



MANAAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

Children's
Commissioner

Building blocks needed for children's rights

11 April 2018

A new report has outlined the next steps the New Zealand Government needs to take to make good on our promises to children.

"The Prime Minister has said that she wants Aotearoa New Zealand to be the best place in the world to be a child" said Children's Commissioner Andrew Becroft.

"This is a vision we can all get behind, and we need to put the systems in place to make that happen."

"Twenty-five years ago the Government of New Zealand promised to do better for all children when they signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Children's Convention). Now we need to make sure New Zealand has put the foundations in place in our legislative and policy systems to facilitate that progress."

"The Children's Convention recognises children as people, with the same rights as everyone else, and also that they need extra support from adults – that means their families, whānau, communities and government decision-makers.

"Recent initiatives such as the Child Poverty Reduction Bill and the proposed Child Well-being Strategy are positive steps towards improving the lives of children in New Zealand. We need to ensure these are not one-off actions.

"The Children's Convention Monitoring Group has released a report "Getting It Right: Building Blocks". The report highlights where New Zealand is making progress on upholding children's rights, and where action is still needed.

The basic building blocks which need attention include:

- supporting children's participation in decisions that affect them;
- taking children and their views into account when new policies are developed, for example by using the Child Impact Assessment tool more widely;
- making sure that children's privacy and best interests are considered when collecting information about them; and
- using the Children's Convention to develop a plan for children and their wellbeing.

"If we don't get these fundamental building blocks in place, there is little chance of the Convention ever being comprehensively put into effect in New Zealand.

"Twenty-five years after we have ratified it, let's take the steps we need to fully embed the Children's Convention in our laws and policies as well as in a national strategy for all children."

ENDS

Media contact

Catherine Jeffcoat

027 696 5101

c.jeffcoat@occ.org.nz

Notes for Editors

Getting It Right: Building Blocks will be available from www.occ.org.nz/childrens-rights-and-advice/uncroc/. It follows the November 2017 report *Getting It Right: The Children's Convention in Aotearoa*.

About the Children's Convention Monitoring Group

The Monitoring Group monitors the New Zealand Government's implementation of the Children's Convention, its Optional Protocols and the Government's response to recommendations from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner convenes this group. Permanent members include Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA), the Human Rights Commission, Save the Children New Zealand and the United Nations Children's Fund New Zealand (UNICEF NZ).

About the Office of the Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner is an Independent Crown Entity, appointed by the Governor-General, carrying out responsibilities and functions set out in the Children's Commissioner Act 2003.

The Children's Commissioner has a range of statutory powers to promote the rights, health, welfare, and well-being of children and young people from 0 to 18 years. These functions are undertaken through advocacy, public awareness, consultation, research, and investigations and monitoring. The role includes specific functions in respect of monitoring activities completed under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. The Children's Commissioner also undertakes systemic advocacy functions and investigates particular issues with potential to threaten the health, safety, or well-being of children and young people. The Children's Commissioner has a particular responsibility to raise awareness and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Children's Commissioner's activities must comply with the relevant provisions of the Public Finance Act 1989, Crown Entities Act 2004 and any other relevant legislation.