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  The Problem with Wallabies

 Lockdown

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The New Zealand
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**LEVEL
2**



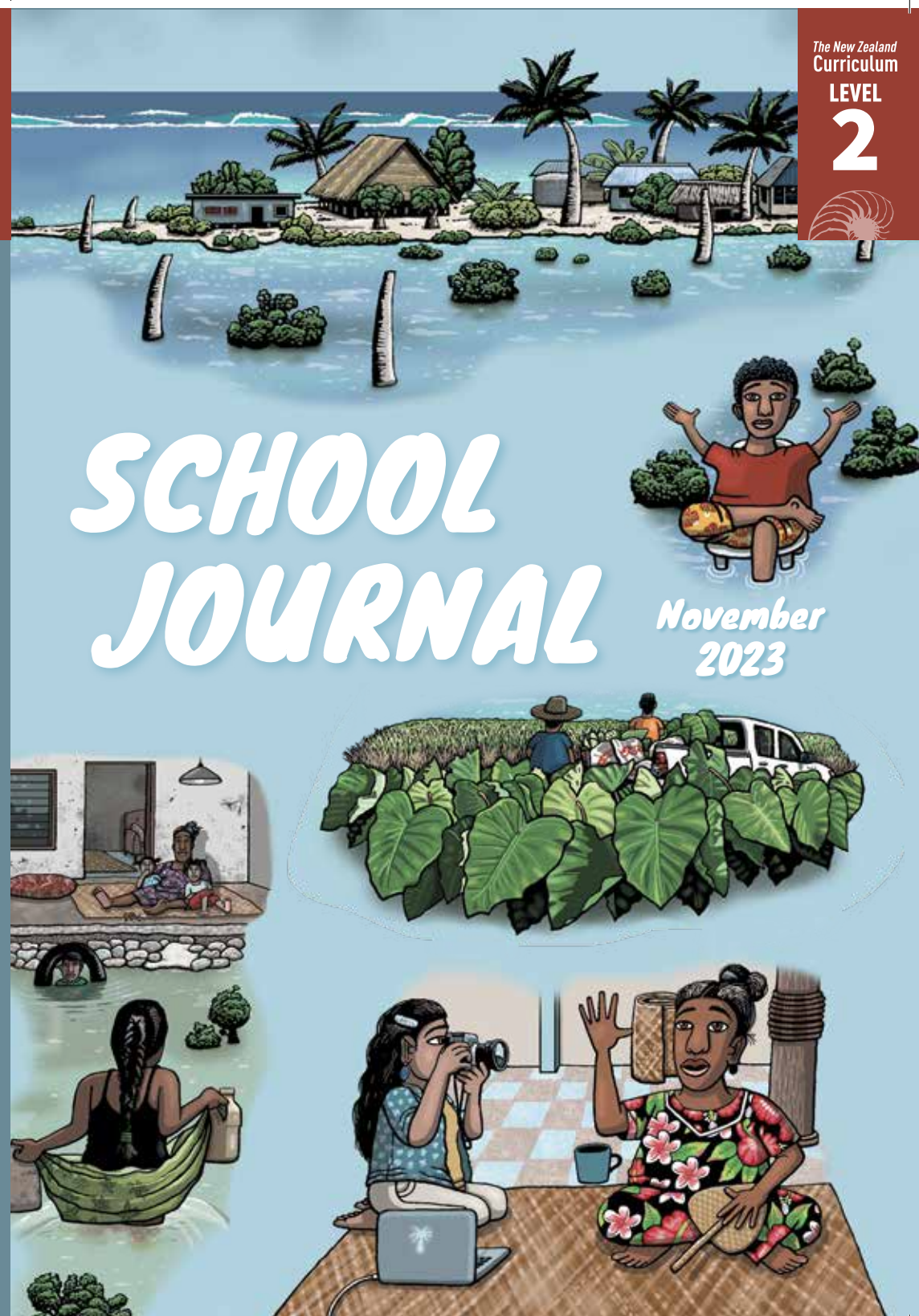
SCHOOL JOURNAL
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The New Zealand
Curriculum
**LEVEL
2**



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Te Poutāhū
Curriculum Centre

 **Te Tāhuhu o
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TITLE	READING YEAR LEVEL
The Problem with Wallabies	3
Being Myself	4
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This Journal supports learning across the New Zealand Curriculum at level 2. It supports literacy learning by providing opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet the reading demands of the curriculum at this level. Each text has been carefully levelled in relation to these demands; its reading year level is indicated above.

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The Problem with Wallabies

by Alison Ballance

Imagine you're a farmer. One night, you go outside and shine a torch across an empty field. You get a shock. You see the eyes of hundreds of animals who are eating the grass. They're not sheep or cows. They are wild wallabies. You have a wallaby problem.



Wallabies come from Australia, where many of them are protected. So how did they get to Aotearoa New Zealand? And why are wallabies a problem here?



WHAT IS A WALLABY?

Wallabies are mostly found in Australia and New Guinea. They look a lot like kangaroos, but they're smaller. A wallaby is a marsupial. When a marsupial has a baby, it lives in a pouch on its mother's stomach. A baby wallaby is called a joey.

Wallabies have strong back legs and feet and a long tail. They move by hopping.

Wallabies in New Zealand

In 1870, a politician called George Grey brought some wallabies from Australia to New Zealand. Grey lived on Kawau Island, north of Auckland. He wanted some interesting animals in his garden, so he introduced five **species** of wallabies.



***Shooting wallabies
on Kawau Island***

The wallabies did well on Kawau Island – there was plenty of grass and plants for them to eat. There were also no animals here that hunted them. The wallabies had lots of babies, and they quickly spread across the island. After just ten years, wallabies had become a **pest**. Grey began shooting them because there were too many on the island.

In 1874, a farmer introduced wallabies in South Canterbury. There was lots of food for wallabies to eat on his farm, and soon there were hundreds of them. In 1912, some wallabies were taken from Kawau Island to the Bay of Plenty so people could hunt them. The wallaby **population** grew quickly there too.



Dama wallaby

Some species of wallaby, including the dama wallaby, are small. Species such as the Bennett's wallaby are larger.



Bennett's wallaby

Why are wallabies a problem?

