LANGUAGE. LITERACY. CULTURE.

SPELLBOUND

ISSUE NO 1 | OCT 2026 | BY SUBSCRIPTION | | REAL STORIES, REAL LEARNING FOR NZ YOUTH & FAMILIES

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WHY THE FUTURE IS OURS TO MOULD

FROM THE EDITOR
NAVJOT MCCORMACK



Let's be honest: Raising or teaching a human being in 2026 is a bit like trying to navigate a rollercoaster while assembling IKEA furniture in the dark.

WE are told our youth operate entirely on a diet of eight-second video loops, algorithm-driven social feeds, and digital notifications. The mainstream media doesn't help either, routinely painting our teenagers as a "troubled generation" locked in a permanent battle with screen addiction and social chaos.

But out here in real New Zealand classrooms, we see something completely different. As a long-time EAL educator and senior journalist right here in Christchurch, I see a generation of immense grit, staggering creativity, and profound cultural pride. We think it's time to change the narrative.

Welcome to *SPELLBOUND* — our quiet digital resistance against the highly superficial world of tech snacking. We are an independent passion project built to meet the high demand for localised learning resources under New Zealand's recent curriculum shifts. We are here to nurture a genuine love for the written word and provide high-interest reading that treats young minds with the dignity they deserve. No mindless scrolling required.

So, what is in this for you? For our teachers, we are handing you back your weekends; each issue delivers comprehensive, zero-prep curriculum compliance tiered across Stage 1–2 (Foundation) and Stage 3–5 (Step-up) levels to make classroom differentiation effortless. For our learners, we provide authentic, multi-level media texts that challenge your mind without bruising your confidence. And for our whānau, we are bringing a premium resource right home to your kitchen tables — allowing parents and children to read, debate, and analyse the exact same powerful stories together.

We are here to celebrate the absolute good in our youth, one real story at a time. Thanks for joining the movement.

Navjot is an accomplished international educator and a seasoned journalist. She also currently serves as the Chair of CANTESOL.

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Flutter family recalls!

Brilliant butterflies inherit memories without ever being taught. One Japanese boy proves their babies are born knowing family secrets!



Wild welcome: A butterfly lands safely in a garden while Jo Nagai, 10, is all smiles after making his historic find.

JO Nagai was only in second grade when he noticed something strange. The swallowtail butterflies he raised from caterpillars at his home in Japan seemed to recognise him!

While wild butterflies flew away in fear, his insect friends stayed completely calm around him, according to Jo. He wanted to know how their brains worked.

Jo wrote a clever letter to a famous university professor in America. The professor had studied whether moths and monarch butterlies could remember things. Together, they designed a special test.

Jo used a gentle buzzing machine to teach caterpillars to avoid the scent of lavender. Even after the caterpillars turned into butterflies, they still remembered to avoid the smell!

Amazingly, their babies and grandbabies avoided the lavender too, even though they were never trained.

At just 10 years old, Jo proved that butterflies pass memories down to their families. This means bugs can pass down warnings to keep their families safe from danger! Jo's brilliant work has completely changed what we know about animal minds!

Agencies

Bug brain blitz: Butterflies born with brainwaves

JO Nagai, a student from Kobe, Japan, initiated a groundbreaking collaborative experiment that has provided astonishing evidence that learned memories can transcend generations. He noticed that



swallowtail butterflies reared in captivity demonstrated a distinct lack of fear toward him, whereas their wild counterparts immediately fled. Jo contacted Dr Martha Weiss, an entomologist at US Georgetown University. Using a muscle therapy device to deliver mild physical vibrations, caterpillars were trained through classical conditioning. They were taught to associate the scent of lavender with these uncomfortable vibrations, successfully inducing a strong aversion to the aroma before pupation began. Remarkably, 70 per cent retained their learned aversion, including their offspring and grandchildren.

Words explode in full colour



Did you know that your words can paint pictures? English loves to use wild colours to describe how we feel, how we act, and when we get into big trouble.

White Lies and White Horses

Imagine your friend shows up to school with a truly terrible, messy hairstyle. They look at you and ask, "Do you like it?" You do not want to make them cry, so you smile and say, "Wow, it looks great!"
You just told a white lie. This is a tiny untruth that you tell on purpose, not to be mean, but to protect someone else's feelings.

White is also the colour of rescue! In old fairy tales, a brave knight on a white horse always dashes in to save people from scary monsters. Today, if a school prefect runs over and stops a big bully from stealing your lunch, you can say they arrived just like a knight on a white horse!

Red Hands and Red Pens

Have you ever tried to sneak a chocolate biscuit from the kitchen counter, only for your mum to walk in while your mouth is completely covered in chocolate crumbs? You just got caught red-handed!



This funny phrase comes from very old history stories about a bad guy who was caught by the police with bright red blood still on his hands. It means you were caught doing something wrong at the exact second you did it!

But red is not all about trouble. A red-letter day is a fantastic day that you will never forget, like your birthday or the last day of school. Hundreds of years ago, people loved holidays so much that they marked them on their calendars with bright red ink. We still use red pens to circle our favourite days today!

Going Super Green

Have you ever felt sad because your friend got a brand new, shiny computer or a cool toy that you really wanted? Your face might look normal, but in English, you are green with envy! It means you are so jealous that you feel like turning into a green cartoon monster.

Green also means you are totally new at something. A greenhorn is a word for a beginner or a trainee who is still very clumsy at their new job.
This phrase is over 500 years old! It comes from farmers who noticed that young, teenage oxen have new, green horns before they grow up into big, strong animals.

Language is stained with history. In part one of a two-part series, ANDREAS WEALD uncovers the bizarre origins of the colour words



English Down the Ages

Green monsters wear white lies

THE colours of the rainbow, the spectrum of light, a kaleidoscope of hues – we are all dazzled by the impact that colour has on our lives and this has given rise to many phrases in English.

Green – **a greenhorn** is someone who is a trainee, a junior staff, or one who is still an amateur at his job. The expression is found as far back as the 15th century, and refers to the fact that young oxen have green horns.

The student-teacher is a bit of a greenhorn.

However, we also talk of being **green with envy** or jealousy, the **green-eyed monster.**

His new computer made us green with envy.

Playwright William Shakespeare used the expression in his play, *Othello*: "Beware my lord of jealousy, it is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on." Although it is associated with nature, green is often also linked to the idea of immaturity or inexperience.

Pink – we say we are **in the pink** to describe being fit and in good health. Shakespeare crops up again as an explanation for this phrase, first used in *Romeo and Juliet*, which contains the line: "I am the very pink of courtesy."

She is in the pink of health.

The pink, a Eurasian plant with pink and white flowers, is thought to have been responsible. The phrase later became "the pink of (good) condition", which was later shortened to the current phrase.

White – if you tell a **white lie** it is considered a minor one, often with good intentions.

The diplomat chose to tell a polite white lie to protect his colleague's feelings, avoiding a tense argument during the international summit.

