

A Guide to the

**RUTH STARKE PAPERS**



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## RUTH STARKE

### BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

Ruth Starke was born in Adelaide in 1946. She spent the early part of her working life in public relations and travel marketing in Australia and overseas. On her return to Australia in the early 1990s, she moved into academia at Flinders University in Adelaide and started to pursue her interest in creative writing. She completed her PhD in English and Australian Studies from Flinders University in 2001. She became a lecturer, a tutor and a supervisor of creative writing postgraduate students at Flinders University. Her creative writing experience extended to work at the University of South Australia and Adelaide TAFE.

It was in 1992, however, that she began writing fiction for children and young adults. Her first published book was *The Great violin fiddle* in 1995 by Mammoth Books Australia. Throughout her career, Ruth wrote stories inspired by actual people and events. *Saving Saddler Street* was inspired by the closure and community effort to re-open Sturt Street Primary School in Adelaide. *Orphans of the Queen* was a result of Ruth's interest in the child migration scheme from Britain to Australia in the 1950s. As the centenary of the beginning and the end of World War I was approaching, she wrote three books on this period of Australia's history, *An Anzac tale*, *My Gallipoli* and *Armistice*. They were aimed at helping children and young people better understand this world event from an Australian perspective.

Her interest in cultural diversity was a theme that ran through many of her books. *Saving Saddler Street* was seen through the eyes of the Greek community in Adelaide. *Nips XI*, and its sequel, *Nips going national*, were stories about a multicultural boys' cricket team. *Noodle pie* was inspired by the Vietnamese community in Adelaide. Where possible, she included in her books different ethnic groups that make up contemporary Australia.

In 2008, Ruth Starke changed direction in her writing and started the trilogy of *Captain Congo* graphic novels. At this time in Australian publishing, graphic novels were infrequently published so she was a trailblazer. Her first graphic novel was *Captain Congo and the crocodile king* which made history by becoming the first graphic novel to be shortlisted by The Children's Book Council of Australia for the Picture Book of the Year award. She followed this up with two more *Captain Congo* books. These books were rather unique as all the main characters were animals. They were all illustrated by Greg Holfeld. When Starke decided to write *An Anzac tale*, she wrote it as a graphic novel. Once again, Greg Holfeld illustrated it and all the characters were Australian animals, primarily kangaroos.

Ruth has been shortlisted for, and won, many awards for her books. In 2001 *Nips XI* was awarded The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA), Book of the Year (Younger Readers), Honour Book. In 2003 *Nips XI* was also a finalist for the UNESCO Prize for Children's & Young People's Literature in the Service of Tolerance. She won the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Award in 2009 for *Noodle pie* and in 2015 *My Gallipoli* won the New South Wales Premier's Young People's History Prize.

Ruth has also won a personal award and several fellowships. She won May Gibbs Fellowships in 2000 and 2016 and the South Australian Government's Carclew Fellowship in 2002. In 2009 she won the inaugural Nance Donkin Award for Children's Literature.

Besides her academic work and writing books, Ruth was heavily involved in the South Australian Writers' Centre, ArtsSA, Australia Council's Literature Board and was a reviewer for many years for *Viewpoint* and *Australian Book Review*.

Her books have been translated into French, German, Italian and Chinese as well as published in the USA.

Ruth died in Adelaide in 2022.

#### *Sources*

AustLit: The Australian Literature Resource

Papers of Ruth Starke

Ruth Starke website <http://www.ruthstarke.com/>

Starke, Ruth *Orphans of the Queen* South Melbourne, Vic: Lothian Books, 2004, p223

Working Title Press media release, *Captain Congo and the Klondike gold*, June 2011

## RUTH STARKE PAPERS

### SCOPE AND CONTENT

Ruth Starke made this donation of papers relating to many of her works for children and young adults to the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc in February 2022. The collection spans the years from 1996 to 2017. The size of this collection is two standard archival boxes and one oversize flat archival box. The oversize box includes galleys and a proof.

The collection contained three audio books and papers relating to books for children and young adults. These include picture books (including non-fiction), chapter books and graphic novels. The papers have been organised chronologically from oldest to most recent. They include manuscripts, artwork, proofs, correspondence with publishers, editors, illustrators and other people and organisations.

