



# Te Puna Wai ō Tuhinapo Youth Justice Residence

## OPCAT Monitoring Report

Visit date: 25-27 November 2024

Report date: February 2025



# Kia kuru pounamu te rongō

## All mokopuna\* live their best lives

\* Drawing from the wisdom of Te Ao Māori, we have adopted the term mokopuna to describe all children and young people we advocate for, aged under 18 years of age in Aotearoa New Zealand. This acknowledges the special status held by mokopuna in their families, whānau, hapū and iwi and reflects that in all we do. Referring to the people we advocate for as mokopuna draws them closer to us and reminds us that who they are, and where they come from matters for their identity, belonging and well-being, at every stage of their lives.

Please note that in this report, for clarity, we use the term 'mokopuna' to describe a group of children and young people, and 'tamaiti' for a specific child or young person.



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# Introduction

## The role of Mana Mokopuna – Children and Young People's Commission

Mana Mokopuna - Children and Young People's Commission (Mana Mokopuna) is an independent advocate for all children and young people (mokopuna) under the age of 18 and for those who are care-experienced, up to the age of 25. Mana Mokopuna advocates for children's rights to be recognised and upheld, provides advice and guidance to government and other agencies, advocates for system-level changes, and ensures children's voices are heard in decisions that affect them.

Our organisation is a designated National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) as per the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

The New Zealand legislation relating to OPCAT is contained in the Crimes of Torture Act (1989). The role of the NPM function at Mana Mokopuna is to visit places where mokopuna are detained:

- Examine the conditions and treatment of mokopuna.
- Identify any improvements required or problems needing to be addressed.
- Make recommendations aimed at strengthening protections, improving treatment and conditions, and preventing torture, cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment.

## About this visit

Mana Mokopuna conducted an unannounced follow-up visit to Te Puna Wai ō Tuhinapo (Te Puna Wai) between 25-27 November 2024 as part of its NPM monitoring visit programme. The objective of our OPCAT Monitoring as a NPM is to prevent ill-treatment in all places where mokopuna are deprived of their liberty by regularly monitoring and assessing the standard of care experienced in these facilities.

In May 2024, Mana Mokopuna found no evidence of cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment) during the full unannounced visit to Te Puna Wai. During the time of the visit Oranga Tamariki had launched the '*Residences and Homes*' pilot to test proposed changes to the way the youth justice residences across Aotearoa New Zealand could operate in the future. A key part of this pilot was trialling a new roster system for kaimahi and at the time of the May 2024 visit the roster changes were in their second week of operating and were a key factor kaimahi wanted to kōrero (talk) to us about.



Since the May 2024 full unannounced OPCAT monitoring visit, Mana Mokopuna has been closely monitoring progress updates from Oranga Tamariki about Te Puna Wai through:

- Analysing data received from Oranga Tamariki monthly.<sup>1</sup>
- Requesting information to ensure plans for mokopuna have been put in place to address concerns and prevent harm.
- Engaging in fortnightly hui with Oranga Tamariki to seek updates on Te Puna Wai.
- On-going communication with kaimahi and stakeholders that work in Te Puna Wai about how the residence is progressing.

The purpose of this unannounced follow-up visit was to follow up on concerns raised directly with Mana Mokopuna about mokopuna care at Te Puna Wai from members of the public. We also took the opportunity to check in and understand progress against the recommendations made in the May 2024 visit report, and in particular, expected outcomes from the kaimahi roster pilot given this was due to come to an end in November 2024.

About this report

This report provides a progress update as at November 2024 on the summary of findings, which Mana Mokopuna documented in its earlier report relating to the unannounced visit in May 2024. This report outlines the quality of mokopuna care experience at the facility and provides evidence of the findings based on information gathered during the visit.

