



THE CHILDREN'S  
BOOK COUNCIL  
OF AUSTRALIA  
NSW BRANCH

# KIDS' CORNER

December 2025

Volume 9 No 7  
ISSN 2652 8320 PRINT  
ISSN 2652 8339 ONLINE

*read*  
*rewrite*  
*imagine*

Cover design and artwork by Tom Jellett

*inside:*

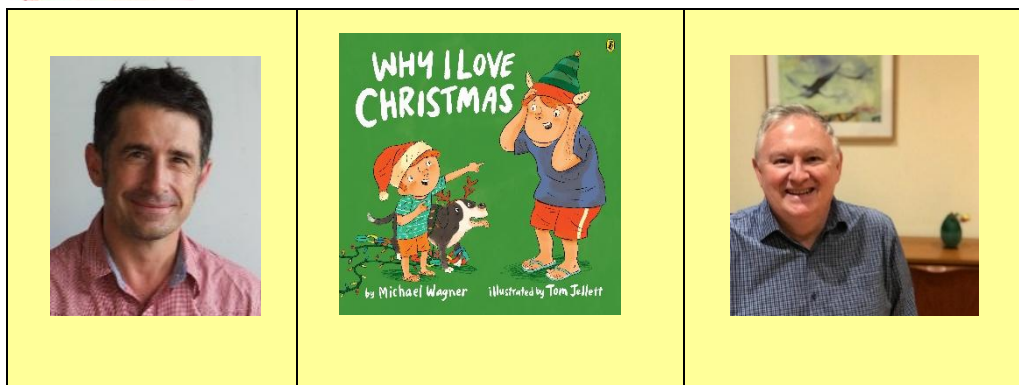
**BAGS = Books As Gifts!**





**WELCOME** to the final issue of **KC** for 2025.

It's an exciting time for all to enjoy with holidays just around the corner.



Our guest creatives, **Tom Jellett, Illustrator**, and **Michael Wagner, Author** have worked together often and remind us of some of the traditions and surprises of Christmas and holidays in **WHY I LOVE CHRISTMAS**, the perfect picture book for this time of year.

They share great visual and language hints that let us tap into many of the secrets and techniques that make picture books one of our favourite kinds of books.

**KC** sets the scene for the annual **BAGS = Book as Gifts** feature of recent, current and upcoming books by our Author and Illustrator members of CBCA NSW.

And we wrap up this issue with a capsule of the year that celebrates 80 years of the CBCA and Australian Children's Literature. Special thanks to all authors and illustrators for sharing their special talents and ideas for reading, writing, imagining and thinking throughout the year! Happy reading always – Morrie and the **KC** Team

## QUICK CONTENTS

P 1-2 . . . . . Cover and Welcome

P 3 -5 . . . . . Guest Creatives -Tom Jellett and Michael Wagner

P 6-8 . . . . . Art decisions and Techniques

P 9 -20. . . . . AIMS and BAGS (BOOKS AS GIFTS)

P 22- 25 . . . . . KC - The Year in Review

P 26 . . . . . CONGRATULATIONS and THANK YOU

With cover design by Tom Jellett



## THANK YOU to our guest creatives

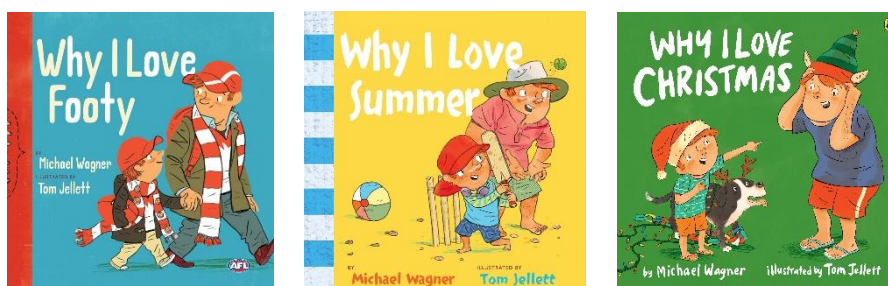
### Tom Jellett, Illustrator, and Michael Wagner, Author

(And a question for Tom as our Guest Illustrator and designer of the December cover for KIDS' CORNER . . . by the way - **Where's Morrie ???...**)

### WHY I LOVE series (Puffin/ Penguin Random House Books, Australia)

Michael Wagner, Author, and Tom Gillette, Illustrator, have worked together on the *Why I Love ...* series. (and more).

Michael blends the words, and Tom blends the images. Find out why they love: *Footy*, *Summer*, and *Christmas*.



### WHY I LOVE WORKING WITH MICHAEL WAGNER



#### by TOM GILLETTE

It is always a pleasure to get to work with Michael on another project. When you receive a text with Michael. He has always thought very carefully about how things could look. His manuscripts always include a great deal of visual material and research. I love this. I don't know if he does this research to help him with the writing side of things...I will definitely ask the next time I see him.

Although there is always a great deal of research done for the book, this shouldn't be confused with Michael being in any way prescriptive on how the illustrations should look...quite the opposite – he is

always (I think...) happy to see what my response to the text might be ( Though that research really does come in handy!)

This is our third '**Why I Love**' book we have done together. It is always fortunate when a book spawns a series, or at least a couple of sequels. We certainly didn't plan this when we did 'Why I Love Footy' ten years ago, so it is always good to check in with this family every few years...mind you, like The Simpsons, this family doesn't seem to have aged at all in those ten years...maybe they all take place in the same year...

In some of the larger scenes in **Why I Love Christmas**, there were many great opportunities to add some tiny details that seem to be common at this time of the year. This is something I love about being an illustrator. There are details from my family Christmases, including particular dishes and foods, as well as long lunches spent in the backyard. Absolute bliss.

I love Christmas time, and I love the week spent between Christmas and New Year's, reading the Christmas books you may have been lucky enough to have been given. Books make the best presents. There is something special about sharing the joy you get from a particular book or author and being able to spread that joy around a bit. ~TOM



## **WHY I LOVE CHRISTMAS**

**by Michael Wagner**

Okay, the rumours are true. I do love Christmas. I really do. So, writing down all the things that make Christmas so special for me felt WONDERFUL. And it also made me feel lucky and grateful. Here's why.

*Why I Love Christmas* is the third book in our 'Why I Love' series, following on from *Why I Love Footy* and *Why I Love Summer*. Writing each book involved me sitting at my desk thinking lovely, grateful, happy thoughts. That was the job! Not many jobs are anywhere near that enjoyable. Most jobs are just hard work. And you never get paid for sitting around thinking happy thoughts. But I did for these three books, and that is what makes me feel so lucky and grateful.

The series began a few years ago when I sat at my computer and, for no good reason, wrote **Why I Love Footy**. The whole story tumbled out in hardly any time at all. But I never thought it would become a book. I just wanted to write it. So, I did.

