

22 September 2025

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Over the last few months the Kindergarten Taranaki Board has been undertaking a process of Due Diligence to assess the possibility of a merger with Whānau Manaaki, a large kindergarten association with 100+ services across the lower North Island and South Otago. The scope of this assessment was focussed on whether a merger would deliver better outcomes for our Tamariki than remaining autonomous.

### Why this matters to you?

As a parent/caregiver, you are a member of Kindergarten Taranaki and your vote (from 13<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> October) determines the outcome of this decision (more information below).

### Board Decision:

The Kindergarten Taranaki Governance Board have voted unanimously to advancing a membership vote on merger with He Whānau Manaaki o Tauarua Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated.

We understand that this is a big decision, it is one that the Board have not taken lightly and a huge amount of work has gone into getting to this point. To support you in your decision, there will be a number of hui from the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> of October for members to directly engage with the Board and understand the potential merger better prior to the formal voting process.

We welcome your questions and reflections. You can send any questions you may have about the merger to [KTFutures@kindergartentaranaki.co.nz](mailto:KTFutures@kindergartentaranaki.co.nz), bring them along to the whānau hui or talk to your kindergartens head teacher.

Further information will be also be available in the coming weeks ahead of whanau voting on the merger with Whānau Manaaki.

### Hui for Whānau

In the week commencing 6 October, the Board, along with our CE, Dawn Osman, and the CEO from Whānau Manaaki, Amanda Coulston, will be facilitating meetings to enable whānau members to hear more about the merger proposal, and why the Board has recommended going to a member vote.

Day and Date	Location and Venue	Time
Tuesday 7 October	The Hub, Hawera	7.00 pm-8.30 pm
Wednesday 8 October	The Devon Hotel, New Plymouth	9.15 am – 10.45 am
Wednesday 8 October	The Devon Hotel, New Plymouth	7.00 pm – 8.30 pm
Thursday 9 October	TET Multi Sports Centre, Stratford	7.00 pm – 8.30 pm

### Te Pūtahi Kura Pūhou o Taranaki

**Taranaki Free Kindergarten Association**, Kindergarten House, 207 Gill Street, PO Box 655, New Plymouth 4340

**P:** 06 759 7036

**E:** [admin@kindergartentaranaki.co.nz](mailto:admin@kindergartentaranaki.co.nz)

**www.kindergartentaranaki.co.nz**

**Special General Meeting:**

A Special General Meeting will now be held on **Wednesday 22 October** for members to attend and for the outcome of the vote to be determined.

**Whānau Voting:**

The voting on the merger opens on Monday 13 October and whānau members will be able to vote in a number of ways:

Electronic Voting	1. An individual email going to each member who has an email address
Proxy Voting	1. Can be handed to Head Teacher /other kindergarten-based staff member at the kindergarten who will scan and email to <a href="mailto:AGMvoting@kindergartentaranaki.co.nz">AGMvoting@kindergartentaranaki.co.nz</a> 2. Emailed to the Chair via <a href="mailto:AGMvoting@kindergartentaranaki.co.nz">AGMvoting@kindergartentaranaki.co.nz</a> on behalf of a member 3. Sent to the meeting with the Head Teacher/other kindergarten-based staff member or a parent/
Voting at the Special General Meeting	1. Via a ballot of those present on the night of the SGM.

Further information for those interested:

**The Decision Process to date:**

Over the past 4 years, Kindergarten Taranaki has been investigating options for the best organisational structure to continue to deliver high quality early childhood education into the future.

This assessment considered a number of options, from remaining autonomous, expanding the services we offer, partnering with existing organisations through to merging with different types of organisations. From this work, the options of remaining autonomous and merging with Whānau Manaaki were taken through to detailed assessment.

Since then, there have been dual workstreams assessing the two options being completed side by side.

The due diligence process for joining with Whānau was a collaborative effort between Kindergarten Taranaki and Whānau Manaaki and was overseen by a working group made up of Board Members and Senior Leadership of both organisations.

This process considered all aspects of both our organisations for alignment and to identify whether Whānau Manaaki would provide better outcomes for our Tamariki than remaining autonomous.

The key areas investigated in detail through this process were:

- general assurance,
- strategic alignment and compatibility,
- financial sustainability and budgeting processes,
- governance compatibility,
- operational assessments and alignment, and
- stakeholder engagement.

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This process confirmed that there is very strong alignment between the organisations approaches, strategies and values. Whānau Manaaki is underpinned by the same core Kindergarten beliefs as Kindergarten Taranaki and continues to have a strategic goal of being a Te Tiriti organisation.

During the due diligence process the entire Kindergarten Taranaki Board also travelled to Wellington to meet with Whānau Manaaki Board members and their senior leadership team. This hui enabled the Board to have robust and frank conversations with Whānau Manaaki to challenge the information that had been presented and get assurances that the identified benefits to Tamariki would be realised.

There have also been a number of opportunities for our Kaiako to engage with Whānau Manaaki, both at a leadership and a Kaiako to Kaiako level to better understand what it would mean to be part of Whānau Manaaki, and the benefits and additional support it would provide our Kaiako. The feedback from these sessions has been very positive.

The Working Group has always had a strong focus on what is best for our tamariki, kaimahi, and wider kindergarten communities. We are confident in the robustness of the due diligence process, and we have faithfully engaged with the evidence provided to inform our decision making.

Ngā mihi nui for your continued support and trust.

Together, we are shaping a future for kindergarten in Taranaki will deliver the best outcomes for the Tamariki of today, tomorrow and all future years.

Ngā manaakitanga,

Matt Verry, Board Chair and Dawn Osman, Chief Executive

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