

**Aroturuki
Tamariki** | Independent
Children's Monitor

2023–2027 Statement of Intent





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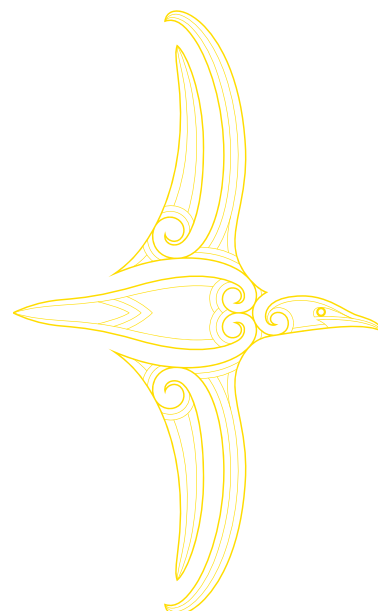
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Minister's Foreword

Children and young people in the oranga tamariki system are our most vulnerable and they deserve a system that supports them to thrive.

As a Government we are committed to delivering better results for New Zealanders, including greater scrutiny, transparency and accountability. A trusted and truly independent monitoring and oversight agency will hold Oranga Tamariki accountable to its obligations to our most vulnerable children and young people.

With its strategic direction, the Independent Children's Monitor is well positioned to help ensure our state care system is accountable.

Over the coming four years, the Monitor's work will help drive continuous improvement through their reporting across the oranga tamariki system so tamariki and rangatahi can thrive.

I believe the Monitor plays a pivotal role in providing scrutiny and holding the oranga tamariki system accountable. I look forward to seeing this strategic direction drive improvements for our most vulnerable children.

Responsible Minister Statement

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by the Independent Children's Monitor, Aroturuki Tamariki, is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.



Hon Louise Upston

Minister responsible for the Independent Children's Monitor

February 2024

Chief Executive's Introduction

The Independent Children's Monitor, Aroturuki Tamariki (the Monitor), has been established to check that agencies supporting and working with tamariki (children) and rangatahi (young people) known to Oranga Tamariki are meeting their needs, delivering services effectively, and improving outcomes.

Our vision is: *Our reporting drives continuous improvement across the oranga tamariki system so tamariki and rangatahi are supported to thrive with their whānau.*

Our role is to monitor agency compliance with the *Oranga Tamariki Act 1989* and the associated National Care Standards Regulations. We will do this by monitoring system performance and looking at outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi who engage with agencies in the system.

We are also tasked with monitoring quality of practice and identifying areas for improvement across the wider oranga tamariki system under the *Oversight of the Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022*.

Our Statement of Intent outlines the strategic objectives that the Monitor intends to achieve or contribute towards. It explains the nature and scope of our functions and operations, and how we will manage these to meet our strategic goals.

As a departmental agency, the Monitor has been provided with a mandate and funding by the New Zealand public. Our strategic intentions show how we intend to demonstrate value for New Zealanders over the medium to long term.

Chief Executive Statement of Responsibility

In signing this information, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on strategic intentions for the Independent Children's Monitor, Aroturuki Tamariki. This information has been prepared in accordance with section 38 and section 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.



Arran Jones
Chief Executive

February 2024

Our Purpose

Independent monitor of the oranga tamariki system

Our role is to carry out objective, impartial, and evidence-based monitoring of the oranga tamariki system.

We do not set the standards; our role is to monitor compliance against existing regulations and quality measures.

Our monitoring activities inform our reports which are required to:

- assess how the oranga tamariki system supports the rights, interests, and well-being of tamariki, rangatahi and whānau experiencing the system
- assess whether powers used under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 are being used appropriately and consistently
- support public trust and confidence in the oversight of the oranga tamariki system
- drive continuous improvement by identifying areas of high performance and areas for improvement in the oranga tamariki system
- inform understanding of the oranga tamariki system and its interface with other systems
- support decision making.