Then, when it was finished, I showed it to my wife, Jane Godwin (she's also a children's author), and said, 'That'll never be a book, right?' To my surprise, Jane thought it could be a book because it came straight from my heart.

It was what creative people call 'authentic' meaning I'd written what I truly feel and believe. And when you write something that's truly what you feel and believe, it's got a pretty good chance of being made into a real book... because it's authentic.

So, I sent **Why I Love Footy** to my publisher, and it was made into a book. Then, to my surprise, it became popular, so I started thinking about writing more books about other things I love. The problem is, there are so many things in the world to love. For me, there's my family, my friends, my home, my city, my country, many different sports, listening to music, writing stories, and more.

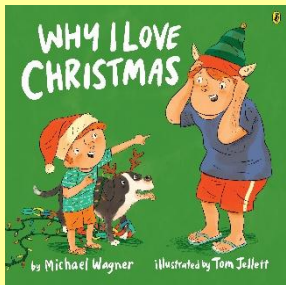
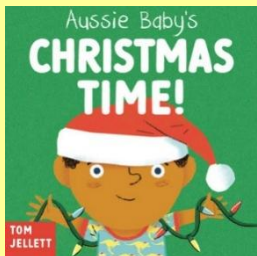
But what came out next was **Why I Love Summer**. I think that's probably because it was winter and I was really looking forward to some warm weather and family holidays. I couldn't turn up the temperature in the actual air, but I could in my mind.

Then, because people also liked **Why I Love Summer**, I suddenly found myself writing about the most precious, lovely, warm-hearted time of the whole year, Christmas. That meant, thinking about all the traditions we take part in as a family: making gingerbread houses with the cousins; going to carols by candlelight; having turkey and pudding for a big family lunch on Christmas Day; and many other things. It was lovely to remember all of those things and put them all into **Why I Love Christmas**.

So that's how the 'Why I Love' series came about. I'm not sure if **Why I Love Christmas** is the last book in the series, or if another idea is going to sneak up on me in the future, but I'm happy either way. It's been a lovely spending so much time thinking about my favourite parts of life and why they bring me so much joy. And it all began because I just wrote something from the heart that I truly felt and believed.

Maybe you could do that too. Right now. Can you think of something or someone you love and then come up with six things you love about them? I bet, if you do that, you'll soon feel just as lucky and grateful as I do whenever I write a 'Why I Love'...book. ~ MICHAEL

## FEATURED BOOKS

	<p><b>Christmas Time</b> ( Allen &amp; Unwin) by Tom Jellett</p> <p><b>Why I Like Christmas</b> Puffin/ Penguin Random House By Michael Wagner and Tom Jellett</p>	
---	--	---



## ART DECISIONS AND TECHNIQUES



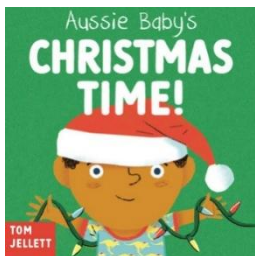
### COVER DESIGN IMAGE

This spread inside the book was eventually adapted into a single page for the back cover design of ***Why I Love Christmas***.

This involved adding some more to the top and bottom of the image in order to fit it into the square format.

This spread was then reformatted again for the

cover of this issue of ***KIDS' CORNER***! See if you can spot Morrie Mouse...you'll have to look carefully! ~TOM



***Why I Love Christmas*** isn't the only Christmas book I have illustrated.

The fourth book in my ***Aussie Baby's First Words*** series, following on from ***Dinner Time***, ***Bed Time***, and ***Bath Time***, is ***Christmas Time***. For very very young readers...or storytime with Mum and Dad, this board book for babies illustrates some of the traditional things you see at Christmas time, but with more of an Australian flavour. Aussie

Christmases feel very unique, we have inherited a lot of Northern

Hemisphere traditions but have turned that into something very Australian. I hope I have been able to convey this very 'Australianness' in both 'Why I Love Christmas' and 'Christmas Time'. (Both make EXCELLENT Christmas gifts by the way.....) ~ TOM

Pop on your



Santa hat

### DESIGNS FOR DIFFERENT AGES

Let's put up the



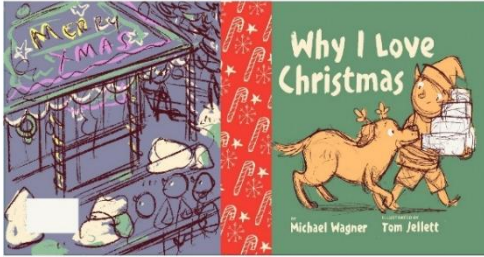
tree

Although there are recurring objects and items in '***Why I Love Christmas***' and '***Christmas Time***' the illustrations look very different. Different audiences or age groups will sometimes determine how you draw and colour things.

For 'Christmas Time' this is a word book for babies, so we just need to illustrate the word on each page, with as little distraction and often very very simplified to reinforce the understanding between word and picture.

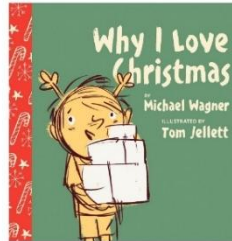
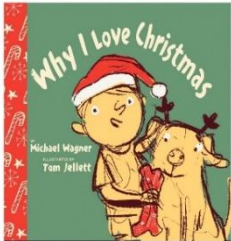
'Why I Love Christmas' is for a more older reader, and as well as reading the text with themselves or with a parent, there is much detail for the reader to hopefully find new things and encourage multiple reads! ~ TOM

## BOOK COVER SAMPLES and DESIGNS

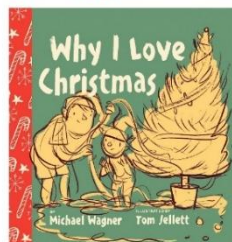
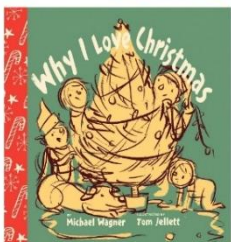


These are examples of cover sketches or rough layouts.

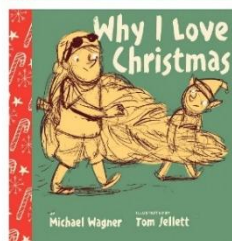
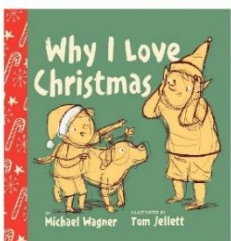
Here, I'm trying a few different elements, and even tweaking the design a little.



The aim was to make it sympathetic with the other two **Why I Love** books which feature our narrator, Mitch, and his Dad. So, eventually, this decided the design for us.



