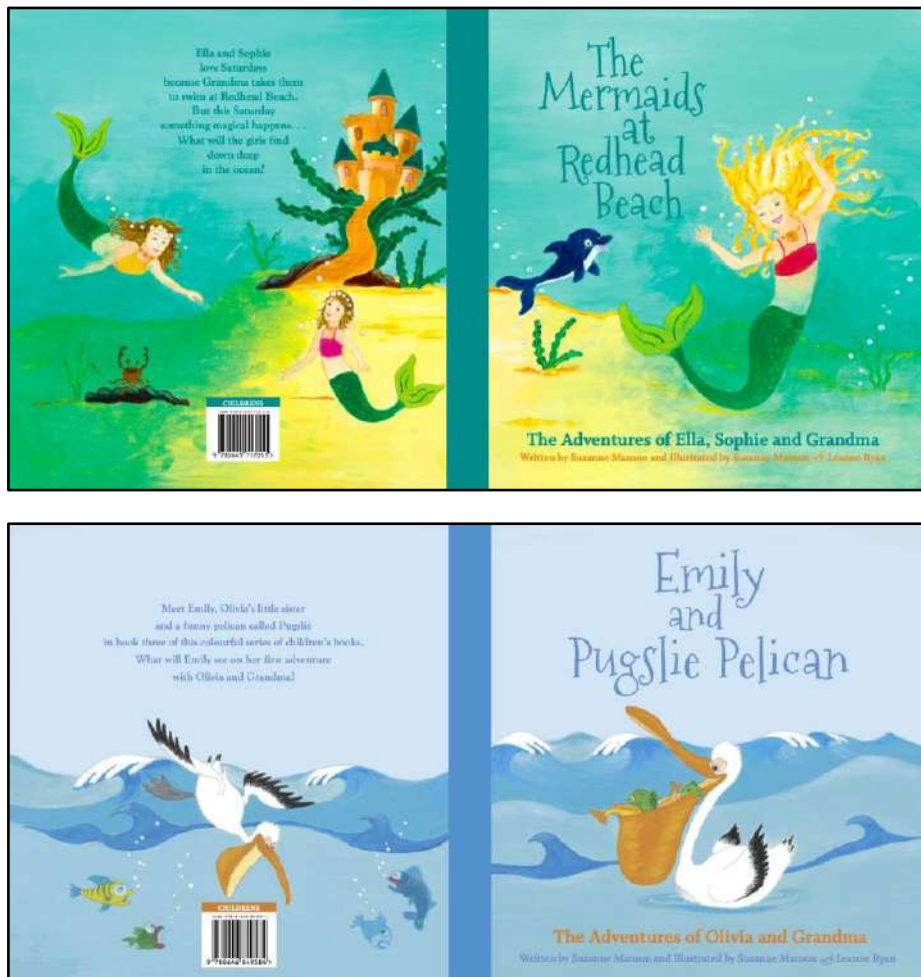


Suzanne Manson

Author & Illustrator

I am a Newcastle local author and illustrator and have recently completed my fourth book in The Adventures of Oliver and Grandma series. These colourful books are about a family of children and their adventures at Redhead Beach. I have really enjoyed writing these books and am looking forward to releasing book five, the last in this series, later this year.

Books are available at Creative Village Newcastle in store and online creativevillagenewcastle.com.au. They are also available through my email and Facebook.



