

31 January 2025

Dr Claire Achmad
Chief Children's Commissioner
Mana Mokopuna | Children and Young People's Commission
Sent via email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe Dr Achmad

Draft OPCAT Report – Epuni Care and Protection Residence

In September 2024, your monitoring team visited the Epuni Care and Protection Residence (Epuni) for a follow up visit to monitor the safety and wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi. This followed a monitoring visit to Epuni in April 2024 and 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).

On 5 December 2024, you provided your draft OPCAT report for Epuni to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) for review and comment. Our response to the factual accuracy was shared with your office on 19 December 2024.

Oranga Tamariki have accepted all seven recommendations made.

As noted in the report, the April 2024 monitoring visit led to Mana Mokopuna recommending that Oranga Tamariki halt admissions and re-set the residence. Your monitors acknowledge that Oranga Tamariki acted quickly in ceasing admissions and implementing an action plan for Epuni to address initial concerns raised by Mana Mokopuna. Furthermore, monthly progress updates against the Epuni action plan have been provided to your office keeping you informed of the required practice improvements. We appreciate your acknowledgement of our transparency and commitment to improvement following the April 2024 visit.

It is pleasing to note that, during the September 2024 visit, your office identified positive progress made to address the concerns raised in April 2024. We acknowledge the findings that, despite this progress, Epuni has remained in a state of transition, requiring additional support and stability, particularly within the leadership team.

We note the concerns raised around the inconsistencies in use of force being recorded and can advise that significant progress has already been made to ensure a robust use of force review system is in place. We are also pleased to advise that concerns raised around admissions, and the recommendation that a member of the senior

leadership team be involved in the admissions process, has also been addressed and now forms part of our 'business as usual' practice.

It was pleasing to note your commendation of Oranga Tamariki for responsiveness to addressing the state of the material conditions at Epuni since your last visit in April 2024. While there has already been significant refurbishment to the facility, we remain committed to continue to address the conditions of the secure care unit and the establishment of the sensory room.

I trust you find this information useful. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact me on [REDACTED]

Nāku noa, nā



Julie Miller

General Manager

External Monitoring and Reviews