

Statement of Intent

2026 – 2029



Mana Mokopuna - Children's Commissioner

Statement of Intent 2026 - 29

Presented to the House of Representatives
pursuant to Section 149 of the Crown Entities
Act 2004

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Statement of Responsibility

This document constitutes our Statement of Intent (SOI) as required under section 149 of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

It sets out the strategic direction of Mana Mokopuna – Children's Commissioner, for the four years ending June 2029 and details how the purposes as set out in the Children's Commissioner Act 2022 will be carried out during this period.

The SOI provides a medium-term outlook with a focus on the Commissioner's strategic intentions and how these will be delivered. The SOI should be read alongside our Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE), which has a one-year horizon, sets out what we will deliver and how our performance will be assessed, to account for the government funding we receive.

This version of our SOI as published in October 2025 reflects minor amendments following a legislative change which came into effect on 01 August 2025, which now sees the Children's Commissioner functioning under the Children's Commissioner Act 2022.

This SOI has been prepared in accordance with the Crown Entities Act 2004. In signing this statement, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information contained in the Statement of Intent for Mana Mokopuna – Children's Commissioner.



DR CLAIRE ACHMAD
CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER
OCTOBER 2025

Note: The date range for this document reflects the end of the relevant financial years 2026 – 2029 (FY25 – FY28).

Message from the Children's Commissioner



E ngā mana

E ngā reo

E karangatanga maha,

Nau mai, haere mai to Mana Mokopuna – Children's Commissioner Statement of Intent. This document sets out our strategic direction for the next four years.

Mokopuna – all children and young people – have the greatest potential in our society. They are the reflection of the dreams of their ancestors, their tipuna, and a glimpse into our collective and intergenerational future. The children and young people of Aotearoa New Zealand are unique, as tāngata whenua; as children and young people of Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa; as children and young people of our bicultural nation, with woven connections to all corners and cultures of the world.

As Children's Commissioner, my team and I have the highest aspirations for all mokopuna, every day, in all circumstances. It is a significant privilege to lead this work as Children's Commissioner, and a responsibility I treat with utmost care, every day. Because what could be more important than our country's youngest generations, its children and young people? They are taonga, precious people, to be nurtured and cherished.

At its heart, our work is about standing up, teaming up, and speaking up for and with our country's mokopuna. I spend a significant amount of my time with mokopuna, listening to them about their aspirations and challenges, and then amplifying their views and solutions, and advocating for their rights, in the spaces that decisions are made about them. Together with my team, our work is grounded in the

experiences, perspectives, and voices of mokopuna themselves, and in the promises to mokopuna included in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Te Tiriti o Waitangi - the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti).

This Statement of Intent forms our navigational stars, keeping Mana Mokopuna – Children's Commissioner on course over the years ahead, as we chart towards Aotearoa New Zealand being a country where every child grows up loved, safe, well and flourishing.

This is the essence of our moemoeā, vision: Kia kuru pounamu te rongo – all children live their best lives.

Our vision for Aotearoa New Zealand's children and young people is ambitious. The times we are living in, and which we will navigate over the years ahead, call for this. Significant challenges exist for mokopuna, many of which are unprecedented.

These are challenges that affect tāngata – people, and Papatūānuku, Te Taiao – the natural environment that we call home. They are challenges that are affecting children and young people, but the ways in which they affect children are often not heard about, and children's rights and views do not feature as strongly as they need to in decision-making.

A big focus of my work as Children's Commissioner, together with my Mana Mokopuna team, is to bring these challenges into the light, and to bring forward evidence-informed solutions, grounded in and shaped by mokopuna voices, to support decision-making.

Mokopuna – all children and young people – have the greatest potential in our society. They are the reflection of the dreams of their ancestors, their tīpuna, and a glimpse into our collective and intergenerational future.

In 2023, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child made its most recent recommendations to the New Zealand Government, including calling for urgent action to address: violence against mokopuna; racism and discrimination experienced by mokopuna; the inequities experienced by mokopuna Māori; and actions to uphold the rights of: disabled mokopuna, mokopuna in State care, every child to an adequate standard of living, and all children and young people in the youth justice system.

At its heart, our work is about standing up, teaming up, and speaking up for and with our country's mokopuna.

Despite the challenges, as a small, relatively rich nation, a better today and tomorrow for our country's mokopuna is within our collective reach. The opportunity to do better for and with children and young people is immense. While the Children's Commissioner has an important role to play in this, to chart a course towards our vision, where all children live their best lives, I recognise that it takes us all – across families, whānau, hapū, iwi, communities, children's and youth organisations, youth-led movements, government, the public sector, business, and civil society.

I warmly extend an invitation to all, to join our movement towards our communities and society-at-large committing to the flourishing of all children and young people, from their most early stages and years, throughout childhood, and beyond. I also extend a challenge to adults: the next time you are making a decision that will affect a child or young person, stop and first consider that decision through the eyes of a child. How does your perspective shift? What do you see that you did not perhaps see before? How does that influence the decision?

Within our collective ecosystem, the Children's Commissioner's role is unique, as the Independent Crown Entity tasked with being the advocate for all Aotearoa New Zealand's children up to age 18, and children and young

people up to age 25 who are in, or have been in, care or custody, including as one of three organisations providing oversight of the Oranga Tamariki System.

Over the next four years, Mana Mokopuna - Children's Commissioner will be deepening our focus on promoting and advancing the rights, interests, and participation of children and young people and to improve their well-being within the context of their families, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities. The Children's Commissioner's independence is an important foundation for our advocacy, enabling us to provide evidence-informed, children's rights-focused advice; to bring people together around children's issues; to speak up when things aren't working well for children and young people; and to bring forward solutions.

It is my job day-to-day to advocate as Children's Commissioner for the rights, well-being, and interests of mokopuna. I am committed to undertaking this work together with mokopuna, working in ways that encourage their participation, and in turn ensure that our work, and the work of others, is shaped by mokopuna themselves. After all, when we make decisions affecting the lives of mokopuna, it is their right to have a say in those decisions.

In the spirit of this commitment to mokopuna and their experiences and voices, we have ensured that mokopuna have had a hand in helping to shape our strategic direction for the next four years. In late 2023, we heard from approximately 800 children, young people – and in some instances their families, whānau, and communities – who responded to the question:

**“I tōu ao, he aha ngā mea nui?
In your world, what matters
most?”**

On the following pages, and throughout this document, you will find some of their direct answers. Together with all the responses received, as well as what we have heard from mokopuna and their communities over recent years, these mokopuna have helped to chart our strategic course ahead, and we will continue amplifying their perspectives and voices.

All of the quotes from mokopuna that are cited in this document were gathered through our “What Matters Most to Children and Young People?” Surveys in 2023 and 2024.

Building on the 30+ years’ work of previous Children’s Commissioners, over the next four years Mana Mokopuna will focus on a progressive journey to full flourishing, much like a child themselves does over the course of their childhood. This will see our strategic intentions span across three areas:

Step up – Growing our ability to support children and young people through understanding their lives and what is important to them.

