



19 December 2023

Dr Claire Achmad
Chief Children's Commissioner
Mana Mokopuna | Children and Young People's Commission

Sent via email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe Dr Achmad

OPCAT Report – Kaahui Whetuu Care and Protection Residence

In September 2023, your monitoring team visited Kaahui Whetuu Care and Protection Residence to monitor the safety and wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi. This monitoring visit was completed as part of your role as a National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), and was a follow-up visit to the full visit completed in June 2021.

On 20 November 2023, you provided your draft OPCAT report for Kaahui Whetuu for our review and comment. On 5 December 2023, we provided our feedback on the factual accuracy of the draft report, and on 19 December 2023 our response to your recommendations.

Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) accepted seven of your eight recommendations. We do not accept the recommendation to close the Kaahui Whetuu hub, as this is not possible at present due to operational requirements to ensure sufficient capacity to respond when needed. Please find enclosed our response to your recommendations.

We acknowledge the areas your report identifies that require further work. This includes the Kaahui Whetuu hub being run-down and routine maintenance not being completed; that the model across the hub and the corresponding community homes can be confusing for staff; and that staffing is not currently sufficient to run the three services at the same time.

As your office is aware, we have not been using the hub in recent months. We are presently considering the future of this facility and how we might make it fit for purpose in the interim while longer term options are considered. Following the release of the Independent External Rapid Review of Oranga Tamariki secure residences and

IN-CONFIDENCE

community homes in September 2023, this work is being prioritised as part of the organisation's transformation programme.

We are pleased that your report identifies that our model focuses on moving away from secure detainment to a trauma-informed community-based model, that the designated area for secure care is not used, that the admission process is thorough and mokopuna-friendly, and that our kaimahi demonstrate a strong commitment to mokopuna Māori.

As our response demonstrates, and as discussed with you when we met earlier this month, there is considerable work underway at Kaahui Whetuu and all Oranga Tamariki residences generally, which will strengthen the areas your report identified. We look forward to continuing to share updates with you and your team as this work progresses.

I trust you find this information useful. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact me on [REDACTED] or alternatively Julie Miller, General Manager Monitoring and External Relationships, on [REDACTED]

Nāku noa, nā



Nicolette Dickson
Tumu Tuarua | Te Kounga o te Mahi me ngā Wheako
Deputy Chief Executive | Quality Practice & Experiences