



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 is free.
Call us on toll free
0800 GRANDS or visit
www.grg.nz to join.

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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 6,284+ 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’s Benefit (UCB) or the Orphan’s Benefit (OB) to help with the
costs of raising the child.

The Unsupported Child’s 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, 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 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or call our National Support
Office on 09 418 3753 for a referral to our advocate, Tricia Corin.

Hello and welcome!



Tatum McKay
Interim Chief
Executive

As we are noticing some cooler mornings and start to welcome Autumn, it is a good time for reflection, and I am doing just that as I wrap up my time as Interim CEO for GRG.

It has been a wonderful past 5 months, getting to know the team, our volunteers and our members, and understanding what is really needed to support you all. I am very grateful to those of you whom I have met, for your generosity of time and spirit. I look forward to meeting more of you as I move into my role as Board Trustee.

Since our last newsletter we have had another farewell and prepare for two new arrivals.

We would like to acknowledge and thank Karla MacDonald for her mahi and care for GRG during the 5 years she was with the organisation. Karla left GRG in December but many of you would have known her well and will join with me to wish her every success and happiness on her next undertaking.

We have welcomed Shannon Raubenheimer, our new Funding and Engagement Executive in March. You can read more about Shannon's background later in the newsletter, but we are all very excited to have her join us and she has already brought with her a delightful energy and enthusiasm.

We also welcome our new General Manager, Samantha Farquhar, this month, to whom I am handing over to. You can also read more about Sam in coming pages, but the Board and I are beyond thrilled to have Sam's experienced and capable leadership at the GRG helm.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the tremendously sad passing of Niwa Nuri this month. Niwa was a former Board Trustee and is remembered as special and valued member of our organisation who showed great care and consideration to all those he met. We give our deepest condolences and aroha to his whānau in this difficult time.

Ngā manaakitanga

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tatum'.

Tatum McKay
Interim Chief Executive
tatum@grg.org.nz

Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi

With your basket and my basket the people will live



Caring Families Aotearoa Excellence in Foster Care Awards 2025

The Excellence in Foster Care Awards recognise the extraordinary efforts of caregivers. GRG member Andrea Neil was recognised at the awards this year.

Each year 10 amazing caregivers or couples are celebrated for the astonishing work they do. Caring Families Aotearoa has been holding the Excellence in Foster Care Awards annually since 2007. The 2025 recipients were celebrated at Government House in Wellington on Friday 7th March. Recipients of the award are nominated by others in the community who see and acknowledge the hard work these individuals are putting in to raising their whānau. GRG member Andrea Neil was nominated this year and recognised for the incredible care she provides to her whānau.

Below is a snippet of the profile done by Caring Families when Andrea was presented with the award: “Andrea’s caregiving journey began 14 years ago when her daughter gave birth to her first grandchild. As mental health, addiction and domestic violence became a regular part of her daughter’s life, Andrea took care of the baby and when he turned three, applied to the court to become his primary caregiver. Since then, three further grandchildren have come in Andrea’s care. Care sector professionals say Andrea is a great role model and support to other carers in her local area. She is willing to help - with a smile and a calm, can do attitude - no matter what life throws at her”



Left: The Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro, Governor-General of New Zealand; Andrea Neil, GRG Member and Hon. Karen Chhour, Minister for Children and for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence.



Right: Jacqui Phillips, former New Plymouth SGC & current GRG Board Member; Andrea Neil, GRG Member

Below: Jacqui Phillips, former Palmerston North SGC & current GRG Board Member; Philippa Wilson, Wellington SG Secretary; Giselle Stalls, National Support Manager; Cecilee Donovan, Wellington SGC; Kathy Procter, Kapiti/Otaki SGC; Tatum Mckay, Interim GRG CEO



Backflipping for a Cause – Bruce Hopkins Takes on 69 Flips for GRG!

Bruce defies gravity by backflipping for a great cause

It's 6:30 a.m. at Auckland's Viaduct, and the city is just beginning to wake. But for actor Bruce Hopkins, the day is already well underway—he's just completed his first backflip of the morning, with 68 more to go!

Bruce, a longtime supporter of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG), has made it his annual tradition to mark his birthday with a challenge like no other—performing one backflip for every year he's turning. This year, that means 69 backflips in a single day, all to raise funds and awareness for the thousands of grandparents across Aotearoa who are stepping up to raise their mokopuna.

As a proud grandfather of four, Bruce understands firsthand the joys and challenges of raising children. His dedication to GRG stems from a deep appreciation for the resilience and love shown by grandparents who take on the role of full-time caregivers, often facing financial hardship and emotional strain.

Here are some interesting facts about backflips:

One of the Most Challenging Gymnastics Moves – Backflips require a combination of strength, coordination, flexibility, and confidence. The move involves launching off the ground, tucking the body, and rotating backward before landing safely.

Physics in Action – The key to a successful backflip is angular momentum. Athletes generate rotation by pushing off the ground and tucking their knees to speed up the spin, then extending their legs to slow down and prepare for landing.