The legends and fairy tales of traditional culture often included the idea of a **knight on a white horse**, who rescued those in need, especially young maidens in distress! The phrase still describes anyone who comes to our rescue when we are in a desperate situation. In the West, the colour was long associated with purity!

Next Issue: The shady history of brown and blue idioms!

Enter the leader

In pure Bruce Lee style, she has broken bones in the martial arts ring. NAVJOT MCCORMACK sits down with TESOLANZ President Gwenna Finikin to see how taking hits prepared her for the national leadership arena



BEYOND her leadership role across the sector, TESOLANZ President Gwenna Finikin remains, at her absolute core, a dedicated, compassionate classroom teacher who understands the daily realities of teaching. This conversation strips away the formal administrative titles to speak directly to the heart of language, cultural identity, and the beautiful diversity of our modern classrooms.

Navjot McCormack (NM): Gwenna, welcome to *SPELLBOUND*. What keeps you passionate about supporting New Zealand's language learners?

Gwenna Finikin: English is the power language of this country, and building a supportive road to language acquisition is essential for safe settlement. Our job is to help newcomers master that power language while simultaneously celebrating and validating their native heritage languages.

NM: Steering a national body like TESOLANZ is a massive balancing act; what is your biggest daily challenge?

Gwenna: I use a high-trust, delegative leadership model to avoid trying to do everything myself. My biggest daily challenge is mastering the balance of knowing exactly when to stand back so my team can grow, and when to step in to provide support.

Continued on Page 7

Flag Bearer: For Gwenna Finikin, true literacy begins by honouring the vibrant cultural tapestry inside our classrooms.



Unleashing power, potential and grace

Continued from Page 6

NM: What is a funny school memory from your childhood, or a surprising fact?

Gwenna: I absolutely hated school as a child until I realised my teachers truly cared about me! A surprising fact: I have practised many different martial arts over the years, and nearly every one came with an injury. I once took a blunt medieval sword directly to the eye during a historical combat session, completely losing my depth perception!

> ‘I practised many different martial arts ... and nearly every one of them came with an injury ...’

NM: What is a simple, joyful classroom moment that makes the endless admin hours worth it?

Gwenna: There are two: Witnessing that glorious "Aha!" moment when a student pushes through a difficult maths concept, and that magical milestone when an English language learner finally breaks out of their "silent period" to initiate their very first conversation.

NM: Looking back at your leadership journey so far, what is your single proudest achievement?

Gwenna: It’s the long-term impact you discover years down the track. I recently met a past student working at a barber shop who was too nervous to cut women's hair. I told her, "I trust you completely because you had a great teacher at age six — and it was me." She now runs that entire department.

NM: With so many curriculum transitions happening, what are the big goals ahead for TESOLANZ?

Gwenna: TESOLANZ is now an official subject association. We are actively formalising English as an Additional Language (EAL) as an accredited high school subject so migrant students rightfully gain qualification credits for their hard work. In primary settings, we are heavily advocating for oral language as a vital pillar of structured literacy.

NM: How much of a relief is it to see a localised resource like *SPELLBOUND* that handles classroom differentiation automatically?

Gwenna: It is an absolute boon for teachers. Reverting to outdated topics like Ancient Egypt doesn’t help kids become relatable world citizens today. Having a modern, localised New Zealand resource like *SPELLBOUND* that automatically handles diverse reading stages is going to save teachers immense amounts of time.

NM: If you could whisper one encouraging message to every hard-working language teacher right now ...

Gwenna: You are making a profound difference to the lives of these children. You might not always see the immediate fruits of your labour during a frantic school term, but you are actively shaping futures. Keep going.

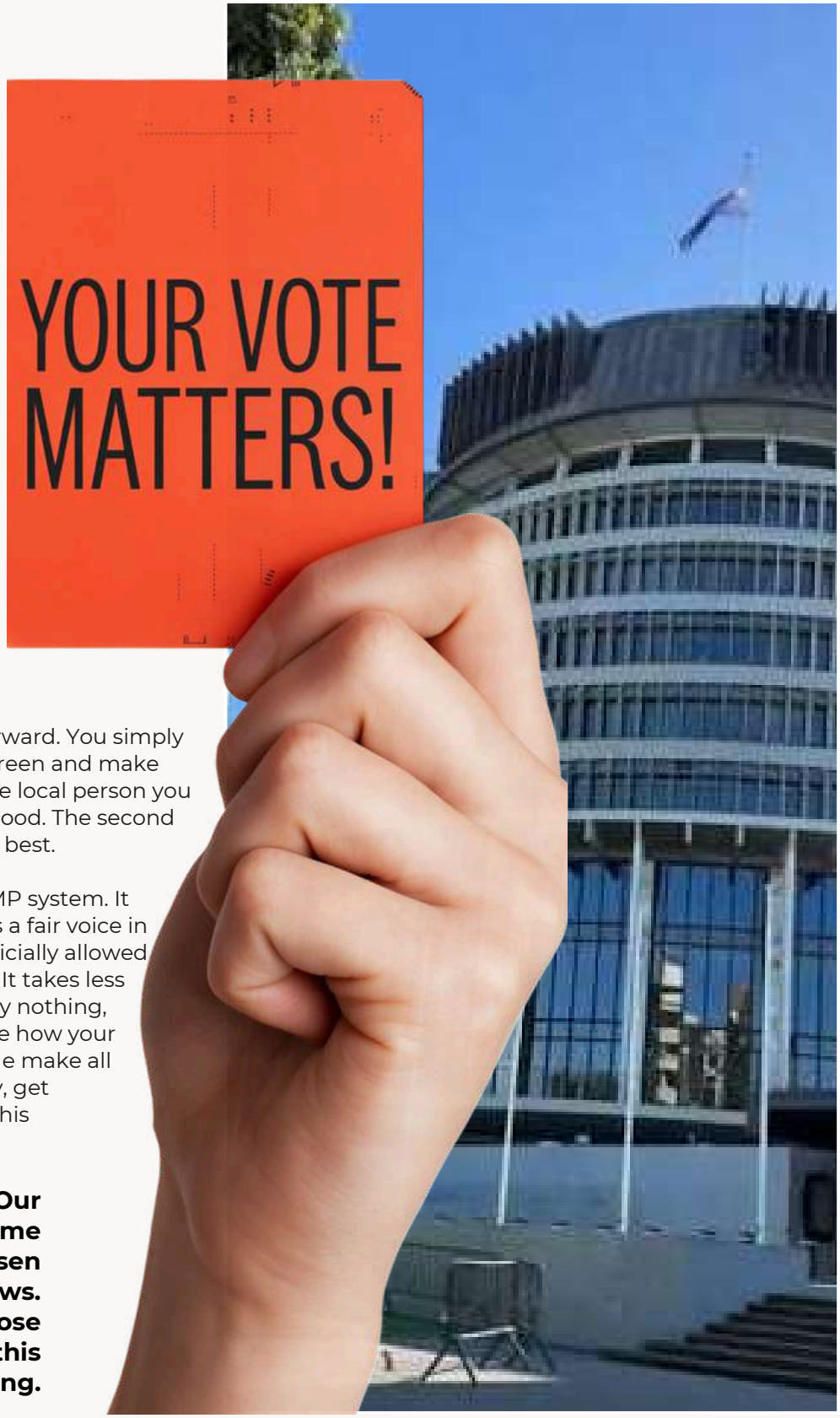
Power of two ticks

EVERY three years, New Zealand holds a big event called a general election. This year, the date is Saturday, November 7. On this day, citizens who are 18 years old or older get a special chance to choose the next government leaders.