About this facility

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| Facility Name:   | Te Puna Wai ō Tuhinapo Youth Justice residence, operated by Oranga Tamariki   |
| Region:  | Ōtautahi (Christchurch)   |
| Operating capacity:  | <p>The facility has a 40-bed capacity and there were 36 mokopuna in the facility at the time of the visit.</p> <p>Te Puna Wai is made up of four units that house tāne and one unit that is shared by takatāpui (mokopuna who identify as part of the Rainbow community) and wāhine. Each unit contains, bedrooms, bathrooms, a dining area, small kitchen, television room, and a designated room for phone calls. Each unit has a secure outside courtyard that can be accessed from inside the unit. There is an additional unit designated for Secure Care.</p> <p>Te Puna Wai also has a large gym, a securely fenced sports field, an outdoor swimming pool, whare (like a wharehau on a marae), and an area for agriculture and horticulture activity.</p> |
| Status under which mokopuna are detained: Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 – s235, s238(1)(d) and s311, Criminal Procedure Act 2011 – s173 and s175, mokopuna who are sentenced under the Corrections Act 2004 – s34A. |   |

<sup>1</sup> Mana Mokopuna receives monthly data bundles from Oranga Tamariki including serious event notifications, report of concerns and safety and security incident reports.



# Concluding Observations from the United Nations

In February 2023, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child ('the UN Committee') released its Concluding Observations<sup>2</sup> for New Zealand's sixth periodic review on its implementation of the Children's Convention<sup>3</sup> and how the Government is protecting and advancing the rights of mokopuna in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In August 2023, the United Nations Committee Against Torture also released Concluding Observations<sup>4</sup> for New Zealand's seventh periodic review regarding the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment<sup>5</sup>.

Many of the recommendations from both sets of Concluding Observations are directly relevant to aspects of treatment experienced by mokopuna at Te Puna Wai which Mana Mokopuna has found during this monitoring visit in November 2024. Where relevant, these are highlighted throughout the body of the report.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer CRC/C/NZL/CO/6 [G2302344 \(3\).pdf](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR](#)

<sup>4</sup> Refer CAT/C/NZL/CO/7 [G2315464.pdf](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment | OHCHR](#)



## Summary of progress as of November 2024 visit:

### Work still to be done:

- The facility is not set up to accommodate Whaikaha mokopuna and there are issues with being able to meet day to day care needs for mokopuna without accessible facilities. This is a clear human rights breach and needs to be addressed immediately.
  - Mokopuna should not be reliant on kaimahi being available to take them out of units to use the bathroom for toileting and showering. There were instances on the visit where mokopuna were told they would have to wait in order to be taken to a toilet.
- There continues to be a lack of progress, investment, and support in embedding mātauranga Māori into the operations at the facility.
- Secure care still requires a refurbishment and is not a therapeutic environment for mokopuna.
  - Secure care continues to be used to care for mokopuna who are experiencing mental distress or for mokopuna who are refusing to return to the open units due to safety concerns.
  - Secure care continues to be used frequently and often admissions do not meet the required grounds.
- Refurbishment of a unit needs to be prioritised with urgency<sup>6</sup> to ensure there is an appropriate unit for mokopuna with additional vulnerabilities.
  - Mokopuna are entering secure care on a voluntary status and remaining there due to their high and or complex needs. This includes takatāpui and Rainbow mokopuna.
- Mokopuna continue to not have access to soap and would like access to nutritious kai, pyjamas, and soft toys whilst in residence. These were all found to be lacking during the November 2024 visit.
- Finalising and agreeing on a roster for kaimahi which balances the wellbeing of kaimahi and the operational needs of the residence, so that mokopuna receive the highest quality of care.
- There continues to be inconsistencies in practice and communication across the site, highlighting the need for specialised and comprehensive training on a regular basis for all kaimahi who work in the residence with mokopuna.
- There is a lack of planning, communication and consultation from social workers regarding mokopuna transitions back into the community, with some mokopuna finding out on the day of their court hearing where they are being released to.

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<sup>6</sup> A unit was ear-marked for refurbishment as part of the 'Residences and homes' pilot, however funding has been re-prioritised.



## Positive progress since May 2024:

- The Rangatahi Youth Council<sup>7</sup> has been reinstated at Te Puna Wai on Tuesday afternoons providing more opportunities for mokopuna voice to be heard by residence decision makers.
- Two kaimahi have recently been appointed into Manager Residence Operations roles to support the Residence Manager and operations of the facility. Kaimahi feel hopeful about the support and experience they will bring to the residence.
- Mokopuna continue to have regular contact and visits with their whānau whilst in Te Puna Wai.
- Kaimahi feel positive about the newly established residence leadership team and feel hopeful about the direction the residence is heading toward supporting mokopuna in the facility.
- The residence is in the phase of resetting the culture with a focus on accountability, processes, raising the standard of practice, and care of mokopuna within the residence.
- There has been an increase in programmes, educational and vocational opportunities for mokopuna onsite at the residence, as well as offsite visits in the community. Mokopuna are able to mix together across units through sport.

