

## **Celebrating our Plunket Nurses on International Nurses Day**

Nurses play a critical role in supporting the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders. On International Nurses Day (12 May), Whānau Āwhina Plunket is celebrating the role its nurses have played for generations of New Zealand whānau and families. It is also paying tribute to its founders Mere Harper, Ria Tikini and Dr Truby King, who 113 years ago paved the way for thousands of Plunket Nurses.

Every year Plunket Nurses see more than 85% of all newborn babies in Aotearoa, as part of New Zealand's unique Well Child Tamariki Ora (WCTO) service. These nurses can make the difference of a lifetime in the first 1000 days of a child's life, and this has remained true as they have continued to provide valuable support to families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Plunket adjusted its services in response to the pandemic to support families using a prioritised virtual service, which saw the delivery of WCTO via telephone and videoconferencing. Through the innovation and flexibility of Plunket Nurses, Plunket was able to remain responsive to whānau in need.

Plunket's Chief Nurse, Dr Jane O'Malley, says, "We're really proud of how our nurses have risen to the challenge of the pandemic and want to use today to celebrate their achievements. Nurses have drawn deeply on their knowledge and skills to partner with whānau using the virtual service ensuring whānau remained connected and supported. Nurses understand the importance of encouraging parents to take the lead in identifying problems and solutions. Healthy Tamariki and confident whānau are at the heart of our strategic vision and the virtual service has put Whānau firmly in the driving seat."

Plunket's prioritised virtual service meant some of Plunket's nurses were able to be redeployed to support New Zealand's wider health system's response to COVID-19.

"Our nurses are incredibly dedicated and flexible; we always knew they would want to play their part in tackling COVID-19 on the frontline. We had 64 staff redeployed to support Healthline, PlunketLine, community testing clinics and other essential services across the country and this gives us even more reason to be thankful on International Nurses Day for the part they play in our communities," says Dr Jane O'Malley.

"Our nurses love what they do and want to continue to support whānau in whatever way they can. It has been a completely new way of working for our nurses, but I am incredibly proud to see how they have adjusted and the feedback from families has been incredible. Today is their day, and I want to personally say thank you for everything they do for our Kiwi whānau," says Plunket Chief Executive, Amanda Malu.

In addition, hundreds of New Zealand families also received support through Plunket's community initiatives, such as online parenting groups and playgroups, ensuring that all families had the support they needed through a worrying time.

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For more information please contact

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