World Record for Most Backflips in One Minute – The current Guinness World Record for the most standing backflips in one minute is 49, achieved by Zama Mofokeng from South Africa in 2019.



From left to right: Bruce Hopkins interviewing with media after his first backflip; Bruce Hopkins midway through completing 69 backflips



New team members join GRG National Office

As we enter into a new year, the national office has two new faces joining us

Sam Farquhar General Manager

Sam has worked in the Community sector for two decades, including working for central and local government. With a background in Community Development, she brings a strong focus on building sustainable relationships and improving organisational structures. Sam also has excellent first-hand experience of funding as well as proven success as an empathetic and empowering leader of teams, including volunteers. Sam has been fortunate to work for some amazing charities such as Plunket and is also active volunteering in her neighbourhood supporting a range of groups. Sam was raised by her grandparents in Northland in her early primary years and is excited to join the team of Grandparents raising Grandchildren as their new General Manager.



Shannon Raubenheimer Funding and Engagement Executive

We're excited to welcome Shannon to the GRG team as our Funding Specialist. With a decade of experience in the not-for-profit sector working within disability, homelessness, child protection and a background as a qualified social worker, Shannon brings a deep understanding of the challenges families face. As a mum to two young boys, she knows firsthand both the joys and complexities of raising children. We're thrilled to have her on board, using her skills and passion to support our GRG whānau.

Shannon is keen to chat with all of our support group coordinators around working together to raise funds for GRG. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with her via email or phone if you have ideas for fundraising - shannon@grg.org.nz or 021 240 7613





Tricia Corin
Specialist Advocate
Income/Financial Support

Tricia Advocating for You

We're excited to share that the FamilyBoost Tax Credit from Inland Revenue is now available to support eligible parents and caregivers with the costs of early childhood education (ECE) from licensed providers. This financial assistance helps ease the burden of childcare expenses, making quality early learning more accessible.

Eligibility

Eligible parents or caregivers can claim up to 25% of their remaining childcare costs after accounting for the 20 hours of ECE and any childcare assistance received from MSD for licensed early childhood education.

Here are examples of assistance available from MSD to help parents and caregivers with the costs of licensed early childhood education:

- Childcare Subsidy
- Early Learning Payment
- Guaranteed Childcare Assistance Payment
- Training Incentive Allowance

Family Boost Tax Credit lump sum payments

• Starting 1 October 2024, parents and caregivers can submit invoices to Inland Revenue for the remaining ECE costs incurred over the previous three months.

• Inland Revenue will provide a lump sum payment of up to \$75 per week per eligible household for the Family Boost Tax Credit, covering the three-month period.

Any Family Boost Tax Credit received from Inland Revenue will not be considered chargeable income or a cash asset for 12 months from the date the parent or caregiver receives each payment. This ensures it won't affect eligibility for the following benefits or support:

- Emergency Benefit
- Jobseeker Support
- Sole Parent Support
- Supported Living Payment – health condition, injury, disability or total blindness
- Supported Living Payment – caring for a person
- Youth Payment
- Young Parent Payment

Extraordinary Care Fund Opening Dates 2025

The Extraordinary Care Fund helps pay for extra costs you have because a child you care for: shows promise in an ability, skill, or talent, for example in school, sports, dance, or music is experiencing difficulties that impact their development, for example learning or behavioural difficulties.

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/extraordinary-care-fund.html>

Opening Dates for 2025:

29th April 2025 - receive outcome 16th June
25th July 2025 - receive outcome 15th August
23rd Oct 2025 - receive outcome 5th Dec





Giselle Stalls
National Support Manager

A word from Giselle

Finding support in others made easy

Feels like just yesterday was Christmas and just like that its March and nearly Easter.

As always, we are incredibly grateful for the dedication, passion, and energy you bring to our community. Your efforts continue to inspire and make a real difference in the lives of so many.

In January, I had the chance to meet the coordinators in Nelson and Motueka. It was truly special to connect in person, hear their stories, and see firsthand the amazing work they are doing on the ground. There's something about face-to-face meetings that just makes the conversations more meaningful and impactful, and I left both visits feeling inspired and energized. Then, I had the honor of attending the Caring Families Aotearoa Excellence in Foster Care Awards alongside the Kapiti and Wellington coordinators. The experience of being part of such a powerful event, celebrating the incredible work of Caregivers, was absolutely moving. The dedication and passion of the coordinators and families were evident, and it was an experience I'll always treasure. Overall, meeting these coordinators face-to-face has deepened my appreciation for the work they do, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with such dedicated individuals. I'm really looking forward to visiting all our support groups over 2025!

A farewell to two of our volunteer coordinators

Jacqui Phillips - Manawatu - Palmerston North

Jacqui has resigned from her role as Support Group Coordinator. We are incredibly grateful for the time, energy, and commitment she dedicated to the position over the last 6 years. Jacqui facilitated two support meetings, coordinated a coffee group, and worked tirelessly on advocacy efforts with WINZ and several other community agencies in the Manawatu region.