## Detailed key findings

### A unit needs to be refurbished as a matter of urgency

As part of the 'Residences and Homes Pilot' a unit at Te Puna Wai was planned to be refurbished for whaikaha mokopuna, mokopuna who identify as takatāpui, or have high and complex needs and vulnerabilities that make it hard for them to mix in open units. However, Mana Mokopuna was told that funding restraints have put this project on hold.

Despite this, the residence is housing many mokopuna who have the above needs and/or identities. Kaimahi are trying their best but are having to manage mokopuna with inappropriate solutions. Solutions include allowing mokopuna to stay in secure care on a voluntary basis due to them not feeling safe in open units.

*"We were promised the unit refurbishment for the mokopuna with high and complex needs, but this isn't happening, so we are having to use secure care as an option to keep mokopuna safe. It's not ideal at all and is not the purpose of secure care".*

*(Kaimahi).*

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<sup>7</sup> Members of the youth council are elected by mokopuna in each of the open units. The aim of the council is to provide opportunity for mokopuna to share their thoughts and feedback regarding their time in residence directly to the residence leadership team. This can include positive feedback as well as suggestions for improvements.





The residence is still not accessible and mokopuna with disabilities need to leave their unit and wait for kaimahi to take them to the only accessible bathroom facilities which are in the whare. Mana Mokopuna witnessed a tamaiti asking to be taken to the toilet and being told they would need to wait for available kaimahi. This situation is particularly concerning as mokopuna have the right to have their basic human rights and needs met, which includes ready access to a toilet as per the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Beijing Rules)<sup>8</sup>. Mokopuna whaikaha also have the right to living conditions that ensure dignity and promote self-reliance as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>9</sup>

Mana Mokopuna recommends that the refurbishment of the unit is prioritised, and accessible facilities are installed immediately for mokopuna. Mana Mokopuna also suggests Oranga Tamariki develop clear policy outlining where mokopuna can be housed when they identify as takatāpui.

## Mokopuna Māori

Mokopuna Māori continue to be the largest demographic group admitted into Te Puna Wai. Mana Mokopuna was told by kaimahi that there had been no progress since the last May 2024 visit to embed mātauranga Māori into operations and practice at the residence. Kaimahi said there is a notable gap in cultural support for mokopuna Māori at the facility and concerns were raised around the absence of this.

The kaiwhakaue has continued to wear several pōtae (hats), but predominantly is having to spend significant periods of time away from the facility training kaimahi. This is despite needing and wanting to be based at the residence to provide cultural advice and support to meet the needs of mokopuna Māori.

Another factor impacting on progress to meet the needs of mokopuna Māori is that during office days the kaiwhakaue has a one-hour slot to provide cultural training to kaimahi. However, this is at the very end of the day, where it was said kaimahi are often tired and disengaged. Given the majority of mokopuna whakapapa Māori in the facility, this training needs to be prioritised, placed earlier in the office day, and the kaiwhakaue given the time and resource to be based onsite to carry out their role.

Mana Mokopuna recommends a national strategy is implemented, which commits to investing in kaupapa Māori or Māori focused programmes and that these are put in place at Te Puna Wai urgently to ensure equitable solutions, that uphold the right of mokopuna to access their culture and identity. There needs to be more support and resource for kaiwhakaue so they are

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<sup>8</sup> Rules 15 and 16 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child also states it is a right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

<sup>9</sup> Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



able to be based in facilities to fulfil their role in supporting mokopuna Māori and their whānau.

Section 7AA<sup>10</sup> of the Oranga Tamariki Act states that practices within the Oranga Tamariki system should have regard for the whakapapa (genealogy) of mokopuna. Among other rights, mokopuna have rights to culture, identity, family and recreation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Mokopuna Māori need to have access to culture and activities that encourage them to explore their identity in a positive way. Te Puna Wai is not currently consistently or holistically meeting the needs of mokopuna Māori.

