



When Vic learnt about healthy, comfortable and energy-efficient homes

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Illustrations by Suxuan Tian



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation who are the Traditional Custodians of the unceded lands that form the backdrop of this story. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia who are the first storytellers of the lands on which this book was written. We honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuous connection to Country, and their intimate connection to the land, waters, animals, plants and communities.

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Mural on page 'Heerlen' after work by Daniel Mac Lloyd (2018)
(<http://danielmacloyd.com/wpArt1/murals/>).

First published in 2024

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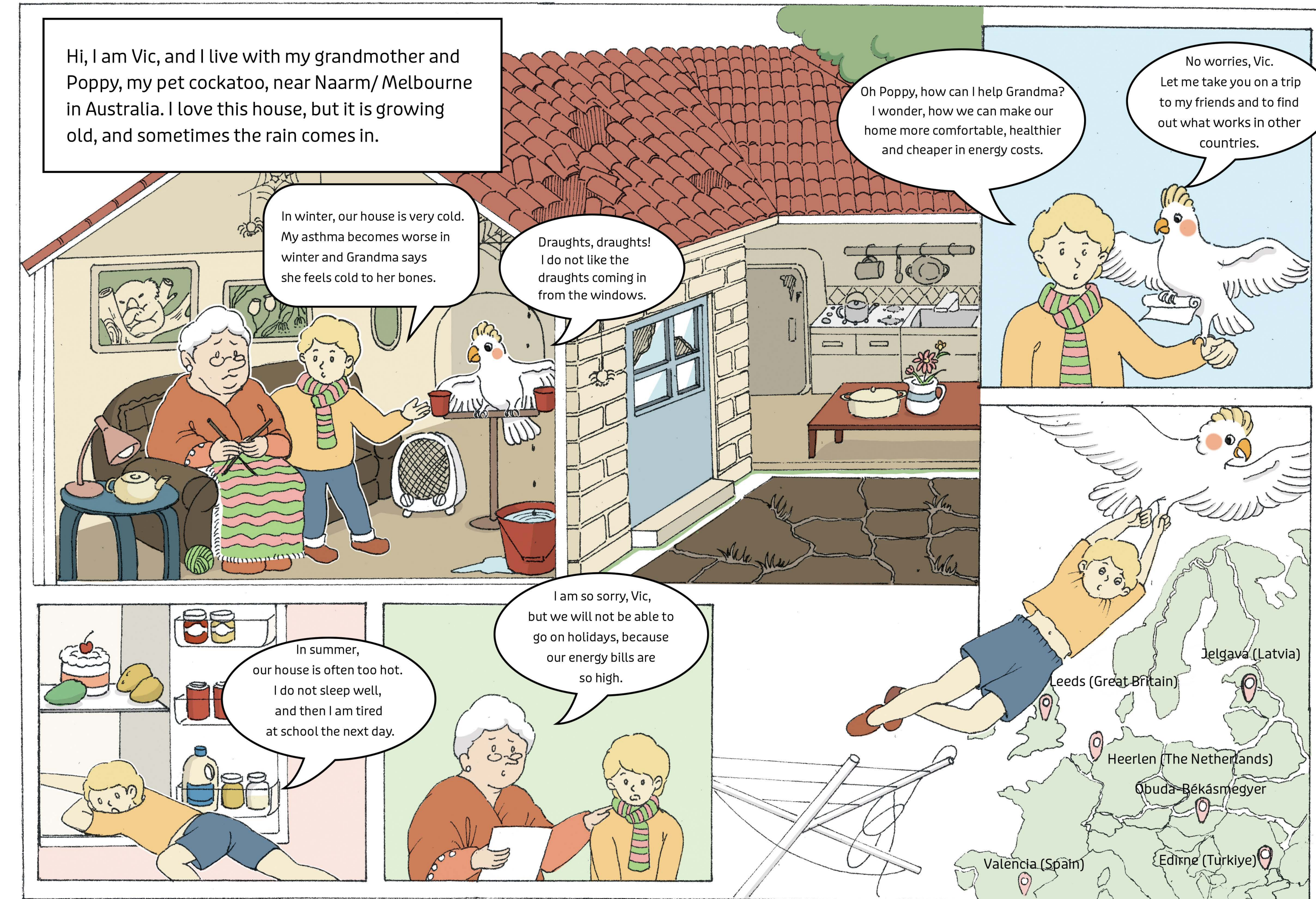
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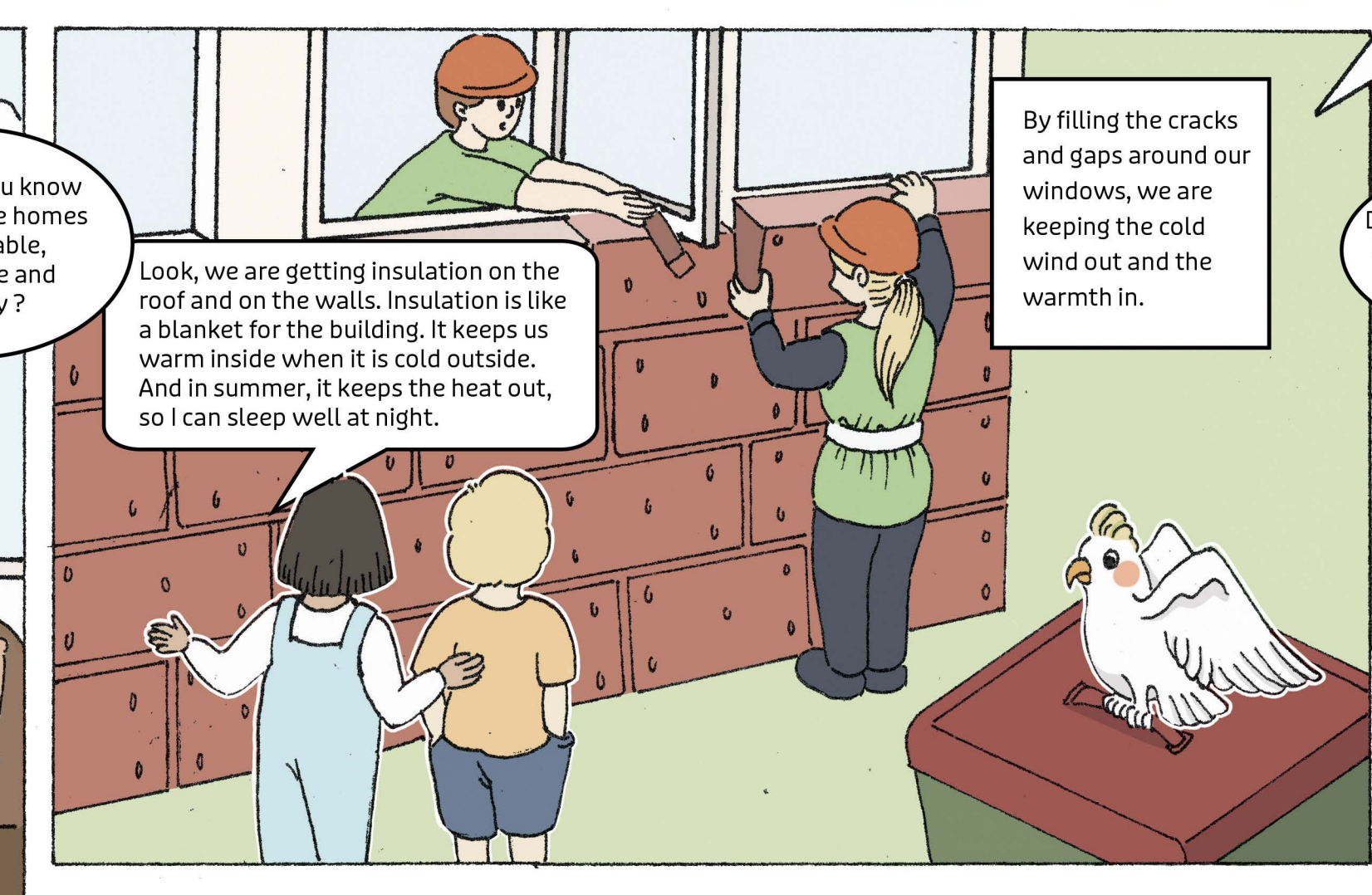
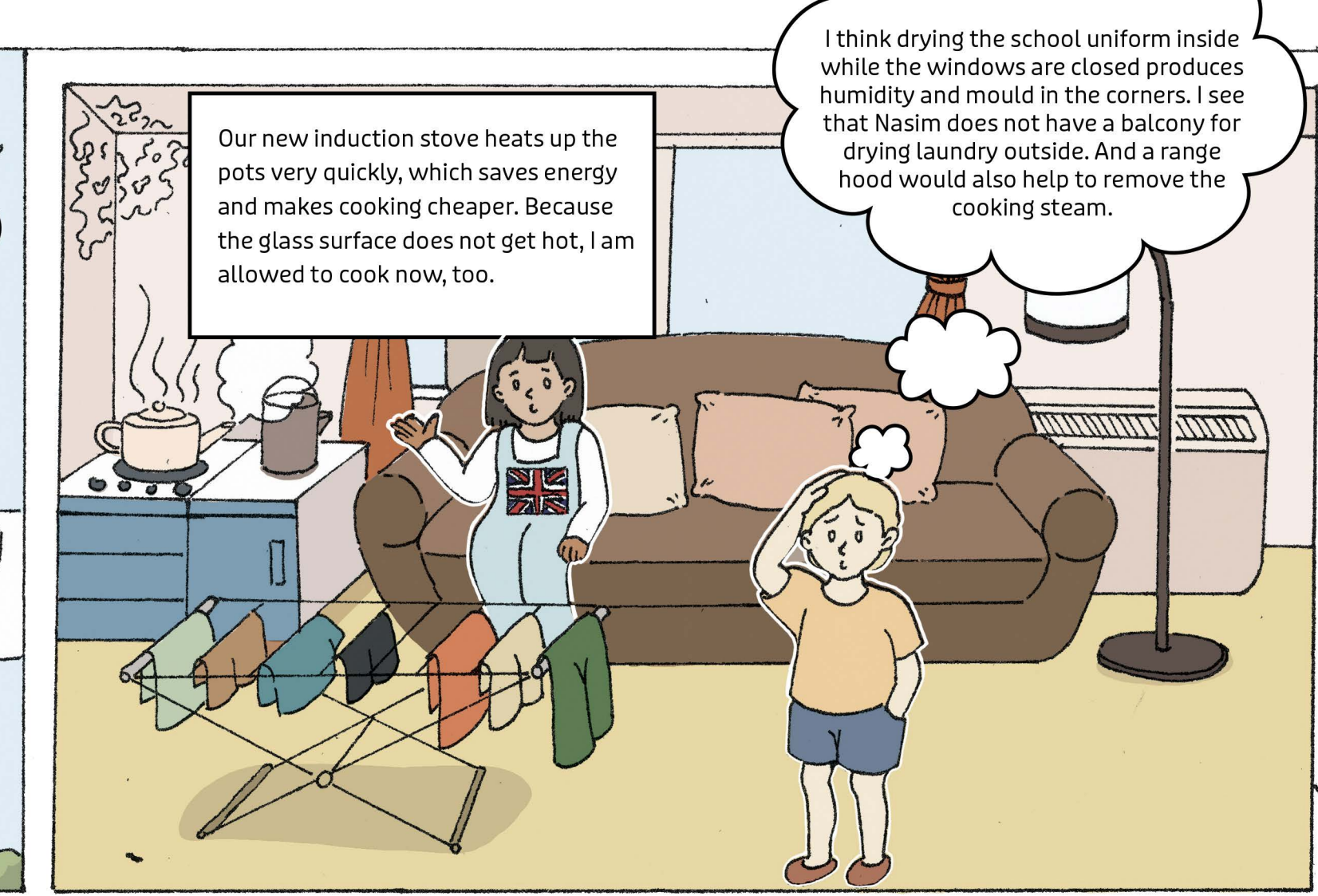
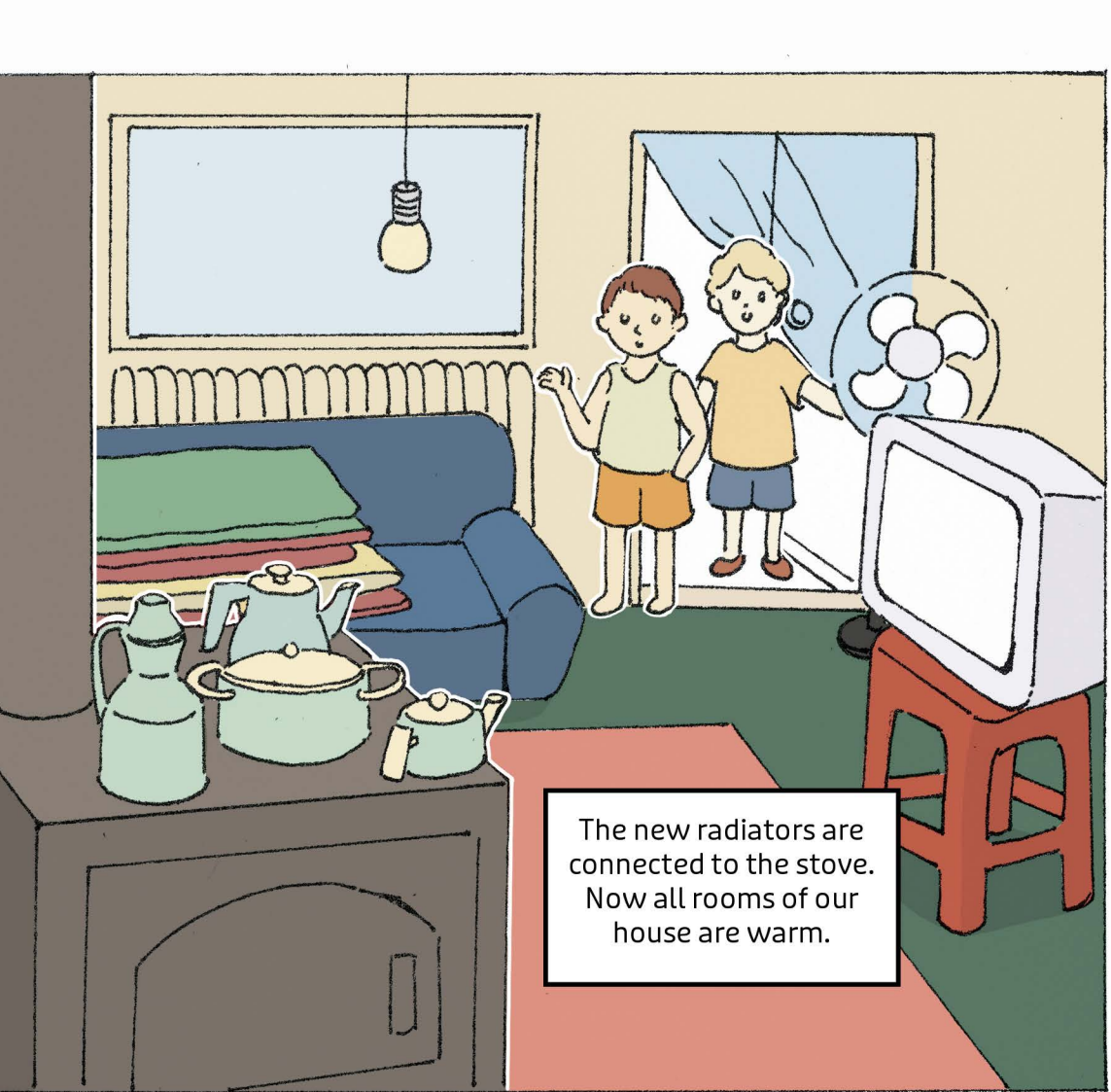
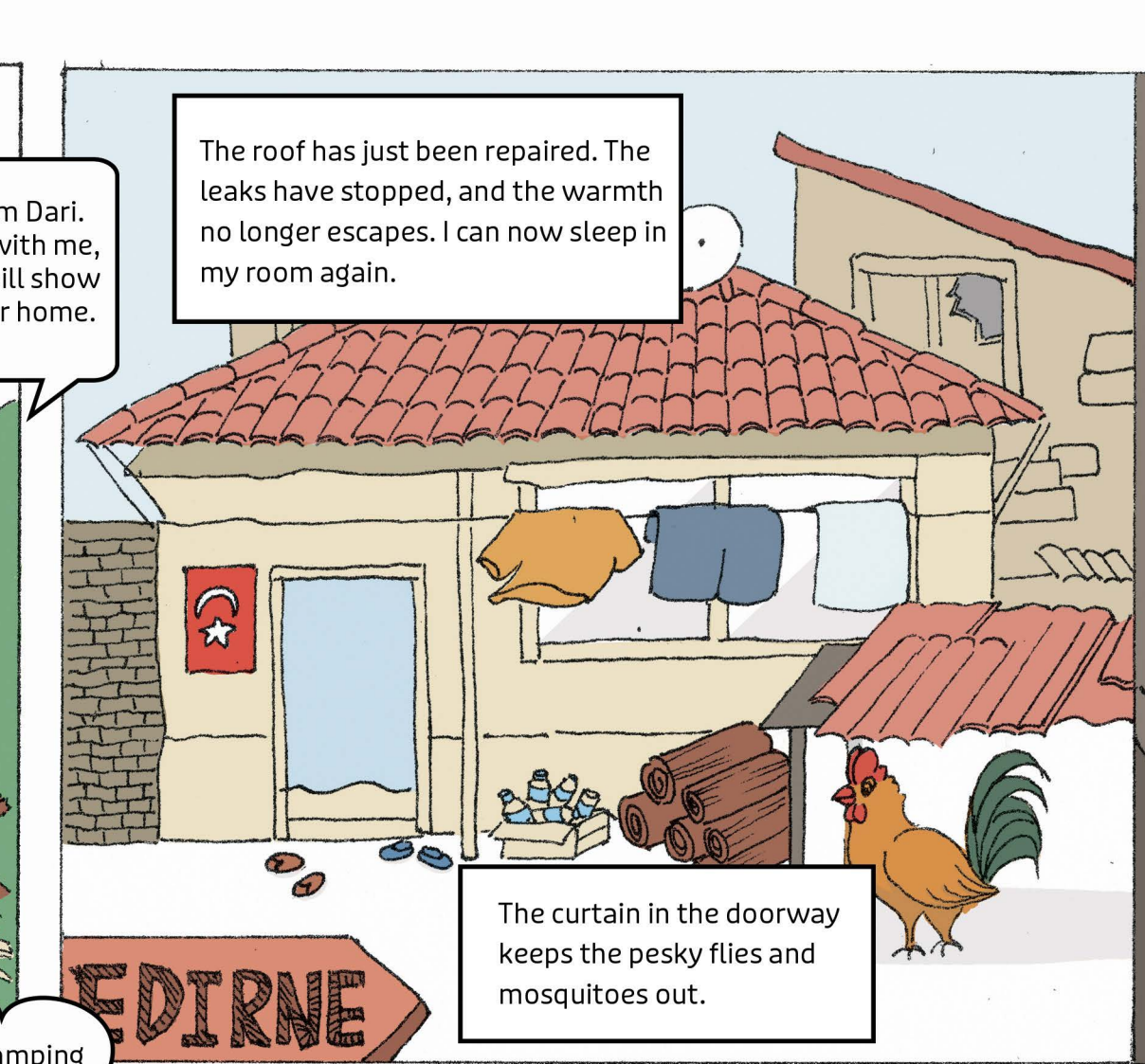
Authors' Note

