



# Thrive

Your impact on the future of  
New Zealand whānau | Spring 2025



whānau āwhina  
plunket

**Kia ora,**

I don't know about you, but I'm really welcoming the warmer weather. Spring means longer hours of sun, which in turn means longer walks along the beach with my dog, Millie.

But for a bit of a departure from those serene strolls, the season started with an adrenaline kick for me thanks to *Dunk it for Plunket!* I briefly traded beach walking for 'bungy dunking'! After having bungy jumped twenty years ago despite my deep fear of heights and vowing to never, ever do it again, I said I would for *Dunk it for Plunket* – but only if I hit a lofty (pun intended) fundraising goal of \$10,000. Well, I'd say that Plunket's mahi is certainly the good cause to get me up to the top of the Auckland Harbour Bridge, and all of my amazing sponsors getting me to that \$10k target meant following through with a bungy jump off the edge! Read more below about my 'extreme dunking' with Managing Director of Arnott's, Mike Cullerne. We also have other updates about our biggest fundraiser on the calendar here at Plunket.

I definitely needed to get back to a relaxing beach after that! And finding stress management strategies like these is especially important for Plunket kaimahi (staff) and volunteers right now, with continuing cases of the measles cropping up across the motu. Recent cases have been reported in Northland, Queenstown and Auckland. My teams are working hard to educate whānau around the importance of completing their children's immunisations schedules – visiting one of our vaccination clinics at an existing Plunket location is an efficient way for caregivers to get this done. These clinics are opening up regularly around Aotearoa, with our Dunedin team having launched theirs in October on the new hub's first birthday! This immunisation work, alongside Health New Zealand, is one that we are proud to offer in our efforts to truly wrap care around tamariki and their whānau. You can read on for more information about other immunisation sites that we've been busy getting up and running.

In this issue of *Thrive*, we also celebrated the fantastic renovation of our hub in Belfast, Christchurch; awarded two long-serving, incredible volunteers; chatted to a wonderful donor who has decided to include a gift in her Will to the Plunket Foundation, and lots of other interesting news for you, our fabulous supporter community.

**Ngā mihi nui,**

**Fiona Kingsford, Chief Executive.**

P.S: If you're based in Auckland or able to travel for a rare, exciting opportunity to explore the famous Gibbs Farm sculpture park, then November 20 is your chance. We still have tickets available but get in quick! I've already bought mine and will pack both sunscreen and a brolly for the typical Auckland spring weather. But I'll have to leave Millie at home for this walk!





## Dunk it for Plunket celebrates another year of dunktastic fundraising!

To everyone who dunked an Arnott's bickie or three, or got creative and dunked something (or someone) else this year, and fundraised for Plunket while doing it – thank you.

September was *Dunk it for Plunket* month, and lots of Dunkers (fundraisers) came together with friends, whānau or colleagues to enjoy a morning tea with their 'Dunk Kits' jam packed with Arnott's goodies, Bell tea, Moccona coffee, Huggies wipes and other bits and pieces of dunktastic fun.

Some went the extra mile and baked up a storm, selling and judging goodies at their events. Others thought way outside the box (literally), hiring dunk tanks, shooting hoops, running Tim Tam slam competitions, and generally doing all sorts of amazing activities to fundraise, to have a blast, and to show their support of Plunket's mahi.

A huge thank you to Arnott's, our naming partner. They provided all the delicious biscuits for the Dunk Kits. They also fundraised themselves, including Managing Director, Mike Cullerne. He joined our Chief Executive, Fiona Kingsford, at the top of the Auckland Harbour Bridge in a *Dunk it for Plunket* first: 'bungy dunking'!

Together, they took the plunge and bungy jumped off the bridge on the very last day of the month after having smashed their fundraising goals, raising \$14,000 collectively for the cause.

*Dunk it for Plunket* donations are still trickling in as we wrap it up for another year. These funds are essential in keeping Plunket's services going and connecting our staff and volunteers with over 280,000 families every single year.

If you got dunking this year and raised over \$150, we'd love to sign you up to be a VIP Dunker. This will mean you'll be guaranteed a delicious Dunk Kit to fundraise with next year, maybe even with an extra special treat in it...

Email Sophie Adams, [sophie.adams@plunket.org.nz](mailto:sophie.adams@plunket.org.nz) to hop onto that VIP list today.



Mike Cullerne of Arnott's and our own Fiona Kingsford were all smiles (of relief!) after their AJ Hackett Auckland Harbour Bridge 'bungy dunks'.