Of special interest are the research notebooks Ruth Starke compiled for five of her books. For conservation reasons, all the newspaper articles have been removed and photocopied from each notebook. The photocopies are kept loosely in each notebook between the same pages as the original articles.

There are numerous manuscripts, including many drafts and rewrites. All have been typed except for an early draft of *An Anzac tale* which is handwritten. There is evidence (including correspondence) of being shortlisted for, or winning, awards in Australia and overseas. Some of these awards are also included in this collection. There are many newspaper articles and book reviews as well as promotional materials. Of particular note is the author's extensive correspondence with her editor, Jane Covernton, from Working Title Press.

The depth of this collection gives an insight into the writing process and the challenges of creating and publishing for children and young adults.

The author donated three audio books and these have been added to the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc collection.

RUTH STARKE  
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS

The Great violin fiddle / Ruth Starke. Port Melbourne, Vic: Mammoth Books Australia, 1995

The Phisic dog / Ruth Starke. Dingley, Vic: Mammoth Books Australia, 1995

Stalker / Ruth Starke. Norwood, SA: Omnibus Books, 1995

Traquee / Ruth Starke. Uniform title: Stalker. French. Paris, France: Hachette, 1998

La Mia ombra / Ruth Starke. Uniform title: Stalker. Italian. Trieste, Italy: Edizioni EI, 1998

Coming out / Ruth Starke. Norwood, SA: Omnibus Books, 1996

*Children's Book Council of Australia, Younger Readers, notable book, 1996*

The Twist in the tale / Ruth Starke; illustrated by Tom Jellett. Port Melbourne, Vic: Lothian, 1997

*Aurealis Awards for Excellence in Australian Speculative Fiction (Young Adult Division), winner, 1997*

Solo spots: senior drama monologues / edited by Ruth Starke & Chris Tugwell. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998

Nips XI / Ruth Starke. Port Melbourne, Vic: Lothian, 2000

*Children's Book Council of Australia, Book of the Year (Younger Readers), Joint Honour Book, 2001*

*Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature, Children's Award, shortlisted, 2002*

*Young Australian Best Book Award (YABBA), Younger Readers, shortlisted, 2001 & 2002*

*Kids Own Australia Literature awards (KOALA), Younger Readers, shortlisted, 2002*

*UNESCO Prize for Children's & Young People's Literature in the Service of Tolerance, Under-13s, finalist, 2003*

Saving Saddler Street / Ruth Starke. Port Melbourne, Vic: Lothian, 2001

Dead red / Ruth Starke. Port Melbourne, Vic: Lothian, 2001

Starstruck / Ruth Starke. Port Melbourne, Vic: Lothian, 2002

Vorrei essere Miss Prugna! / Ruth Starke. Uniform title: Starstruck. Italian. Firenze, Italy: Giunti Junior, 2004

Nips go national / Ruth Starke. Port Melbourne, Vic: Lothian, 2003

*Children's Book Council of Australia, Younger Readers, notable book, 2004*

Hawthorn, Vic: Louis Braille Audio, 2004

Muck-up day / Ruth Starke. Port Melbourne, Vic: Lothian, 2003

*Davitt Awards for Best Crime Book by Australian Women, Young Adult, winner, 2004*

Stella by the sea / Ruth Starke. Camberwell, Vic: Puffins Books, 2003

*Children's Book Council of Australia, Book of the Year (Younger Readers), shortlisted, 2004*

*Queensland Premier's Literary Awards, shortlisted, 2004*

Camberwell, Vic: Penguin Books, 2006

Meng Zhong xiao wu / Ruth Starke. Uniform title: Stella by the sea. Chinese. Beijing, Italy: Wai yu jiao xue yu yan jiu chu ban she, 2011

Western warriors / Ruth Starke; in Kids' night in! / edited by Jessica Adams, Juliet Partridge & Nick Earls. Camberwell, VIC: Penguin, 2003

Orphans of the queen / Ruth Starke. South Melbourne, Vic: Lothian, 2004

*Queensland Premier's Literary Awards, shortlisted, 2005*

*New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards, Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature, shortlisted, 2005*

Hawthorn, Vic: Louis Braille Audio, 2005

Catland / Ruth Starke. Camberwell, Vic: Puffins Books, 2005

*Children's Peace Literature Award (South Australian Psychologists for Peace), shortlisted, 2005*

*The Wilderness Society, Australia, Environment Award for Children's Literature, Younger Readers, shortlisted, 2006*

