

# Toru Fetū Kindergarten Opening – ‘A dream come true’

3 June 2010



What promised to be a rainy start, dawned a beautiful day for those who gathered to celebrate the opening of Toru Fetū Kindergarten in Cannons Creek. A joint venture between three local playgroups and ‘Wellington Kindergartens’, Toru Fetū is the first purpose built Pasifika Integrated Service kindergarten in New Zealand. It was a fitting day for a celebration of children, community and culture.

Promoting the languages and culture of Niue, Tuvalu and Cook Islands, there were large contingents from each community, local iwi, Minister of Education Anne Tolley and Minister of Pacific Island Affairs Georgina Te Heu Heu, Race Relations Conciliator Joris de Bres, Porirua City Mayor Jenny Brash, sector and community leaders and local members of parliament.



Guests were welcomed on to the kindergarten grounds by a cultural montage encompassing karanga from local iwi, Ngati Toa and calls of welcome from the Cook Island, Tuvalu and Niue groups. Children were very much part of the celebrations, with waiata sung by the neighbouring Maraeroa School children. There were also many ‘soon to be’ Toru Fetū Kindergarten children present, setting a vibrant backdrop to the formalities.

Church leaders from each group provided a blessing and prayer and acknowledged the importance that Toru Fetū’s opening marked, as ‘a dream come true for elders’ who are particularly concerned with the preservation of their cultures for future generations.



Ministers, Anne Tolley and Georgina Te Heuheu unveiled the kindergarten signage and officially opened the building, speaking of the benefits gained from quality early childhood education and how language and culture provide the core of individual, social and economic wellbeing, qualities they recognised as inherent in Toru Fetū. They also spoke of the importance of self help, independence and community responsibility to drive initiatives such as Toru Fetū for the wider wellbeing of the area.



‘Wellington Kindergartens’ General Manager Amanda Coulston spoke of the journey, passion and commitment of the representatives from each community group who had run their playgroups for as long as twenty years, and who held the vision for a high quality licensed service that nurtured the language and culture of each of the three groups. It was an emotional day to see the vision become a reality. “Toru Fetū Kindergarten is a shining example of how Government, community and organisations such as ours can work together to provide something special for children and their families.”



**For enrolment inquiries, please call Toru Fetū Kindergarten on 04 239 6063.**