## Secure Care

Secure care continues to be used frequently at Te Puna Wai and concerns remain around practice being inconsistent and inappropriate and in breach of the legislation governing secure care<sup>11</sup>. Kaimahi told Mana Mokopuna that secure care is often full and admissions into secure care do not always meet the required grounds.<sup>12</sup> Mokopuna also continue to refuse to leave secure care due to fears for their safety in the open units and 'voluntary admissions' continue to be an option for mokopuna who need to regulate and de-escalate. Although kaimahi do not agree with 'voluntary admissions', they feel that there continues to be no other option for mokopuna and that this is the best that they can do to manage behaviours and the care and safety of mokopuna including those identifying as takatāpui. Multiple kaimahi raised concerns around the environment in secure care in that they believe it is not conducive to therapeutic healing, with insufficient sensory opportunities and a lack of space for mokopuna to properly regulate especially for those experiencing mental distress.

Regulation 48<sup>13</sup> has also continued to be regularly used and, at times, the grounds are not met. This has also resulted in mokopuna spending prolonged periods of time in their bedrooms, which leads to negative outcomes including the lack of access to education, interaction with peers, and isolation for mokopuna. When mokopuna are rotated out of their bedrooms, mokopuna feel that certain tamaiti are favoured explaining that some mokopuna are allowed additional time in the TV room, for example, or have generally longer rotations than others. There is a perceived difference in treatment for voluntary admissions into secure care and those mokopuna who have met the grounds for secure care admission. Mokopuna are unhappy about the differential treatment and the situation is further escalating mokopuna behaviours and dysregulation due to the inconsistencies in kaimahi practice.

<sup>10</sup> [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 No 24 \(as at 30 June 2024\), Public Act 7AA Duties of chief executive in relation to Treaty of Waitangi \(Tiriti o Waitangi\) – New Zealand Legislation](#)

<sup>11</sup> Ss368–383A of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

<sup>12</sup> Grounds or s368 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

<sup>13</sup> [Oranga Tamariki \(Residential Care\) Regulations 1996 \(SR 1996/354\) \(as at 01 July 2023\) 48 Confinement to rooms of children and young persons in secure care – New Zealand Legislation](#)



During the November 2024 visit more than one kaimahi we spoke to said there is regularly only one kaimahi rostered to the secure care unit covering the night shift. The Monitoring team observed this situation during this visit with one kaimahi in the unit with multiple mokopuna. During our observation time in secure care, mokopuna were locked in their bedrooms talking and shouting to each other about inappropriate topics and using inappropriate language that only settled after 11pm - almost three hours after mokopuna were confined to their rooms for the night. Oranga Tamariki informed the OPCAT Monitoring team that the minimum standard is two kaimahi in secure care overnight, however there are times when only one is allocated to the unit.

Mana Mokopuna encourages Oranga Tamariki to ensure the minimum number of kaimahi are allocated to the secure care unit for every shift. Kaimahi should not be working in isolation and there should be on-hand support to meet mokopuna needs, ensure their safety, and keep practice consistent.

## Mokopuna Basic Needs

### Access to soap

In May 2024 Mana Mokopuna recommended Te Puna Wai management investigate ways to ensure mokopuna have access to soap and ensure they use it as often as possible to build good health and hygiene practices.

During the visit in November 2024 Mana Mokopuna found that soap was still not available in the units. Mokopuna were washing their hands with water and then dried these on their clothing or kaimahi were giving hand sanitiser to mokopuna after they used the bathroom. It continues to be an on-going concern that mokopuna do not have access to soap. Using soap and water is an effective infection control method<sup>14</sup> especially for close living situations like residences. It continues to be an on-going concern that mokopuna do not have access to soap and this was echoed by the residence medical team given that mokopuna do come into the facility with skin conditions and infections. We were told that some mokopuna in one unit had recently been treated for scabies prior to this November 2024 visit.

### Lack of nutritious kai (food) options

During this visit, mokopuna and kaimahi raised concerns around the kai mokopuna were receiving, particularly the amount of carbohydrates in their diets leading to significant weight gain for some mokopuna.

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<sup>14</sup> [Hand hygiene | Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission](#)



Mokopuna and kaimahi spoke about raising this as an on-going issue about mokopuna having access to more nutritious options to ensure they are having a balanced diet whilst in residence, however nothing is being done.

Mana Mokopuna noted on one night for dinner, mokopuna were provided a large plate of oily hot chips, topped with large amounts of mayonnaise alongside meat and gravy. Mokopuna could not tell the monitoring team what sort of meat it was and described the meal as 'yuck'.

