

Emma: Emma Twigg's Incredible Journey to Olympic Gold (2022)
Jessica Lawry, Upstart Press, 32pp.
 978 1 990003 64 6 **\$19.99** Pb

Author and primary school teacher, Jessica Lawry, met Emma Twigg at university and has followed her rowing career. To inspire the next generation, Lawry has put Emma's story in picture book format giving appeal to a wide range of ages. Emma's story is truly inspirational. Lawry begins the story with Emma falling in love with rowing as a schoolgirl. Tension builds in the narrative as Emma persists with long, lonely hours of training, is selected for the 2012 Olympics and comes fourth. This is followed by more disappointment at the Rio Olympics. Emma takes breaks, reassesses her goals and gives her Olympic dream another chance. This story is told with humility and the real sense that Olympic gold does not come easy. Emma's pain and disappointment is clearly shown in the beautiful illustrations and the text. Lesser people may have thrown in the towel earlier, but Emma's 20-year rowing career is the ultimate example of perseverance and resilience. Instead of using photographs, Lawry has created beautiful but realistic illustrations, capturing the misty scenes on Lake Karapiro and the emotions on faces. There are no white spaces on the pages and the illustrations vary from double-page spreads to half a dozen smaller pictures overlapping to illustrate Emma's journey to Olympic glory. This book would be a great addition to any school library. Highly recommended for ages 8-99.

The Monarch Butterfly: New Migrant (2022)
Annamarie Florian, ill. *Alistair Hughes*, Upstart Press, 32pp.
 978 1 990003 66 0 **\$34.99** Pb



Specific to the monarch butterflies in New Zealand, this picture book

beautifully illustrates the magic that is the life and metamorphosis of the butterfly. The text is melodically written, bringing the life cycle alive with alliteration, wonderful vocabulary and little couplets on each page (in larger font), summarising the detail. The illustrations are simple, yet detailed, and I love the amount of white space throughout, creating a fresh and clean look. The slightly larger-than-normal size of the book gives presence, is good to hold, and really showcases the story, also proving to be an excellent format for reading aloud to a larger group of young ones. An interesting account at the end of the book provides the reader with an opportunity to think about how the first butterflies arrived here, so far from their natural home in North America. This is a beautiful book, really well done, the best I've seen for a long time on this topic. If it was a hardback, it would be even more presentable as a gift book. Read it.

Roar, Squeak, Purr: A New Zealand Treasury of Animal Poems (2022)
 Editor *Paula Green*, ill. *Jenny Cooper*, Puffin, 280pp. 978 0 14377514 0 **\$45.00** Hb

Where would New Zealand children's poetry be without Paula Green? Our poetry superstar has brought together a wonderful collection of poems about all kinds of animals—from the water, the air and the land. The poems come from well-known, and new New Zealand writers, some already known for their children's writing, but some from the adult poetry world too. There are marvellous pieces from Paula herself, and gathered from young contributors who have sent poems to her children's poetry blog *Poetry Box*.

The top-notch production makes this a forever book, along with

Jenny Cooper's dazzling watercolour illustrations which capture the animals so well. They have personality plus and I'm astounded by the different array of cats she has managed to portray (cats are a very popular subject for poems!). Some are humorous, while others make you want to reach out and stroke them. The creatures in the water section have wonderful green / blue aquatic backgrounds. The whale is a favourite, both in words and illustration. This collaboration has previously produced **A Treasury of NZ Poems for Children**, which this new publication makes a fine companion to. Look out for the roaring lion's mouth on the cover, complete with embossing, and a tiny mouse sitting on the 'squeak' of the title. It's irresistible. If you want to encourage children to be writers I can't think of a better place to start than with a copy of this book and an introduction to: nzpoetrybox.wordpress.com
Crisi Blair, Auckland

Where is it in Town? A Wildlife Hunt for Kiwi Kids (2022)
Ned Barraud, Pottan and Burton, 32pp. 978 1 98855046 6 **\$21.99** Pb

I am a long-time admirer of Ned Barraud's work. Among my favourites are **Tohora: The Southern Right Whale** (2019) and **Incredible Journeys: New Zealand Wildlife on the Move** (2021). I recently gifted a copy of **Where is It? A Wildlife Hunt for Kiwi Kids** (2020) to my grandson. He lives in Australia but, at 2.5 years old, he already has a keen interest in wildlife, so it was an ideal book to connect him back to New Zealand. Its sequel, **Where is it in Town? A Wildlife Hunt for Kiwi Kids** is immediately engaging, presenting the reader with a different search-and-find scene on each page.

