



**Response from Oranga Tamariki to recommendations  
from the Mana Mokopuna monitoring visit to:**

# **Te Au rere a te Tonga Youth Justice Residence**

**Visit date – June 2024**

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## Introduction

Te Au rere a te Tonga Youth Justice Residence (Te Au rere) is an Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) run youth justice residence. The facility's location is Palmerston North.

In June 2024, staff from Mana Mokopuna—Children and Young People's Commission (Mana Mokopuna) completed an unannounced monitoring visit to the facility.

The facility has capacity to take 40 rangatahi. The legal status which rangatahi can be detained at the residence include:

- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 - sections 235, 238(1)(d) and 311
- Corrections Act 2004 – section 34A
- Criminal Procedure Act 2011 - sections 173, 174 and s175.

The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of Oranga Tamariki services against the seven domains relevant to Mana Mokopuna's role as a National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). The seven domains are:

- Domain 1: Treatment
- Domain 2: Protection systems
- Domain 3: Material conditions
- Domain 4: Activities and contact with others
- Domain 5: Medical services and care
- Domain 6: Personnel
- Domain 7: Improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori.

The draft OPCAT report was shared with Oranga Tamariki on 20 September 2024.

## Recommendations Summary

The OPCAT report for Te Au rere, makes eight recommendations and we accept them all.

We value the feedback we receive from Mana Mokopuna and use recommendations to make improvements. For this report, Mana Mokopuna acknowledged several areas of excellent practice and made a range of positive observations about the high quality of care rangatahi were receiving at the facility.

Oranga Tamariki is committed to strengthening practice as a priority. We are continuing to work towards ensuring consistent, quality practice, that is inclusive, collaborative, culturally responsive and meets the needs of tamariki and rangatahi. We are committed to achieving better outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi and we value the feedback and insights provided by Mana Mokopuna.

Recommendations	Status
<b>Oranga Tamariki Systemic Recommendations</b>	
1. Investigate ways to ensure mokopuna and their whānau have access to intensive, wraparound transition support to help mokopuna successfully reintegrate back into their communities.	Accepted
2. Improve mokopuna ability to access on-site vocational programmes by dedicating time and resource to building partnerships with providers.	Accepted
3. Address the gaps within forensic services by working collaboratively with Health New Zealand   Te Whatu Ora to ensure all mokopuna health and mental health needs are met in a timely manner.	Not accepted
4. Ensure kaimahi receive the full Te Waharoa induction training as well as professional development training opportunities on supporting and caring for mokopuna who are experiencing mental distress, neurodiversity, and Spectrum Disorders.	Accepted
5. Ensure social workers provide a comprehensive medical history to residences when mokopuna are admitted.	Accepted
<b>Facility Recommendations</b>	
1. Provide training for all kaimahi on incident recording and the criteria required for SENs, ROCs, and MySafety incidents.	Accepted
2. Continue to provide ongoing training for kaimahi to continue to upskill and maintain a high standard of practice and care for mokopuna. An audit should be conducted to ensure all kaimahi have completed their Te Waharoa training modules.	Under consideration
3. Provide a minimum of bimonthly professional and cultural supervision sessions for all kaimahi that work directly with mokopuna.	Accepted

The responses to the Te Au rere OPCAT report recommendations are detailed in the remaining sections of this report.

## Response to Systemic Recommendations

Below are our responses to the systemic recommendations made in the Te Au rere OPCAT report.

### Recommendation 1

*Investigate ways to ensure mokopuna and their whānau have access to intensive, wraparound transition support to help mokopuna successfully reintegrate back into their communities.*

#### Response

Being able to understand and prepare for transitions gives rangatahi increased certainty and control over their future and helps contribute to a successful outcome for them. Every rangatahi completing a stay in a residence needs a plan to be in place to ensure positive and supportive reintegration into their community.

Rangatahi are encouraged by their social worker and residence kaimahi to actively participate in transition planning alongside their whānau and other professionals. It is important for the rangatahi and their whānau to understand the plan and help agree to what supports and strategies are put in place. This helps to support positive and sustainable behaviour change by the rangatahi. It is also a good opportunity to identify, address and resolve any concerns or issues between the rangatahi and their whānau prior to returning home.