This book aims to empower children and their parents to better understand energy stress and how it may be reduced. The term energy stress, sometimes also called energy or fuel poverty, captures the limited access to energy in the home that is essential for a dignified life. Energy stress is a form of social inequality and a risk to health and wellbeing in Australia and around the world.

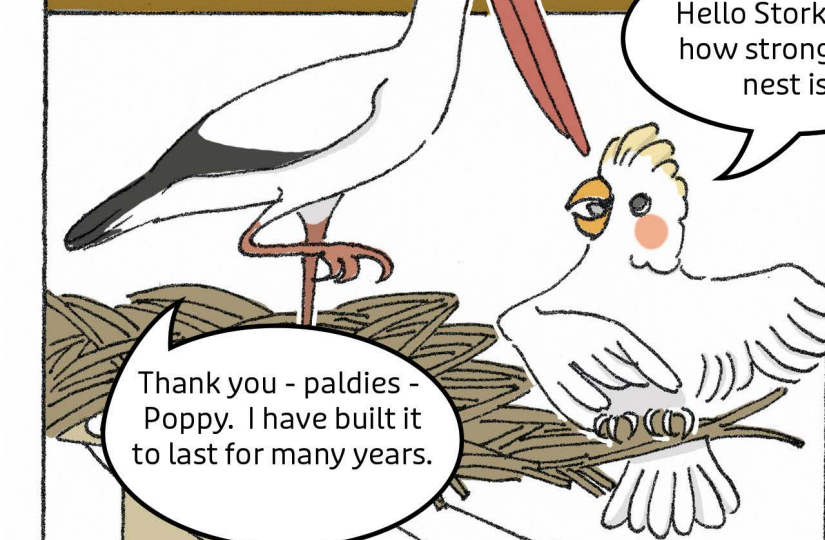
Energy stress can be reduced in varied ways, which include improvement of housing quality and more efficient appliances, access to self-generated electricity, mindful energy use and income support. However, recognition of energy stress, acknowledgement of its physical, social and mental impacts and awareness of how this problem can be addressed is often low.

For children in energy stress, reading about other kids in similar situations can be affirming. For children who have adequate access to energy, learning about less fortunate children can build empathy and understanding. For parents, this book offers objective information on the situational causes of energy stress and may help start discussions with their children about how households can be lifted out of energy stress through comprehensive and collective actions.





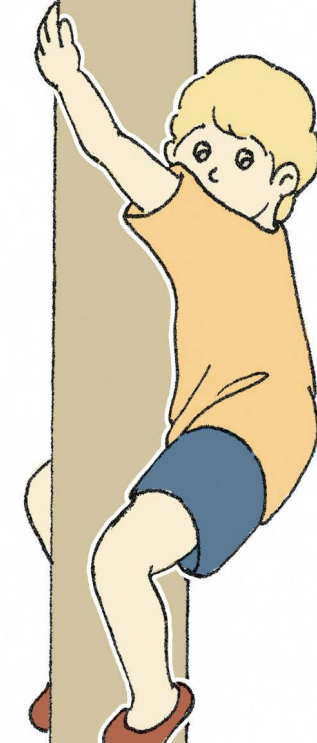
JELGAVA



Hello Stork, I like how strong your nest is.

Thank you - paldies - Poppy. I have built it to last for many years.

Hi, do you know how to reduce energy costs and how to make homes comfortable and healthy?



Hi, I am Lauris. I can tell you a bit about my home.