Team up – Connecting and convening mokopuna, whānau, hapū, iwi and organisations working with and for children and young people and enabling their mokopuna focused capability.

Speak up – Advocating for and advancing the rights, well-being, interests, and participation of mokopuna across government and throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, and monitoring mokopuna rights.

In all our endeavours, my team and I will seek to inspire long-term systemic and behavioural shifts that benefit children and young people’s interests, from the earliest years of their lives, and on an intergenerational basis. As we undertake this work, a learning-mindset, service-heart ethos will ensure we learn and optimise as we go, with mokopuna-based decisions at the forefront.

The Children’s Commissioner Act 2022 is the legislation that established our agency, and among other things, it emphasises the centrality of relationships to our work. Together, my team and I look forward to building relationships over the coming years that will support our ability to deliver on the strategy set out in this Statement of Intent.

I look forward to opportunities to meet you on the journey towards our country being a place where children and young people are seen, respected, and valued as the taonga – treasures – that they are, able to live their best lives every day, knowing and experiencing the rights they hold, and participating fully in the matters affecting them.



DR CLAIRE ACHMAD
CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER
OCTOBER 2025

Karere mai i te Tumu Whakarae o Mana Mokopuna



E ngā mana

E ngā reo

E karangatanga maha,

Nau mai, haere mai ki te Tauākī Whakamaunga
Atu tuatahi o Mana Mokopuna – Children and
Young People’s Commission. E whakarārangi
nei i te aronga rautaki mō ngā tau e whā e haere
ake nei.

Kei i ā tātou mokopuna – ngā tamariki, rangatahi
katoa – te pitomata nui katoa i roto i te
porihanga.

Ko rātou te whakaatatanga o ngā moemoeā o
ngā tipuna, o rātou tipuna hoki, ā, he tirohanga
ki te kohinga me ngā reanga mō ngā rā e heke
mai ana. Ko ngā tamariki, rangatahi o Aotearoa
nei he motuhake, he tangata whenua, he
tamariki, rangatahi o te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa; he
tamariki, mokopuna o tēnei ao ahurea rua, kua
tūia nei ki ngā tōpito me ngā ahurea o te ao
whānui nei.

Kei i a mātou kei tō mātou Kōmihana, Mana
Mokopuna – te Kōmihana a ngā Tamariki,
Rangatahi, ngā wawata tino nui mā ngā
mokopuna, mō ia rā, mō ngā āhuatanga e pā
nei ki a rātou. He tino hōnore hoki tēnei te ārahi
i ngā ahi hei Kaikōmihana, he haepapa e tino
ngakau nui nei au, i ia rā. Nā te mea he aha te
mea nui o te ao tērā i ngā reanga o Aotearoa e
tipu ake nei, ngā tamariki, mokopuna, rangatahi
hoki? He tino taonga rātou, he taonga tangata,
me whakarea, me tiakina hoki.

Kei te pūtaketanga o a mātou mahi ko te tū,
ko te mahi tahi me te noho hei māngai mō a
tātou mokopuna o Aotearoa. He nui te wā e
whakapau kaha ana au mō ngā mokopuna, te
whakarongo ki ō rātou moemoeā, ngā wero
me te whakanui i ā rātou tirohanga me ngā

hāpaitanga, te noho hei māngai mō ō rātou
mōtika, ki roto i ngā wāhi e whakaritea ana
ngā āhuatanga e pā ana ki a rātou. Ko ā mātou
mahi i takea mai i ngā wheako, i ngā tirohanga
me ngā reo kōrero a ngā mokopuna tonu, i roto
hoki i ngā kī taurangi kua tāpaetia ki te Tikanga
Mōtika a te Komiti o te Rūnanga Whakakotahi i
ngā Iwi o te Ao me Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Mā tēnei Tauākī Whakamaunga Atu e
whakaahua i ā mātou whetū whakatere, e
hāngai tonu ai a Mana Mokopuna ki tōna ara mō
ngā tau e heke mai ana, e whakatere waka nei
mātou kia noho ai a Aotearoa hei ao e tipu ake ai
te tamaiti me te aroha, e noho haumaruru ai, e ora
tonu ai, e rea ake ai hoki.

Koia nei te pūtaketanga o te moemoeā, e ō ai te
kōrero: Kia kuru pounamu te rongo – all children
live their best lives.

He awhero nui hoki tēnei tirohanga mō ngā
tamariki mokopuna o Aotearoa. Nā runga i te
wā e noho nei tatou me ngā tau e heke mai
ana e tika ana kia pēnei te tirohanga. He maha
tonu ngā wero kei mua i a tātou mokopuna, te
nuinga kāore tonu e mōhiotia ana. He wero e
whai pānga ana ki te tangata, ki a Papatūānuku,
ki te Taiao e kīia nei ko tō tātou kāinga tonu. He
wero e pā ana ki ā tātou tamariki, rangatahi,
heoi kāore tonu e rangona aua pānga ki a rātou
ngā tamariki, rangatahi, kāore tonu e puta ana
ō rātou mōtika, ā rātou tirohanga i roto i ngā
mahi whakariterite. Ko tētahi wāhanga o te
aronga o te Kaikōmihana, e taku tīma o Mana
Mokopuna ko te whakapuare mai i ngā wero nei
ki te ao marama, me te whai atu me ngā urupare
whai taunakitanga, kua takea tonu mai i ngā
mokopuna tonu, hei tautoko ake i ngā whakarite
mā rātou ake.

I te tīmatanga o tera tau tonu, ka puta ngā
tohutohu a te Komiti o te Rūnanga Whakakotahi

i ngā Iwi o te Ao mō ngā Mōtika Tamaiti ki te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa, pērā i te karanga whawhati tata kia anganui atu ki ngā āhuatanga pēnei i te: tūkino taikaha mokopuna; te kaikiri me te toihara e pā nei ki ngā mokopuna; ngā tōrite e pā nei ki a tātou mokopuna Māori; me ngā mahi ki te whakamana i ngā mōtika: o te hunga mokopuna whai kaha; ngā mokopuna e tiakina ana e te Kawana; o te hunga tamariki kia noho ora ai rātou; tae atu ki ngā tamariki, rangatahi e mau nei ki te pūnaha ture taiohi hoki.

Ahakoia ngā wero, ahakoia tō tātou iti ā-ao nei, he ao manawanui tonu tātou, ka taea tonu ēnei tū āhuatanga te whakaea. Kua tae ki te wā nui whakaharahara mō tātou ki te whakapai ake i ngā āhuatanga mō ā tātou tamariki. Ko tā mātou o te Kōmihana, he whakaū, he whai takoha atu ki tēnei huarahi e para nei mātou ki te tirohanga whānui, e noho ora ai ā tātou nā tamariki, ā, me taku kite atu mā tātou katoa tēnei mahi e whakaea, mā te mahi tahi puta noa i ngā whānau, i ngā hapū, i ngā iwi, i ngā hapori i ngā rōpū whakahaere taiohi, tamariki hoki, ngā rōpū taiohi, te kāwanatanga, te rāngai tūmatanui, ngā pakihi me te porihanga katoa.