In monitoring the performance of the oranga tamariki system we collect data from relevant agencies and compare it with the voices of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. Our monitoring includes compliance with the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and related regulations, quality of practice and outcomes, and identifying areas for improvement.

Our insights are developed to drive continuous improvement across the system with the aim of improving outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi, particularly tamariki and rangatahi Māori and children with disabilities. Our operations and findings are independent from the government agencies we monitor. There are also provisions in our legislation that restrict the ability of Ministers to direct our work. This is important so that our monitoring can be trusted by both the public and decision makers. Our monitoring reports are used by others to advocate for system change.

Our strategy supports the Government priorities of providing an independent monitor of the oranga tamariki system. Our strategy aims to drive improvement of the system so it can be supported to improve the rights and responsibilities of caregivers to give them more autonomy, and monitor the quality of the systems in place which support increased devolution of care decisions to relevant community organisations.

Our Context

The oranga tamariki system

The oranga tamariki system is responsible for providing services and support to tamariki and rangatahi and their whānau under, or in connection with, the *Oranga Tamariki Act 1989*.

This includes services like early support, emergency help, care, youth justice and transitions out of care. This also includes work to support whānau wellbeing and reduce risks to tamariki.

Many organisations are involved in the oranga tamariki system. There are government organisations such as Oranga Tamariki, Police, and health and education organisations, as well as iwi, hapū, and Māori social services, and community organisations.

Our history

The Monitor was established as a business unit within the Ministry of Social Development in 2019 to monitor compliance of agencies who have care and custody of tamariki and rangatahi with the *Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations 2018*.

On 1 May 2023, we became a departmental agency and our scope broadened to providing independent oversight and monitoring across the wider oranga tamariki system.

We are one of three agencies with oversight of the oranga tamariki system

The purpose of the *Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022* is to strengthen oversight of the agencies providing services to tamariki and rangatahi experiencing the oranga tamariki system. The two other oversight agencies are the Children and Young People's Commission and the Ombudsman.

We are required to work together to check that the law is being applied correctly, services are being delivered effectively, and that those services are improving outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi.

Over the next four years we will be working with Mana Mokopuna – Children and Young People's Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman to provide effective oversight of the oranga tamariki system, while ensuring there is no wrong door for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau.

Our Values

Kia Māia – Courageous

We are brave, bold, capable and confident.

This means we:

- stand up for what is right
- tell the truth, even when it isn't popular.

Manaaki – Respectful

We show respect and care for others.

This means we:

- respect diversity of thought, action, and culture
- have a child-centred and te ao Māori perspective woven throughout our work
- look out for each other and make work a safe place for our colleagues.

Kia Pono, Kia Tika – Trustworthy

We are honest and genuine and do the right thing.

This means we:

- admit when we don't know the answer
- cross-check our data
- do what we say we will and communicate in a timely manner if we can't.

Kia Huritao – Reflective

We are considered and reflective.

This means we:

- learn from experience, value feedback, and always look for opportunities to improve
- take the necessary time to make the best decisions we can
- never assume we know what is best.



Our Vision

Our reporting drives continuous improvement across the oranga tamariki system so tamariki and rangatahi can thrive with their whānau.

Strategic priorities

A strong and effective oversight system

We are independent, transparent and ethical, and our reporting is trusted and widely used

Insights that drive real change

We are deeply curious and open-minded so we can create and share meaningful insights through a combination of accurate data and the voices of experience

Strategic outcomes

Improved outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi are at the heart of our work

We are transparent and operate fairly and objectively

We are independent, and seen to be independent

We improve understanding of the oranga tamariki system and its impact

Our commitment

We gather the voices of experience and combine them with data to provide the insights that can drive real changes for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau across Aotearoa.