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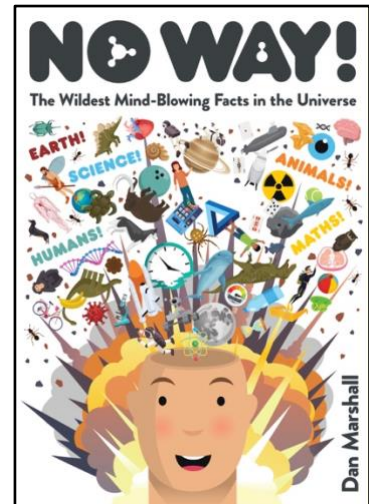
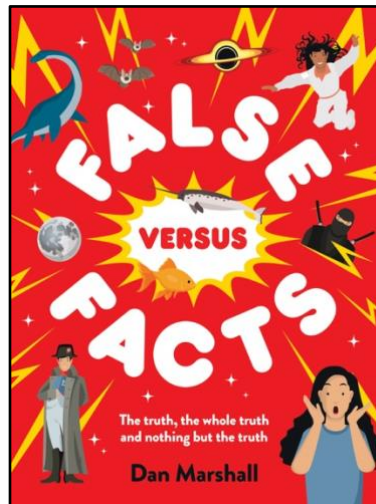
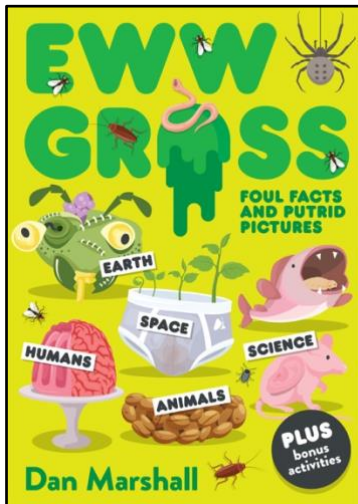


Dan Marshall

Author & Illustrator

Dan is a Newcastle based author and illustrator who writes and illustrates children's books that spark curiosity about our world and the larger universe. His titles include *Mind Blown*, *Look Book*, *No Way!*, *Super Duper*, *Eww Gross*, and *False Versus Facts*. Combining fascinating facts, humour, and eye-catching illustrations, his books encourage children to explore science, nature, space, history, and the weird and wonderful things that make our universe so remarkable. His book *No Way!* was recognised as a Notable Book by the Children's Book Council of

Australia in 2022, while *Eww Gross* was shortlisted in 2024. Dan's books have also been published internationally, reaching young readers across the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, South Korea, China, Poland, Turkey, and other countries. His latest book, *101 Space Secrets* will be published globally in October 2026.



Offerings

- School, library and festival appearances
- Illustration workshops

Awards

- *No Way!* CBCA Eve Pownall Award, Notable book 2022
- *Eww Gross* CBCA Eve Pownall Award, Shortlisted book 2024

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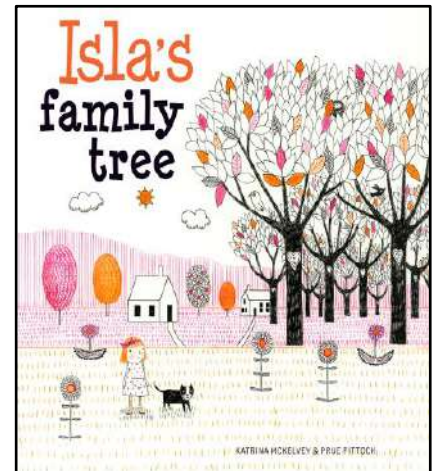
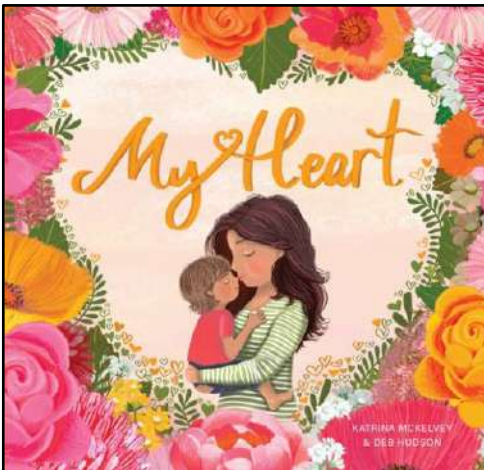
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Katrina McKelvey

Author & CBCA Committee Member

Katrina McKelvey is a children's author, picture book manuscript assessor, former primary school teacher, and wife and mother living in Newcastle, NSW. She's highly involved in CBCA and SCBWI, community events, literary conferences and festivals, and loves visiting schools. She's written many children's picture books and educational readers including her new titles *My Heart* and four Healthy Harold big books for the newly released Life Education Australia Early Years program. Katrina is left-handed, loves tea, scary movies and rollercoasters, and is addicted to mint chocolate. When she was little, a hot air balloon accidentally landed in her backyard.



