



GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN TRUST NZ

Raising resilient and healthy children and young people through empowering grandparent and whānau care families since 2001

Are you raising someone else's child full-time?

GRG provides support, information, advice, advocacy services and caregiver education programmes nationwide to full-time caregivers who are raising a child not born to them. Membership and services are free. Call us on toll free **0800 GRANDS** or visit

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Welcome! Tena koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei, Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri Namaste, Hallo, Bonjour, Hola and Greetings this month to our 6,000+ member families and all our non-member subscribers!

Financial support for raising someone else's child...

If you are raising someone else's child because:

- there has been a breakdown in the child's family, or
- their parents have died, or
- they are missing, or
- they have a long-term disablement

AND you are to be their principal temporary or long-term caregiver, from the date you apply to Work and Income for this support, then you are entitled to either the **Unsupported Child Benefit** or the **Orphan's Benefit** to help with the costs of raising the child.

The **Unsupported Child** or **Orphan's Benefits** are not taxable and they are 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 New Zealand.

To qualify for it you must also be over 18 years of age, resident and present in NZ 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 us tollfree on **0800 472 637** or call our National Support Office on **09 418 3753** for a referral to our advocate, Tricia Corin.



Kate Bundle
Chief Executive

Kate's Take

Kia ora koutou katoa. A warm welcome to the 82 new member families who have joined GRG this year. It hasn't been quite the start to 2023 we were all hoping for, especially after nearly three years of a global pandemic that disrupted all of our lives in ways we could never have imagined. I certainly hadn't imagined that we would be talking about another major and 'unprecedented' disruption in our lives so soon after, but the deluge and flooding we experienced, particularly in the North,

Auckland and Coromandel regions on 27 January, the further deluge five days later and then Cyclone Gabrielle barely two weeks later left a trail of untold destruction, shock and trauma for so many. Sadly too, the unthinkable loss of life in utterly devastating circumstances. The impact will be felt by our nation for a very long time to come.

Our hearts and prayers are with all of you who have suffered. As you pick up the pieces of what is left of your lives and belongings — while GRG is not a first response organisation in an emergency and disaster of this type, we are here to help guide you to the organisations who can.

In our advocate, Tricia Corin's column this month, there is helpful information and links to services that can provide crisis and emergency help including income support and essentials.

While we also had staff impacted by the weather events with evacuations, yellow and red-stickered homes too — we are here to support you with advocacy help and guidance on income support, parenting and guardianship, navigating the challenges of raising someone else's child and being a listening ear, so please feel free to call us on 0800 472 637 if you do need help.

All of this disaster comes at time when caregivers are also having to navigate the requirements of schools, getting children back into routines with homework, extra-curricular activities and in many cases having to work out just what the new teachers are expecting.

This month on page 4 Hannah provides some helpful advice for grandparents and whānau navigating these challenges.

The gift in a name

In 2022, members of our National Support Office staff and Board of Trustees completed the *Te Kaa: Ignite your cultural competency* training programme. This rich and insightful workshop programme held over five months challenged and extended us as individuals and as a team as we delved into the Māori world: Te Ao Māori and what it means to be Māori in our country today.

As part of our strategic priorities to ensure that our services are responsive to all caregivers — and from whatever their culture, creed or race they come to us for help; this journey into Te Ao Māori was another important step in our evolving journey as an organisation to empower grandparents and strengthen whānau.

We were fortunate to be led on this journey by Te Amohanga Rangihau (Amo) of Tuhoe, who holds a Master's in Applied Indigenous Knowledge and is an accredited and licensed Te Reo Māori translator. Amo was raised by his grandmother on the marae and we were honoured when he accepted our request for a te reo Māori name depicting grandparents raising their grandchildren.

He gifted GRG the name **Te Hei Māpuna** at our graduation at Ōrākei Marae in December. In his gift and dedication, he referred to 'māpuna' as something that is precious, and to be treasured; explaining that his grandmother often referred to him using this word during his childhood. It also means to 'well up'.

During his korero, it was an emotional experience for us all, in which our aroha for the GRG cause literally 'welled up' leaving no dry eyes in the room. We are proud to include this te reo Māori name within our identity as we go forward on this important journey together.



Te Hei Māpuna

"It is an altruistic virtue embodying the intrinsic connection between a grandparent and grandchild that is everlasting."

māpuna

1. (verb) to well up.
2. (modifier) precious

hei

1. (particle) at, in, on, with - sometimes used of future time or place.
2. (particle) Used with kinship terms to show relationships.



