

These are the 'stories' of our guest authors and illustrators:



*Tristan Bancks* grew up in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. He says that he was an ambitious, energetic kid. He loved stories, playing sport and 'being master of my own destiny. I was always starting a lawnmowing business, writing a book, putting on a play, running a dance party or making dodgy horror movies with my friends'. He is a writer for children and teenagers with a background in acting and filmmaking. His books include *My Life & Other Stuff I Made Up*, *Mac Slater Coolhunter* (Australia & US),

*Galactic Adventures First Kids in Space* and the *Nit Boy* series (about a kid with the worst case of nits in world history). His short films as writer and director have won a number of awards and have screened widely in festivals and on TV. His most recent books are *Two Wolves*, a crime-mystery novel for middle-graders (March 2014) and *My Life & Other Stuff That Went Wrong* (April 2014), a book of weird-funny-gross short stories. He has recently spent six months with his family travelling in the UK, Europe and South-East Asia, during which he visited some of the children's literature sites which have inspired him. He says that the unifying theme in his work is 'the search for identity: who am I and what do I care about? Following your bliss, doing the thing you love no matter the obstacles. Breaking through fear and self-doubt. Money and power – how much you need and what you're willing to compromise to get them. I seem to write 'Action-Adventure' and 'Weird-Funny-Gross'.' Tristan is excited by the future of storytelling and inspiring others to create. Check out Story Scrapbook, his free multimedia story brainstorming app, and chat to Tristan at <http://www.tristanbancks.com>



*Peter Carnavas* grew up as the youngest of four kids with two parents who 'somehow allowed and encouraged him to pursue his interests without him realising'. He learnt the violin and guitar and was pretty certain he would one day become one of the world's greatest songwriters, sitting somewhere alongside Bob Dylan, John Lennon and Brian Wilson. This didn't happen, so it was lucky he could draw little pictures of people. Peter has always written stories and scribbled pictures. Every birthday and Christmas present included pencils and sketchbooks. After making little books for family and then teaching for a few years, Peter began immersing himself in picture books. He immediately fell in love with the work of

the great picture book creators. Peter completed a picture book course and put together a dummy version of his book, *Jessica's Box*. A little while later, New Frontier accepted the book. His tale of a little girl's attempt to find friendship entered the world in April 2008 and was shortlisted for the CBCA Crichton Award for Emerging Illustrators and the Queensland Premier's Literary Award. Many books have followed, including *Last Tree in the City*, *The Children Who Loved Books*, *My Totally Awesome Story* (written by Pat Flynn) and *The Boy on the Page*. His most recent books are *Jonathan*, illustrated by Amanda Francey, and *My Nanna is a Ninja*, written by Damon Young. Peter lives on the Sunshine Coast with his wife, two daughters and a scruffy dog that occasionally escapes. See his website at <http://petercarnavas.com/about-me/>





*Sarah Davis* spent her formative years in New Zealand getting into trouble for doodling all over her school books, and now gets paid to scribble to her heart's content, and can hardly believe her luck. 'I don't have any formal art training, but hold an honours degree in literature, and as a qualified secondary teacher I taught English, creative writing and art in NZ secondary schools. My love of language plays an important part in my work, and I really get a kick out of the way

words and images can be made to play off each other.' In 2004 she moved to Sydney and began freelancing in commercial illustration for advertising, film, editorial publishing, and toy design. She worked as an in-house designer for The Book Company, and as art director and senior illustrator for Childhood Heroes, producing books in association with high profile sports stars such as Tim Cahill, Brett Lee, and UK footballers Steven Gerrard and Rio Ferdinand. She received her first picture book contract in 2008, and in 2010 she quit her day job and began illustrating books full time. 'Now I'm lucky enough to spend my days drawing wicked pirates, crazy llamas, cowardly dogs, and a thousand other strange and wonderful things, and calling it "work"! I'm totally ruined for any other career, and will never have a Real Job ever again. Hopefully!' Since 2008 she's had 18 books published in Australia and overseas, and her work has been shortlisted for quite a few awards in Australia and New Zealand. She is also the current



Illustration Coordinator for the Australian Chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), and frequently speaks at schools, universities, festivals and conferences. See her website at <http://sarah-davis.org/>



*Anna Fienberg* was born in England and came to Australia at the age of three. She grew up in a house filled with books. Her mother was a teacher librarian who relished stories as much as chocolates. 'On Sunday mornings we'd all lie in bed with our books, lost in magical wardrobes, witches' spells, genies' magic... What we were going to read next was just as important in our family as what was for lunch!'

