



NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2016

DATABASE: 6397 WHANAU CARERS

*Tena Koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei, Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri, Greetings to all!*

## From the National Office

### News Flash

It is with heart breaking sadness I have to inform you that after the April newsletter these will no longer be able to be sent out on snail mail. The reasons for this are:

- \* These cost \$30,000 (yes \$30,000) per year to produce and post and postage costs are going up again. Plus mail deliveries have been cut back to three times per week.
- \* We have been mailing in excess of 2100 per month. Even cutting back to 3 times a year would not help.
- \* The extreme difficulty in getting funding for these. Put frankly we do not have the ongoing funding and we need to cut costs.

They will still be available on our web site and delivered via email. I am gutted it has come to this but needs be as needs must. This has affected me deeply as I know how much you our members love and rely on them but we live in a changing world.



We encourage those without emails/ computers to please go to their local library or friends houses to check them out on our web site.

Should we obtain ongoing funding for these then we would

reinstate them, but at present it is not a viable option.

This action has not been taken lightly I can assure you.



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Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Winner



**Anne Tolley 7 April, 2016**

## **The Future of Child Protection and Care**

E nga mana, e nga reo, e te iwi o te motu, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.  
Good morning everyone and thank you for coming along today to hear about the future for care and protection in New Zealand.

Can I acknowledge MSD Chief Executive Brendan Boyle for hosting this event today. Also the other chief executives from the Vulnerable Children's Board, who have been so supportive.

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone who has played a part in helping create the framework for a new operating model to support our vulnerable children and young people into their teens and beyond. It's a year since I announced that there would be a complete overhaul of Child, Youth and Family, led by an independent expert panel chaired by Dame Paula Rebstock. Since that time the panel has delivered a compelling case for change in its interim report, while just before Christmas it delivered its final business case, which included 81 recommendations.

Today I want to talk you through the Government's response to that final report, and the major changes that will take place over the next few years in care and protection, as we take radical steps to provide a system that works for the long-term needs of children, and that supports staff and caregivers. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the vital role that everyone has played up to this point. The expert panel, the youth advisory panel made up of young people with experience of state care, the Maori Reference Group, the Practice Reference Group, Office of the Children's Commissioner, Fostering Kids, NGOs, experts, and the secretariat and its members from various agencies who did such

hard work behind the scenes.

We all know it has been, and will continue to be, a huge challenge and a very emotional experience. I especially want to thank the brave, intelligent and inspiring young people who gave up their time to give me and the expert panel a first-hand insight into our care system. Many is the time they had me in tears in my office at the Beehive after they shared their experiences. This is happening to us, they said, but no one ever asks what we want or what is best for us. They told me that above all else they want a loving, safe and stable home and a chance for a bright future.

And that is what they, and all of the vulnerable children and young people in this country deserve. They are in this position through no fault of their own.  
They deserve better.

There is no doubt that we need wholesale change. In its first six months the panel took an in-depth look at the current system and the long-term outcomes for vulnerable young people. A study found that by the age of 21, for children with a care placement who were born in the 12 months to June 1991:

- Almost 90 per cent are on a benefit
- Around 25 per cent are on a benefit with a child
- Almost 80 per cent do not have NCEA Level 2
- More than 30 per cent have a Youth Justice referral by age 18
- Almost 20 per cent have had a custodial sentence
- Almost 40 per cent have had a community sentence

The panel concluded that the agency is not effective in intervening early to provide the

support that these children and young people deserve, and that demand for CYF services has increased as a result of children re-entering the system on multiple occasions. 64 per cent of the 61,000 children notified to CYF in 2014 had a previous notification.

The average age of children placed with family is 7 to 8 years old and they have already had an average of 7 to 8 care placements by this stage. We already knew from a previous workload review that around fifty per cent of staff time is spent on administration.

On top of this the panel found that:

- less than 25 per cent of CYF staff work directly with children in need of care and protection, and
- Less than 1 per cent of staff have a dedicated professional support role, such as psychologists and therapists.

Quite simply the current system is not delivering effectively for vulnerable children and young people. It is not allowing our social workers to do their job, which should be spending most of their time supporting vulnerable children and families.

So that's the bad news.

Here's the good news. We are going to do something about it. Transformational change is going to take place.

Remember, this is not just another restructure and a quick-fix. I said a year ago that we weren't going to tinker around the edges. We promised radical change and that is what we are going to deliver over the next five years.

Cabinet has agreed to major reforms of state care in this country and a complete overhaul of CYF to a new model which will be completely child-centred, and a focus on five core services – prevention, intensive intervention, care support services, transition support and a youth justice service aimed at preventing reoffending.