Captain Congo and the crocodile king / Ruth Starke; illustrated by Greg Holfeld. Kingswood, SA: Working Title Press, 2008

*Children's Book Council of Australia, Picture Book of the Year, shortlisted, 2009*

Kingswood, SA: Working Title Press, 2010

Noodle pie / Ruth Starke. Norwood, SA: Omnibus Books, 2008

*Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Award, Upper Primary Children, winner 2009*

*Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature, Children's Award, shortlisted, 2010*

*United States International Board of Books for Young People, List of Outstanding International Books for children and young adults, selected, 2011*

Hawthorn, Vic: Louis Braille Audio, 2008

Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA: Kane Miller Books, 2010

- The Fish gut experiment / Ruth Starke; illustrated by Tom Jellett. Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA: Stone Arch Books, 2008
- Captain Congo and the maharaja's monkey / Ruth Starke; illustrated by Greg Holfeld. Kingswood, SA: Working Title Press, 2009
- Children's Book Council of Australia, Picture Book of the Year, shortlisted, 2009*
- Kingswood, SA: Working Title Press, 2010
- Thorpey / Ruth Starke. Malvern, SA: Omnibus Books, 2009
- Fill out this application and wait over there / Ruth Starke. Malvern, SA: Omnibus Books, 2009
- Captain Stella / Ruth Starke. Camberwell, Vic: Puffins Books, 2010
- Captain Congo and the klondike gold / Ruth Starke; illustrated by Greg Holfeld. Kingswood, SA: Working Title Press, 2011
- Kingswood, SA: Working Title Press, 2012
- An Anzac tale / Ruth Starke; illustrated by Greg Holfeld. Adelaide, SA: Working Title Press, 2013
- Children's Book Council of Australia, Picture Book of the Year, notable book, 2014*
- Children's Book Council of Australia, Eve Pownall Award for Information Books, notable book, 2014*
- Children's Book Council of Australia, Younger Readers, notable book, 2014*
- Ledger Awards for Comic Arts, Bronze Ledger, winner, 2014*
- Sydney, NSW: HarperCollins Publishers, 2019
- My Gallipoli / Ruth Starke; illustrated by Robert Hannaford. Adelaide, SA: Working Title Press, 2015
- New South Wales Premier's Young People's History Prize, winner, 2015*
- Asher Literary Award for female authors writing on an anti-war theme, shortlisted, 2015*
- Western Australia Premier's Book Awards, Non-fiction, shortlisted, 2016*
- Children's Book Council of Australia, Picture Book of the Year, notable book, 2016*
- Children's Book Council of Australia, Eve Pownall Award for Information Books, notable book, 2016*
- Adelaide, SA: Working Title Press, 2016
- Armistice / Ruth Starke; illustrated by David Kennett. Sydney, NSW: Working Title Press, 2018
- Children's Book Council of Australia, Eve Pownall Award for Information Books, notable book, 2019*
- Sydney, NSW: HarperCollins Publishers, 2019



Ella Havelka / Ruth Starke in Our land, our stories: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples,  
histories & cultures Sth Melbourne, Vic: Cenage Learning Australia, 2019

Stan Grant / Ruth Starke in Our land, our stories: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples,  
histories & cultures Sth Melbourne, Vic: Cenage Learning Australia, 2019

<b>RUTH STARKE SERIES AND BOX LIST 2023</b>				
<b>Series No</b>	<b>Series name</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Box No.</b>
1	Books	1.1.1	<i>Nips XI</i>	1
1	Books	1.2.1	<i>Saving Saddler Street</i>	1
1	Books	1.3.1	<i>Nips go national</i>	1
1	Books	1.4.1	<i>Orphans of the Queen</i>	1
1	Books	1.5.1	<i>Captain Congo and the crocodile king</i>	1
1	Books	1.5.2	<i>Captain Congo and the crocodile king</i>	3
1	Books	1.6.1	<i>Noodle pie</i>	1
1	Books	1.7.1	<i>Captain Congo and the Maharaja's monkey</i>	2
1	Books	1.8.1	<i>Captain Congo and the Klondike gold</i>	2
1	Books	1.8.2	<i>Captain Congo and the Klondike gold</i>	3
1	Books	1.9.1	<i>An Anzac tale</i>	2
1	Books	1.9.2	<i>An Anzac tale</i>	3
1	Books	1.10.1	<i>My Gallipoli</i>	2
1	Books	1.11.1	<i>Armistice</i>	2
2	Other papers	2.1.1	<b>Awards &amp; biography</b>	2

