



Thrive

Your impact on the future of
New Zealand whānau | Winter 2026



whānau āwhina
plunket

Kia ora,

Winter can be a beautiful time in Aotearoa, but it can also be a difficult season for many whānau. Colder days, higher household costs, winter illnesses and the everyday pressures of caring for young children can all add up - especially for families who may already be feeling stretched.

That is why the care, connection and practical support made possible by amazing people like you matter so much. Because of you there are warm, welcoming clinic spaces, safe places for tamariki to play, expert advice on keeping little ones safe in the car, or a friendly volunteer helping new parents feel less alone. Your generosity helps Plunket be there in moments that are real, local and deeply meaningful. Thank you.

In your winter issue of *Thrive*, we celebrate some of these moments of impact. You'll see how generous friends like you and funders are helping transform Plunket spaces, like in Papatoetoe with a bright new clinic environment or in Kaikohe with a playground designed especially for under-fives.

We also share how our partnership with Baby Bunting is helping whānau travel more safely through car seat clinics ensuring proper car seat installation for parents' peace of mind. And how BestStart's wonderful annual Butterfly Appeal in continues to bring care closer to families across the motu. You'll also read about how some of our compassionate supporters are choosing to make a lasting legacy by leaving a gift in their Will.

And I am delighted to share that [Dunk it for Plunket](#) returns this September (with even more fun and rewards than ever).

Each of these moments are very different but they all demonstrate how incredible your support is. They show that when communities come together around babies, tamariki and whānau, the impact can last far beyond a single moment. I am so grateful to you for being a part of that.

Thank you for continuing to open your heart and stand alongside Plunket.
Your care helps us keep showing up where, when and how families need us most.

Ngā mihi nui,

Fiona Kingsford, Chief Executive.

P.S: I'm joining in the Dunk it for Plunket fun again this year myself! This time I'm returning to one of my fave spots, Oriental Bay, and going for another ocean dip with some friends - my entire leadership team! We're competing to see who can raise the most funds and brave the spring sea temperatures for a very, very good cause. Perhaps that might inspire you too!



[Learn more](#)

Thanks to friends like you, two stunning property projects make a huge difference for families in Papatoetoe and Kaikohe

Here at Plunket, we care for families in more than 400 clinics and community spaces across Aotearoa. Keeping these spaces modern, welcoming and fit for purpose is no small task.

Thanks to support from generous donors like you and amazing grant funders, we're able to keep investing in these spaces where whānau come for Plunket expertise and wraparound care.

Recently, amazing support from donors helped to bring two exciting projects to life. In Papatoetoe, a major refurbishment has transformed an ageing hub into a bright, family-friendly space.



A lick of paint, new carpet and extendable rooms thanks to folding doors has made a world of difference.

We touched base with the Papatoetoe Clinical Leader, Riteshni Kumar, to see how kaimahi (staff), volunteers and families are enjoying the makeover.

“Honestly, it feels like a dream come true,” she shared. “The space is so much more welcoming and practical now, with wider areas for prams, brighter lighting, and a layout that just works so much better for families. We’ve had such great feedback from whānau — people genuinely notice the difference and feel more comfortable coming in. One mum said that when she had visited the clinic before the renovations, she was shocked to see that it looked exactly as she remembered it from when she was a child! So when she came back after the makeover, she was so excited her jaw literally dropped.”

There is still more work to go on the project, but Riteshni adds that it's already made a big difference to team morale, too. “We now have a proper staff room, break area, and modern kitchen. It helps us do our jobs so much better. We’re incredibly grateful to the donors who have made this possible.”



The adventure playground built with natural materials is perfect for the age and stage of the tamariki who visit Plunket's Kaikohe clinic.

Meanwhile, further north in Kaikohe, a vibrant new playground is already bringing joy to local tamariki and whānau. The community was lacking a playground where the littlest of tamariki could play and explore safely.

Plunket was the natural location for a vibrant play space for under-fives, and as the clinic itself had recently undergone a refresh, it made sense to follow it up with an upgrade to the outdoor area as well.

