

**CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS  
ALLIANCE** AOTEAROA  
NEW ZEALAND

Annual Report  
2020/21

22 September 2021



## Karakia

*Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te mea ngaro ki runga ki tēnā, ki tēnā o tātou  
Kia mahea te hua mākihikihi kia toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te aroha, toi te reo  
Māori kia tūturu  
Ka whakamaua kia tīna, tīna  
Haumi e hui e, tāiki e.*

*Let the strength and life force of our ancestors be with each and every one of us  
Freeing our path from obstruction so that our words, spiritual power, love and  
language are upheld  
Permanently fixed, established and understood  
Forward together.*

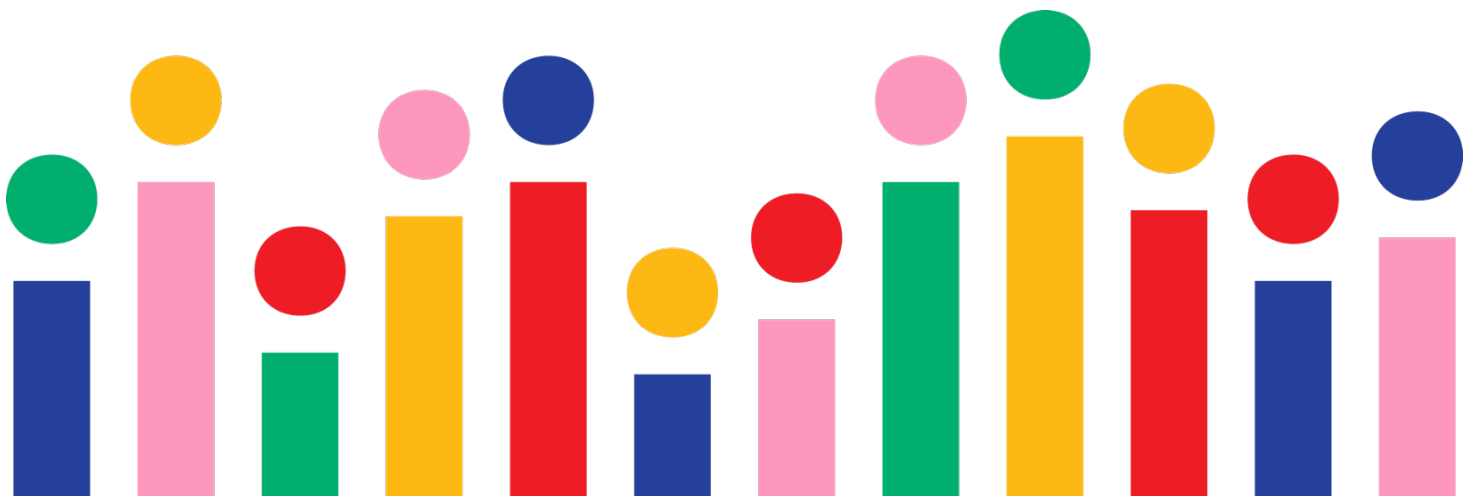
The Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand is a civil society coalition committed to protecting and promoting children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our work builds on the work of many who have come before us.

Our vision is an Aotearoa that actively respects and realises the rights of all children.

# Children’s Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand Annual Report 2020-2021

## Contents

- Chairperson’s Report.....5
- Treasurer’s Report.....7
- About Us – Our Strategic Framework.....9
- Introduction to the Team.....10
- Reporting on Children’s Rights .....15
- Children’s Convention Monitoring Group.....19
- Acknowledgements.....21



## Chairperson's report

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

I would like to begin my report by saying a big thank you to all those who are part of the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand - our individual and organisational members and those who contribute to our reports are the essence of who we are and how we achieve what we do. I also wish to thank the other members of the steering committee and our Executive Director Andrea Jamison. We are very fortunate to have such an experienced and knowledgeable group of committed children's rights advocates volunteering their time on the steering committee. We are also lucky to have Andy's experience guiding us through the reporting process.

I would also like to acknowledge the extensive contribution of Mereana Ruri who left the steering committee this year. Mereana has been a member of the steering committee of the Children's Rights Alliance since 2015 and has played an integral role in civil society reporting on the CRC. We will miss Mereana's expertise in children's rights, her wisdom and her kind heart but we are also excited to know she continues to contribute to children's rights in Aotearoa in her new role at the Joint Venture for Family Violence and Sexual Violence.

