



January/February 2019 Newsletter

4,573 NZ GRG Member Families

Tena Koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei, Bula, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri, Namaste, Hallo, Bonjour, Hola and Greetings to all!



KEY DATES THIS MONTH

15 February 2019

Last date to apply for Extraordinary Care Fund for next funding round.

28 February 2019

Last date to apply for SAYSUP payments
See page 4 for more information and help to access these supports

1 March 2019

Submissions on second round of consultation on the Family Court Rewrite at 5pm. See page 3 for more information.

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Find us on Facebook at

[Facebook.com/grg.org.nz](https://www.facebook.com/grg.org.nz)

Hats Off to Chipmunks in Rotorua!

Chipmunks in Rotorua have recently started up a 'grandparents day special'

Every Monday (excluding public and school holidays) the admission price for children aged 1-11 years brought in by their grandparents will be lowered to \$7 per child.

If you are a Rotorua grandparent enjoy the bonus of sharing ideas over a cup of team while the children do arts 'n crafts and other fun activities without the responsibility of cleaning up the mess!

346/352 Te Ngae Rd, Lynmore, 3010 Rotorua, New Zealand
Phone: (07) 777 2007 email: rotorua@chipmunks.co.nz



Monday to Friday 9:30am - 5:30pm
Saturday 10:00am - 5:30pm
Sunday 9:30am - 5:30pm



Kate's Take! On the CEO's Desk this Month

Tena Koutou e Tau Hou oaoa - Happy New Year to you all!

As we go to press with this newsletter, children are finally back to school.

If you are anything like most, you will be heaving a sigh of relief that you might now be able to instil some semblance of routine within the household after the school holidays have ended.

At GRG the month has been busy responding to the support needs of 105 new member families who joined GRG after the Christmas shutdown - who are needing support after taking on the care of their grandchildren or kin in circumstances where they can't be raised by their parents.

A warm welcome to our whānau of 4573 Member families nationwide, from all of us at GRG!

We encourage you to get in touch with your local Support Group Coordinator or call our 0800 GRANDS helpline if you need further assistance in this particularly challenging time as a new caregiver.

School and Year Startup Payments

Quite a few members without access to a computer have needed assistance applying online for the **School and Year Start Up payment** to help with the initial school and year costs involved that often come at the beginning of the year. If you are a Unsupported Child or Orphan's Benefit recipient and you haven't yet applied for this extra support please make sure you do before it ends on 28 February 2019. If you need help with this, call us with your WINZ Id number, and the names, ages and dates of birth of the children and we can do the online application for you over the phone.

Or if you have online access, go to the www.workandincome.govt.nz website and type school and year start-up payment into the search bar. It takes a matter of a couple of minutes to complete as long as you have the necessary information handy.

Extraordinary Care Fund

The next round of funding for the ECF is closing on 15 February 2019. Decisions will be advised to applicants on 29 March 2019. If you would like more information on this fund which is available to support children

supported by the UCB/OB with up to \$2000 per year per child for qualifying extra expenses please refer to page 4 of our **October 2018 Newsletter** and our website for more information on how to apply. Note that if you don't get your application in before the 15th of February your application will be considered at the next funding meeting in June with decisions advised on 2 August 2019. If the funding request is time-specific to the early part of this year, we urge you to act quickly to get your application in.

Family Justice Review /Family Court Rewrite

In our October issue I discussed the Independent Panel's review of the 2014 Reforms to the Family Court and our submissions on the issues and difficulties facing so many grandparent and whānau caregivers as they have endured the Family Court process to seek justice and outcomes in the best interests of the children in their care.

The 2014 reforms were meant to keep people out of court and reduce the legal costs associated with resolving parenting disputes. Except in without notice cases in which a remedy was required urgently, the reforms removed the initial right to representation by a lawyer, expecting that the Parenting Through Separation and Family Dispute Resolution Service would ensure that disputes were resolved more quickly without the need for a lawyer.