There are 11 two-page spreads depicting wildlife habitats found in the city: the back garden both at daytime and at night; long grass; the garden shed; leaf litter; in the trees; in a creek; the botanical gardens; a nature reserve; the edge of town; and at the wharf. The animals hidden in each scene are realistically rendered in a key, set against a white background, on the right-hand panel of each spread. The last few pages give extra information about the creatures found within the book. This is a multi-layered, sophisticated search-and-find book, one that will draw readers back to its pages many times to pore over its hidden detail. The illustrations evoke a strong sense of place with immediately recognisable New Zealand flora and fauna. There is playful detail in the red band gumboots at the bottom of the stairs, the cob-webbed garden shed, and the kahu with its roadkill. The distinctive wooden houses in the garden and on the edge of town, the tangle of power lines, and old batten and wire farm fences further ground the images to place. The wide-ranging selection of habitats encourages investigation of places we may otherwise overlook—leaf litter and under the pier of the city harbour for example. The inclusion of a road cone in the latter scene is perhaps a nod to the problem of pollution. The spread of the nature reserve with images of a stoat, trap, and rabbit in the foreground reminds the reader of the dangers posed to our wildlife, as do the cat, hedgehog, and possum in the night garden. They invite discussion for enquiring children. There is also space to research the names and significance of the many trees and flowers found within our cityscapes. I was surprised that the Māori names for many of the creatures pictured were not consistently used in the key. Barraud includes korimako, kereru, kārearea, and ruru. Other names, while they appear in the informational back pages, are not used: tititipounamu (rifleman); piwakawaka (fantail); and tauhou (silveryeye). Perhaps it was a design issue to avoid cluttering the page with text, but it seems a lost opportunity to familiarise our young readers with the Māori names of our diverse wildlife. Misgivings aside, I look forward to sharing this book with my grandson when he next visits. It promises many hours of exploration and

re-readings, and will no doubt prompt outdoor excursions to find the various animals. It will also find a place on my school library shelves, alongside our already robust collection of Barraud's books. Recommended.

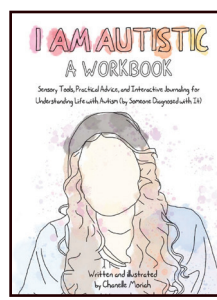
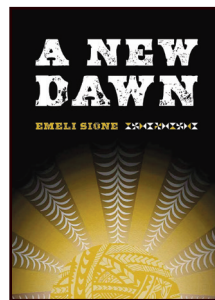
Bronwyn Fox, Auckland

A New Dawn (2022)

Emeli Sione, Mila's Books, 84pp. 978 0 4736302 8 7 \$34.99 Pb

This book is an easy read for intermediate age but a better read for year 9 and up as there are many concepts that would be great for discussion and require further understanding and context. This is a perfect book to share with rangatahi when thinking about issues around social justice, racism and government, especially as there is not much written about the dawn raids at a junior secondary level and the Aotearoa New Zealand histories curriculum currently needs resourcing. I appreciated Emeli's personal account and the illustrations by Darcy Solia add to the drama and injustice of the story. Emeli's story is muted in black and white, and colour is cleverly added to the images towards the end as Emeli talks about the healing process that Pacific people continue to go through as a result of this time. The apology and information about the dawn raids at the end add depth to the book which rangatahi will tap into. I especially liked the images of Jacinda Ardern covered with an 'ie toga' a fine mat draped over her as part of the apology. This symbolised an 'ifoga'—an asking for forgiveness. Emeli's point that seeking forgiveness must be framed in a way that the culture you are asking understands is relevant and key to the ability to forgive all the wrongs from this time, but also to be able to move forwards in Aotearoa as Pacific people. Emeli's story, along with the primary source material at the end of the book, makes this title a great resource for students from year 9 upwards, trying to grapple with understanding the dawn raids and seeing that this was a time in our Aotearoa history that happened to people that they may know. Dahlia Malaeulu's Mila's Books has stepped into the breach by publishing other Pacific writers who have stories that need to be told and have a right to be heard.