I'd now like to touch on some of the work we have done over the last year. A large proportion of the work of the Children's Rights Alliance is focused on preparing, presenting and following up on civil society reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. In the 2020-2021 year this work was focussed on preparation for the sixth reporting round and included hosting meetings in person and on-line to engage with civil society on the reporting process and to support members and other organisations and individuals to contribute to the reporting process either through the comprehensive report to be submitted on 1 December 2020 or through thematic reports. The reporting process is discussed in more detail at pages 15 to 18 including how you can be involved in the next steps.

A key aspect of our work as an Alliance is our commitment to supporting and strengthening children's participation. To help give effect to this commitment, we have developed a stocktake of recent reports and research in relation to children's views and experiences of their rights in Aotearoa. We are very grateful for Amelia Vincent's research assistance on this piece of work. We have also recently welcomed Michelle Egan-Bitran to the Children's Rights Alliance whānau as our new Kaiako / Co-ordinator Children's Participation. Michelle brings extensive expertise in children's participation having worked at the Office of the Children's Commissioner and as the Project Manager for *Kia Tika, Kia Pono – Honouring Truths: An Ethical Framework for Engaging with Children and Young People who are Care Experienced in Research, Governance, Policy Making and/or Service Design*. Michelle will be leading our work to support children, tamariki and rangatahi to share their views and ideas as part of Aotearoa's 6th periodic report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

We have also continued to meet regularly with the Children's Commissioner and with government officials as a member of the Children's Convention Monitoring Group (CMG). This work is discussed in further detail at pages 19 to 20. Our sincere thanks to Sarah Morris and Erin Gough from the Children's Commissioner's Office who have done outstanding work over the last year co-ordinating and leading the CMG's work to advance and monitor the Convention.

In the second half of 2020 the Alliance completed our strategic planning process including confirming our purpose, vision, mission, and values. The executive summary of our strategic plan is on page 9 and the full version will be available on our website. We also confirmed our 2021-2023 strategic objectives of the Children's Rights Alliance are to:

- Use the Children's Convention reporting cycle to advance and protect children's rights in Aotearoa.
- Build our profile and capacity through our online presence, membership and relationships with allies.
- Strengthen our organisational infrastructure.

Our priority for 2021-2022 is to develop and present the 6th consolidated non-government, civil society report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (due 1 January 2022) and to advocate for action on the Committee's recommendations.

As I mentioned in our last annual report, during the strategic planning process we identified the need to do further work on our organisational structure and relationships with our members and key partners to ensure we are in a strong position to continue our advocacy work so that all pēpē, tamariki, and rangatahi have their rights protected and promoted. We are very grateful for the generous support of the J.R.McKenzie Trust, particularly over the last five years, which has enabled us to do the work needed to strengthen our Alliance and plan for the future.

To assist with this work and ensure that we learn from our work over the last few years, we have contracted Rachel Trotman from WEAVE to undertake an evaluation looking back on our work over the last few years as well as to the future and how we can best contribute to the children's sector going forward. Thank you to those of you who have been contacted to contribute to this evaluation. We are now at a critical but exciting juncture as we explore how we continue to do our mahi in the years ahead so your insights and suggestions for the future are very much appreciated!

Over the last year we have also continued work to develop our new website, which will go live over the coming weeks, providing a vital reference point between us all, as an Alliance, and on children's rights. Please get in touch and let us know what you think of the new website once it is up online.

We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with our members and wider civil society to ensure that children in Aotearoa experience the full realisation of their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. All children, all rights, all circumstances.

Ngā mihi maioha



Jennifer Braithwaite  
Chairperson



## Treasurer's report

This report is for the period ending 31 June 2021. A copy of the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (the Alliance) financial report is available to members at the AGM and will also be available on the Alliance's website.

### Income

The Alliance remains most appreciative of the generous 5-year grant from the JR McKenzie Trust and our budget for the period 2017-2022 has been structured accordingly. The sum of **\$61,050** was drawn down during this financial year as per the Year 5 and 6 schedule for this grant.

An amount of **\$210 (2020: \$405)** was generated from memberships paid to the Alliance by organisation and individual members.

Total income for the year ending 30 June 2021 amounted to **\$61,260 (2020: \$41,185)**.

The **volunteer input** to the governance and work programme remains a huge and highly important resource to the organisation. Thank you to each and every volunteer for your continued support.

### Expenditure

Total **expenditure** for the year ending 30 June 2021 amounted to \$50,678 (2020: \$22,167)

### Projects and strategy

Total expenditure of \$44,340 (2020: \$16,818) comprise of

- Preparation and follow up on the 6<sup>th</sup> reporting round of the UN and included hosting meetings to engage and support civil society.
- The steering group and Executive Director completed the strategic process in the latter part of the financial year.

