



MANAAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

**Children's
Commissioner**

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For immediate release

Teachers can help children make their voices heard

Primary teachers now have a simple way to encourage their students to know and learn about their rights under the Children's Convention. A new resource from the Office of the Children's Commissioner can help teachers encourage children to speak their minds about the things that matter to them.

Today, the Office of the Children's Commissioner has released a new resource to help children in New Zealand primary schools know their rights, specifically their right to have a say on issues that affect them.

All children in Aotearoa New Zealand have rights guaranteed under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Children's Convention). These rights are intended to keep children safe, healthy and help them have a good life.

Rights: Now! was developed after working with children in Christchurch in 2017 on the redevelopment of the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor. Children came up with all sorts of new and exciting ideas that made a real difference for the redevelopment of the area with the support of local organisation Regenerate Christchurch.

"It was good to think that my ideas are valued" – Participant, Age 10

"*Rights: Now!* is a step towards educating children about their rights" says Sarah Morris from the Office of the Children's Commissioner. "When the New Zealand Government signed up to the Children's Convention in 1993 it promised to promote, respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of all children" she says. "*Rights: Now!* is a contribution to keeping that promise".

The resource has a specific focus on a child's right to have their say and to participate and be heard on issues that affect them. It also supports teachers to take a child-led approach to children's rights.

Rights: Now! includes two session plans, hands on activities and background as well as a child friendly "Children's Convention" poster explaining each of their rights.

To find out more see the *Rights: Now!* resource attached.

ENDS

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

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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 Children, Young Persons and Their Families 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.