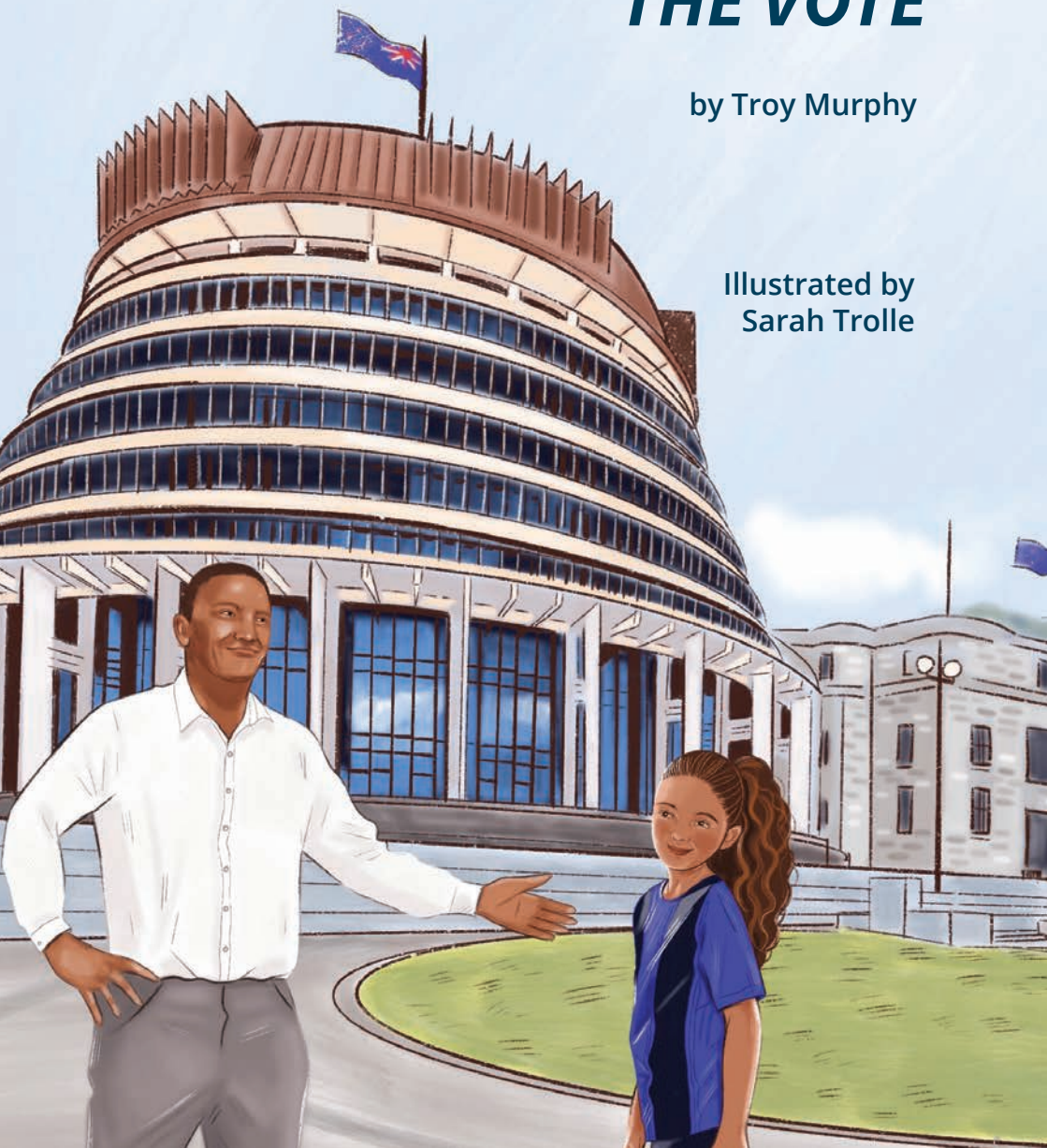


Te Pōti

THE VOTE

by Troy Murphy

Illustrated by
Sarah Trolle



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It was a warm lunch time at Kiwikipi School. Hinekura ran to the school field with her new friend, Louie. The two joined the other children who were already lined up.

“Mine, yours, mine.” Hinekura could hear a large boy picking teams. Louie had told her that the boy’s name was Bronx. Bronx owned the only football in the school so he got to choose who played on his team. He always chose the best players for his own team, meaning they never lost. Louie was always put on the losing side, but it didn’t matter to Louie - all he cared about was playing football.