Offerings

- Storytimes (Preschool to Year 6)
- Author Talks (Preschool to Year 6)
- Author/Illustrator talks/workshops with Kirrili Lonergan
- School Holiday sessions
- Host for literary events
- Literary conferences and festivals: host, chair, panel participant, presenter

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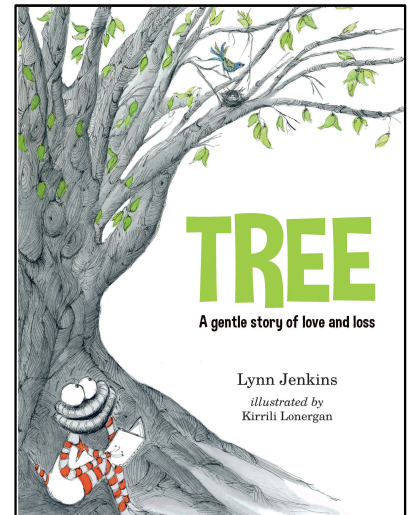
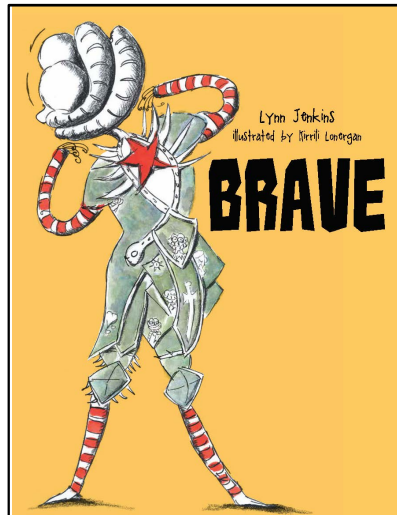
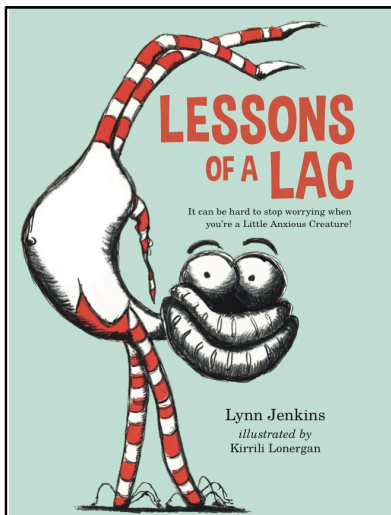
Lessons of a LAC

Author/Illustrator



Lynn Jenkins and Kirrili Lonergan are a dynamic duo, passionate about early intervention and guiding children to reach optimal social and emotional well-being. The Lessons of a LAC books, products and packages have evolved from an increased interest from schools and parents in assisting children to manage their worries, be it big or small! Together they created the Lessons of a LAC Anxiety Management Program which they present regularly at schools and conferences. These sessions incorporate information, delivered both verbally and with the use of many visual aids. They aim to leave children with a tool belt of anxiety management strategies.

Lynn Jenkins is a practicing and experienced clinical psychologist, mindfulness teacher and author. She is extremely passionate about early intervention and children's social/emotional development. Kirrili Lonergan is a picture book illustrator, art therapist and a former paediatric nurse who relates warmly to the needs of children.