The LED lighting products in our home produce light much more efficiently than the old glowing bulbs with a tiny wire in them. They also last longer. This saves electricity and costs.

These windows are double-glazed. The air between the two sheets of glass keeps the heat in during winter and out during summer. It also keeps the noise out, so I can concentrate on my homework.

Our new fridge is very energy efficient. The seals are tight so that the cool air does not escape. And when I forget to close the door, the alarm calls me back quickly.

It is very hot inside although it is so cold outside. Lauris told me that the radiators do not have controls.

Since they have blocked their ventilation shafts to keep out the smoke from the neighbours, they have a lot of water vapour in the air from bathing and drying laundry. This can cause mould, which is unhealthy.

Come back soon and tell me what you have found out!

Naughty Poppy!

Poppy! Stop chewing through the telephone wires!



Óbuda

Lovely seeing you again, Poppy. And thank you - köszönöm szépen. This tree hollow used to belong to Squirrel. It is dry and warm, and I can easily protect my eggs.

No, but I will take you to Miska, who often visits me here in the park.

Good evening, Owl. I like your new nest.

That sounds perfect. Do you know how to make human homes perfect, too?

Our washing machine is water and energy efficient. It uses less water than older machines, which means it saves on energy to heat the water. And our clothes get clean even if we wash in cold water.

This display is connected to our smart electricity meter. We can see how much electricity we are using at any time and how much we have spent for the day. This helps us manage our energy use and costs.

Oh, it is very hot inside. I think this is because the windows do not have shading. The sun comes straight in through the glass and heats up the home.

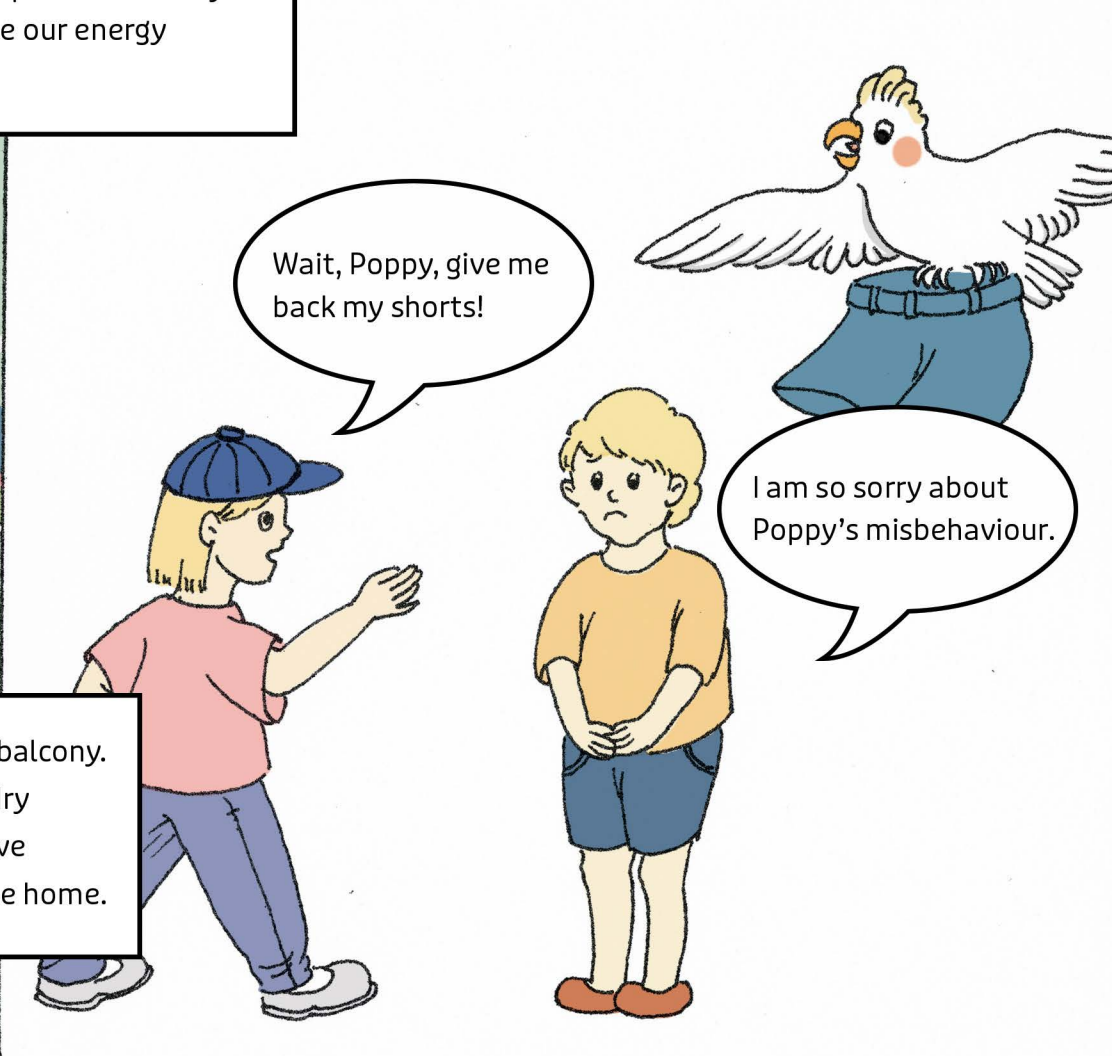
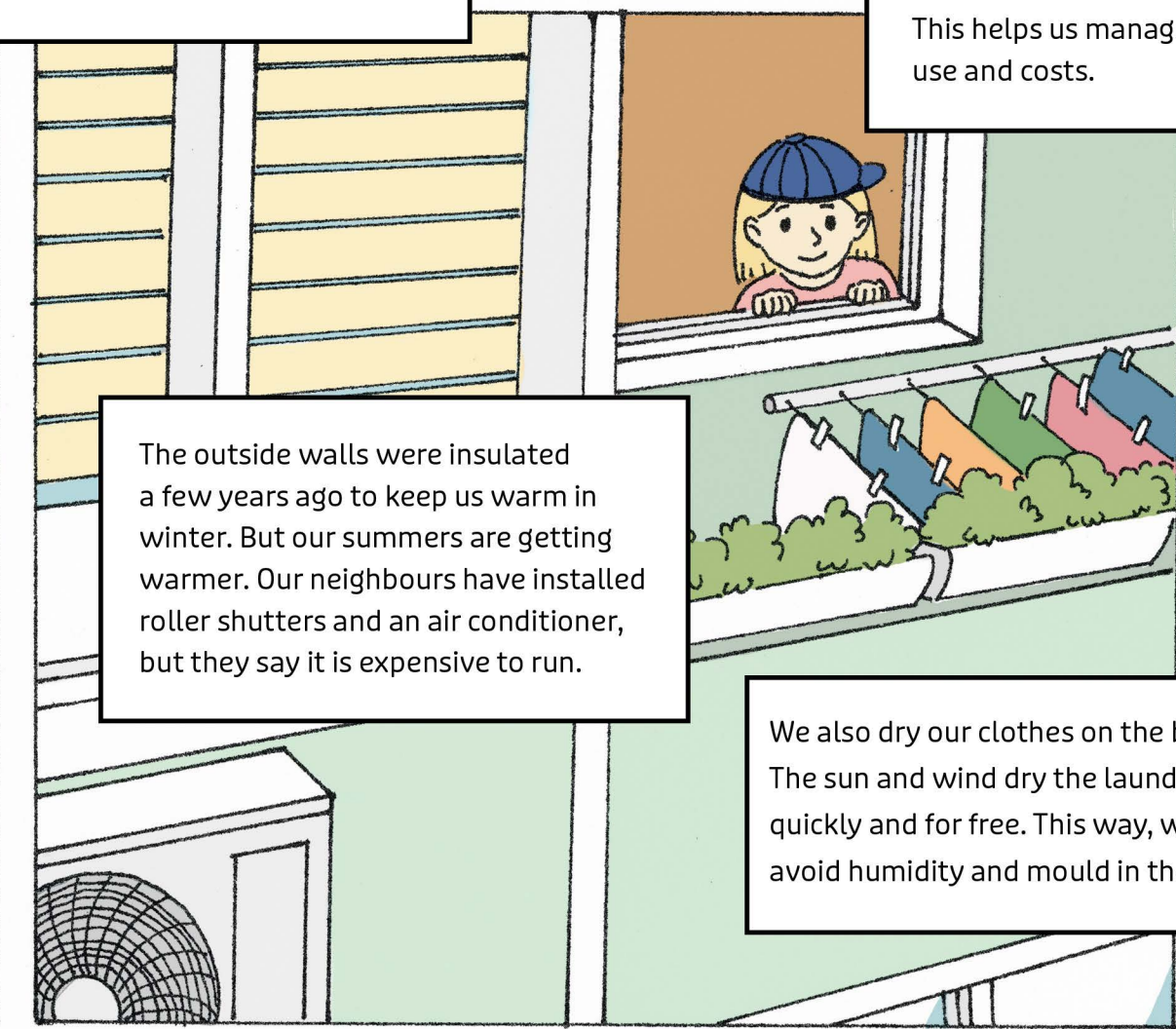
Hello Vic, I can show you our apartment over there. It is not perfect, but we have made a few improvements recently.