Koia nei te tono mahana ki a koutou katoa, kia hono mai ki te nekehanga nui ki ō tātou nā hapori me te whānuitanga o ngā porihanga e manawanui nei tātou kia tipu, kia rea ā tātou tamariki, rangatahi mai i a rātou e taitamariki ana, ki te wā ka rangatahi rātou, puta noa ki te wā e taiohi ai rātou me ngā rā ki tua hoki. E toro ana hoki i te wero ki te hunga taipakeke: i a koutou e whakatau ana i ngā ritenga mā te hunga tamariki, rangatahi hoki, me whai wā ki te whakaaro ake ki a rātou, me te tiro ki ō mahi mai i ngā whakaaro, i te tirohanga hoki a te tamaiti tonu. Ka rerekē ai ō whakaaro, he aha te mea e kite ana koe, kāore nei koe i ki te i mua? Ka pēhea te whakaawetanga o taua tirohanga i tō whakataunga?

I roto i te kotahitanga o tēnei pūnaha hauropi, he mahi ahurei hoki tā Mana Mokopuna, he hinonga nā te Karauna kua whakamahia kia noho hei māngai mō ngā tamariki, rangatahi katoa o Aotearoa atu ki te 18 te pakeke, ki ngā tamariki rangatahi ki te 25 te pakeke, kua roa kē e noho ana ki te manaakitanga a te Kāwana, i roto anō hoki rōpū whakahaere e toru, e whakarato ana i ngā tikanga whakahaere i roto i te Pūnaha o Oranga Tamariki.

I roto i ngā tau e whā e haere ake nei, ka hōhonu ake te aronga ki te whakatairanga me te whakawhanake i ngā motika, i ngā aronga me te whakaurunga a ngā tamariki, rangatahi, ki te whakapiki i te oranga i roto i te horopaki o ngā whānau, ngā hapū, ngā iwi me ngā hapori hoki. Ko te tū kotahitanga o te Kōmihana tētahi mea nui whakaharahara, te tūāpapa hoki o te noho hei māngai, he whakarato tohutohu whai taunakitanga, whai aronga hoki ki ngā mōtika a ngā tamariki, rangatahi; ki te whakaputa kōrero i ngā wā o te raru, me te whakatau urupare hoki.

Ko mātou katoa ngā mema o te Poari o Mana Mokopuna me tā mātou tīma, koia nei tā mātou mahi o ia rā, e noho nei hei Tumu Whakarae o Mana Mokopuna, he māngai mō ngā motika, mō te oranga me ngā aronga a ngā mokopuna. Ko taku manawanui tēnei ki te mahi i tēnei mahi mā ngā mokopuna, he whakahau i a rātou me taku tīma e tika, e pono ai a mātou mahi me ngā mahi katoa a ētahi atu i runga anō i ngā hiahia a ngā mokopuna. Nā runga i tērā, e tika ana mēnā ka whakatauhia ngā whakataunga mā rātou, me whai wāhi mai rātou ki aua whakataunga rā.

I roto i te wairua o te manawanui ki ngā mokopuna, ki a rātou wheako, ki o rātou reo hoki, ko tā mātou he whakahau kia whai ringa atu mātou ki ngā whakaritenga o te ara rautaki mō ngā tau e whā e haere ake nei. I te tau 2023, ko te rongo kōrero, āhua 800 tamariki, rangatahi – ā, i ētahi wā ō rātou whānau, hapori hoki – i whakautu mai ki te pātai:

“I tōu ao, he aha ngā mea nui? In your world, what matters most?”

Kei ngā whārangi e whai mai ana, ā, puta noa i tēnei tuhinga, ka kitea ngā tino whakautu. Katoa ngā whakautu i tukuna mai, tae atu ki ngā rangona kōrero mai i ngā mokopuna, hapori hoki puta noa i ngā tau, nā ēnei kōrero i tārai i te ara rautaki e kōkirihiā nei, ā, kāore e kore ka nui ake ngā tirohanga, ka nui ake hoki ngā reo.

Ko ngā kōrero katoa mai i ngā mokopuna kua kohia ki tēnei tuhinga, ā, i kohia mai i te ruri “What Matters Most to Children and Young People?” i whakahaeretia i te tau 2023 Ko ngā kōrero katoa mai i ngā mokopuna kua kohia ki tēnei tuhinga, ā, i kohia mai i te ruri “What Matters Most to Children and Young People?” i whakahaeretia i te tau 2023 me 2024.

He hinonga Karauna mātou, ā, neke atu i te 30 tau mai i ngā Kaikōmihana o mua, i ngā tau e whā e haere ake nei ko te aronga o te Kōmihana nei ko te kōkiritanga whakamua kia tipu, kia rea, pēnei i te taitamariki i a rātou e tipu ake ana. Ka kitea tēnei tū āhuatanga i roto i ngā aronga rautaki ka puta i ngā tau e whā e haere ake nei:

E tū – Te noho o te Kōmihana ki te whakatau tūāpapa kaha rawa mō ngā āhuatanga e whai pānga ana ki ngā mokopuna.

Mahi Tahi – Te tūhono me te hui tahi me ngā mokopuna, ngā whānau, ngā hapū, ngā iwi me ngā rōpū whakahaere te mahi tahi me ngā tamariki, rangatahi, te whakahau i ā rātou āheinga aronga mokopuna.

Kōrero Mai – Te noho hei māngai me te kōkiri i ngā mōtika, i ngā aronga me te whakaurunga a ngā mokopuna puta noa i ngā tari Kāwanatanga, puta noa i Aotearoa me te aroturuki i ō rātou mōtika hoki.

I roto i a mātou mahi katoa, ko te rapunga matua ko te whakaawe i ngā nekehanga pūnaha, whanonga mauroa e hua ai ā tātou tamariki, rangatahi, o rātou aronga hoki mai i a rātou e pakupaku ana, ā, tae noa ki ngā whakareanga e haere ake nei. I a mātou e mahi nei i ngā mahi, me whai āhua akoranga, me whai manawanui ki te ratonga, mā ēnei tū āhuatanga e whakapakari ake ai, e tū ai ngā whakaritenga mā ngā mokopuna ki mua hei whāinga mā tātou katoa.

Ko te Children and Young People's Commission Act 2022 te ture i whakatūria ai tō mātou Kōmihana, i tua atu i tērā, he miramira i te kounga me te whai mana o ngā kōtuinga i roto i ngā mahi. E hihiko ana te ngākau ki te hanga anō i ēnei momo kōtuinga i roto i ngā tau e haere mai ana hei tautoko i ō mātou mahi ki te tuku i te rautaki e rārangi nei i roto i te Tauākī Whakamaunga Atu.