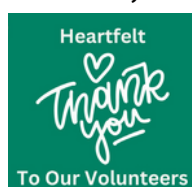
Jacqui's dedication and passion for supporting others have made a lasting impact, and we are incredibly grateful for her commitment. While we are sad to see her step down from this role, we are pleased to share that she will serve as a valued member of the GRG Board of Trustees.

A huge thank you to Jacqui for her exceptional service and contributions as a coordinator.

Marie Mason - Tokoroa

We are sad to announce that Marie has resigned as the Tokoroa Support Group Coordinator. Marie has been a dedicated and compassionate leader, providing support and guidance to our members. We are truly grateful for her hard work and commitment.

Thank you, Marie, for everything you've done. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours and know you'll always be part of our community.



Donations & Gifts

GRG want to sincerely thank the Highbury Knitters group who very generously donated knitting over Christmas. The knitting was distributed as part of our emergency care packages and will be well loved in their new homes. The Highbury Knitting group are always keen to hear from our members if there are any specific knitting requests, so please get in touch with us if you are after anything knitted, especially as we come into the colder months.

We would also like to acknowledge the team at MUFG Pension & Market Services who very generously donated Christmas gifts in December for our members. The team at MUFG have been long time supporters of GRG.





Tom Harris
Community Outreach
Advocate

A word from Tom

Advocating with you

As the GRG Community Outreach Advocate, I'm available to all members for support around linking you with the best services to help. I join with a long history of community service and advocacy based on equity of opportunity for those who need support. I look forward to working alongside those who seek to build better futures for themselves and those who are in their care.

As a supporter of community-based services, I serve on a number of national, community, school and local government boards. I also sit on several advisory panels to help services deliver to the marginalised and disadvantaged in our community. Supporting community-based services with governance and direction is something I am passionate about and am always happy to pitch in where needed.

In this newsletter, I want to feature Community Law Centres Aotearoa, Community Law have 24 law centres throughout Aotearoa, from Kaitia to the Bluff you can access free legal advice and information. Many centres are readily available to contact either directly with walk in appointments, email and phone appointments. Community Law can be useful to many of GRG's members as they quite often have a lawyer who is familiar with family court processes or are able to refer you to a family court legal aid lawyer or family court navigator. For more information about the services that Community Law Aotearoa offer, please visit their website www.communitylaw.org.nz

Our national office staff

Supporting our members



Justine Gibb
Client Services
Administrator

Justine is GRGs Client Services Administrator. She's the voice you hear when you call our 0800 number, and she plays a crucial role in ensuring smooth operations and exceptional service for our members. With a focus on efficiency and customer care, she is responsible for managing phone calls, processing requests, and providing administrative support across various services. Her dedication to detail and strong organisational skills help ensure that every query receives the highest level of support and satisfaction.

She also sends out all our welcome packs, parcels and other goodies.

If you ever have any queries, questions or just want a chat - Justine is always available. You can contact her on our 0800 GRANDS number between 9am - 2pm on weekdays.



Listener Article - 'Holding the baby'

A recent cover story highlights the surge in grandparents raising grandchildren

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) was proud to contribute to The Listener NZ's recent article, Holding the Baby, which sheds light on the growing number of grandparents stepping in to raise their mokopuna. The article explores the challenges faced by these caregivers—many of whom take on this role unexpectedly and without financial or legal support.

Through our advocacy and frontline support, GRG provided key insights into the realities of raising grandchildren, highlighting the urgent need for better financial assistance, legal protections, and emotional support for whānau caregivers. We are grateful for the opportunity to amplify the voices of these incredible grandparents and to continue advocating for systemic change that ensures they receive the support they deserve.



Left: GRG featured in the January 2025 listener article titled 'Holding the Baby'

Wellington Support Group Co-ordinator Kathy Procter was featured in the article. Below is an excerpt from the article:

"Kathy Procter spent the long drive back from Wellington Hospital to her Kapiti home sobbing. She was in her early 50s, with a 14-year-old still living at home, when Oranga Tamariki asked her and her husband, Andrew, if they could take in their 11 month-old grand-child, Anna, because their adult daughter was not capable of caring for her. That was 12 years ago, and the answer was yes. They bought a cot and a car seat, and reorganised their household for the little girl, who had special needs. Reflecting on her ambivalence about taking on the responsibility, Procter recognises she went through a period of grief - for the child, for her daughter and for herself. You're grieving because this is not your idea of how grandparenting should be. You realise you're not going to be the grandparent of that child, you're going to be her mother" Grandparenting has got more involved and complex for many New Zealanders."



GRG's Simply Acquired & Learned Techniques™ SALT trauma informed care 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, develop self-regulation and
- increase the child's resilience, feeling of stability, security, and belonging within their whānau.

REGISTER NOW at SALT@grg.org.nz or phone 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) Each SALT workshop is FREE for all Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ (GRG) registered members!

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 6500 grandparent and whanau care families nationwide, representing around 10,000 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.

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[Our Website](#)

Donate

Donating to GRG with One Percent Collective means that every cent donated lands in our bank account – they don't take a cut because they're a charity too! We get 100% and they handle all the admin. They even make it easy to claim a 33% rebate on your GRG Trust donations at tax time!



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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