I submit roughs like these to the book's editor who will then take them to the publisher's covers meeting. At this meeting, many people, including those in the marketing sections, decide what will work best for the cover. I'll generally submit 8-10 different options, and the editor will let me know which one they have decided on. Sometimes, a request may come back asking for a more detailed rough of one or two of the ideas. ~ Tom



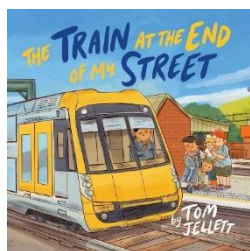
## STORIES AND CHARACTERS EVERYWHERE

This is one of my favourite spreads from 'Why I Love Christmas'. It is very close to the street party that happens every year where I live in Sydney. We close off the street for an evening, and everyone brings a plate of food to share. It is a great night to meet and catch up with

neighbours and meet new people who may have moved into the street. Although the spread was inspired by our street Christmas party, this illustration is now used for the invitation that goes into everyone's letterbox for that year's street Christmas party!

You may like to think of the stories behind some of these characters? ~ Tom

## Extra books by Tom

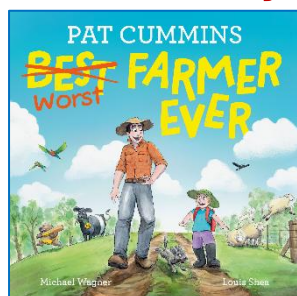


### **The Train at the End of Our Street**

(Affirm Kids) <https://www.simonandschuster.com.au/books/The-Train-at-the-End-of-My-Street/Tom-Jellett/9781923022362>

by Tom Jellett <https://tomjellett.com/>

## Extra book by Michael



### **Best (Worst) Farmer Ever**

(HarperCollins)

<https://www.harpercollins.com.au/9781460764749/best-worst-farmer-ever/>

By Michael Wagner <https://michaelwagner.com.au/>

with Pat Cummins

and Illustrated by Louis Shea

*Earlier this year, I had a picture published by HarperCollins, that I co-authored with Australian Test Cricket captain Pat Cummins. It's a fictional day on his real life farm, during which Farmer Pat, his son Albie, and their dog Normie solve all sorts of farm-related problems. And no problem is too complicated for Farmer Pat! Sort of.*

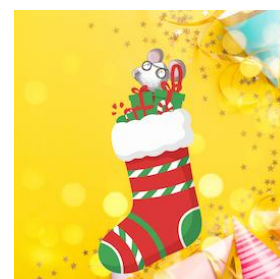
*Our heartwarming and funny little story is superbly illustrated by Louis Shea, who turned the background Aussie animals into a hilarious bunch of ratbags who, at one stage, even play their own game of farmyard cricket. ~ Michael*

## AUSSIE CHRISTMAS JOKES

From DADSHOP.COM

[https://www.dadshop.com.au/blog/christmas/best-christmas-jokes-to-make-everyone-laugh-this-holiday/?srsltid=AfmBOoplDzBhJaeErtkoQrCcPSdha2kULo8kY\\_ILhPESCHxdm7rt2bsh](https://www.dadshop.com.au/blog/christmas/best-christmas-jokes-to-make-everyone-laugh-this-holiday/?srsltid=AfmBOoplDzBhJaeErtkoQrCcPSdha2kULo8kY_ILhPESCHxdm7rt2bsh)

What do you call Santa when he's on the beach in Australia? Sandy Claus!



What do you call a snowman on holiday in the Australian tropics? A puddle!

What kind of motorbike does Australian Santa ride? A Holly Davidson!

Why don't Aussies have a white Christmas? Because they prefer a golden one at the beach!

What do you get if you cross a kangaroo and a sheep? A woolly jumper!

Why was the bush turkey crossing the road on Christmas Day? Because he wasn't chicken!

What do you get if you cross a kangaroo with Santa's reindeer? A Christmas hopper!





**CBCA NSW Branch *AIMs* + *BAGs* =  
Author and Illustrator Members + Books As Gifts**



**SAMI BAILY \* MARJORIE CROSBY-FAIRALL \* REBECCA FUNG**

**Welcome the holidays with special gifts in KC.**



**MELISSA GARSIDE \* SUSANNE GERVAY \* PETER GROSE**

**-Discover info about some of the recent and upcoming books by  
some of our CBCA NSW author and illustrator members.**



**MAX HAMITON \* PIP HARRY \* AMANDA LIEBER**

**-Revisit stacks of ideas about stories from earlier issues of KC.**



**YVONNE LOW \* NATHAN LUFF \* SOPHIE MASSON**

**Books and imagination are always the best gifts.**



**BELINDA MURRELL\* KAT OST \*LUCIE STEVENS**

## Books as Gifts anytime



**LUCIE STEVENS \* DEB TIDBAL \* NANDINA VINES**



### AIM 4 BAGS

**Special thanks to our CBCA NSW BRANCH**

**AIMs = Author and Illustrator Members**

for sharing their recent and upcoming books as we all ...

**AIM 4 BAGS 2025 = AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR MEMBERS for BOOKS AS GIFTS**

Authors and Illustrators included in this issue of KC are members of CBCA NSW.

**MEMBERSHIPS are open for the calendar year  
during December – January.**

**Please check the CBCA NSW Branch website for  
further details.**

**MEMBERSHIP:**

**<https://www.cbcanw.org.au/membership>**

**We'd love to have you join us.**



## CBCA NSW BRANCH 2025 BAGS = BOOKS AS GIFTS



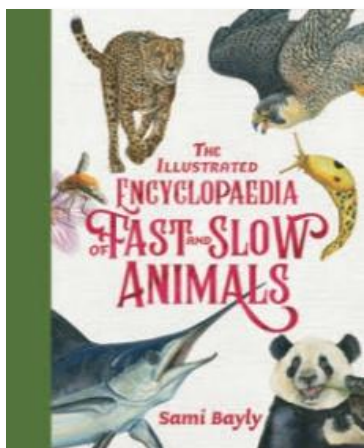
**SAMI BAYLY** [www.samibayly.com](http://www.samibayly.com)

### **The ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF FAST AND SLOW ANIMALS**

(Lothian/Hachette Australia)

<https://www.hachette.com.au/sami-bayly/the-illustrated-encyclopaedia-of-fast-and-slow-animals>

Whether you like to take things fast or slow, you will lose yourself in this stunning encyclopaedia filled with incredible detailed illustrations and fun facts about some of the most fascinating fast and slow animals in the natural world. Children and adults alike will wonder at these speedy and not-so-speedy animals. ~ **SAMI BAYLY**



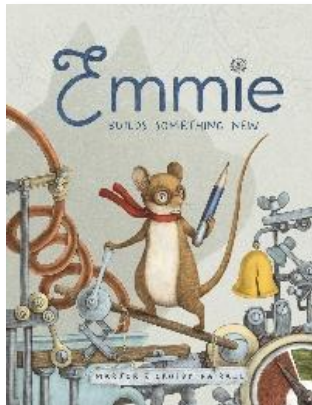
### **MARJORIE CROSBY-FAIRALL**

– Author and Illustrator [*Emmie* is my debut as both author and illustrator.] [crosby-fairall.com](http://crosby-fairall.com)

### **EMMIE BUILDS SOMETHING NEW**

(Affirm Press)

