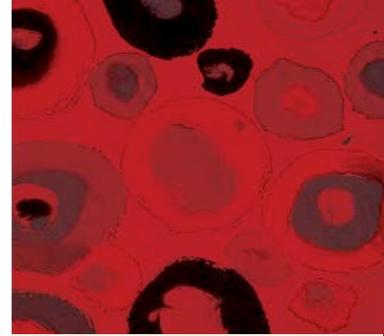




MANAAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

**Children's
Commissioner**



A new chapter for children's rights in New Zealand?

13 November 2017 – embargoed until 12 noon

The Children's Commissioner is calling on the country to embrace children's rights to ensure their overall well-being.

"The new Government has declared that 'if we put child well-being at the heart of what we do, then the well-being of all New Zealanders will be lifted.'" said Judge Andrew Becroft.

"The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child shows us the many different ways that government can influence the well-being of children and young people. We have an opportunity now to cement our approach to child rights."

The UNCROC Monitoring Group has released a report about how New Zealand is putting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Children's Convention) into practice, and where it can do better.

The report makes three recommendations that Government can put into place immediately:

- Make sure children's rights and needs are at the centre of policy and legislative reform. Identify where children's rights are not being met, what needs to be done, who will do the work, when it will happen and how the work will be monitored.
- Allocate responsibility and resources to coordinate the implementation of the Children's Convention across government.
- Ensure children and young people's views are taken into consideration in the development of legislation and policies.

"Children's voices need to be heard in our country. We are very bad at seeking out their voices, listening to them, factoring them into our decision making and then reporting back to children the decisions made."

"If the practice was ingrained in government departments and community groups, there would be a significant change in the way policy is created here – for example in areas of education, health and housing, and in the way we respond to child poverty."

Upholding the Children's Convention can improve the lives of children and young people living in the most difficult circumstances.

"We need to be much more positive about the Convention and what it can do for our children. Yes, 70% of our children do well, and some do outstandingly well. But 20% are struggling, and 10% do as badly, if not worse, than most comparable OECD countries. All our children would benefit significantly from the Convention if fully applied, but especially those whose needs are not being met."

From 2018, the UNCROC Monitoring Group will publish progress reports focusing on legal and policy developments for children and young people in New Zealand and how those developments align with the principles of the Children's Convention.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

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Getting It Right. The Children's Convention in Aotearoa will be available from www.occ.org.nz/childrens-rights-and-advice/uncroc/

The report will be launched at 1.25pm Monday, at the Childhood Studies Colloquium at Victoria University of Wellington (Kelburn campus),

The Children's Commissioner will be speaking at the launch, to be livestreamed from www.facebook.com/childrenscommnz/

About the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) Monitoring Group

The UNCROC 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).

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 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 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.