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# Tuhoe and Oranga Tamariki join forces

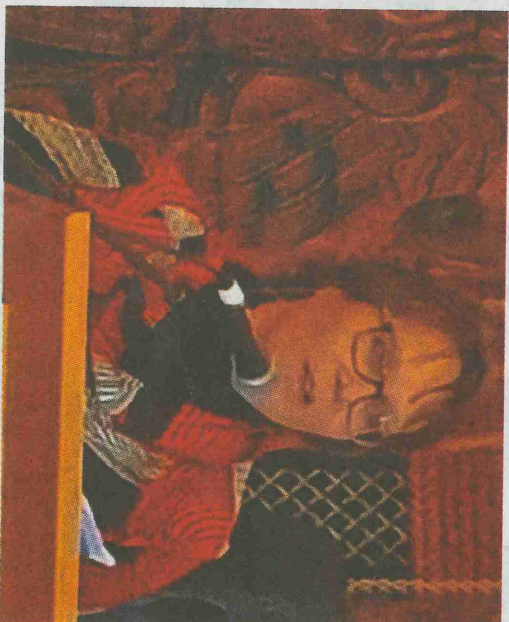
TUHOE and Oranga Tamariki will work together to move at-risk children out of state care and into safe, loving homes connected with their wider whānau, under a Relationship Agreement signed in Taneatua yesterday.

Under the strategic partnership Oranga Tamariki has undertaken to deal with all those who are identified as Tuhoe centrally through its Whakatake office, in the iwi's rohe.

"The most important priority which Tuhoe and Oranga Tamariki share is the protection of our children and ensuring that our tamariki who may be at risk from circumstance are found safe, secure and caring homes," Te Uru Taumatua chairman Tamati Kruger said.

"Oranga Tamariki know which children are at risk. Tuhoe's knowledge of whakapapa and our families means that we can provide insights into wider whānau and hapu connections than a state agency could be expected to be aware of, and find safe and loving homes connected to our children.

"With Oranga Tamariki we can see the struggle in the home. Neither of us want a never-ending treadmill of state care and it scares us greatly to think that our tamariki could grow up without knowing unconditional love."



"These are hard problems. But we are surrounded by experienced natural caregivers in the community.

"We want to work with Oranga Tamariki to help them identify and assess these families without getting caught up in bureaucratic box ticking over deep community knowledge."

Children's minister Tracey Martin, who attended the signing, said she was delighted that Tuhoe had signed a Relationship Agreement with Oranga Tamariki.

**CONNECTING WITH WHANAU:** Last week, Minister for Children Tracey Martin was at a public hui in Whakatake focused on Oranga Tamariki.

Photo Mawera Kareta

"The best place that children can be raised is at home, with family and whānau, and this agreement will help that to happen for Tuhoe tamariki.

"Every child deserves to be loved and safe and the more we can get early help to families the better we'll do," Ms Martin said.

"A culture, any culture, is just culture of care for one another. Our greatest threat is a loss of care.

"The answer is to put care back at the centre of our approach. This partnership is the first step," Mr Kruger said.

The signing took place at a dinner in Taneatua last night hosted by 40 caregivers living in the four tribal centres who look after children from their wider whānau that are not their own.

## Schools urged to keep immunisation register of staff and students

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come to school if you were not immunised.

"But we do need to know [whether students are immunised] because in the event that there was a case of measles in the school, anybody who wasn't immunised or who we did not know about, would likely be, according to information from the chief medical officer, stayed down from school and asked to stay home for about two weeks to see if any symptoms presented themselves.

"This could not only affect a lot of students in the Eastern Bay, it could also affect a lot of staff."

Mr Manning said they were now also putting a staff register together.

Like other schools, they received notices from health authorities about the register at the beginning of term

three.

"We got information that there had been increasing numbers of cases [of measles] in New Zealand."

Dr Miller said having to stay at home for up to 14 days was very inconvenient and disruptive, but was necessary to reduce the risk of further spread and to protect vulnerable people at early childhood centres and schools and in the community.

"Everyone should check that they are up to date with their vaccinations. It is never too late to catch up."

There have been 27 confirmed cases of measles in the Bay of Plenty since April 1 this year, of which 11 have had a hospital admission.

The Western Bay has had 22 cases and Taupo five, with the last case recorded earlier this month. There have been no cases in the Eastern Bay.

Dr Miller said the disease was still circulating, particularly in Auckland, so everyone needed to be aware of the illness and how best to protect themselves and their families.

Measles symptoms include a fever, runny nose, sore red eyes and cough, followed a few days later by a rash usually starting on the face before moving down the body.

Immunisation with the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) is free and is the best protection for children and younger adults. MMR was not effective in protecting babies under one, so they relied on the rest of the population being immune to protect them, said Dr Miller.

"Parents and caregivers should check that their own and their children's immunisations are up-to-date. Immunisation given on time is the best way to prevent measles."

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