It is important to note that the Youth Court plays a crucial role in approving the transition plan for rangatahi leaving a youth justice residence. The decisions of the Court impact what support rangatahi can access, including mentors through supported bail, mentoring orders, conditions of a Court Order, and other wrap around support options if required.

We acknowledge there are opportunities to strengthen planning across residence and sites to further support transition. This continues to be an area of practice which varies across residences, and we are working closely with Tamariki and Whānau Services to lift the consistency of service provision in this area.

Our analysis of transitions from residences shows that Multi Agencies Team (MAT) meetings, which are the primary mechanism used for transition planning in residences, have limited effectiveness when key professionals, like site social workers, are not able to attend. At times, MAT attendance can be impacted at short notice if site social workers are dealing with arrests, court, or have other commitments such as Family Group Conference's which have statutory timeframes that are not easily changed.

We are currently exploring how residences can provide greater flexibility when holding MAT meetings, or joint transition meetings, to support higher attendance and improved rangatahi preparedness for returning to the community.

Rangatahi that have been in youth justice custody (and/or in care) for a continuous period of more than three months between the ages of 14 years, 9 months and 18 years will also become eligible for Transition Support Services (TSS).

This is a distinct (though related) transition, which supports rangatahi as they exit care and/or youth justice and transition into their adult lives, independent of Oranga Tamariki. Typically, TSS will provide support subsequent to (though overlap) the transition from residence into the community. These are consent-based services and supports are available up until the age of 25 years.

### Recommendation 2

*Improve mokopuna ability to access on-site vocational programmes by dedicating time and resource to building partnerships with providers.*

#### Response

We are pleased that Mana Mokopuna has recognised the improvement regarding vocational activities since the last visit, in that some rangatahi under the Criminal Procedure Act 2011 and the Corrections Act 2004 are now accessing off-site programmes or work experience. However, we do acknowledge

your recommendation that more work is needed to ensure rangatahi can access vocational programmes and learning on-site at the residence.

Providing an environment for rangatahi to learn practical skills for possible future work is important, for the reasons noted by those rangatahi who spoke to Mana Mokopuna: to build skills, so they can find jobs and earn money after their release and not be drawn back into re-offending. We accept the recommendation that Oranga Tamariki continue to build relationships with external providers and increase the number of on-site vocational opportunities, so that they can be accessible to all rangatahi regardless of their ability to go off-site. At Te Au rere the two programme co-ordinators and the employment co-ordinator will continue to partner with more external and internal providers to support running an increased number of on-site vocational programmes, in partnership with educational providers.

### Recommendation 3

*Address the gaps within forensic services by working collaboratively with Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora to ensure all mokopuna health and mental health needs are met in a timely manner.*

### Response

We acknowledge your recommendation but note that the provision of mental health services, and any gaps within forensic services, is the responsibility of Health New Zealand–Te Whatu Ora and not Oranga Tamariki. Therefore, we do not accept the recommendation, but will continue to raise the issue of ongoing gaps in the provision of forensic and mental health services and what is being done to address them with Health New Zealand–Te Whatu Ora, including whether there are further opportunities to collaborate in ensuring all mokopuna health and mental health needs are met in a timely manner.

We recognise the unique needs of the rangatahi that are placed in secure youth justice residences, including those with complex mental health needs, and the importance of working differently to support these rangatahi. Options to improve trauma informed care and how we support rangatahi with mental health needs are being considered across the Residences and Homes Group. We hope to consider options for implementation following the restructure.

A new national role of Assessment Coordinator, which is in the process of being appointed, will focus on appropriate placements for rangatahi according to their needs. This includes consideration of assessment, intervention and ongoing support. There are also new national training roles being established to offer kaimahi further training in mental health and trauma informed care.

An interagency regional Te Whatu Ora – Oranga Tamariki leaders' group has been established to oversee health and mental health service provision at Te Au rere. Through this forum, Te Whatu Ora has recognised the high level of in-reach specialist mental health services required for rangatahi admitted to Te Au rere. Relationships, processes and procedures have improved greatly, although it is acknowledged that the mental health service currently has a significant number of practitioner vacancies.

