



BEST NZ BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS 2020

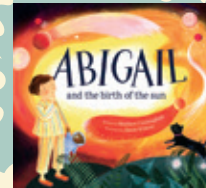


KIA ORA TAMARIKI!

Do you love to read? Well, we've got the perfect book list for you! Chosen by the judges of the 2020 New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults, here are 30 brilliant options we know you will love. Hunt them out and lose yourself in the very best new books, created by New Zealand authors and illustrators, just for readers like you!

PICTURE BOOK AWARD

BIG QUESTIONS, A CHEEKY HERO,
PETULANT PONIES, CHRISTMAS
CATASTROPHE & A KIWI CLASSIC



ABIGAIL AND THE BIRTH OF THE SUN

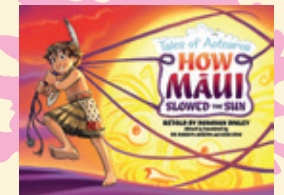
BY MATTHEW CUNNINGHAM, ILLUSTRATED BY SARAH WILKINS,
PUBLISHED BY PUFFIN, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE, \$19.99 PB

Is it a book about science? Or magic? Or family? Yes, yes, and yes! This is a beautiful story about a curious child who goes on an adventure with her father to discover the origins of the universe. *Abigail and the Birth of the Sun* captures the child-like wonder of big questions and big possibilities. Swirling dream-like illustrations complement the text excellently and leave little treasures for the reader to discover.

HOW MĀUI SLOWED THE SUN

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY DONOVAN BIXLEY, ADVISED AND TRANSLATED BY DARRYN JOSEPH AND KERI OPAI,
PUBLISHED BY UPSTART PRESS, \$24.99 HB, \$19.99 PB

The familiar myth of how Māui slowed the sun is given a modern twist, with humour injected into this quintessential New Zealand story to lend it a new friendly and fun appeal. Donovan Bixley's illustrations burst with life and colour, with vivid settings and characters that are detailed and full of personality, and an almost-cartoonish quality which is ultimately appealing and endearing.



MINI WHINNY: GOODY FOUR SHOES

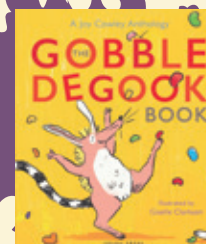
BY STACY GREGG, ILLUSTRATED BY RUTH PAUL,
PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC NEW ZEALAND, \$18.99 PB

Mini Whinny may be grubby, petulant, and more than a little bit naughty, but we can all empathise with her jealousy over the new arrival at Blackthorn Stables. This gentle tale of envy, misperception and friendship is perfectly paced, with cliff-hangers on nearly every page and delightful dialogue and humour. The cute illustrations capture all Mini Whinny's big emotions in a way that is sure to make readers of all ages smile.

SANTA'S WORST CHRISTMAS

BY PAMIA TAHĀU-HODGES AND BRYONY WALKER, ILLUSTRATED BY ISOBEL JOY TE AHO-WHITE,
PUBLISHED BY HUIA PUBLISHERS, \$20.00 PB

With some good old kiwi caring and ingenuity, an extended whānau saves the day for Santa and everyone else. Bursting with joy and packed with unique writing ideas – from hilarious letters to Santa to alarming newspaper articles – this book will appeal to both young readers and the more sophisticated Santa fans. The vivid illustrations are packed with detail, and are sure to lead to new laughs every time this book is read.



THE GOBBLEDEGOOK BOOK

BY JOY COWLEY, ILLUSTRATED BY GISELLE CLARKSON,
PUBLISHED BY GECKO PRESS, \$39.99 HB

Some of Joy Cowley's best short stories and poems for children are brought together in one artfully presented anthology. Giselle Clarkson's energetic illustrations perfectly capture the hilarity, joy and spirit of Cowley's unparalleled word painting, humour and playful rhymes. Beautifully designed and well selected, each piece feels like its own adventure. This fresh collection is sure to spark the creative juices of many future writers.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION AWARD

POLYNESIAN WOMEN POWER,
A LANKY DREAMER, PROVINCIAL
UNREST, REVOLUTION
AND DIVINATION



#TUMEKE!

