

## **Whānau Āwhina Plunket celebrates 115<sup>th</sup> birthday by debuting te reo Māori on its website**

Whānau Āwhina Plunket has marked its 115<sup>th</sup> birthday – and honoured its bicultural origins – by officially launching te reo Māori translations on its website.

The website **plunket.org.nz** is data free and one of Aotearoa’s most widely read digital child health resources.

Chief Executive Amanda Malu says visitors can now read the main pages and menu navigation in te reo Māori or English.

“This is a proud moment for Whānau Āwhina Plunket and another important step in our commitment to better meet the needs of whānau Māori,” Ms Malu says.

Ms Malu says the organisation has been on a journey to fulfil the legacy of the two founding Taua, midwives and healers Mere Harper and Ria Tikini, who worked closely with their friend and neighbour, Dr Frederic Truby King.

“What more fitting way to mark our 115<sup>th</sup> birthday and celebrate how far we’ve come in supporting our whānau and mokopuna than including te reo Māori – the language our two founding midwives would have spoken – on a digital platform that is so widely used by New Zealand parents and caregivers.”

In a twist of fate, Ms Malu is a direct descendent of Mere Harper, who is her great-great-grandmother.

“I can only imagine what they would make of our website today – now one of our most powerful communication channels!

“It has 1.6 million visits each year – that’s more than 4000 people every day. Providing critical health information and parenting support in te reo Māori is a really important step in making our digital platforms inclusive and accessible.”

Fluent te reo Māori speaker Hera Black translated the web pages, working alongside the organisation’s digital team. Ms Black has since joined Whānau Āwhina Plunket as Te Pou Whakarae (Chief Advisor Māori).

Ms Black says as the great-granddaughter of Mere Harper, Ms Malu is continuing the legacy of Whānau Āwhina Plunket’s founding wāhine toa.

“Back in 1907, te reo Māori would have been the language Mere and Ria spoke, but our language was sadly lost for a long time with the use of te reo Māori discouraged in Aotearoa for many years,” Ms Black says.



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“Now, in what is a full circle, Whānau Āwhina Plunket is playing a key part of revitalising te reo Māori and honouring the genealogy of our founding wāhine toa through Amanda – another influential wāhine opening doors for iwi and whānau.”

Whānau Āwhina Plunket sees nearly 90 percent of all new-born babies in Aotearoa, and more than 60 percent of all newborn Māori pēpi. The organisation has recognised it has an obligation to work differently to help improve Māori health outcomes.

Amanda Malu thinks Mere and Ria would be very pleased to see the work being done to become a truly bicultural organisation that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

“Whānau Āwhina Plunket is on the pathway to becoming what we always intended to be: an organisation that partners with whānau, to set the path of wellness in our communities for generations to come.”

**ENDS**

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*Hera Black is fluent in te reo Māori and available for interviews.*