A cat-and-mouse caper with a unique twist, this is a captivating tale that celebrates innovation, resilience and the power of kindness. Emmie the mouse is an extraordinary inventor. There is no problem she can't fix! But then a new kind of problem arrives. The type of problem that has claws, a long swishy tail and a mischievous gleam in its eyes ... Emmie is sure that she has an idea big enough to frighten the problem away but perhaps the best way to tackle a problem is friendship, not fear? ~ **MARJORIE CROSBY FAIRALL**







**REBECCA FUNG** is a Sydney-based author. She's written adventures in space and under the ocean.

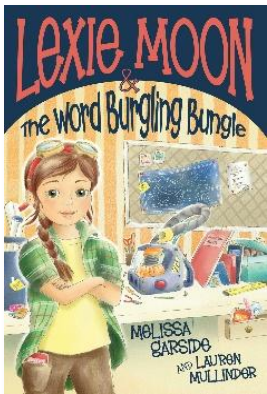
**SEPTOPUS** (Owlitude Press) is about Stanley, a 7-legged octopus who's not treated well because he's different from other octopuses, but remains optimistic and has adventures – finding friends, playing sport, playing pranks, and even fighting a shark!



**PRINCESS HAYLEY'S COMET** (Christmas Press) tells how Hayley builds her own comet catcher when she decides she wants a comet for her birthday.

In **A VERY SPECIAL MOON MISSION** (Owlitude Press) Three friends accidentally fly a spaceship to the moon. They rescue their friend and figure out how to fly back to Earth!

*QUOTE: When a child says they love reading or writing stories, I do a happy dance inside. Reading and writing empower me and provoke thought. I'm excited they're experiencing this too. ~ REBECCA FUNG*



**MELISSA GARSIDE** [www.melissagarside.com](http://www.melissagarside.com)

**Illustrator:** Lauren Mullinder

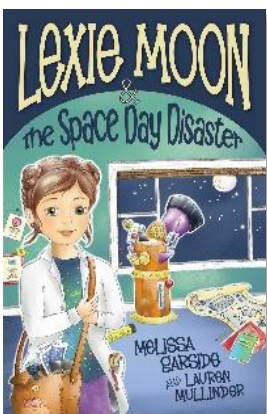
**LEXIE MOON AND THE WORD – BURGLING BUNGLER - Book 1** (Riveted Press)



**LEXIE MOON AND THE SPACE DAY DISASTER - Book 2**

The action-packed Lexie Moon junior-fiction series is loaded with high-stakes adventure, quirky inventions and hilarious word-play. Join Lexie in her first two adventures as she sniffs out villains and averts disasters. With themes of family, friendship, STEM and resilience, this series will make the perfect gift for readers and inventors aged 7-10.

*QUOTE: Writing fiction is a chance to make the impossible come to life on the page and in our imaginations. ~Melissa GARSIDE*





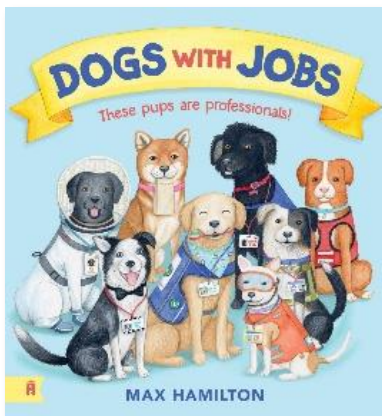
## MAX HAMILTON, Author and Illustrator

[www.maxhamiltonillustration.com.au](http://www.maxhamiltonillustration.com.au)

### **DOGS WITH JOBS** (Albert Street Books)

*From beekeepers to brave rescuers, dogs have the most amazing jobs! A delightful exploration of the many careers of our canine companions. Dogs may be our best friends, but sometimes that's just their side hustle! Meet the*

*beekeepers, the whale poo sniffers, the dental assistants and the penguin protectors from around the world who prove that dogs have more jobs than you can throw a stick at. Packed with adorable illustrations and quirky jobs, this heart-warming book about our best friends is perfect for young readers and dog lovers everywhere. ~MAX*



#### About the Creator -

**Max Hamilton** is an award-winning illustrator, a graphic designer and most enthusiastically a maker of children's books. She enjoys noticing the little details in things and loves to get lost in the world of illustration and stories. Max lives with her family and their cuddly dog

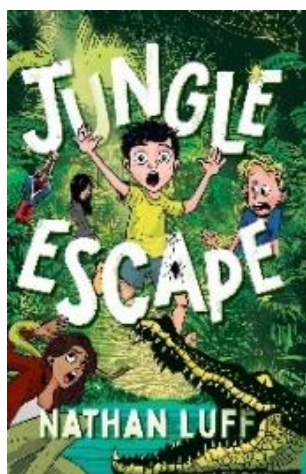
in Sydney, Australia. "Dogs with Jobs" is her tenth book as illustrator and debut title as an Author!

**QUOTES: - I love details and getting lost in in the world of illustrations and stories.**

**- Books are so important for fostering a healthy imagination in children, in developing an understanding of others and developing problem-solving skills.**

**- Books create memories, shape cultures and bring new possibilities to our world.**

**~Max HAMILTON**



## NATHAN LUFF [www.nathanluff.com.au](http://www.nathanluff.com.au)

### **JUNGLE ESCAPE**

**with Chris Kennett, Illustrator**  
(Walker Books Australia)

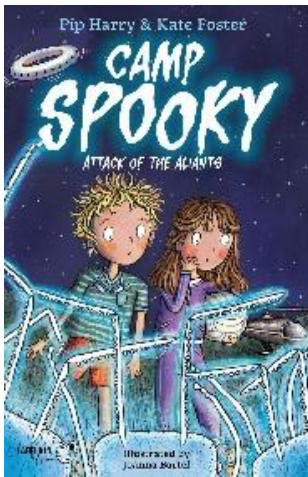
**Book Trailer:** <https://nathanluff.com.au/book/jungle-escape/>

*Jungle Escape is an action-comedy middle-grade novel set in the beautiful (but dangerous) Daintree Rainforest of Far North Queensland. A bunch of rich, pampered kids get sent to what they think is an elite resort, but the resort is in a complete state of disrepair, and, in fact, the kids are expected to*

*help restore it. As if! ~Nathan LUFF*







**PIP HARRY** [www.pipharry.com](http://www.pipharry.com)

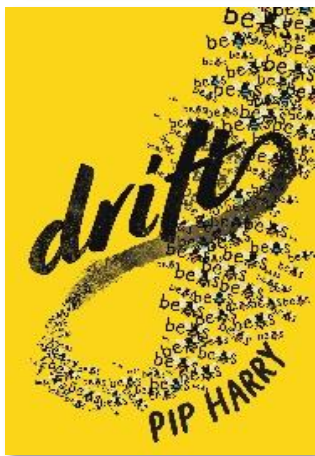
## **CAMP SPOOKY: ATTACK of the ALIANTS**

with **Kate Foster**, and **Joanna Bartel** (Illustrator)