Wallabies are mostly nocturnal – they eat at night and rest during the day. It took people a long time to realise the harm wallabies were doing because they are not usually seen during the day.

Wallabies cause a lot of damage in New Zealand. They eat many plants in native forests. Where there are lots of wallabies, the forest floor is often bare dirt when it would usually be covered with plants. This means there is less food for native birds and lizards to eat. And there are fewer worms and insects for birds to eat.

Wallabies like to eat **seedlings**, so there are not enough young plants to replace the trees when they die. If we don't stop wallabies spreading, there will be fewer native species in our forests. Wallabies also eat small pine trees. This is a problem for people who plant pine forests.

Farmers are worried about wallabies. Wallabies eat grass, which means there is less food for animals like sheep and cows. Sheep won't eat where wallabies have been feeding because they don't like wallaby poo. Wallabies damage farmers' fences too.



▲ The left side of the fence shows the damage wallabies do to the forest floor.

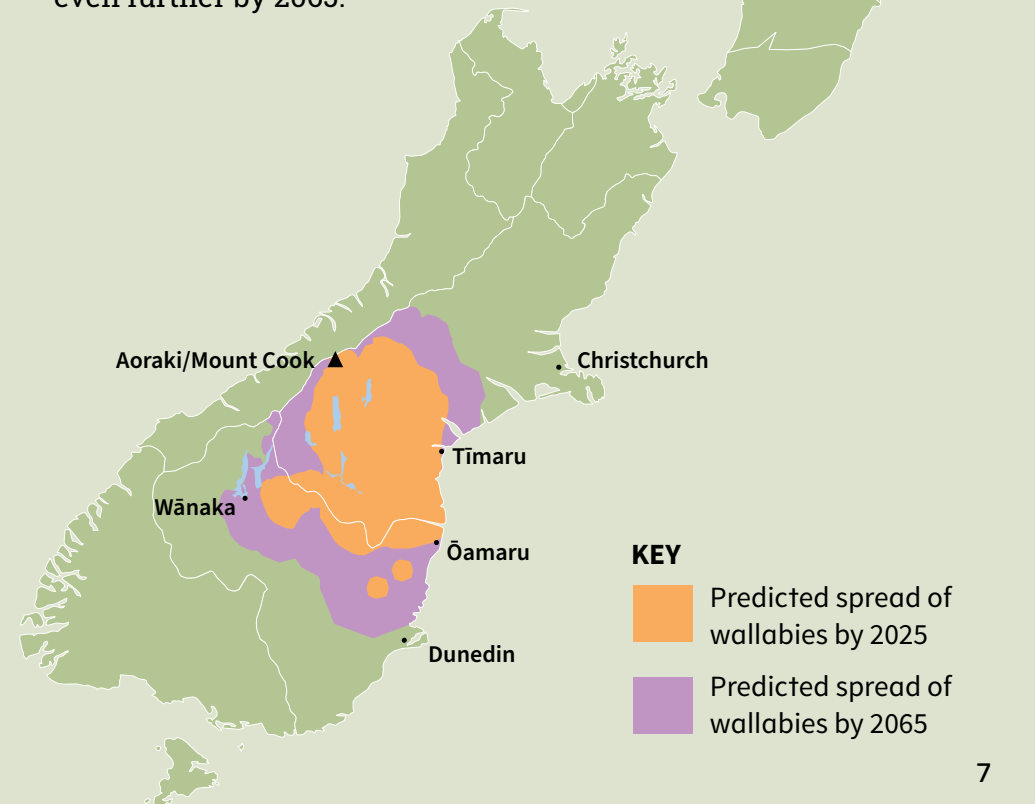


Wallaby poo

WHERE ARE WALLABIES FOUND IN NEW ZEALAND?

Today, wallabies are found mostly around the Rotorua lakes and in the Waikato in the North Island. In the South Island, wallabies are found in South Canterbury, but they are moving into nearby areas.

If nothing is done to fix the problem, it's predicted they will have spread further by 2025 and even further by 2065.



Solving the wallaby problem

In New Zealand, it's against the law to keep wallabies or move them to new places. The government has a plan to get rid of all wallabies, but it isn't easy.

The first step is to stop wallabies spreading into new areas. People who see a wallaby can report it online so it can be found and hunted.

The next step is to **shrink** the size of the areas where wallabies live. Hunters will hunt them at the edges of these areas. They'll then move to the middle until all the wallabies are gone. Wallabies are also being removed from Kawau Island.

Getting rid of wallabies

Hunters kill wallabies by shooting them. Some hunt wallabies for sport. Others do it as a job. Farmers shoot wallabies on their farms.

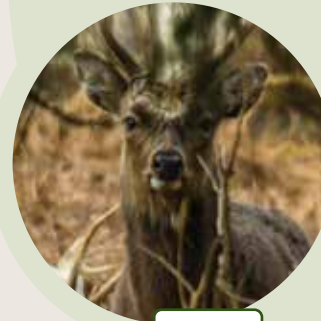
Hunters work at night, when wallabies are awake. They use a spotlight to look for them. In this light, a wallaby's eyes shine brightly. Some hunters use special **binoculars** that allow them to see the animals in the dark. They often use dogs to help track down wallabies. A hunter can shoot more than a hundred wallabies in a single night.

Some people like to cook and eat wallaby meat. It's used to make pet food too.

Farmers and hunters sometimes use poison to kill wallabies. The poison is hidden in bait that wallabies like eating. In the future, hunters might use **drones** and other ways to find the animals and then get rid of them.



Rabbit



Deer



Ferret



Stoat

PESTS IN NEW ZEALAND

Settlers brought many kinds of wild animals to New Zealand, not realising the damage they would do. Rabbits and deer were brought here because people wanted to hunt and eat them. Soon they noticed that rabbits and deer damage native plants (just like wallabies do). They also spread quickly.

Then ferrets and stoats were introduced to kill the rabbits. Even though this seemed like a good idea at the time, the ferrets and stoats also became pests because they kill many native birds and lizards.

The damage caused by wallabies costs millions of dollars every year. If nothing is done, they will spread further across New Zealand and harm the **habitats** of many more native animals and plants.

