



## Education Report: Ā Mātou Kōrero | Our Stories

<b>To:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Cc:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	7 December 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1277855
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<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	Yes	<b>Round Robin:</b>	N/A

### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to provide you with background information on the Ā Mātou Kōrero | Our Stories storybook series. These books are part of our response to Recommendation 36 of the [Royal Commission Inquiry Into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques](#) (March 2019).

We have provided your office with copies of the books for you to consider providing to the Prime Minister. This paper also asks you to confirm your attendance at the Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand (IWCNZ) book launch.

### Summary

- A collection of storybooks celebrating the Muslim communities in Aotearoa New Zealand are now available. *Welcome Home, Open day at the Mosque, Ko wai au? – Who am I?*, together with the previously launched *Aya and the Butterfly*, can now be accessed online on [TKI](#).
- The storybooks are part of our Ā Mātou Kōrero | Our Stories series, which are designed to support understanding of the Kiwi Muslim community. The books cater to children in early learning and Years 1-3, and align with *Te Whāriki* and *The New Zealand Curriculum*.
- This series was developed in partnership with IWCNZ and the Ministry, following the March 2019 Christchurch terror attacks.
- The series contributes to the Government's response to Recommendation 36 of the [Royal Commission Inquiry Into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques](#) (March 2019). This recommendation was for the Government to "invest in opportunities for young New Zealanders to learn about their role, rights and responsibilities and on the



value of ethnic and religious diversity, inclusivity, conflict resolution, civic literacy and self-regulate”

- Print copies of all the books are currently being sent to early learning services and primary schools across Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes an Arabic edition of *Aya and the Butterfly*.
- These books are being launched at an IWCNZ event in Wellington on 9 December.
- We have sent copies of the books to your office to share with the Prime Minister if appropriate.

### Recommended Actions

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The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **agree** that you will attend the IWCNZ launch.

Agree / **Disagree**

- b. **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you.

**Agree** / Disagree



Ellen MacGregor-Reid  
**Hautū | Deputy Secretary**  
**Te Poutāhū | Curriculum Centre**

07/12/2021



Hon Jan Tinetti  
**Associate Minister of Education**

11/12/2021



## Background

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1. *Ā Mātou Kōrero | Our Stories* is a series of illustrated storybooks that have been developed to support, reflect, and celebrate the Kiwi Muslim community in Aotearoa New Zealand. They are also a way for non-Muslim Kiwis to “learn about others, so that they are no longer others.”
2. The idea for this series was raised by Dr. Maysoon Salama of the Islamic Women’s Council of New Zealand, and the Ministry of Education, after the tragic events in Christchurch in March 2019, to support wellbeing and inclusion, resilience, and understanding for the Muslim community in Aotearoa.
3. The series also contributes to the Government’s response to Recommendation 36 of the [Royal Commission Inquiry Into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques](#) (March 2019). This recommendation was for the Government to “invest in opportunities for young New Zealanders to learn about their role, rights and responsibilities and on the value of ethnic and religious diversity, inclusivity, conflict resolution, civic literacy and self-regulate”

## More information on Ā Mātou Kōrero | Our Stories series

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1. These storybooks are designed to be read to tamariki, by kaiako or whānau, and are intended for an audience of both Muslim and non-Muslim tamariki throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.
2. The series has been created for those in Early Childhood Education and Primary years 1–3, and is aligned with both *Te Whāriki* and the *New Zealand Curriculum*. The focus of the series is on wellbeing and resilience, and promoting unity, diversity, and inclusion. Kaiako Support Materials (KSMs) support further engagement with these themes in classroom learning.
3. The first book, *Aya and the Butterfly* by Dr Maysoon Salama was published digitally and made available online on 15 March 2021. There were launches in Christchurch and Wellington for the release of this book and supporting resources. Ministry staff attended both launches, and Minister Little attended the Wellington launch.
4. Physical copies of all titles in the series are being distributed to Early Childhood Centres and Primary schools in New Zealand. There was considerable interest in the March 15 Christchurch launch of *Aya and the Butterfly*. Since then, Dr Maysoon has appeared on Nine-to-Noon and appeared at the Christchurch Writers festival in August.
5. The series now includes the following titles:
  - *Aya and the Butterfly* by Dr Maysoon Salama (in both English and Arabic editions)
  - *Welcome home* by Mukseet Bashir
  - *Open day at the Mosque*, courtesy of the Kilbirnie Masjid community
  - *Ko wai au? – Who am I?* by Nesra Wale



6. Parents, whānau and the general public can access PDF and audio versions for free via the TKI website: <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/A-Matou-Korero-Our-Stories>
7. Below are brief summaries of each storybook in the series:

**Aya and the Butterfly by Dr Maysoon Salama (available in English and Arabic)**

Aya and the Butterfly is the story of a young girl who is coming to terms with losing her father, and learning that it is okay to feel sad and to miss him, while also remembering him with the help of her grandparents.

**Welcome home by Mukseet Bashir**

When Syed the Sandgrouse becomes lost in a storm far away from his home, he has to find a way to make a new life in Aotearoa New Zealand and meets new friends to help him along his way.

**Open day at the Mosque, courtesy of the Kilbirnie Masjid community**

Open Day at the Mosque is the story of a typical open day celebration, narrated by a young girl from the mosque. Readers experience a tour of the mosque and see all the different ways the open day is celebrated and shared with the wider local community.

**Ko wai au? – Who am I? by Nesra Wale**

A pepeha-inspired story about a young kiwi Muslim boy growing up in Waikato and the different ways that culture, food, family and friends, and his likes and dislikes combine to give him his own unique identity.

## Launch details

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8. IWCNZ has organised a launch of these storybooks at an event in Wellington on 9 December 2021. The venue is the Mākaro Room at the Wharewaka Function Centre. Invited guests can arrive from 6pm, with formal proceedings to start at 6:30pm.
9. Attendees will include Nesra Wale who contributed to the *Ko wai au? – Who am I?* story, and some children from the mosque featured in this book. Dr. Maysoon will be present and will share what the project, in particular *Aya and the Butterfly*, has meant to her. This launch presents another opportunity to promote the Ā Mātou Kōrero Series.
10. IWCNZ have signalled to us that Ministers and the Secretary of Education are invited to the launch (as well as up to 10 Ministry staff). If they are able to attend they will set aside time for them to speak at the launch.
11. At 7pm there will be a mix and mingle, with nibbles and light refreshments available. They anticipate the even to conclude by 8pm.
12. The venue they have chosen seats up to 300 people. However they will limit attendance to 100 people due to COVID protocols. Attendees will need to wear their masks, show their COVID vaccine pass, and present an ID.
13. The IWCNZ will release a press release following the book launch. IWCNZ has consulted the Ministry on the content of this press release.



## Key Risks and Benefits

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14. There is a risk some individuals may perceive the books as promoting the Muslim faith in schools. Our experience to date suggests a small number of individuals will have a negative reaction to the series. Our reactive comms will highlight the intent of the series is to promote well-being and inclusion — not faith or belief. Additionally this is in response to Christchurch terror attacks and Royal Commission report recommendations.
15. There is a risk that other communities may request a similar series focusing on their people and their stories. Our reactive comms will explain the rationale for this series, including our obligations for contributing to the Royal Commission report recommendations.
16. There is a risk that parents, whānau and community members will seek print copies (these are only available to early learning services and primary schools). Our reactive comms will include details for accessing digital versions of the books.
17. This series provides a number of clear benefits including supporting wellbeing and inclusion, resilience, and understanding for the Muslim community in Aotearoa. These series increase the diversity of classroom resources available to schools, as well as an Arabic text to support our Muslim community.