Te Au rere continues to work closely with the local forensic services provider, Capital Coast Youth Forensics, to enable more regular and timely support for rangatahi on site. There has been improvement since your monitoring visit with fortnightly meetings now occurring between the Forensic Clinical Co-ordinator and the Team Leader Clinical Practice.

A youth forensic psychologist is also onsite every second Tuesday, and a psychiatrist has resumed clinics (although the frequency of these visits is still being determined). Forensic nursing services have also greatly improved with rangatahi now being visited and information shared in a timelier manner.

#### Recommendation 4

*Ensure kaimahi receive the full Te Waharoa induction training as well as professional development training opportunities on supporting and caring for mokopuna who are experiencing mental distress, neurodiversity, and Spectrum Disorders.*

#### Response

Te Waharoa is the induction training for new residential youth workers. We have made a number of changes to this training to ensure new kaimahi are well prepared for the realities of working in a secure residence, including having the skills to pro-socially engage with rangatahi and safely de-escalate situations involving rangatahi in their care.

Changes we have made include:

- the duration of content of the 'mana in relationships' component of the training was reviewed by three youth justice senior psychologists and amended to better include a trauma informed approach
- extended Safe Tactical Approach and Response training from two days to five days
- other changes to better support and guide staff in their engagement with rangatahi and in safely deescalating heightened behaviour, including working with the Case Leading teams on improving the interventions and strategies for the Care Team for individual rangatahi
- Substances and Choices Scale (SACS), Kessler and Suicide screening training is being delivered by national kaimahi in the Professional Practice Group to ensure training is consistent nationally
- the number of initial observation (buddy) shifts has increased from five to 10 where new recruits shadow an existing staff member to learn the requirements of the role. A revised observation booklet has been introduced and observations from the buddy shifts are recorded and completion of the required shifts is signed off by a team leader.

We continually review and improve our induction and other training packages to ensure they are responding to emerging needs and the complexities of the rangatahi we work with. Additionally, kaimahi are receiving training on our new Standard Operating Procedures, which includes new approaches to engage and de-escalate situations with rangatahi. This is to ensure consistency in our engagement across all residences, and that it aligns with legislation and regulations.

Work is underway to achieve sustainable and enduring service improvements for rangatahi, tamariki and kaimahi via a six-month pilot of a new operating model which Oranga Tamariki is presently running at Te Puna Wai ō Tuhinapo, our youth justice residence in Christchurch.

Elements we are testing include smaller cohort groups, new staffing rosters, improved training and leadership development. As part of the pilot, the residential youth worker curriculum will also be reviewed. The pilot is allowing us to test these in a controlled environment, and we are learning and adapting as we go, to ensure the new ways of working are fit for purpose and enduring. The final evaluation is scheduled for 15 December 2024.

Additionally, the Office of the Chief Social Worker is working closely with the Youth Justice Services and Residential Care team to reassess learning and development needs and how these are best responded to across all residences.

#### Recommendation 5

*Ensure social workers provide a comprehensive medical history to residences when mokopuna are admitted.*

#### Response

Generally, before an admission to a residence, the social worker will update or commence a social work assessment and the All About Me plan (AAMP) to help the transition for the rangatahi go smoothly. This includes ensuring rangatahi, their whānau and caregivers are all involved in this planning process, and that these plans are recorded in CYRAS (our information management system) so that they can be accessed by residential staff.

The AAMP is designed to enable Oranga Tamariki to support and respond to the needs of tamariki and rangatahi in care in line with the National Care Standards. The AAMP helps everyone involved support

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the needs and objectives of tamariki or rangatahi, by recording planning information that is responsive to their changing needs and circumstances and advances their long-term goals and outcomes.

In a youth justice residence, at times getting medical information for a rangatahi at the time of admission can prove difficult. Referrals can be made at short notice after a rangatahi is arrested by the Police, and some information may not be available until the next day or after the weekend. This can also occur when a rangatahi is not previously known to Oranga Tamariki and new information needs to be obtained before this can be given to a residence.