(Larrikin House)

**CAMP SPOOKY** is the perfect gift for 7+ readers who love spooky (but not scary!) tales with plenty of fun and humour. "The first book in the Camp Spooky series is a solid and entertaining all-rounder that blends heart, mystery and friendship in a really enjoyable way. - CBCA Reading Time



## **DRIFT** (Hachette/Lothian)

<https://www.hachette.com.au/pip-harry/drift>

This new contemporary verse novel from multi-award-winning author Pip Harry is perfect for thoughtful readers aged 12+. Drift is a powerful verse novel for an upper MG to YA audience and features bees (so many bees - a SWARM of bees) and themes of friendship, viral videos gone wrong, family

and found family, expat life, the power of swimming, the wonder of bees and the tough reality of chronic pain. It's a glorious story, sophisticated writing and will have major reader appeal." - Megan Daley, **Your Kid's Next Read**



## **YVONNE LOW**

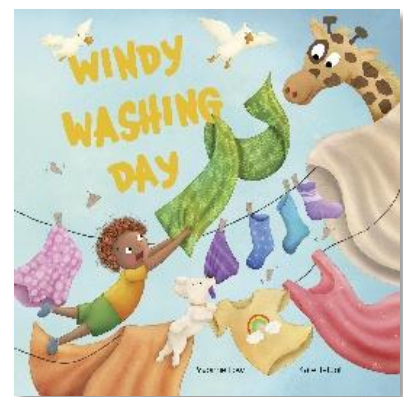
Writer, Artist, Illustrator

[www.yvonnelow.com](http://www.yvonnelow.com)

## **WINDY WASHING DAY**

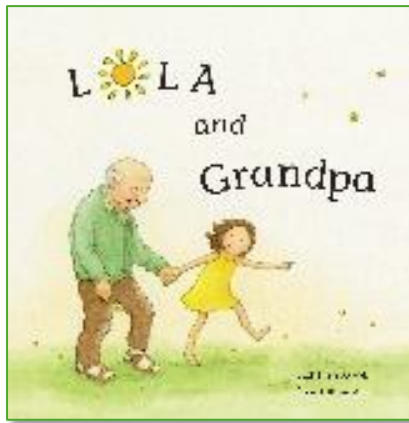
with **Kate Talbot**, Illustrator

(Midnight Sun Publishing)



How an ordinary day becomes extraordinary... It's a dry, sunny day and perfect for hanging out the laundry. But what happens when an unexpected wind pulls the washing off the line and carries it all next door – to the Zoo! Windy Washing Day is a delightfully funny, rhyming romp filled with crazy animal antics. ~ Yvonne





## **LOLA AND GRANDPA**

By **YVONNE LOW** and **ASHLING KWOK**

(Little Pink Dog)

A beautiful story about a little girl and her adored grandpa.

I loved creating the illustrations for this sensitively written story by Ashling.

*QUOTE: Open a book and in no time at all, you'll be immersed in reading, springboard into imagining, writing*

*and drawing your very own stories. A good book can inspire all these things! ~ YVONNE LOW*

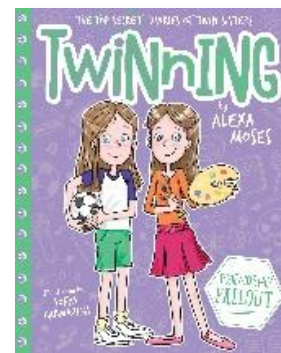


**ALEXA MOSES** [www.alexamoses.com](http://www.alexamoses.com)

with Sofya Karmazina, Illustrator

**THE TWINNING SERIES** (Scholastic Australia)

1. **BFFS (not)** 2. **Skippping Stars** 3. **Friendship Fallout**



**Series comment:** The internationally published, bestselling *Twinning* series delves into the relationship dramas that bubble up among tweens on the primary-school playground. Come hang out under the Friendship Tree and share gossip and seaweed snacks with identical twins Izzy and Grace, and their funny, loyal gang, as they battle the arrogant Clover Williams and her crew, while also trying to manage their own friendship fallouts. For 6 -12-year-olds. ~**Alexa MOSES**

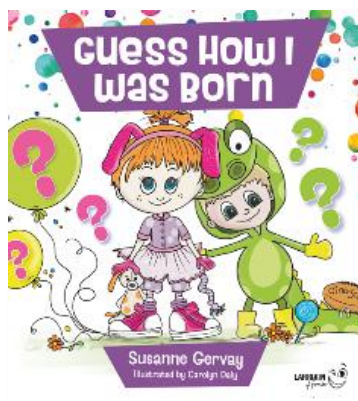
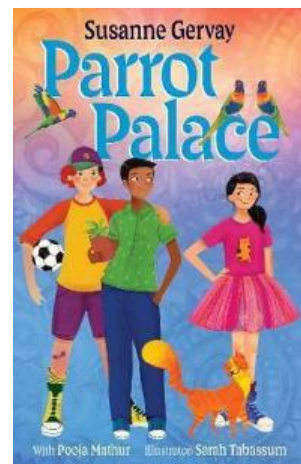
*QUOTE: 'Reading for fun improves your concentration, enriches your thinking and speaking abilities, makes you a better creative thinker, and more able to understand other people's points of view.' ~ Alexa MOSES*

**SUSANNE GERVAY** <https://sgervay.com/>

**PARROT PALACE** (Simon & Schuster)



Three inventive, daring kids and their diverse families, live in a three-storey apartment block called *Parrot Palace* where they get under the skin of discrimination. The Indian and South East Asian cultures weave between the customs of Europe, China and Australia to become a celebration of our multi-cultural nation and democracy. A junior fiction that is a "Must Read!" ~ Susanne



**GUESS HOW I WAS BORN**

Illustrated by **KAREN DALY**

Every child is a miracle in Susanne Gervay's truly glorious *Guess How I Was Born*, a book of joy, wonder and science, and endless love as well.' Jackie French AM. All families are our family, however they are formed. Nuclear, mixed marriage, adopted, step, IVF, multigenerational, sole parent, all of US.~ Susanne

**QUOTES :** *You are never alone when you have a book.* ~ **SUSANNE GERVAY**

*-School librarians are at the heart of story, supporting kids.* ~ **SUSANNE GERVAY**

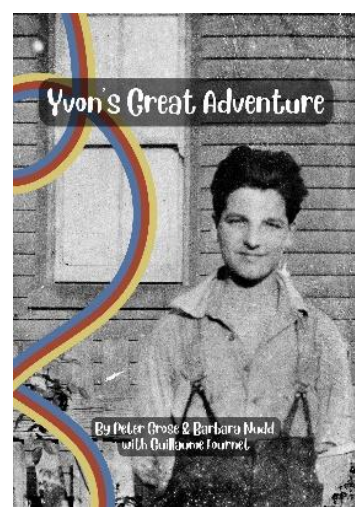


**PETER GROSE**

**YVON'S GREAT ADVENTURE**

(Self-published)

*Yvon's Great Adventure* is the extraordinary true story of how a French boy survived the final year of war on the Western Front, and a journey to Australia thanks to the protective care of his 'adoptive' family of knockabout Australian soldiers. ~**PETER GROSE**







## AMANDA LIEBER

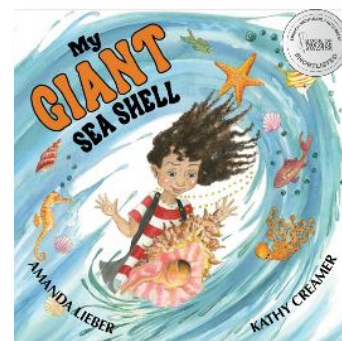
<https://amandalieber.com>

### MY GIANT SEASHELL

(Little Pink Dog Books)

Through the eyes of a child, we are taken on a journey as *she* watches and tries to understand *her* mother's fade into a greyness of depression.

