

Superhero the write stuff

When she's not busy teaching primary school kids' traffic safety, Nicky Johnston has her nose buried in a book.

Not just any book but her very own first publication, *Go Away, Mr Worrythoughts!*, for children aged three to 10, that she has written and illustrated.

Nicky, an RACV Traffic Safety Educator, said her picture book was inspired by her eldest son Bayley's experience with generalised anxiety disorder (GAD).

Bayley, now nine years old, was first diagnosed with GAD at age five.

"We had an awful time trying to help Bayley cope with his anxiety," Nicky said.

"So my book was really inspired about how he was able to manage and control his anxiety in order to live happy and free."

Nicky's book follows the adventures of a boy who discovers he has superpowers and is able to thwart bad old Mr Worrythoughts.

"While there is a lot of valuable information around, such as books for parents of anxious kids and for adult sufferers, I found very few children's books about anxiety," she said.

"The book reflects the externalisation technique we still use with Bayley every time his anxiety gives him negative internal thoughts. I wanted Bayley to see how far he has come



Debut author Nicky faces her toughest critics — her children, Cooper, Asher and Bayley.

with managing his anxiety and how I think of him as my superhero."

Nicky also suffers from anxiety and said she was completely devastated when Bayley showed the signs and was finally diagnosed.

"I sincerely hope that my book can help other parents, teachers and

children who are experiencing the symptoms of anxiety," she said

"Bayley has really blossomed within himself; it is just amazing, he has been able to manage his anxiety and control his worry thoughts.

"After he read the book, he said to me, 'You get it, Mum!', which for me

means the book was a total success even before it hit the book shops."

Go Away, Mr Worrythoughts! (RRP \$14.95) will be launched by Nicky on 19 July, 1pm, at Robinson's Bookshop, 3/11 Station Street, Frankston and on sale from the end of June, via www.nickysart.com.au.

Love story a real treasure



Sally Learey, a Traffic Safety Educator colleague of Nicky's, also published her debut book last year, which was profiled in *Clubtalk*.

Like Nicky, Sally's book, *Food for me is gluten free*, was inspired by her family's health experiences after her husband and two of her three children were diagnosed with coeliac disease.

Sally is now about to publish her

true life experiences.

"I met my husband David in Lorne when he was working and living there and I was teaching at the Lorne school," Sally explained.

"I'd moved there not knowing a soul and being unfamiliar with the town. David introduced me to all these wonderful places around Lorne that he loved.

"And of course, his love, soon

