



Towards Kindergarten Aotearoa

Please come along and have your say October 2022

The South Otago Kindergarten Association (SOKA) is one of 24 kindergarten associations across the country. Seven of those associations including us, are working together to establish Kindergartens Aotearoa – a single, national kindergarten association to ensure the growth and sustainability of kindergarten in the future. You can read more about Kindergartens Aotearoa here <https://kindergartensaotearoa.weebly.com>

SOKA is a small association and we can be very proud that in the recent challenging years we have managed to grow from two to five kindergartens and currently have 34 staff including three staff in the office. We are required to do everything larger associations do – and we're at the limit of our capacity to meet all our obligations in a timely way, to generate increased funding whilst continuing to grow our services in our rural communities.

For this past year to ensure adequate resourcing, we have contracted the services of He Whānau Manaaki (HWM) who are a Wellington based Kindergarten Association and are one of the seven associations working towards Kindergartens Aotearoa. HWM has provided their expertise across administration, operational and teaching and learning aspects of our work. While our kindergartens continue to offer our communities high quality teaching and learning, we are looking to the future to ensure we grow our services so more children and families in South Otago can experience kindergarten. We can't do this as we are at present, which is why the SOKA board is recommending we join with He Whānau Manaaki; an association with common values and strategic goals such as continuing towards our common vision for Kindergarten Aotearoa. Please take the time to look at their website. <https://www.wmkindergartens.org.nz>

The decision to join SOKA with HWM is ultimately determined by you - our kindergarten communities. This means we will hold a Special General Meeting later in the year to vote on this. We want to take some time over the next couple of months to talk with our staff and communities about the board's recommendation. (The board is made up of representatives from each kindergarten community). We want to set out the background to this decision, the pros and cons for our services, staff and communities, and the issues that we know you will have questions about. We have set up meetings over the coming weeks:

Poupoutunoa on the 8th of November at 7.30pm
Goldfields on the 9th of November at 7pm
Milton on the 10th of November at 7pm
Balclutha on the 16th of November at 7pm
Rosebank on the 17th of November 7pm
These meetings will be held at the kindergartens

If you cannot make your kindergarten community meeting, you are welcome to join one of the other community meetings. This is so you get a date that works for you.

We are also setting up a section on our website with the communication that goes out to our communities and also with a questions and answers section. This will be updated as we go through the meetings so there is one place that will have the up to date information. If you have any questions please feel free to email them to office@sokindergartens.org.nz Our website address is <https://www.sokindergartens.org.nz>

Our wish is for kindergarten to continue to thrive and grow here in South Otago and around Aotearoa. We have a passion for community-based, not-for-profit kindergarten services led by high-quality teaching and learning. We want to provide the best for our staff, and for our teachers. We are excited about the prospect of joining with He Whānau Manaaki – and in future Kindergartens Aotearoa - and the possibilities that could open up for our communities. We look forward to seeing you on the night.

Daniel Wark – Chair – South Otago Kindergartens