BY MICHAEL PETHERICK,
PUBLISHED BY ANNUAL INK, MASSEY UNIVERSITY PRESS, \$30.00 PB

The Newtown Community Waitangi Day Festival is going to take a lot of organising! Thankfully there are a host of memorable characters willing to help out. Who would have thought a library notice board could inspire innovation, friendship and romance – not to mention some sick beats? *#Tumeke!* is a multimedia surprise packed with poetry, lyrics, emails, emojis, illustrations and engaging storylines. A fresh, unique take on storytelling.

LIZARD'S TALE

BY WENG WAI CHAN, PUBLISHED BY TEXT PUBLISHING, \$21.00 PB

Lizard's Tale is a fast-paced story set in crowded, culturally diverse Singapore during World War Two. Lizard is a poor boy who is trying to track down a missing uncle. In the process he accidentally gets caught up in a dangerous world of espionage, covert missions, secret codes and daring escapes. Weng Wai Chan presents an exciting read packed with historical detail, nail-biting adventure and convincing characters.



AFAKASI WOMAN

BY LANI WENDT YOUNG, PUBLISHED BY ONETREE HOUSE, \$29.00 PB

Lani Wendt-Young tackles a wide range of challenging topics across this short story collection, in ways that will provoke much discussion among teenage readers. The writing is clean, bold and willing to play with moral ambiguity. This is a powerful and compelling read that, while uncomfortable at times, always focuses on putting the voice of Polynesian women front and centre, with evocative scene-setting throughout.

ASPIRING

BY DAMIEN WILKINS, PUBLISHED BY ANNUAL INK, MASSEY UNIVERSITY PRESS, \$22.00 PB

Ricky is growing up too fast, in the most literal sense. The 6'7" 15-year-old from tourist trap Central Otago is handling school, work, basketball and a verbose perpetual internal monologue – all alongside the mysteries inherent in a town bursting at the seams with new arrivals. Damien Wilkins has a proven track record in the adult literary fiction space, and here he capably carries over his sophisticated but unpretentious style in a way that will appeal to teens and adults alike.



MOONLIGHT THE UNICORN'S HIGH TEA HICCUP

BY SALLY SUTTON, ILLUSTRATED BY KIRSTEN RICHARDS,
PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC NEW ZEALAND, \$14.99 PB

When Sophia and Claire are invited to a high tea by the Honorary Great Aunties, they're looking forward to a pleasant afternoon of triangle sandwiches, delicious savouries and fancy cakes. Unfortunately, the unexpected addition of six little horses turns the occasion into one big mess! Another delightful addition to Sally Sutton's Miniwings stable, this is a funny story with charming illustrations, ideal for younger readers or as a read aloud.

PRINCE OF PONIES

BY STACY GREGG, PUBLISHED BY HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS, \$24.99 HB

Mira, a refugee living in present day Berlin, discovers a spirited stallion owned by Zofia and yearns to ride him. Zofia offers to coach Mira, telling her own story of danger, escape and adventure during World War Two. Stacy Gregg combines historical fact and thrilling fiction in an unforgettable story about two girls brought together by the horrors of war, and the loyalty and love of magnificent horses.



THE HISTORY SPEECH

BY MARK SWEET, PUBLISHED BY HUIA PUBLISHERS, \$32.00 PB

A slice of Aotearoa Gothic for the young adult reader. In 1960s provincial New Zealand, Callum Gow is right on the divide between childhood and adulthood, and everything that entails. Clean and crisp writing allows plenty to happen between the lines. It doesn't shy away from issues such as racism and child abuse, and is a deeply rewarding read for mature teens who can connect to Callum's emotional journey and development.



TIME MACHINE AND OTHER STORIES

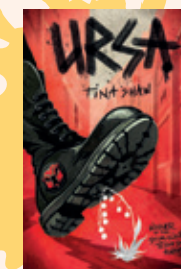
BY MELINDA SZYMANIK, PUBLISHED BY AHOY!, THE CUBA PRESS, \$25.00 PB

This refreshing collection of short stories from Melinda Szymanik will engage a young reader's attention and inspire further discussion. From everyday adventures to the wonderfully weird and fantastical, the diverse tales will take you on a journey of the unexpected. Monsters under the bed, lost dogs, pirate-ship shenanigans, and crocodile revenge – these are just some of the challenges the author's characters face with bravery, intellect and luck.