With the love, support and help of her family, the mother finds her happiness and colour again. ~AMANDA LIEBER



## BELINDA MURRELL [www.belindamurrell.com.au](http://www.belindamurrell.com.au)

### THE DARE DEVIL PRINCESS AND THE GOBLIN KING (Penguin Books)

Once again, bold and brave Princess Tillie is on an exciting adventure. The farms surrounding

the castle are under attack from goblins from the Wild Forest. Princess Tillie and her friends must use all their wits to trick the goblins into returning home. This is a fast-paced thrilling adventure that will be adored by young readers, aged 6 to 9. There are four books in the series, beautifully illustrated by REBECCA CRANE. ~BELINDA



**QUOTE - Reading with your child is the best gift you can give them. Reading inspires empathy, emotional intelligence, creativity, family closeness and helps make kids smarter! Reading is an adventure! ~ Belinda MURRELL**





## SOPHIE MASSON

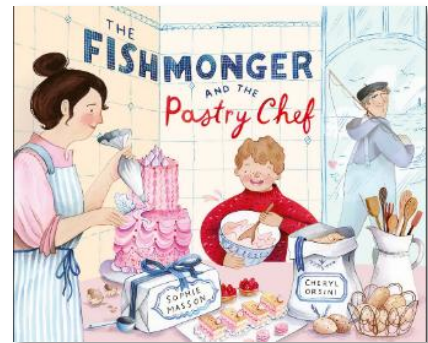
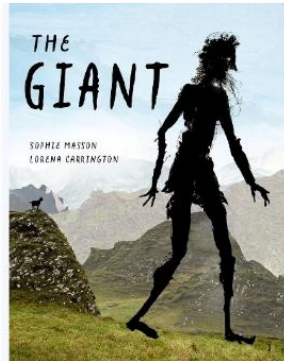
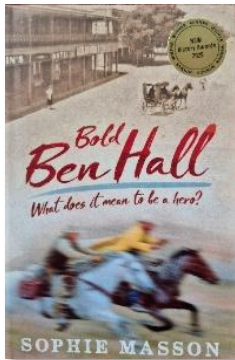
**-BOLD BEN HALL** (Walker Books)

**-THE GIANT**

Illustrated by LORENA CARRINGTON (Midnight Sun)

**-THE FISHMONGER AND THE PASTRY CHEF**

(Little Hare, Hardie Grant Books)



Middle-grade novel **Bold Ben Hall**, published by Walker Books, and winner of the Young People's History Prize in the 2025 NSW History Awards, an exciting adventure set around the story of legendary bushranger Ben Hall, in the turbulent Gold Rush era

**The Giant**, A beautiful, touching story of memory, inclusion and friendship, by the award-winning creative duo of writer Sophie Masson and illustrator Lorena Carrington, whose previous picture book *Satin* with Midnight Sun Publishing was a Notable Book in the 2024 CBCA Book of the Year Awards: <https://newsouthbooks.com.au/books/the-giant/>

**The Fishmonger and The Pastry Chef**, A beautiful seaside town in France, and a boy named Lucas who loves two favourite places and two favourite people: his aunt Violette in her patisserie and his friend Cyprien in his fish stall at the markets. But when Lucas notices his two favourite people are lonely, he hatches a plan to help them connect. A beautiful picture book about food and friendship, missed connections, and the magic of storytelling: <https://publishing.hardiegrant.com/en-au/books/the-fishmonger-and-the-pastry-chef-by-sophie-masson/9781761211225> ~Sophie

**QUOTE- Words as an author: I have been so incredibly lucky this year, with three books out, plus the prize I so unexpectedly and wonderfully won with Bold Ben Hall, and with the picture books, working with the most incredible co-creators, Lorena Carrington and Cheryl Orsini. I'm so grateful to all my publishers for their belief in my books, and so grateful too for the wonderful readers, children and adults, who have taken them to their hearts. Wishing everyone a wonderful festive season--and lots of fabulous books under the tree! ~ Sophie MASSON**



## KAT OST

<https://www.katost.com/>

### **LIKE, COMMENT, SUBSCRIBE?**

(Part of the **Rhiza Shorts** line published by Rhiza Edge)

**Like, Comment, Subscribe?** is a contemporary, accessible short novel about teen baking influencer Becca, who is juggling online expectations, family pressures and figuring out who she wants to be beyond the algorithm.

With short, punchy chapters and relatable social media content, it is ideal for lower secondary and reluctant readers, and a great gift for teens navigating self-esteem, friendships and the impact of social media on real life. ~ **Kat OST**



## LUCIE STEVENS [www.luciestevens.com](http://www.luciestevens.com)

### **R.I.P. NANNY TOBBINS**

(Harper Collins Australia)



What happens when a beloved governess returns as a ghost after her untimely death? Set in London in 1851, R.I.P. Nanny

Tobbins is the story of nine-year-old Albertine navigating change in her family while her ghost-governess causes all kinds of chaos. Readers aged 9+ who like adventure stories with spooky overtones will enjoy its mystery and humour, which is delivered with a dash of gentle but quirky macabre. ~**LUCIE**

**QUOTE: No other gift can nurture wonder, connection and imagination as effectively as a children's book .~ Lucie STEVENS**



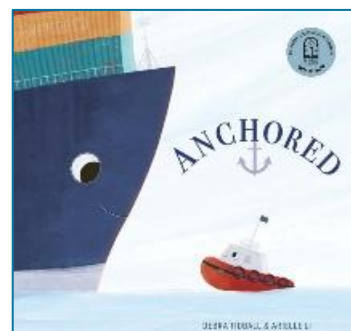
## DEBRA TIDBALL

[www.debratidball.com](http://www.debratidball.com)

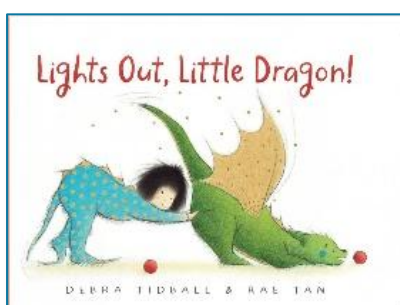
with Arielle Li, illustrator

### **ANCHORED**

(EK Books)



**Anchored** -Tug leads Ship out to the ocean and they say goodbye. She wonders, does Ship miss her as much as she will miss Ship? With Ship away Tug feels less brave, more alone and sometimes feels like sinking, just a little. A story about love and connection over oceans~ **DEB**



### **LIGHTS OUT, LITTLE DRAGON!**

(HarperCollins)

With Rae Tan, Illustrator

**Lights Out, Little Dragon!** It's bedtime and Little Dragon is trying every trick to stay awake. Can you help him get to sleep? You might just have the magic touch!

