

Office of
the Children's
Commissioner
Strategic Action Plan 2022



Guiding principles – He Mokopuna He Taonga

The Strategic Priorities are underpinned by the following principles, which will be used to guide decision making, the strategic action plan, and related activities across the OCC. These principles were developed and refined by the OCC collectively.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi underpins our work

We honour and give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi to improve the well-being of mokopuna in the context of their whānau, hapū, and iwi.



We take a whole of system approach

We recognise that we are part of a community working within a wider system that affects the lives of mokopuna and their whānau. Our actions and decisions are informed by a holistic and whole-system view.



We focus on activity that is proactive

The core activity we undertake is proactive and forward looking with a focus on searching for opportunities to advocate for a better life for mokopuna and their whānau.



We work collaboratively

We work together with people from across the office, government, and community to grow our collective knowledge.



We demonstrate best practice in our work

We demonstrate best practice in all we do to support mokopuna and their whānau to live their best lives.



We focus on work that makes a difference

We focus our effort and resources on the activities that will make a positive difference in the lives of mokopuna and their whānau.

Our Vision and Strategic Goals

The Vision provides direction and purpose for the Strategy, while the Strategic Goals focus effort into areas which will enable the achievement of the Vision.

OUR VISION

“Kia kuru pounamu te rongu | All mokopuna live their best lives”

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Education

“We advocate for all mokopuna to have access to, and participate in, inclusive and equitable education.”



Mental Wellbeing

“We advocate for the mental Wellbeing of mokopuna to be prioritised, so that they may thrive and flourish.”



Ending Family Violence

“We advocate to end family violence and to help families heal”



Monitoring Places of Detention

“We independently and regularly monitor places where mokopuna are deprived of their liberty and advocate for system change.”

Education

Strategic Priority

"We advocate for all mokopuna to have access to, and participate in, inclusive and equitable education."

Specific Objectives

- 1.1 We participate, engage with, and listen to mokopuna, and their whānau.
- 1.2 We advocate to positively make an impact for access to and participation in education by mokopuna.
- 1.3 We support system participants to improve access to formal and informal (holistic) education and develop all mokopuna as lifelong learners.



We participate, engage with, and listen to mokopuna, and their whānau.

Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 1.1.1 As we regularly engage with mokopuna we will listen to, and understand, their perspectives on access to, and participation in, inclusive and equitable education and produce one thematic report by the end of the next 12 months on the findings.
- 1.1.2 We will ensure our OPCAT team and Mai World team meet at least once a month to discuss recent insights relating to access to, and participation in, inclusive and equitable education.
- 1.1.3 We will complete an evidence brief by 31 December 2022, in line with kaupapa Māori, mātauranga Māori, and other culturally appropriate approaches, relating to mokopuna access to, and participation in, inclusive and equitable education.
- 1.1.4 We will undertake an environmental scan to understand what programmes and initiatives are occurring and planned by system participants relating to mokopuna education and annually identify the top 5 priorities to inform our advocacy work.
- 1.1.5 Over the next 2 years we will engage mokopuna, in line with the relevant project plan, for the purpose of informing the Curriculum Refresh Project led by the Ministry of Education and receive written assurance from the Ministry that the voices of mokopuna offered during this engagement will inform the Project.



We advocate to positively make an impact for access to and participation in education by mokopuna.

Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 1.2.1 We will advocate for holistic, affordable, inclusive, and equitable access to education and resources, aligned to the diverse needs of mokopuna through presentations, stakeholder meetings, speeches, advice, and media content directed to at least 10 key influencers and decision makers.
- 1.2.2 We will engage with the Ministry of Education and NZSTA at least once a quarter, to advocate for action to identify alternative options to, and to reduce, exclusions and expulsions across all schools.
- 1.2.3 We will advocate for the Government to implement the recommendations of the UN Children's Committee (6th periodic review process / Convention Monitoring Group reporting and UN review of NZ).