“Mine, mine. Ah, there you are, little Louie! On to the loser’s side where you belong,” Bronx said with a smirk.

“You too new girl,” Bronx said to Hinekura, waving his hand dismissively.



The teams spread out across the field. Bronx threw the ball into the air. Hinekura quickly gained possession and kicked the ball with a powerful thud. To Louie's surprise, the ball went straight past the goalkeeper and into the goal.

"Yes!" Louie screamed. "That was amazing Hinekura!"

"What are you guys doing?" Bronx shouted. "She's running circles around us! Get your heads in the game!"

Bronx's team started the next play. Bronx tried to pass the ball but Hinekura intercepted and dribbled it down the field. The goalkeeper watched nervously as she swung through and made the kick.

"NO!" Bronx roared as he desperately tried to reach Hinekura, but it was too late. Hinekura's kick sent the ball past the goalkeeper to score another goal.

"Yes! We might actually win!" Louie exclaimed as Hinekura ran around hi-fiving her teammates.



Bronx, visibly fuming, grabbed the ball and carried it to the halfway line. "Alright, we're resetting the scores and starting the game again."

"What?! That's not fair!" Louie shouted.

"My ball, my rules, little Louie."

"And this time, you're on my team," Bronx said, pointing at Hinekura. She glared back at him, "I don't think so!"

"My ball, my rules! You either play for me, or I'm putting my ball away," Bronx threatened, holding up the ball.

"Wow, you're such a bully! I guess I won't play at all then!" Hinekura said, storming off the field.

"Whatever, just don't even think about trying to play with us tomorrow. You're banned!" Bronx yelled after her.



Hinekura didn't speak to any of her classmates for the rest of the afternoon.

"Hey, how was your first day at the new school?" Hinekura's dad asked as he picked her up. Hinekura looked down at her shoes. "Not great, huh? That's ok, Hine. But I'm here if you want to talk about it, ok?"

Hinekura said nothing and the two walked home in silence.

As soon as they got home Hinekura went straight to her room, shut the door, and climbed into bed. Clutching her favourite teddy bear, she cried and cried, before drifting off to sleep.

A soft knock woke her up.

Her dad poked his head around the door, "It's time for kai. Are you feeling hungry?"

Hinekura felt her stomach rumble. "Is it ok if I eat dinner in my room pāpā?" Her voice was croaky.

"You know that we only eat kai at the table. If you tell me what's happened, then maybe you can eat in your room just this once, ok?"

Hinekura fought back tears as she explained, "There's this boy at school who won't let me play football because he owns the ball!

He even reset the score after I scored two goals. It's not fair!"

"Aue, that's not good," he said, shaking his head. "Rules are there so things are fair. If one person is changing the rules to suit them, it defeats the purpose of playing the game."



“Has that ever happened to you, pāpā?” Hinekura asked.

“Not for a long time,” he said. “I don’t play sport anymore and the main rules I follow are the laws - and you don’t want to break those!” Hinekura’s dad said with a chuckle. He noticed the confused look on Hinekura’s face. “A law is a rule that everybody in the country has to follow. If they don’t follow it they could get in trouble with the police.”

“Do you think if I told the police about Bronx I could get him in trouble and put in prison?” Hinekura asked hopefully.

“Kāo. Unfortunately, being rude isn’t against the law,” he replied.

“Well it should be! Who makes the laws? We should tell them!” Hinekura exclaimed.

Hinekura’s dad smiled, “The people in Parliament make the laws.”

“What exactly is Parliament?” Hinekura asked curiously.

“Parliament is a group of people who the country have chosen to make the laws,” Hinekura’s dad said. “You know what? Parliament is actually here in Wellington, not far from your new school. How about we visit tomorrow and you can see for yourself?”

“Yes, please!”

The next afternoon, Hinekura could barely contain herself as they stood on the lawn in front of Parliament. She stared up at three large buildings in awe. One was a round, layered shape with a flag on top. The grey one in the middle was made of stone and had a big set of steps leading up to it. The sandy coloured building on the right looked like a church with its pointy roof and stained glass windows.

“Let’s go in through the Beehive,” Hinekura’s dad said, moving towards the big round building. “No prizes for guessing how it got its name!”

Hinekura laughed as they made their way through the entrance. She spotted some people that looked a bit like police officers up ahead.

“Now we need to go through the security scanners, just like we did at the airport when we flew down from Auckland last week.”



“Why do they need security?” Hinekura asked.

