



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position:	Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement
Location:	Te Whanganui-a-Tara
Reporting to:	Executive Director
Issue Date:	November 2025
Delegated Authority:	Financial and Human Resources delegations as authorised
Staff Responsibility:	Yes

Our Organisation

Mana Mokopuna - Children's Commissioner advocates for all 1.2 million mokopuna aged under 18 in Aotearoa and care-experienced mokopuna aged under 25.

Established under the Children's Commissioner Act 2022 and building on over 35 years of New Zealand independent children's commissioners, Mana Mokopuna is an Independent Crown Entity led by the Children's Commissioner. We advocate for children's rights to be recognised and upheld, provide advice and guidance to government and other agencies, advocate for system-level change, ensure children's voices are heard in decisions that affect them and monitor places where mokopuna are detained.

Our name, Mana Mokopuna, describes who we are and what we stand for.

At its heart, Mana Mokopuna recognises the many elements that will support mokopuna to thrive. It focuses on children and young people in the context of their family, whānau, hapū, iwi and wider community. It also recognises that their participation in decisions that affect them is vitally important.

Our Vision and Values

Our moemoeā is *Kia kuru pounamu te rongō* - *All mokopuna live their best lives*. We want to see every child in Aotearoa, regardless of their background, growing up knowing they belong with their whānau, having what they need to live their best life. It means mokopuna have a say about what matters for them, and that their rights are respected, protected and advanced by those in power.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is central to our work, alongside the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Giving effect to Te Tiriti threads through our work, grounded in our tikanga framework with four values-based principles that guide our mahi and behaviour:

- **Aroha:** Mokopuna are taonga. They are born with their own inherent mana. We will always act with compassion and empathy, adapting readily to respond to their needs.
- **Pono:** We believe honesty and integrity are key to doing our job well. We will always report things as we see them and never as how others want them to be seen. We stay true to one important thing: we do as we say we will.
- **Tika:** We are always about the best results for mokopuna. We empower others to bring about the best for them. We're independent and will always speak out for their interests. We consider the range of needs we have to meet and make every attempt to get it right. We never shy away from the hard stuff.
- **Mātauranga:** Mokopuna are our reason for being. They are involved, participate, and have input into things we do. We act from a place of knowledge; we work from evidence and advise others based on the things we learn.

Purpose of this Position

The Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement provides strategic leadership and oversight of functions that engage with and for mokopuna and their whānau, hapū, iwi and communities to ensure that their voices are heard and amplified to promote and advance the rights, interests, and wellbeing of Mokopuna in alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

To do this, the role leads the development and delivery of a cohesive, forward-thinking communications, stakeholder and engagement strategy that strengthens and promotes the advocacy of Mana Mokopuna - the Children's Commissioner. Providing strategic oversight across engagement and communications (including strategic engagement and media, stakeholder intelligence, digital channels and content creation) functions, this role ensures that all engagement is aligned, impactful and focused on the promotion of the interests, rights and wellbeing of mokopuna.

Combining strategic thought leadership with operational oversight, the Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement ensures that Mana Mokopuna is focusing on high impact opportunities to engage, build relationships and communicate in ways which promote and advance the interests, rights and wellbeing of mokopuna within Aotearoa through:

- Engaging and building relationships with mokopuna and their whānau, hapu, iwi and communities to hear their voices, lived experiences and understand what matters most to them.
- Building relationships and leveraging shared connections and resources for the benefit of mokopuna and their whānau.
- Providing strategic stakeholder insights and advice to support Mana Mokopuna to focus on the most impactful engagement efforts.
- Promoting the advocacy undertaken by Mana Mokopuna using strategic communications and engagement across digital platforms using storytelling and visual content to promote a world where all mokopuna live their best lives.

A key focus of this role is leading a high performing team that operates within a positive working environment where kaimahi have the support to do their best mahi.

The Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement is part of the leadership team and will contribute to strategic work programme planning and priority setting for the organisation, ensuring that we are progressing towards the achievement of our moemoeā - *kia kuru pounamu te rongo*.

Working Relationships

Internal: • Children’s Commissioner • Executive Director • Leadership Team • Direct reports • Kaimahi across the tari	External: • NGO and community sector, including organisations that represent Pacific communities, ethnic communities, disabled, rainbow, care-experienced, excluded, or marginalised mokopuna • Oranga Tamariki Oversight Partners: Te Aroturuki Tamariki and the Ombudsman • Government agencies, particularly: • Ministry of Social Development • Treasury • Oranga Tamariki • Te Puni Kōkiri • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Health • Ministry of Business • Innovation and Employment • Ministry of Justice • Ministry of Pacific Peoples • NZ Police • Human Rights Commission • Privacy Commissioner • Housing New Zealand • Statistics New Zealand • Social Wellbeing Agency • Māori communities, including Iwi, hapū, whānau and Māori organisations • Academics and Māori and community researchers and data experts • Child rights advocates and sector • Wider NGO sector • Mokopuna directly and/or agencies representing them
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Key Accountabilities