Many young people think that learning about how our leaders run our country and reading long law papers is very boring. However, voting is actually the ultimate real-world power trip. It is the exact moment where your single choice carries the same weight as a wealthy business owner or a famous rugby player. When you turn up to a voting place, election staff will give you a square paper ballot. You do not need to memorise complex rules.

The process is incredibly straightforward. You simply take an ink pen behind a private screen and make two dark ticks. The first tick is for the local person you want to represent your neighbourhood. The second tick is for the political party you like best.

In New Zealand, we call this the MMP system. It ensures that every community gets a fair voice in Parliament. If you are 18, you are officially allowed to enter the booth and cast a vote. It takes less than five minutes, it costs absolutely nothing, and it is your primary tool to change how your country runs. Do not let older people make all the decisions for your life. Get ready, get registered, and step up to the box this November!



NZ powerhouse: Our Parliament (extreme right), where chosen leaders make our laws. Voting lets you choose who works inside this building.

Beyond ballot box babble

Spamming text messages until midnight to save a reality TV star? Classic. Tuning in to a general election on November 7? An absolute snooze fest. It is time to torch the ancient civic playbook and figure out how to get the mobile-scrolling young minds into the booth. ANDREAS WEALD offers food for thought



WHY is it that millions of teens will stay up until midnight, obsessively spamming text messages to save a singer on *New Zealand Idol* or *America's Got Talent*, yet the moment a general election hits on November 7, the collective youth response is a massive yawn?

Let's be completely honest: Traditional political campaigns are a masterclass in sleep induction. Young citizens look at politicians' trading endless, robotic ballot box babble on television and instantly switch off. It is an agonising parade of suits, graphs, and empty promises that feels light-years away from real life. But here is the bizarre contradiction: Teenagers actually love the drama of voting — they just prefer doing it via text for a reality TV contestant rather than an old-fashioned parliamentary representative.

If the Electoral Commission genuinely wants to drag the mobile-scrolling generation into the booth, they need to torch the ancient civic playbook entirely. Imagine if casting a vote for the next Prime Minister was as simple as texting "VOTE 1" to a short-code from your bed.

If we can completely eliminate a celebrity dancer with a single swipe, official democracy should feel just as instant and seamless.

Instead of a dreary community hall, voting stations should offer high-speed iPads, free Wi-Fi, and a complimentary slice of pizza. Rock up, tap a screen, grab a slice, and change the laws of the country.

While US elections play out like multi-billion-dollar, hyper-dramatised Hollywood blockbusters, New Zealand elections can feel like a painfully quiet school assembly. However, behind the dry speeches lies a massive, real-world power structure. The winners of this reality show control the national budget. Their choices dictate the price of your tertiary studies, your weekend minimum wage, and climate policy in Aotearoa.

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An election is the ultimate elimination finale, except there is no script and the stakes are real. If you are 18, you hold a legal ticket to rewrite the rules. Stop letting older generations decide your future. For now, put down the phone, march into that school hall, and make your real-world vote count. Then, in a few years, take the stage in Parliament, grab the microphone, and change the ancient rules for the next generation! Sweet as!

The winners of this reality show control the national budget...

Greyhounds have their day

The racing industry officially loses its bark as a historic new mandate stops the sport dead in its tracks across New Zealand

THE racing tracks have gone silent. In a historic piece of legislation, New Zealand has officially implemented a total ban on commercial greyhound racing. A report by 1News confirmed that this fundamental shift follows years of intense public debate regarding animal welfare and a major decline in the industry's social licence. While track owners argue that modern safety infrastructure has improved, 1News reported that animal advocacy groups successfully lobbied the government, stating that the moral cost of dog injuries is simply too high. As New Zealand joins a growing list of global nations shutting down the sport, it marks the end of a long, controversial evolution.

Ancient icons

To fully appreciate this contemporary policy, we must explore the historical context of the breed: These dogs have been carefully bred for speed for over seven millennia, originally serving as prized hunters for ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian rulers. Their cultural prominence expanded during the Roman Empire, where artists immortalised their distinct, athletic structures in marble. Even their modern name is rooted in history, likely evolving from the word "Greekhound" when the dogs crossed into England 2,000 years ago.

However, the concept of chasing a machine is a relatively recent phenomenon. Records show the earliest recorded instance occurred in London in 1876, where dogs sprinted along a straight 400-yard course. This initial trial quickly lost public interest because a straight line offered no real evaluation of a hound's agility; the swiftest dog simply won every time. The sport required a more dynamic design to capture global interest.

Betting machine

The true breakthrough occurred across the Atlantic due to a clash between animal welfare and entertainment. At the turn of the 20th century, traditional coursing — where dogs chased live prey — faced intense opposition from early animal rights advocates in America. To bypass these protests, a promoter named Owen Patrick Smith substituted live animals with a dummy mechanical lure, eventually upgrading the device to a motorised trolley running on a circular track by 1919. While Smith initially designed the sport as a wholesome, non-gambling spectacle, his business partner, George Sawyer, realised the financial potential of trackside betting. Sawyer introduced bookmakers, causing public attendance to skyrocket.

Cultural wave

By July 1926, this highly profitable model crossed back over to Britain, debuting at Belle Vue stadium in Manchester. Though it opened to just 1,700 people, the growth was exponential. Within a week, attendance swelled to 16,000, eventually maturing into a massive cultural phenomenon, attracting 100,000 spectators to London's White City stadium.



The tail end: A solitary racer watches from the margins, unaware that a historic new legislation in New Zealand has permanently cleared its path toward a peaceful family couch.

Before New Zealand's total prohibition, the mechanics of the race remained heavily reliant on these early 20th century principles. Dogs wearing numbered, colour-coded jackets and safety muzzles were confined to automatic mechanical traps. An artificial lure was triggered from behind, and as it zipped roughly 11 metres ahead of the starting line, the trap doors sprung upwards and opened automatically to release the dogs. Sprinting at unprecedented speeds of up to 61 km per hour, the animals had to navigate the field strategically. Hounds used their tactical instinct to fight for the favourable inside rail position or seek clean air on the outside to prevent their running path from being impeded by rivals.

A century later, the cycle has come full circle. The decisive New Zealand move serves as a clear example of how public values can directly transform national laws.

Compiled from historical records and agency reports

Paws for thought

THE very first greyhounds arrived in New Zealand in style. Travelling aboard the Endeavour during James Cook's historic 1769 expedition, a pair of family greyhounds belonged to the famous British naturalist, Sir Joseph Banks. While the dogs spent their nights sleeping in his private cabin, they spent their days working, utilising their famed speed to pursue small game for the scientific team.