“Well, with some of the most important people in the country working here, like the Prime Minister; they need to make sure no one is bringing in anything dangerous,” he said, pulling everything out of his pockets. “Ok, you go through the scanner first, Hine. I’ll be right behind you.”

As she walked through the scanner, the security officer gave her a big thumbs up. Once her dad was through, the two made their way into the stone building and up two flights of stairs, arriving at yet another scanner.

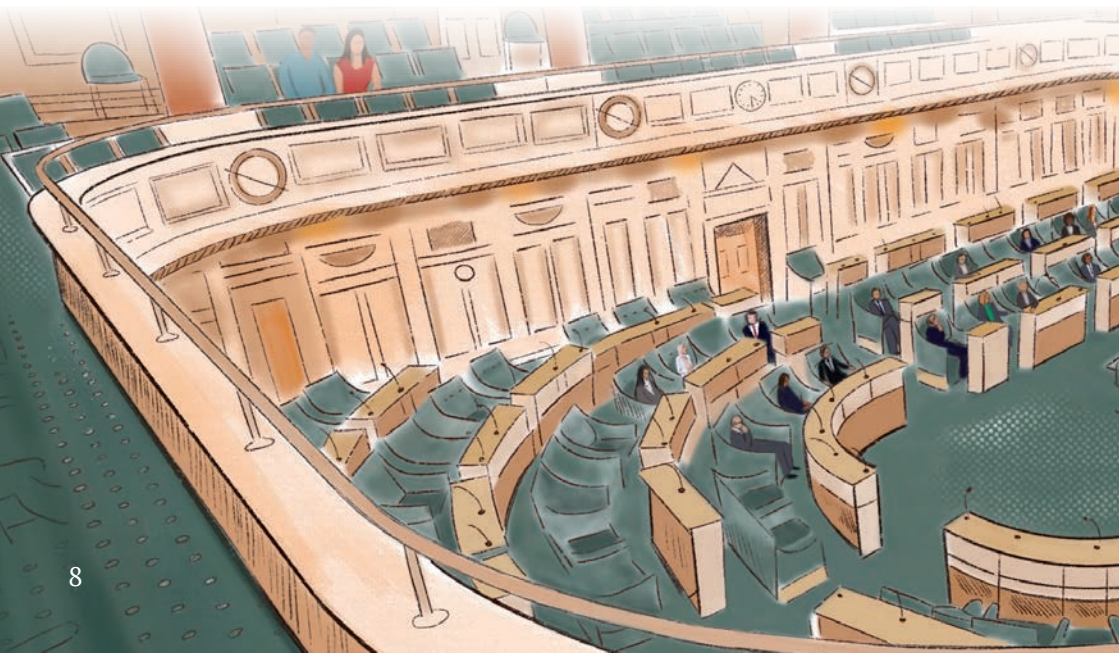
Hinekura’s dad paused before a solid wood door and whispered, “Now, listen Hine, we have to be extra quiet in this next room.”

“Why pāpā?”

“Because some very important people are trying to do mahi in this room.”

“Like the Prime Minister?!” Hinekura asked loudly.

“Shhh, Hine - too loud,” he whispered. “Āe, the Prime Minister should be in here.”