Our work How we deliver

Policy & practice

- We prepare and provide our reports which identify within the oranga tamariki system:
 - areas of high performance
 - areas for improvement
 - extent it supports the rights, interests and well-being of tamariki and rangatahi
- Our reports are utilised by the agencies that are the subject of the reports, our oversight system partners and others

Monitoring & engagement

- We utilise our monitoring approach to visit all regions across the motu to understand how the oranga tamariki system is experienced and assess compliance
- We engage broadly using our tikanga approach to:
 - uphold the mana of each community we visit
 - recognise the importance of whanaungatanga
 - understand and reflect information and insights from across the system

Enablers

High performing and engaged kaimahi

Kaimahi: 60 FTE
Goal: Create a work environment where kaimahi feel valued, respected and supported to succeed in their work.

Information

We conduct clear, truthful analysis based on accurate information to inform our reporting.
Goal: We are data led and a trusted advisor who delivers insight to influence system change.

Our values

Kia Māia – courageous
We are brave, bold, capable and confident

Manaaki – respectful
We show respect and care for others

Improving outcomes for Māori

We influence system performance and improvements that value tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau and enables them to realise their potential and aspirations

Equity within the system

We undertake child-centred, whānau-led practice to promote improved and equitable outcomes for all tamariki and rangatahi

We partner and collaborate effectively to strengthen oversight

We influence meaningful change in the oranga tamariki system

We utilise technology, research & analytics to turn information into meaningful insights

Our engagement reflects the tikanga of the communities within which we work

Data & insights

- We are kaitiaki of the data and information we collect and treat it as taonga
- We undertake deductive coding to enable analysis and determine findings
- We assess outcomes and changes over time using our outcomes measures
- We undertake data assurance and review to ensure accuracy of analysis and reporting
- We find opportunities to share information with hapū, iwi and Māori organisations

Corporate

- Our kaimahi have the tools and resources to do their work
- We keep accurate and timely records
- We meet all our departmental obligations
- Our kaimahi are supported, safe and well
- Our kaimahi are informed and enabled to learn and develop
- We ensure the right information reaches the right people at the right time

Relationships

Our relationships with our Māori Advisory Group, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, oversight partners, ERO, other govt agencies, NGOs, communities and connectors

Goal: Connections support information gathering and influence.

Kia Pono, Kia Tika – trustworthy

We are honest and genuine and do the right thing

Kia Huritao – to be reflective

We are considered and reflective

Strategic Priorities – *what we intend to achieve and what we will do to achieve it*

A strong and effective oversight system

Future state: We are independent, transparent and ethical, and our reporting is trusted and widely used.

For our reporting to have the desired impact on the oranga tamariki system over the next four years, our reports must be impartial and accurate. To enable this, we will use evidence-based methods and undertake data assurance and review processes to ensure accuracy of analysis and reporting. We will operate in a fair, objective way with full transparency and ensure that we are independent and are seen to be independent.

Insights that drive real change

Future state: We are deeply curious and open-minded so we can create and share meaningful insights through a combination of accurate data and the voices of experience.

We will continue to refine our methodologies so that our reports improve understanding of the oranga tamariki system to influence meaningful change. We will do this by using technology, research, and analytics to turn information into useful insights. We will report across the oranga tamariki system to encourage agencies to operate more effectively as a unified system and so the system is better

placed to deliver integrated services and outcomes that meet tamariki, rangatahi and whānau needs. We will cultivate our relationships with our oversight partners to strengthen oversight and promote continuous improvement to the system. We will continue to build connections with the agencies that are the subject of our reports so that they have the information they need to drive improvements.

Improving outcomes for Māori

Future state: We influence system performance and improvements that value tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau and enable them to realise their potential and aspirations.

We will continue to assess whether positive outcomes are being achieved for those experiencing the oranga tamariki system using our outcomes framework, which was developed using a holistic te ao Māori lens. Our work will focus on how the oranga tamariki system can enable tamariki and rangatahi to realise their potential and aspirations with the support of their whānau, hāpu, iwi and communities. One way we will do this is by ensuring that our engagement reflects the tikanga of the communities we work in, enabling us to develop meaningful, trusting relationships and gather deeper insights. We will also look for further opportunities for reciprocity by sharing information with hapū, iwi and Māori organisations.

Equity within the system

Future state: We undertake child-centred, whānau-led practice to promote improved and equitable outcomes for all tamariki and rangatahi.

Over the next four years we will increasingly look at the extent to which services and supports in the oranga tamariki system are being provided equitably. In our monitoring activities

we will take an approach that equitably reflects the full range of experiences. We will visit and monitor all regions across Aotearoa, New Zealand to understand how the oranga tamariki system is experienced and the extent to which it supports the rights, interests and well-being of a range of tamariki and rangatahi and whānau. We will engage broadly to understand and reflect information and insights from across the system and will keep improving outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi at the heart of our work.

Our Plan

Intended operations

Over the next four years we will work to transform how the oranga tamariki system is monitored, as intended by the *Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022*.

Now that the Act is in place, we are working to embed an expanded monitoring programme to assess the performance of the whole oranga tamariki system. We are developing and building our systems and capability and engaging widely to drive system improvements.

Our future focus is to centre our work programme around the following priority areas:

1. Gaining a complete picture of the oranga tamariki system and how it is experienced.
2. Analysing the information we collect to understand how well services are working to improve the outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi.
3. Identifying areas of high performance and areas for improvement within Oranga Tamariki and the oranga tamariki system.
4. Providing impartial and accurate reporting on how the oranga tamariki system is experienced and how it is delivering outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi.
5. Working with others to ensure our reports are used for system improvements and better outcomes.

Our enablers

The resources that make it possible for us to achieve our strategic intentions are:

- A high performing and engaged workforce
- Access to accurate and complete qualitative and quantitative information
- A strong monitoring approach and practice
- A rigorous analysis methodology
- Purposeful and productive relationships

Indicators of success

Our performance measures have been developed to explain how we will work toward our organisational objectives. They represent the priorities of our work programme in an appropriate and meaningful way. Our reporting against these will show how effective our performance has been.

Performance measures 2023/2024	Target
Prepare and provide final reports as defined in the <i>Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022</i>	100%
Complete visits to at least three regions each year to understand how the oranga tamariki system is experienced	Visit at least three regions
Oranga tamariki oversight system partners are satisfied with and use Aroturuki Tamariki reports to support them in their functions and duties	Baseline
All agencies who are the subject of a final report make commitments to implement changes based on Aroturuki Tamariki report	100%
The Māori Advisory group is satisfied that Aroturuki Tamariki has regard to their views when developing priorities, work programmes and monitoring approaches	Baseline
Regional visits reflect the tikanga of the community within which Aroturuki Tamariki operates including sharing with the community what was heard	90%

Our Other Commitments

Organisational performance

Our organisational goals are enabled by a high performing and engaged workforce and our kaimahi are valued, safe, and supported to succeed. We are working to ensure they have access to the training, support systems, tools and resources required to perform at their best. We have a focus on continuous improvement regarding our ability to capture accurate and complete information and meet our reporting obligations. These objectives are achieved through:

- supporting a diverse and capable workforce, building cultural competency and continuing to have no gender or ethnicity pay gap
- sustaining a modern and flexible workplace, with an inclusive, respectful and positive working environment
- prioritising assurance and accountability, keeping accurate records and ensuring the right information reaches the right people at the right time.

Our host agency relationship

From 1 July 2019 to 30 April 2023, the Monitor was a business unit of the Ministry of Social Development. On 1 May 2023, we became an operationally independent departmental agency. As a departmental agency we are hosted by the Education Review Office (ERO). Hosting means ERO provides back-office services such as finance, payroll and technology.

As an appropriation within Vote Education Review Office – Independent Monitoring and Assurance of the Oranga Tamariki System, financial and performance reporting for the Monitor appears in ERO's annual report. We operate under our own Strategic Intentions and will report on performance against these in our own annual report, from 2023/2024 onwards.



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