Born to run: Secrets of the fastest hounds on planet earth

DID you know that some dogs can run as fast as a car? These dogs are called greyhounds. They are built for extreme speed. They have very long legs and thin bodies. Before a race starts, the dogs wear special clothes. They put on bright, colourful jackets. Each jacket has a big number on its front. The dogs also wear muzzles over their noses to keep them and others safe.

Next, the dogs go into small boxes called traps. They wait quietly in the dark. Suddenly, a fake mechanical toy rabbit zooms past the boxes on a long track. Click! The doors open automatically. The dogs jump out fast. They run at a blistering 61 km per hour! They run around a big oval track to chase the toy.

They look like beautiful streaks of lightning as they race to the finish line! However, these dogs cannot race in New Zealand anymore. The government made a new rule to stop the sport. This is because racing can cause bad injuries, and people want to make sure the dogs stay safe, happy, and healthy at home.

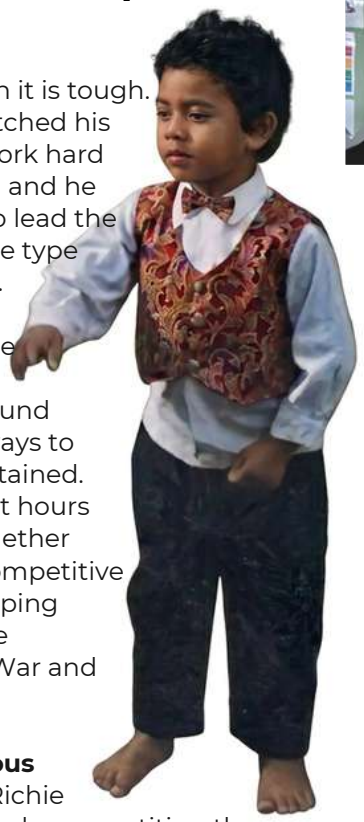
From backyard to global stage

Long before the bright stadium lights, real fun meant making a racket, inventing hand games, and dodging the flying cricket ball. NAVJOT MCCORMACK reports









IMAGINE sharing a single suburban house with five brothers and sisters for 30 years. There are six children in total in the family: Three energetic boys and three lively girls. This busy, connected environment was daily life for Mailinoa Elia and her younger brother, Richie Mo'unga.

Long before Richie became a global rugby icon and a New Zealand star, he was just a cheeky little boy running around the neighbourhood streets of Riccarton, in the city of Christchurch. Life in their proud, traditional Pasifika household was incredibly simple. Mailinoa remembers vividly that their family did not grow up with material wealth. Because they had no digital technology, no smartphones, and no video game consoles, the six siblings had no modern screens to distract them. They were forced to use their imaginations, and they quickly realised that they only had each other for entertainment.

Strict routine

Their weeks followed a strict, beautiful routine: Church, home, and school. Their mum and dad worked exceptionally hard every single day to provide for them. Through their daily actions, they modelled core family values like faith, honesty, and kindness, even when it is tough. Richie watched his parents work hard in silence, and he decided to lead the exact same type of lifestyle.

Around the home, the siblings found creative ways to stay entertained. They spent hours sitting together playing competitive hand-clapping games like Pinnacle War and Samaria.

Mischievous

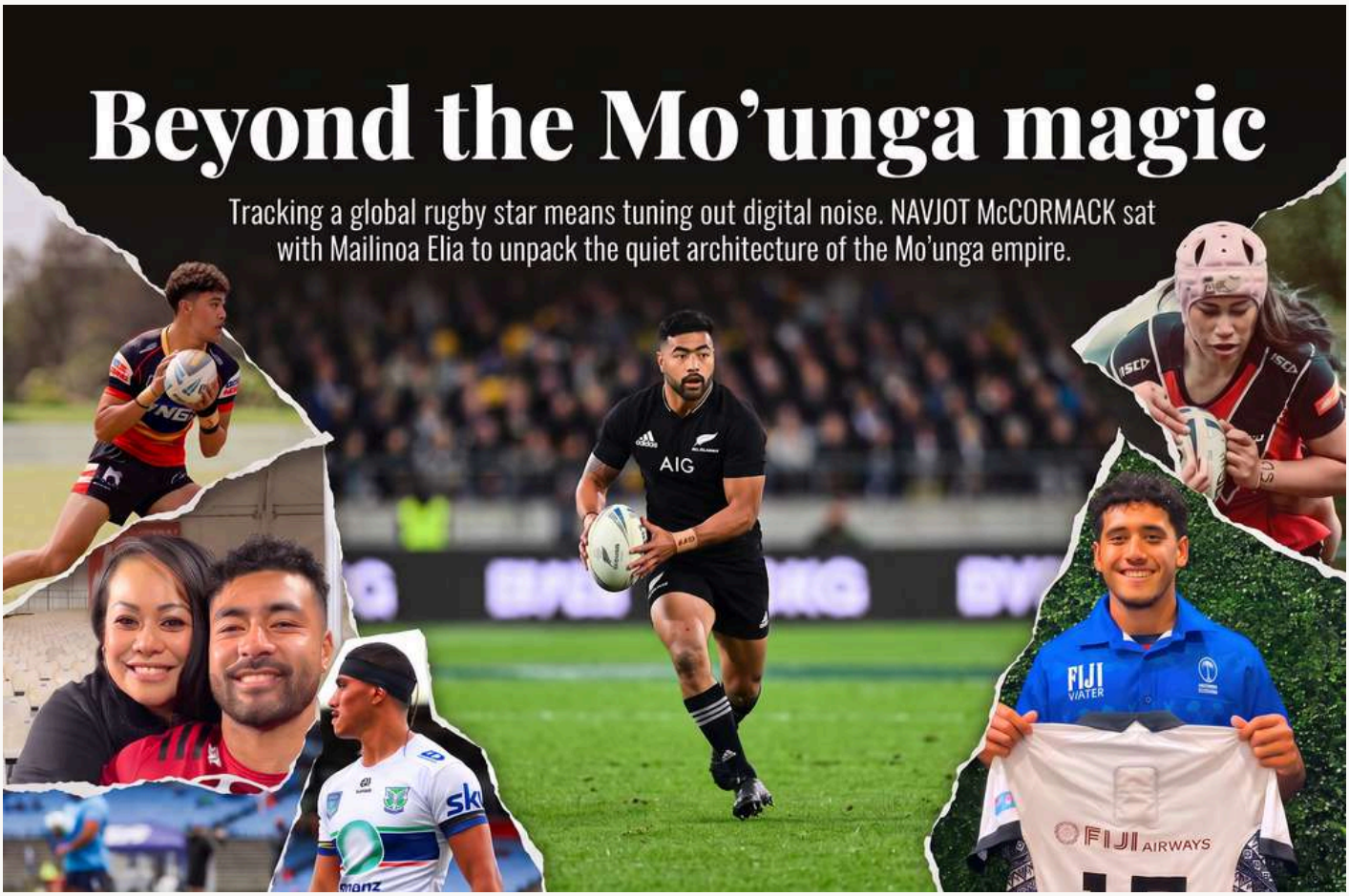
Because Richie was intensely competitive, these little hand games turned into big, laughing battles. When they stepped outside, the backyard became their sports stadium. Richie and his two brothers played fierce matches of backyard cricket and rugby from morning until night. Mailinoa laughs when she recalls how mischievous Richie could be. During one tense backyard cricket match, Richie smashed the ball straight through a house window. The second the glass shattered, the boys sprinted away in opposite directions to escape trouble!

