

Mental Health  
Awareness Week  
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## He Tai Pari | Rising Tide

Dickson, S. (2016). Kōtuku Creative.

Sarina Dickson and Julie Burgess-Manning are the pair responsible for the very popular Worry Bug resources (*Maia and the Worry Bug* and *Wishes and Worries*) brought about as support for children after the Christchurch earthquakes. However, don't be put off if your child or students haven't experienced, or don't remember the earthquakes. This book appeals to any child with worries, and includes excellent strategies to help.

*He Tai Pari | Rising Tide* is Dickson's new book, but for older aged children (Year 5–8). Cleverly however, *Rising Tide* is not *Maia and The Worry Bug* for older children. It's a fresh, new story fully created on its own accord. Everything about it screams 8–12 year olds – the physical size of the book, the cover page illustration, and the use of minimal illustrations throughout.

The book centres on nearly ten-year-old Ari who lives with his parents and two sisters. The hooks come quickly – Ari has secrets. While these hold our interest in the story, it's reassuring for us with our own, and there's a subtle focus on Ari believing he's the only one that suffers from his secret which keeps him feeling isolated and ashamed.

What captured me were the skills and strategies both Ari and his Dad use to manage and cope with things. The back of the book is filled with creative lesson plans for school use. I was impressed by the immediate connection Dickson makes between home and school and the extension of activities from interpersonal relationships to communities and environments.

A part of this focus is brought to self-fulfilling prophecies – our beliefs that we are the way we think we are, and how this relates to worry. This is of course challenged, and the book looks to embed a growth (rather than fixed) mind-set understanding. Because I'm not a teacher, my thoughts come from a parent perspective: do I want my kids exposed to and learning about this? Absolutely.

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This is unmistakably a New Zealand/Aotearoa story – the use of Māori and the descriptions of what Ari notices in his rural township are so familiar. At no stage did I consider the themes in the book as having to relate to the Christchurch earthquakes. The strategies embedded in the story are useful for any young person whether they worry a lot or a little.

My daughter gave *He Tai Pari* | *Rising Tide* a solid eight out of 10. She told me it was “relatable” and that, “If I have secrets that feel really big and kinda out of control, I’d talk to someone... [like] you, nan or maybe dad.” Perfect. I couldn’t ask for anything more.

**Reviewed by Anna Mowat, the project lead for Sparklers, a wellbeing website for schools. She also works across the All Right? wellbeing campaign and co-directs Real Parents.**



The Mental Health Foundation's Information Service brings you reviews as part of the Good Reads feature for Mental Health Awareness Week. To view more go to <https://mhaw.nz/>