GLOSSARY

binoculars: a tool used for seeing things far away

drone: a device with a camera that is flown by remote control

habitat: a place where an animal or plant is suited to live

pest: an animal that harms crops, farmland, or native plants and animals

population: the number of people, animals, or plants in an area

seedling: a young plant grown from a seed

shrink: to make smaller

species: a group of animals of the same kind



SURPRISE!

by Rajorshi Chakraborti



Our grandparents, Nanaji and Nani, are visiting from India for the first time since Covid began. Everyone's got a surprise for them.

Papa and Mummy's surprise is going to be our new electric car. We got it last month, and no one's been allowed to talk about it on our video calls with our grandparents. We want to see their reactions when we pick them up at the airport.

My older brother, Bhaiyya, wants to follow up that surprise by driving us all home from the airport. Our grandparents don't know that he has just got his driver's licence.

My older sister, Didi, whose real name is Lata, is at university and can't wait to introduce Nani and Nanaji to her girlfriend, Marama. This will be their third surprise. Didi and Marama have been dating since last year.

Amazing as all these surprises are, you'll soon see that mine is the most important because it involves Comet. Comet – who is a one-year-old golden retriever – is the newest member of our family. OK, so he isn't really a surprise because Nanaji and Nani have seen him plenty of times on video calls. But nothing beats the feeling of cuddling Comet in person or stroking his head and looking into his eyes.

And I want our grandparents to meet Comet as soon as they land!

That is the awesome idea I came up with just this morning, except my parents don't seem to get it. "Can we pl-e-e-e-ase take Comet with us?" I beg Mummy one last time. "I can wait outside the airport building with him."

"No, because that's not the issue," Mummy answers as she does her make-up.

"What if Comet and I wait in the car. Then we lie low and jump out as you arrive. Think how amazing that would be!"

But Mummy won't change her mind. "Once Nani and Nanaji are with us, there won't be enough room in the car."

"But Comet fits comfortably in the boot," I point out.



"And where will their luggage go?"

"On our laps." My answer's ready because I've thought this through. Comet will give our grandparents a big welcome at the airport. Then on the way back, with their suitcases on our laps, we can start opening the presents they will certainly have for us. It's a win-win!





Papa walks in followed by my brother, who is fighting his own battle.

"Think about it, Papa. It doesn't make any sense."

Papa acts as though he hasn't heard Bhaiyya. "Has anyone seen my running shoes?"

"I'm allowed to drive you all to the airport, but I'm not allowed to drive back? Why is driving back not OK?" Bhaiyya continues.

"Because we want to give Nanaji and Nani a bit of time to get used to the idea of you driving. They'll be exhausted after their flight. I don't want them to be nervous on the way home."

Bhaiyya looks hurt, and to be fair, I can see why. "Papa, I've been driving you all for months now, and I passed my test on the first go. Why would my driving make them nervous?"

Papa tries to find an answer while putting on his shoes. "Well, they haven't seen you in, uh, five years. You were twelve when you last saw them."

Bhaiyya looks like he can't believe his ears. "But they see me all the time on video calls. They know how old I am!" I try to give Bhaiyya a look of support, but I don't think he notices.

Mummy, who is ready to go, comes up with a plan. "How about this – if you're extra careful on the way to the airport, you can drive us all back?"

Bhaiyya beams. "Done!"

I see my chance. "Great, and you also like the suitcases-on-our-laps idea?"

The person whose support I was hoping for lets me down. "Is this still about Comet coming along?" Bhaiyya cuts in. "No, of course he can't. The only dogs allowed at the airport are support animals. Plus, Nani and Nanaji will be exhausted after their flight."





“Are Didi and Marama meeting us at the airport?” I ask as we’re driving through Mount Vic tunnel. No one replies for a while. Bhaiyya is concentrating extra hard on driving straight.

“Um, not exactly,” says Mummy. “But we’ll see them soon.”

“You mean Didi isn’t going to be there?” I’m really surprised. She adores Nanaji and Nani. Before she began university, just before COVID, she went and stayed with them in Mumbai for three months.

We’re out of the tunnel, and Bhaiyya answers. “Nani and Nanaji don’t know about Marama yet. So don’t go blurting it out.”

“Are you talking to me?” I ask, annoyed.

“What do you think?” Bhaiyya answers.

Papa reminds Bhaiyya that the road he’s driving on has a speed limit of 50 kilometres an hour.

“I know,” Bhaiyya replies and slows down.

“Why don’t they know about Marama?” I ask Mummy.

“Well, we thought we’d wait until they were here ...”

“Because it’s not that common in India,” my brother yells from the front.

“No, that’s not true. I’m sure it’s just as common in India,” Mummy answers. “But, uh, the way we tell your grandparents might be a bit different.”

“Which is why we want to wait until they’ve had a couple of days to rest,” Papa adds.

“Because they’ll be so exhausted after their flight!” Bhaiyya and I say at the same time, and we both start laughing.

* * *

Nani is hugging me in the arrivals area when she says, “Lata!”

“Oh, yes, Lata isn’t with us, but she’s planning to see you at home ...” Mummy begins and then realises that Didi is standing right behind her. She turns and sees Marama as well, who is holding a bunch of flowers.

That’s when the biggest surprise happens. “Marama,” Nani calls out with a smile, walking towards her with open arms.

Nani hugs Marama, and Nanaji shakes her hand. Then Nani and Nanaji give Didi big hugs. I glance at my parents, then my brother, who all look astonished.

“You know each other?” Papa asks.

“Of course,” Didi answers with a huge grin.

“They met on a video call ages ago.”

“Uh, why didn’t you tell us?” asks Mummy.

“What, and miss this priceless moment,”

Didi laughs. “Plus this surprise was Nani’s idea.”

Nani and Nanaji are smiling at us. Nani’s still holding Didi’s hand. Bhaiyya and I look at each other. We’ve got some great surprises coming up, but it’s pretty clear the contest is already over.