**QUOTE:** I'm excited for all the adventures I'll have reading books these holidays! ~  
**Deb TIDBALL**

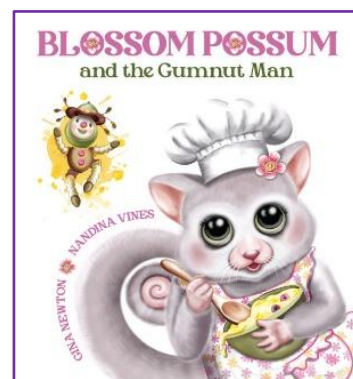


## NANDINA VINES

[nandinavinesillustrator.com](http://nandinavinesillustrator.com)

### **BLOSSOM POSSUM AND THE GUMNUT MAN**

(Wilkinson Publishing)



**Blossom Possum** is too excited to sleep on her birthday, so she gathers Aussie bush ingredients—gumnuts, wattle seeds, lillypilly berries and witchetty grubs—to make a tasty treat: a Gumnut Man held together with sticky wattle gum. But just as she's about to take a bite, the Gumnut Man jumps up and dashes away! Blossom Possum and her friends—Rocky Cocky, Toey Joey, Echo Gecko, Trilby Bilby and Okka Quokka—chase after him, but he's too quick, until a surprise encounter with By-jingo Dingo by the river. Filled with rhythm, rhyme and onomatopoeia, this Aussie twist on a classic tale delivers suspense, humour and a satisfying ending. ~**Nandina VINES**

**QUOTE:** Reading opens doors, writing builds the path, thinking lights the way, and imagining lets us fly. As a children's book illustrator, I paint those journeys so young minds can wander freely. ~ **Nandina VINES**



*These holidays, you may like to get out and discover lots of FUN AND PUNS*

## HO – HO - HO – Very “punny” AUSSIE HOLIDAY PUNS



A **pun** is a type of joke that uses **word play** to create humour.

It may be based on the multiple meanings of a term or on similar-sounds of different words.

For info about the language terms of “**puns**”[ **homophones, homographs, metonymy, figurative language**], see <https://www.twinkl.com.au/teaching-wiki/pun>

What words are used to create these puns?

Samples of Aussie puns are from <https://travelersanddreamers.com/australia-puns/>.

I’m **koala-fied** to tell you that hiking in Australia is amazing!

I’m **emu-sing** myself in the outback.

Sydney **harbours** some great views!

It’s raining cats and **dingoes**.

I can **possum-tively** confirm that Australia was my best trip ever!

Hiking is not funny, it’s **hill-arious**.

**Wattle** we do today?

No **roo’d** rage so far while road tripping in Australia.

You are **quokka-ing** me up!

I’m **wombat-dering** what we’ll have for dinner tonight.

**Hoppy-go-lucky**.

I need a **reef-freshing** drink to escape the heat.

Sidney is an **aussome** city.

**Rock-and-roo.**



©DESIGNALIVE

## KIDS' CORNER 2025 – The Year in Review

2025 has been a year of celebration. The **CBCA (Children's Book Council of Australia)** was established 80 years ago.

Ever since then, Australian readers have been able to “book” almost any kind of adventure you can imagine.



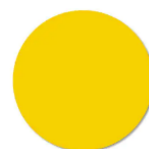
### 2025 has given us:

- the CBCA Children's Book Week® artwork by Jess McGeachin, who created the *Isle of Biblio*, a utopia for book-loving creatures.
- record numbers of kids as **Shadow Judges** who shared and shaped the outcome of the CBCA BOYA winners. <https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au/all-creative-responses/>
- unique **COLLIDE** book trailers of 2025 Notable books created by reading teams of all ages. <https://www.cbcanw.org.au/collide-book-trailers>
- all kinds of happenings, in-person and online, with amazing authors and illustrators sharing their imagination.
- **KC4KC =KIDS' Comments for KIDS' CORNER** and more.

**KIDS' CORNER** has shared parts of stacks of books and ideas to encourage readers to **READ, WRITE, THINK, IMAGINE, and CREATE**.

To revisit past issues of **KC**, check online for **KIDS' CORNER**

<https://www.cbcanw.org.au/kids-corner> (on the CBCA NSW branch website) and click the big yellow button. **Cheers ~ Morrie**



### KIDS' CORNER – December 2025

**GUEST ILLUSTRATOR - Tom Jellet**

**Theme - BAGS=BOOKS AS GIFTS**

#### SPECIAL FEATURES:

-Things we love

-**BAGS = the Books as Gifts** list of great books to read and to share for the holidays and anytime by some of our CBCA NSW author and illustrator members.

-**2025 THE YEAR IN REVIEW**



*Usually, the books we choose to read have that special “something” about the plot, setting or characters that we “connect” with. These “bits of books” help us ask and care about “what happens next?” The*

*answer, of course, is “in the book. ~ Morrie*



**KIDS' CORNER – Oct/ Nov 2025**

**GUEST ILLUSTRATOR – Tannya HARRICKS**

**THEME: CELEBRATE, CATCH UP, COUNT DOWN**

**SPECIAL FEATURES:**

- Special new books after Children's Book Week®
- Generations of authors –
- New books in the NSW State Library, in the Australian Museum, and in the Environment.
- Special Book Awards



*Every time you “BOOK AN ADVENTURE”, you are part of the history and growth of quality Australian Children's Literature. ~ Morrie*

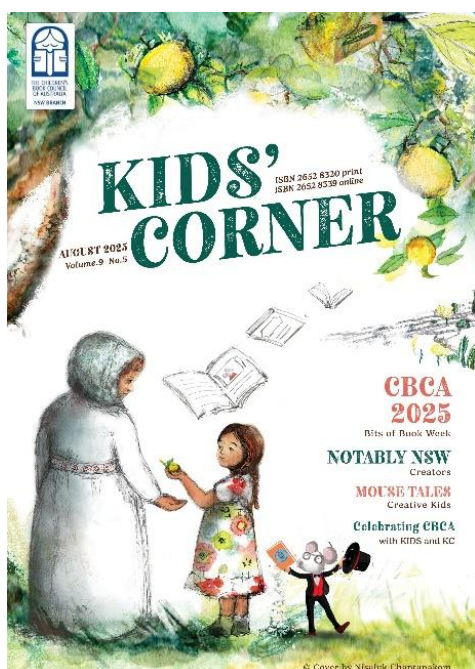
**KIDS' CORNER – AUGUST 2025**

**GUEST ILLUSTRATOR: Nisaluk CHANTANAKOM**

**THEME: Celebrating CBCA with KIDS and KC**

**SPECIAL FEATURES:**

- CBCA Children's Book Week
- past, present, future
- NOTABLY NSW** authors and Illustrators
- KC4KC** -Children's Book Week