DR CLAIRE ACHMAD
TE KAIKŌMIHANA MŌ NGĀ TAMARIKI
HIRINGA-Ā-NUKU 2025



What matters most to mokopuna?

As an Independent Crown Entity working in service of mokopuna, to inform our strategic intentions, in preparing the original version of this SOI in 2023, we heard from approximately 800 children, young people, and in some instances their families, whānau and communities, who responded to the question:

**“I tōu ao, he aha ngā mea nui?
In your world, what matters most?”**

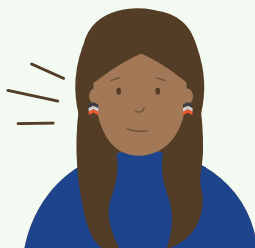
**“Everybody
keeping our
Earth clean.
Cos I don't like
thinking about the
Earth feeling sick.”**

Māori female, 11-15 yrs



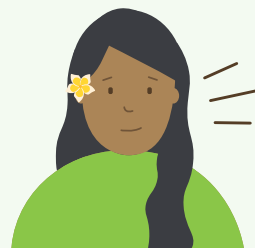
**“A good education so you
can get a good job and
prepare you for
the future.”**

Māori female, 12-17 yrs



**“For me personally it would
be Stability, Housing,
More Te Reo Māori
kaupapa to heal, Whānau,
Connections, Aroha,
Manaakitanga, etc...”**

Samoan/Māori female,
12-17 yrs



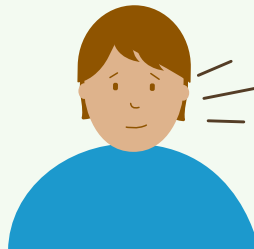
"I think one thing that's really affecting my family is that my parents aren't getting paid enough. They struggle getting money and all prices have gone up, so that's not really helping us much. If you could help children's parents earn more money, I think they would be able to **experience more and learn better.**"

Chinese female, 12-17 yrs



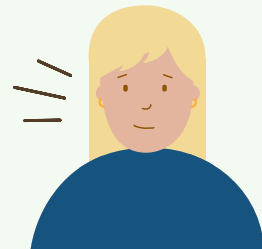
"The most important thing to me right now is **the protection of queer people,** especially transgender people. I am afraid the rise in anti LGBT sentiment in the US is going to spread here, and I have already seen the effects of the radicalisation. I want transgender people to be safe."

Pākehā male, 12-17 yrs



"What matters most is **people have equal opportunities to succeed** and that structural inequality is addressed before any real progression can be made. I am especially passionate about how this applies in the justice system and how we punish those who were already punished structurally."

Pākehā female, 18-24 yrs



‘Mokopuna’ brings together the kupu ‘moko’ – imprint or tattoo, and ‘puna’ – spring (of water).

Together, this kupu introduces the idea of intergenerational connectivity, recognising that children are the impression of their ancestors.

‘Mokopuna’ acknowledges that all children and young people are unique individuals who also exist within the context of their family, whānau, and wider communities.

When we use the kupu ‘mokopuna’ in our work, we are referring to all children in Aotearoa New Zealand to reflect and acknowledge the context that all children and young people exist within.



SECTION 1:

Our Mahi

"I think for me,
as a young adult I
value the connection
with people that I
care for and love.

I truly believe that this is
a fundamental part of the
children's upbringing."

CHINESE FEMALE, 18-24 YRS

Mana Mokopuna – Children's Commissioner at a glance

OUR VISION

Kia kuru pounamu te rongo -
All mokopuna live their best lives.

OUR LEGISLATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

The Children's Commissioner is an independent Crown entity, governed under the Children's Commissioner Act 2022.

The Children's Commissioner is a designated **National Preventative Mechanism** under the **Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture**.

OUR PURPOSE

To independently **promote and advance the rights, interests, and participation** of children and young people and to **improve their well-being** within the context of their families, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities.

OUR TEAM

The Children's Commissioner is the independent advocate for all children under the age of 18 in New Zealand and all children and young people under 25 who have been in, or who are in care and/or custody.

40

kaimahi (staff)

based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington and regularly visiting mokopuna in communities around the country.

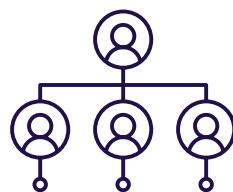
OUR WORK

Guided by domestic law, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and international human rights instruments, most notably the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

It is also grounded in the **lived experiences of mokopuna, their perspectives and voices.**

Built on **30+**
years of work

of previous Children's Commissioners and their teams.

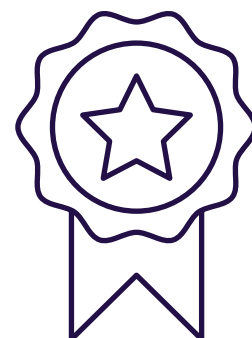


Focused on advocacy for children and young people and monitoring their rights. This means

we build relationships with communities, government and other agencies to advance the well-being of all mokopuna

with a particular focus on mokopuna Māori and mokopuna experiencing disadvantage.

We encourage the **views and experiences of mokopuna to be listened to and acted on**, including modelling and promoting best practice in children's and young people's participation.



What we do

Our Vision

The vision of the Children's Commissioner and the Mana Mokopuna team is for all mokopuna, regardless of their background, to grow up loved, safe and well, knowing they belong with their families and whānau, and have what they need to live their best lives. This vision has previously been carried through the work of the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) and the Children and Young People's Commission, and is a vital thread from the past into the future.

**Our moemoeā /
Te puna orange**

**'Kia kuru pounamu te
rongo': an enduring state
of wellbeing for mokopuna,
symbolised by a healthy and
flowing spring.**

**All mokopuna live their
best lives.**

Our Purpose

The Children's Commissioner is the visible, independent advocate for all mokopuna in Aotearoa New Zealand under 18 years of age, and those under 25 who have been, or are in, care and/or custody.

The Children's Commissioner was established from 1 August 2025, under the Children's Commissioner Act 2022. As outlined in the Act, the Children's Commissioner leads our purpose to promote and advance the rights, interests, participation, and wellbeing of mokopuna, within the context of their whānau and communities. This involves, among other things:

- building and maintaining relationships that enable the Commissioner to work alongside mokopuna, hapū, iwi, communities, youth-led organisations, organisations working with and for mokopuna, and government and public sector agencies
- sharing and growing knowledge and understanding of children's rights
- supporting government to make decisions that impact positively on mokopuna, their whānau, and those in the community best positioned to support them

- encouraging the views and experiences of mokopuna to be listened to and acted on, including modelling and promoting best practice in children's and young people's participation
- prioritising mokopuna who are disadvantaged, and the issues affecting them
- undertaking work that supports improved outcomes for mokopuna Māori within the context of their whānau, hapū and iwi
- raising the visibility, and recognising the diversity, of mokopuna while helping to shape the way that children and young people are viewed and valued in society.