## Our Belfast hub in Christchurch reopens with a polished new look

**Our Belfast community hub has had an impressive makeover!**

Recent upgrades mean that Plunket staff now have two clinical spaces, allowing us to see more clients and meet their increasing, evolving needs in Christchurch's Belfast suburb. Our kaiāwhina (community health workers), community services teams and karitane health workers can now all be based on site, meaning we have a more welcoming environment for whānau and local groups.

A big thank you to Belfast Community Trust, proudly managed by Perpetual Guardian and their initial generous grant of \$160,000 and additional later funds that all enabled us to spruce up the space.

Some of our local kaimahi (staff) gathered at the hub in October to celebrate its reopening. Ngāi Tūāhuriri kaumātua Liz Kereru and Maaka Tau blessed the refreshed premises.

"Whānau Āwhina Plunket has been part of the local community in Belfast since 1956," says Denise Shera, Plunket's General Manager of Service Delivery. "The recent transformation will mean that a long list of Plunket's vital services can be brought under one roof here. This was only made possible with that initial grant from Belfast Community Trust (Perpetual Guardian). We're very grateful."





## Donors look ahead to the future of Aotearoa, and pledge support to make a real difference.

September was Wills Month in Aotearoa, and longstanding supporter, Jan Barton was proud to share her motivations for including a gift to the Plunket Foundation in her Will.

Plunket has played an important role in Jan's life, right from the start. Some of Jan's earliest memories include walking to the local Plunket rooms with her mum, and 'playing Plunket' with dolls in her front yard. Later, as a young mum raising three children in rural Auckland in the 1960s, Jan relied on her Plunket nurse for practical advice and reassurance.

Like many in her community, Jan joined her local Plunket committee, beginning a volunteer journey that spanned nearly 40 years. "I have decided to leave a gift in my will to Plunket because it will be my final contribution to the cause that I have given to all my life," says Jan.



*Jan has included a gift in her Will to the Plunket Foundation after decades of support and receiving support herself from Plunket.*

[See Jan's story](#)

## Two volunteers with 20 years' shared experience win Northern region award

Plunket volunteers, Alison McTaggart and Carol Harvey provide warmth, dignity, community and connection to whānau with young children. Between them, they have 20 years' experience supporting whānau in their community and were recently jointly awarded 'Volunteer of the Year', as part of the Northern region's Plunket celebrations for National Volunteer week.

Through the Clothing Swap Shop, which operates out of the West Auckland Plunket Family Centre, Alison and Carol carefully curate donated clothing items for newborns and children up to five years, and welcome families with kind smiles and helping hands.

Alison told us about one recent feel-good story from her time at the Shop. "A mother had been coming in for a few weeks. She told me she found herself driving to the Family Centre every Wednesday, even when she didn't have much money, because she loved the feeling of being able to browse, to shop—even if it was just 50 cents an item. It made her feel like a mum who could provide."

Ka pai, Alison and Carol!

Find out more about volunteering with Plunket on [our website](#).



## New Plunket partner, Haven, helps whānau set up for a brighter future.

We recently welcomed Haven to our Partner Whānau. Haven shares our commitment to supporting whānau and their holistic wellbeing today, and in the future. Families enrolled with Plunket can now access free financial wellbeing checks to complement our health checks. Whānau can chat about everything from Kiwisaver and mortgages to medical and health insurance with a qualified advisor, receive quotes, and make choices that fit with their needs and budgets.

Our partnership has also enabled us to offer a Facebook Live event around family financial planning.

If you would also like to chat with a friendly Haven advisor or know of someone who might be interested, **contact them today.**

**HAVEN**  
Insurance | Mortgages | KiwiSaver



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## A rare opportunity to explore Gibbs Farm sculpture park

We still have tickets available for our Gibbs Farm Plunket Experience on November 20.

Enjoy a day of beautiful art and stunning scenery on the Kaipara Harbour coastline, including a delicious lunch with some friendly Plunket kaimahi (staff).

Gibbs Farm sculpture park only opens a handful of times a year for charities to offer experiences like these – so get in quick before the last of our tickets are snapped up!

Tickets are \$120. If you have a larger group of friends or colleagues interested in joining you, we can arrange a special rate.

Learn more on the [website](#), or contact Jo Bailey to discuss your larger group of adventurers:  
[jo.bailey@plunket.org.nz](mailto:jo.bailey@plunket.org.nz)



# Gibbs Farm Experience

Plunket Fundraiser and Lunch  
20th Nov 2025  
10:00am–2:00pm



## Other Plunket news from across the motu

- **In October, the Auckland Diwali Festival shone a little brighter for local families, as Plunket marked its first-ever presence at the event.**

The festival, which celebrates the Indian Festival of Lights, saw thousands of people flock to the Dew Drop Centre in Manukau for a day of vibrant performances, delicious food, and cultural activities. For Plunket, this debut was a crucial step in connecting with the region's large and growing Indian community.