## Mokopuna would like pyjamas and teddy bears

Mokopuna asked us to advocate for all mokopuna at Te Puna Wai to be provided with pyjamas and teddy bears.

Mokopuna told us that they would like to have their own pair of pyjamas each for bedtime, as they are currently wearing the clothes they wear during the day. Mana Mokopuna saw in one unit a tamaiti who had a pair of pyjamas on and another tamaiti with a onesie on during the evening routine. These mokopuna told the Monitoring Team how comfortable they were and mentioned that it was their 'turn' with the pyjamas. Mana Mokopuna confirmed with mokopuna in the unit that these clothing items were shared between all mokopuna in the unit. The Monitoring Team were also able to be a part of the Rangatahi Youth Council hui where mokopuna requested the residence leadership team provide all mokopuna on site with their own set of pyjamas. It was accepted in the visit wrap-up hui at the conclusion of the monitoring visit, that this request by mokopuna would be looked in to by the residence leadership team.

*"We all have to share one pair of pyjamas and one onesie amongst us in the unit. We would all like our own pair of pyjamas".*

*(mokopuna)*

We were also shown a photo of a neatly made bed with teddy bears for one of the tamaiti in the residence and were told about how proud they were of it and that they had been requesting more soft toys. This signifies that mokopuna in residence are, above all, children, and have the right to have belongings that are appropriate to their age, important to them, and that make them feel safe.

## Roster Pilot

At the time of this November 2024 visit the pilot roster had been in place for six months and there were discussions around extending this roster to allow for tweaks to be made and further testing to ensure the balance between kaimahi wellbeing and meeting the needs of residence operations. There were mixed feelings from kaimahi about the roster. Some kaimahi spoke about there being a better work life balance and being able to spend more time with their own whānau, and others emphasised the increased opportunity to develop programmes for



mokopuna during non-contact time. Most kaimahi said that the roster made supervision with their TLOs possible and that there seemed to be time for regular training.

*"The roster has provided opportunities to work on training sessions, team comradery and get through supervision for kaimahi".*

*(Kaimahi)*

Whereas other kaimahi disliked certain shifts, in particular the 11pm-9am shift was still causing concerns as kaimahi were exhausted by the time mokopuna were waking up for their morning routines. In addition, despite the roster being designed to increase the kaimahi pool, there continued to be concerns around absenteeism and sickness particularly in the morning and afternoon shifts. This was apparent during the November 2024 visit as there was one kaimahi managing secure care by themselves with seven mokopuna in the unit. Another example was during one handover, it was advised by TLOs that kaimahi from the units needed to supervise mokopuna visits with professionals and whānau due to escorts all being off site and there not being enough kaimahi to cover.

## Leadership and Culture

The appointment of new members of the residence leadership team has helped to foster a more positive residence culture and hope that the residence is moving in the right direction for mokopuna. Kaimahi across the facility spoke about their appreciation of the residence manager, their leadership style and their visibility and commitment to mokopuna. Kaimahi said that the residence manager continues to be supportive of mokopuna contact with their whānau and will always approve visits to ensure mokopuna see their whānau, especially those who do not live within the Canterbury region.

*"The residence manager is like a breath of fresh air, very present, supportive, approachable and will go above and beyond for mokopuna".*

*(Kaimahi)*

At the time of the visit two Manager Residence Operations (MRO's) had been appointed, one was in their first week and the other undergoing their induction training. Kaimahi were looking forward to seeing in action the skills and experience they brought to the leadership team, particularly as one MRO has come directly from working in the units and kaimahi said they understood what it is like working on the floor. Kaimahi believed this put the MRO in good stead to advocate for mokopuna and kaimahi at a leadership level. Kaimahi said they were already impressed with the MRO that had started, as they log everything and are very process driven, which is something kaimahi said has been missing in the residence for a long time. The residence leadership team advised in early 2025 they will be meeting together to determine how they will work as a newly established team to clearly define their roles and



responsibilities. This, they said, would support their mahi (work) towards achieving their aspiration of Te Puna Wai becoming the centre of excellence for Youth Justice in the country.