“Told you we should have brought Comet,” is all I can say to my brother.

illustrations by Andrew Burdan



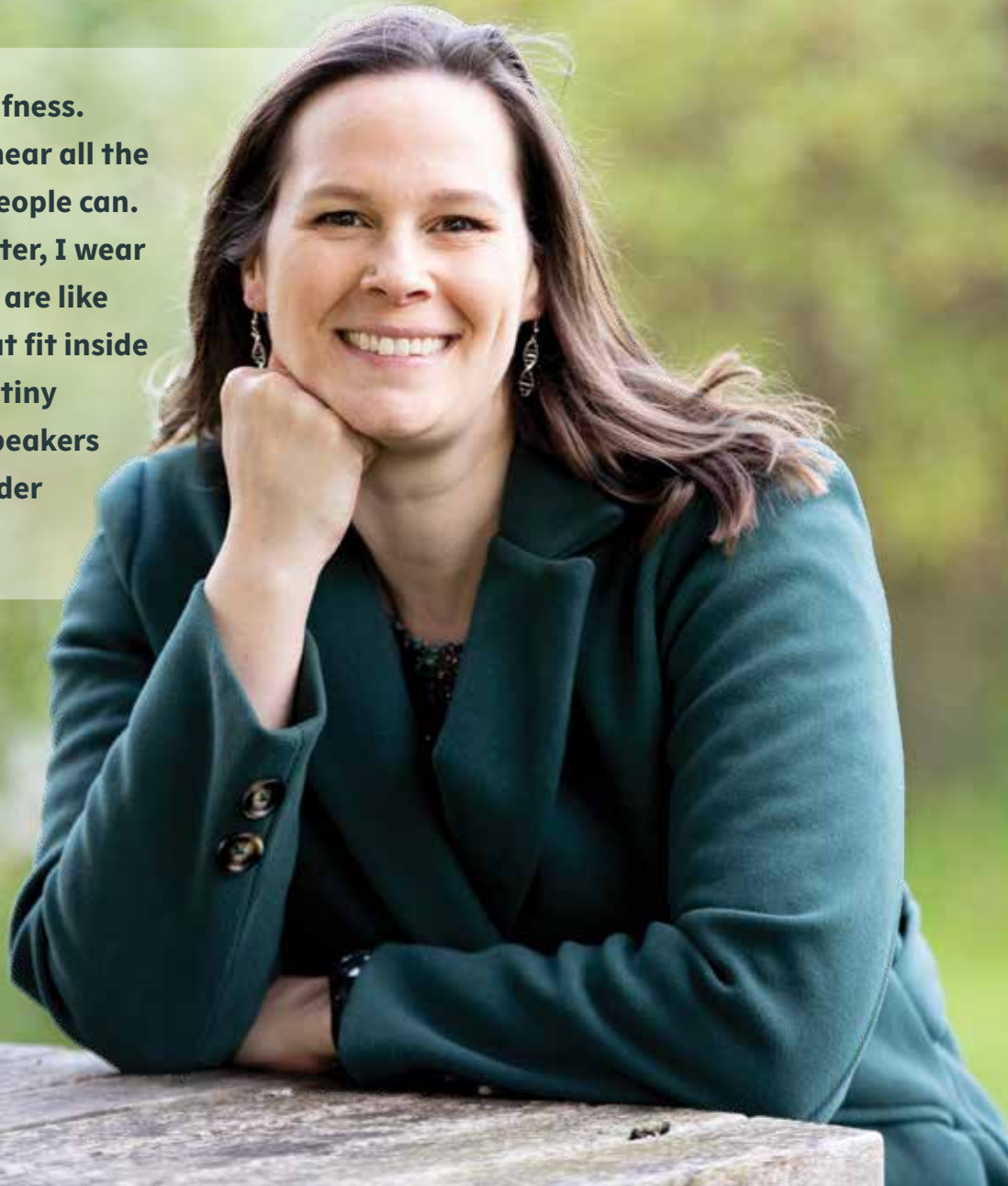
The following words in this story are common Hindi terms used to address family members:

Nani:	Nanaji:	Didi:	Bhaiyya:
<i>mother's mother</i>	<i>mother's father</i>	<i>older sister</i>	<i>older brother</i>

Being Myself

by Laura Hikawai-Goodall

I was born with deafness. This means I can't hear all the sounds that most people can. To help me hear better, I wear hearing aids. These are like little computers that fit inside my ears. They have tiny microphones and speakers to make sounds louder and clearer.



My first hearing aids

My mum says I got my first hearing aids when I was two years old. She realised I was “hard of hearing” because I wasn’t talking as much as other children my age. I couldn’t hear everything, and so I was unable to copy and say many words.

Many people with deafness can hear some sounds. I can hear loud, low noises, like a truck driving past. But I can’t hear sounds that are high, such as birds singing or people talking, unless I’m right next to them. Someone else with deafness might be able to hear people talking well most of the time but find it difficult if there is background noise, such as in a busy cafe.

I don’t remember getting my first hearing aids. But I *do* remember learning how important they were when I was five.



Hard of hearing

A hard of hearing person can hear some sounds but not others. Most hard of hearing people wear hearing aids to help them hear sounds such as talking (in person or on the phone) and traffic.

Being deaf

A person is deaf (taringa turi) if they have very little or no hearing at all. A lot of deaf people use sign language to communicate. They make signs with their hands, arms, body, and facial expressions. Sign language is an official language in Aotearoa (along with te reo Māori).

Noah Waite's mother, Chanelle, is deaf. She taught Noah sign language when he was a baby so they could communicate.



Fitting in

When I started school, I hated wearing my hearing aids. They were huge and really ugly!

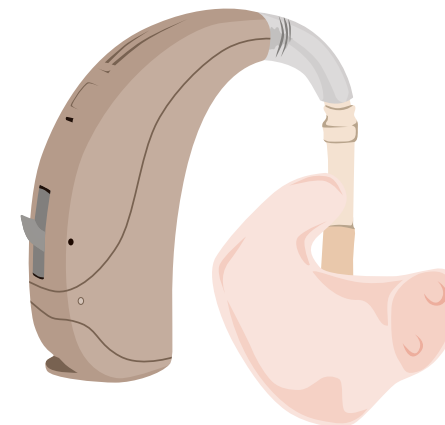
I wanted to be like all the other kids, but I felt like my hearing aids made me stick out like a sore thumb. So one day, I pulled them out of my ears. Then I told my classmates that I could hear everything and I didn't need them any more.