Key Result Areas	Accountabilities
Strategic Leadership	• Contribute to the strategic direction setting of Mana Mokopuna and associated performance frameworks. • Lead the development and execution of strategic communication and engagement plans, weaving together the different work streams to undertake activities that promote and advance the rights, interests and wellbeing of mokopuna. • Develop and drive strategic engagement and communications initiatives that advance mokopuna rights and amplify their voices to meaningfully shape the decisions that affect them. • Build and maintain strong relationships within government agencies, non-governmental organisations, Te Ao Māori, Pacific communities, youth focused organisations, community leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure Mana Mokopuna is connecting with and hearing from the villages that surround mokopuna. • Provide strategic direction and oversight of the design and execution of communications and engagement initiatives, ensuring opportunities are maximised to hear from and amplify mokopuna voices, while also ensuring that risks and challenges are proactively managed.
People Leadership	• Provide strong leadership to the team, ensuring that a culture of manaaki, support and high performance is fostered, where all kaimahi feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to the moemoeā of Mana Mokopuna. • Build, manage, and develop a high-performing team by setting clear objectives and providing ongoing coaching and feedback to support individual and team growth. • Identify professional development opportunities with kaimahi, ensuring they have the skills and knowledge to effectively advocate for mokopuna rights and manage complex cases and projects. • Manage team workloads and resources effectively, ensuring a balance between operational demands and strategic initiatives while maintaining kaimahi wellbeing.

	• Address team challenges proactively and constructively, offering support and solutions to maintain team cohesion and alignment with moemoeā. • Continuously model the values of Mana Mokopuna, as a senior leader in the organisation.
Operational Delivery	• Lead the successful and timely development and delivery of a strategic work programme, which provides for reactive and proactive communications and engagement opportunities and gives consideration of mātauranga Māori across all activities undertaken. • Establish clear objectives, timelines, and deliverables for the work programme, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities and resource availability. • Develop and implement robust frameworks to monitor progress, measure outcomes, and evaluate the impact of the work programme, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability. • Ensure quality assurance across the teams work programme including but not limited to ethics, safeguarding and other mechanisms for safe practice. • Provide clear and timely updates on work programme progress, challenges, and successes to internal and external stakeholders, fostering transparency and collaboration. • Ensure the Strategic Communications and Engagement team has the necessary capability and resources to deliver on their work programme, addressing problems as they arise and being proactive in removing any roadblocks to delivery. • Manage financial resources within budget, as directed by the Executive Director and in accordance with the policies of the tari and the public sector.

Issues & Risk Management	• Proactively identify and assess emerging issues, risks and opportunities both within the organisation, and across the eco-system that could impact the realisation of mokopuna rights and the amplification of their voices in decisions that matter to them - this may include system or organisational changes and shifts in the wider landscape. • Establish robust systems to monitor risks, issues and opportunities, providing regular reporting and strong actionable recommendations and mitigations to support the Commissioner to promote and advance mokopuna rights and amplify their voices. • Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to address risks and resolve issues, leveraging partnerships to achieve sustainable, mokopuna-centred outcomes. • Review and refine risk management frameworks and practices, integrating lessons learned from past issues to strengthen team resilience and responsiveness in safeguarding mokopuna.
Relationship Management	• Develop and maintain excellent working relationships with external agencies including government, NGO, community sector, particularly Māori and Pacific communities. • Establish effective working relationships and communication with all key stakeholders for the team and maintain excellent internal working relationships across Mana Mokopuna. • Leverage relationships and connections for the shared benefit of mokopuna.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi Obligations	• Ensure that plans, practices, processes, activities and initiatives of the Strategic Communications and Engagement team are reflective of our commitment and obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. • Champion the rights of Māori as Tangata Whenua. • Actively work to improve skills and knowledge of Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori.
Other Duties	• Initiate, participate in and lead as appropriate, projects and areas of work prioritised by the Executive Director. • Perform other duties to support the team or the wider tari, as delegated by the Executive Director.

Technical/Professional knowledge and skills

- Extensive, successful experience in people leadership, ideally in senior positions within community engagement and/or advocacy focused organisations.
- Excellent engagement, relationship management and inquiry skills with the ability to quickly build trust and rapport.
- A strong understanding of the practical application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the workplace, with experience in ensuring the provisions of Te Tiriti are centred throughout engagement practices, stakeholder management and communications.
- Proficiency in Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori, with the ability and confidence to engage within Te Ao Māori and matatau settings.
- A proven ability to build high performing teams within a culture that fosters wellbeing, psychological safety and innovation.
- Expertise in successfully leading teams in a complex and demanding environment, with the ability to provide strong coaching, mentoring and support to direct reports to ensure work delivery.
- Experience in leading and executing strategic plans that influence the achievement of outcomes for mokopuna (experience specific to stakeholder engagement planning desirable).
- Extensive background and experience in engagement and communications related roles, ideally with experience within kaupapa Māori organisations and/or within roles that enable mokopuna participation.
- Expertise in navigating statutory, legislative, and public service processes with regards to children's interests, rights, wellbeing, and participation (including UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).
- Exceptional communication skills, both verbal and written, with the ability to influence without authority.
- Expert understanding of how to promote mokopuna voices and experiences in a way that advances their rights, interests and wellbeing.
- A strategic and analytical thinker with a proven ability to create solutions in a changing environment.
- A track record of building and sustaining relationships across a range of different sectors, communities, and agencies.
- Demonstratable understanding and ability to analyse the impacts of engagement and communications on mokopuna Māori and apply this analysis to leadership of an engagement function.
- Relevant tertiary qualification and extensive equivalent experience.

Special Requirements

- Demonstrated commitment to embedding Te Tiriti based practice within previous roles, and commitment to progressing the Te Tiriti journey of the Commissioner, including participating in te reo lessons or cultural development activities.
- Welcomes and values diversity and contributes to an inclusive and safe working environment.
- Willing to travel to fulfil job requirements of the role.