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Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 1.3.1 We will collaborate with MoE and NZSTA to advocate for whānau, hapū, and iwi to participate in education decisions, including having tangata whenua representation on every School Board of Trustees in line with Te Tiriti obligations.
- 1.3.2 We will communicate the voices of mokopuna we have heard to the Ministry of Education through quarterly meetings with the Secretary of Education to support the early identification, and the resourcing, of sustainable supports and solutions for mokopuna who are frequently absent from school.
- 1.3.3 We will meet with and learn about a community initiative in each region we visit to inform our advocacy to ensure mokopuna have access to holistic education which enhances their ability to be active citizens and leaders in their schools and communities.

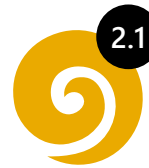
Mental wellbeing

Strategic Priority

"We advocate for the mental wellbeing of mokopuna to be prioritised, so that they may thrive and flourish."

Specific Objectives

- 2.1 We engage with mokopuna and their whānau to ensure our advocacy for improved mental wellbeing outcomes is well-informed.
- 2.2 We advocate for easy, early and equitable access to mental wellbeing support and resources in communities.
- 2.3 We collaborate with stakeholders to improve the mental wellbeing of mokopuna in context of their whānau and community.



2.1

We engage with mokopuna and their whānau to ensure our advocacy for improved mental wellbeing outcomes is well-informed.

Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 2.1.1 As we regularly engage with mokopuna we will listen to, and understand, their perspectives on mental wellbeing and produce one thematic report by the end of the next 12 months on the findings.
- 2.1.2 We will ensure our OPCAT team and Mai World team meet monthly to discuss recent insights relating mokopuna mental wellbeing.
- 2.1.3 We will commission an evidence brief by 1 October 2022 to be completed by 31 March 2023, in line with kaupapa Māori, mātauranga Māori, and other culturally appropriate approaches, relating to improving mokopuna mental wellbeing.
- 2.1.4 We will undertake an environmental scan to understand what programmes and initiatives are occurring and planned by system participants relating to mokopuna mental wellbeing and annually identify the top 5 priorities to inform our advocacy work.



2.2

We advocate for easy, early and equitable access to mental wellbeing support and resources in communities.

Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 2.2.1 We will advocate to reduce child poverty, recognising this is a contributing factor to the mental wellbeing of mokopuna, through hosting the Child Poverty Monitor and through thought leadership in presentations, stakeholder meetings, speeches, advice, and media content directed to at least 10 government agencies (including but not limited to DPMC, Statistics NZ, MBIE, Treasury, HUD, MSD, and IRD) and wider community influencers and decision makers.
- 2.2.2 In each region we visit, we will engage with whānau, hapū and iwi to learn about by-Māori, for-Māori approaches to support the mental wellbeing for mokopuna Māori and summarise the insights derived from this engagement every 6 months to inform our advocacy work.

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Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 2.3.1 We will contribute to the review of mental health legislation at an early stage through a formal submission and regular advice.
- 2.3.2 We will advocate for kaupapa Māori and other culturally appropriate approaches to improving the mental wellbeing of mokopuna through presentations, stakeholder meetings, speeches, advice, and media content directed to at least 10 key influencers and decision makers.
- 2.3.3 We will work with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission and Child and Youth Wellbeing, supported by quarterly meetings with key stakeholders, to prioritise a focus on mokopuna (particularly at adolescence) and efforts to improve maternal mental wellbeing, and improved supports for parental, family and whānau wellbeing.
- 2.3.4 We will advocate for care experienced mokopuna to have easy and early access to mental wellbeing support through quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team of Oranga Tamariki.

Ending Family Violence

Strategic Priority

"We advocate to end family violence and to help families heal."

Specific Objectives

- 3.1 We ensure mokopuna voices are heard with sensitivity and care, to understand the impacts of family violence.
- 3.2 We advocate for support services to prevent family violence and to support mokopuna, and their whānau, to heal from the impacts of family violence.
- 3.3 We engage with communities and stakeholders to end family violence.



