

October 2022

Dear Friends and Whanau of Totara Farm Trust

I hope you are enjoying the early signs of spring and are resuming a somewhat normal routine with most Covid related restrictions lessened or removed entirely.

We need your input

We have recently reviewed our **Home Agreement & Consent for Support** documents which I have attached. We will take some time with all the people supported by Totara Farm Trust to work through the content of these important documents.

Could I ask you take some time to read through and, if are a next of kin, welfare guardian or have enduring power of attorney, to sign and return if you are comfortable to do so. Alternatively, please get in touch with me to discuss any reservations or suggestions you may have. Having current, signed Home Agreements and Consent for Support are a Ministry requirement so we will be following up in the coming weeks if we have not heard back from you.

If we unable to confirm one way or the other with you, we will assume you have agreed to the contents of the documents.

2. I have also attached an invitation for our friends and whanau **Christmas event**. It's so great we can celebrate this together this year. Could you please email your RSVP to office@totarafarmtrust.co.nz before Tuesday 1st November so we can make arrangements around catering etc.



Changes to the Team

As many of you will be aware, we have had several staff leave over the past 6 months and can now happily report we have completed the recruitment process and have hired new and equally amazing staff to join our fantastic team.

While we are sad to say goodbye to staff, we understand their reasons with several going back to studies, others moving closer to whanau and some exploring entirely different job options. I know they, like many of us, have taken pause for thought over the last 2 and a half years.

The new staff are settling in well and bring a raft of ideas and enthusiasm that we are all benefitting from.



Sector changes

We are really pleased with the appointment of Paula Tesoriero into the CEO role at Whaikaha – The Ministry for Disabled People. There is no doubt we are entering a new era in the sector, but we have been cautioned not to expect change overnight. They have a big job to do setting up the new Ministry and we intend to be an active voice advocating with and for your loved ones.

If you are interested in staying up to date, I would encourage you to sign up for updates and scan through the information available here: <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/>



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Covid Update

It really is great that life is very close to being back to normal. We still need to maintain some precautions so here is where we are at.

- If you're visiting, we will get you to test when you arrive. If the result is negative than all can be normal.
- If you do not want to have a test, you will need to wear a mask while you are inside one of the homes.
- Masks are still being worn while in vehicles and indoor spaces where it's difficult to maintain social distance (regardless of test result).

Some of the day to day

On an operational level we have a mid-point audit/evaluation primarily on the Kingseat property in November. We will also be audited around some other people supported who have what is considered high funding. This process will take a week.

By the end of October, we will have caught up on all mandatory training for the team including First Aid and de-escalation training. Five staff are studying their level 4 qualifications and five are studying their level 3 qualifications. Other learning is primarily focused on getting our new staff embedded in their teams and getting to know your loved ones.

Our goal planning calendar is getting back on track and most staff who have been smashing out long hours while we have been recruiting have managed to take a well-earned break.

We are also catching up on repairs, maintenance and decorating as trades people become available and have some lovely small gardens coming along nicely – bring on summer.



Let's get excited about the future

It is just fantastic that we can *finally* start making plans for the future – from Christmas plans, to thinking about summer holidays right through to big audacious dreams for the longer term.

This year nine of your loved ones have secured employment or have changed jobs – a real reflection of what's happening in the job market. There has been a broadening of community engagement with more people volunteering and exploring new hobbies and social events. It's inspiring to see this stretching out beyond Covid and sets a great example to all of us.



At the risk of being repetitive – we really, *really* need you to get back to us about the home agreement, consent for support and the Christmas party, so I look forward to hearing back from you in the next week or two.

Nga manaakitanga ki a koe me o koutou whanau

Bernadette and The Leadership Team



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