



Media Release

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Selwyn joins New Zealand's first university opportunity for children

Selwyn District Council is partnering with the award-winning Children's University to help foster a life-long love of learning.

Children's University is a learning programme that encourages 7 to 18 year olds to engage in exciting and innovative learning activities and experiences outside of the classroom.

The first Children's University programme in New Zealand was started last October with Lincoln University and the University of Canterbury forming the Children's University Canterbury Partnership to oversee the programme.

Selwyn District Council has joined the programme, identifying and offering opportunities to explore and participate throughout the district. These include exploring and participating in Council-organised programmes and events. Some of these opportunities and activities will be identified on the Children's University website and in Council guides.

Council Community Relations Manager, Denise Kidd, says supporting Children's University was a great opportunity for the Council to play a part in investing in Selwyn's children and future.

"It's important to encourage our children to learn in the world, as well as the classroom, and the Council knows that Selwyn has a lot to offer and is a world worth exploring."

Children at participating schools choose, visit and participate or explore at approved learning destinations. These can range from visiting a museum, participating in an outdoor activity, or taking a craft or art class, to spending time visiting and exploring a farm—anything that connects with the Children's University learning "curriculum" and has realistic links to a university programme.

When children visit a learning destination they gain hours in a learning passport. Once the children have completed at least 30 hours of learning they take part in a graduation ceremony to mark their achievements.

As a world first, Te Taumutu Rūnanga has taken the opportunity to be a part of Children's University. Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki ki Taumutu tamariki and mokopuna now have the ability to receive formal recognition of learning that enhances their cultural identity, Te Taumutu Rūnanga Chairperson Julie Robilliard says.

"The most exciting aspects of Children's University being piloted in the Canterbury region is that we have a unique opportunity to set the standard for how mātauraka

Māori can be valued within this programme and how partnership with mana whenua can enhance the experience for all students in Aotearoa.”

Prebbleton and Ladbroke Schools are among those taking part in the programme. Ladbroke School Children’s University coordinator Keryn Wilson says the programme has been a great opportunity for her students.

“The initiative has allowed our students to see learning opportunities outside school time and they are excited by the activities that have been counted. Students have been embracing their passions and also looking for ways to reflect on these through a lens of what has been learned. They are keen to talk about what they have been involved in and families are also showing their support by utilising local learning destinations.”

ENDS

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