**Box 3 holds unusual shape/oversize papers**

## A GUIDE TO THE RUTH STARKE PAPERS

### SERIES DESCRIPTION

#### SERIES 1 – BOOKS

Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
1	1.1.1	<i>Nips XI</i> Research notebook Rough sketch by Gregory Rogers, photocopy, black & white, 10 May 2000, 1p Illustrations by Gregory Rogers, photocopies, colour, 3pp Letter with thoughts on the book by Tom Lewis, typed, 1p	Gregory Rogers, illustrator  Tom Lewis, editor	1
1	1.2.1	<i>Saving Saddler Street</i> Research notebook Newspaper articles relating to the closure of Sturt Street Primary School, Adelaide, 1996-2005 Letter from author to Helen Chamberlin & Laila Dickson about the launch of the book, 20 September 2001, 1p Letter of thanks for Ruth's support from Kathleen Patitsas, 25 July 2002, 1p Thank you card from students who read the book. Sturt Street Community School official opening folder, 19 March 2005 Reviews, 2001-2002	Helen Chamberlin, Lothian Books, editor  Laila Dickson, Lothian Books  Kathleen Patitsas, For the Committee to Save Sturt Street Primary School	1
1	1.3.1	<i>Nips go national</i> Research notebook		1
1	1.4.1	<i>Orphans of the Queen</i> Research notebook Chapter page illustrations by Anita Mertzlin, photocopies, black & white, May 2004, 4pp	Anita Mertzlin, illustrator	1
1	1.5.1	<i>Captain Congo and the crocodile king</i> Promotional material from Working Title Press Flyer for launch on 16 August 2008 Reviews, 2008 Young Writers' Night, City Program, SA Writers' Centre, 16 June 2009 Reviews, 2009		1
1	1.5.2	<i>Captain Congo and the crocodile king</i> Artwork, A3, black & white, photocopies, handwritten edits, 3pp		3

Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
1	1.6.1	<i>Noodle pie</i> Research notebook Promotional book marks (4) Email from Celia Jellett about the selection of the book for the 2011 United States International Board of Books for Young People List of Outstanding International Books for children and young adults, 16 February 2011, 1p	Celia Jellett, senior editor, Scholastic Australia	1
1	1.7.1	<i>Captain Congo and the Maharaja's monkey</i> Ms, 1 <sup>st</sup> draft, typed, April 2007, 22pp Email correspondence between author & Jane Covernton about corrections to Ms, August 2007, 5pp Early draft illustrations from Greg Holfeld, handwritten edits, photocopies, black & white, 18pp Email from Greg Holfeld about a sketch of the proposed cover, 30 September 2008, 1p Proof, rough illustrations & email from Greg Holfeld, photocopies, black & white, 28 November 2008, 47pp Illustrations, draft by Greg Holfeld, photocopies, black & white, 2pp Illustrations, draft by Greg Holfeld, photocopies, black & white, 3pp Proof, cover (2 copies), title page, verso page, page 2, colour photocopies, 2009, 6pp Research article on the home of the Maharajah of Jodhpur, India, 12 April 2009 Reviews, 2009	Jane Covernton, Editor, Working Title Press  Greg Holfeld, illustrator	2
1	1.8.1	<i>Captain Congo and the Klondike gold</i> Email correspondence with Greg Holfeld after completion of 1 <sup>st</sup> draft, 8 October 2009, 5pp Email correspondence with Jane Covernton after completion of 2nd draft, 22 October 2009, 2pp Email correspondence with Jane Covernton & Penny Matthews after completion of 2nd draft, 13 November 2009, 2pp Email correspondence with Greg Holfeld & Jane Covernton after completion of 3rd draft, 20 November 2009, 3pp Ms, 3 <sup>rd</sup> draft, includes alterations suggested in 20 November 2009 email, typed, handwritten edits, 30 November 2009, 22pp Proof, black & white text, cover page & rough illustrations, handwritten edits, 47pp Proof, black & white text & rough illustrations, 11pp Illustration of a miner, photocopy, black & white, 17 November 2009, 1p	Greg Holfeld, illustrator  Jane Covernton, editor, Working Title Press  Penny Matthews, editor	2

