



NEWSLETTER MAY 2018

DATABASE: 7782 WHANAU CARERS

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

### Responding to Your Feedback

We had a lot of excellent feedback following our March newsletter featuring a couple of articles on parenting ADHD children/Autistic children and how to deal with their issues. We know this is certainly not easy!

There is a closed group on Facebook which our Founder, Di and many members belong to. Di writes: "My thoughts about this closed group: they are fabulous, with so many discussions and ideas for our challenges and our precious ones. One does have to ask to be invited. I have found comfort in knowing grand's/caregivers and 2 couple parents are involved, plus single Mum's. So many ideas and different strategies are discussed. We are very impressed with this page. For more information please see: [www.facebook.com/groups/ADHDNZ/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/ADHDNZ/)

### Key Messages For July 1<sup>st</sup> 2018

We have already covered some of the income support changes that came into effect on 1 April and others that will soon take effect from 1 July 2018, but we note there is still some confusion out there about these changes. So here is a summary of what you need to know.

#### Families Package

The Families Package changes coming into effect on 1 July are significant. They include:

- **Best Start**

MSD will pay the Best Start tax credit to **any** client getting a **main** benefit, who has a baby born (or due) on or after 1 July this year. Inland Revenue will pay Best Start for all other New Zealanders with new babies born (or due) on or after 1 July. Please note that the "main benefits" are Sole Parent Support, Job-

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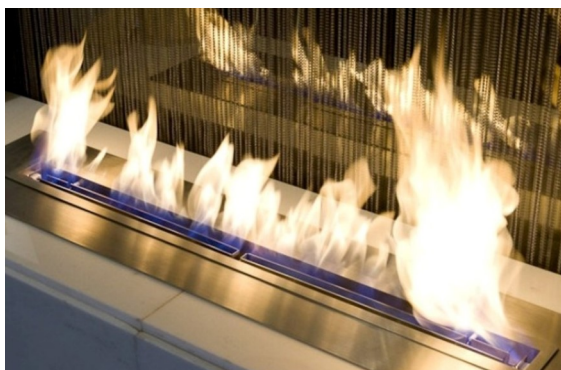
seeker, Supported Living Payment, Emergency Benefit, Youth Payment, Young Parent Payment. The Unsupported Child and Orphan's Benefits are Supplementary Payments and are not included.

- **Winter Energy Payment** will also be paid by MSD to anyone who is on a **main** benefit or on NZ Super.
- **The Family Tax Credits** are increasing.
- **Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit People rates are increasing** from **1 July** as they don't qualify for Family Tax Credits. A new **Clothing Allowance** will be available to anyone getting the **Orphan's or Unsupported Child's Benefit**. **This will be paid automatically weekly into your bank account.**

## Winter Energy Payment

- The Winter Energy Payment will be paid automatically from 1 July until 29 September (inclusive). You do not need to apply for it.
- NZ Super and Veteran's Pension clients, along with clients on a benefit who have an approved travel reason, can leave NZ for up to 28 days and still get the payment.

Payments to NZ Super or Veteran's Pension couples (and couples who both qualify for a benefit e.g., SLP) who have separate bank accounts will get the full Winter Energy Payment paid into one account (not split).



Note: This is **not** available for people who are only getting the UCB/OB.

It is for all on Main Benefits and NZ Super.

Automatically you can get:

- \$20.46 a week if you're single with no dependent children
- \$31.82 a week if you have a partner or dependent children.

This will be paid from 1 July to 30 September 2018. From 2019, it will be paid from 1 May to 1 October.

You don't have to pay it back.

## Client communication about Winter Energy Payment

- MSD is using social media, websites and stakeholder groups to spread the word about the Winter Energy Payment.
- From **30 May** they are emailing all clients they have email addresses for.
- From **28 May** they are writing to all NZ Super and Veteran's Pension clients they don't have email addresses for.
- A Winter Energy Payment pamphlet along with Easy Read and NZ Sign Language versions will be available from

late May/ early June.

- All clients (except those who have already opted out) will get a grant letter **from 1 July** letting them know they'll get their Winter Energy Payment shortly, and when it will stop.

Towards the end of winter, MSD will run an extensive campaign to let clients know their Winter Energy Payment will soon stop.

