



# MANA MOKOPUNA Children's Commissioner

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

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<b>Position:</b>	Engagement Team Lead
<b>Location:</b>	Te Whanganui-a-Tara
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement
<b>Issue Date:</b>	November 2025
<b>Delegated Authority:</b>	Financial and Human Resources delegations as authorised
<b>Staff Responsibility:</b>	Yes

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## 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 Engagement Team Lead provides management and support to a team of Engagement Specialists, while also working alongside them to design and deliver a programme of safe, ethical, and impactful engagements with mokopuna and their whānau.

The role is responsible for quality assurance - ensuring that the engagement activities are well planned and managed to maximise mokopuna participation. Working with the Engagement Specialists, the Engagement Team Lead will ensure that all engagements undertaken by Mana Mokopuna are grounded in the rights, voices, and lived experiences of mokopuna, and reflects best practice in participation, cultural safety, and mokopuna-centred approaches. Through this work the Engagement Team Lead plays a crucial role in ensuring that mokopuna voices are heard and amplified in decisions that impact them.

With the support of the Engagement team, the Engagement Team Lead plays a key role in fostering strong, values-aligned relationships with community to ensure engagement approaches are locally grounded, culturally responsive, and informed by trusted relationships. This includes building strong relationships and working in partnership with iwi, hapū, Māori service providers, and community networks to create safe and meaningful opportunities for mokopuna and whānau to share their experiences.

In addition to supporting high-quality practice and a collaborative team culture, this role will support the Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement with advice to inform their strategic planning, ensuring that operational delivery aligns with the strategic plan for Mana Mokopuna. The role champions inclusive, trauma-informed, and mokopuna-centred approaches, ensuring that mokopuna voices are amplified to meaningfully shape decisions that affect them.

## Working Relationships

<p><b>Internal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement</li> <li>• Children’s Commissioner</li> <li>• Executive Director</li> <li>• Leadership Team</li> <li>• Direct reports</li> <li>• Kaimahi across the tari</li> </ul>	<p><b>External:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Māori communities, including Iwi, hapū, whānau and Māori organisations.</li> <li>• NGO and community sector, including organisations that represent Pacific communities, ethnic communities, disabled, rainbow, care-experienced, excluded, or marginalised mokopuna.</li> <li>• Government agencies, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Social Development</li> <li>• Ministry of Youth Development</li> <li>• Te Puni Kōkiri</li> <li>• Ministry of Pacific Peoples</li> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> <li>• Ministry of Justice</li> <li>• NZ Police</li> <li>• Human Rights Commission</li> <li>• Privacy Commissioner</li> <li>• Housing New Zealand</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Child rights advocates and sector</li> <li>• Mokopuna directly and/or agencies representing them</li> </ul>
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## Key Accountabilities

Key Result Areas	Accountabilities
Team Management & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide management, coaching and support to the Engagement Specialists to design and deliver a work programme that includes ethical engagements which maximise connection with mokopuna and their whānau.</li> <li>• Build, manage, and develop a high-performing team by setting clear objectives and providing ongoing guidance and feedback to support individual and team growth.</li> <li>• Identify professional development opportunities with kaimahi, ensuring they have the skills, knowledge and support to effectively design and deliver engagements for mokopuna and their whānau.</li> <li>• Manage team workloads and resources effectively, ensuring a balance between operational demands and strategic initiatives while maintaining kaimahi wellbeing.</li> <li>• Address team challenges proactively and constructively, offering support and solutions to maintain team cohesion and alignment with moemoeā.</li> <li>• Manage all HR related processes for the Engagement Specialists, with support from the Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement where appropriate.</li> <li>• Manage financial resources within budget to deliver the engagement programme, as directed by the Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement and in accordance with the policies of the tari and the public sector.</li> <li>• Foster a culture of Manaaki, support and performance are fostered, where all kaimahi feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to the moemoeā of Mana Mokopuna.</li> <li>• Continuously model the values of Mana Mokopuna in your role.</li> </ul>