Members of the leadership team went on to acknowledge that there have been significant gaps, particularly when the residence has been short staffed, resulting in kaimahi cutting corners with practice making bad practice the norm. The residence leadership team anticipate that key areas for them to focus on will be kaimahi accountability and the development of clear processes to raise the standards of practice, and therefore care, that mokopuna receive whilst at Te Puna Wai. This has included simplifying HR processes to address kaimahi practice and behaviour, and leadership expectations being clearly communicated to Team Leader Operations (TLOs), as well as to the teams working in the units with mokopuna. Regular kōrero is occurring with kaimahi who are not meeting expectations thus ensuring practice is addressed immediately, rather than leaving it unaddressed and the behaviour continuing to be enabled.

In May 2024 kaimahi described the residence as being in a state of transition. During the November 2024 visit the residence was in a phase of resetting the culture, moving away from a punitive approach to a therapeutic approach to care for mokopuna whilst they are in Te Puna Wai. Kaimahi, we spoke to said they felt the residence was in a much better space compared to our last OPCAT monitoring visit in May 2024, however all acknowledged that there is still a long way to go to make progress in the residence.

*"When I first came to work here the culture was lock them [mokopuna] up, it was very punitive. Now it has moved towards more of a focus on a restorative, therapeutic approach".*

*(Kaimahi)*

## Kaimahi practice, training, and communication

The introduction of a new roster has meant there has been an increase in the amount of new, inexperienced kaimahi working in the facility, with some kaimahi having no experience working with mokopuna. The practice across Te Puna Wai therefore continues to be varied and the experienced kaimahi continue to be stretched in having to support kaimahi to upskill. This has included some of the clinical team case leaders mentoring new residential youth workers. We were told during the November 2024 visit that there has been an increase in trainings, including trauma informed practice, and working with mokopuna who have disabilities, due to the increase in the number of admissions for mokopuna who are experiencing mental distress or have very high and complex needs.

Kaimahi said that although there has been training implemented since the May 2024 visit, the training they are receiving is still not sufficient to meet the needs of mokopuna in the facility. Kaimahi said there is an urgent need for regular comprehensive, specialised training particularly in areas of mental health, caring for mokopuna with high and complex needs and



for mokopuna who identify as takatāpui<sup>15</sup>, to ensure they are appropriately caring for mokopuna and have the resources to do this. Kaimahi also emphasised the importance of needing intensive training around secure care and a dedicated team working in secure care given the legalities associated with it. This particularly related to a need for better training and clarity around what constitutes the grounds for a secure care admission and how to appropriately care for mokopuna in secure care. Kaimahi also suggested that there is a need for a psychologist or specialised mental health clinician to be employed at the residence to offer guidance, consultation, and support for kaimahi to support them in caring for mokopuna across the board appropriately.

Kaimahi noted that there continues to be communication breakdowns between management, particularly within the TLO group and the clinical and operational teams working in the units with mokopuna. Kaimahi noted that communication from TLOs is often inconsistent across teams, resulting in mokopuna being communicated different messages and expectations across shifts, which in turn creates instability in their care whilst in residence. Kaimahi suggested that having a dedicated TLO per unit would help to mitigate this, so that practice, communication, and processes can be consistent for the care of mokopuna across the site.

*“There are 6 different teams, 100 and something kaimahi, it’s hard for mokopuna as it is like they have 6 sets of parents with different instructions, as practice across the teams is inconsistent so who do they listen to?”.*

*(Kaimahi)*

## Programmes

Since May 2024 there has been a positive increase in the variety of educational, recreational, and vocationally-related activities available for mokopuna to engage in. These activities take place both offsite and onsite and include opportunities for units to mix through sport. Some mokopuna are also going offsite once a week as part of the residence touch team made up of kaimahi and mokopuna to play other teams in the local community. There was an extensive holiday programme planned for the summer period with a range of external providers and kaimahi internally delivering programmes, some of these included:

- DJ workshop
- Sushi programme
- Tie Dye t-shirt making
- Driving simulator challenge
- Art programmes
- Graffiti art programme
- Cooking programmes

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<sup>15</sup> [Takatāpui | A Resource Hub](#)





- New Years resolution vision boards

Kaimahi told us that so far, programmes have been going well and that there has been more of an effort being made by kaimahi in some units to run programmes. This was evident during the November 2024 visit, as we saw mokopuna and kaimahi engaging in sports games in the gym, swimming, touch on the field, and one unit were engaging in exercise circuits consisting of squats and burpees.