## Extraordinary Care Fund

- The Extraordinary Care Fund provides extra financial support to children showing promise, or having trouble in a particular area.

- **Applications for the next round are open now and close 22 June.**

We encourage OB/UCB Clients to apply early, as it can take time to get everything together. [See our website for further tips and advice, along with the application form.](#)

## Clothing Allowance

If you get the **Unsupported Child's Benefit or Orphan's Benefit** you'll also automatically get a **new Clothing Allowance** for clothing the child or children in your care.

This is a non-taxable weekly payment, with the rate

<u>Age of child:</u>	<u>Weekly rate from</u>
	<u><b>1 July 2018</b></u>

0-4	\$20.14
5-9	\$22.83
10-13	\$28.19
14+	\$33.84

dependent on the age of the child or children.



## Just an Alert here:

If you have an agreement with Oranga Tamariki (ex CYF) as some people do to receive financial help to buy clothing for a child (e.g. uniform), but you are getting the UCB; it may pay to check with them whether you are still eligible for the support from Oranga Tamariki for clothing. We do not want to see any of you get into the situation where you have to pay it back.



## Kate's Take...

### + the Hot Topics on the CEO's Desk this Month

#### He did it!

#### Bruce Hopkins Nails the Te Araroa Trail

Earlier this month, Bruce took the final steps of the Te Araroa Trail to the famous sign at Stirling Point at Bluff, ate some yummy chocolate cake baked by trail founder Geoff Chappell's wife Miriam and savoured some cool bubbles picked up en-route to meet Bruce, by our Southland Support Coordinator, Lynette Nielsen.

The enormity of his journey, the stories he's told/been told, the people he has met (including a number of our grandparent care families along the way), the injuries and near death experiences he's endured and the personal reflections on life after walking 3000 km in all extremes of weather are all now sinking in for Bruce as he gets used to normal life again.

We are delighted and most grateful to see that donations continue to come into his Givealittle page, and to date over \$23,000 has been raised for GRG via the page and our website. On behalf of us all, thank you Bruce—now get some much needed rest and relaxation. You deserve it!

To follow the last leg of Bruce's journey raising awareness and funds for GRG along the way please see information, podcasts and to donate at:

[Facebook.com/BruceHopkinsTeAraroa](https://www.facebook.com/BruceHopkinsTeAraroa)

[Radionz.co.nz/tags/Bruce%20Hopkins](https://www.radionz.co.nz/tags/Bruce%20Hopkins)

[Givealittle.co.nz/cause/thelongwayhome](https://www.givealittle.co.nz/cause/thelongwayhome)

#### Mental Health and Addiction Enquiry

The submissions for this close online on 5 June 2018. If you wish to make a submission directly to the Panel, please go to the Panel's website at [www.mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/](http://www.mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/) and click on the [Have Your Say](#) page.

We are also making a submission on behalf of GRG and have also requested to meet with them to discuss the issues affecting our families. To assist us in representing your views, [we invite you to take part in our Survey which you can access here](#).

#### Recent Changes at National Support Office

##### 0800 GRANDS helpline

As many of you already know, our Founding Trustee, Diane Vivian QSO recently made the decision to resign from her role on the 0800 GRANDS helpline. These calls are now going directly to the GRG office and referrals are made to other staff to help members with



their needs. We are fortunate, however, that in addition to her important role as Founding Trustee, Di remains very much involved in the work of GRG, maintaining the Facebook page as a social media extension of our member support, writing her column and helping with the newsletter each month and working on various projects of importance to the work GRG carries out to raise awareness of the needs of our families. I am also personally grateful for the support and advice that Di provides with the wisdom of her years of experience supporting our members.

#### New GRG National Support Office

Amid those changes, we have also been in the process of packing up and moving offices in the past month to **our new offices in the Chelsea Business Park at 162 Mokoia Road, Birkenhead**. We plan to hold an official opening of the new office in the next month with details to be confirmed.

A new phone system is also being installed in the new office which we are pleased will soon enable members to call the 0800 number from their cell phone.

Please refer to our new physical address on page 7.

#### Farewell to Kelly

**Kelly Vivian, our Office Administrator** has decided the time is right for her to move on to new challenges and opportunities. She has been with us since September 2014, and as many of you have developed a relationship with her over the years via the phone, I am sure that like us, you will be sad to see her go at the end of May. We wish her every success for the future.