Offerings

- Author/illustrator talks/workshops
- Lessons of a LAC anxiety management school visits
- Lessons of a LAC teacher PD sessions

Awards

Ollie's Treasure – shortlisted for Book of the Year Speech Pathology Australia 2018

Contact

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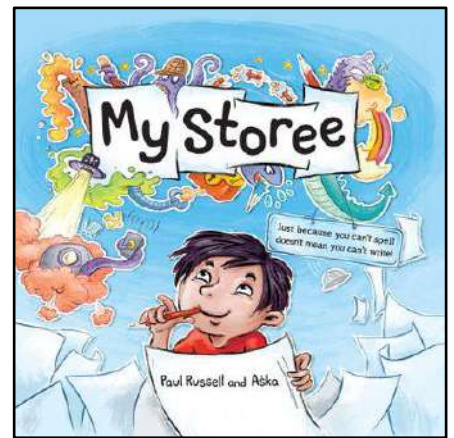
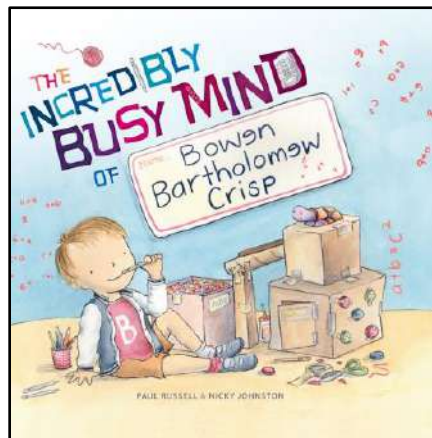
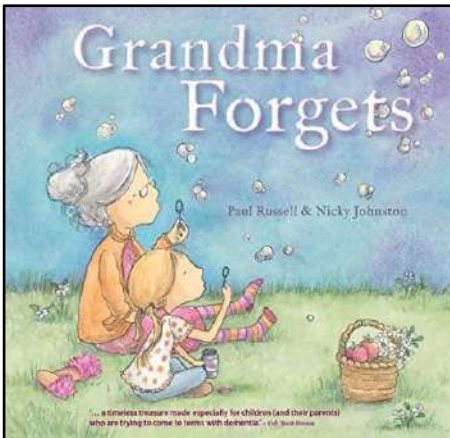
F: <https://www.facebook.com/LessonsofaLAC>



Paul Russell

Author

Paul Russell has always been passionate about stories, even before he could read. Determined never to grow up and lose his imagination, he is a teacher, playwright, father, artist and author but maybe not always in that order. He is passionate about children's literacy and in building an appetite within children for the written word. Paul's writing mixes his personal experiences with his imagination, allowing him to write on such diverse topics as dyslexia, dementia, anxiety and neurodiversity. His books combine serious issues with his gentle hand and great humour.



Awards

- *The Incredibly Busy Mind of Bowen Bartholomew Crisp* – winner of the Speech Pathology of Australia award 2022 for 5 – 8 year olds
- *Grandma Forgets* - CBCA Notable Book 2017
- CONDA Best Playwright 2009

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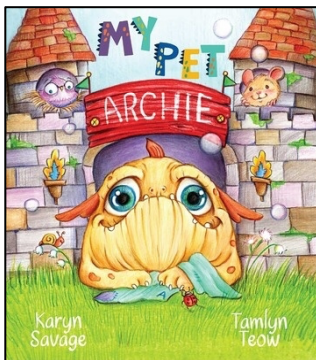
Karyn Savage



Author & CBCA Committee Member

Karyn Savage is an experienced primary school teacher specialising in music and drama. She brings her energy and love of storytelling to provide interactive author visits for schools and community events. She enjoys supporting literature events at interstate conferences and volunteering with Newcastle Writer's Festival as well as helping to coordinate events for the CBCA Hunter region. My Pet Archie, (2025) is Karyn's debut picture book Illustrated by Tamlyn Teow and published by Riveted Press. The School Magazine has published many of Karyn's evocative, emotive and humorous poems which are often inspired by nature or the shenanigans of her own children and those she

Milo is her furry fourth child and you may spot them walking around wetland trails or Newcastle beaches. She loves reading, playing music and over the years has accumulated quite an amazing collection of tumbled sea glass. Beach combing has become a way to unwind and slow down. Karyn is currently working on several picture book manuscripts, a middle grade novel and short stories and poems for children.