GRG trustees and staff with Amo and Renee Ihaia (Maurea Consulting) at Ōrākei Marae

Hannah's Outreach - Back to School Tips!

We often get calls at National Support Office in regards to issues with children's schools – so to welcome the new schooling year (with hopefully no more interruptions!) I thought it would be a good idea to offer some handy tips on how to approach these issues.

Caregivers may need to talk to teachers to address a child's specific needs or brainstorm solutions to solve problems. These conversations can be tricky, but it's important to learn how to talk to teachers and navigate these sensitive subjects.

It is also vital for caregivers to be involved in the child's development and progress at school. It is important to address issues like learning difficulties, misbehaviour, needing extra support, and children who feel their teachers are being unfair right away before they become bigger problems.

Here are a few tips to open a conversation with teachers:

- **Practice communication skills** to foster a healthy relationship and enable productive discussions.
- **Listen** - To communicate effectively, it's essential to become a good listener. Don't be afraid to ask the teacher questions.
- **Stay calm** - Remaining calm with teachers yields better results.
- **Take a "teamwork" approach with teachers.** When caregivers and teachers team up, they become a united force in supporting children at school.
- **Prepare a list of questions** - Having a list of questions makes better use of time and ensures you won't forget anything important that you may want to discuss.
- **Keep an open mind** when talking about the problems that children encounter at school. The goal is to find solutions that work for the child, caregiver, and teacher. Remember, learning is a

collaborative experience.

- **Treat them with respect** - Have you thought about the amount of patience it takes for educators to teach a room full of kids? It takes the same patience from caregivers to talk about tough issues with teachers. Being respectful is the key to forming a positive and open dialogue.
- **Allow all parties to have a say** - Letting someone have their say, without interrupting them, gives us insight into their personality, how they think and how they behave. The act of listening helps caregivers and teachers to get to know each other through supportive conversations. Take the time to listen and exchange ideas so that you can create a plan that benefits your child.

Building open communication with teachers ultimately benefits a child's development. Kids may want to express themselves more often. It's that openness and willingness that improves children's social skills and learning experiences in the classroom. Caregivers can also request recommendations from the teachers to support the child at home. When children learn how to communicate effectively with caregivers and teachers, they become the kind of person who grows into a strong adult.

If you continue to experience issues, then there are further steps you can take. Ideally, you should always talk to your school principal first if you have any concerns. Be clear about what these are - it's very difficult to respond and act on vague concerns. Sometimes it's not possible to go to the principal or you may be unhappy with this outcome also.

If you would like help or have any questions, please contact the GRG National Support Office on 0800 GRANDS

If that's the case, you can complain directly to the Teaching Council. Information on this can be found on the Teaching Councils website or by calling 04 471 0852 and as always you can contact me at GRG's National Support office if needed on 0800 472 637 or email Hannah@grg.org.nz. I am happy to advocate and amplify your whānau's voice when needed. Let's make this schooling year great, with lots of learning opportunities, growth and no further interruptions mid-term!



Hannah Morris
Community Outreach Advocate



Caregiver Education

GRG's Simply Acquired & Learned Techniques™ **SALT** workshop programme

This programme has been developed specifically for grandparents and whānau caregivers to help them learn how to increase attachment in children who have experienced trauma, and how to:

- safely de-escalate conflict and develop self-regulation and
- increase the child's feeling of stability, security, belonging, and resilience within their whānau.

Upcoming workshops: Napier, Auckland, Whakatane, Hamilton & Waikato areas

For dates, venues and further information, please REGISTER YOUR INTEREST FOR SALT by contacting us at SALT@grg.org.nz or phone 0800 472 637

Tricia Advocating for You

GRG is not an emergency response service but we are sharing as much information as we can that may be helpful if you have been impacted by the recent flooding and Cyclone Gabrielle.

Urgent help

- If life, health or property is in danger, call 111 immediately.

Civil Defence National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

www.civildefence.govt.nz

- Civil Defence can help if you urgently need food (if you can't get it from a shop), water, somewhere to stay, information, or community support.

Their website has a [directory of local Civil Defence groups](#) and factsheets of information about the various support available to those affected by Cyclone Gabrielle. This includes support for communities, animal welfare, and information about insurance, schools, and healthcare. You can download this information to save or print, and it's available in multiple languages.

