

28 February 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 – Puketai Care and Protection Residence

In November 2024, your monitoring team visited the Puketai Care and Protection Residence (Puketai) to monitor the safety and wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi. This 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).

On 31 January 2025, you provided your draft OPCAT report for Puketai to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) for review and comment. Our response to the factual accuracy of the draft report was shared with your office on 17 February 2025.

Oranga Tamariki has accepted five of the 10 recommendations made and partially accepted five recommendations. Your recommendations range from concerns about funding for and recruitment to the Kaiwhakaako role, and training for kaimahi, to working collaboratively with Health NZ - Te Whatu Ora for tamariki and rangatahi.

We note that during this visit, Mana Mokopuna found no evidence of cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment).

Throughout the report, Mana Mokopuna has identified many strengths at Puketai, including tamariki and rangatahi having regular contact with whānau, good access to activities, evidence of strong safety protections, including tamariki and rangatahi being encouraged by kaimahi to share openly with your monitoring team, and the work underway to improve outcomes for tamariki Māori.

We acknowledge that there are areas where improvement is needed, and we are committed to ensuring action is taken to address concerns that you have raised. Oranga Tamariki acknowledge that refurbishment is needed at Puketai and we note planning for this was well underway prior to the monitoring visit. We also acknowledge

the need for kaimahi to have training and a robust process to follow for safely administering medication after tamariki and rangatahi abscond and then return to the residence, to ensure there is no confusion over when they should receive their next dosage of medication. We are pleased to advise that training has already been completed with kaimahi to address this recommendation.

We note that you have made recommendations regarding health and education, which are similar to other recommendations Mana Mokopuna has previously made. While we accept the intent behind these recommendations, we consider them to be closed as there is already sufficient work underway to address them.

Your team have also made a recommendation about tamariki and rangatahi needing to be informed of their plan by social workers prior to being admitted into residence. We acknowledge that it is important this happens, and we are committed to ensuring this is strengthened. Professional judgement is applied by social workers, taking into account any safety and wellbeing risks, to determine the best time to inform tamariki and rangatahi of placement changes. We were pleased to see the acknowledgement that, overall, social work contact with tamariki and rangatahi has improved.

It was also pleasing to see Mana Mokopuna acknowledge the dedicated team at Puketai, and their focus on continuing to use relational and trauma informed practice. We were also pleased to see your reflections that kaimahi were open and committed to learning as well as had good relationships with stakeholders and external providers. We are pleased your team was able to see some of the many examples of the dedication of Puketai kaimahi.

I trust you find this information useful. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact me on 027 257 2492.

Nāku noa, nā



Julie Miller
General Manager
External Monitoring and Reviews