Carole Smith, Kaiawhina in Kaikohe says, “the playground has been a real hit with the tamariki visiting the clinic. It has brought a positive new dynamic to appointments, with the kids often heading straight outside to play! We are so grateful to the donors and funders who have made this special place possible for tamariki and whānau in the Kaikohe community.”

Thanks for the fabulous new play area go to the Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board, Oxford Sports Trust and generous individuals who believed in the vision.

But there's always more work to do to keep our properties open and serving whānau well. That includes the final stage of renovations in Papatoetoe, but also continuous property projects across the motu. We'd love your support.



If you'd like to help create welcoming spaces like these where families can truly thrive, please contact our Philanthropy Manager, Loren O'Sullivan:
loren.osullivan@plunket.org.nz
027 4059 442



Safer rides for our littlest passengers

One vital service that Plunket is able to offer whānau - thanks to help from our supporters - is car seat checking and help with proper installation.

Last year, at one of our regional car seat clinics run with the local police, not one car seat that we saw had been installed correctly. Not one.

That was in just one small town, but Plunket kaimahi and volunteers are seeing 80% of pēpi (babies) across Aotearoa. We simply can't check every single car seat out there without help.

Enter our new partner, Baby Bunting! Thanks to their same focus on child safety, we can be right there for caregivers with support like car seat clinics, helping them feel confident while travelling with their precious cargo.



Plunket and Baby Bunting teams ready for action outside the Westgate store.

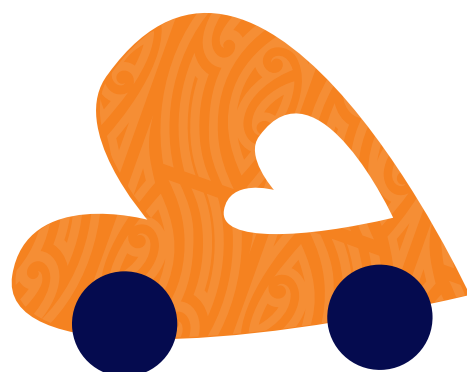
A massive thanks to Baby Bunting – with child safety and wellbeing at the heart of what we do together in the years to come, we'll be making a real difference!

Thank you so much, Baby Bunting!



A car seat installation in Christchurch

In May, we put our new shared pledge of 'safer rides for little passengers' into action during Road Safety Week. We teamed up to host free car seat checks and installation services at three locations in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and Ōtautahi Christchurch. Trained child restraint technicians provided 106 complimentary checks, with expert care to ensure seats were fitted safely and for each child's age and stage. Families asked questions, got top-tier advice, and left with greater peace of mind.



BestStart Butterfly Appeal brings care closer to whānau

Thanks to the incredible generosity, creativity and heart shown by Best Start teams during the 2026 BestStart Butterfly Appeal they raised an impressive \$86,000 to support babies and families through Plunket.

Now in its 11th year, the Butterfly Appeal is a much-loved part of Plunket's partnership with BestStart. Each year, BestStart centres across the motu get behind the appeal in wonderfully imaginative ways, from teddy bear picnics and reading challenges to wheel-a-thons, raffles, bikeathons and blue-themed fundraising days!

But this year's appeal was about more than raising funds. It provided an amazing opportunity to showcase just how impactful the partnership between Plunket and BestStart really is. Our kaimahi provided health, wellbeing and educational support in BestStart centres, helping more whānau access trusted health, wellbeing and parenting support close to where they already are.



This year's top fundraising centre - BestStart Kamo Central in Whangārei.

The top fundraising centre this year was BestStart Kamo Central in Whangārei, which raised an outstanding \$3,667. Their success was helped along by teacher Karyn Morgan, who spent months crocheting handmade creatures, from octopuses and stingrays to Triceratops dinosaurs, then selling them to support the appeal.



BestStart Kamo Central tamariki perform a waiata for Plunket kaimahi.

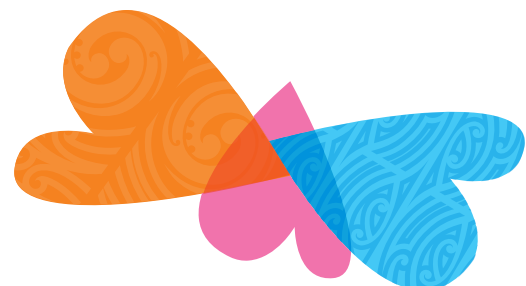
BestStart Kamo Central Centre Manager Kay Eady said the team was proud to support Plunket's work in their community: "Knowing that our fundraising efforts will help Plunket continue this important mahi, that has such a positive impact on the wellbeing of families, makes us very proud."

