



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position:	Engagement Specialist
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 Engagement Specialist plays a key role in creating opportunities to hear the voices, lived experiences, and aspirations of mokopuna and their whānau, ensuring that the work of Mana Mokopuna is grounded in what matters most to them.

Working across diverse contexts and communities, the Engagement Specialist leads and supports the design and delivery of engagement approaches that uphold mokopuna rights, prioritise their wellbeing, and ensure emotional, physical, and cultural safety. The role ensures that engagement processes reflect best practice in participation, are well-planned, inclusive and accessible, and are tailored to the needs of different age groups, identities, and experiences.

By embedding high standards of practice and working collaboratively - both within the organisation and alongside communities - the Engagement Specialist maximises opportunities to hear directly from mokopuna and their whānau, ensuring their voices are amplified to meaningfully shape the decisions that affect them.

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"> • 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"> • Ministry of Social Development • Ministry of Youth Development • Te Puni Kōkiri • 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 • Mokopuna directly and/or agencies representing them
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Key Accountabilities

Key Result Areas	Accountabilities
Engagement Design & Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside team, build a programme of engagements that operationalises the organisational strategy and maximises opportunities to engage mokopuna, particularly mokopuna Māori and their whānau and communities to understand what 's important to them. • Plan and deliver 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 advocacy. • Apply trauma-informed, inclusive, and culturally grounded approaches that prioritise the emotional, physical, and cultural safety of participants. • Tailor engagement methods 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, ethical, respectful, and useful way. • Ensure information is captured in line with ethical and privacy standards and contributes to broader reporting and impact monitoring.

Promote Mokopuna Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Provide robust, evidence-based advice and expertise within the machinery of government to support the design and delivery of mokopuna friendly services and initiatives. • 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. • 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. • 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. • Represent Mana Mokopuna on inter-departmental groups, advocating for and amplifying the voices of mokopuna, showing a high level of competence and professionalism.
Practice & Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold high standards of engagement practice aligned to Mana Mokopuna engagement practice frameworks and guidelines, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, tikanga Māori, and children's rights conventions. • Participate in team and individual reflection and continuous improvement processes, sharing insights and learnings to strengthen practice. • Contribute to the development of tools, resources, and approaches that support consistent, high-quality engagement across the team. • Contribute to the provision of timely and sound advice across the tari on matters relating to mokopuna engagement and participation.
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 rights, including systemic barriers, individual cases, and organisational challenges. • Contribute to the management of risks and issues,

	<p>ensuring timely and effective responses to upholding mokopuna rights and wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refine 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 directed. Perform other duties to support the team or the wider tari, as delegated.

Technical/Professional knowledge and skills

- Proven expertise in 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.
- Understanding of and experience in using high quality, evidence-based engagement practices and how to use these to design and deliver engagements, drawing on 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 whānau 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.
- Strong planning and organisational skills with the ability to concurrently manage multiple activities, ensuring attention to detail across all.
- Research (both qualitative and quantitative) and evaluation skills.
- Sound understanding of machinery of government and policy and legislative processes.
- Sound understanding and knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and how this can be implemented in within participation, engagements and in the amplification of mokopuna voices.
- A working 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).
- Basic level of proficiency in Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori and a commitment to broadening your knowledge in these areas.
- 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.
- Ability to provide effective coaching and support to other kaimahi.
- Ability to undertake complex pieces of work autonomously, without supervision.
- Tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline with a professional practice background and 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.