As soon as possible after the Police or Court referral to a youth justice residence, or when a rangatahi has been previously unknown to Oranga Tamariki, kaimahi will try and support a health assessment being completed on a rangatahi which is obtained by consent. Therefore, if rangatahi or whānau do not consent then kaimahi cannot get the health assessment completed. Where there is a completed health assessment, this is recorded under the health and education record on CYRAS so this easily accessible to residence upon admission.

If rangatahi arrive at Te Au rere without information about their medical history, Te Au rere kaimahi are committed to ensuring any available records are obtained as quickly as possible or an assessment process commences as soon as possible after consent is obtained.



## Response to Facility Recommendations

Below are our responses to the facility recommendations made in the Te Au rere OPCAT report.

### Recommendation 1

*Provide training for all kaimahi on incident recording and the criteria required for SENs, ROCs, and MySafety incidents.*

#### Response

The reporting of incidents such as Serious Event Notifications (SENs), Reports of Concern (RoCs) and mySafety (the Ministry incident recording system) is important as these records support the safety and wellbeing needs of the rangatahi in our care, which is a priority.

After a serious event occurs involving tamariki and rangatahi, the key consideration is ensuring their immediate safety. A safety plan is developed, implemented, and regularly reviewed until the issue or concern is resolved. Any other rangatahi that may be affected by the event are also considered as part of this process.

Case records that relate to rangatahi are stored in CYRAS. In the event of an allegation of harm, records will include a RoC, arrangements to ensure the child's safety, any assessment or investigation undertaken resulting from a RoC and the outcome of the assessment.

Keeping accurate case records is an important practice requirement for all kaimahi at Oranga Tamariki. It is essential that key actions and decisions for the tamariki and rangatahi are accurately recorded to ensure significant decisions are clearly evidenced and transparent.

The Te Au rere senior leadership team and Team Leader Operations are all able to currently complete SENs, RoCs and mySafety reports. Team leaders will provide refresher training, on an ongoing basis, to all care team and night shift kaimahi on their office days.

Senior managers and team leaders will receive further coaching to complete SENS and ROCs when it is identified this is required for individuals. Case Leaders guidelines are currently being written and information pertaining to SENS and ROCs will be included.

### Recommendation 2

*Continue to provide ongoing training for kaimahi to continue to upskill and maintain a high standard of practice and care for mokopuna. An audit should be conducted to ensure all kaimahi have completed their Te Waharoa training modules.*

#### Response

As noted in our response to Systemic Recommendation 4, Te Waharoa is the induction training for new residential youth workers. Oranga Tamariki continually reviews and improves our induction and other training to ensure it is responding to emerging needs and the complexities of the rangatahi we work with. The Office of the Chief Social Worker and the Youth Justice Services and Residential Care team are working together to evaluate learning and development needs and how these are best responded to across all residences. Additionally, kaimahi are receiving training in our new Standard Operating Procedures, which includes new approaches to engage and de-escalate situations with rangatahi.

At Te Au rere, some kamahi have completed parts of the programme. The remaining components of the programme will be completed via individual modules during office days and other specific allocated training days to ensure that all kaimahi complete the full Te Waharoa induction. Senior Te Au rere leadership will update their training database to provide evidence that Te Waharoa has been completed when each kaimahi has concluded the entire programme.

### Recommendation 3

*Provide a minimum of bimonthly professional and cultural supervision sessions for all kaimahi that work directly with mokopuna.*

#### **Response**

Oranga Tamariki is committed to delivering supervision and encourages kaimahi to make use of all forms of supervision (supervisor/supervisee supervision, group supervision, peer supervision, cultural supervision) to reflect, learn and stretch. Focusing on kaimahi ora is also an important part of the supervision process.

We recognise the importance of regular professional supervision. As per our professional supervision policy, the Social Work Registration Board's policy requires that social workers "... access regular and appropriate supervision at least monthly and in a manner that is consistent with reasonable expectations of the levels of skill and practice ability of the individual." As per the same policy, youth workers are required to have group supervision every three weeks.

Te Au rere group supervision will be carried out by the Team Leaders Operations each office day which occurs every third week. All managers will be providing kamahi individual supervision at least once monthly and will keep records of this occurring.

We will develop a Te Au rere specific supervision policy so all kaimahi can develop their understanding of what supervision is. This will include the many types that of supervision they currently can access.