		Ms, typed, handwritten edits, March 2010, 15pp Email from Jane Covernton about story changes, 25 March 2010, 1p Promotional flyer from Working Title Press		
Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
1	1.8.2	<i>Captain Congo and the Klondike gold</i> Galley of front & back covers, full colour, A3, 1p		3
1	1.9.1	<i>An Anzac tale</i> Research material, 18 April 2004, 5pp Ms, draft, handwritten, 15pp Ms, typed, January 2011, 9pp Email from Greg Holfeld with initial thoughts, 31 March 2011, 1p Ms, draft, typed, handwritten edits, March 2011, 15pp Ms, final draft, typed, handwritten edits, March 2011, 15pp Email from Greg Holfeld about submission of artwork to Australia Council for the Arts, 13 December 2011, 1p Rough illustrations from Greg Holfeld, black & blue, photocopies, 2pp Email correspondence with Greg Holfeld & Jane Covernton with comments on the text & illustrations, April 2012, 7pp Email correspondence with Gina Inverarity, Jane Covernton, & Greg Holfeld about the marked- up roughs & Ms corrections, May 2012, 3pp Email from author to Greg Holfeld & Jane Covernton about the source of most of her opening scenes, 10 July 2012, 1p Endnotes, typed, 4pp Endnotes, typed, edited by Gina Inverarity, 6pp Comments on Endnotes by Peter Stanley, Greg Holfeld & author, 7pp Endnotes, typed, handwritten edits, 10pp Proof of Endnotes, final, colour illustrations, includes Timeline, 4pp Email from Greg Holfeld about progress of illustrations, 12 August 2012, 1p Rough illustrations by Greg Holfeld, photocopies, black & white, 3pp Proof of colour front cover, rough & final back cover, 3pp Illustration by Greg Holfeld, photocopy, black & white, 1p Reviews, 2013	Greg Holfeld, illustrator  Jane Covernton, editor, Working Title Press  Gina Inverarity, editor  Peter Stanley, Head of the Centre for Historical Research, National Museum of Australia	2

Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
1	1.9.2	<i>An Anzac tale</i> Proof, A3, photocopy, black & white rough illustrations, includes text, handwritten edits, 19 March 2012, 30pp Galley of front & back covers, full colour, A3, 1p		3
1	1.10.1	<i>My Gallipoli</i> Proposal & justification for the story including target audience, scenes, narrators & maps, January 2012, 2pp Updated proposal & justification for the story including a draft scene, narrators & maps, May 2012, 4pp Notes to accompany the 5 <sup>th</sup> draft, typed, handwritten edits, 5pp Ms, 7 <sup>th</sup> draft, typed, 11pp Email from Jane Covernton with comments about the Notes & Bibliography, 24 October 2010, 7pp Proof of Notes & Bibliography, colour photocopies, 2pp Newspaper article of Ruth Starke & Robert Hannaford at the book launch, 16 April 2016, 1p Promotional material from Working Title Press Reviews, 2014-2015	Jane Covernton, editor, Working Title Press  Robert Hannaford, illustrator	2
1	1.11.1	<i>Armistice</i> Email correspondence with Jane Covernton relating to comments about the text & pagination, June-September 2016, 14pp Email correspondence between Jane Covernton & Mark Wilson about illustrating the book (which he declined), September-October 2016, 7pp Email correspondence between Jane Covernton & Tsering Hannaford about illustrating the book (which she eventually declined), October 2016, 4pp Email correspondence with Jane Covernton, David Kennett & Greg Holfeld about the progress of the illustrations April 2017, 3pp Rough illustrations by David Kennett, photocopies, black & white, 22pp Email correspondence with Jane Covernton about the progress of David Kennett's illustrations, including colour & black & white examples, July 2017, 8pp Ms, 11 <sup>th</sup> draft, text only, including computer edits, Imprint page & Notes, September 2017, 36pp	Jane Covernton, editor, Working Title Press  Mark Wilson, illustrator  Tsering Hannaford, artist  David Kennett, illustrator	2

<b>SERIES 2 – OTHER PAPERS</b>				
<b>Series</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description &amp; Date Range</b>	<b>Key Contacts</b>	<b>Box</b>
2	2.1.1	Awards		2
2	2.2.1	Biography		2