Since the Butterfly Appeal began in 2016, BestStart centres have raised more than \$569,000 for Plunket. That generosity helps us continue to be there for families when they need us most.

To everyone at BestStart - the tamariki, whānau, teachers and centre teams who fundraised with such energy and aroha and to our Plunket kaimahi who helped bring this partnership to life in communities across Aotearoa: thank you so much for being amazing.



Partnerships Manager, Jess and tamariki



Wills Week 2026: Stories of Care, Connection and Lasting Impact

This year's Wills Week campaign celebrated the lasting impact Plunket has on tamariki and whānau, while highlighting how gifts in Wills can help ensure that support continues for generations to come.

We are grateful to two inspiring donors who have let us know that they are including a gift to Plunket in their Will. Jan told us about her lifelong connection with Plunket, from childhood visits with her mother, to raising her own children with Plunket's support, volunteering in her community, and ultimately choosing to leave a gift in her Will to the Plunket Foundation.



Jan generously shared her time and her stories of life as both a Plunket mum and volunteer.

We also heard from Tupou, who was supported by a Plunket nurse during a difficult period following pregnancy loss and postnatal depression. The compassion and care she received helped her through an incredibly challenging time and inspired her to leave a gift in her Will so other families can access the same support in the future.



Tupou and her tamariki, at her beloved Foxton Beach.

Together, their stories show the lasting difference Plunket can make for families, and how gifts in Wills help ensure that care continues for future generations.

As part of Wills Week, we were delighted to host a supporter morning tea in Whangārei. It was wonderful to connect with our supporters, thank them for their generosity, and share the impact they are making for children and families across Aotearoa.

A highlight of the morning was hearing from Plunket Clinical Services Manager, Cynthia Keay, who shared a powerful story. Cynthia recently bumped into a woman who remembered the support she had received more than a decade earlier, and the difference it had made to her family.

At the time, Cynthia listened to her concerns that had been dismissed elsewhere and referred her baby to a specialist, which ultimately transformed his quality of life. It was a powerful reminder that we don't always see the difference our support makes, but its impact can be profound and long-lasting.



Plunket Clinical Services Manager, Cynthia Keay



Leaving a gift in your Will is much the same: choosing to be there for families when they need support, knowing that the impact of your care may only be fully realised many years later.

We'd love to walk alongside you. Whether you're just starting to think about your Will, ready to write or update one, or have already remembered Plunket with a gift – we'd love to hear from you.

After you've looked after the people you love, a gift in your Will is a beautiful way to continue supporting the things you care about, long into the future – helping tamariki and whānau across Aotearoa for generations to come.

And if you've already included Plunket in your Will, or are considering updating your Will to include us, please let us know. We'd love the chance to say thank you, and to make sure your wishes are understood exactly as you intend them.

Complete our [Gifts in Wills form](#) or contact our Philanthropy Manager, Loren O'Sullivan: loren.osullivan@plunket.org.nz | 027 4059 442

Celebrating the volunteers who help whānau feel less alone

During Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu, National Volunteer Week, we honoured the incredible people who give their time, energy and aroha to supporting whānau through Plunket.

Across Aotearoa, Plunket volunteers help make extra support possible. From visiting new parents at home, to running playgroups and parent groups, providing lovingly knitted clothes and accessories for new pēpi, and creating welcoming spaces where whānau can connect, share and feel seen.

For volunteer Kayla, who hosts a Plunket in the Neighbourhood group (or 'PIN' Group) in Miramar, Wellington, this mahi is deeply personal. Raising twins during Covid while also moving around a lot meant access to support groups and consistent Plunket care was limited. That experience gave her a lasting appreciation for the power of connection in the early years of parenting.