Our work is guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, domestic law, and international human rights instruments, most notably the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Children's Convention). As required under our Act, when making recommendations on appointees to the position of Children's Commissioner, the Minister must give regard to knowledge of and experience in children and young people's rights and issues, and knowledge and understanding

of te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori knowledge and experience in and knowledge of tikanga Māori.

We are committed to ensuring that our mahi is evidence-informed and grounded in the lived experiences and voices of mokopuna. Taking a children's rights approach enables us to recognise and respond to the diversity of mokopuna experiences, cultures, perspectives, and outcomes.

Our Legislated Responsibilities

As an Independent Crown Entity, we are uniquely positioned to foster collaboration, and bridge the gap between Government decision-making and what is happening at a flaxroots level for mokopuna.

We work to ensure the Government delivers sustainable progress for and with mokopuna, and to provide effective, specialist advisory on kaupapa relating to mokopuna and their lives.

We advocate for improving mokopuna lives through Government investment and policy that is informed by data and insights - including those directly from mokopuna, their families and whānau, and people that mokopuna have significant relationships with - and measurement of outcomes for children and young people.

Our role is to independently promote and advance the rights, interests, and participation of mokopuna, and to improve their well-being within the context of their families, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities.

As outlined in our Act, this role includes¹:

- advocating for the well-being and interests of tamariki and rangatahi collectively, including through reports and submissions (section 20(a); (b); (i))
- supporting tamariki and rangatahi to engage with agencies to facilitate the resolution of issues (section 20(c))

¹ A full list of the Children's Commissioner's functions, duties and powers is set out in sections 20-25 of the Children's Commissioner Act 2022.

- providing information to members of the public who have questions about matters relating to the rights, interests, or well-being of tamariki and rangatahi (section 20(d))
- receiving and inviting representations from members of the public on any matter that relates to the rights, interests, or well-being of tamariki and rangatahi (section 20(e))
- raising public awareness of, undertaking and promoting research into, and reporting on matters that relate to the rights, interests, or well-being of tamariki and rangatahi (section 20(a); (e); (h); (l); and section 21(a))
- inquiring generally into systemic matters that relate to, or affect the rights, interests, or well-being of, tamariki and rangatahi (section 20(i))
- reporting, with or without request, to the Prime Minister on matters affecting the rights of children and young people (section 20(h))
- monitoring the application of, and advocating for, the advancement of the Children's Convention (section 21)
- encouraging and promoting the voices and participation of tamariki and rangatahi (section 22)
- working as one of the three organisations making up the Oversight of the Oranga Tamariki System, as the independent advocate for mokopuna, working to ensure their rights are upheld, and that their interests and well-being are prioritised (section 7)
- independent monitoring of places where mokopuna are held in detention and deprived of their liberty, as a National Preventative Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) (section 23 – other duties and functions).

Our role in monitoring how well the Government is implementing and upholding the rights of children includes leading the Children's Convention Monitoring Group, convened by the Children's Commissioner.

Mokopuna who have had, or are vulnerable to having, their rights, interests, participation, and well-being compromised are often living in situations of disadvantage, in the care of Oranga Tamariki, or in contact with the broader Oranga Tamariki System. We have specific responsibilities relating to these mokopuna. These responsibilities flow from our legislation and via our responsibilities in relation to the Children's Convention. Both require a focus on the rights of mokopuna who are disadvantaged or vulnerable to breaches of their rights, such as mokopuna with disabilities (mokopuna whaikaha).

We provide independent and expert advice on the interests, rights, participation, and well-being of mokopuna to select committees, ministers, government agencies, courts, and others, influencing policy, legislation, practice, and systems. This includes our statutory membership on the Advisory Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology Committee. We also advise, encourage and support agencies to embed best-practice child and youth participation processes into their work, to hear the voices of mokopuna and meaningfully act on their ideas and views, and to keep them informed about how their participation informs decision-making.

Our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Our Act makes clear that honouring and embedding te Tiriti o Waitangi is one of our core responsibilities. All our strategic work incorporates a te ao Māori lens.

Te Tiriti provides a unique context in which to apply the Children's Convention. Te Tiriti provisions in our Act aim to advance the well-being of all mokopuna, within the context of their families, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities.

Our legislation requires the Children's Commissioner to have a strong focus on the rights, interests, and wellbeing of mokopuna Māori by;

- building and maintaining relationships with hapū, iwi, and Māori organisations.

- always seeing mokopuna Māori within the context of their whānau, hapū, and iwi.
- setting strategic priorities and work programmes that support improved outcomes for mokopuna Māori promoting Māori participation and leadership and te ao Māori approaches in the performance of the Children's Commissioner's functions, as appropriate.

The Children's Convention and other international human rights treaties and obligations

The Children's Commissioner has a legislative mandate to work alongside civil society and with the Government to enable the progressive realisation of all children's rights for all mokopuna in all circumstances, including during times of emergency or crisis.

This involves raising awareness and understanding of the rights mokopuna have, including amongst mokopuna themselves.

We also monitor how well the Government is upholding and progressing the rights of mokopuna under the Children's Convention.

The aim of the Children's Convention is to make real children's rights in practice, meaning all children should experience all of their rights every day, in all circumstances. The Children's Convention and the United Nations' children's rights reporting processes provide opportunities for Mana Mokopuna to work alongside mokopuna, civil society, and with the Government of the day, to identify positive progress on children's rights, and remaining children's rights challenges to be addressed. We work with organisations in the Children's Convention Monitoring Group, and report regularly to the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of the Child on how well Aotearoa New Zealand is doing when it comes to children's rights.

In February 2023, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child made a comprehensive set of recommendations to the Government of Aotearoa New Zealand about its implementation of the Children's Convention.

These recommendations build on previous United Nations' recommendations and guidance, providing clear areas where improving children's rights is required.

Along with its wider set of recommendations, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that urgent action be taken to address:

- racism and discrimination
- violence against mokopuna
- the placement of mokopuna in out-of-home care, and the conditions of care
- the rights of mokopuna whaikaha
- the right of every mokopuna to an adequate standard of living, noting the impact of housing deprivation on mokopuna health and well-being
- the inequities experienced by mokopuna Māori
- youth justice issues.

Using the Children's Convention as a basis to prioritise our advocacy, together with Te Tiriti and what mokopuna and wider evidence tells us, enables us to bring focus onto addressing internationally recognised needs for mokopuna in Aotearoa New Zealand. Part of this advocacy role is that we independently hold the government to account for progress in these areas. Within this advocacy, we provide independent, mokopuna-focused advice to support government to address the recommendations. In doing so, we can collectively support children's rights outcomes for and with mokopuna.

In carrying out our work, we seek to progress Aotearoa New Zealand's wider international human rights treaties and obligations that contribute to the children's rights framework in our country. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes that mokopuna whaikaha should experience their full range of rights equally with other children. They should have a world which does not make life harder for them based on how they experience or interact with the world.