Melissa Spark, Auckland



Weather and Climate Change, New Zealand (2022)

Sandra Carrod, ill. Karsten Schneider, Oratia Books, 100pp. 978 1 99 004226 3 \$29.99 Pb

Enchanted is not a word I'd normally use in a non-fiction book review but right from the first page, I was enchanted by **Weather and Climate New Zealand**. Partly it was the clarity of Sandra Carrod's well-structured and informative prose and partly it was the impact of Karsten Schneider's complementary maps and diagrams in full colour. The well-chosen colour photographs added to my enjoyment. This is the book I wish I'd had beside me in the 1960s when I struggled with the weather aspect of Geography 1. My problem was an inability to interpret the daily newspaper weather maps with their highs, lows and isobars. This book (carrying with it the historical advantage of computer technology and satellite systems) is able to explain these things in a way I can finally understand.

In mid-spring, as I began writing this review, an icy blast of cold air briefly brought snow to sea level across the South Island. I flipped through the index and found this extreme weather event deftly explained. A polar blast occurs when there is a weakening of the strong jet stream in the upper atmosphere which normally keeps most of the cold polar air mass confined to the Antarctic. This weakening allows some of the cold polar air to move northwards. And what has weakened the jet stream? Temperature contrasts cause the jet stream to *weave and buckle*, allowing cold air to be drawn in from the south. Sandra Carrod's conclusion is, of course, calm, clear and concerning. *Climate change may affect the balance of temperature in the upper atmosphere and make the jet stream more wavy*. Two of Karsten Schneider's elegant colour diagrams demonstrate the chilling process with clarity.

Weather and Climate New Zealand

is more than a textbook; it is also a collection of answers to questions that many of us have about our changing climate. As well as explaining such weather features as clouds, rain, wind, frost and fog (all with local examples) it also puts them into their global context, introducing the factors such as the planet's rotation, atmospheric circulation, ocean currents and temperature variations. There are well-structured reports, maps and diagrams on the ozone hole, cyclones, tornadoes and the El Niño and La Niña cycles (complete with summaries of how each affects New Zealand's weather patterns). Two recurring themes are the way that almost every weather element is connected and the way that the climate is changing in measurable ways. Yet these are not the most important part of this power-packed volume. What is truly striking is the way that almost every aspect of the climate we enjoy and the weather we encounter each day has been affected by our human activities. Sandra Carrod's writing is calm, clear and concerning; sometimes alarmingly concerning. *Methane is currently responsible for about half a degree of total warming*. Oceans are not only warming but also losing oxygen and becoming more acidic, sea levels are changing, environmental pollution is continuing and temperatures are rising. The text tells us that the safe limit for CO2 in the atmosphere is 300 parts per million. Next to it is a diagram showing the current level at 400 ppm. On p.84 is a diagram showing some of the cost of climate change in New Zealand in our hottest year so far, 2021. Our children already seem to be well aware of the significance of what's going on in this book, hence their protests. I hope they get some copies into the hands of their climate-change-denying adults, to inspire them to follow

up the three-page section suggesting useful activities, neatly arranged as *Start small then think BIGGER*. Oh, and there are four pages on 'How to Read a Weather Map'.

Trevor Agnew, Christchurch

I Am Autistic. An Interactive and Informative Guide to Autism (by someone diagnosed with it) (2022)

Chanelle Moriah, Allen and Unwin, 144pp. 978 1 99100 606 6 \$29.99 Hb

This is a book that many people have been desperately waiting for, albeit without realising it. Indeed it's the sort of book that could have spared author Chanelle Moriah years of severe anxiety preceding an autism diagnosis in 2020. After the diagnosis, Moriah was driven to research the condition but encountered a dearth of reliable resources.

As the title indicates, the book is identity-driven, addressing the pressures and expectations faced by autistic individuals in a neurotypical world. The contents are comprehensive, spanning all aspects of the autistic experience from physiology to behavioural and social dynamics. Complex concepts are broken down into page-length components and frequently clarified with lists or diagrams. The negatives are not minimised; particular attention is paid to sensory overload and burnout. However practical strategies provide reassurance, whether with daily issues such as diet and dress or more broadly, tools for sensory regulation. The design augments the accessibility of the text. The type, based on hand-printing, is readable with an informal journal-like feel (most sections include blank pages for personal note-taking). Chanelle's sensitive and graphic line illustrations enhance the visual appeal, with loose colour washes and splatter effects. The classy hardcover production invests a potentially challenging topic with a light contemporary look. The author is a supremely gifted communicator, and along with the publisher, is to be congratulated on producing such a creative and insightful resource. Autistic readers will feel supported, understood and less isolated and those close to them will gain invaluable insights.

Sarah Matthewson, Auckland