"I love seeing parents build friendships and realise they're not alone," Kayla says. Through her volunteer role, she has watched friendships form between parents who may never have met otherwise, and seen mothers share challenges they had been carrying alone. "We also get to witness the sweet milestones of the little ones and share in those moments of excitement with whānau," she adds.



Kayla with her twins.

Volunteers like Kayla help whānau feel supported, connected and less alone. And when parents feel like they're a part of a helpful community, their little ones can thrive. Thank you to all the incredible volunteers for this life-changing impact.

Pop the kettle on, because *Dunk it for Plunket* is back for 2026!

On Tuesday September 22 or any day that suits you next month, host a morning tea & dunk a few Arnott's bickies (or dunk anything you like!) for babies and tamariki across Aotearoa.

It's quick and easy to sign up to host a morning or afternoon tea fundraiser. We'll even send you a Dunk Kit once you have raised \$30 (one of many rewards this year).



There are still scrumptious Dunk Kits to go around, and rewards like mugs, aprons and tea towels!

A Dunk Kit is box jam-packed with Arnott's favourites, Bell tea, Moccona coffee, Huggies wipes – everything you need to gather up your nearest and dearest for a cuppa and to support babies and their whānau to thrive.



You can also get creative and dunk anything – or anyone – you like. However you choose to dunk it, you'll be making an amazing difference for whānau all around New Zealand by ensuring Plunket stays right there for them where, when, how they need. Plus, it's fun!

Please sign up today and get dunking this September.

[Sign up here](#)



Other Plunket news from across the motu:

🧡 A few weeks ago on Safe Sleep Day, we announced that **Plunket will be part of a vital new pilot in Auckland to help with preventing SUDI (Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy)**. The pilot is a partnership with Ririki Haumarū Safekids Aotearoa, New Zealand Police, Hāpai Te Hauora and Hato Hone St John. It will help emergency frontline staff refer whānau that they identify as needing SUDI prevention support to organisations like Plunket, for care that can make a real difference in the safe sleep space.

🧡 **In June, our Hamilton team welcomed the first Toyota Yaris Hybrid to the Plunket fleet!** First Toyota Yaris joins fleet – keep an eye out for our nurses out on the roads in their new, safe and sustainable rides. The new Yaris is expected to use almost 50% less fuel than our current vehicles, which also means around 50% fewer carbon emissions. It's a positive step in our commitment to reducing our environmental impact! This is just the beginning, with another 134 Toyota Yaris Hybrids due to join the fleet before the end of the year.



Clinical Lead, Ashleigh with the Yaris Hybrid on her rounds.

🧡 **Since launching in March, our new Online Perinatal Wellbeing Service (OPWS) has gone from strength to strength.** We've seen high demand for the service, highlighting the very real, unmet need among parents experiencing mental health challenges. We're also seeing encouraging early outcomes, with parents sharing that they feel more resilient, confident, and connected, and better able to navigate the challenges of parenting. One māmā told us that "it was really helpful to have the opportunity to talk through everything, and I appreciate how easy you made it to open up about what I've been carrying for a really long time. I left feeling heard and understood, which was incredibly valuable."

We're planning to evolve this amazing service and look forward to sharing more detail with you in the coming months.

If you would like to get involved, make a donation or to talk to our friendly Fundraising team, please call or email: supporters@plunket.org.nz or call **0800 20 55 55**

Tamariki Tidbits: fun facts you may not know about little ones!

The children that we have the privilege of seeing everyday say and do the funniest things! Here's a great story from Lee, a B4 School Check nurse in Tāmaki

Makaurau, Auckland:

'During the assessment, I asked if he could count my fingers. The child put his hands in his pockets and said, "you've got 10, I've got 10, what's next?"'



A few words from some of the whānau you're helping by supporting Plunket:

"When my Plunket nurse first visited, she was so supportive and lovely that I immediately felt lifted. I was a single mother who had experienced pregnancy and postpartum health issues and was grieving the loss of a close family member. She referred me immediately to support services and groups like Plunket's own Perinatal Adjustment Programme (or PPNAP), which I believe saved my mental health. She continues to be a positive light when I meet her for my baby's assessments. PlunketLine has also been an amazing support when my child is unwell."



whānau āwhina
plunket

[Donate today](#)