Currently, funding, services and strategies for supporting vulnerable children is scattered across multiple agencies, and also within those agencies. It is complex and fragmented, difficult to navigate for children, whanau and decision

makers, and there is no accountability for poor results.

By the end of March next year, a new operating model will be in place, which will act as a single point of accountability so that one agency is responsible for the long-term well-being of these vulnerable children and young people. So instead of simply reacting to a crisis, it will focus on harm prevention and ensuring these young people go on to lead successful lives.

A social investment approach using actuarial valuations to identify highest needs and risks will support targeted early interventions to ensure that these children receive the care and support they need, when they need it.

Targeted funding up front should reduce the social cost for these young people and our communities, as well as the long-term financial cost to taxpayers. To allow funding to follow the child, the new model will also have the ability to directly purchase vital services such as health, education, trauma and counselling support, so that these young people can have timely access to the assistance they need without any hold-ups, allowing them to recover and thrive.

Our staff, and our children, shouldn't have to negotiate with providers when a service is urgently required. Services could be purchased from DHBs, education providers, NGOs, and specialist services such as psychologists. Some of the funding for this approach could be reallocated in future years from relevant departments.

The challenge for the NGOs here today is to think about how you can contribute to this new way of working. Above everything, the new system will put the needs of the child at the very centre of everything it does. We say it happens at the moment, but in reality it doesn't. All decisions need to be made in the short and long-term best interest of the child.

And these young people need to have a voice. They deserve to be heard in the decision-making process of service provision, represented in planning and strategy decisions that affect them, and they need to be able to advocate for their rights through an understanding of their expectations of the system.

To allow this to happen, New Zealand's first ever independent youth advocacy service will be launched, effective from the end of March next year. It will be funded in partnership with the philanthropic sector and is currently under design. I'm also delighted to say that my Youth Advisory Panel will be re-established to provide advice and feedback as work continues over the next year on transforming the operating system.

Earlier we talked about children having as much as 8 different care placements by the time they are seven years old. That is heartbreaking.

One of the things that the expert panel found, and which we heard from the youth panel, was that each individual move brings trauma for the child. The panel talk about a "Professional Practice Framework" – it must be a trauma-informed practice that heals as well as protects these vulnerable children, while being consistent across all agencies. The aim of the new model will be to ensure these young people live and thrive in a loving and stable home as soon as possible.

The focus on prevention will support families to develop a loving and stable relationship with their children and prevent young people from offending. Intensive intervention, where there are concerns for the safety or well-being of children and young people, must prioritise children's need for stable loving care at the earliest opportunity.

Children who cannot live and thrive with their birth parents need to develop a loving and stable relationship with another family as soon as possible, and we need more of these loving families to put their hand up and open their homes to these vulnerable kids.

You'll be aware we are working on a strategy for attracting more quality caregivers. Under the new model there will be intensive targeted support for caregivers, including some increased financial assistance and much better access to support services. To balance that, for the first time, mandatory National Care Standards will be introduced so that there is a clear expectation for the standard and quality of care in placement homes. Work on those changes will continue this year.

Of course, our staff are vital. They need a system that allows them to do their job – and which gives them more time to support vulnerable children and families. The new model will be a single point of entry for identifying and assessing the needs of vulnerable children, young people and their families, so that intensive intervention can be provided.

It will have a professional practice framework that is system wide and will support professional judgment through guidance on trauma, building resilience, attachment and child development, as well as addressing factors likely to cause criminal behaviour and other drivers of offending, and ensure there is access to therapeutic services. And so that we can prevent harm, trauma and offending, we will need a suitably trained workforce, which will require staff with a greater range of specialist skills.

Social workers would still be the main professionals responsible for carrying out functions under the Children Young Persons & their Families Act, however there will be flexibility for the new leadership to allow other professionals to play a role, as the expertise within the new model is widened.

For example, if a high and complex needs specialist such as a psychologist or paediatrician is assessing a child and identifies a need for care and protection to ensure the child's immediate safety, then they would be able to seek the appropriate declaration from the court, rather than having to go through the social worker, who currently is the only person with legal power to prepare and present the affidavit and other documents at court.

This would mean that action would be able to be taken sooner to keep a child safe, by cutting down on bureaucracy and allowing the specialist to make a detailed and informed case to court, and reducing any risk of any misinterpretation.

These changes are still subject to final Cabinet approval. We can't underestimate the scale of For young people in care, the Government is their parent. What parent would throw their the changes which will take place over the next few years. Currently the organisation is focused

on crisis management, and reacts to crises.

We'll need to see a major culture change and a huge shift in thinking within the new model, which will instead focus on harm prevention and the long-term outcomes for young people. That's something similar to the Policing Excellence model, where New Zealand Police successfully embedded a new culture within its organisation focusing on preventing rather than simply reacting to crime.