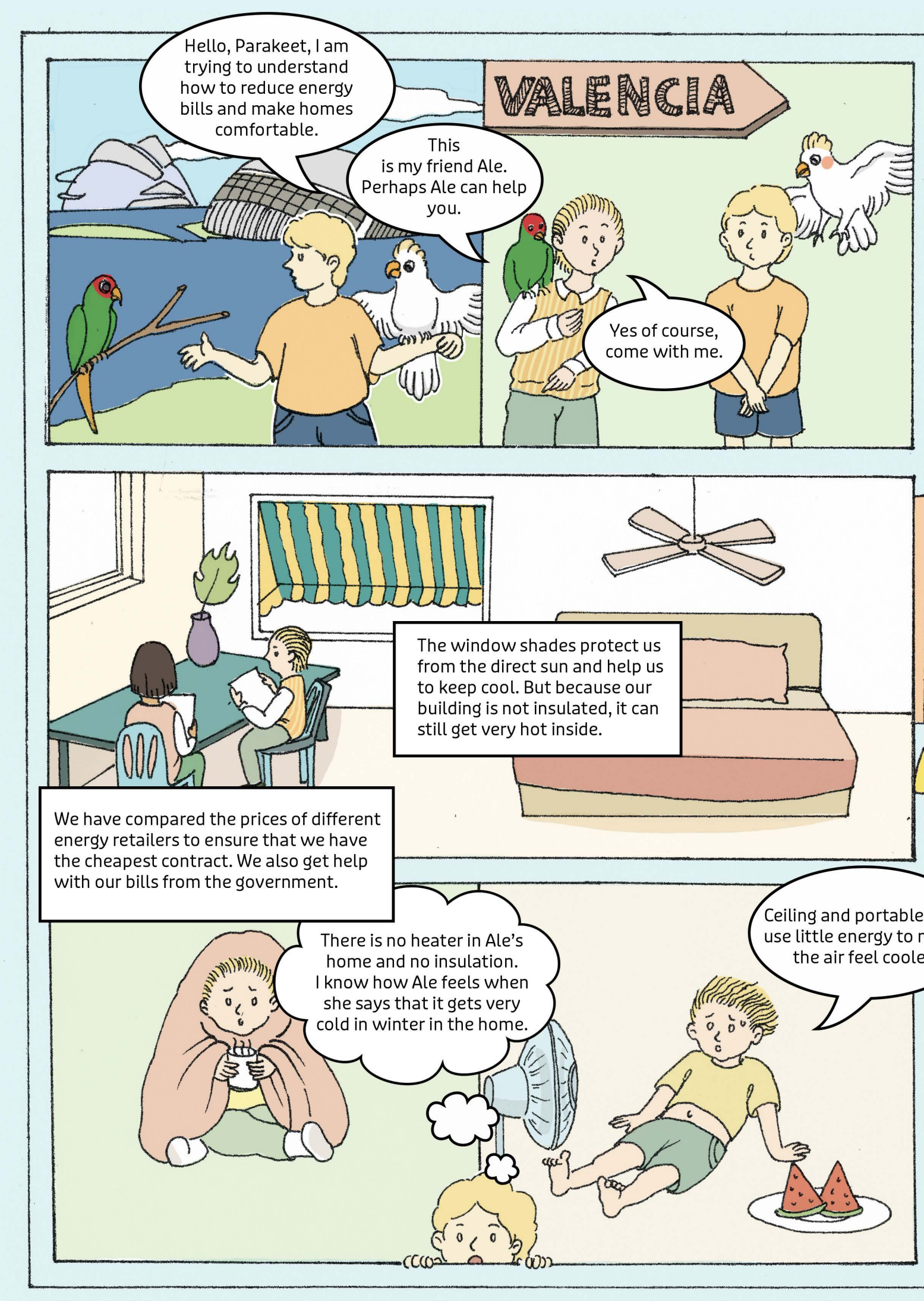
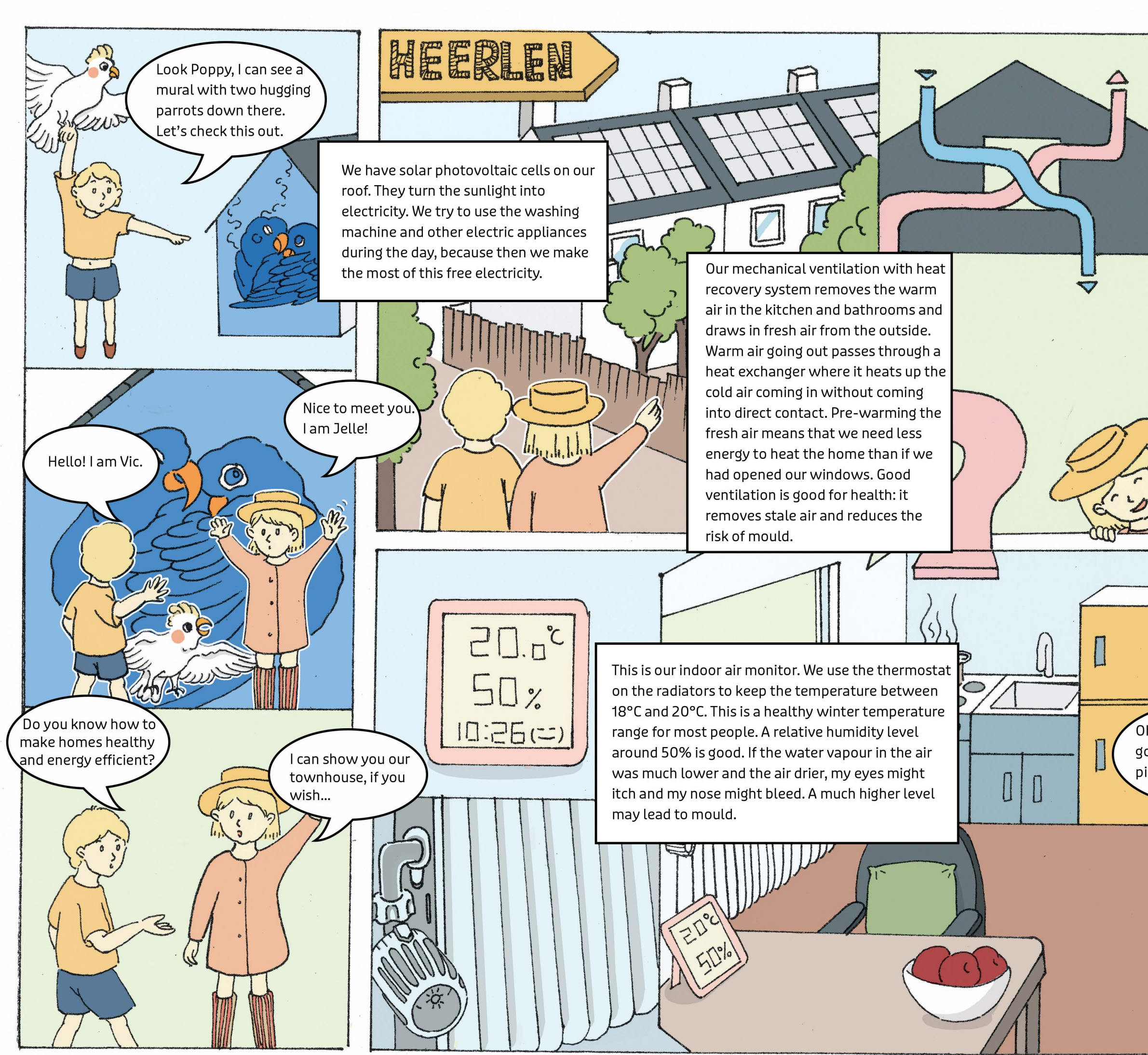
The outside walls were insulated a few years ago to keep us warm in winter. But our summers are getting warmer. Our neighbours have installed roller shutters and an air conditioner, but they say it is expensive to run.