I soon realised I couldn't understand what my teacher was saying, but I couldn't get my hearing aids back in my ears! I tried and tried, and then the school called Mum. She came and put them in, right in front of my classmates. I was so embarrassed that I never took them out at school again or pretended I could hear everything.



Laura, aged 5

In the 1980s, hearing aids had a small tube connected to a box that sat behind the ear. The ones that Laura wears today are much smaller.



When I was nine, we moved to be closer to family. I was excited to see more of my grandparents, aunties and uncles, and cousins, but I was worried about starting a new school. I just wanted to fit in and not be bullied. A girl at my old school had called me “deafo”. I never forgot how that made me feel.

On my first day at my new school, some teachers shouted or made their mouth shapes bigger when they spoke. This made it harder for me to understand what they were saying.

Luckily, things got better when a girl called Natalie came and talked to me. She asked me questions to find out what I could and couldn’t hear. I told Natalie I could lip-read by watching the shapes of people’s mouths when they speak.

The other students saw what Natalie was doing, and they started doing the same. I began to feel like I fitted in. I felt that I was different in a *good* way, not a bad way. Natalie and I became friends throughout primary and high school. And she’s still my best friend today!

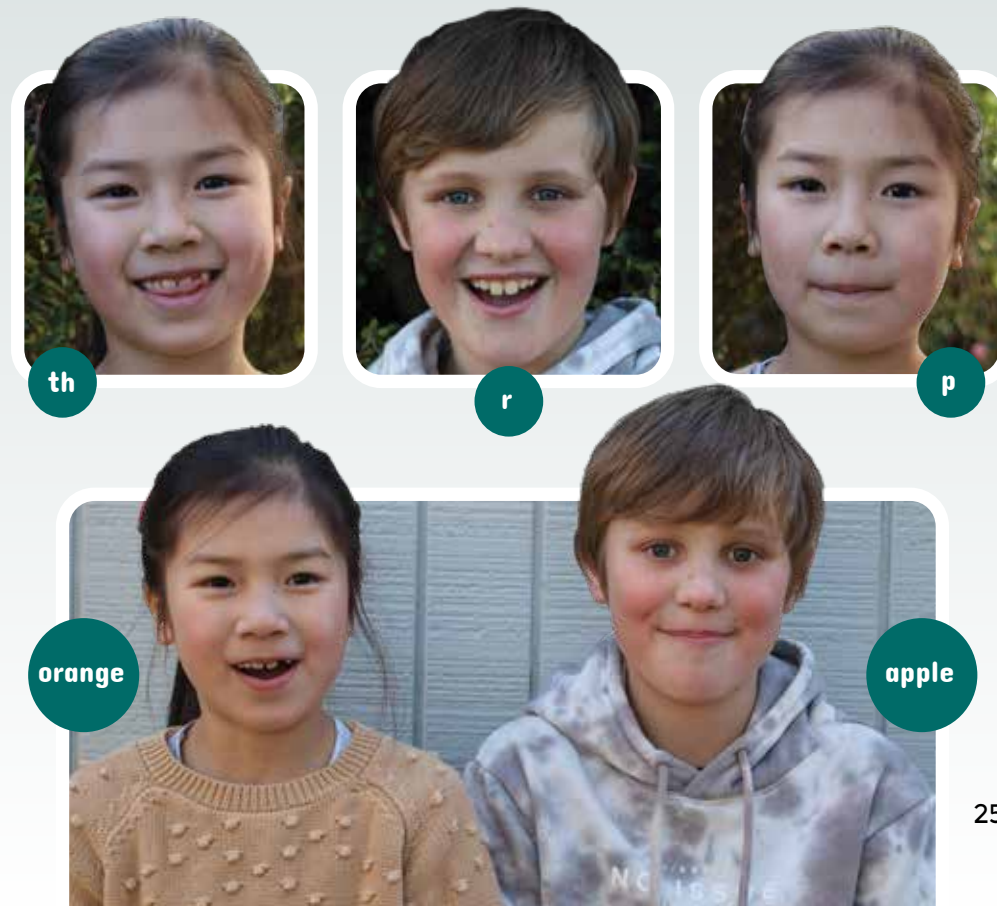


Lip-reading

When I was little, I began lip-reading. I learnt to say a lot of words by copying how people moved their mouths.

Each part of every word you speak has its own mouth shape. If you look in the mirror and say “th”, the shape of your mouth is different compared with when you say “r” and “p”. When you say “orange” compared with “apple”, your lips and your tongue move differently.

Today, I still lip-read to make sure I understand what people are saying – especially in noisy places. I find it hard if someone covers their mouth or doesn’t look at me when they’re talking.



Deafness

Deafness is common and can develop at any age. About one in six New Zealanders have some deafness - that's almost one million people.

Many things can cause deafness, such as:

- being born with it
- having an illness such as an ear infection
- being injured while playing sport, having an object poked into an ear, or some other kind of accident
- being around too much loud noise (including music).

Half of all deafness can be prevented - especially when it is caused by loud sounds. It's important to wear earmuffs to protect your ears when you're in noisy places.

"It's the best feeling in the world knowing I can just be myself – hearing aids and all."



Being hard of hearing hasn't stopped me

Today, I'm still not able to hear as well as a hearing person, but that hasn't stopped me from doing things.

After high school, I studied science at university. I love reading and telling stories, so later I began working as a science writer. Today I tell stories about the amazing things scientists and inventors are doing.

I've often had to work harder than hearing people to reach the same goal. But it's been worth it. I have a job I love, I've travelled around the world, I've bought a house, and I'm married and have a daughter.

Best of all, I don't need to pretend I can hear to fit in with hearing people any more. Most people are thoughtful, and some know how to help me understand them better. It's the best feeling in the world knowing I can just be *myself* – hearing aids and all.

Time Capsule

The hungry ocean
devours land
bit by bit
wave by wave
storm by storm

floods towns
villages
plantations

drowns crops
salts soil
until nothing grows.

Our stomachs rumble.
Our hearts break.

SOS!
Save our souls!
Do something!

Our islands are sinking
shrinking
slipping away.



We will lose everything.

Where will we live?
What will we eat?

