

Remember that infamous Toyota ad? Who would have thought the use of the word 'bugger' could have created such a stir, but it did in 1998. Temporarily banned from our screens, it triggered a national debate and then went on to win countless awards both here and overseas. Would it have fuelled the same furore today? Probably not.

Language is always changing. The way we express ourselves reflects our constantly changing and evolving culture.

So four language experts or linguists, Laurie Bauer, Dianne Bardsley, Janet Holmes and Paul Warren have collaborated on a delightful new book, *Q & Eh: Questions and Answers on Language With a Kiwi Twist*.

All four are professional academic linguists and importantly are also expert users of language. They've turned their knowledge into a fascinating, accessible and delightful read for one and all. Their combined wit, wisdom and love of words helps unlock the mysteries of the way we communicate and makes the book a joy to curl up with.

Riddled with contradictions and idiosyncrasies, language world-wide is a complex thing; however, taking a lighter look at it can also be enormously entertaining and the psychology behind it is endlessly fascinating.

Where do 'wowser', 'craw thumper' and the f-word come from? Do New Zealanders mangle the English language? Why do we say 'bald as a badger' when badgers are really hairy?

We may take language and the way we communicate for granted but pick it apart, turn it inside out and it becomes a fascinating object of speculation or conversation topic.



Title: *Q & Eh: Questions and Answers on Language with a Kiwi Twist*

Authors: Laurie Bauer, Dianne Bardsley, Janet Holmes and Paul Warren

RRP: \$39.99

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For more information, or to arrange an author interview, or extract, please contact Jennifer Balle at Random House New Zealand on 09 984 6174 or jballe@randomhouse.co.nz

Q & Eh explores language issues, answering an array of questions, often with a distinctly Kiwi angle. The book breaks the subject into six sections, and this organisation in itself helps us understand the different facets of the everyday tool that language is.

The first part of their book looks at the way we pronounce language: consonants and vowels, accent and intonation, and how what we read influences the way we speak.

Next, they discuss how our language defines us from a social point of view, be it gender issues, age markers or specific group interactions, and also from a psychological angle, examining how children learn to speak and why we make errors.

Individual words, the building blocks of language, are then considered: the quirky and commonplace, from borrowings to obsolescence, to new trends and shape-shifters.

Part four starts putting words together again with affixes and compounds, phrases and sentences.

In part five the many different forms of English around the world are discussed as well as the way other languages impact upon our world.

And finally, spelling and punctuation are tackled, including the question of whether these really matter.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Laurie Bauer, Paul Warren and Janet Holmes teach linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington where Dianne Bardsley is Director of the New Zealand Dictionary Centre. They contribute a popular language column to *The Dominion Post* that has been running for several years and also they appear regularly on *National Radio*.



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