

3 April 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 – Korowai Manaaki Youth Justice Residence**

In November 2024 and January 2025, your monitoring team visited the Korowai Manaaki Youth Justice Residence (Korowai Manaaki) to monitor the safety and wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi. This followed on from a monitoring visit to Korowai Manaaki in February 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 27 February 2025, you provided your draft OPCAT report for Korowai Manaaki to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) for review and comment. Our feedback to factual accuracy was shared with your office on 20 March 2025.

The November 2024 and January 2025 visits were to assess progress by Oranga Tamariki against the recommendations Mana Mokopuna made following the monitoring visit at Korowai Manaaki in February 2024. Your office noted several findings as part of your report but did not include any additional recommendations.

I want to acknowledge the concerns that have been raised regarding fighting and assaults at Korowai Manaaki. Oranga Tamariki are committed to ensuring that any concerns raised about culture and allegations of harm are fully investigated. As noted in the report, Mana Mokopuna has been in regular communication with members of the Youth Justice Services and Residential Care (YJSRC) team level to receive frequent updates on the residence action plan.

A six-month accelerated action plan was developed and commenced in January 2025 to address opportunities for improving residential practice and programming by July 2025. The main components of this plan are:

- Intensive upskilling of the front line;
- Enhancing the Recruitment Process;
- Enhancing Leadership and Culture;
- The programming approach; and
- Quality assurance of improved safety and practice.

As signalled in our response to your earlier monitoring report, there is work underway to address the previous recommendations made including:

- Ensuring all kaimahi are fully aware of the professional standards expected of them at Korowai Manaaki. This includes daily stand ups with all kaimahi at the beginning of their shift, regular communications with the site to address practice issues, and the commencement of one-to-one hui between the residence manager and staff to reset professional standards, dress standards, and contraband issues.
- It is important that there is a high standard for professional practice at Korowai Manaaki. The YJSRC team are establishing a new Use of Force panel which provides for a National Office review of incidents. A Residential Practice Quality Panel is also occurring weekly.
- In addressing the level of contraband in the residence, we note that while some contraband is being brought to Korowai Manaaki during whānau visits, there are also issues with rangatahi who do not receive whānau visits being found with contraband. We are continuing to take a strong stance on our approach to contraband including the introduction of clear bags for kaimahi.
- Kaimahi practice is being prioritised and all kaimahi will be retrained to support increased capability when engaging with rangatahi. The relocation of the residence leadership team into the education block enables senior residence kaimahi to observe what is happening with rangatahi and address practice immediately. A member of the YJSRC leadership team is on site every two weeks for three days, providing additional support to the residence manager.
- The YJSRC team are developing a national suite of programmes for all residences focusing on key areas of need for our rangatahi, including culture and identity, rehabilitation and reintegration, life skills, education, health and wellbeing. It is intended this work will provide nationally consistent, structured programming for each residence, which will be supported by local community and national providers to reduce the reliance on our kaimahi to deliver programmes. Korowai Manaaki will be the initial focus in rolling this mahi out at the end of April 2025.

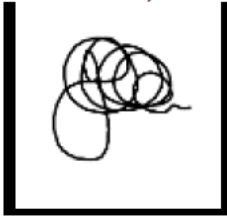
It is pleasing to note that Mana Mokopuna acknowledges there has been an increase in access to independent advocates to engage with rangatahi and a commitment from residence management to build relationships with independent advocates.

I also note the positive feedback that the education provider, Kingslea School, delivers an engaging educational programme for rangatahi at Korowai Manaaki, comprising opportunities to achieve NCEA credits, including café days where rangatahi learn employment and life skills such as cooking and barista skills.

It is also pleasing to read that there is potential for good programming at Korowai Manaaki, and that the dedicated programme co-ordinator is developing comprehensive programmes for rangatahi and supports kaimahi to implement the programmes in the unit through a variety of learning tools.

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

Nāku noa, nā



Julie Miller

**General Manager**

**External Monitoring and Reviews**