URSA

BY TINA SHAW, PUBLISHED BY WALKER BOOKS AUSTRALIA, \$24.99 PB

Tina Shaw's page-turner is destined to appeal to fans of both dystopian and fantasy young adult fiction. She handles issues of class, power and privilege in a way that is both familiar and refreshing, making this a moving read for any teen looking for a new literary revolution to fire them up. 'Cerel' Leho's befriending of upper echelon Emeë is the catalyst for big change – and not just for the teens themselves.



WYNTER'S THIEF

BY SHERRYL JORDAN, PUBLISHED BY ONETREE HOUSE, \$24.99 PB

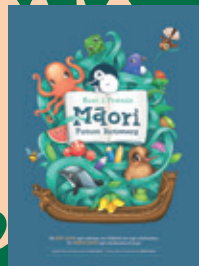
Outsiders Wynter and Fox are drawn together by chance, but their journey into a new shared future reveals secrets from their respective pasts, some so long dormant as to have been forgotten. This slice-of-medieval-life historical fiction has just the right twist of elemental magic, with a solid story that grows and swells in speed and significance as it goes along. Sherryl Jordan carefully walks the balance between evocative historical language and accessible, enriching descriptive writing.

JUNIOR FICTION
WRIGHT FAMILY FOUNDATION
ESTHER GLEN AWARD

COMMUNITY SPIRIT,
INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE,
AFTERNOON TEA, MAGNIFICENT
HORSES AND UNEXPECTED TWISTS

NON-FICTION ELSIE LOCKE AWARD

TE REO IN PICTURES, TE TIRITI,
A KIWI HOSPITAL, BIG
JOURNEYS AND BIG HAIR



KUWI & FRIENDS MĀORI PICTURE DICTIONARY

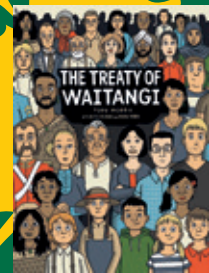
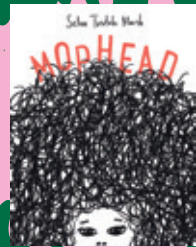
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY KAT QUIN, TRANSLATED BY PĀNIA PAPA,
PUBLISHED BY ILLUSTRATED PUBLISHING, \$34.95 HB

Bright, fun and comprehensive, this te reo Māori/English picture dictionary matches its size with its content. There are over 1,000 definitions and pictures, covering everything from Feelings to Reptiles, from Creation Narratives to Family Trees. A great example of engaging, educational and family-friendly non-fiction, with its spacious pages and sweet, fun illustrations. *Kuwi & Friends Māori Picture Dictionary* is delightful and informative, and would take pride of place on any bookshelf.

MOPHEAD

BY SELINA TUSITALA MARSH, PUBLISHED BY AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY PRESS, \$24.99 HB

Mophead is many things, and almost defies genre. Poet Selina Tusitala Marsh has produced an engaging, inspirational, aspirational autobiographical picture book that roams full and untamed, and will leave a powerful mark on all who read it. The result is visually unique and shows us we are not defined by 'what' we are, but 'WHO' we are. *Mophead* is, in equal measure, tart and delicious, a treat.



TE TIRITI O WAITANGI / THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

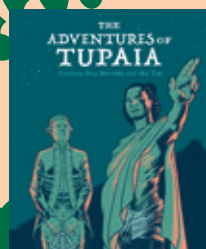
BY ROSS CALMAN AND MARK DERBY, ILLUSTRATED BY TOBY MORRIS,
TRANSLATED BY PIRIPI WALKER, PUBLISHED BY LIFT EDUCATION, \$20.00 PB

This reorua (bilingual) graphic-novel-style flip book presents important information in a visually appealing and engaging way. The text (in both English and te reo Māori) and illustrations work together to provide readers with a calm, balanced presentation of a complex part of our history. Timelines, Treaty definitions and links to the Treaty in 32 languages provide the young reader with further options to learn and explore.

THE ADVENTURES OF TUPAIA

BY COURTNEY SINA MEREDITH, ILLUSTRATED BY MAT TAIT, PUBLISHED BY ALLEN & UNWIN WITH
TĀMAKI PAENGA HIRA AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM, \$30.00 HB

The tale of Tahitian priest and navigator Tupaia is brought to life through Mat Tait's powerful illustrations and thrilling storytelling from Courtney Sina Meredith – providing equal parts adventure and spiritual journey. This important book provides a vivid account of the voyage of Captain Cook's *Endeavour*, and the ensuing clash of cultures, combining mysticism, imperialism and exploration in a way that will be devoured by students and teachers alike.