In fact the opposite effect occurred. Before the reforms the proportionate split between on notice applications and without notice applications was 70:30. **The 2014 reforms resulted in this split being reversed.** The Panel has also found that over 80% of applicants interviewed listed that the main reason they lodged a without notice application was because they wanted a lawyer in court. The reforms did not adequately recognise that most people need a lawyer to

represent them when seeking help from the court to protect the vulnerable needs of children, especially where there is a risk of violence or neglect.

The Panel has produced a [second consultation document](#) which outlines their initial thoughts on a proposed direction for change. In short they have recognised there are a number of barriers to getting justice for many, including lengthy delays, significant costs, the children's views are often not heard when they ought to be, services only fit one culture and one kind of family, and the family justice services need to be better at helping children and families through violence. They have also recognised that good information is also hard to come by and that there is a need to re-introduce the right of access to a lawyer from the beginning and the ability to be referred to conciliation counselling.

The Independent Panel thinks the family court and services should work together better so all families can get access to what they need and that the family court and services should be like a 'korowai' or cloak for parents that are not living together anymore, caregivers and whānau who need help to make decisions about their children.

Their recommendation for the "korowai of the Family Justice System" is that it will also make sure people get **legal advice and representation** at any time, children and young people get to say what they think, children and young people are heard, you can apply to the family court at any time (not just on a without notice/urgent basis or after PTS or FDR has failed), there will be help from a family justice services coordinator (a new role); help from a senior family court registrar (a new role which would have certain judicial powers to consider procedural matters to free up the Judge's time spent on administrative/procedural hearing time).

Changes are also proposed in relation to the appointment of Lawyer for Child, their experience and ongoing professional development.

The Panel is seeking further input from you on the changes needed. If you would like to have a say on the second round of consultation please go to: <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/key-initiatives/family-court-rewrite/#independent>.

Submissions close at 5pm on Friday 1 March 2019



GRG Outreach in the Community

Kate Mace

GRG Outreach Community Advocate - advice and advocacy for grandparent and whānau care families and their community support needs

As the New Year kicks off, it is often the time that we make (and in many cases break) all the New Year's resolutions. An idea that I came across recently that struck me as a fantastic tool for recording funny anecdotes and memories that could be reflected on at the end of each year with your children and family is the "Gratitude Jar" or you could call it a "Reflections" or "Good Things Jar".

How often do your grandchildren at various ages and stages say laugh out loud funny things, or surprise you with their erudite observations on life or other witticisms that you wish you could later remember? Or how about recording those wonderful days, maybe an event or an outing or a show you've seen, a book you've read or an achievement that you feel grateful to have experienced, or you just want to record something briefly that means a lot to you? The Reflections/Gratitude Jar is an idea I read about on a blog called unschoolrules.com and is very simple and easy for the whole family to enjoy. Just find a large glass jar which you might like to decorate and place on or near the dinner table or breakfast bar. Keep handy a pile of coloured note paper or card with a pen for each member of the family to make a quick note as they wish and pop it into the jar. At the end of the year, much enjoyment can be had over a meal as the notes are re-read aloud as moments of reflection, gratitude, hilarity or insight gained throughout the year are once again shared and reflected upon. These notes can also be later pasted into a scrap-book when you get going on your next year's Good things /Gratitude / Reflections Jar. This is a great way for children and adults alike who have been affected by past trauma to develop a greater mindfulness and memory of things they enjoy or for which they are grateful which helps create new positive memories.



Advocating for You!

Tricia Corin

GRG Specialist Advocate on Benefits and Income Support

Recently I have represented a number of grandparents caregivers who are Sole Parent Support Benefit recipients in which the rate they receive for the support of their grandchildren is reduced by \$22 per week per child because the mother has not identified the father of the children. In most cases the grandparents did not even know that they were receiving a reduced rate.

Sections 192 – 194 of the Social Security Act 2018 (previously s70A of the 1964 Act) requires the Ministry for Social Development to reduce a client's benefit for each dependent child for whom the client does not identify the other parent, and does not seek child support.