Pacific Peoples

Pacific mokopuna are whanaunga of tangata whenua, all being peoples of Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. Mokopuna in Aotearoa New Zealand are enriched through understanding of the worldviews, understandings and histories of Pacific families in our country. The Children's Commissioner and the Mana Mokopuna team carries out our independent role recognising Pacific ways of knowing, being and doing from across the distinct nations of the Pacific, including pūrākau and the interconnectedness of mokopuna Pacific in New Zealand across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

As such, we recognise the place Aotearoa New Zealand holds as a nation of the Pacific; the special relationships between the New Zealand Crown and Niue, Cook Islands and Tokelau, and under the Treaty of Friendship with Samoa; and the importance of mokopuna learning about Aotearoa New Zealand history as a Pacific nation. Through independent advocacy, the Children's Commissioner is committed to amplifying the voices of Pacific mokopuna in Aotearoa New Zealand, recognising their communities and the importance of by Pacific for Pacific approaches.

SECTION 2:

Our Strategic Intentions & Framework

"What matters most to me is making people around me proud of me & happy."

I think seeing the people I love most and am closest with happy is very important to me."

AFGHAN FEMALE, 12-17 YRS

Our Unique Role

As New Zealand's Independent Children's Rights Institution, the Children's Commissioner occupies a unique position among agencies, communities and people working to support mokopuna in Aotearoa New Zealand, as per our legislation.

At the core of our unique role is our connection to mokopuna - their lived experiences, voices, and perspectives. The Children's Commissioner and the Mana Mokopuna team regularly engage with children and young people and is committed to amplifying their voices and views to decision-makers, so that these can be considered in decisions that affect mokopuna. Other key features of our unique role include:

- Sole-corporation Independent Crown Entity – arms-length from Government, led by a clearly recognised Children's Commissioner who is the full-time active, visible and independent advocate for all children in New Zealand.
- Legislative mandate that prioritises a rights-based approach.
- Legislative mandate to recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to Te Tiriti, and undertake work and build relationships that support improved outcomes for mokopuna Māori in the context of their whānau, hāpū, and iwi.
- One of three independent organisations in the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System.
- Ability to bridge the gap between government decision-making and what's happening on the ground for mokopuna, their whānau, and those that mokopuna have built strong connections with.
- Ability to foster collaboration across the sector.

- Key role convening the Children's Convention Monitoring Group, including holding government agencies accountable for upholding mokopuna rights.
- Recognised and respected as experts in mokopuna engagement, children's rights, and advocacy for and with children.
- National Preventive Mechanism designation under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.
- Built on the foundations and previous 30+ years of work of previous Children's Commissioners, OCC and the Children and Young People's Commission.

We ultimately aim to ensure that the Government delivers meaningful progress for and with mokopuna; to provide effective, specialist advisory on kaupapa relating to mokopuna and their lives; and to contribute to growing a culture of children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Because of our focus on advocacy for and with all mokopuna in our country, we are committed to strongly grounding our organisation and work in an awareness and care for Te Taiao, our natural world, to play our role as kaitiaki of the sustainability of our planet for future generations. We exercise strong commitment to recognising the connections of children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand to Te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa and the wider world, and we are committed to continuing to deepen our connections with Pacific communities and communities with links to diverse regions of the world.

Our Strategic Intentions

At the heart of everything the Children's Commissioner does is listening to, championing, and amplifying the experiences and voices of our country's mokopuna. This is foundational to the Children's Commissioner's advocacy for and with them. What mokopuna have told us through our "What matters most to children and young people?" survey, together with the voices of mokopuna that we have heard over recent years, have helped to shape our strategic intentions set out in this Statement of Intent.

To achieve our strategic intentions and deliver on our legislative functions, we must establish ourselves as a healthy, effective organisation that will make an enduring impact for and with mokopuna. Our three strategic intentions for 2026-29 are to Step Up, Team Up, and Speak Up, outlined in brief in Figure 1.

These strategic intentions sit at the core of our broader strategic framework (see page 26, Figure 2) which outlines how they contribute to the system and societal level changes that we aim to contribute to.

Figure 1: Strategic Intentions, 2026-29



Step up our ability to support children and young people through a strong, evidence-based understanding of what is important to them

We intend to grow our ability to have a lasting impact for mokopuna over the broader 2026-29 period. The Step-Up strategic intention describes what we will need to strengthen, in order to amplify the voices of mokopuna, deliver on our legislated responsibilities, and deliver for mokopuna.

Key among these is our commitment to developing evidence-led approaches to advocating for children and young people. To achieve this, we will ensure that over the period covered by this Statement of Intent, we focus on improving the knowledge base of research, data, and insights about mokopuna that is available to the sector.

This will include:

- collating and amplifying the work of researchers, experts and practitioners working on kaupapa relating to mokopuna and whānau experiences, and children's rights.
- developing the ways that we share this knowledge base through our communications.
- identifying gaps in knowledge, and commissioning our own work - in particular, work that directly engages with mokopuna themselves and inquiries into systemic issues affecting children and young people - to ensure that people and communities working to support mokopuna are doing so in an informed, data-driven way.
- exploring creative, innovative, and mokopuna-led ways to enable child and youth participation to help shape our agency's work and enable children and young people to learn about their rights under the Children's Convention. For example, one initiative will be developing a safe, open, and regular mechanism to hear from mokopuna in real-time about the issues and things that matter to them.

Team up with mokopuna, whānau, hapū, iwi and organisations working with and for children and young people

To be a credible independent advocate that has impact, the Children's Commissioner must have strong relationships with mokopuna themselves, and the villages around them.

Strong relationships are critical for our ability to deliver our responsibilities and support improved outcomes for mokopuna throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. Our ability to advocate for and with mokopuna is central to our work.

We must ensure that we maintain our direct connections with mokopuna and those that are within their ecosystems.

It is also essential that we build strong links with key sector stakeholders to enable our advocacy to have impact, and to amplify the impact of our advocacy.

Under our Team Up intention, we will focus on building relationships over the next four years with:

- mokopuna across diverse communities, including mokopuna whaikaha
- whānau, hapū, iwi
- kaupapa Māori and youth-led and child-focused community organisations
- public sector organisations serving mokopuna and their whānau and communities
- international children's rights networks.

As the key advocate and contact point for mokopuna and their communities, we have the unique ability to listen, champion and amplify the voices of mokopuna. We know from experience, for example, that mokopuna are disheartened by consultation and engagement

that does not take account of their views in a meaningful way.

Over the next four years and beyond we will focus on helping other agencies across the public sector to hear and listen to the voices of mokopuna. In practice, this means:

- sharing evidence, research, and insights about mokopuna and the aspirations of mokopuna, their whānau, hapū and iwi on a regular basis
- applying an ecosystem framework that will help agencies to view mokopuna within the context of their whānau, hapū, iwi, communities, schools, social services, and other organisations mokopuna and their whānau may be connected with
- working with public sector agencies to help them improve and deepen their capability to engage meaningfully with children and young people, to shape their work that serves mokopuna.