### Meetings

- 2021: \$4,395 (2020 \$2,210) for steering committee meetings – the higher cost is due to strategy meetings held in second part of the year in addition to the normal steering group meetings.
- 2021: \$0 (2020: \$995), no cost were incurred for the online AGM.

### Operating expenses

- \$1,556 (2019: \$1,963) for Accounting services and package (\$1,375), bank fees (\$40) and minor administrative fees (\$141);
- \$320 (2020: \$180) for the ACYA website hosting.

## Current Financial Position

This year the Children's Rights Alliance is reporting a **surplus** of **\$10,582** and **retained earnings** of **\$133,198**.

The retained earnings comprise cash funds of **\$133,198** held in the ASB account. The retained earnings will be utilized for the development and presentation of the 6<sup>th</sup> consolidated non-government, civil society report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Alliance will continue advocacy for action on the recommendations from the report. We will also continue our work to strengthen the organisation and build our membership to ensure the Alliance is well placed to produce high quality reports on children's rights.

I move that **Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand's Financial report and Tier 4 Performance Report** for the year ended 30 June 2021 be formally adopted.

*Heidi Coetzee*

Heidi Coetzee  
**Treasurer**





## About us – our Strategic Framework

Our Strategic Framework outlines the Alliance’s purpose, vision values and our strategic focus and priorities. You can see a summary of this below.



### Strategic Framework 2021-2023 - Executive Summary

<b>Purpose</b>	We work as an Alliance to advance, promote and report on children’s rights, so that all children in Aotearoa actively experience all their rights, in all circumstances.
<b>What we want to see</b>	An Aotearoa that actively respects and realises the rights of all children.
<b>How we will get there</b>	<p>Together, we work to make a difference for children by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing understanding about children’s rights</li> <li>• Working to put children’s rights into practice</li> <li>• Reporting on progress on children’s rights</li> <li>• Working so all children can actively participate in               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their own lives</li> <li>• the things that matter to them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>All rights. All children. All circumstances.</p>
<b>Values</b>	<p>Our values guide the work we do and the ways we work together. They are:</p> <p><b>Aroha    Te ira tangata    Tika    Pono    Whanaungatanga    Manaakitanga</b></p>
<b>Strategic Objectives 2021- 2023</b>	<p>The current strategic objectives of the Children’s Rights Alliance are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the Children’s Convention reporting cycle to advance and protect children’s rights in Aotearoa.</li> <li>• Build our profile and capacity through our online presence, membership and relationships with allies.</li> <li>• Strengthen our organisational infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority for 2021-2022</b>	To develop and present the 6th consolidated non-government, civil society report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (due January 2022) and to advocate for action on the Committee’s recommendations.



## Introduction to the team

The Children's Rights Alliance is run by a volunteer Steering Committee which is elected at our AGM and meets on-line fortnightly during the year, with occasional kanohi ki te kanohi meetings. The Steering Committee is comprised of at least 7 people with a mix of expertise on a range of children's issues: justice, law, education, disability and social services. Members of the Steering Committee are well connected in the children's sector and can draw on a diverse range of experiences and networks throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

From time to time, the Steering Committee co-opts new members to access a particular sector or to fill a knowledge gap. There is also capacity to establish sub-committees, working groups and branches to further the Alliance's aims and objectives. Since May 2020, Andrea Jamison has been the Alliance's Executive Director, supporting the Alliance's mahi. We are also supported by a number of contractors including Karen Davis of Common Cents Accounting who we have been fortunate to have working with us for a number of years. Amelia Vincent has recently provided research assistance to the Alliance, and Michelle Egan-Bitran has joined us as Kaiako/Co-ordinator Children's Participation.

### Jennifer Braithwaite, Chairperson

Jennifer has served on the Steering Committee of the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand since 2018 and as the Chairperson since 2019. Jennifer is a lawyer and passionate advocate for children and access to justice with a background in diverse areas of law including children's rights, child protection, Te Tiriti o Waitangi claims, Māori legal issues, public law, refugee status applications, education issues, family law, criminal justice, and employment. She has also held a number of governance roles including at Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP, Community Law Centres o Aotearoa, YouthLaw Aotearoa, and Child Poverty Action Group. Jennifer has a Masters in Law (Hons) specialising in human rights and Masters in Social and Community Leadership (Hons) for which she completed her thesis research in relation to youth participation in NGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is currently the inaugural Borrin Foundation Justice Fellow researching access to justice for children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. She also works as a Barrister and with a number of community organisations on access to justice issues.