Offerings

Storytime Sessions

Holiday workshops

School Author talks - My Pet Archie (preschool – stage 1)

School Poetry workshops (stage 2-3)

School Creative writing workshops (k-6)

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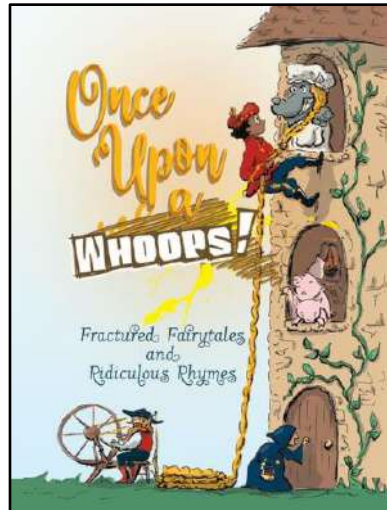
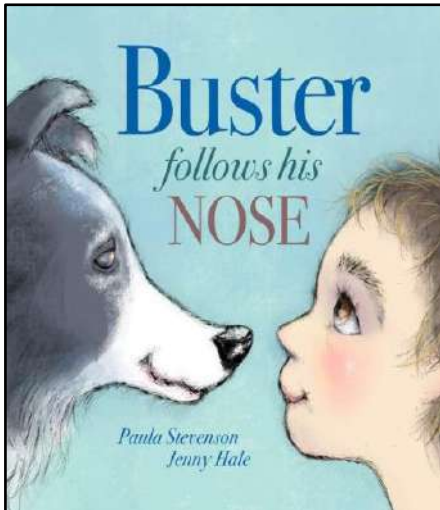
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Paula Stevenson

Author

Paula loves to write stories for children that entertain, surprise and inspire. She lives and works on a rural property in the Upper Hunter Valley of NSW, having escaped from the city more than twenty years ago. She writes every day and is inspired by her landscape and environment, writing stories and poems for children about cows, kelpies, roos, echidnas, goannas and even snakes, which occasionally sneak into her house. She is fascinated by bees and passionate about alerting the world to the threats they face. Her picture book *Buster Follows His Nose* was published in May 2022. Her poems have been published in *The School Magazine*, and she has had stories published in numerous anthologies. Paula posts regularly on her website and FB blogging about books, writing and her animal encounters!



Offerings

- Author talks
- School visits
- Library visits

Awards

- Short listed Scribbles Creative Writings Awards 2018 & 2019
- Long listed Harper Collins Aspiring Writers Award 2017

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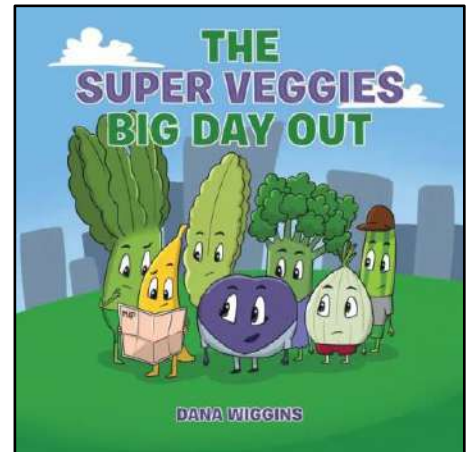
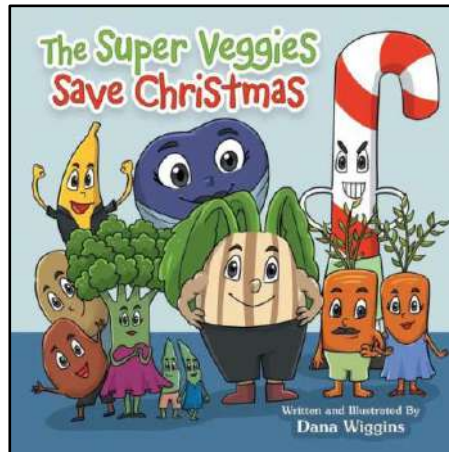
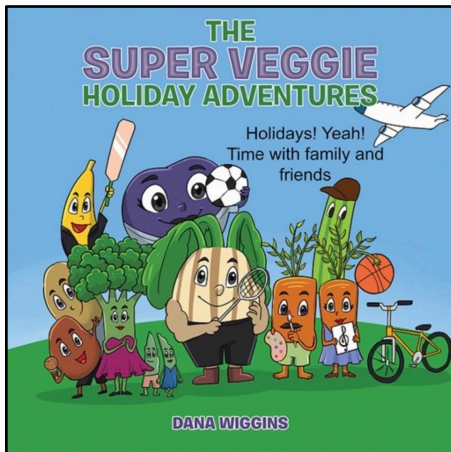
In: <https://www.instagram.com/pmstevo7/>