We also intend to focus on connecting and convening agencies and stakeholders with a strong interest in supporting mokopuna over the period of the Statement of Intent. This will help to foster collaboration and bridge the gap between mokopuna and their communities and decision-makers, and contribute to creating focus and commitment to progressing children's rights in practice.

Speak up for the rights, voices, and interests of mokopuna across government and throughout Aotearoa New Zealand

A core component of the Children's Commissioner's legislated role is to promote and advance the rights, interests, and participation of mokopuna.

Advocacy for and with mokopuna will continue to be at the heart of our strategic intentions over the next four years and beyond.

Over the next four years, to fulfil our Speak Up intention, we will:

- advocate proactively on strategic areas of children's rights focus, grounded in evidence including what mokopuna tell us
- advocate reactively on matters that are relevant to mokopuna as they arise, bringing forward a specialist perspective, grounded in children's rights and their lived experience
- prioritise our advocacy in the areas that our legislation gives us responsibility for
- work directly with mokopuna to develop their own understanding of their rights
- monitor the implementation of the Children's Convention by the Government and report to the United Nations on children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand
- build understanding of children's rights under the Children's Convention throughout the public sector, to deepen a children's rights approach in policy, legislation and practice
- advocate for cross-party consensus on children's issues
- contribute to raising public awareness and understanding of matters relating to mokopuna rights and interests, growing a culture of children's rights.

We hold a designation as a National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) under the Optional Protocol on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). This means we access and monitor places where mokopuna are held in detention across Aotearoa New Zealand to prevent breaches of their rights. In this role, our focus is on preventing torture and ill-treatment through examining the conditions and treatment of mokopuna, identifying improvements to address problems, and making recommendations to strengthen protections and improve treatment and conditions.

We are well-placed to highlight things that are going well for children and young people too, and where there are positive changes and initiatives to build on. We will shine a light on the many incredible contributions mokopuna are making every day to our country, and advocate for systemic and societal change on some of the most pressing challenges affecting children's lives based on what works, so they experience real, tangible progress.

Over the next four years, we intend to prioritise four proactive strategic advocacy areas for and with mokopuna:

- **Strong Start in Life** – Close to 60,000 babies are born in Aotearoa New Zealand each year, and they should all have the strongest start. Evidence shows that investing in whānau, both before a child is born and in their early years – with a particular focus on their first 2000 days – makes the biggest difference to lifelong and intergenerational well-being.
- **Thriving Families and Whānau** – Mokopuna have told us that the most important thing to them is their families, whānau, and the people that they have significant relationships with. When these are thriving, mokopuna can thrive too. The social, economic, and environmental impacts on mokopuna are not felt in isolation – we see and hear mokopuna in the context of whānau, hapū, iwi and the communities and groups wrapped around them, and all mokopuna should grow up experiencing an adequate standard of living.
- **Growing up Safe and Well** – We know there are areas that impact heavily on ensuring children grow up experiencing their full and flourishing potential, are loved, safe and well, with hope for the future. Our focus will shine a light on these issues including preventing child maltreatment, eliminating family violence, child and youth mental health and inclusion, and care and protection and youth justice.
- **Participating in What Matters to Me** – Mokopuna have a right to be heard and participate fully in society. We have heard from mokopuna themselves that education, our environment, and culture and recreation are some key areas they want to see us support them in.

We will continue to listen deeply to tamariki and rangatahi about the issues that matter to them to ensure their experiences, ideas and aspirations continuously inform our advocacy. Our proactive, strategic advocacy will be complemented by our reactive advocacy on key issues affecting mokopuna.

Figure 2: Mana Mokopuna Strategic Framework 2024-27

Our Strategic Framework



The Children's Commissioner leads our Independent Crown Entity set up under law to promote and advance the rights, interests, and participation of children and young people and to improve the well-being within the context of their families, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities.



WHAT THIS WILL MEAN

SUCCESS

Children and young people experience improved well-being within the context of their families, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities

Children and young people are encouraged to participate in matters affecting them, and in turn ensure our work, and the work of others, is shaped by mokopuna themselves

Long-term systemic and behavioural shifts that are consistent with children's rights and benefit children and young people's interests

Our communities and society-at-large are supported to commit to the flourishing of all children and young people

is our contribution to all children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand growing up **loved, safe, well and flourishing, and knowing their rights**. This is the essence of our moemoeā, vision: Kia kuru pounamu te rongo – all children live their best lives.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Strong start in life | Thriving families and whānau
Growing up safe and well | Participating in what matters to me

SECTION 3:

Our Performance & Management

"I believe that
equality matters most
in the world."

MĀORI FEMALE, 12-17 YRS

Our Performance and Management

Our contribution to change

We aim to deliver on our responsibilities to mokopuna and aspire to develop our people, processes, and systems to support deliver on our core functions. Investing in our organisational health and capability will be critical to delivering on our strategic intentions.

We will be successful if we are able to bring the voices and rights of mokopuna to the fore of any decision that impacts them

Measuring this success can be challenging as the outcomes of those decisions may not be directly, or solely, attributable to our actions and influence. As a result, we intend to measure our performance, not just on what we do – but particularly how we do it. This means that we will measure our strategic performance through two levels:

- Our interventions
- Our processes

When taken together, this will provide a more complete picture of our performance highlighting our work for and with mokopuna.

Our interventions

To ensure that we are making the most of the resources that we have available to us, we will measure the interventions that we undertake. These interventions will be at an output level that has been measured previously – for example, the number of submissions on bills before Parliament that we prepare, or the number of reports that we produce.

These measures will provide a benchmark of success as an organisation that will demonstrate that we are active in our representation of, and work with and for, mokopuna.

Our process

To be effective in our role, how we undertake our work will determine how successful we are for mokopuna. This is where we will measure our strategic intentions of 'Step Up', 'Team up', and 'Speak Up'. At the heart of this measurement will be whether mokopuna are involved, or their voices are heard at each part of the process.

In our work we will be able to measure our performance against these strategic intentions with both quantifiable and qualitative measurements. We expect these to change over time as we embed our organisational approach – this will include for example the number of resources canvassed for our evidence base, the number of hui with other agencies or stakeholders, and the number of avenues through which we published a report or position statement. Alongside this, we will gather qualitative measurements of our process through our engagements with mokopuna and our stakeholders.

The detail of what we will measure and how will be set out in our Annual Statement of Performance Expectations and reported through our Annual Report.

We will continue to monitor our financial outlook and measure our performance against standards that are agreed and set in consultation with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and our Minister.

Our organisational health and capability will help us succeed

Our initial focus for the four-year period is to focus on ensuring we have the capability and capacity to have the biggest impact for mokopuna.

Our focus will be on ensuring that our kaimahi have the capability and capacity to perform effectively in their roles. Alongside this we are continuing to evolve our suite of tools, systems and processes that will increase our reach and impact. We are intentionally adopting an innovative mindset in our approach to capability as we further strengthen the ways that we engage with mokopuna.