## **Dr Claire Achmad, Deputy Chairperson**

Dr Claire Achmad has served on the Steering Committee of the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand since 2018, has held the Deputy Chair role since 2019. She is an international children's rights law and policy expert and child rights advocate. Currently, Claire is Chief Executive Officer of Social Service Providers Aotearoa. Claire is committed to using her skills and experience to advance and protect the rights of children and tamariki in Aotearoa and globally. She has previously held roles in Aotearoa and internationally across government, intergovernmental organisations, and non-government organisations. Claire holds a PhD in international children's rights law from the Child Law Department, Leiden University, and has published internationally on a range of child rights issues. Claire represents the Alliance on the Children's Convention Monitoring Group, convened by the Children's Commissioner. She lives in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, and grew up amongst kauri and kereru in the Waitākere Ranges of Tamaki Makaurau.



## **Jacqui Southey, Secretary**

Jacqui Southey is the child rights advocate and research Director at Save the Children New Zealand. She is fully committed to a positive and nurturing world for children, today and every day into the future. Her focus is systemic and cultural change that will see children's rights understood, respected and upheld for all children in our everyday lives.

Jacqui has a background in children's rights – with a particular interest in children's participation and empowering children's agency, child rights education, speaking up with and for children on issues important to children now and in the future, and teaching. She recently completed her Master of Education focusing on child engagement, children's social and emotional development, and authored a significant research report on the positive discipline practices of parents of children under five years of age.

Prior to beginning her role at Save the Children, Jacqui lead the child rights education and participation programme at UNICEF New Zealand for seven years and was a primary school teacher for ten years before her role at UNICEF. Jacqui lives in the Wairarapa, is mother to three adult children, and three beautiful grandchildren



## Heidi Coetzee, Treasurer

Heidi Coetzee joined the Children’s Rights Alliance (formerly ACYA) steering committee in 2019 as treasurer. She is the Chief Executive of Save the Children New Zealand, the organisation credited with being the birthplace of children’s rights. Save the Children’s mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. Heidi also holds the deputy chair position for the Council of International Development.



## Mereana Ruri

Mereana was a steering committee member of the Children’s Rights Alliance (formerly ACYA) from 2015 until 2021, when she stepped down to avoid any conflict of interest after taking up a new role with the government’s Joint Venture on Family and Sexual Violence. Mereana brought 22 years policy experience in the government, regulatory and NGO sectors with a focus on roles that have contributed to the advancement of the rights and wellbeing of tamariki in Aotearoa. Mereana is a former co-Chair who presented our last report to the UN Committee in Geneva in 2016. In the same year, she also led the NGO delegation to Geneva to observe and contribute to the Government’s presentation of its fifth periodic report. Mereana is of Ngāi Tūhoe and Tainui descent and currently lives in Wellington.



## **Dr Deb Inder**

Deb is a practicing Mediator, Barrister and Lawyer for the Child. Her areas of expertise in family law are; Family Violence, Extended Family Issues, Parenting/Care and Contact Issues, Relocation and Relationship Property disputes. Deb holds a PhD in Law from Otago University, her thesis topic being 'Children's Participation in the Context of Private Law Disputes in the New Zealand Family Justice System'.

Deb is a passionate child advocate and continues to work to improve the participation experiences of children who are the subject of inter parental disputes.



## **Dr John Waldon - Tūhoe (Ngāti Koura, Te Urewera), Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Pōrou**

Dr John Waldon has long-term interest in the rights and well-being of children. Born and educated in Whakatāne, John has whānau connections with Papakainga and Te Tōtara marae at Ruātoki, as well as Te Tira Hou in Auckland.

John has held the Tamariki Māori portfolio on the Steering Committee for many years and attended the 2003 session of the United Nations Committee for the Rights of the Child and the 2010 pre-session on behalf of ACYA.

John holds a Bachelor of Science degree (Waikato), a Master of Public Health (Otago) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Massey). He has worked with the Hepatitis Research Unit at Whakatāne, where his whānau mandate was to carry out this research to protect children from hepatitis B, and with Te Pūmanawa Hauora at Massey University. John is currently a Restorative Justice Facilitator, contract researcher and has an appointment as a conjoint lecturer at the University of Sydney. He is also a Board member of the Midcentral District Health Board. John has presented papers on Māori health and wellbeing internationally, is a life member of the Cancer Society and has served on the boards of the Public Health Association, the NZ Drug Foundation and currently Chair and President of the Manawatū Centre of the Cancer Society.