Assistance via Work & Income (WINZ)

Civil Defence Payments are available [via WINZ if you've been affected](#) by Cyclone Gabrielle or the flooding in one of these regions:

- Northland region
- Auckland region
- Waikato district council
- Thames/Coromandel district council
- Hauraki district council
- Matamata/Piako district council.
- Tairāwhiti/East Coast region
- Hawke's Bay region
- Manawatu region
- Wairarapa region
- Horowhenua region

These payments can help cover the costs of:

- Food
- Bedding
- Clothing
- Accommodation
- Loss of income



WINZ can help cover the costs of somewhere to stay if you:

- have to leave your home because of the emergency, or
- were away from your home at the time of the emergency and can't return. How much you get depends on your situation and where you're staying.

You may be able to get a Civil Defence Payment if either:

- a Civil Defence emergency has been declared or the event meets the guidelines for a Civil Defence emergency.

To qualify you must be in one of these situations because of the emergency:

- you had to leave your home (e.g. you've been evacuated or you're on stand-by)
- you were away from your home at the time of the emergency and can't return
- you need help with food, bedding or clothing
- you can't go to work.

You must also:

- not be able to cover your costs from insurance (or you haven't been paid yet)
- not have access to any other help, e.g public donations, other government relief funds or charitable relief funds.



Insurance costs

If you're not sure whether insurance will cover your costs, you may still qualify for a Civil Defence Payment. However, if you get a Civil Defence Payment and then your insurance pays for any costs covered by this, you'll need to pay it back.

Immediate social support

Housing Insurance and lodging a claim:

If you have damage to your home, property or car, contact your insurance company as soon as possible. For more information you can contact: info@advisory.org.nz or phone 0800 777 299 or 03 379 7027

Residential Advisory Service (RAS) provides advocacy and advice to homeowners about insurance claims phone 0800 777 299 for more information.



Information for disabled people affected by the extreme weather events

Deaf and disabled people and whānau can contact [Whakarongorau Aotearoa](https://www.whakarongorau.govt.nz), New Zealand Telehealth Services for support and information - TEXT 8988 or 0800 111 213

Or access using the New Zealand Relay Service at NZ Relay or go to www.nzrelay.co.nz

If you are accessing disability support services and need extra support, in first instance contact your provider. You can also contact Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People at contact@whaikaha.govt.nz or via 0800 566 601

If you are receiving Ministry funded support and services and would like additional support during this time, please contact your provider in the first instance. They have been briefed by the Ministry and are prepared for your call.

There is potential support available through the [Lottery Individuals with Disabilities Fund](https://www.iwdfunding@dia.govt.nz) seeking urgent replacement of mobility equipment damaged or lost in the recent flood events. See their website or email iwdfunding@dia.govt.nz or phone 0800 824 824.

If you still need advice or GRG to advocate for you to access your income support entitlements please contact us on [0800472637](tel:0800472637) for a referral to our advocacy service.



Health and wellbeing

The following information will help you with general wellbeing.

It is important to get enough sleep during these challenging times. Good tips can be found at: www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living/sleep/sleep-tips/ (this is a national DHB endorsed health site)

It is also important to explain what is going on to children – and especially listening to them and talking to them about their fears.

See our [September 2022 newsletter](#) where Hannah talks about explaining the tough stuff to children on page 3 for some helpful tips.

Also see some good tips at: www.kidshealth.org.nz/coping-natural-disaster

Support for your Anxiety and Health

Anxiety is very common during an emergency event such as a flooding and evacuations. This is a normal response to a very stressful situation. Talking to people and helping others can be both therapeutic and useful.

If you need further support for yourself or for others:

- call your general practice, after-hours GP practice or Healthline on 0800 611 116.
- free-call or text 1737 to talk to a trained counsellor.
- in an emergency, call 111.

Can't get hold of friends or whanau?

If you're concerned about someone and can't get in touch with them, NZ Police have set up an online form for people to report their concerns. Go to: <https://webforms.police.govt.nz/en/person-inquired-for>



Tricia Corin
**Specialist Advocate
Income/Financial
Support**

Grand Reflections

A caregiver's journey

This month one of our members shares her journey and appreciation for the support from her Support Group — especially when — as she says “we had close to nothing.”

My name is Sonia, and here is my story

GRG – Our time with Shirley has been an overwhelming journey with the help and support she has given.

It has been a year and a half we've been with Shirley and GRG.

When we first uplifted our grandchildren from family harm, we didn't know whether we could afford to have our grandchildren or not. We wanted to give them our love and support and most of all a safe environment.

Shirley has helped us on more than one occasion with clothing as we had close to nothing, we had to start fresh with both our grandchildren. The food parcels Shirley brings to our home has just been overwhelming for us knowing that this will help our grandchildren to be fed and clothed, and a weight was lifted off our shoulders.