This won't happen overnight, Policing Excellence took four years to implement, but it represents a much smarter and common sense approach, which will have much better results for our children. The majority of children known to CYF are Maori, and if we are to ensure better lives for these vulnerable children we must address this over-representation. This has to be a top priority for the new model, with high aspirations and targets. It will require a changed approach, careful but deliberate, that encourages and supports greater innovation and new approaches.

There is a need to establish an ongoing work stream that brings together qualified academics, social service providers, iwi and Whanau Ora to enhance existing knowledge and supports, and to develop new ways of working effectively alongside building strategic partnerships with iwi groups. The harsh fact is that currently 6 out of ten children in care are Maori. We must and will do better for these kids.

I have one radical change left to tell you about child out of the house when they turn 17? But that is what happens at the moment. And think of the trauma that these young people will already have experienced in their lives. I'm a mother and a grandmother. My children were nowhere near ready to go out into the world and fend for themselves at that age.

We need to give them a chance. I'm pleased to say that legislation will be passed this year which will raise the age of state care to a young person's 18th birthday. But that is still very young to be out on your own, so options will also be developed to allow some young people to remain or return to care up to age 21, with some kind of support in place, depending on needs, up to age 25. We cannot give up on these young people so

soon. Because of early trauma they often need a bit more time to catch up with education and social development. If they need some kind of support to go on to lead successful lives then we need to look at how that could be provided.

So what will success look like? Better lives for children in care and fewer of them!

There are big changes and huge challenges ahead. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a world class care and protection system for our most vulnerable young New Zealanders. Yes, it will require extra funding, and that is being addressed in the usual Budget process.

But it also needs determination to succeed and to drive these changes through. I'm certainly not lacking in that, and I know that everyone here has the same passion to deliver a better life now and in the future for our vulnerable children. Strong leadership of the new model is absolutely crucial. The State Services Commission will provide advice in the next few weeks on the structure to support the model. Following Cabinet agreement on this a recruitment process will begin for new leadership.

I know there has been a lot to take in this morning. As you read the expert panel's report you'll see it goes further than today's announcements. There are some parts of the report that we are looking a little deeper into and Cabinet will make more decisions as we get more information. We have to do this right and that means we won't rush into anything until we're sure it's the right move.

I urge you to read the report and the relevant cabinet papers which are all on the MSD website. We've also made available to you today a question and answer section and a fact sheet with a timeline of the work ahead of us. As you work through this material I have no doubt you will have some questions. I'm happy to work with you and MSD over the next couple of months to set up some group meetings so we can sit down together and exchange ideas on how you can keep contributing to this valuable work.

This is only the beginning.

Thank you for the work you've done to date and thanks in advance for all of the hard work to come in the months and years ahead.

# Grand's reflections...

## Pecking Order

### Discussion with Young Grandson About Heaven

He asks me what heaven looks like. I said I expect it's a lovely place, but as no one I know has been there and come back to tell me about it, I really have no idea. Grandson replies after a moment of thought, "Well Nana, when you get there can you send me a txt and let me know". Gorgeous eh?

### Little Darlings

It's after dinner and I've had G & H for over 10 years now so they know they are on dishes duty after dinner. I'm sitting back watching the news with my cup of tea and they are both bickering over their duties in the kitchen. It goes rather quiet and I think hmmm what's up? But I sit and wait a while because I didn't hear a crash so nothing could be broken. Then I hear my grandson say "Well grandma growls us all the time but she still loves us."

### Clever Cookie

Miss 7 needs a wee hand with her basic facts for Maths so thought we would keep it simple.

On Saturday morning having breakfast with Miss 7 and Poppa asked her if she would like a hot cross bun. Miss 7 took 1 and was eating it when I asked her, if poppa had 6 buns and you took 1 how many were left. Miss 7 said 3 so I repeated the question and still 3 was the answer. I must have given her the look of where did the answer come from. Miss 7 then said to us "Poppa had 6 buns, he ate 2 and I took 1, so it leaves 3". Correct and I can now see where the answer of 3 came from as I was expecting 5 as the answer.

I have had little Miss Nataya for over three years now. She knows who her real mum is, which is my daughter. She addresses her as Tiffany mum. Now right up to a month ago I am nana mum and my husband is poppa dad. Then my new grand daughter was born. We went to Middlemore to visit the beautiful little bundle and she was a 9 pounder. I said come to nana to babe as I held her. Nataya has been fine with my daughter in law having a baby. Nataya knew she was a girl. She would say to me Kayla has a pipi in her tummy. But from that day I'm now called mum. Her mum is fine with it. But she had sorted out the pecking order. This little angel is not silly. She will be five in July.

### Update

You have previously published my story about our little girl who had both her legs amputated when she was 5.