## Nicola Taylor

Professor Nicola Taylor is Director of the Children's Issues Centre in the Faculty of Law at the University of Otago. She also holds the Alexander McMillan Chair in Childhood Studies. She has qualifications in both law and social work, a PhD, and has been admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand. Nicola is a leading socio-legal researcher and has undertaken many studies with children, parents and professionals on family law, cross-border and children's rights issues. She was the founding Treasurer of ACYA and has been involved with ACYA and the Children's Rights Alliance for many years.



## Andrea Jamison, Executive Director

Andrea has a longstanding commitment to children and their rights. She has worked at the Office of the Children's Commissioner and at the Ministry of Youth Affairs, where she had a lead role in developing Government's 2nd children's rights report. In 1999, Andrea received a Nuffield Bursary to study the use of children's rights in local authority planning, policies and service delivery in the United Kingdom. She helped to draft ACYA's 5th periodic report in 2015, joining the ACYA steering committee in 2016. Andrea attended, as an observer, the UN's examination of Government's 5th periodic children's rights report in Geneva. She was chair of ACYA, and then the Children's Rights Alliance, from 2017-2019, and has represented the Alliance on the Children's Convention Monitoring Group since 2016. Between 2016 and 2019 Andrea worked at IHC developing a particular interest in the intersectionality of disability and children's rights. She lives in Wellington, has two teenage children and spent her own childhood in Waitohi/Picton.



## Reporting on Children's Rights

Reporting on children's rights is a central part of our work as an Alliance, and an opportunity for us, as a nation, to focus on our children and tamariki, to take stock of our progress, and to identify what more needs to be done to meet our commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Children's Convention).

It is the Government's responsibility to implement the Children's Convention and to report every five years on progress. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child also needs "on the ground" information to assess the Government's report and understand how well children's rights are being realised, in practice, in Aotearoa. The information we provide, as a civil society Alliance, tells a story, or paints a picture, of how life is for children in Aotearoa.

There is not one story of childhood and adolescence in Aotearoa, but many. Our role is to work together to share our knowledge and insights as to what is going well and where improvements are needed to realise all rights, for all children, and in all circumstances, including during a global pandemic. Each of us who works with and for tamariki, brings our own knowledge and understanding of different aspects of children's lives and experiences and, collectively, we can report comprehensively on what is needed to uphold children's rights. Also, because our reports inform the recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, reporting lays the foundations for our on-going advocacy for children, especially over the next 5 year reporting cycle.

Reporting on children's rights can, of necessity, lead to a focus on problems or issues for children in Aotearoa, especially during such unsettled times. It is important that the stories we tell through our reporting lift up our pēpē, tamariki and rangatahi and help to create a sense of belonging, hope and possibility for each and every child, now and in the future.

We also need to take care to respect that the stories we are telling belong, ultimately, to children - our reporting needs to create the space for pēpē, tamariki and rangatahi to share and shape their stories, themselves.

## The structure and content of our report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

We structure our report using a group of thematic "cluster" headings to organise the information we provide to the UN Committee. These cluster headings are set by the UN Committee, based on groups of articles, to ensure all children's rights are reported on. The thematic cluster headings are:

- A. General measures of implementation (arts.4, 42 and 44(6))
- B. Definition of the child (art.1)
- C. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7,8 and 13-17)
- D. Violence against children (arts.19, 24(3), 28(2), 34, 37(a) and 39)
- E. Family Environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9-11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27(4))
- F. Children with disabilities (art.23)
- G. Basic health and welfare (arts.6, 18 (3), 24, 26, 27 (1) - (3) and 33)
- H. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28 - 31)

- I. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b) – (d) and 38 – 40)

We also need to report on two optional protocols to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict,

Thematic reports can also be provided on issues for a particular group of children (for example, children with disability or children in State care) or about a cross cutting issue, such as climate change.

## The steps in the reporting process

- The Children’s Rights Alliance and others, such as the Children’s Commissioner, report to the Committee on the key children’s rights issues in Aotearoa.
- Using the information provided, the Committee develops a list of up to 30 issues for the Government to report on, called the List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR).
- The Government has 12 months to provide a written report to the Committee, responding to the LOIPR. This is the Government’s periodic report on children’s rights.
- The Children’s Rights Alliance reports to the Committee to
  - provide supplementary information
  - comment on the Government’s report
  - suggest issues for the Committee to discuss with the Government
  - propose recommendations the Committee could consider making to the Government.
- The Children’s Rights Alliance meets with the UN Committee to answer questions and help the Committee prepare for its examination of Aotearoa’s progress on children’s rights - the Pre-session.
- The Government appears before the Committee to discuss progress on children’s rights in Aotearoa – the Session.
- The Committee issues Concluding Observations to the Government, recommending what should be done to realise children’s rights in Aotearoa.

