

## Kyle Mewburn Interview

I had the pleasure of interviewing Kyle Mewburn for his upcoming two chapter books for 6-9 year olds: 'Scruffy Old Cat' and 'Funny Little Dog'. Kyle won the Joy Cowley award with his book 'Kiss Kiss Yuck Yuck' and has won several awards since then.

Kyle says he had been trying to get published in the adult area for a number of years but when he began working with children he realised he should instead target this audience. For several years, he received rejects but with comments such as they liked his writing but felt the stories were not suited for picture books. When he saw the Joy Cowley competition he decided to try writing for a much younger age group. He says working with Joy Cowley put his book on the next level. The experience taught him a lot.



Kyle was approached by an editor to write the Pop Hooper series. He got the idea for the first book from his cat, which he is really fond of.

“When I go to someone else’s house they always think their cat is the perfect pet. What is perfect for one person is not another’s choice. If you ask each kid what they want – they all want something else. I wanted a dragon when I was young.”

What he actually got was an egg, which eventually hatched into a chicken. It thought he was the mother and followed him all around – until it got eaten by a dog.

Kyle has been contracted to write another two books; with another two possibly in the pipeline. He wanted to write about a cockatoo next but was sidelined into a pony story. He says he never thought of himself as a pony person – but he is now.

The books are being sold in Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom. Several of his other books have gone overseas too: Duck Stuck to the U.K., No Room for a Mouse in Japan, Kiss Kiss Yuck Yuck in Australia and America.

Like most authors he says the money isn’t rolling in. He has begun to write for the educational market to expand his repertoire. An environmental series of early readers are coming out with Oxford University Press (Australia) and a series of Aussie Yarns.

“They wanted me to retell some Aborigine tales but I prefer to write my own stories.”

Together they came up with the idea of bush tales. He is presently working on a young adult and finishing the next two books in the Pop Hooper's Perfect Pet series.

Kyle starts his day at 7.00am every morning and writes until 3.00 (unless he is totally absorbed – those days he writes until 5.00). He spends a lot of that time rehashing and rewriting what he wrote the day before.

Kyle lives in the countryside and says he needs that quiet so he can concentrate. He doesn't know how anyone can work with a laptop in a cafe. "I pick up fragments everywhere but it doesn't amount to anything until I'm in the garden. I often get ideas there."

Finally, I asked Kyle what advice he would give to writers. "If you get feedback from an editor – take it on board. It takes effort for them to give you feedback and it is worth its weight in gold." Kyle says when he decided to write for children he researched the market. He quickly found out that publishers usually send out form letters and he understands they don't have time to write letters to everyone who sends in a manuscript. That's why he realises personal comments from editors are so valuable. "Think of it as a positive not a negative – even though it is a rejection."

Kyle Mewburn's website: [www.kylemewburn.com](http://www.kylemewburn.com)