No screens, just smashed windows: (clockwise from top): Richie Mo'unga dominating on the global rugby stage; his older sister Mailinoa Elia (inset) keeping her brother protected; Mailinoa cradling Richie as a baby; and Richie, a 'cheeky little boy' from the start (left).

But when the sun went down, the house filled with beautiful music. Richie discovered he had a magical hidden talent: He could hear a complex song just once or twice on the radio and immediately copy it perfectly. Without ever taking a single music lesson, he taught himself how to play the guitar and the piano. (**Also see Pages 13 & 14**)

Beyond the Mo'unga magic

Tracking a global rugby star means tuning out digital noise. NAVJOT McCORMACK sat with Mailinoa Elia to unpack the quiet architecture of the Mo'unga empire.



Gene pool phenomenal: The Mo'unga family tree doesn't just sprout talent — it fields an entire backline. New Zealand rugby icon Richie Mo'unga with sister Mailinoa Elia (left, centre), and the next generation keeping the legacy alive (clockwise from right): Niece Serenaia, and nephews Fiji international Isaiah Armstrong-Ravula, Cristiano and Pesamino.

BEHIND the international roar of stadium crowds lies a fierce Pasifika blueprint built on silent hunger, generational legacy, and the unshakeable rule of kindness.

Navjot McCormack (NM): Mailinoa, you occupy a truly profound space where elite athletic excellence, proud Pasifika heritage, and daily classroom education intersect. Welcome to *SPELLBOUND*. Can you tell us a little about yourself and explain your deep multi-generational connection to the Christchurch community?

Mailinoa Elia: I was born and raised right here in the neighbourhood of Riccarton, in Christchurch. My family lived in the exact same house for 30 years — this neighbourhood is deeply embedded in our identity. I actually attended Te Kāpehu Riccarton School as a student, and all my siblings, including Richie, came through this primary school. My path into teaching wasn't conventional; I had my children when I was quite young, and as they started school, I applied for a role as a teacher aide. I spent seven rewarding years in that position, during which I was consistently encouraged by my peers to complete a teaching degree. I gave it a go, graduated, and transitioned into full-time teaching just as my own kids went off to high school. I've been a qualified teacher here now for five years, marking 12 consecutive years at this school.

NM: Excellence seems to be a multi-generational trait in your household. Your own children are carving out remarkable sporting pathways across New Zealand.

Mailinoa: It definitely runs in our blood! My eldest son, Cristiano, is in Year 13 at St Thomas of Canterbury College and is currently contracted with the Junior Warriors Pathway. Next year, he'll relocate to Auckland to play league while pursuing tertiary studies in music. My second son is also contracted with the Junior Warriors and is heavily involved with Canterbury Rugby Under-16 Metro. My 15-year-old daughter at Villa Maria College just made the Canterbury Under-16 Rugby League team.

Continued on Page 14

Fortitude in spotlight

Continued from P13

NM: Richie is arguably one of the most scrutinised, debated, and celebrated rugby players on earth right now. What is the emotional and psychological reality of watching a younger sibling perform under that level of global pressure?

Mailinoa: When I look at him on the world stage, all I think about is our humble beginnings. I am immensely proud, but deeply humbled. We did not start with much, but our parents tried the best they could to raise us well. What grounds Richie, and what shields him from the pressure of global celebrity, is that he has remained completely unchanged since he was a little boy. To me, that unwavering consistency reflects his true character.

NM: Your family has rich Samoan and Tongan roots. How did your cultural values shape the mental fortitude required to withstand world-class pressure and handle modern celebrity?

Mailinoa: The unexpected advantage of growing up without material wealth was the absolute absence of modern digital distractions. All we had was just us. Our mental toughness was forged through daily, deliberate conversations with our parents. They didn't just lecture us about faith, honesty, and hard work, they modelled those virtues explicitly. Richie absorbed that blueprint.





Guardian angel: Te Kāpehu Riccarton School teacher Mailinoa Elia (right) fiercely guards her All Black brother, Richie Mo'unga (above).

Photos: SPELLBOUND MEDIA

NM: Along with a massive base of loyal supporters, prominent international athletes frequently face intense public criticism and online negativity. How does your family insulate itself against that harsh commentary?

Mailinoa: To be blunt, it does not faze him, and it does not faze us. Our dad was incredibly intentional about training our minds. He constantly drilled into our ears: "Don't listen to what people say to you. It's all in here — in your mind and in your heart." I've read some of the negative comments online, and Richie has received his fair share, but it changes absolutely nothing. It doesn't register or disrupt our peace. Richie's ultimate response to negativity is simply, "God bless you." He moves forward with grace.

NM: Yet, beneath the professional armour, he is still your younger brother. Do you still experience intense pressure or anxiety when a major match is underway?

Mailinoa: Oh, the anxiety is absolutely real! My heart races, my blood pressure spikes, I can't sit still, and I honestly breathe funny! It stems entirely from a big sister's protective instinct. I want to protect him as much as I can, and I have to consciously remind myself that he is his own man who knows how to safeguard himself. When he steps up to take a critical kick that the entire world is depending on, my mind immediately races to: What happens if he misses? How will the public react, and how can we help restore his spirit?

NM: What is it like at home when Richie is playing?

Mailinoa: When the family gathers to watch him play, the atmosphere is beautifully chaotic; it is exceptionally loud, packed with an immense volume of food, and filled with deep, non-stop family conversation. We are a family of profound faith and prayer, and we simply pray that whatever time God allocates to him on that field is spent safely.

NM: If Richie walked into your classroom as a pupil, what is the number one rule you would have to remind him about?

Mailinoa: "Stop talking!" Richie doesn't talk to cause trouble; he just loves sharing cheeky banter, and connecting with every single person he meets.

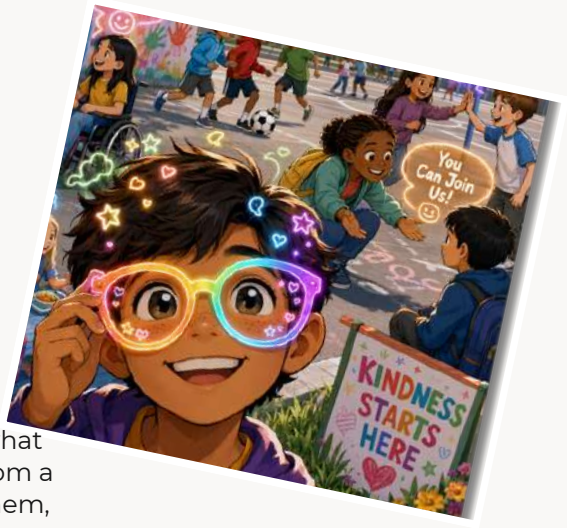
NM: If you could write one golden rule on every classroom whiteboard in New Zealand?