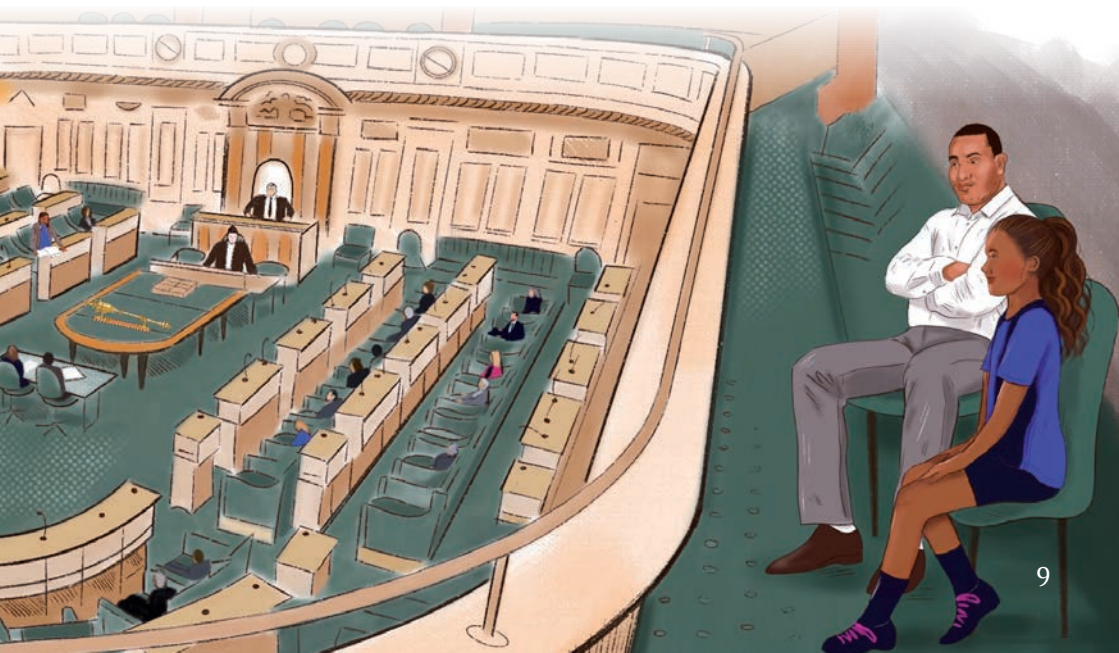


Her dad pulled the door open, and Hinekura was amazed to see they were looking down on a room of very well dressed people sitting in squishy green chairs.

“Without plastic wrap, how are people supposed to keep their food fresh? We will be creating more food waste and making life harder for every single New Zealander with this change!” The man who was speaking sat down in his chair, just as a woman got up to speak.

“The Right Honourable Prime Minister,” said a man in a black robe who sat in a big chair at the front. Hinekura felt a rush of excitement as she spotted the Prime Minister stand to her feet.

“This so-called hardship is minor compared to the good this change will do for the environment. By eliminating single-use plastic wrap, we will reduce the amount of plastic in our oceans, waterways, landfills and streets, leading to a cleaner, greener New Zealand. Stopping the mass production of plastic wrap will also reduce power demands and our need for non-renewable energy sources. If it comes down to choosing between convenience and the planet, I choose the planet every single time Mr Speaker!” The Prime Minister’s passion was clear.





“Hear, hear!” cried the people around her.

“What’s happening, pāpā?” Hinekura whispered.

“They’re debating if we should get rid of single-use plastic wrap, you know like cling film people put over plates of food to keep it from drying out. The voices below them grew louder...

“Oh, come on!”

“This is a get rich quick scheme for their mates making beeswax wraps!”

“Outrageous!”

“ORDER!” the man in the black robe shouted, rising to his feet. Everyone instantly quietened.

“Who is that man sitting in the big chair?”

“That’s the Speaker of the House. He’s a bit like a referee to make sure all the MPs, you know, the members of Parliament follow the rules and don’t get too silly,” Hinekura’s dad explained.

“What does “member” mean?” Hinekura whispered.

“It means they belong to a group, kind of like how you used to be a member of the Rangers football club back in Auckland,” he whispered back. “But all of the members of Parliament are chosen by the people of New Zealand, during the election.”

“Mr Speaker,” the Prime Minister continued, “I think this is an excellent bill and on this third and final reading, I would like to commend it to the House.”

The Speaker rose to his feet and said, “The question is that the motion be agreed to, those in favour say aye.”

“AYE!”

“To the contrary, no,” the Speaker continued.

“NO!”

“The ayes have it,” the Speaker declared.

“No they don’t!” a woman interjected, “I call for a party vote!”

“A party vote has been called. I will ask the Clerk to perform a party vote,” the Speaker announced.

“What are they doing?” Hinekura asked.

“They are voting now. Aye means yes, just like āe in Te Reo. The people down there all belong to different parties, or groups who say yes or no together. Parties are like different teams,” Hinekura’s dad whispered. “Now they are going to record what each party thinks about this law. Should we get rid of single-use plastic wrap, yes or no?”



A woman in front of the Speaker, also wearing a black robe, rose to her feet and called out “Kiwi Party, Tūi Party, Kea Party, Rūrū Party.” As each party name was read out, a different member would stand up and call out a number.

“53 votes in favour!” cried the Kiwi Party representative.

“52 votes opposed!” called a man from the Tūi Party.

“Kea Party, 8 votes in favour!” said a lady.

“7 votes in favour!” said a man from the Rūrū party.

The woman in the black robe, the Clerk, had been writing this down. She turned and handed the Speaker the piece of paper. He examined it for a moment, before standing up to announce, “The ayes are 68, the noes are 52. The motion is agreed to.”

The House erupted in applause as Hinekura asked, “So, does that mean there will be no more cling film at the supermarket now?”