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Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 3.1.1 We will undertake an environmental scan, in line with kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori approaches, to understand existing mokopuna voice relating to family violence and develop a summary document by 1 June 2023 to inform our future work programme.
- 3.1.2 We will engage with other agencies and groups working towards achieving the Te Aorerekura National Strategy and Action Plan to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence prior to 31 January 2023 to inform the environmental scan and our future work programme.



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Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 3.2.1 We will identify at least two community-led models of practices that are therapeutic, restorative, and trusted by communities, and develop an advocacy plan for the development and resourcing of these approaches.
- 3.2.2 We will develop a plan to advocate for the support and resource needed for whānau to be together safely following care and protection and youth justice interventions by engaging with key stakeholders such as Oranga Tamariki, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, iwi, and community organisations.
- 3.2.3 We will advocate through presentations, stakeholder meetings, speeches, advice, and media content for by-Māori for-Māori approaches by government and agencies to inform solutions aimed at ensuring the safety and wellbeing of mokopuna Māori and their whānau.

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Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 3.3.1 We will meet with and learn about all community-led initiatives and solutions through the Te Aorerekura network to inform our advocacy for education and community initiatives that support mokopuna to have healthy and positive relationships.
- 3.3.1 We will develop relationships with at least 3 other agencies and agree a memorandum of understanding with each of them for the purpose of advancing the rights of all mokopuna to be safe.

Monitoring Places of Detention

Strategic Priority

"We independently and regularly monitor places where mokopuna are deprived of their liberty and advocate for system change."

Specific Objectives

4.1 We ensure the voices of mokopuna are at the centre of our reporting on places of detention.

4.2 We hold organisations to account for the way in which mokopuna in places of detention are treated, for the conditions that they live in and the extent to which their Wellbeing is prioritised.

4.3 We work across the system to influence change to improve outcomes for mokopuna in places of detention.



We ensure the voices of mokopuna are at the centre of our reporting on places of detention.

Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 4.1.1 We visit Care and Protection residences, Youth Justice residences, Mental Health facilities, Youth Justice remand homes, and Mother and Baby Units regularly according to the applicable legislation and guidelines.
- 4.1.2 We undertake all our visits in accordance with our Mana Mokopuna framework recognising that mokopuna Māori are disproportionately represented in places of detention.
- 4.1.3 During each visit, we listen to and understand from mokopuna their experience of these facilities in order to examine the conditions and treatment of them and make recommendations to improve their wellbeing as much as possible.
- 4.1.4 During each visit, we engage mokopuna and take the time needed to ensure that they understand our work and their right to participate in ways that make sense to them.



We hold organisations to account for the way in which mokopuna in places of detention are treated, for the conditions that they live in and the extent to which their wellbeing is prioritised.

Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 4.2.1 We monitor community, iwi, non-government organisations, and responsible agencies and organisations to ensure the right of all mokopuna to be safe while in places of detention by producing and publishing a report within 90 working days of each visit.
- 4.2.2 We will engage with all key stakeholders in the care and protection, youth justice, mental health, and corrections system to inform our work and recommend systemic and specific remedial actions where needed to improve the wellbeing and safety of mokopuna in places of detention.

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Key activities over the next 12 months:

- 4.3.1 The Commissioner will advocate through presentations, stakeholder meetings, speeches, advice, and media content, for the phased closure of large care and protection and youth justice institutions and for smaller, in community models that keep mokopuna connected to their whānau, hapū, iwi and communities.
- 4.3.2 We will advocate through our regular meetings with Oranga Tamariki for care-experienced mokopuna to be involved in designing solutions for issues impacting mokopuna in care and protection residences and youth justice residences.
- 4.3.3 We will seek a written assurance from Oranga Tamariki by 31 March 2023 that a complaints and grievance system is adopted that is safe, mokopuna centred, and independent of Oranga Tamariki.



MANAAKITIA Ā TĀTOU TAMARIKI

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