



The Book of New Zealand Records and Firsts - Stephen Barnett

Published by Scholastic, RRP \$17.00

Young people will find plenty to spark their interest in this fascinating collection of New Zealand records. Many of the achievements have been completed in the past decade.

The author delivers a vast amount of facts without information overload. Chapters are divided into topics such as fastest, deepest, longest; biggest and most; unusual records; and New Zealand firsts.

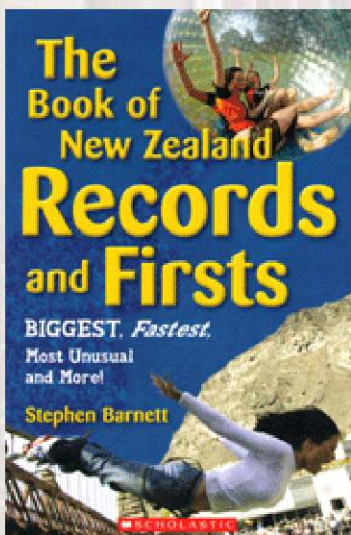
Many undertakings involve years of training and courage. Like freedivers Niki Roderick and William Trubridge who dive to incredible depths on just one breath of air. Or Wellington man Tony Adams who overcame severe disability as a child to set a world record for tap dancing at 610 taps a minute.

Some firsts are amazing inventions, like the world's first amphibious car developed by Alan Gibbs. Or the jetpack built by Glenn Martin that straps onto a person's back and allows the pilot to fly at up to 100kph. Other bright ideas involved the community. The world's largest canned food structure was built by Wellington secondary school students. 54,527 cans were collected by local students, then arranged to spell out 'i can'. Afterwards, all the cans were donated to charities.

Unusual records include bizarre endeavours such as Skye who bent her body through an unstrung tennis racket three times in 12.4 seconds. Maurice Bennett is a unique artist who uses thousands of slices of toast to assemble life-like portraits.

The book's eye-catching design is matched with bold headings and lots of photos. It's an intriguing assortment of accomplishments and a handy homework resource.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett.



Promoting the enjoyment of children's literature.