Mailinoa: If you can be anything in this world, be kind!

World through kindness lens



Put on your magic glasses and take on the five-day challenge, writes ANNA GUILLERMO-YANGA



IMAGINE walking onto your school grounds tomorrow morning, and picture every single person — from the New Entrants to the Year 13s, and even your teachers — wearing an invisible pair of "magic glasses". These glasses do not help you read tiny writing or see far away. Instead, they let you see exactly what someone else is feeling on the inside! Sounds pretty amazing, doesn't it?

In real life, those magic glasses are called *perspective-taking*. That is a big phrase, but it simply means stepping outside your own thoughts and imagining what it is like to walk in someone else's shoes. When you look at a situation from another person's point of view, you begin to understand their feelings and choices. When we pause to ask, "How would I feel if I were in their place?", showing kindness becomes natural and easy.

Real-life kindness story

Over a 100 years ago, a woman named Jane Addams wanted to practise this exact skill. Instead of staying in a quiet, comfortable house far away from people who were struggling, she chose to move right into a busy, tough neighbourhood in Chicago and opened a welcoming community home called Hull House. Jane didn't just guess what her new neighbours needed from a distance. She lived alongside them, listened carefully to their stories, and worked to see the world through their eyes.

Because she took time to understand their feelings and challenges, she was able to build Chicago's first public playground, open a public kitchen, host art classes, and create clubs for children and families. Jane showed us that true kindness starts when we take time to genuinely see and care about others.

Five-day challenge

What would happen if your whole class tried this for just one week?

Day 1: The Playground Check-In: Look around at morning tea time. Is someone sitting alone or looking left out? Put on your "magic glasses" — how would you feel if you were in their shoes? Walk over and invite them to join your game!

Day 2: Teacher's Shoes: Your teachers work very hard every day to make you learn. What is one small thing you can do, like putting gear away quietly, to make their day brighter?

Day 3: The Listener: When a classmate is talking to you, give them your full attention without interrupting. Ask them: "How did that make you feel?"

Day 4: The Cheerleader: Notice someone who tried really hard or made a mistake in class. Give them a warm word of encouragement — "You can do it!" "You are capable!" "Keep learning!"

Day 5: The Thank-You Note: Write or draw a quick thank-you note for a friend, teacher, or staff member who brightens your day.

When everyone at school practises perspective-taking for one week, something incredible happens: Feelings of worry go down, friendships grow stronger, and school becomes a place where everybody feels like they belong. Are you ready to put on your magic glasses and start the five-day kindness challenge today?

Anna is a Learning Assistant at Ashburton Christian School and a Roots of Empathy Instructor.

Lavender love

From sweet superhero floral sprays to heartfelt prayers for global peace, Te Kāpehu Riccarton pupils share their raw, honest and unfiltered views



• The views expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPELLBOUND MEDIA.

TEACHER TIP: Transform reading into an active, real-world skill by getting your classroom to write short response letters to these published pupil viewpoints. Submitting their thoughts gives students a purposeful, exciting opportunity to practise authentic persuasive writing. Email: editor@spellboundmedia.co.nz.

Selected responses will be featured in our next issue, turning your students into real published authors!

LAVENDER is a word with multiple meanings. For example, the flower lavender, the colour lavender, and the lavender spray that helps you sleep.

The flower lavender is known for its fresh, floral, distinct scent that carries a slightly sweet smell. Lavender is mostly found in a group to make them show their shine, but the colour lavender has a completely different backstory. The colour lavender is mostly known for the light gradient shade that is perfect for a soft lover.

The special tone of lavender is what makes it stand out. Without that soft undertone, if it is replaced by a dark gradient violet, it is the worst possible shade of purple that you can create (in my opinion by the way).

Lavender spray is one of my favourite techniques for trying to help you sleep when a creepy nightmare or non-sleepiness can't doze you off. That's when lavender spray comes in as a superhero! In fact, I actually put lavender spray all around my room while spinning around like a fidget spinner. When the empty bottle is chilling on my shelf, I ask my mum to buy me a new one. If you haven't guessed yet, lavender is my favourite colour and favourite flower!

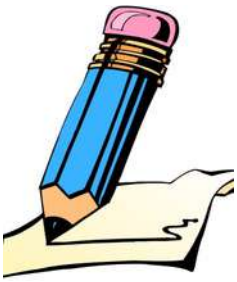
Khushi Singh, Y5

Not funny anymore

TO all the kids who say 67 is funny, I want to say it is funny no more! 67 is not funny, period. 67 is cooked. Why do kids think 67 is funny? I don't know.

It is 2026, so 67 is not funny. It is just boring. Give it up, please! I hate it and think all kids should stop shouting this silly number.

Yolanda Korowale, Y6



Praying for peace

ON October 7th, 2023, the terrible war in Palestine started, and it has been going on for a long time. The conflict has been happening since way back in history. The fighting makes it so hard for people to live in safety.

My family in Palestine is okay, but it seems so hard for them to live in these conditions. It feels so sad for them to lose their homes and starve in the cold nights. Thousands of innocent kids have been killed, and so many people have died from starvation. But the people didn't give up till now; they love their country and won't give up. I wish for Palestine to be free from war and take their land with peace. And I will pray for Palestine to be free.

Maria Shurab, Y5

Family is life

GOING on a trip with your family takes time, but it is always worth it. Not playing on a digital device and instead spending time with your family is what life is all about. Your family is everything, and they will never talk behind your back! Going on a trip with a friend is okay, but travelling with your family is way better.
I am nine years old and I have five siblings and one cat. I used to have two cats, but the other one ran away. That is all I want to say about that!

Rogan Sadlier, Y5

Braver than ever

I FELT a massive rush of determination to win at sports. I have faced difficulties and hard moments while playing, but I always got back up braver than ever. I was completely determined to win our rugby league game, but an unexpected trip came along. I was just about to score a try, but I fell straight to the ground, defeated. I just lay there in the dirt for a moment, thinking: Would a little mud stop me? I decided to get right back up brave. I still managed to score a try in that league game because I kept trying and trying. Even though I did fall over and we lost the game, I still had lots of fun.

Novah Jacobs Tipene,Y6

No kidding, Messi is the real GOAT



By HADI HOSSAINI, Y7, Te Kāpehu Riccarton School

FORGET about farm animals that chew on grass all day. In the world of football, a GOAT means something completely different — the Greatest of All Time.

Lionel Messi is the real GOAT because he has the most Ballon d'Or awards, Golden Boots, and assists in the world. Oh, and he also won a World Cup!