She is 8 now and loving life and school.

We get to take her to Raglan for the Halberg Trust surfing day. She gets to try surfing, paddle boarding and Amar Waka. It's an awesome feeling watching her try new things or finding ways to do things we take for granted like getting dressed, her arms don't bend so simple tasks become near impossible for her. Have you ever tried to feed yourself or put a top on with straight arm's. ....give it a go. ...it's not as easy as you think. I'm inspired by this little girl who thinks outside the box for everything.

So this weekend she gets to try a whole new world of water sports. I'm not sure who's more excited, me or her. She's always been a water baby, so this is perfect for her.

Sharee.



## 2016 Research

Our research waka is gathering momentum at time of writing this newsletter we are nearing 600 grandparent and whanua caregivers who have completed this research and thank you. If you have not done this yet please go to [www.grg.org.nz](http://www.grg.org.nz) you can do it there. We want to rock this waka with 1000 responses. Will you help?



## What is Happiness?

Happiness cannot be measured by one simple, single moment. It comes in many forms. A look: smile: smell: feeling: thought: word or just simply, life.

We all need moments of happiness in our lives to counter balance the sadness, loss and disappointment of that pendulum, that swings back and forwards. It is always good to have a stash of happiness tucked away in our internal money box. For when life deals us a rough patch, we can dig deep into that money box and take forth a moment of happiness that can put things in perspective. To relive a moment of joy, can soften the stabs of pain and hurt.

As we travel on our journey of life many things contribute to our inner wellbeing. Happiness is just one part of the complex picture. The smell of a new-born, the giggle of a child, the smile of an older person, the taste of a favourite dessert, the words 'I love you' all our senses come into play for indeed both happiness and sadness.

Lying in a hammock, smelling the sea air can elicit a deep sense of wellbeing. To see an act of kindness upon a stranger can swell ones heart. To be that person even more so. All these simple acts can all add to our money box. It is all out there, one just has to be more aware. We are so busy rushing here there and everywhere, with a million thoughts racing through our brain. Sometimes we really do need to sit down and smell the roses and top up our internal money box. It will serve you well when needed. How full is your money box, does yours need a top up?

Di writes a blog for Kiwi Families.

## Can we help you?

Members ONLY services are available nationwide  
Caregivers Toll free helpline  
**0800 GRANDS** (0800 472 637)  
For landline caregivers only please  
**New members and general information please dial ext. 1**

### Members' Support Manager:

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Moved home or planning to? Be sure to let us know.

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## Parental Leave Also Includes Caregivers or GRG in Work

New Zealand workplaces are dynamic and evolving, with more women in paid employment and parenting arrangements becoming more diverse. Legislation that comes into effect from 1 April 2016 provides working families with more support and greater choice in the way they manage caring for their new children and staying connected with their workplace. If your child is expected to be born, is born, or you assume primary care of a child under six years of age on or after 1 April 2016, you may be entitled to 18 weeks of parental leave payments. The changes extend parental leave payments to benefit people with non-standard working arrangements – such as casual, seasonal, temporary and fixed-term employees, and workers with more than one employer

Parental leave and parental leave payments of 18 weeks will also be available to primary carers who are not biological or adoptive parents. For example a grandparent who intends to raise the grandchild in place of the parents

Parental Leave is changing to reflect modern working arrangements and allow people to go back to work keeping in touch hours for occasional activities without losing their entitlements, and to be able to take the unpaid leave flexibly, by agreement with their employer. Parental leave benefits families; children, employers and workplaces and helps employers attract and retain skilled workers. Knowing they have an employer who understands and will fulfil their obligations can really help an employee who is responsible for giving a child the best possible start in life. Being family friendly makes good business sense and contributes to growing New Zealand for all.

### From 1 April 2016

18 weeks' parental leave payments

**18 weeks of parental leave payments will also be available to primary carers, other than biological or adoptive parents, who take permanent primary responsibility for the care, development, and upbringing of a child who is under the age of 6 years. For example a grandparent who will be raising the grandchild in place of the parents**

Parental leave payment is extended to include workers who have worked for any employer for any 26 of the 52 weeks prior to becoming the primary carer to a child, and therefore includes:

- Casual and seasonal workers
- People with more than one employer
- A person who has recently changed jobs

## Postage Costs

The price of sending a letter will cost \$1 from July 1, an increase of 20 cents. A fastpost letter will leap up 40c to \$1.80.

If you are getting our newsletters via the post and you have an email address the please let us know what your email is. Let Kelly know on 0800 472 637 ext 2. 9 – 2 pm Auckland callers 09 418 3753 or email her with your email address on [kelly@grg.org.nz](mailto:kelly@grg.org.nz). Thanks.

