**[Mental Health Foundation New Zealand](https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/37/book-dvd-and-app-reviews" \l "sept28" \t "_blank)** [​](https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/37/book-dvd-and-app-reviews" \l "sept28" \t "_blank)**Wishes and Worries**  
​**Dickson, S. (2015). Kotuku Creative  
Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information Resources Specialist at the Mental Health Foundation**.  
*Wishes and Worries* was written in response to the Christchurch earthquakes to help children who are experiencing mild to moderate anxiety. It’s designed for use in classrooms, while its companion *Maia and the Worry Bug* is designed for children to take home.  
When my partner and son brought *Wishes and Worries* home in their weekly pile from the local library, I could see its immediate value. Our son has become increasingly worried about noises in the night and robbers.  
Even though *Wishes and Worries* is intended as a classroom resource, it was an easy night time read, engaging, beautifully illustrated and the content was affirming. The author is adept at being able to turn the principles of cognitive and narrative therapy into a compelling story.  
**Easy to relate to for kids**  
The main character Dan's worries and fears are disrupting his ability to enjoy everyday activities and stopping him having fun with his mates. My son could really relate to the character’s focus on noises and listening for sounds of danger.  
Through Dan's journey, kids who may previously have felt powerless over their thoughts and feelings can see how they can “untangle” and identify their own worries. They learn to reflect on how these thoughts affect their thinking and their bodies, and to use their creativity to find ways to be with, or direct them.  
You also get a good sense of how a child may feel misunderstood when adults around them may think they are just being difficult and that parents and teachers need to be aware of the expectations we put on them to just “get on” with everyday tasks.  
We read through some of the suggestions for class activities at the back, many of which are student-led.  
The availability of this book in schools to support the curriculum would help kids realise they are not alone, that others feel the same and that their school is supportive.  
My son laughed out loud at the suggestion of putting a box in the principal's drawer that kids could put their written worries into. He decided he would instead send his worries into space on the Millennium Falcon (from *Star Wars*).  
The book provides readers with valuable skills and normalises kids’ concerns, but also has a dash of magic, fun and hope.  
Available in both [English](http://www.theworrybug.co.nz/store/p1/Wishes_and_Worries.html) and [Te Reo Maori](http://www.theworrybug.co.nz/store/p4/He_k%C4%81nehe%2C_he_m%C4%81natunatu.html).  
  
  
**Review by Bob Docherty of Bob's Books 03-03-2016** <https://bobsbooksnz.wordpress.com/>  
***Maia & the Worry Bug, Wishes and Worries by Sarina Dickson and Julie Burgess-Manning, Illus. Jenny Cooper. Pub. Kotuku Creative, 2015.***  
Both these books form part of an anxiety management resource for the home and for the school. They were conceived because children and adults getting stressed and anxious by the Canterbury Earthquakes.  
Of course they have wider application than that. Everybody has worries that can be dealt with in the ways described by these two books.  
Much has been written and discussed about worrying and anxiety as lately as the Rugby World Cup when Steve Hansen described Worry as a wasted emotion. So it is but it doesn’t stop people worrying.  
The facts are that worrying cause children and adults to perform and function below what they are capable of if they were not distracted by worries. My mother always said Que Sera Sera what ever will be will be and others have said you cant worry about things out of your control.  
In Maia and The Worry Bug , worry is personified as a bug that can be removed like any other bug and in Wishes and Worries worries are scene as something you recognise and put in a place where they can be changed for the positive.  
Good advice and a programe and suggestions of how to manage worries in the home and school. Two books well worth having.  
Jenny Coopers illustrations in both books are perceptive  and relevant. The facial expressions of the characters say it all.  
  
  
**PEER REVIEW: JUNIOR BOOKS OCTOBER 2015**[**New Zealand Book Council**](http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/blog/topics)**06-10-2015  
  
Reviews by Librarians, Teachers and Principals of the latest New Zealand books for junior readers**  
  
**Wishes and Worries  
Sarina Dickson, Illustration: Jenny Cooper**  
**Reviewer: Julie Newth, Teacher with Library Responsibility, Onepoto School**  
  
This is an emotional story, dealing with anxieties that, unfortunately, many children come to school every day loaded down by. It is extremely pertinent to the children of Canterbury but also to children country-wide.  
  
The book is a wonderful read-a-loud and the use of language is descriptive and quite poetic. My favourite line being ‘A wish is a worry turned inside out’. I loved the idea that everybody needs ‘a tree’ to place their fears where they can be recycled.  
  
The illustrations fit the story beautifully and the font changes throughout the text, making it very engaging for the reader and the audience; while the activities are well designed and would encourage children to talk about their fears and worries, and hopefully put into practice strategies that could ease their anxieties. The links to the curriculum at the back of the book are also great discussion starters.  
  
A highly recommended read-a-loud, with lots of potential for further discussion.