*If you really want to **BOOK AN ADVENTURE**, there's a good chance that an author or illustrator can provide the perfect passport for you to help create characters, sort settings, plan plots, and adapt info for a great escape. ~ Morrie*



**KIDS' CORNER – June/July 2025**

**GUEST ILLUSTRATOR: Binny TALIB**

**THEME: A NOTABLY NSW ADVENTURE**

**SPECIAL FEATURES:**

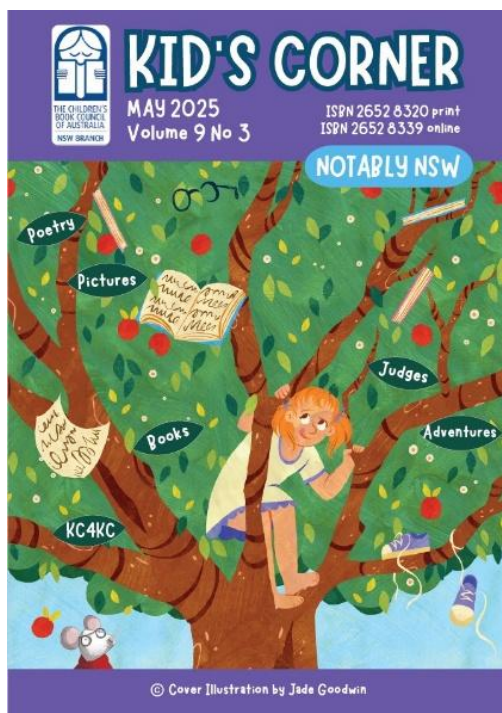
-**NOTABLY NSW** – comments from NSW authors and Illustrators who are on the CBCA Notables List for 2025. And some on the CBCA Shortlist!

-**COLLIDE BOOK TRAILER** hints

-**Shadow Judging** Creative Responses



*If you were wondering where to **BOOK AN ADVENTURE** with Australia's best books, New South Wales is a great place to start. ~ Morrie*



**KIDS' CORNER – APRIL MAY 2025**

**GUEST ILLUSTRATOR : Jade GOODWIN**

**THEME: Notably NSW**

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

-Judging BOYA

-The CBCA Shortlist and Notably NSW books

-Mike Lucas – Book Week Poetry

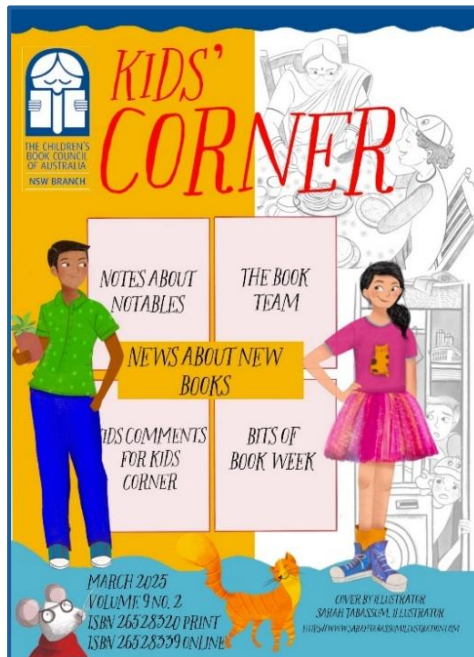
-New Books for YA

-National Simultaneous Storytime

-National Reconciliation Week



**WELCOME to KIDS' CORNER for March. It's a great time to start planning 2025 as the year to Book an Adventure," ~ Morrie**



## KIDS' CORNER – March 2025

**GUEST ILLUSTRATOR: Sarah TABASSUM**

**THEME – Notables, the “News” and KC4KC**

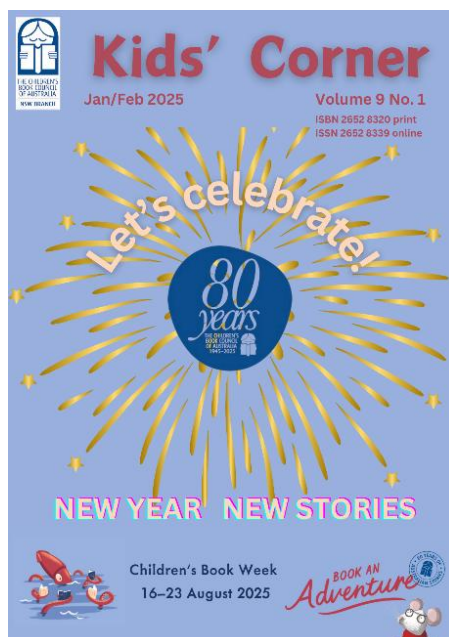
### SPECIAL FEATURES

- **KC4KC** = Kids Comments for KIDS CORNER - Reading
- Book Teams
- Bits of Book Week
- KC4KC = Kids’ Comments for KIDS’ CORNER - Reading-
- New Author - Roy Mahajan
- CBCA Notables List/-What’s the News



**KIDS' CORNER for February 2025 - invites you to CELEBRATE a NEW YEAR with lots of NEW STORIES in books, online, in our daily lives, and those yet to be imagined ~ Morrie**

## KIDS' CORNER –January/February 2025



**GUEST ILLUSTRATOR- MaryAnne Ann O'MOUSE**

**THEME- Let's Celebrate: New Year, New Books**

### SPECIAL FEATURES

- CBCA 2025 Book Week overview, theme, dates, artist
- Australian Day - Young Australians of the Year
- Library Lovers' Day
- John Marsden
- Reading – PRC, AUS Chn Laureate, What's New?
- Corpse Flower







image created by Tom Jellett

**CONGRATULATIONS** – Thanks to Tom Jellett, you found MORRIE singing with his friends at the end of the front row!

Many thanks to all the Creatives, Authors, Illustrators, and Readers who keep all of us all Reading, Writing, Thinking, Imagining, and Creating.

We hope your holidays are filled with stacks of BAGS!

This issue of KC was compiled by [Jackie.hawkes7@gmail.com](mailto:Jackie.hawkes7@gmail.com) with the help of LOTS of people who love to share stories, imagination and information.

We would love to include your ideas in KC 2026. Happy reading always!

Cheers to and from - Morrie, Maryanne Ann O'Mouse, Magic Morrie, Adventure Morrie and all our friends, especially YOU!