The people who think "Penaldo" is better are just completely wrong. [Editor's note: Penaldo is a hilarious, real-world internet slang mashup of "Penalty + Ronaldo". Football fans use it to tease Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo, joking that he only scores because he takes easy penalty kicks!]. All Ronaldo has is the most goals and a Puskás award. **Continued on P18**

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Congratulations to all the writers on these pages. You are now published writers!

You too can share your stories with our readers. Debate the issues which concern you and ask the questions that matter. We invite students, teachers and parents to share their viewpoint with our readers. Contributions should be emailed to: **editor@spellboundmedia.co.nz.** Include your full name, school, year, and a contact number. Selected articles will be published. Articles may be edited for clarity and space.

YOUR SAY

Proud of roots

MANA is all about being proud of your culture, your identity, and yourself. You should always celebrate your background, even if people say, "Oh, your culture is so weird." Never listen to them because they are completely wrong! Be proud of yourself and everyone around you because you have a unique heritage to share.

I am originally from India, and celebrating our culture is very important because it brings us so much happiness. We gather around as a family to play traditional Onam games. We also love wearing beautiful cultural clothing like sarees and lehnga. Boys wear a mundu and a comfy shirt. I love my culture, and you should love yours too!

Neya Arun, Year 7

Love for coffee

I WAS born in Malaysia, and moving to New Zealand was very interesting at first, but I soon got used to living here. I arrived in Christchurch when I was just four years old, but I still remember a lot about my homeland.

I was born in a beautiful city called Ipoh. It felt quite old and rustic compared to Christchurch, and it was very different in many ways. However, I absolutely loved the fact that the entire city was completely obsessed with coffee! Malaysia is a wonderful place, and I am proud to share my journey with you.

Devan Kumar, Year 7

Competition spirit

FOOTBALL and basketball are two popular sports and each offers unique excitement and structural challenges.

Football is played out on a large field and emphasises physical strength, deep strategy, and intense teamwork as players aim to score goals using their feet. In contrast, basketball is played indoors on a smaller court, focusing heavily on agility, quick reflexes, and extreme precision as players shoot, pass, and dribble. Despite their differences, both sports inspire incredible unity among players and fans alike, beautifully showcasing the true spirit of competition on the world stage.

Cris Ivan Espiritu, Year 7

Vibrant Fiji culture

I AM a Fiji Indian, and I am incredibly proud because our culture is so vibrant and colourful. We have many amazing festivals. Plus, our Bollywood movies and songs are enjoyed by people all over the world. I would invite you to join in a celebration to experience our rich culture.

Ruhamah Khan, Year 7



Hop-lessly lost in translation!

WHEN British explorer Captain James Cook first dropped anchor in Australia in 1770, he pointed a finger at a bizarre, massive creature leaping around with a built-in pocket and asked the local Guugu Yimithirr people what it was. They naturally replied "Gangurru", which was simply their standard native word for a large grey kangaroo.

While the old myth claims the locals were actually saying "I don't understand your English," real history proved to be much funnier. When the British First Fleet arrived years later, they started aggressively shouting "Kangaroo!" at the local Dharug people.

The locals had never heard the word before, assumed it was a magic English word for "delicious meat", and started enthusiastically shouting it back! To make matters stranger, the kangaroo was officially placed on the Australian Coat of Arms alongside the Emu for an incredibly stubborn reason: Neither animal can physically walk backwards.

Australia selected them to represent a nation always moving forward, completely ignoring the fact that if a kangaroo attempts to take a step backward, its massive, heavy tail acts like a parking brake and tips it flat on its face!

Me, myself, and yard!

DID you know that the human body was the first ruler? An “inch” was the width of a thumb; a “hand” was five fingers wide; a “foot” was the length of a foot. A “cubit” ran from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, and a “yard” was the length of a whole arm. Good luck trying to pass your next math exam using your own body parts!

Why Messi is still the real GOAT

Continued from Page 17

Let's be completely honest: A Puskás is just a single goal award, not a real championship trophy!

Messi has the absolute best dribbling skills and is a great playmaker. On the other side, Penaldo is a selfish man who just hogs the ball and steals goals from his own teammates. That is exactly why nobody passed the ball to him in the World Cup!

I actually went to a local park and asked 15 people to choose between Messi and Ronaldo. The final score was 13 to 2 for Messi!

You could try asking people yourself, and Messi will always win. Some fans only care about Instagram followers and YouTube subscribers, not about real football. Therefore, Messi is the one true GOAT.

Hadi Hossaini is a Year 7 pupil at Te Kāpehu Riccarton School in Christchurch

MIND GYM (Page 19) SOLUTIONS — **CROSSWORD: Across:** 4. MONARCH, 6. MIGRATION, 8. FINIKIN, 9. PROHIBITION. **Down:** 1. GREEN, 2. DRAGON, 3. WHAEA, 4. MATUA, 5. PINK, 7. TALENT, 10. BACKYARD. **RIDDLE ANSWER:** There aren't any — it's a one-storey house. **SUDOKU PUZZLE 1** (4x4): **Row 1**: 2-4-1-3 | **Row 2**: 1-3-4-2 | **Row 3**: 4-2-3-1 | **Row 4:** 3-1-2-4. **SUDOKU PUZZLE 2** (9x9): **Row 1:** 1-3-2-5-7-4-6-8-9 | **Row 2:** 8-5-6-1-9-2-7-3-4 | **Row 3:** 9-7-4-3-8-6-1-5-2 | **Row 4:** 6-8-1-9-4-5-2-7-3 | **Row 5**: 4-2-3-7-1-8-9-6-5 | **Row 6:** 7-9-5-2-6-3-4-1-8 | **Row 7**: 5-1-7-4-3-9-8-2-6 | **Row 8:** 3-4-8-6-2-1-5-9-7 | **Row 9:** 2-6-9-8-5-7-3-4-1. **WORD SEARCH TARGETS:** Government, Tracks, Greyhound, Runner, Barking, Hound, Fastest, Speed, Agility, Pace, Racing, Ban.

SPELLBOUND WORD SEARCH

S	R	H	C	B	S	N	X	P	R	A	U	W	W	Y
C	U	S	G	Q	J	O	B	A	N	A	O	E	C	T
Z	N	O	R	B	V	J	A	A	F	F	C	T	E	G
V	N	D	T	K	U	T	N	A	W	B	W	I	N	K
F	E	G	A	U	T	A	S	B	A	F	K	P	N	T
C	R	R	J	B	D	T	G	R	C	X	T	J	V	G
Z	O	E	Q	X	E	C	K	I	S	S	P	H	E	M
T	K	Y	W	S	T	I	O	L	L	A	X	Z	W	S
R	H	H	T	C	N	X	R	F	C	I	H	Q	P	R
A	U	O	Y	G	S	S	P	E	E	D	T	Q	Z	Z
C	D	U	E	T	Z	M	O	N	N	V	Z	Y	A	J
K	Q	N	K	D	N	L	S	S	P	T	J	I	H	D
S	B	D	D	N	G	O	V	E	R	N	M	E	N	T
F	L	X	I	A	G	L	D	H	O	U	N	D	Q	R
H	E	K	W	D	P	J	B	G	A	Z	V	G	F	B

Find these words:

GOVERNMENT TRACKS, GREYHOUND RUNNER, BARKING HOUND, FASTEST SPEED, AGILITY PACE, RACING BAN



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Sudoku Puzzle #1

		1	
1			
	2	3	
		2	

Sudoku Puzzle #2

1			5	7	4		8	9
8		6	1	9	2	7	3	
	7		3				5	2
	8							
	2		7			9	6	
	9	5		6				8
			4			8	2	6
				2			9	7
		9	8	5				

SPELLBOUND FAMILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

4. A beautiful type of large orange and black butterfly mentioned on the Science Page.
6.The long journey monarch butterflies make across countries or regions to survive.
8.The surname of the martial arts enthusiast who became the national President of TESOLANZ.
9.A strict law that stops a commercial sport or practice from happening completely.