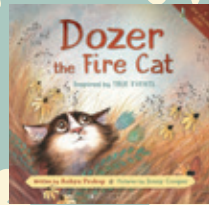
THREE KIWI TALES



THREE KIWI TALES

BY JANET HUNT, PUBLISHED BY MASSEY UNIVERSITY PRESS \$24.99 PB

Janet Hunt takes readers along on the journeys of three kiwi at Palmerston North's Wildbase Hospital – Raratoka, Piwi and Latitude. Readers are connected to the complex process of caring for kiwi, without ever getting mired in complicated jargon. It is inspirational to see the outstanding work that goes into saving our national bird, and the strong combination of science, history and narrative makes this an emotionally compelling read.



DOZER THE FIRE CAT

BY ROBYN PROKOP, ILLUSTRATED BY JENNY COOPER,
PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC NEW ZEALAND, \$18.99 HB

Dozer is a characterful and very recognisably cat-like cat – with his fluffy-footed stalking of prey, sometimes inelegant washing techniques, and contortionist sleeping positions. A thoughtful approach to composition can be seen on each spread, with lots of white space used around vignettes of Dozer and his human family, and illustrations that exploit the properties of pencil and watercolour to create smoky, claustrophobic drama in the climax of the story.

SANTA'S WORST CHRISTMAS

BY PANIA TAHAU-HODGES AND BRYONY WALKER, ILLUSTRATED BY ISOBEL JOY TE AHO-WHITE,
PUBLISHED BY HUIA PUBLISHERS, \$20.00 PB

A fabulous representation of extended whānau (as well as Santa's little green elves), with gorgeously composed, incredibly child-friendly illustrations. It would take from one Christmas to the next to exhaust all the details on each page – can you spot the koru on almost every page? How many different snacks can you count throughout the book? The result is joyous, hilarious and utterly charming.



SONG OF THE RIVER

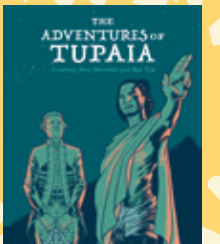
BY JOY COWLEY, ILLUSTRATED BY KIMBERLY ANDREWS,
PUBLISHED BY GECKO PRESS, \$29.99 HB

Cam lives in the mountains and wishes he could see the sea. He sets out to see where a trickle of water leads, and follows it as it grows into a creek, a stream, and finally a river flowing into the sea. Kimberly Andrew's detailed illustrations using muted, natural colours capture the magic of this journey, and allow readers to soar along with Cam towards the sea – weaving between trees, high above the forest or underwater with the frogs.

THE ADVENTURES OF TUPAIA

BY COURTNEY SINA MEREDITH, ILLUSTRATED BY MAT TAIT, PUBLISHED BY ALLEN & UNWIN WITH
TĀMAKI PAENGA HIRA AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM, \$30.00 HB

The impacts on Pacific peoples of Tupaia's journey with Captain Cook are sensitively explored in this large-format book. Careful use of point-of-view gives or takes power from the characters in different ways as we move through the story. The limited colour palette serves as a shortcut towards drama and emotional impact, while the pared-back illustrations are sophisticated, striking, dramatic and, ultimately, incredibly moving.



WILDLIFE OF AOTEAROA

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY GAVIN BISHOP,
PUBLISHED BY PUFFIN, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE, \$40.00 HB

This super-size book is full to the brim with lovingly rendered creatures of Aotearoa, in Gavin Bishop's inimitable watercolour style. The backgrounds for each spread are stunning and depict different ecosystems, from wetlands to dark watery depths, and from night-time forest skies to cool, clear mountain air. The compositions strike a masterful balance between "poster" and movement. These are the type of wildlife illustrations children might be tempted to tear out of the book to Blu-Tack to their wall.