"Auckland has a significant population of Indian families, and it's essential that we are visible and accessible to them," said Vivian Cheung, Principal Advisor, Priority Populations. "Diwali provided the perfect opportunity to engage with parents and caregivers in a comfortable and celebratory setting."

A key element of the day was having dedicated staff on hand who could speak a variety of South Asian languages.

**"This linguistic diversity helped break down communication barriers, ensuring families felt welcomed and understood. As almost half of Auckland's new baby cases are of Asian ethnicity, Plunket needs to actively engage with this growing community"**

- Sam Ferriera, Regional Operations Manager, Northern.



- **We continued to expand our immunisation services in September and October. Whānau can now take their tamariki to clinics in Waterloo, Hutt Valley; to two locations in Auckland; and most recently, to our Dunedin hub.**

The launch of immunisation services in Dunedin coincided with the first birthday of the hub.

Clinical Lead, Marlene Du Toit-Parks said it was an amazing day of learning, collaboration and community. "All the hard mahi and planning have paid off to create a lovely day of connection, team building and learning. Whānau and tamariki had nothing but positive feedback, and our staff are so proud of what we've achieved together."



*Whānau spoke about how much they valued being able to access immunisations in a calm, family-friendly environment they already knew and trusted.*

One māmā said it was great to have her daughter's immunisations done in such a private, open and welcoming space and shared that the flexible appointment times helped her fit the visit around work.

This is another amazing way the the new hub is bringing various services and support for whānau and their tamariki together for a one-stop-shop approach to wraparound care.

- **In September, we launched a Virtual Kaiāwhina (community health worker) Services pilot. The goal with these video calls is to address barriers to whānau receiving Plunket support, like living in remote or rural areas, not having transport to get to a Plunket clinic, or being unable to get out of the house for a number of reasons like older children being sick (which also then means no home visits). Caregivers can book a virtual call through their Plunket nurse or kaiāwhina.**

Our team reports that a very hot topic for caregivers in these video calls is sleep, sleep, sleep! Lack of sleep for the whole household, how to get more of it, and the ever-changing sleep patterns of babies are top of mind for whānau and we're also able to offer tips around safe sleep and its importance.

It's an adaptive way to deliver Plunket care in an increasingly digital world. "We are parents ourselves, holders of Mātauranga, community knowledge and all things well-child," says Samantha Haverfield, Kaiāwhina in Whanganui, Marton and Bulls regions says. "The Virtual Kaiāwhina sessions ensure whānau have access to this care, no matter where they are in Aotearoa. It's also becoming our new normal with everything going online now."



## Words from whānau that you help by supporting plunket:

“I moved from Colombia to Blenheim two years ago with my family – my husband, my two children and my nine-month-old baby.

I’ve never had such a wonderful experience. The Plunket nurse has taught me very beautiful things that I had never learned with my other children; that love and dedication to the patients is a great admiration for me. She has helped me establish the baby’s weight, taught me how to be more educational with my baby, and above all, taught me new things.

I now know how to feed my baby in an easier and more practical way.

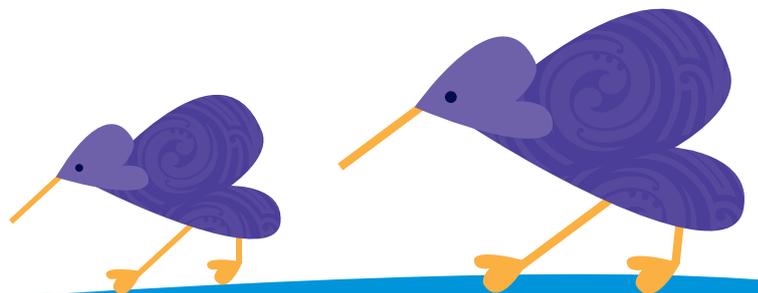
Thanks, Plunket.”

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

Earlier this year, Plunket supporter, highly respected paediatrician and advocate for a child’s early years of development, Dr Johan Morreau, sadly passed away. **His TedTalk** was filled with interesting Tamariki Tidbits around things like the importance of immunisation, and the first 1,000 days of a child’s life.

“The first 1000 days will determine the quality of the next 32,000. If things don’t go well, that can significantly compromise a person’s future. The first thousand days are the window of opportunity for a child, for a family, and for a country.”

- Dr. Johan Morreau.



If you would like more detail about these news stories, please contact the Fundraising team [supporters@plunket.org.nz](mailto:supporters@plunket.org.nz) or call 0800 20 55 55



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