

Kawepūrongo



Balmoral's Best Books

By Nina Kayes, Will Herrick, Tomas Woodruffe-Creegan

The way this whole amazing event started was when we were selected to attend a meeting which included Dr. Ross Bernay, a lecturer from AUT, the deputy principal, students, and parents from around the school. Our main topic was how we could get everyone to enjoy reading. After many more meetings, the three of us decided to send out a survey called 'Balmoral's Best Books' to teachers, asking their classes about their favourite books. This gave us a whole lot of information about what children at Balmoral liked to read, and meant we could categorise the books into different genres, therefore giving us even more information.

After gathering the data, we decided on our next move. We met with AUT and planned a huge event with every hub in the school making a stall, where they were given a genre each. We selected the genre that each hub would have, making sure we picked appropriate ones for each age group. Their challenge was to design an interactive stall which 'sold' their genre to the audience. We were amazed by what everyone came up with. Then we had yet another meeting to decide which jobs must be done before the event, which was on the 6th November

so time was ticking to get everything finished.

The three of us worked on lots of smaller projects together throughout the year, all leading up to the big final one. As this was happening, we developed a research question to find out more about how we could promote reading at our school: How can reading bring the community together? We worked with the deputy principal and a lecturer from AUT to develop a survey to be filled out by people who came to the night about our research question. Dr. Necia Billinghamurst from AUT then uploaded the survey to Google Forms, which we edited. We recruited other students and student teachers from AUT to support us in organising the event and setting up on the day. When the night finally arrived, we all met up and started our rotation of jobs. Midway through the event, the three of us gave a speech to show gratitude to everyone who made it possible and wished everyone a good night.

Putting the event together, we learnt a lot. We learnt how to take responsibility, work in a group, and lead a group.

Every person had their own part to do. We had so many people getting excited about helping out and investing a lot of time and skill into the whole project. Heaps of adults came to support; the school was packed. Everyone was so surprised at how many students also turned up at the event. We couldn't have done it without so many people who helped us put it together. It felt like a community effort. For the survey, we learnt a lot of different things. The first thing being that people actually like to read. We also learnt that although our school is made up of many ethnicities, the people who completed the survey were mostly Pākehā and a large number of she/her identifiers. Going into the event, we thought there would not be many people filling out the survey, but we were wrong. After scanning all the data, we were able to get some good answers about what, when and where people like to read.

What this event means for our community is a big step forward. We have managed to do more than we thought we could. This means that our future students at Balmoral will have an opportunity to think and learn more about reading and experience a welcoming community that encourages reading. One question asked respondents whether this event made them want to read more, and if they wanted another event like this one. Most of the responses we got said that they would really like another event like the one that we had. They also thought it would be a good idea to continue this at Balmoral. Another response from the data was that for students, it is common and a good idea to get recommendations from their friends. We are sure that all the people who set up the event are proud of how many people came, which in itself shows that people love to read in our community. Advice to parents, the data from parents said that you should read to your children, encourage them to read and share books you find fascinating with them. The data showed that the teachers think you have to model for your students. If you read at SSR time, then the students will look up to you and copy the model. The data also told us that students don't necessarily look to their teachers for book recommendations, but we feel this shouldn't stop teachers from doing just that, perhaps even setting up times when everyone in the class is making recommendations.

The Reading Ambassadors decided that Balmoral School should host this event every two years, so that every intermediate student can attend the event before they head off to secondary school and have the opportunity to be part of a celebration of books in this way.

It will be a lot of work for teachers, but every second year would be manageable, and everyone would still get to experience it. We highly recommend events like this. The data we collected can also be used for future events.



Critical Condition

By Hansika Pandya

Imagine being seriously sick and waiting days to see a doctor-long enough for your condition to worsen. That is the reality of over a third of New Zealand's adult population - a clear sign that our healthcare is on the brink of failure.

The reason I am writing about this topic is that I know a person who recently had to get hospitalised. It didn't take long to see a GP because we had sent pictures of him showing how serious his condition was. As soon as the GP saw him in person, he immediately referred him to the emergency department (ED). Even then, we waited two and half hours for them to see him. The first time we went there they kept him for around five days and sent him back. After a day back home we had to call an ambulance because his condition worsened. That happened at least three to four more times every time he came back his health would deteriorate and more symptoms kept piling up. Most times they would discharge after only a day even though he wasn't visibly fit to be discharged.

After they finally stopped taking him lightly and as a non-acute patient he stayed at the hospital for nearly a month.

Some people think that New Zealand's health care shortage began because of the pandemic, however that is not true. In reality, New Zealand's health care shortage has been developing since the early 2000s.