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## Children's Commissioner to conduct review

The Children's Commissioner has announced that his Office will be carrying out a thematic review of Oranga Tamariki's policies, processes and practice relating to care and protection issues for tamariki Māori aged 0-3 months.

"At the time of the attempted uplift from Hawke's Bay Maternity Hospital at the beginning of May, our Office shared our views on the critical importance of the mother-child relationship, and the fact that this relationship is denied to too many Māori children", says the Children's Commissioner, Judge Andrew Becroft.

"My Office has been concerned about this issue for some considerable time and discussions with several parties involved have heightened the need for a review of Oranga Tamariki's practice when they are notified of serious care and protection concerns for young babies.

"It's been increasingly clear over recent days and weeks that the community as a whole is profoundly uneasy with the way our current care and protection of tamariki Māori is carried out", he says.

"We believe it is time to examine closely the policies standing behind present practice, and the processes used to implement them, with a view to identifying any necessary change to policy, processes and practice."

The review will not be looking at the attempted uplift at the beginning of May. That case is presently before the court.

"But the reportage of that situation has generated waves of community concern and anger, especially from iwi", Commissioner Becroft says. "It deserves a thorough response.

"Consequently we have decided to exercise our specific statutory power under the Children's Commissioner Act to monitor and assess the policies of Oranga Tamariki. We have a mandate for precisely this kind of situation."

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### 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 wellbeing 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 wellbeing 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.