Some carers are not required to apply for Child Support. Exemptions are when:

- The carer of their child(ren) would be at risk of violence if they carried out or took steps to meet their Child Support obligations.
- The paying parent is deceased.
- The child is conceived as a result of incest or sexual violation.

Some carers are still required to complete a Child Support Application, although Inland Revenue-Child Support (IR-CS) may exempt the paying parents when:

- The carer is taking active steps to legally identify the paying parents
- There are compelling circumstances for not meeting their Child Support obligations and there is no real likelihood of Child Support being collected.

The Ministry has advised that the *“impact of s192-194 is discussed with clients at the initial application interview and at subsequent appointments for those taking active steps to provide evidence to support an exemption. These conversations are supported by follow up letters to ensure that clients have all the information they need to understand their entitlement.”*

The impact of the reduction is that instead of incentivising the mother to name the father and/or take steps to prove who is the father of the child to ensure he is accountable and pays child support, in these cases the reduction unfortunately unfairly penalises the child and their grandparent caregiver, who are most often facing challenging or severe financial hardship.

I recently lodged an Official Information Act request to ascertain how many grandparents might be in this situation.

We were advised by the Ministry that *“at least 47 clients receiving Sole Parent Support were recorded as grandparent to the child to whom a s192 reduction applied.”* However they conceded that because relationships may be recorded differently it is difficult to obtain a definitive figure. We suspect there are likely to be many more grandparents and whānau caregivers for whom a reduction in the support for the child in their care ought to be removed.

If, as a full-time grandparent/whānau caregiver you are raising someone else's child on Sole Parent Support with the child considered as a dependent on your benefit where **a reduction applies or you think you may be subject to a reduction**, it may be possible that an exemption applies in your case. We can help you with that. Please call us on **0800 472 637** or email me at Tricia@grg.org.nz.

Are you raising someone else's child?

If you are **because there has been a breakdown in the child's family and you are likely to be their principal caregiver for at least 1 year** from the date you apply to Work and Income for this support then **you are entitled to this support to help with the costs of raising the child.**

The UCB is not taxable and is **not affected by your income or assets** as a caregiver. It is affected by any income the child might be receiving (e.g. ACC) and the child must be resident and present in NZ. To qualify for it you must also be over 18 years of age, resident and present in NZ for a continuous period of 12 months or more and you must not be a natural parent, an adoptive parent, or a step-parent of the child.

If these circumstances apply to you and you think you have been incorrectly advised or you realise now that you should be receiving this support, please contact me on Tricia@grg.org.nz or our helpline on **0800 472 637** or call our National Support Office on 09 418 3753 for a referral to me.

Raising Grandchildren

I think that raising grandchildren is like crossing a tidal river that is in full flood by stepping from one slippery boulder to another slippery boulder with little ones clinging to hips and skirt.

Okay, we have crossed this river once before with our own children but the river was gentle then and the stepping stones were dry and easy to manage for we were younger back then.

Our hopes and dreams for our children carried us with the strength of our youth. This second crossing is full of misgivings, bewilderment and drama and just plain fright at times.

we fear we will all drown and perish but our tired hearts fight on for each foothold and we move, one tentative step at a time that we might carry our grandchildren across safely into adulthood.

We slip and slide and hide our stress and let the love that we have for these youngsters guide us along the way. It can be lonely but we hitch that child higher up on our hip, reach for the hands of those that clutch at our skirt to reassure them and then we take another step forward.

We are grandparents and we are determined for we are not alone anymore.



The waters are high and the surges of emotions threaten to sweep the feet out from under us.

Our friends back on the safety of the banks call that we shouldn't be doing this, that we are too old. We have to learn new ways of understanding the court system with custody issues. Most of us also become some-what familiar with rehabilitation centers and the penal system, with drug and alcohol issues, with theft and lying and abuse.

Slippery rocks to negotiate indeed. We fight for help and for funding for these little ones and our cries sometimes go unheard. Waves of difficulties swamp us and there are times when

We are many and reaching out we find that rope that GRG have strung across the flooded river to guide us safely along the way.