My cousin is taking photos
collecting stories from elders
storing our lives on the metaverse

creating a time capsule
for disappearing islands.

Our hopes and dreams
our culture and family
float in the Cloud.

It's somewhere to visit
when we can't go home.

Serie Barford

illustration by Fraser Williamson

Giving a Green Gift

by Herman de Groot

We all like giving gifts to our friends and family. What was the last present you gave someone? Did you buy it or make it? Making presents instead of buying them is good for the planet.

Think about what you could create using things you already have. You could decorate an old jar or can to make a container for pencils and pens or spoons and forks.

You could make a present using objects you've found. Next time you're at the beach or on a walk, look for things to collect. You could use shells or pebbles to make a necklace or decorate a pot plant. When you're making a green gift, be creative. Think outside the box.



Papier mâché

Using papier mâché is a fun way to make a gift. There are many things you can create, such as a mobile, a sculpture, a mask, or a bowl.

Let's make a bowl

You will need:

- ☐ old newspapers or plain paper
- ☐ a small bowl (for the mould)
- ☐ baking paper or tin foil
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ paint and a paintbrush
- ☐ 1 cup of flour
- ☐ 2 cups of water
- ☐ a large bowl and a whisk
- ☐ a jar

DID YOU KNOW?

Papier mâché means "mashed paper" in French.



Instructions

(You will need an adult to help you.)

1. Tear the paper into strips.
2. Cover the outside of the small bowl with baking paper or foil. (If you use baking paper, soak it in water first.) Smooth it down as much as you can with your fingers.
3. Make the glue by pouring the flour into the large bowl. Add the water in small amounts, and mix with the whisk to form a gooey paste. (You may not need to use all the water.)
4. Dip each strip of paper into the paste.
5. Slide the strip between your fingers to remove excess glue.

6. Place the strips over the outside of the small bowl and smooth them out with your fingers.
7. Place the bowl upside down on a jar to stop the papier mâché sticking to anything. Leave it to dry overnight.
8. Add another layer of paper. Leave it to dry. Repeat until you have four or five layers of paper.

9. Remove the papier mâché carefully from the bowl when it is dry. Make sure the inside of the bowl is dry.
10. Use the scissors to trim the edges of the pieces of newspaper so they are tidy.

Now your bowl is ready to paint and decorate.



TIPS

- ☐ Papier mâché is very messy! Cover the surface of your table with paper. Wear old clothes.
- ☐ Be patient – it will take a few days to make your bowl.
- ☐ You can paint or decorate your bowl. To add decorations, cut out shapes on coloured card, tissue paper, or fabric. Then glue them onto the bowl. You could also add beads, shells, or dried leaves.



Now you have an amazing green gift that you can give to someone. So next time you decide to give a present, pause and think. Do you want to give a green gift? The less we buy, the better for the Earth. It'll also make you feel good.



Tiny Dragon

by Felyx Neubrandt
(age 8)



I was walking home after school one day when I heard a little growl. I turned around and saw a tiny little dragon! The dragon had green and red scales all over its body, and it had four wings.

As I got closer, it growled at me softly. It was shivering, so I said, “Don’t worry. I won’t hurt you.”

It calmed down, and I picked it up and walked home. I got home before Mum, and I went into my room and put a pillow and small blanket under my bed for the tiny dragon.

I wondered what it liked to eat, so I left some meat, vegetables, and dragon fruit, but when I came back, the dragon had eaten nothing but the coal from my fireplace! So I left some more coal there, and this time when I came back, it had eaten all of the coal.

I decided to keep the tiny dragon a secret. I also decided to name it Sparky. I even found out that it could breathe fire! I think Sparky and I are going to be great friends.

illustration by Iona Johnston



The Future of Growing Kai

by Arihia Latham

Growing food is everyday magic. When we grow fruit or vegetables from tiny seeds, we can watch them turn into plants that provide us with kai. And having a full puku helps us to feel happy and peaceful. Rongomātāne, the atua (god) of kai grown in gardens (especially kūmara) is also the atua of peace.

Growing our own kai uses fewer resources. Today, kaitiakitanga (the protection of our environment) is more important than ever. And when we provide food, we are caring for our hapori (community). This helps to connect us and shows manaakitanga (by being kind, generous, and respectful).

In February 2023, Cyclone Gabrielle damaged many food crops in the North Island. As our climate changes, there will be more storms. It's time to take action and imagine how we might grow food in the future.

New ways of growing food

Sometimes it's hard to imagine doing things differently. Luckily, some people are coming up with new and creative ways of growing food.

Arama Kukutai runs a company called Plenty, which is creating **sustainable** farms for the future. At Plenty, the vegetables are grown inside tall towers, which uses a lot less land than growing them outside.

Special lights (instead of sunlight) shine on the plants. The indoor farms use about 10 percent of the water they would use if the plants were outside. That's because all the water is recycled. Because the plants are inside, they are protected from storms, and **pesticides** aren't needed to stop bugs eating them.

The people at Plenty look after their community by **employing** workers who live in the area. They also supply fresh vegetables to people in the city nearby. This means less fuel is used to transport the vegetables, and they're more affordable to buy.





Carl and Kati Freeman have turned every metre of their backyard into an **organic garden**. They grow twenty-five different kinds of vegetables in fifty garden beds around their house.

This shows what's possible when all the available land is used for growing food.

Carl and Kati also keep bees for their honey and chickens for their eggs. They sell the honey, eggs, and vegetables at a local market. Even though there's no room to kick a ball around in their backyard, they can feed lots of people. Imagine if we could all grow enough food to do the same!



Communities working together

We can also learn about growing kai by asking our whānau about the traditional methods of growing food. The “tried and true” ways that our tipuna (ancestors) used often work the best.

Pā to Plate is a community group that helps marae in Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) to rebuild their gardens to provide kai for whānau, the marae, and those in need. They help growers sell kai at stores and markets too. Pā to Plate connects people to their whenua (land) through kai.

Rereata Makiha says that growing kai by the maramataka (lunar calendar) has helped the plants grow well at their māra kai (food garden). They watch for signs in the natural world. The best time to plant crops is a week before the new moon. A good time to **harvest** them is at Rākaunui (the full moon). Having lots of kūmara, Māori potatoes (peruperu), and kamokamo growing in the māra kai showed that the vegetables are thriving.