Dana Wiggins

Author & Illustrator

I have written three books encouraging children to eat well and discover how tasty and exciting vegetables can be! My books are available from Barnes and Noble, Amazon and Balboa Press.



Offerings

- School visits K - 6
- Festival appearances

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YT: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/Nvx18ljkV18>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/thesuperveggieadventures>

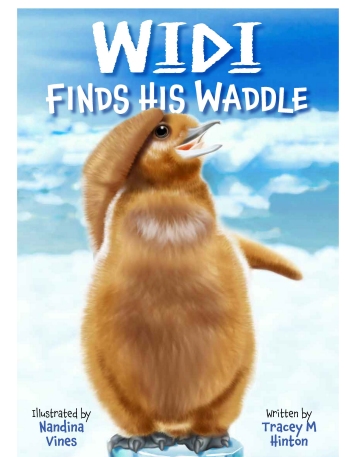
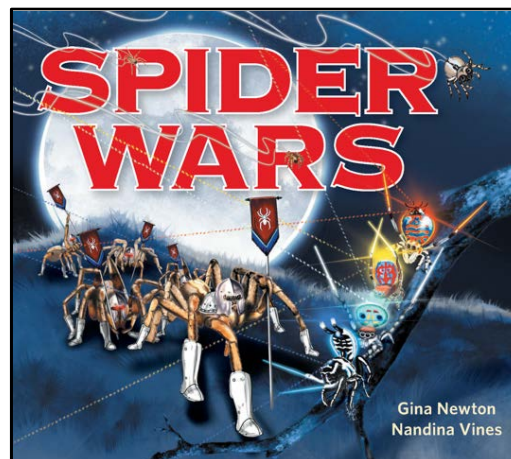
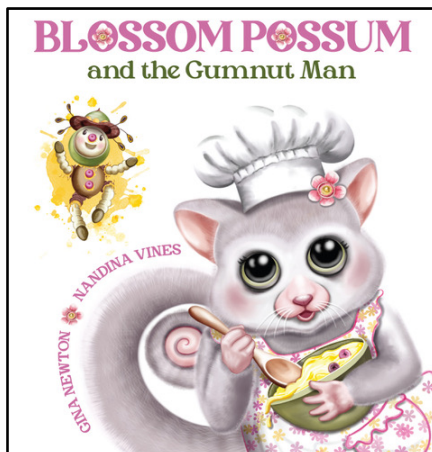


Nandina Vines

Illustrator

Growing up on the coast with the sound of waves and seabirds as her backdrop, Nandina Vines has been creating stories and pictures for as long as she can remember. She wrote, illustrated and compiled her very first children's book at just nine years old, sparking a lifelong passion for storytelling through art. Now living in the beautiful rural Hunter Valley, she draws inspiration from the bush, wildlife, and peaceful rhythms of nature. Her love of animals and the outdoors shines through in every joyful, whimsical illustration she creates.

With a portfolio of over 20 illustrated titles, Nandina has extensive experience working with self-published authors. Recently, she collaborated with the multi-award-winning author Dr Gina M. Newton on Blossom Possum and the Gumnut Man and Spider Wars, both of which are published through Wilkinson Publishing.



Offerings:

- School visits
- Library visits
- Festival visits

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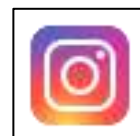
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