



CAROSIKA COLLABORATIVE

Preterm birth care across Aotearoa: whānau-centred, equity-driven

Our Whakapapa and Journey

The Carosika Collaborative emerged from a transdisciplinary hui held in Auckland in August 2019. The hui was titled 'Developing a New Zealand Action Plan for Preterm Birth'. The hui was hosted by the University of Auckland with funding from the Hugo Charitable Trust. Healthcare professionals, academics, funders, policy-makers and leaders of pregnancy and newborn whānau representative groups were invited to attend the hui. More than 50 individuals representing 36 groups attended the day. A summary of the hui is available as an appendix to our strategic kete and can be reviewed [here](#).

Through this hui and kōrero, it was agreed that we should work together as a broad collaboration, taking a worldview across all aspects of preterm birth, with implementation of evidenced-based initiatives in a nationally consistent way to achieve equity. The rōpū considered important themes and proposed a governance and operational framework for the future.

The hui was opened by Tina Allen-Mokaraka and Tasi Wilson, who bravely and generously shared the story of the birth and loss of their first daughter, [Carosika](#). Carosika had been born five years before, unexpectedly early at 23⁺⁶ weeks. Tina and Tasi had to make a quick and very difficult decision regarding Carosika's life whilst Tina was in labour. Carosika passed away soon after birth. Their kōrero was inspiring and insightful, reminding all attendees of the importance of our mahi and the need to do better for all across Aotearoa. They set us on the path to work together with whānau at our core.

Tina and Tasi expressed a strong desire to remain involved in the project and continue to share their story to help others. Through discussion by attendees, Tina and Tasi were invited to consider naming the new initiative. They took time and through kōrero with whānau, they returned with some ideas. They clearly expressed that they would like to gift Carosika's name and use te reo Māori to support the mahi. Their intention was to honour Carosika and other pēpi who are with their tupuna. Their generous naming gift was gratefully received.

By this time in 2020, [our Steering Group](#) was established and at our first hui, Tina and Tasi's suggestions were considered, with consensus favouring the Carosika Project, Taonga Tuku Iho. Tina and Tasi had offered the addition of Taonga Tuku Iho to represent the legacy of preterm babies from the past and the treasure they represent to inspire future change. A briefing on the name was prepared and circulated to Steering Group members for wider consultation and then agreed as our formal name in March 2021.

Through the process of establishing our brand we consulted with Opetā Elikā (senior branding specialist, Federation advertising agency). He considered our ways of working and future intention, and recommended our name was amended to the the Carosika Collaborative, Taonga Tuku Iho. Our branding and logo were developed accordingly, with a focus on a strong cultural presence blending Māori, Pacific and Indian themes.

A [national best practice guideline for preterm birth pregnancy care](#) was the major priority identified at our original stakeholder hui and work got underway on this in 2021, once funding was

secured through the Health Research Council/Manatū Haoura maternity programme. In planning a title for the national best practice guide, the knowledge translation research team favoured use of Te Reo for the title. Aiming to remain positioned close to the Collaborative, Taonga Tuku Iho was adopted as the title for the best practice guide. It was considered that knowledge was the treasure being handed on, and this aligned well with a guide for national sharing of knowledge to achieve best practice and improve preterm birth outcomes for all.

In the last three years, the Carosika Collaborative has grown significantly in reputation and activity. In particular, it has sought to strengthen whānau at our core and the [Carosika Whānau Awhina Rōpū](#) was established in 2024. This group of more than 20 whānau with lived experience of preterm birth generously contribute time, experience and wisdom to inform our Steering Group and other Carosika working groups across the Collaborative. The Collaborative has also sought to strengthen Māori participation at all levels including key performance indicators for our leadership.

In mid-2025, through review of our communications strategy and by an in-person hui of the Whānau Awhina Rōpū and Steering Group, it was agreed that our name and brand should be reconsidered. It was highlighted that our name and brand did not include specific reference to preterm birth or our national reach. It was also noted that the use of Taonga Tuku Iho, in two places and with two potential meanings, was not only confusing but, more importantly, may be considered to utilise Te Reo inappropriately, and inadvertently cause offence to whānau Māori.

As a consequence, Māori members held a hui together with Pou Tikanga from Deloitte and to wānanga the concerns raised and make recommendations for change. They advised that Taonga Tuku Iho should sit in one place only, and either as part of our name or as the title for the best practice guide were appropriate. They recommended that the Collaborative should reflect on the original gift and our intention of its meaning whilst deciding where Taonga Tuku Iho should be used. They highlighted that the process for change should be whānau led. The rōpū recommended that the principles used by the Collaborative should be transparent, and that the narrative of our journey should be articulated and recorded to enable understanding of our whakapapa.

Through on-line hui and email discussion, the Carosika Whānau Awhina were invited to review the recommendations made and to consider naming and branding changes, including ideas for proposed strap lines. Following their review, the Steering Group were consulted. Across both rōpū, it was agreed that Taonga Tuku Iho as a title, spoke to the nature of the national best practice, and removal of it from the name would allow for a strapline better able to describe our Kaupapa. There was very strong support for 'collaborative' to remain in our name, many saw this as the key to why they were involved, representing the essence of how we work. Several iterations of a strapline were considered to include reference to preterm birth, our national reach and equity.

All members of Carosika Whānau Awhina and the Steering Group were invited to join a hui with Opeta Erika (branding specialist) and contribute thoughts and opinions. The name and strapline evolved and was agreed upon: **the Carosika Collaborative – Preterm birth care across Aotearoa; whānau-centred, equity-driven** and **Taonga Tuku Iho** remains the title for our national guide including the strapline **A best practice guide for equity in preterm birth in Aotearoa**.

We remain committed to the continuous mahi of being culturally safe in our practices and holding safe spaces for whānau. We welcome all others to join us.

February 2026