The employment coordinator, programme coordinator and agriculture tutor are all working together to support mokopuna, however there is a need to increase FTE for more kaimahi in this space so more work can be done to support mokopuna with strengthening their life skills and preparing them to transition back into their communities successfully. For example, Kingslea School has not been able to find a food technology teacher. In the absence of this dedicated kaimahi, the programme co-ordinator has been filling this role in addition to their regular role, to prevent mokopuna from missing out.

Mokopuna across the facility are attending education through Kingslea School<sup>16</sup> and it was reported that mokopuna are engaging well and working towards achieving NCEA credits, where in the past, it has been difficult to get some mokopuna to want to attend and engage in education. There has been an increase in opportunities for mokopuna to develop life skills and prepare for employment, as mokopuna said their focus is to get jobs and earn money.

Opportunities include:

- Some mokopuna are regularly going offsite every Thursday to Waiora Trust<sup>17</sup>, which is an agricultural and horticulture centre
- Connections being built in the community with a local insulation firm that does devanning, who have offered some mokopuna work experience starting in January 2025
- An arrangement has been established between Te Puna Wai and Ara Institute<sup>18</sup> to run a barbering course once a week onsite over five weeks for mokopuna to learn basic barbering skills. Four mokopuna were engaged in this at the time of the visit and kaimahi said they were loving it
- Mokopuna learn facial massages, haircuts, and practice on one another to support them to work towards being offered a place in the full barbering course at Ara once they leave residence. Two mokopuna have left residence and been accepted into the course.
- Driving Simulation course occurs onsite, for mokopuna to have defensive driving lessons to learn how to drive safely.

<sup>16</sup> [Kingslea School – Learning for Life](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Wai-Ora Trust & Wai-Ora Social Enterprise](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Hairdressing and Barbering - Ara](#)





- Mokopuna are studying towards sitting their New Zealand learner's driver's license and being taken offsite to do the test. There has been a tamaiti who was supported to achieve their restricted driver's license whilst at residence.
- Mokopuna are being supported to create CVs, obtain IRD numbers, bank accounts and learning how to cook.

*"We are trying to break the cycle. Mokopuna say to us, why would I need to steal a car if I have my license and own car".*

*(Kaimahi)*

Kamahi told us that one of the challenges they face is that they set these opportunities up particularly work experience or enrolling mokopuna into courses, but when they are back in the community there is a lack of support, follow through and planning by social workers to transition mokopuna successfully. This often results in mokopuna reoffending and ending up being readmitted back into residence.

*"We try to arm them with as many tools as they need whilst they are here to support them in the community".*

*(Kaimahi)*

## Transition Plans and Social Worker contact

Kaimahi, mokopuna and whānau continued to raise concerns around the lack of transition support and contact with social workers when they develop plans for mokopuna.

Some mokopuna told us that they often do not hear from their social workers or cannot get hold of them. When we asked what the plan was in place for them, mokopuna told us they were sitting on remand and were unsure of what the plan was for them.

In some cases, mokopuna who had been sentenced to a supervision with residence order<sup>19</sup> and were eligible for early release<sup>20</sup> had court hearings approaching within a matter of weeks and they told us that they had no idea where they were going to be released to or what supports were in place. This lack of transition support and clear planning has a significant impact on mokopuna, as it does not provide time for them to prepare, be involved in planning or for supports to be implemented in time for their release back into the community. These factors are critical to set mokopuna up for success as they transition out of care/to the next stage of their care.

<sup>19</sup> [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 No 24 \(as at 30 June 2024\), Public Act 311 Supervision with residence order – New Zealand Legislation](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 No 24 \(as at 30 June 2024\), Public Act 314 Court must in certain cases release young person from custody before expiry of supervision with residence order – New Zealand Legislation](#)



*"My early release is in 2 weeks, but don't know where I am going or what the plan is and I ain't heard jak<sup>21</sup> from my social worker".*

*(Mokopuna)*

*"This is like home, I'm not phased if I don't get out and keep coming back here, there is nothing else".*

*(Mokopuna)*

Kaimahi told us:

