



MANA MOKOPUNA Children's Commissioner

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position:	Kaiarahi
Location:	Te Whanganui-a-Tara
Reporting to:	Engagement Team Lead
Issue Date:	November 2025
Delegated Authority:	Nil
Staff Responsibility:	Nil

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 Kaiarahi provides practice expertise and guidance to support Mana Mokopuna to engage and communicate in ethical and culturally appropriate ways across all channels, promoting best practice in mokopuna participation – upholding mokopuna rights, interests and wellbeing.

This role acts as a kaitiaki across all engagement and communications activities – providing support and quality assurance to ensure that every story told and every opportunity for engagement and participation created for and with mokopuna upholds their rights, honours their mana and models best practice.

Central to the role is weaving te ao Māori perspectives and values throughout our engagement and communication approaches, ensuring our practices reflect manaakitanga, Kotahitanga, and the mana of all mokopuna of Aotearoa.

Together with the Engagement Team Lead and Engagement Specialists, this role will also lead and contribute to the design and delivery of safe, ethical engagements which focus on hearing from mokopuna and their communities, whānau, hapū and iwi.

Working Relationships

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

Key Accountabilities

Key Result Areas	Accountabilities
Engagement and Communications Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the planning, creation, and delivery of communications and engagement programmes ensuring that these centre mokopuna and their whanau, are built on best practice and integrate te ao Māori values and perspectives and kaupapa of Mana Mokopuna. • Contribute to the development of long-range policies and strategies for the tari, sharing expertise and knowledge freely. • Contribute expertise and advice to support Mana Mokopuna to make the biggest strategic impact for mokopuna, particularly in relation to participation and engagement. • Collaborate with communities and agencies to promote and advance the rights of mokopuna, supporting the engagement and participation of mokopuna in decisions that impact them, and services designed for them

Promoting safe and ethical practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the development, implementation and continuous improvement of Mana Mokopuna engagement practice frameworks and guidelines, drawing on best practice based on tikanga Māori, children's rights conventions and other relevant information. • Support practice standards to be upheld in the design and delivery of our engagement and communication activities through the provision of specialist advice and guidance and the development of tools and resources. • Identify areas for development and improvement in Mana Mokopuna practice and support the development and delivery of tools and resources to build these areas. • Function as an escalation point for mokopuna safety, protection and safeguarding concerns (across all channels), providing advice aligned with our practice frameworks and organisational policies, with the safeguarding of mokopuna and their whānau at the centre. • Lead the ethics processes for engagements and communications related activities along with the ongoing development and implementation of safeguarding and ethical standards across engagement and communication activities. • Facilitate a culture of consistency, reflection and continual improvement across engagement and communication practice. • Contribute to organisation-wide training and learning initiatives on safeguarding, ethics, and mokopuna participation.
Engagement and Communications Design and Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide coaching, support and guidance across the team to support the design and delivery of engagement and communications activity which maximises connection with mokopuna and their whānau, amplifies mokopuna voices and promotes their participation. • Provide advice and support in the building of a programme of engagements and communications that operationalises the organisational strategy and maximises opportunities to engage mokopuna and their whānau to understand what 's important to them. • Lead and contribute to the planning and delivery of safe, ethical, and mokopuna-centred engagement activities with mokopuna and their whānau to hear their voices, understand their experiences and gain insight and information to inform the Commissioner's

	<p>advocacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply trauma-informed, inclusive, and culturally grounded approaches that prioritise the emotional, physical, and cultural safety of participants, and support the wider team to do the same. • Support the team to tailor and adopt engagement methods sensitive to the needs, ages, identities, and contexts of mokopuna, ensuring accessibility and meaningful participation. • Create genuine opportunities for mokopuna to share their voices, experiences, and aspirations in ways that uphold their rights and honour their mana. • Support the accurate and respectful representation of engagement insights to inform organisational advocacy and decision making. • Actively identify and take opportunities to promote the role of mokopuna voice in shaping decisions that affect them. • Record, analyse, and communicate engagement outcomes in a clear, respectful, and useful way. • Ensure information is captured in line with ethical and privacy standards and contributes to broader reporting and impact monitoring.
Practice & Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain oversight of engagement practice across the wider team ensuring alignment to Mana Mokopuna engagement practice frameworks and guidelines. • Lead and participate in team reflection and continuous improvement processes, sharing insights and learnings to strengthen collective practice. • Contribute to the provision of timely and sound advice to the Commissioner and the wider tari, on issues that impact on mokopuna participation and engagement. • Generously share knowledge and expertise in mokopuna engagement and participation both internally and externally through coaching, delivery of presentations and participation in wānanga, Talanoa, and advocacy within community. • Represent the Commissioner on inter-departmental groups, advocating for and amplifying the voices of mokopuna, showing a high level of competence and professionalism. • Contribute to development and learning initiatives across Mana Mokopuna focusing on mokopuna safeguarding and ethical participation and engagement

Issues & Risk Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively identify and address or escalate emerging issues and risks that could impact the realisation of mokopuna safety, wellbeing and rights, including systemic barriers, individual cases, and organisational challenges. • Contribute to the management and mitigation of risks and issues, ensuring timely and effective responses to upholding mokopuna rights and wellbeing. • Review and refine application of risk management frameworks and practices within own and teamwork, integrating lessons learned from past issues to strengthen responsiveness in safeguarding mokopuna.
Relationship Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build genuine and enduring relationships within and outside Mana Mokopuna, leveraging those relationships for the benefit of promoting and advancing the rights, interests and wellbeing of mokopuna. • Work in partnership with communities to ensure engagement activities reflect local needs, interests and aspirations for mokopuna and whanau. • Work collaboratively across the organisation on cross function initiatives or projects and ensure that engagement insights inform the work of the organisation.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi Obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that plans, practices, processes, activities and initiatives undertaken 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate, participate in and lead as appropriate, projects and areas of work as directed. • Perform other duties to support the team or the wider tari, as delegated.

Technical/Professional knowledge and skills

- Extensive successful experience working with mokopuna in a practice focused profession (such as social work or youth work).
- Highly proficient in Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori with the ability and confidence to engage solely in Te Reo within matatau settings.
- Proven expertise in using child-centred, rights-based engagement practices grounded in Te Ao Māori, and the UN Children's Convention, with a strong, evidence informed understanding of how to design and deliver engagements that create safe, ethical and inclusive spaces for mokopuna and their whānau to share experiences.
- In-depth understanding of child rights, safeguarding, and ethical engagement principles from a Te Ao Māori perspective, with demonstrated experience applying these principles in engagement and communications contexts.
- Recognised as an ethical, credible and experienced practitioner from whom others regularly seek advice and professional support and demonstrates ethical and reflective approach to own practice.
- A confident and highly skilled communicator, presenter, and facilitator, with strong written and verbal communication skills and the ability to tailor skills to a broad range of audiences.
- Successful proven experience in using creative approaches, including use of technology, to engage and communicate with mokopuna, whanau, hapu, iwi and communities.
- 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.
- Strongly demonstrated analytical skills with the ability to synthesise information, draw conclusions and make recommendations. Some experience in the practice of a relevant professional discipline would be advantageous.
- Excellent relationship building and interpersonal skills with the ability to quickly build trust, listen actively and adapt styles to engage with mokopuna, whānau and communities.
- A strong 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.
- Proven ability to provide effective coaching, guidance and support to others with experience in delivery of professional supervision beneficial.
- Proven ability to undertake complex pieces of work autonomously, without supervision.
- Tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline with a professional practice background and extensive 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 and safe working environment.
- Willing to travel regularly (sometimes once a month or more) to fulfil job requirements.