ILLUSTRATION RUSSELL CLARK AWARD

A RIVER'S JOURNEY, A KIWI
CHRISTMAS, A DOZY CAT, STRIKING
HISTORIES AND WILDLIFE

TE REO MĀORI

WRIGHT FAMILY FOUNDATION TE KURA POUNAMU AWARD

EVERYDAY POEMS, ADORABLE
MANU, SMELLY FEET,
NOISY FRIENDS AND KIDS
TO THE RESCUE



ARAPŪ TOI

BY MOIRA WAIRAMA, ILLUSTRATED BY AUSTIN WHINCUP,
PUBLISHED BY BAGGAGE BOOKS, \$30.00 PB

Arapū Toi combines short, easy to understand, poems for all ages with artwork that epitomises the idea that “a picture is worth a thousand words”. Gentle rhythmic te reo Māori, with kupu that emphasise ideas of wellness, is used to describe the sights, sounds and feelings of everyday life – like a zip seizing up on a coat – alongside more poetic images such as the darkness or the night or a whale singing in the depths of the ocean.

KO FLIT, TE TĪRAIRAKA, ME NGĀ HĒKI MUNA

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY KAT QUIN, TRANSLATED BY NGAERE ROBERTS,
PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC NEW ZEALAND, \$18.99 PB

Bravery, suspense, friendship and love are all brought to life through the eyes of an adorable pēpi tirairaka (baby fantail). Te reo Māori breathes naturally and rhythmically in this book, with chirpy repetition of sentences used to introduce new kupu and to reinforce ideas of connection, belonging, similarities and differences. Attractive, evocative illustrations allow readers to learn about native species and their homes, while also enjoying the flutter of a gentle adventure.



NGĀ HOA HOIHOI O KUWI

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY KAT QUIN, TRANSLATED BY PĀNIA PAPA,
PUBLISHED BY ILLUSTRATED PUBLISHING, \$20.00 PB

Kuwi the kiwi wants a hot cup of kawakawa tea and some peace and quiet – but Huwi the kiwi chick and friends want to play LOUDLY, and so this energetic tale begins. Te reo Māori is used skilfully throughout, with witty adaptations to mimic sounds and situations, encouraging readers to become involved in the story. Items of Kiwiana are scattered throughout the illustrations, so that curious readers can search and make new discoveries in every story time.



TIO TIAMU

BY KURAHAU, ILLUSTRATED BY LAYA MUTTON-ROGERS, PUBLISHED BY HUIA PUBLISHERS, \$25.00 PB

Smelly feet, that's the giant Tio Tiamu's big problem. His people don't want to be around him, and they tease him. However Tio Tiamu is kind hearted, and despite the way they have treated him, he continues to help his people. Then one day something amazing happens. This ageless and weighty story deals with universal themes such as the mauri of relationships, but also embodies Māori concepts of manaaki tangata, kindness and forgiveness.

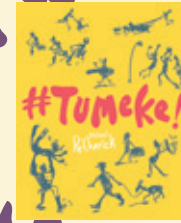


TE KIRIHIMETE I WHAKAKOREA

BY PANIA TAHAU-HODGES AND BRYONY WALKER, ILLUSTRATED BY ISOBEL JOY TE AHO-WHITE,
TRANSLATED BY KAWATA TEEPA, PUBLISHED BY HUIA PUBLISHERS, \$20.00 PB

Everyone is preparing for Christmas, when Santa suddenly announces that it is cancelled. Santa has had so many disasters in the last year that he's had enough, and the elves can't get him to change his mind. But the children of Aotearoa come to the rescue with a plan, and some amazing gadgets, and Santa is able to get back on track, and Christmas is back on. Beautifully illustrated and cleverly translated to rhyme, this picture book is rooted firmly in Aotearoa.

I WHAKAKOREA



#TUMEKE!

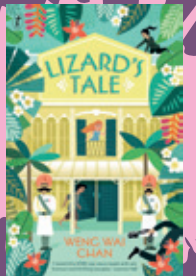
BY MICHAEL PETHERICK,
PUBLISHED BY ANNUAL INK, MASSEY UNIVERSITY PRESS, \$30.00 PB

This book will be unlike anything you've picked up before. It's a frenetic story made up of all kinds of different scrappy tales told through emails and messages, community notice boards and school projects. D'Flock, Constable Piripi, Monty ... the characters are as diverse as the community that Newtown School serves, and the humour hits on a variety of levels, making this debut offering a treat for readers of a range of ages.

