



## Kingscliff backdrop for young adult fiction

# Kingy-raised author nabbed by Penguin

## Megan Jacobson's writing sparks publisher bidding war

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THE standard advice for aspiring authors is to write what you know.

And that's one of the reasons former Tweed Shire schoolgirl Megan Jacobson set her recently published debut novel, *Yellow*, in Kingscliff.

The young adult fiction book, set in the 1990s, sparked a bidding war between two major publishing houses, with Penguin coming out on top.

It was a dream come true for Megan, who even had the Penguin logo on her phone screen-saver in a bid to attract her favourite publishers.

Now aged 32, Megan lived in Kingscliff and attended the local primary and high schools before graduating from Year 12 in 2001.

While the seaside town is not explicitly named in the book, locals will find the geographical backdrop familiar.

The picturesque coast and bushland play a large role in the storyline about a teenage girl's struggles with family and friends and the ghost she teams up with after encountering him in an unlikely place.

"I had a really vivid dream

about a ghost calling up a broken phone booth," she said about the inspiration for the storyline.

In return for helping prove who murdered him 20 years ago, the ghost agrees to help get her separated parents back together and negotiate her bitchy friends.

The main character's father called her Kirra after his favourite surf break.

There's some amusing observations about the locals, such as the region being the melanoma capital of the world where people get cancers cut out of them like others get their hair cut.

While Kingscliff clearly made an impact on Megan, she made her mark as well, winning the Sydney Morning Herald short story competition in Year 12 and participating in public speaking events.

"I know so many people who went to these fancy private schools in Sydney," she said from that city, which she now calls home.

"But I don't think I could have had any better education than Kingscliff High; the whole school was so supportive."

Megan works part-time in news production at the ABC, juggling it with writing, which suits her just fine.

"You don't do it (writing) for money," she laughed.

"If you think of it as a hobby that gives you a bit of pocket money, I think you'll be happy."

She's just finished the first draft of her second novel, this one set in Darwin, where she also lived for a time growing up.

She has also worked as a scriptwriter for television and still dabbles in freelance work.

With her contacts, and her track record of successfully employing the law of attraction, Kingscliff featuring on the big screen may not be a big pipe-dream.



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**IN DEMAND:** Ex-Kingscliff High School student Megan Jacobson's debut novel, set in Kingscliff, sparked a bidding war between two major publishers. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED