

Oranga Tamariki Future Direction Action Plan

September 2021





Who we are

Our vision

All children are safe, loved and nurtured by whānau, hapū, and iwi, supported by thriving communities.

Our purpose

To ensure that all tamariki are in loving whānau and communities where oranga can be realised.

Our values



We put tamariki first

We will challenge when things aren't right for the child



We believe aroha is vital

It keeps us focussed on what is right



We respect the mana of the people

We listen, we don't assume, and we create solutions with others



We are tika and pono

We do what we say we'll do



We value whakapapa

Tamariki are part of a whānau and a community



We recognise the oranga is a journey

We understand the long term impact of our actions today



Our Future Direction

We are committed to ensuring that New Zealand is the best place in the world to be a child. We are also committed to ensuring Oranga Tamariki partners with hapū, iwi and Māori organisations to find appropriate solutions for tamariki in need.

There will always be a need for a state care and protection agency for all tamariki in New Zealand. This role and responsibility – and the power to remove tamariki from their whānau – should be utilised only in extreme situations and not as a go to solution.

We acknowledge there needs to be a fundamental and significant shift in the approach, operating model, and practice of Oranga Tamariki to be truly tamariki and whānau centred.

Oranga Tamariki needs to be a high-performing, highly trusted statutory care and protection and youth justice agency. We must also be an enabler and co-ordinator for Māori and communities, to empower them to put in place the support, the solutions and the services that they know will work for their people.

To do this, we have developed an Action Plan that draws together themes from across *Hipokingia ki te Kahu Aroha Hipokingia ki te Katoa* (the report of the Ministerial Advisory Board) as well as recommendations from previous reviews and the Waitangi Tribunal report. These focus on five key areas:

- organisational blueprint
- people and culture
- Relationships, partnering and decision-making
- social work practice
- data, insights and evidence

We believe that delivery of the Action Plan will ensure Oranga Tamariki is in the best position to deliver better outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau, empower staff to excel, enable local approaches, and lead across the system.

This document sets out the Action Plan.

What we've heard

"There will always be a role for Oranga Tamariki, we're not debating that – but the short term or near term **prevention space needs to come to us.**" (Strategic partners)

"We know our families best but there are always barriers to get support from government." (Strategic partners)

"Oranga Tamariki should focus on **removing barriers to whānau being well and thriving; and empower those who can work with whānau, and reduce Oranga Tamariki functions to lead only those things that can't be handed over to communities.**" (Māori)

"The role of social workers **needs to be changed to be more effective**, for example having a greater focus on listening and understanding. **The 'social worker' name needs to be changed.**" (Youth Advisory Group)

"We work in silos here – organisationally and at a site-level. This needs to stop. **The social worker voice gets lost going up the line.**" (Oranga Tamariki staff)

"When **social workers are not appropriately supported the pressure on them can lead them to make bad decisions.**" (Others)

"**The complexity of cases is increasing.** Caseload figures don't take account of complexity." (Oranga Tamariki staff)

"**Whānau must be considered in the context of care for tamariki** and the factionalisation of Māori needs to be reversed, by regrouping at pā." (Māori)

"**Different Māori groups across the country have different solutions** to the issues in their respective rohe, but they **need to be enabled** to implement them." (Māori)



Organisational Blueprint

To support and deliver transformation, we need a structure that aligns functions to best effect, has clear accountabilities, reduces duplication, and supports joined-up approaches across functions that need to work together.

0-6 months

- 1.1 Determine how functions are grouped for best effect, and then put in place a leadership team to reflect this, drive further change, and set culture. This will ensure that professional social work practice is appropriately reflected at this leadership level.
- 1.2 Alongside the development of a new operating model, consider what functions and models best support subsequent change below the leadership team.
- 1.3 Reset Oranga Tamariki regional boundaries to have one common set across the agency that better reflect the communities it serves.
- 1.4 Strengthen the feedback and complaints system so it is 'fit-for-whānau', and ensures that tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau have their voices heard and have confidence in the process.

6-12 months

- 1.5 Develop an operating model that drives locally led, centrally enabled ways of working.
- 1.6 Ensure the operating model allows the agency to invest more resources and staff into early support.
- 1.7 Through a fit-for-purpose transition plan, close our current care and protection residences and replace them with a model that enables tailored care for tamariki with high and complex needs.

12-24 months

- 1.8 Place the voices of tamariki and rangatahi at the centre of decision-making at all levels and support tamariki and whānau to participate in and be central to decision-making.

*Timeframes are indicative and subject to further review.

People and culture

The long-term success of transformation hinges on the creation of a culture that acts as an accelerator of positive change.

0-6 months

- 2.1 Develop a Kaimahi Ora strategy for all staff, supporting staff to have work life balance and provide regular opportunities to debrief following traumatic events and manage the cumulative impacts of their work.
- 2.2 Implement the public services Positive and Safe Workplace model.

