



26 April 2022

Judge Francis Eivers
Children's Commissioner
Office of the Children's Commissioner
PO Box 5610
Wellington 6145

Sent via email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe Judge Eivers

Draft OPCAT Report – Te Au rere a te Tonga Youth Justice Residence

In December 2021, your monitoring team visited Te Au rere a te Tonga Youth Justice Residence to monitor the safety and wellbeing of rangatahi. The monitoring visit was completed as part of your role as a National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

On 1 April 2022, you provided your draft OPCAT report for Te Au rere a te Tonga Youth Justice Residence for our review and comment. On 19 April 2022, we provided our feedback on the factual accuracy of the draft report. Please now find enclosed our response to your report's recommendations.

We have accepted all ten recommendations made in your report, and our response identifies the work that has been, or is currently, underway to address these. We welcome the specific recommendations you have made about practice and supervision. Our response will be informed by the broader shift in practice we are making as an organisation, based on our new organisational Practice Framework which was introduced to staff through regional hui in 2021.

I understand, as part of your visit, your monitoring team did not gain access to one of the units at Te Au rere, and that staff and mokopuna were unwelcoming. We acknowledge your experience on this occasion was below what we would expect. We have reminded our staff of the importance of professionalism and engagement with your kaimahi when visiting our facilities. We anticipate that when you return to

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Te Au rere a te Tonga Youth Justice Residence in the future your experience and visit across the whole of the residence will be positive.

We were pleased to note that during your monitoring visit to Te Au rere a te Tonga Justice Residence you found no evidence that mokopuna had been subjected to torture, or cruel or degrading punishment. We acknowledge your areas of concern relating to the extent of the use of restraints and secure care, the continued need for an overarching therapeutic model of care, inappropriate admissions, and staffing levels.

It was pleasing that you observed positive examples of tikanga, and Te Reo being incorporated into every day activity and routines and efforts by kaimahi to increase their cultural capability. This is a continued area of focus for all staff across the organisation. We acknowledge your comments about the need to build from relationships with mana whenua to having a shared strategic plan.

An important part of the Oranga Tamariki Future Direction Plan is the work we will undertake to develop a workforce strategy. A key focus of this work involves strengthening cultural capability, training and professional development for our kaimahi.

I trust you find this information useful. If you have any questions or would like further information, please feel free to contact me on [REDACTED] or alternatively Julie Miller, Director Review Management, on [REDACTED]

Nāku noa, nā



Nicolette Dickson
Tumu Tuarua | Te Kōunga o te Mahi me ngā Wheako
Deputy Chief Executive | Quality Practice and Experiences