Our grandchildren will survive this journey and our tired hearts will know such joy.

Together we can do this. There can never be a river too deep to keep us from crossing because every grandparent out there raising their grandchildren is unstoppable!

We can slay dragons if that's what it takes...And together we will!

- Pauline Sloane

what a grand idea!

Our Motueka Support Group recently enjoyed a picnic lunch in one of their local parks and put this scavenger hunt together for the children...

It was "very popular especially with the treasure box at the end!!!"

If you have a grand idea or reflection you would like to share with our members and readers please email us at office@grg.org.nz



Can we help you?

Members ONLY services are available free of charge nationwide

New members and existing members please call our Helpline 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or 09 418 3753

Or Join GRG via our website at www.grg.org.nz Or click the Join GRG button below

JOIN GRG

Office Administrator:
09 418 3753
Email: office@grg.org.nz

Chief Executive:
Kate Bundle 027 2446763
Email: kate@grg.org.nz
GRG Trust NZ
PO Box 34892
Birkenhead
Auckland 0746

National Support Office Unit C
Chelsea Business Park
162 Mokoia Road
Birkenhead Auckland
0626

Our Office Hours are 9am to 2pm Monday to Friday

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ is a registered charity (CC20205) providing nationwide and local support focused on supporting and

empowering grandparent and whanau caregiver families to achieve positive life outcomes for the children and young people in their care

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or you have changed address please update your details by contacting the GRG Trust Office as this is where the total mail out membership is kept. Moved home or planning to? Be sure to let us know.

Disclaimer: Opinions or views expressed in this newsletter shall be understood as reflecting those of the author as quoted and are not to be taken as given or endorsed by GRG.

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Heoi ano, na. *E te Atua, aroha mai..... O God shower us with love. Ka kite Ka Whangaia ka tupu, ka puawai* - That which is nurtured, blossoms and grows. *He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ako mātou* We are respectful, we listen, we learn.

Please pass this newsletter on to other grandparents/kin caregivers you know who need support

Donate to GRG

Give a little to GRG via our secure DPS payment system on our website at www.GRG.org.nz at or at Givealittle.co.nz/org/grg



Thank you to our Suncorp our **Community Partner** and to our generous Sponsors, Funders and private donors supporting GRG's Support Services, Information Resources and Carer Education programmes throughout New Zealand, including this newsletter.



Brighter Futures Community Partner



GRG Support & Coffee Groups Nationwide

Note: Meetings are held during school terms - with public and school holidays excluded unless otherwise specified.

Kaitaia & Kerikeri

Meets: First Friday of the month @ 10.30am-12.00pm Contact: **Martha Taonui** 0220507056 or jamcleaner@gmail.com or Kaitaia@grg.org.nz for one to one support including telephone support and advice and advocacy on a range of issues including WINZ matters and accessing support for families.

Kaikohe

Contact: Moengaroa Floyed on 09 401 3057 or Kaikohe@grg.org.nz for meeting times and support.

Dargaville

Meets: Monthly at Dargaville Boating Club—Back of the BP Service Station overlooking the Northern Wairoa River **Contact: Sandy Zimmer** on 09 4394420 or Dargaville@grg.org.nz for telephone support, parenting and GRG Toolbox workshops for members, Emergency Outreach/crisis support for members, Advocacy for WINZ & Court.

Whangarei

Meets: First Friday of the month @ 10.30am-12.00pm at the Anglican Care Centre, Corner of Mill Rd and Deveron St. **Contact: C/- Janet Puriri** on 09 435 0044 or Lianne on Whangarei@grg.org.nz for support group meetings. Koha for morning tea. Donations of garden produce and good used children's clothing appreciated.

Ruakaka

Contact: Tauser Kingi on 09 432 8611 or Ruakaka@grg.org.nz for meeting times and support.

West Auckland/Waitakere

Meets: 3rd Thursday of the month @ 10am at: 267 Glengarry Road, Glen Eden (the hall is under the Terrance Kennedy resthome) parking in the Salvation Army car park **Contact: Esther Price** on 0212510690 or Waitakere@grg.org.nz for telephone support and support group meetings, whanau outings, events and workshops for members.