6-12 months

- 2.3 Develop a model to inform allocation and resourcing decisions at regional and national level.
- 2.4 Develop for all staff, in conjunction with the three whare wānanga, a suite of appropriate cultural competency programmes, to ensure staff can engage with whānau and wider communities in culturally responsive ways.

12-24 months

- 2.5 Develop a workforce strategy that will support high-quality social work, which will include;
 - clarifying the role of Oranga Tamariki social workers, and other professionals
 - working alongside the Social Worker Registration Board and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers to continue to build the social work workforce
 - identifying the workforce needs of the community, regions and sites.
 - training, career progression pathways, leadership and professional development and workforce planning
- 2.6 Invest in the capability of leaders (especially frontline leaders) to ensure shifts to practice and culture take place that support a locally-led, centrally-enabled way of working and that support tamariki and whānau to participate and be central in decision making.
- 2.7 Establish trained specialist caregiving roles for our high and complex needs tamariki that recognise the skills required to work with our most vulnerable tamariki and enable appropriate remuneration and ongoing development and support to be provided.

*Timeframes are indicative and subject to further review.



Relationships, partnering and decision making

To put tamariki and whānau at the centre of the system, we will build required levels of trust and capability, alignment, and transparency to achieve authentic and genuine partnership and participation, including the participation of tamariki and rangatahi.

0-6 months

3.1 Work with iwi and community leaders and Regional Public Service Commissioners in each region to identify opportunities to co-design services and co-locate with partners.

6-12 months

3.2 Greater investment in partners with a particular focus on early support.

3.3 Fundamentally shift how we assess and respond reports of concern with our partner agencies to ensure collaborative decision-making and support at the earliest possible point.

3.4 Ensure the delivery of Transition Support Services to ensure that rangatahi are successfully supported to transition to independence and prevent future generations from coming to notice.

12-24 months

3.5 Prototype new approaches to partnering to enable decision-making and resourcing to be made in closer proximity to whānau.

3.6 Invite and resource communities to work alongside them in the care and protection system (e.g., reclaim the intention of the Family Group Conference to enable whānau-led decision making).

*Timeframes are indicative and subject to further review.

Social work practice

We will enhance the mana of social workers across both the agency and the wider care and protection sector so we can better support tamariki, rangatahi and whānau needs.

0-6 months

4.1 Build a framework that incorporates the current practice standards and the Social Workers Registration Board competency standards into one place.

6-12 months

4.2 Set a clear direction to only use s78 Without Notice orders for tamariki when there is clear evidence of solid engagement or attempts at engagement with whānau, which leads to no workable safety plan being put in place.

4.3 Working with the Social Workers Registration Board introduce micro-credentialing for supervision and other specialist areas, which recognises the skills and knowledge that are required by supervisors and other specialist roles.

4.4 Ensure the appropriate application of MAPA and STAR by instituting a revised restraint practice, including more frequent training and recertification.

4.5 Develop standard operating procedures that give staff clarity on areas of practice that require national consistency.

4.6 Fundamentally shift how staff assess and action reports of concern to ensure safety and security of tamariki and whānau based on best practice.

4.7 Through a fit-for-purpose transition plan, close our current residential and protection homes and replace them with smaller purpose-built homes to enable tailored care for the high complex needs tamariki in care.

12-24 months

4.8 Develop a three-month post-degree professional practice course, partnering with tertiary providers, to develop a statutory child protection component that would involve a paper and placement within Oranga Tamariki.

*Timeframes are indicative and subject to further review.



Data, insights and evidence

Ensure robust data, research and information flows that support ongoing transformation. This includes ensuring that our understanding of how tamariki are experiencing care is current, accurate and equitable.

0-6 months

- 5.1 Continue to roll out new performance reporting tools which make data and information available to operational staff from social workers and site managers all the way to the leadership team to inform their decision-making.
- 5.2 Develop options for replacing the Oranga Tamariki case management system in a cost conscious and timely way. The replacement will capture more detailed information on, for example, the needs of tamariki and whānau, progress in meeting those needs, and the experiences of tamariki and whānau who interact with us.

6-12 months

- 5.3 Share data and evidence on needs and challenges of whānau and the support and resources that can make a difference.
- 5.4 Review performance management framework to align with revised organisational strategy and vision.

12-24 months

- 5.5 Replace the Oranga Tamariki data warehouse to enable data collected to be centralised and analysed to inform monitoring and decision-making.
- 5.6 Embed evidence-based decision making from sites to national office, that encompass several actions including implementing new performance reporting tools to make data and information available to all staff to inform decision-making.
- 5.7 Deploy the Social Wellbeing Agency's Data Exchange to make sure we can seamlessly share data between ourselves and partners in a safe and secure way.

*Timeframes are indicative and subject to further review.





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