With Kelly leaving, we have recently advertised her role on SEEK and have had an excellent response. We are going through the final stages of our interview process at present and look forward to introducing you to our newest member of staff on the GRG team soon.





## I've been thinking...

**Diane Vivian, Founding Trustee**

I recently posted on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/grg.org.nz/](http://www.facebook.com/grg.org.nz/) about how perfumes and aftershave that our parents used when we were children evoked many memories. Many happy. Some even said they gagged at mother's overpowering perfume when riding in the car and laughed. Some were reminded of their late husband or father when smelling this aroma and it brought back thoughts and wonderful memories, transporting them back to that time for a brief moment. Even a mum's warmth, laughter and a reminder of her.

But what about our grand/whanau children? These triggers set off and transpose them back to a much unhappier time. They relive any traumas they may have suffered, even pre-verbal. It may also not just be the smell. It can also be the feeling of fabric, a fluffy blanket or a toy. This of course relates to Post Stress Syndrome.

Please remember this when making new memories. Just like you, who remembers wonderful times, it can take traumatized children back to very unpleasant times. Sometimes we are not aware as we were not there at that time. I was one who always wore the same perfume when raising and when our grand went off to camps very anxious, I sprayed that same perfume all over her dressing gown as a comfort reminder of love. It worked.

Which also brings me on to the subject of Supervised Contact or visits between our charges and their parents. Now, I know we will all have differing views on this. Having had to take my two to Supervised visits I noticed that days prior to the visit they would start acting up, sometimes wetting

beds, then for two days later one had issues as well. I began to ask myself what damage was this doing to the children?

Were they being re-traumatized, was this causing flashbacks for them, did they feel unsafe? Parents not showing up, or with other children in tow and a new partner. A number of issues came up for me: Are we, by abiding to this ruling, further traumatizing the children, sending mixed messages to some very young ones?

I often wondered by taking them, how does this feel for the children? If Nanny takes me to Mum or Dad, they must be ok and therefore why can I not live with them? What thoughts go through their wee minds?

And what of those parents who tell them stuff that they do not need to know, and in some cases we have heard of, they tell them not to listen to the grand/carer, or in some cases ignore the children...

How does this impact upon their attachment issues with their carer, particularly when their carer may have parenting orders until the child is 16/18? There is also the issue of cost involved for payments to supervised care centres and also travel costs.

I do know the other side is that by seeing their parents

it gives them identity, but remember we are family too. Also a common thread is at least they can see parents for what they are. But in young immature minds as we all well know, particularly for those children who are emotionally younger than their actual years, no matter how much the children have been abused, they still love and want to be with their parents.

I guess whichever way we look at this there are issues all round. I once again draw attention to wonderfully wise words of the late Dame Whina Cooper.

Take care of our children. Take care of what they hear, take care of what they see, take care of what they feel. For how the children grow, so will be the shape of Aotearoa.

DAME WHINA COOPER



## Have you heard of Irlen Syndrome?

Irlen Syndrome is sometimes also referred to as Meares-Irlen Syndrome, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, and Visual Stress. It is not a problem with the optical function in the eyes, but rather a problem with the brain's ability to process what the eyes are seeing. In other words, it is a perceptual processing disorder.

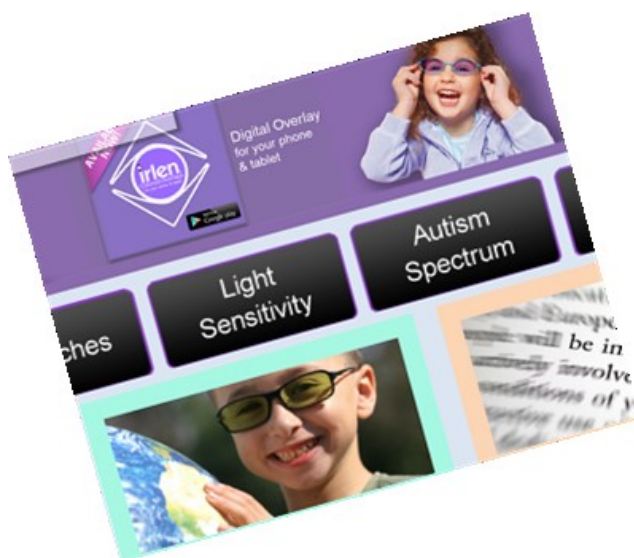
The condition was identified in 1980 by New Zealand teacher, Olive Meares who described the visual distortions some students reported when they were reading from white paper. Coincidentally, at around the same time and American psychologist, Helen Irlen wrote about how coloured overlays could help some people with similar visual distortions to read.