As an Independent Crown Entity, building on the 30+ years' work of previous Children's Commissioners, over the next four years we will focus on a progressive journey to full flourishing as New Zealand's enduring Independent Children's Rights Institution, much like a child themselves does over the course of their childhood.

This will see our strategic intentions span across four areas:

Our independence is critical:

We understand that protecting our independence, real and perceived, is vital to our work. We watch for potential conflicts of interest and manage them transparently. We carry out our work in a way that earns the trust of both partners to Te Tiriti. We work in a way that upholds our credibility and reputation.

We act with integrity and courage:

We are open, honest, and fair in everything we do. We role-model the standards and behaviours we expect of others. We speak up and do the right thing, even when it is hard. We take responsibility for delivering high-quality work. We listen, speak, and act in a way that preserves mana.

We're here to make a difference:

We are clear on what we are trying to achieve and purposeful in how we go about it. We bring our best to the table to achieve exceptional outcomes together. We aim for our work to be relevant to iwi, hapū, and whānau Māori. We aspire to continually improve and adapt to the changing needs and expectations of mokopuna, serving them effectively.

People matter:

We care for our own and each other's well-being. We are committed to empowering and developing our people. We show respect, foster a culture of belonging, and value diversity. We support one another to respect tikanga Māori.

The Children's Commissioner leads our organisation

As a corporation sole Independent Crown Entity, the Children's Commissioner holds the responsibilities of the Board and Chief Executive under the Crown Entities Act 2004, providing overall leadership to Mana Mokopuna, while being the full-time visible advocate for all mokopuna. The Children's Commissioner delegates day-to-day operational leadership of the organisation to the Executive Director.

Our kaimahi are from diverse backgrounds

We have a total of 40 kaimahi with expertise in mātauranga Māori, policy, law, child and human rights, human rights, social work,

youth development, youth and community engagement, advocacy, specific focus areas (e.g., youth justice, care and protection, mental health, family violence, youth participation, youth engagement, community engagement, health, and education), teaching, research, communications, finance, and human resources.

Over the coming four-year period, we intend to continue to invest in our kaimahi and leadership team to ensure that we are best positioned to deliver our strategic intentions. In addition to focusing on our people, we will work to establish and improve our organisational systems, policies, and processes to support ensure that we can have the biggest impact with and for mokopuna.

Our operating environment has changed, and we will adapt to updated roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for monitoring Oranga Tamariki are distributed across a set of agencies making up the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System. As this oversight system further matures, we will work closely with the two other Oversight organisations (Aroturuki Tamariki | the Independent Children's Monitor and the Office of the Ombudsman | Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata) and wider stakeholders to ensure that it is protecting and supporting mokopuna.

We will continue to manage our financial outlook to ensure that we are delivering for mokopuna

We are predominantly funded from revenue received from the Crown, (see the Vote Social Development Estimates 2025-26), Children and Young People's Commission (M63) (A25), which sets out our funding to support us over the coming years.

For further information about our financial outlook and how we will measure our performance, please refer to our annual Statement of Performance Expectations.

We will consult with and report to our responsible Minister

To ensure that the Government is well informed of our positions and statements, we will always inform our responsible Minister's office of upcoming publications, speaking events, and times when we have given media comment that may significantly impact the Minister and/or the Government of the day.

We will work with MSD as our monitoring agency and the Minister's office to ensure that we have an agreed way of operating our no-surprises approach.

Glossary

The explanations below are provided to support readers of this report, they are not intended to be interpreted as definitions.

Aotearoa	Term in Māori often adopted as a name for New Zealand
Hapū	The kinship clan, clan, sub-tribe. To be pregnant, conceived in the womb
Hui	A gathering or meeting
Iwi	Strength, bone and the extended kinship group, the tribe
Kaitiaki	Guardian, also references the guardianship role of iwi Māori and cultural guardians
Kaimahi	Staff/employees
Kaiwhakahaere Matua	Chief Executive Officer
Kaupapa	Matter or issue for discussion
Kōrero	Discussion, conversation, or statement
Kupu	To talk, to speak, word
Mahi	To work, to practice, to act
Manaakitanga	Kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others
Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa	The Pacific Ocean, literally the great ocean of Kiwa. “The Great Connector” of all Polynesia, linking the Pacific to Aotearoa
Moemoeā	Dream, vision
Mokopuna	When we use the kupu ‘mokopuna’ in our work, we are referring to all children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand
Mokopuna whaikaha	Disabled children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand
Nau mai, haere mai	Welcome!
Oranga Tamariki System	Wider than simply Oranga Tamariki, the Oranga Tamariki System is responsible for providing services and support to tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau under, or in connection with, the Oranga Tamariki Act. Many organisations are involved in the Oranga Tamariki System. There are government organisations such as Oranga Tamariki, Police, Health and Education organisations, iwi, hapū, and Māori social services as well as community non-government organisations

Pākehā	Non-Māori New Zealander
Papatūānuku	In the Māori world view, land gives birth to all things, including humankind, and provides the physical and spiritual basis for life. Papatūānuku, the land, is a powerful mother earth figure who gives many blessings to her children
Rangatahi	Youth, young adult
Tamariki	Children
Tāngata	People
Tāngata whenua	Indigenous people of this land
Taonga	Treasured things
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The founding legal document of Aotearoa New Zealand, signed in 1840
Te Taiao	The natural world that contains and surrounds us — the land, water, climate and living beings. It refers to the interconnection of people and nature
Tikanga (or tikanga Māori)	Māori methodology or rules, the first law of Aotearoa
Tipuna	Ancestors
Whānau	<p>Whānau is often translated as ‘family’, but its meaning is more complex.</p> <p>It includes physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions and is based on whakapapa. Whānau can be multi-layered, flexible, and dynamic. Whānau relationships include those with whāngai (foster children) and those who have passed on. There are roles and responsibilities for individuals and for the collective. The structure of whānau can vary from immediate family to much broader collectives. The most important features of whānau that distinguish it from family and other social groupings are whakapapa, spirituality, and the responsibility to marae and hapū.</p> <p>Whānau is also used as a metaphor for close friends or associates, intended to be inclusive and build a sense of group unity. Whānau begins with the individual. The relationship between the individual and the whānau is subtle and complex. Individuals have rights of their own, but they exist because of the whānau and have responsibilities to the whānau.</p>
Whakapapa	The family lines of whānau that connect to ancestors and the natural world
Whaikaha	To have strength, to have ability, otherly abled, enabled



64 4 471 1410

children@manamokopuna.org.nz

www.manamokopuna.org.nz

PO Box 5610

Wellington 6145

Find us online:

Facebook: Mana Mokopuna – Children's Commissioner

Instagram: @childrenscommnz

LinkedIn: Mana Mokopuna | Children's Commissioner

Vimeo: Mana Mokopuna

Linktree: @manamokopuna



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