Kids growing food

Growing kai in a school, community, or marae garden is a great way to learn and have fun. Many schools take part in the Enviroschools programme. Students reuse materials like wooden **pallets** and plant pots to make gardens. They also collect rainwater and use it to water the gardens.

The students at Te Awamutu Primary School grow fruit and vegetables. They also have chickens and a worm farm, which they feed with their food scraps. The compost from the chooks and the worm farm is then put back on the soil to keep it healthy. What a great way to use all their food scraps so they don't go to a landfill!

The magic of growing kai is spreading as new ideas make it possible for more people to grow fresh food in different spaces. Keeping our traditional ways alive is also exciting. Whatever way we learn to grow kai, we can feel proud that we're part of a sustainable future.



Glossary

employ: pay someone for work

harvest: pick or gather crops

organic garden: a garden where pesticides or sprays aren't used

pallet: a flat piece of wood used to carry products or goods

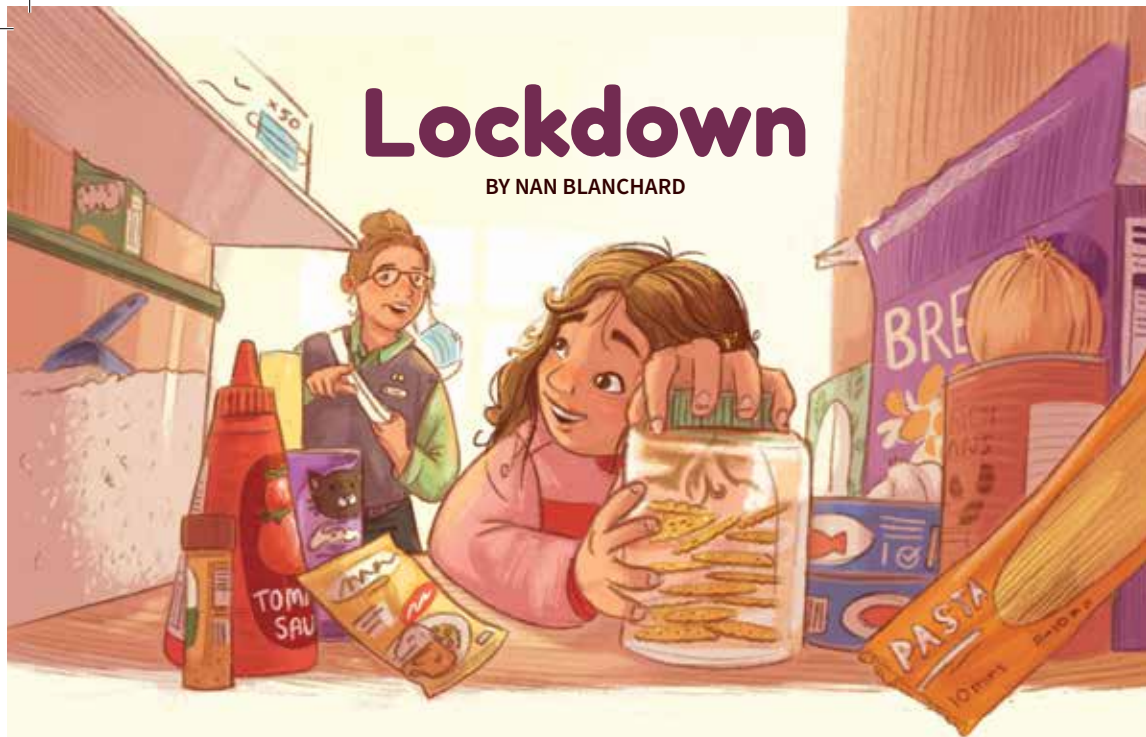
pesticide: a substance that kills insects and other pests that harm crops

sustainable: making sure that resources are not used up or permanently damaged



Lockdown

BY NAN BLANCHARD



When we went into lockdown because of the pandemic, the whole world changed. We couldn't leave home except to buy food or go for walks around the block. We couldn't see family who didn't live with us. We couldn't see our friends, and we couldn't go to school.

Only people like my mum could go to work. Mum works in a supermarket, and she's an essential worker.

"What's an essential worker?" I asked, trying to sneak a biscuit from the jar without her noticing.

"Essential workers are people who do jobs we can't do without. And they can't work at home, even during lockdown. Put that biscuit back."

"I hope you don't get Covid," I said, crossing my fingers behind my back.

My mum is tough, but she still catches bugs sometimes. On her last birthday, she had a sty in her eye, so she didn't want a party.

* * *

During our class Zoom, Whaea Julie asked us to write about our lockdown experiences.

"The first thing I want you to do, tamariki, is describe yourselves. Then describe who is in your bubble."

"Bubble!" called out Jesse, who was still in his pyjamas. And he blew out his cheeks and made a popping sound.

Everyone laughed. Then Mia's tabby cat put its face up to her camera and everyone laughed again.

Here's my description:

My name is Izzy Baxter, and I'm nine years old. I have long, curly brown hair. I like skateboarding and animals and chocolate biscuits. But we hardly ever have chocolate biscuits because they're too expensive.

In my bubble, there's my mum and my grandpa. My grandpa looks after me when my mum is at work trying not to get Covid. My grandpa is very smart. He's good at thinking things up. My dad lives in Levin, and I can't see him because of lockdown. He lives with Stella and my baby sister Birdie, who has fat legs and puts everything in her mouth. I miss my dad.

The End

After Grandpa read what I'd written, he said, "What a good description." Then he said, "What are you going to do about missing your dad?"

"I don't know," I said, feeling sad.

"I'm sure you'll be able to think something up," said Grandpa. "Something that won't change things but will help a bit."

He continued peeling the carrots for dinner.

I sat on the couch and thought hard. Then I asked Grandpa if I could use his phone to ring Denver. "Denver," I said, when her dad had passed her his phone. "I've got an idea."

And that's how our club started. A club for kids who couldn't see their mums and dads and koro and kuia or other important people in their lives during lockdown. Denver, Sialei, Mia, Li, Miriama, Jesse, and I were all in the club.