The first meeting we were invited to with Shirley and other grandparents, sharing our emotions, on how traumatised our grandson was at the time. The big spreads of food she puts together every meeting. The training offered to support us looking after our grandchildren.

Shirley is an amazing woman with all the support she has given. I can ring her anytime when feeling down, need help or advice.

On behalf of my family and I, we would like to thank you Shirley for all that you have done for us.

Sonia Tawhai, Graham Tawhai, Kingstyn and Irie Toia-Tawhai



“We wanted to give them our love and support and most of all a safe environment”.

Did you know...

Support Group Coordinators are a key part of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ's (GRG) integrated approach to supporting over 9,000 grandparent and whānau/kin caregivers nationwide. Our Support Group Coordinators are all volunteers, most often having been a fulltime grandparents/kin carer themselves and wanting to give back to their local communities, having received support themselves and knowing how valuable it can be.

Merle's Support Group Update

Greetings Everyone! In welcoming in 2023, I want to acknowledge all the families/whānau out there who have been impacted by the severe weather events over the last month. I'm sure many are feeling bewildered and overwhelmed with the enormity of what they are facing. Our hearts and thoughts go out to you all.

We are very sad to report that some of our Support Group Coordinators have also felt the brunt of the devastation in these areas and while I know they are doing their best to support others in their areas – it will be some time before they will have any semblance of normality so patience and understanding is appreciated. If you need support and your local Support Coordinator is not able to assist, please remember to call our free helpline on 0800 472 637.

Christmas celebration in Hamilton

On the 3rd of December 2022, Hamilton GRG Support Groups were one of the many organisations invited to take part in the Special Children's Christmas Party at Claudelands. This annual event, principally sponsored by NZME and Sky, is put on for around 10,000 children across the country who have special needs either through health issues, disability or disadvantaged home circumstances. It was a wonderful day – for grandparents and kids alike with beaming faces taking in the quality presents and enjoyable Christmas fare. Even Santa dropped in to make sure no one missed out.



Resignation and Thank You Sandy

Sandy Zimmer has been a GRG member for ten years and our SGC for Dargaville for at least five. She has decided it is now time for a break from this role. Sandy has been a steadfast support to the Dargaville members and has developed strong relationships with other agencies such as Work and Income NZ and Oranga Tamariki which has helped strengthen her advocacy for members. We are very sorry to see her leave this role and know she will be missed. We wish her well for the future.



Merle Lambert
**National Support
Coordinator**

If you or someone you know would like to consider becoming the local Support Group Coordinator for the Dargaville area, please contact me at merle@arg.org.nz or 021 246 0553.



Other Handy Helpline Numbers

EMERGENCY 111 for emergency services, fire, ambulance or police

PLUNKETLINE 0800 933 922 for advice on child health or parenting from a registered Plunket Nurse

HEALTHLINE 0800 611 116 for health triage and advice from a registered nurse.

COVID-19 Healthline concerns **0800 358 5453**

'NEED TO TALK?' Text 1737
Get help from a counsellor

LIFELINE 0800 543 354 or **Text 4357** – 24/7 confidential support from qualified counsellors and trained volunteers

YOUTHLINE 0800 376 633 helping families and youth

0508 CARERS (0508 227 377) a 24/7 Caregivers Guidance and Advice Line.

0800 WHATS UP (0800 942 8787) is a free counselling helpline for teenagers and children run by Barnardos.

DEPRESSION.ORG.NZ
Free text number 4202

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ

Established in 2001 as a registered charitable trust (CC20205), GRG supports over 6,000 grandparent and whanau care families nationwide, representing around 9,500 caregivers and over 16,000 children. Our vision and kaupapa is to empower grandparent and other whanau care families to achieve positive life outcomes, through providing support, information, advice, advocacy services and caregiver education programmes.

Donate

Have your circumstances changed?

Our aim is to keep you informed and of what's happening, key information and opportunities that can help you. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or you have changed address or phone number please update your details by clicking the button below or contact us.

Update your member details

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

Join GRG or subscribe to our newsletter via our website or click the button below.

Join GRG

Our Website

Information About COVID-19:

Our website contains several webpages with information that we have collated for grandparent and other whanau caregivers. You can click on the COVID-19 button below or go to our website www.grg.nz.

COVID-19

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 ake o mātou – We are respectful, we listen, we learn.

Please pass this newsletter on to other grandparents and whanau caregivers who need support.

Ngā mihi nui – Thank you to our Funders for their support for our newsletter.



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