New Lynn

Meets: 3rd Tuesday of the month @ 10am at 9 Binsted Road, New Lynn **Contact: Robyn Robertson** on 021 309 365 or NewLynn@grg.org.nz for telephone support and support group meetings, whanau outings, events and workshops for members.

East Auckland

Meets: Last Monday of the month at Dunkirk Road Activity, Centre, 50 Dunkirk Road, Panmure, (09) 570 5539 **Contact: Tess Gould Thorpe Hall** on 09 535 6903 or Tamaki@grg.org.nz for a friendly welcoming group of grandparents/kincarers sharing experiences and relevant information in a relaxed and confidential setting over morning tea with Gloria's glorious scones. Telephone support and meetings, Whanau outings and events, Emergency Outreach/crisis support for members, Clothing, furniture, and available opportunities, for members.

South Auckland

Contact: Virginia Peebles on 09 277 7514 or SouthAuckland@grg.org.nz for support.

Papakura/Pukekohe/Waiuku

Meets: Alternately in Papakura and Pukekohe **Contact: Shirley Afoa** on 021 129 4151 or Papakura@grg.org.nz or Anne Doddrell on 09 237 8161 or Pukekohe@grg.org.nz for telephone support and support group meetings, whanau outings, events and workshops for members.

Hamilton & Huntly

Meets: Last Monday of the month @ 10.00am at 58 Palmerston St (beside Parentline) Hamilton. **Contact: Pat Davis** on 07 855 0530 or Hamilton@grg.org.nz for telephone support and meetings, Whanau outings and events, Emergency Outreach/crisis support for members. Guest speakers are often in attendance. RSVP is always required for catering purposes and facility chairs to be set out.

Te Awamutu

Meets: 2nd Monday of the month @ 9.30-11.30am at TA or Kihikihi **Contact: Ruth Gilling** on TeAwamutu@grg.org.nz or 022 045 4475 for telephone support, assistance with WINZ, Schools etc and support group meetings, whanau outings, events and workshops for members.

Papamoa/Te Puke

Meets: First Monday of the month from March to December (excl holidays) @ 10.30-11.30am (or longer as required) at **The Empowerment Centre, Jocelyn Street, Te Puke** **Contact: Rawinia Macredie** on 07 562 2850 or TePuke@grg.org.nz for telephone support and meetings.

Opotiki

Meets: We are a relatively new group and look forward to welcoming members in the area, so please get in touch for more information on meeting opportunities or for support. **Contact: Sophie Wilson-Kahika** on 07 262 5136 or Opotiki@grg.org.nz for telephone support, advice and support meetings, as needed in Opotiki and the Kawerau area.

Rotorua

Meets: Monthly **Contact: Anne Donnell** 020 402 22910 or Rotorua@grg.org.nz for telephone support and meetings, workshops for members, Emergency Outreach/crisis support for members and support on WINZ and Court matters.

Te Kuiti

Meets: 3rd Wednesday of the month @ 10am At: Tiffany's Café, Rora St, Te Kuiti **Contact: Kay Higgins** on 027 430 2939 or TeKuiti@grg.org.nz for telephone support and informal support group meetings with lots of interesting chatter and laughter!

Taupo

Contact: Lesley-Anne Wells on 07 377 3539 or Taupo@grg.org.nz for support and meetings.

Note: Meetings are held during school terms - with public and school holidays excluded unless otherwise specified.

Taumarunui

Contact: Jo Wickham on 07 896 7515 or Taumarunui@grg.org.nz
Meetings on 1st Tuesday of the month at REAP and coffee catchup at Big Mommas on 3rd Tuesday of month at 10:00am.

Taranaki/New Plymouth

Meets: We are a new group and look forward to welcoming members in the area, so please get in touch for more information on venue and times. **Contact:** Lorraine McLaren on 027 520 1144 or NewPlymouth@grg.org.nz for telephone and support meetings, Whanau outings, events and workshops for members.