Engagement Design & Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide strong leadership to 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.</li> <li>• Work alongside the Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement to build a work programme that maximises opportunities to engage mokopuna and their whanau, supporting their participation in decisions that matter most to them.</li> <li>• Design and lead engagement activities alongside the team, ensuring that these are well planned, mokopuna-centred - upholding their rights and prioritising their safety.</li> <li>• Maintain oversight of health and safety of team across their work and particularly within engagement activities – recognising and responding to changing conditions or potential hazards in line with organisational policy and practice</li> <li>• Establish clear objectives, timelines, and deliverables for the team, ensuring proactive planning and resource availability.</li> <li>• Contribute to the development and implementation of systems to capture, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of engagement activities.</li> <li>• Oversee the collection and analysis of data and insights found through engagements, ensuring these are shared effectively to inform organisational decision making and advocacy.</li> <li>• Provide clear and timely updates on work programme progress, challenges, and successes to the Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement fostering transparency and collaboration.</li> <li>• Ensure the team are working in line with best practice and have an eye across quality assurance, ensuring the necessary capability and resources to deliver on their work programme, addressing problems as they arise and seeking support from the Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement where needed to remove any roadblocks to delivery.</li> <li>• Support consistency, reflection and continual improvement in engagement delivery across the team.</li> </ul>
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Promote Mokopuna Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide advice and support to the Manager Strategic Communications and Engagement and other leadership roles to ensure they are well equipped to engage strategically and at a systemic level to promote mokopuna participation.</li><li>• Work alongside organisations and communities to promote and advance the rights of mokopuna by providing advice or building tools to support the safe and ethical engagement and participation of mokopuna.</li><li>• Provide robust, evidence-based advice and expertise within the machinery of government to support the design and delivery of mokopuna friendly services and initiatives.</li><li>• Support mokopuna voices to be regularly and widely shared across the tari, enabling Mana Mokopuna as an organisation to remain up to date with what mokopuna are sharing with us, supporting our advocacy to be grounded in their voices.</li><li>• Generously share knowledge and expertise in children's engagement and participation both internally and externally through coaching, delivery of presentations and participation in wānanga, Talanoa, and advocacy within community.</li><li>• Support the development of tools and resources that support Mana Mokopuna to ensure that mokopuna are participating in the delivery of our own organisational functions.</li><li>• Represent Mana Mokopuna on inter-departmental groups, advocating for and amplifying the voices of mokopuna, showing a high level of competence and professionalism.</li></ul>
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Issues & Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively identify, address and/or escalate emerging issues and risks within the team's operating environment that could impact on that could impact the realisation of mokopuna rights or the organisation's ability to meaningfully engage with mokopuna and their whānau.</li> <li>• Lead the development and implementation of strategies to manage high-risk or complex issues, ensuring timely and effective responses to upholding mokopuna rights and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to address risks and resolve issues, leveraging partnerships to achieve sustainable, mokopuna-centred outcomes.</li> <li>• Support the team to identify and raise risks, integrating lessons learned from past issues to strengthen team resilience and responsiveness in safeguarding mokopuna.</li> </ul>
Te Tiriti Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that plans, practices, processes, activities and initiatives of the engagement team are reflective of our commitment and obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.</li> <li>• Champion the rights of Māori as Tangata Whenua.</li> <li>• Actively work to improve skills and knowledge of Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori.</li> </ul>
Other Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate, participate in and lead as appropriate, projects and areas of work directed.</li> <li>• Perform other duties to support the team or the wider tari, as delegated.</li> </ul>

## Technical/Professional knowledge and skills

- Proven successful people leadership and management experience, with the ability to guide, develop and support a team to deliver high quality work.
- Demonstrated excellence in operational planning and delivery with the capability to prioritise, manage teamwork flows, problem solve and contribute to wider team direction.
- Proficiency in Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori, with the ability and confidence to engage within Te Ao Māori and matatau settings.
- Experienced in dynamic risk assessment, recognising and responding to changing conditions when working outside of the office.
- Strong understanding of organisational health and safety obligations and able to identify, assess and manage risks while modelling safe behaviour.
- Proven ability to oversee budgets and expenses to ensure these are being managed prudently.
- Excellent relationship building and communications skills, with the ability to work collaboratively with and foster partnerships with community and sector stakeholders.
- Proven expertise in leading child-centred and rights-based engagement approaches with a strong, evidence informed understanding of how to create safe, ethical and inclusive spaces for mokopuna and their whanau to share experiences.
- Strong understanding of high quality, evidence-based engagement practices ability to design and deliver engagements, informed by relevant frameworks including te Tiriti o Waitangi, tikanga Māori, and the UNCRC.
- Proven excellence in engagement and inquiry skills to elicit meaningful, rights-based insights from mokopuna and whanau ensuring their voices are heard in ways that uphold their mana.
- Excellent relationship building and interpersonal skills with the ability to quickly build trust, listen actively and adapt style to engage with mokopuna, whanau and communities.
- A confident and skilled communicator, presenter, and facilitator, with strong written and verbal communication skills and the ability to tailor skills to a broad range of audiences.
- Culturally competent with demonstrated experience of working effectively to engage with mokopuna across all cultures, with particular focus on mokopuna Māori, mokopuna Pacific and their whānau and aiga.
- Analytical skills and a proven ability to synthesise information, draw conclusions and make clear recommendations to inform advocacy and system change.
- Proven understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and ability to implement obligations within participation, engagements and in the amplification of mokopuna voices
- A sound understanding and knowledge of statutory, legislative, and best practice in children's participation (including the Children's Convention, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).
- Experience in intersectional advocacy, including advocating with, and for, groups who

face discrimination in Aotearoa, including lived experience.

- Well established networks across government, community, the NGO sectors and child and youth focused advocacy groups.
- Tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline with a professional practice background and substantial equivalent experience relating to children's participation, development, rights, interests and wellbeing.

### **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 working environment.
- Willing to travel regularly (sometimes once a month or more) to fulfil job requirements.