

Dr Helen Edwards Bio 2025



Dr Helen Edwards is an Adelaide-based children's author who weaves diverse stories of nature, magic and history. Helen's debut middle-grade novel, *The Rebels of Mount Buffalo*, was published in October 2023, by the award-winning Riveted Press, distributed by Simon and Schuster. Inspired by real-life mountain guide and early feminist Guide Alice Manfield, it's a captivating time-slip tale in which a girl lost to grief meets a daring rebel on a misty mountain who guides her to rediscover her courage and find her way home. In Feb 2024, *The Rebels of Mount Buffalo* was longlisted in the DANZ Children's Book Award for books which feature diversity in all forms. In June 2024, it was shortlisted in the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards.

Helen's second novel, *Legend of the Lighthouse Moon*, was published on 2nd October 2024 by Riveted Press. Rich with folklore and brimming with adventure, *Legend of the Lighthouse Moon* is a dazzling tale of family, resilience, and the enduring magic of the sea. Join Mona McKenna on a journey of self-discovery where the whispers of the past guide her towards a future filled with hope, love, and legends brought to life. Set on Kangaroo Island in 1970, with a main character living with type 1 diabetes, it features the history of the Cape Willoughby lighthouse and the endangered sea lion colony, as well as drawing on legends from the islands where Helen's grandmothers were born in the Irish Sea. Helen's third novel, a WWII story set in Australia, will release in April 2025 with Riveted Press and her fourth, co-written with Award-winning author Kate Gordon, in August 2025.

Helen has a PhD in Psychology and a long background working in mental health. She writes stories that reduce stereotypes and increase understanding of diversity, including characters who live with chronic illness, mental illness, and/or who are neurodivergent. These are not the focus of the story, but rather, the characters simply live with these things, and are the heroes—having adventures, living their lives and solving problems, big and small. Helen has lived with type 1 diabetes herself since 1979. She also lives with anxiety and ADHD, both diagnosed in adulthood,

as well as a number of other chronic conditions. In her author talks, Helen shares her personal experiences with living with chronic illness and neurodiversity, which resonates with students and opens up conversations. In 2001, she founded an award-winning online counselling service for people with diabetes, which she ran for 16 years. Over 90,000 people follow her across social media, where her platforms inspire action for people and planet, with kindness and hope, focusing on our children's future.

Helen has been shortlisted in and won a number of awards, including being a South Australian State Finalist for Australian of the Year for her work in diabetes. She was winner of the ZestFest writing competition, a special mention in the inaugural Writers' SA Deep Creek Fellowship and short-listed in the inaugural SA Literary Fellowship.

Helen is an experienced speaker and has presented talks and workshops locally and internationally across a wide range of topics. Helen has a number of author talks and workshops prepared and is flexible in her approach and topics. These include talking about how she became a writer, how she comes up with ideas for books, and how she weaves together nature, magic and history. She has a rich range of historical artefacts and props related to her first three novels and the students always love these. In her author talks, she works with the group to create the outline for their own historical magical story, which are often hilarious and always wonderful!

Some of Helen's workshop topics include 'Seeking Stories, Crafting Characters' - in this 2-hour workshop, participants learn different ways of seeking story ideas, how anything can start a story, noticing story sparks, the importance of character development, backstory, and voice, using your senses in writing, taking dialogue and making it real, and using your experiences. They go through a series of writing exercises and group activities to create their own story outline and character/s, as well as begin a story.

'Weaving Nature, Magic and History' - participants learn how to develop a story setting that weaves nature, magic and history together. They go through a series of writing exercises and group activities to learn how to build a world filled with nature, selecting aspects of the environment, animals and more, to build their world and characters. This can include exploring the nature in the surroundings if appropriate and writing outside. They experiment with animal characters and select an aspect of history for their story (setting, time or place/person), and add a dash of magic. They will work on their own story idea throughout the workshop.

Other workshops can focus on specific aspects of writing and the curriculum to suit.

Helen has a Working with Children Check in SA. She is a member of Writers' Vic, Writers' SA, Qld Writers Centre, ASA, CBCA and SCBWI. She is on the SA committee for the CBCA. She is part of the Author Pen Pals initiative and a Role Model with Books in Homes. She is passionate about inspiring action for our beautiful, fragile planet and nature features in all her books. She finds history fascinating and uncovers stories that may have been forgotten, or hidden, and brings them into the light. If you're looking for a children's author who speaks from the heart, who laughs loud and

loves deep, who is passionate about people and planet, and who understands we come in a glorious rainbow of human beings, Helen is your person. See more about Helen at her website www.helenedwardswrites.com and follow her across social media @drhelenedwardswrites