Although there remain many questions within the medical world as to the cause of sensory processing disorders and what is/is not defined as being an Irlen Syndrome condition, we are highlighting this condition and the possible options for assisting children with these issues as it may help one of you.

*As one of our members wrote to us recently about one of the children in their care affected by this condition:*

*It was difficult for us to understand his issues with writing etc. When he got his new glasses with the coloured lens, suddenly he could see words rather than moving jumbled up letters. His dyslexia and his behaviour in class were really bad until he got these lenses. They are brilliant.*

Exploring this further we learned about the work of the Irlen® Institute and the use of lens to assist children and adults affected by reading problems, headaches, light sensitivity, ADD and ADHD, autism and many other ailments.



According to the Irlen® Institute's website, "seventy percent of the information an individual receives enters through the eyes and must be correctly interpreted by the brain. Any problem in the way the brain processes visual information can cause difficulties in the general ability to function. Sensory overload causes problems processing, interpreting, and interacting with the environment."

For example, it is claimed that the Irlen Method helps individuals with "Autism and Asperger Syndrome who have perceptual problems, light sensitivity, and sensory overload by filtering the frequencies of light to which the individual is sensitive." Their lens are claimed to "allow the brain to process visual information normally."

They also state that:

"Irlen addresses the underlying perceptual processing difficulties and light sensitivity that can contribute to reading difficulties, headaches, and attention difficulties. Irlen also can play a role in the challenges experienced by many individuals who have been diagnosed with dyslexia, autism, concussion syndrome and traumatic brain injury, or who have a misdiagnosis of ADHD. You and your child deserve a treatment for ADD that is non-invasive, a solution for headaches that is immediate, an alternative treatment for autism

that addresses sensory overload, and a successful way to combat the light sensitivity and physical symptoms caused by head injury."

The Irlen® Institute has certified diagnosticians and screeners available in over 45 countries including throughout New Zealand.

If you would like to learn more about Irlen Syndrome or to access one of their

diagnosticians their website is [www.irlen.com](http://www.irlen.com).

## Grand's reflections...

### Hair straighteners

Bringing up a teenager is interesting. My granddaughter is now 15 and is expected to iron her school blouses. We are now into colder temperatures, and when Sunday night came last weekend and the blouses were still not ironed I wondered how things would go on Monday morning. She emerged dressed with a jersey on over the white blouse with a perfectly ironed collar. None of the other blouses was ironed so I enquired why she had only done one. She said "Oh I used my hair straighteners on the collar and no one sees the rest of the it." Laugh out loud, or as the young ones put LOL.



### A problem from our Facebook page shared

I wanted to share my holiday teen experience as I am sure other grandparents may have been through this. Our teen is a just turned 15 granddaughter. She has been allowed both at Easter and last week to have some unsupervised time with her Mother as she needs to have her Mother more in her life.....or so we thought.

The age of social media means teens find ways so we keep that line an open one. Last week Mother arrived here and then took her camping and also on an unauthorized 300 km trip by car .

### Hugest Congratulations

Thought I'd update my journey as a nana... Yesterday cyfs (OT) were farewelled... 3 yrs this month my Moko was placed into a family who loves and adores him. But on the upper note, my Moko will have the best of both worlds... And my family has extended... I may not have my Moko in my care, but I know where he is, he's classified as family... And I'll have weekend sleepovers visits etc and shared holidays... I can't ask for a better outcome... Today I shared my visit with my daughter and future son in law. 1st time in 3 yrs we went to the park as a family and had lunch... Things plan out for a reason... I have the most amazing extended family... I couldn't ask for anyone better to raise my moko... Who knows the door is open..... Treat my home as if it was there's... So next fortnight I get my 1st whole weekend sleepover... Have plans... I may not have won the battle but I won the war... cyfs (OT) is no concern of mine. I look forward to the future... My journey has cost money and time unnecessary stress and false allegations... I plan to celebrate next week...if

you're continuing  
your journey...  
Stay strong.....