LIZARD'S TALE

BY WENG WAI CHAN, PUBLISHED BY TEXT PUBLISHING, \$21.00 PB

This vibrant, action-packed junior fiction story brings a freshness to the 'war stories' genre. Through the eyes of Lizard and Lili, readers experience Singapore while the nation is on the cusp of World War Two reaching its shores. There's espionage, dastardly grown-ups and cunning kids and an incredibly well fleshed out and culturally rich setting. Readers will be left hungry for more stories about Lizard's adventures from this first-time author, and for curry puffs!



SANTA'S WORST CHRISTMAS

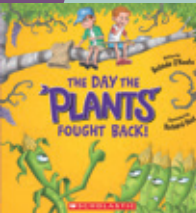
BY PANIA TAHAU-HODGES AND BRYONY WALKER, ILLUSTRATED BY ISOBEL JOY TE AHO-WHITE,
PUBLISHED BY HUIA PUBLISHERS, \$20.00 PB

There is a brilliant richness in texture to the illustrations in this book, with all kinds of details and layers that will keep kids of all ages coming back to look over it time and time again – whether it's the festive season or not! Full of quirky charm and an inclusive cast of characters, this is a treat for all whānau members to pore over and enjoy the occasional more subversive visual gag.

THE DAY THE PLANTS FOUGHT BACK

BY BELINDA O'KEEFE, ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD HOIT,
PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC NEW ZEALAND, \$18.99 PB

It's not every first-time author who can handle the jandal of creating a quality rhyming story, but this book is a pleasure to read aloud for just that reason. With a plot that packs in plenty of exciting shenanigans and a big climax before an age-appropriate resolution – not to mention a touch of magic and two very relatable main characters – this is a whole lot of fun for young readers and their grown-ups.



THE SMELLY GIANT

BY KURAHAU, ILLUSTRATED BY LAYA MUTTON-ROGERS,
PUBLISHED BY HUIA PUBLISHERS, \$25.00 PB

From the moment you pick it up, this tale of a kindly giant with smelly feet feels like a very special book, and the evocative aesthetic of the illustrations are a huge part of that appeal. A carefully considered, limited colour palette helps evoke a strong emotional response, while the pared-back, modern look and feel of the book indicate that Laya Mutton-Rogers is riding high on the crest of a new wave of children's book illustrators from Aotearoa.

BEST FIRST BOOK AWARD

A SELFLESS GIANT, NOTICE BOARDS,
SINGAPORE SPIES, GARDEN MAGIC
AND A FESTIVE TREAT

JOIN US ONLINE!

THE NEW WORLD WE ALL FIND OURSELVES IN THIS YEAR MEANS WE NEED TO RETHINK HOW WE PRESENT THE 2020 AWARDS. BUT ONE POSITIVE OUTCOME IS THAT INSTEAD OF HAVING TO LIMIT OUR BOOKS ALIVE FINALIST AUTHOR EVENTS TO A HANDFUL OF LOCATIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY, WE'LL BE BRINGING THEM DIRECT TO ALL OF YOU ONLINE, VIA YOUR SCHOOL OR LIBRARY!

We will be partnering with our friends at the Library and Information Association of New Zealand (LIANZA) who will coordinate with libraries around the country to host Books Alive virtual storytimes and events with our finalists. You'll even get the chance to prepare questions for them!

Our winners' announcements on 12 August will go online too, so that you can all watch them from the comfort of your home.

We'll circulate more information closer to the time, but for now, subscribe to our YouTube channels so that you know when new material has arrived. And enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/user/lianzaNZ>
bit.ly/YouTube-NZCYA

**BOOKS
·ALIVE·**
MEET OUR FINALISTS
#NZCYA

YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARY COULD HAVE THESE BOOKS!

You can win a pack of finalist books for your library by telling us in 50 words why you think your school should have them. Don't forget to give us your name, the name of your school and which of the seven categories in this booklet you are choosing.

Be quick! We need your email to childrensawards@nzbookawards.org.nz by 15 July 2020.

Only responses from children will be eligible.



THE
SAPLING

JUST ONE MORE
CHAPTER...

All about kids' books,
for adults who love them.

thesapling.co.nz

CONGRATULATIONS
to our 2020 finalists
Lani Wendt Young
Sherryl Jordan



Afakasi Woman
LANI WENDT YOUNG

Wynter's Thief
SHERRYL JORDAN

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AWARD
FINALIST!



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**TE KETE
KURA A
KUWI**

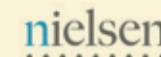
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NEW ZEALAND

BOOK AWARDS

FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS

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