Napier

Meets: First Friday of the month @10:30am at the Napier RSA Dining Room **Contact:** Rozane Duncan on 027 901 2021 Napier@grg.org.nz for telephone support and informal get together support group meetings and Watties staff sales.

Hastings

Contact: Tom Kupa on 06 879 4302 or Hastings@grg.org.nz for support and meetings.

Whanganui

Meets: On the 3rd Saturday of the month @1-4pm **Contact:** Jenny Morton on 06 344 3656 or 027 443 7780 or Whanganui@grg.org.nz for meeting venues, telephone support and support group meetings, whanau outings, events and workshops for members.

Taranaki

Meets: We are a new group and look forward to welcoming members in the area, so please get in touch for more information on venue and times. **Contact:** Connie Peters Ph 0274883415 in Dannevirke or Taranaki@grg.org.nz

Coffee Groups

Matakana & Warkworth	Anita	021 08205563
North Shore Auckland	Val	022 0802368
Auckland Central	Jane	021 029 54802
Hamilton	Carol	027 361 1929
Cambridge	Bev	021 02720902
Raetihi	Angel	06 385 3404
Kapiti	Margaret	04 293 4728
Upper Hutt	Margaret	04 976 9475
Blenheim	Juliet	03 571 6222
Christchurch	Elaine	021 025 08834
Ashburton	Deborah	027 626 4866
Dunedin	Nanette	03 455 2016

Manawatu

Meets: First Tuesday of the first month @10:00am or First Thursday at 6pm in alternate months at the Old Public Trust office, next to the Library entrance, The Square Palmerston North. **Contact:** Jacqui Phillips on 021 229 0455 or PalmerstonNorth@grg.org.nz for telephone support and support group meetings, whanau outings, events and workshops for members.

Levin

Contact: Ann Waddell on 06 362 7269 or Levin@grg.org.nz for support and meetings.

Hutt Valley

Contact: Serehah Nicholson on 021 743 414 or HuttValley@grg.org.nz for support and meetings.

Wellington & Kapiti

Meets: Usually on the 3rd Friday of the month at Johnsonville Community Centre or the Kapiti Community Centre **Contact:** Cecilee Donovan on 021 158 6643 or Wellington@grg.org.nz for meeting times and venue or for telephone support, Whanau outings and events, Workshops for members and Emergency Outreach/crisis support.

Nelson

Contact: Paula Eggers on 021 062 6583 or Nelson@grg.org.nz for meetings and support.

Motueka

Meets: Fortnightly on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at St Andrew's church lounge, 64 High Street, Motueka. **Contact:** Rankeilor Arnott on 03 528 5089 or Motueka@grg.org.nz for Telephone support and meetings,

Whanau outings and events workshops for members and Emergency Outreach/crisis support for members. Some meetings we have organised speakers and other meetings are sharing and caring among the Grandparents.

Canterbury

Contact: Veronica Brunt on 03 942 5935 or Canterbury@grg.org.nz for support.

Waimate

Meets: We are a new group and look forward to welcoming members in the area; so please get in touch for more information on venue and times. **Contact:** Margaret Pink on 03 434 7233 or NorthOtago@grg.org.nz for telephone and support meetings, Whanau outings, events and workshops for members.

Otago Coastal/Dunedin

Contact: Aad & Leonie on 03 465 1764 or Otago@grg.org.nz for support.

Southland / Invercargill

Meets: Fortnightly on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month @ 10.00 at 183 Spey Street (Family-Works) **Contact:** Lynette Nielsen on 03 216 0411 or Southland@grg.org.nz for telephone support and meetings, whanau outings and events, workshops for members and emergency outreach/crisis support for members.

New Groups

If you are interested in setting up a new Support Group or a Coffee Group in your area, please contact the GRG National Support Office on 09 418 3753 or email us at office@grg.org.nz for more information. As part of the Support Group establishment and support we offer regular training on a range of issues affecting grandparent and whanau carers to assist with your roles.