says Anna, who started writing stories when she was eight, but never imagined being an author. She studied psychology, did some freelance writing, then scored

the best job in the world. 'Working for *School Magazine* was a treat,' Anna says. 'I couldn't believe you could get paid for sitting back comfortably in your chair, cappuccino in hand, reading over a thousand books a year. Heaven!' Of



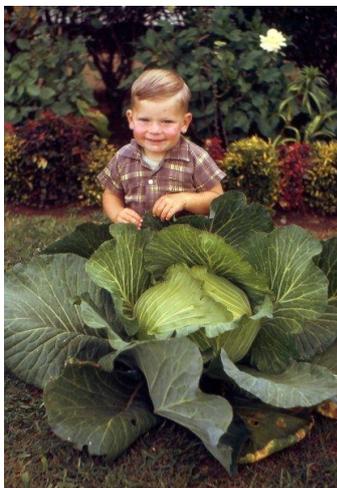
course, as an editor she also had to write reviews and articles, stories and plays. One of those stories for *School Magazine* later became her first book, *Billy Bear and the Wild Winter*, published in 1988. 'Tashi began as a conversation with my mother, Barbara. She was telling me how, when she was a child, she used to tell stories – creative whoppers! And the kids would crowd around, dying to hear the latest tale. We began talking about a character like her – a storyteller extraordinaire – and over many cups of tea we cooked up Tashi'. *Once Tashi met a Dragon*, illustrated by Kim Gamble, is the second full-colour picture book in Anna's bestselling series of sixteen chapter books about Tashi. Anna also writes for teenagers, and nearly all her books have been listed as Notable Books by the CBC. Her latest novel is *Louis Beside Himself*, and *Figaro and Rumba and the Cool Cats* is her latest chapter book with Stephen Michael King. See her publisher's website at <http://www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=311&author=5>



*Narelle Oliver* grew up in Toowoomba, Queensland, in a family who spent every spare moment pursuing interests in visual and performing arts – especially photography, drawing and painting. A highlight of her childhood was regular trips into unusual countryside gathering ideas and material for various artworks. While studying for a Bachelor of Education degree, Narelle majored in design and printmaking and discovered the world of contemporary children’s picture books. She taught for several years at the Queensland School for the Deaf, and also tutored in Language and Children’s Literature



courses at the University of Southern Queensland. Her first picture book, *Leaf Tail*, was published in 1989. Many of Narelle’s books have been inspired by a continuing interest in natural history and history. The linocut print medium which she often combines with other media is a feature of her illustrations. She is the author and illustrator of award-winning picture books including, *The Best Beak in Boonaroo Bay*, *The Hunt*, *Baby Bilby, where do you sleep?*, *The Very Blue Thingamajig*, *Dancing the Boomcha-cha Boogie*, and *Fox and Fine Feathers*. Her picture book, *Home*, was commissioned by the Brisbane City Council Library Services Division and features the peregrine falcons which inhabit inner-city Brisbane. This book forms the basis of the design of the children’s library in Brisbane Square. Her latest picture book *Don’t Let a Spoonbill in the Kitchen!* was launched there by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce AC. The original illustrations from Narelle’s picture books have been exhibited in group and solo exhibitions throughout Australia. Narelle works in a home-based studio in inner-city Brisbane, surrounded by family, pets, and an array of wildlife which visit their overgrown rainforest backyard – a pair of azure kingfishers diving into the swimming pool, a scrub turkey and its chick making their mound in the compost heap, and from time-to-time spangled drongos, boobook owls mobbed by noisy minas, tawny frogmouths, lorikeets and rosellas. See her website at <http://www.narelleoliver.com/>



*James Roy* was born in western New South Wales, and spent much of his childhood in Papua New Guinea and Fiji, adventuring by day and reading books by night. Then, one day, tired of reading books by dead people, he decided to start writing his own. Since 1996 he has written thirty books including the CBCA Honour Books *Captain Mack* and *Billy Mack’s War*, six Notable Books, and a WA Premier’s Book Award for *Anonymity Jones*. In 2008, his short story collection *Town* won the Ethel Turner Prize for Young People’s Literature in the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards, as well as the Golden Inky in Australia’s only teenage choice awards, and its German translation was shortlisted for the prestigious German Youth Literature Prize. Its follow-



up, *City*, was recently named a White Raven selection. When James isn’t travelling locally and overseas to talk about books and writing, he lives with his family in the Blue Mountains. He doesn’t like olives very much, in his spare time plays and builds musical instruments, and he believes that ukulele is to guitar as children’s writer is to adult writer – underestimated but just as good. One day he will appear on the stage of the Sydney Opera House, hopefully as a performer, not as the guy who hands Tommy Emmanuel his guitar. See his website at <http://www.jamesroy.com.au>