- Some social workers are not attending Multi Agency Team hui or prerelease hui for mokopuna, making it difficult to develop plans and prepare mokopuna to transition back into the community.
- Some mokopuna are not being informed where they are being bailed or released to prior to their court appearances. We were told of cases where mokopuna have attended their early release court hearings and found out on the day at court where they were going.
- When mokopuna have both Care and Protection and Youth Justice matters (i.e. crossover between these two parts of the Oranga Tamariki System), often allocated social workers are not working together, they are arguing over responsibilities, have differing views which is ultimately impacting on the level of care mokopuna receive.
- Mokopuna who are placed in Te Puna Wai under the Corrections Act often do not have allocated Oranga Tamariki social workers. This is leading to significant gaps in terms of liaising with whānau, understanding their care histories, and who the key people to maintain contact and provide updates to, to ensure mokopuna needs are met. There is a need for gaps to be bridged between Oranga Tamariki and Corrections.
- Case leaders at times are not being updated on the plans for mokopuna, making it difficult for the team at residence to plan for the discharge of mokopuna.
- Opportunities such as work experience or a course have been arranged and set up for mokopuna, however once they have transitioned back into the community there is a lack of follow up and support for mokopuna from their social workers and these opportunities fall through. Mokopuna have told kaimahi when they come back into residence, there was no support or help.

*"Mokopuna are being released into the community with no plans, or updates, they are being set up to fail, reoffend and end up back in residence".*

*(Kaimahi)*

The lack of communication and planning from social workers with mokopuna, whānau and kaimahi was highlighted frequently throughout the visit.

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<sup>21</sup> Youth slang for 'nothing'



*"Our tamaiti was in TPW earlier in the year and there were zero transition plans. The Judge said that they come back to us. Oranga Tamariki just dropped them off and set us up to fail".*

*(Whānau)*

It was described as a key contributing factor that led to several mokopuna reoffending within short periods of time and being readmitted back into the facility, as mokopuna and their whānau were not adequately prepared or had supports in place in the community.

*"We are constantly having to chase up, it is frustrating we think of other whānau that don't have the resources or gumption that they have to ask for help".*

*(Whānau)*

*"Mokopuna are fearful of the unknown, what is next or what the plan is, they feel safe and secure in residence so don't mind doing something dumb to get back here and that should not be the way".*

*(Kaimahi)*

*"We have everything we need here, a toilet, bed, food, friends and we get looked after".*

*(Mokopuna)*

Mokopuna have a right to a high standard of care and this includes an excellent transition support plan with robust support. If the cycle of readmission into secure facilities is to be curbed, social workers need to work with residences to provide the level of support mokopuna deserve.



# Appendix One:

## Gathering information

Mana Mokopuna gathered a range of information and evidence to support the analysis and develop findings for this report. These collectively form the basis of our recommendations.

| Method   | Role  |
|--|---|
| Interviews and informal discussions with mokopuna and kaimahi.             |   |
| Interviews and informal discussions with kaimahi and external stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residence Manager</li> <li>Manager Residence Operations</li> <li>Team Leader Logistics</li> <li>Change Lead</li> <li>Residential Youth Workers</li> <li>Acting Team Leader Clinical Practice</li> <li>Case Leaders</li> <li>Team Leader Operations</li> <li>VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai</li> <li>Kingslea School</li> <li>Kaiwhakaue</li> <li>Nurses</li> <li>Youth Forensics Team</li> <li>Whānau</li> </ul>   |
| Documentation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grievance quarterly reports</li> <li>Serious Event Notifications</li> <li>Incident reports</li> <li>Report of Concerns</li> <li>Secure care logbook and register</li> <li>Seized/Prohibited items register.</li> <li>Quality Lead monthly reports</li> <li>Mokopuna list</li> <li>Use of Force data and reviews</li> <li>Current Staffing Numbers (including vacancies, inductees, leave and special leave).</li> <li>Daily logbooks</li> <li>Remand Reviews</li> <li>Behaviour Management System (BMS)</li> <li>Christmas Holiday Schedule</li> <li>Pilot Roster</li> </ul> |



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Rangatahi Council Minutes</li> <li>■ Team Training and Development Schedule</li> </ul>  |
| Observations and engagements with mokopuna | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unit routines</li> <li>■ Education in the classroom</li> <li>■ Activities on-site</li> <li>■ Mealtimes</li> <li>■ Shift debriefs and handovers</li> </ul> |