Here's what I wrote for Whaea Julie:

We have a club for kids who can't see their whānau during Covid. We meet on Zoom at 2.00 pm on Saturdays. We've come up with some things to do when we feel sad.

These are our ideas:

- 1. Hug our cats and dogs (not our goldfish)!*
- 2. Tell each other when we're sad.*
- 3. Keep in touch with our whānau by Zoom.*
- 4. Keep in touch with our whānau by writing letters.*
- 5. Put bears in our windows.*
- 6. Visit the bears in our neighbourhood windows.*
- 7. Eat chocolate biscuits (if we have any).*
- 8. Plan a surprise for someone.*

The end





When my grandpa read our ideas, he said, “I knew you would think something up – great stuff!”

When my mum read them, she said, “Excellent. I wish more people thought like you rather than worrying about buying all the flour and toilet paper in the supermarket.”

And when Whaea Julie read them, she wrote, “Ka pai tō mahi! I’m looking forward to hearing about the surprises!”

* * *

We all put our thinking caps on to come up with some surprises. Jesse said he would clean out his goldfish bowl, which would make his goldfish happy. Li said she would eat her peas every night without making a fuss. Sialei said she would practise her dance steps really hard so her granny would be proud. And Denver said she’d draw a picture of herself to send to her mum so her mum wouldn’t forget what she looked like.

Me and Miriama and Mia took ages to decide what to do. Finally, Mia said, “I’m going to bake some lemon muffins and leave them on Mrs de Visser’s doorstep.”

And Miriama said, “I’ll write messages like ‘Have a happy day’ and ‘I love your garden’ and put them in people’s letterboxes.”

I wrote down what I would do:

*I’m going to give my baby sister, Birdie,
my wooden animals. There’s a giraffe,
an elephant, a lion, a tiger, and a monkey.
She can put them in her mouth if she wants.*

The end



"That's nice of you," Grandpa said. "I'm sure Birdie will like that. How's everyone feeling about missing their families?"

"Still sad," I said, "but the club helps."

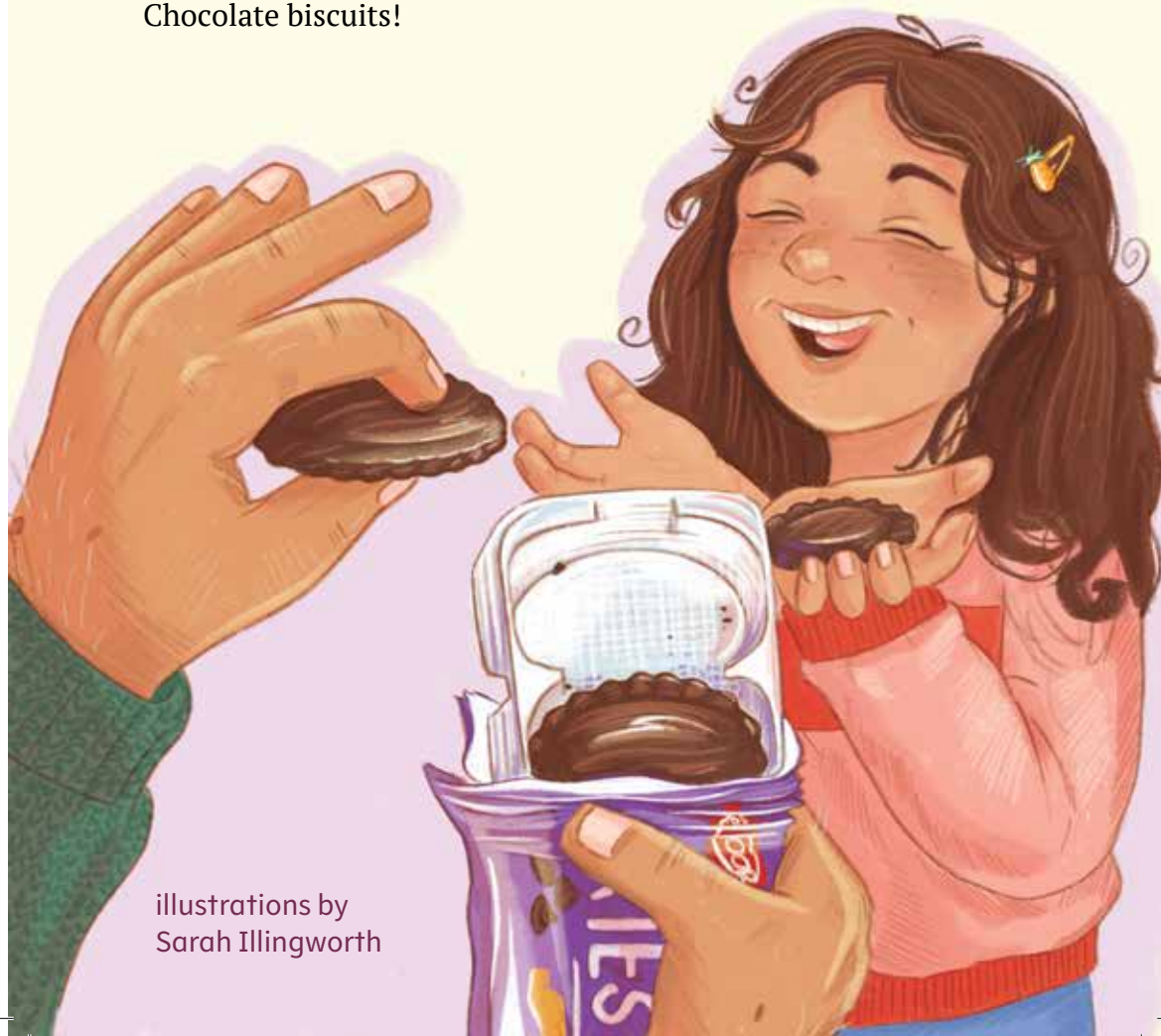
"I bet it does," said Grandpa. "It was a great idea." Then he said, "I've been planning a surprise, too."

"Who for?" I asked.

Grandpa smiled and opened the high kitchen cupboard.

"Close your eyes, and hold out your hands."

Something rustled and crinkled. I opened my eyes.
Chocolate biscuits!



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