“Not quite yet,” Hinekura’s dad explained. “They still need to get sign off from the Governor-General. When the Governor-General signs it off, then there will be no more plastic wrap.”



“What would happen if more people voted no?” Hinekura asked.

“Well, it wouldn’t become a law,” Hinekura’s dad replied.

“So voting is a way people can decide things fairly if they don’t agree?” Hinekura asked.

“Āe, Hine,” Hinekura’s dad said with a smile. “Far out, you’ve got your māmā’s brains alright! Ok, I think it’s time for us to head back to our whare,” he said, glancing at his watch.

“Māmā!” Hinekura ran to greet her mum as they arrived home.

“Tēna koe i tēnei ahiahi Hine!” Her mum exclaimed, scooping her up into a big hug. “How was Parliament? Did you see the MPs?”

“Yeah, it was cool. They were debating a law which would get rid of cling film!”

“Ah, tino pai,” Hinekura’s mum said as she unwrapped the fish and chips on the dining room table.

“She’s got your smarts alright, she caught on very quickly to how it all worked,” Hinekura’s dad said to her mum.

“Of course she did! Are you feeling better today sweets?” Hinekura’s mum asked.

“Definitely,” Hinekura said, smiling at her dad. “But I can’t play football anymore at school which is dumb,” she said through a mouthful of chips.

“Yeah, your pāpā told me what happened at school, so I picked up something at lunch time.” Hinekura’s mum left the room for a moment, and reappeared with a brand new football.

Hinekura’s eyes widened. “Is that for me?!”

“Sure is, Hine,” said her dad. It was all māmā’s idea - now you can play football without worrying about that bully.”

“Aue! That’s awesome!”



“No playing with that ball until after dinner!” Hinekura’s mum warned. Hinekura ate quickly and went straight outside to play football with her mum, dad, and her brand new ball.

The next morning, Louie spotted Hinekura in the playground before class started.

“Mōrena, Hinekura!”

“Mōrena, Louie! Guess what?”

“What?”

“My parents gave me a football last night!” Hinekura said pulling it out of her backpack.

“Wow! That’s awesome – does that mean you’re going to be running your own game at lunch?” he asked hopefully.

“Sure does. We need to spread the word that we are going to be running our own game at lunch time,” Hinekura said proudly.

The two kicked the ball back and forth with other school mates until the first bell rung. Word quickly spread around their class that Hinekura was going to be running her own game today.

“Ha! No one’s going to want to play with you, no one even knows who you are!” Bronx smirked at Hinekura when he found out.

“We’ll see...” Hinekura smiled back.

At lunch time, Hinekura and Louie met on the field, steering clear of where Bronx usually played.

“I was thinking we could be team captains,” Hinekura said as they kicked the ball between them.

“What, so play against one another?” Louie asked. Hinekura nodded. Louie flashed a smile, as their classmates ran over to join them.



“Louie and I are going to be team captains and take turns choosing players,” Hinekura announced to the large group assembled.

“How do we decide who gets to pick first?” Louie asked.

“Well, we should make it fair, so how about paper, scissors, rock?” Hinekura asked. Louie nodded in agreement.

“...paper ... scissors-“

“What are you guys all doing over here?!” Bronx had arrived.

Hinekura and Louie grinned at Bronx. “We’re playing football of course!”

“Let me play!” Bronx demanded. And then, sheepishly, “I think people didn’t want to walk all the way over to my game because yours is closer to the classroom.”

“No way!” Hinekura was adamant.

“Come on, Louie, I’ve let you play with me heaps of times!” Bronx pleaded.

“That’s true,” Louie said reluctantly. Even though Louie didn’t like Bronx, he always let him join his football matches.

“You should let him play,” one boy cried.

“No, don’t. He’s a cheater!” another yelled.





In a matter of moments everyone was arguing amongst themselves.

“ORDER!” Hinekura shouted. “I know a fair way we can settle this. Thumbs up if you want Bronx to play with us, thumbs down if you don’t.

Everyone did as they were told and Hinekura quickly counted. She looked at Bronx with a big grin as his eyes widened nervously. Hinekura paused for a long moment and looked at Louie...

Then she winked at Bronx, put her own thumb up and cried “And the ãe’s have it!”



TE REO MĀORI GLOSSARY

TE REO MĀORI	ENGLISH
Te Pōti	The Vote
Kāo	No
Āe	Yes
Pāpā	Dad
Māmā	Mum
Tēna koe i tēnei ahiahi Hine	Good afternoon, Hine
Tino pai	Very good
Whare	House

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