We also dry our clothes on the balcony. The sun and wind dry the laundry quickly and for free. This way, we avoid humidity and mould in the home.

Wait, Poppy, give me back my shorts!

I am so sorry about Poppy's misbehaviour.





Back home, Vic and Grandma make many improvements to their home based on what Vic has learnt.

The added insulation material between the timber studs in the walls and rafters in the ceiling reduces the heat flow through the building elements.

Solar photovoltaic cells work best when facing the sun and in an unshaded area of the roof.

A reverse cycle air conditioner is an energy-efficient way of heating and cooling a home.

Double-glazed windows offer good insulation.

Induction stoves can boil water faster than other types of cooktops.

Ceiling fans often come in combination with LED lights.

Flyscreens can be easily removed for cleaning.

A vegetated pergola offers shade in summer. In winter, when there are no leaves, the sun can still enter through the windows and warm the house.

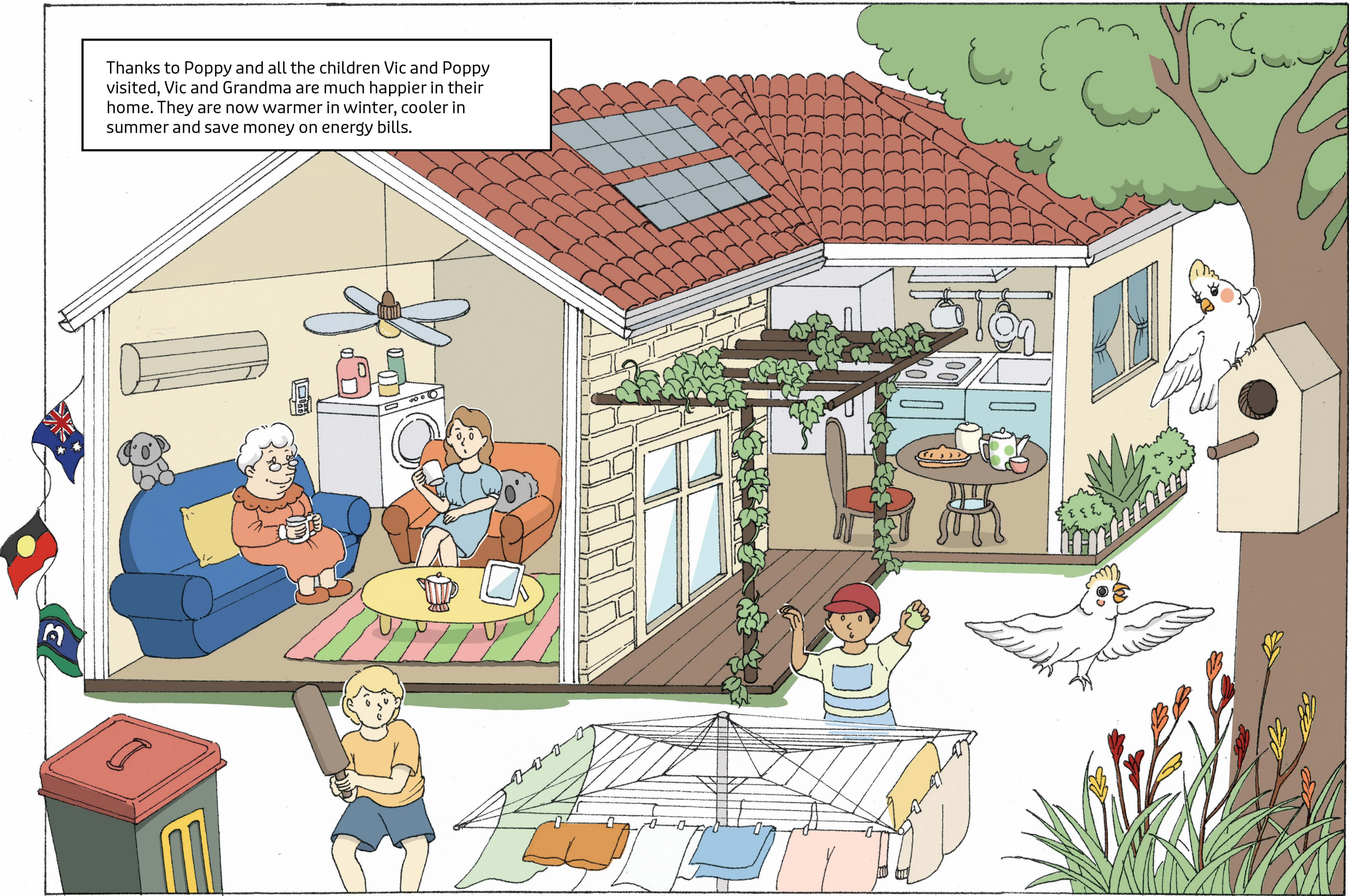
Thank you for helping me find a cheaper energy contract. And the energy concessions will lower my bills even more.

Dear Poppy, I hope this nest box will also make you warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

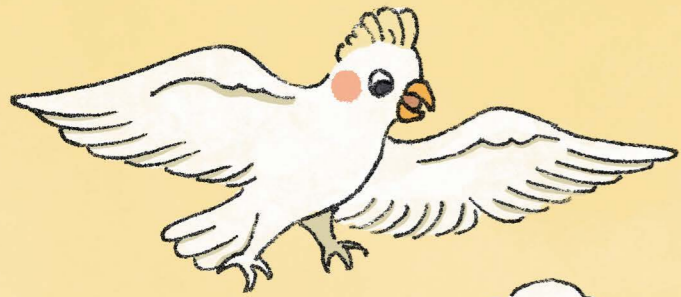
The star ratings on fridges and washing machines show the energy efficiency of an appliance. The more stars, the better.

The Hills Hoist is a clothesline that takes up little space. It rotates in the wind, so that the laundry dries quickly.

Thanks to Poppy and all the children Vic and Poppy visited, Vic and Grandma are much happier in their home. They are now warmer in winter, cooler in summer and save money on energy bills.



thank you!



To cite: Willand N, Middlemiss L and Tian S (2024) *When Vic learnt about healthy, comfortable and energy-efficient homes*, RMIT University, Melbourne.