The final straw came when we found out she had supplied alcohol to our granddaughter which was then shared with 3 friends. Social media photos meant of course that other parents found out and told us. Aside from the obvious reaction to this I have notified the Mother – phone, Facebook etc are now off limits but as she sees no wrong with supplying her daughter (a minor in our care) with alcohol, I feel that we now go back to supervised visits only which are then only about twice a year.

I want our granddaughter to understand my reasoning but struggle with telling her, without it seeming over the top, how irresponsible her Mother was.

We have dealt with the bringing of alcohol to sharing and social media issues which she has taken ownership for, but punishing her for her Mother's attitude to drinking seems unfair. We do not have a no alcohol policy in our home but draw the line at supplying teens especially other people's teens and would like to see her enjoy her life without resorting to needing alcohol.



Talking about drugs and alcohol we have always done and she was clear that she did not wish to use either as she knows the effects. She is very sporty does well at school and has excellent social skills but her ability to accept everyone and everyone's behaviour as " just who they are" leaves her vulnerable. (Continued over page)



(Continued from previous page)

## And a solution, solved

I wanted to respond to all the grandparents who posted their thoughts and say thank you. We have had apologies from 2 of the girls and our granddaughter apologized to the parents as well so feel we are on the right track and she voluntarily gave me her phone and the laptop is off once homework and her research is finished.

As we often allow for the tent to be up during holidays we will do it again but be more vigilant. Her Mother is on a different page to us and it is our trust

that has been challenged so supervised access is back in force which means we will not see her for months or even longer.

Our granddaughter has also realized that sometimes friends can use social media for their own ego trip so lots of discussion around that.

Her very trusting loving and friendly forgiving nature has taken a wee hit but it is what makes her special. Thanks everyone.



Thank you for  
your support for  
GRG!

Give a little to GRG via our secure DPS payment  
system on our website at [www.grg.org.nz](http://www.grg.org.nz)  
or at <https://www.givealittle.co.nz/org/grg>

**givealittle**  
from the  Spark Foundation

## Can we help you?

Members ONLY services are  
available nationwide  
Caregivers Toll free helpline  
0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637)  
For landline caregivers only

Or

TEXT 4 SUPPORT  
TEXT your name to 027 398 0388  
We will call you back.

New members and general  
information please call  
0800 472 637 or 09 418 3753 or join  
via our [website at www.grg.org.nz](http://www.grg.org.nz)

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contacting the GRG Trust Office as this  
is where the total mail out member-  
ship is kept.

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

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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

We are respectful, we listen, we learn

*He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ako mātou*

Please pass this on to other grandparents/kin carers you know.

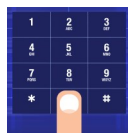
GRG Trust Head Office hours are 9am – 2pm daily. (We raise grandchildren too)

We are a Charitable Trust



Thank you to our Sponsors and  
Funders supporting GRG's Support  
Services throughout New Zealand  
including this newsletter and to our  
Community Partner — Suncorp NZ





## SUPPORT GROUP CONTACT NUMBERS

For the most up to date contact details please go to our website [www.grg.org.nz](http://www.grg.org.nz). If you are a grandparent or whanau caregiver and need a referral to one of our Field Officers please call 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or if you are in Auckland please call 09 4183753 \* Telephone Support \*\* Telephone Support and Meetings

Kaitia* / Kerikeri	Martha Taonui	022 050 7056	jamcleaner@gmail.com
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Te Kuiti**	Kay Higgins	027 430 2939	palmdrive@xtra.co.nz
Taumarunui**	Aroha Rudkin	027 873 0061	aroharudkin@yahoo.com
Taupo*	Lesley-Anne Wells	07 377 3539	lesley-anne@xtra.co.nz
Rotorua**	Anne Donnell	020 402 22910	rotoruagrg@gmail.com
Tokoroa*	Currently vacant		
Tauranga**	Karen Ormsby	07 579 3571	jewelzs@hotmail.com
Papamoa/Mt Maunganui*	Rawinia Macredie	07 562 2850	jnmacredie@kinect.co.nz
Opotiki*	Sophie Wilson-Kahika	07 262 5136	wsophie71@yahoo.co.nz
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