DOWN

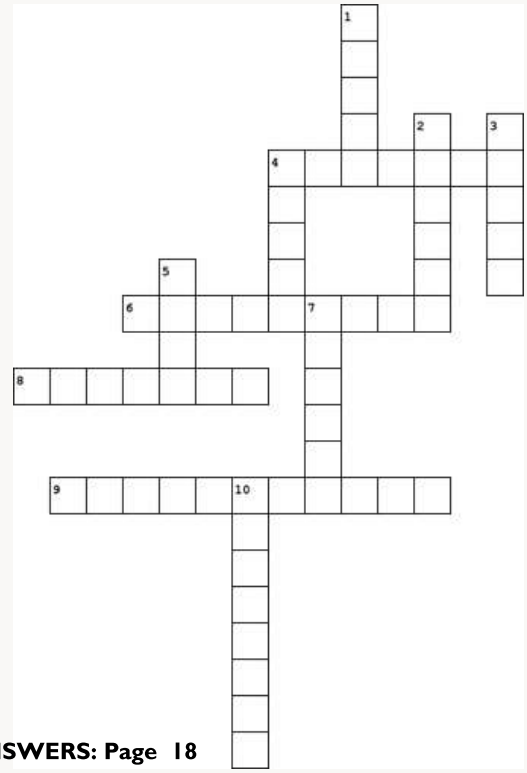
1.A colour used in a traditional idiom to describe a trainee or a junior colleague.
2.The final word in the famous Bruce Lee movie title that inspired our Page 6 headline.

DOWN (CONTINUED)

3.The correct te reo Māori title of respect used for a female teacher.
4.The correct te reo Māori title of respect used for a male teacher.
5.A colour used in an idiom to describe someone who is in very good health.
7.A natural ability to do something incredibly well, like playing rugby or the piano.
10.The grass area behind a house where Richie Mo'unga played cricket with his brothers.

Riddle:

There's a one-storey house in which everything is yellow. Yellow walls, yellow doors, yellow furniture. What colour are the stairs?

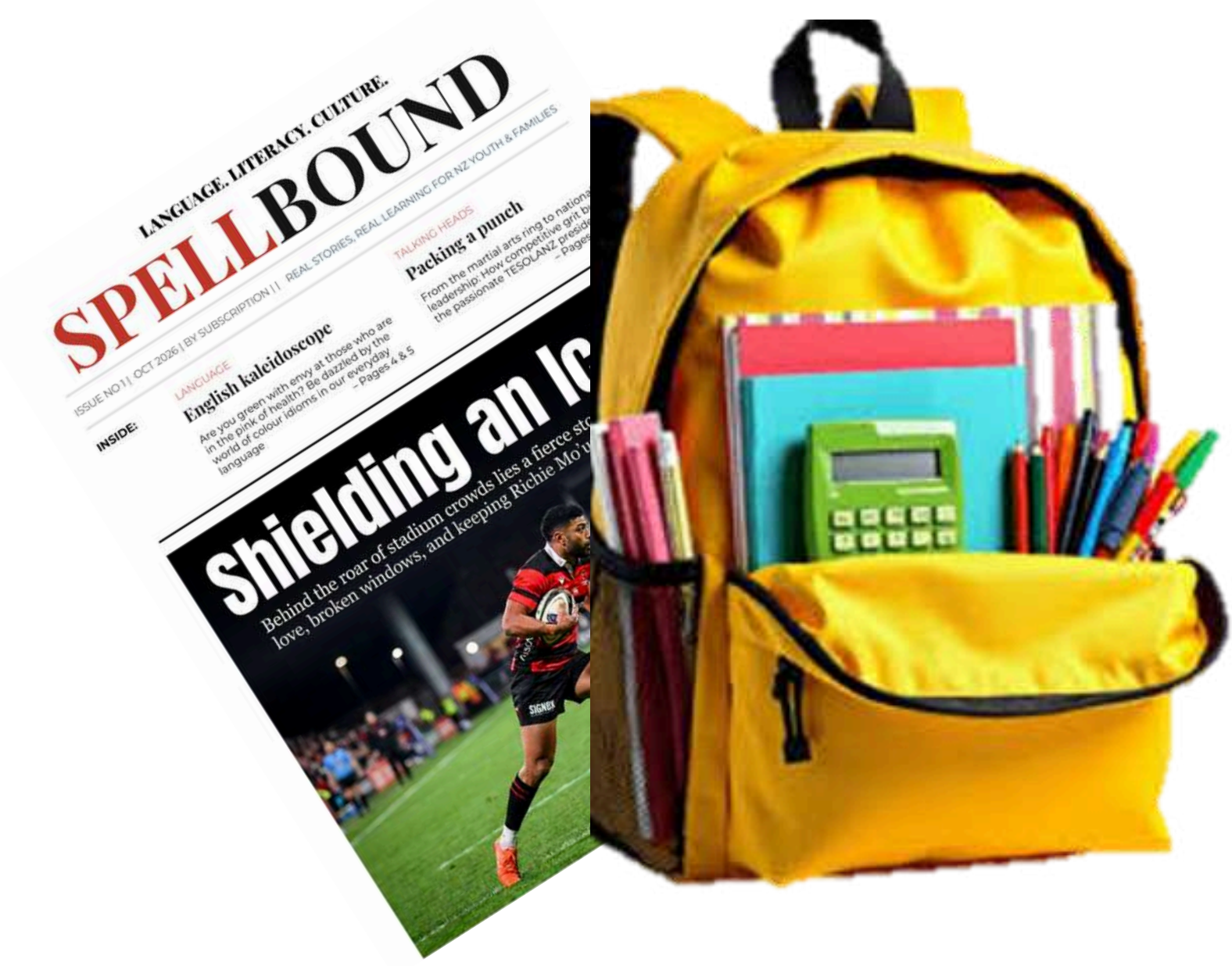


ANSWERS: Page 18

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1 IN 6.

That is the number of Kiwi teenagers who leave school every year with **ZERO qualifications. 10,400 exit school unable to confidently read or write.**



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