Find out more about the [reporting process](#).

## Reporting timetable

The reporting process is a five year cycle. The reporting timetable for this, our 6<sup>th</sup> periodic reporting cycle, is:

- 1 March 2020: the Alliance submitted its [LOIPR report](#) to the UN Committee.
- June 2020: the Alliance submitted a [supplementary report](#) to the UN Committee on the impact of COVID-19 on children in Aotearoa.
- October 2021: the Government’s report is due with the UN Committee.
- 1 December 2021: the Alliance plans to submit its main report to the UN Committee.



- February 2022: Aotearoa's Pre-session, where the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child will meet with the representatives of the Alliance and other civil society organisations and individuals to prepare for examining Aotearoa's progress on children's rights.
- May 2022: Aotearoa's Session, where UN Committee will meet with a Government delegation to examine Aotearoa's progress on children's rights. Representatives of the Alliance will attend as observers.

It is likely that both the Pre-session and the Session will be held virtually this reporting round.

## Key issues

While recognising all children's rights issues are important, to help provide a strategic focus for our collective advocacy over the next 5 year reporting cycle, the Children's Rights Alliance has identified seven current priorities for making children's rights real in Aotearoa. (Please note these are subject to change as our reporting is finalised over the coming months):

- Greater respect for the rights of tamariki Māori as tāngata whenua and under the Children's Convention
- An end to discrimination, including racism, so the rights of all children are upheld equally.
- Greater efforts to protect all children from violence and abuse, in all circumstances, including through initiatives to better understand and prevent violence.
- A supportive environment for families, so that all children can know and, as far as possible, be cared for by their families. We want to see children's rights advanced and upheld in:
  - Oranga Tamariki
  - Adoption law reform.
- An adequate standard of living and good health for all children, with a priority focus on
  - children's mental health
  - timely access to quality health services for all children
  - warm, safe housing
  - nutritious food.
- Adequate protections for children who work and the removal of Aotearoa's reservation to Article 32(2).
- An increase in the minimum age of criminal responsibility, an end to detention of young people in Police custody, and an end to the use of physical restraints in detention. Removal of Aotearoa's reservation to Article 37(c).

## How can Children's Rights Alliance members, and others with an interest in children's rights in Aotearoa, be involved?

There are several ways to be involved in monitoring and reporting on children's rights. We recognise how busy everyone is, especially in these uncertain times, and all contributions, big and small, are welcome.

### Contribute to the Alliance's comprehensive report

One way to be involved in children's rights reporting is to contribute to the Children's Rights Alliance's reports by sharing your views and insights as to how well the rights of children and tamariki are being respected and applied, in practice, in Aotearoa.

If you would like to part of developing the Alliance's report then [please contact us at: info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz](mailto:info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz)

### Submit a thematic report

Alternatively, you may want to write a thematic report on a cross-cutting issue for children's rights in Aotearoa. These are due to the Committee on 1 January 2022 and have a 6,000 word limit. The Children's Rights Alliance would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with those wanting to develop and submit thematic reports on cross-cutting issues for children in Aotearoa.

### Support children, tamariki and rangatahi to share their views and ideas with the UN Committee

Being heard and taken seriously is central to the realisation of all rights of children, tamariki and rangatahi.

The UN Committee and the Children's Rights Alliance encourages children, tamariki and rangatahi to **be as creative as they like** and to share their views in any format and language they wish. For example:

Film or video; Spoken Word; photography; art work; waiata / songs and/or lyrics; written text; first person narrative, case studies, factual reports, poetry, survey findings...and more.

If you are interested, or would like more information or support with this, please contact us at: [info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz](mailto:info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz)



## Children's Convention Monitoring Group

Our mahi as a member of the Children's Convention Monitoring Group (CMG) has formed a key element of the Alliance's activity during the 2020/21 year.

Convened by the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the CMG is a collective made up of the Independent Crown entities monitoring children's and human rights in Aotearoa, alongside the international children's organisations represented in New Zealand, and the Alliance as the group representing civil society.

The Alliance has been a member of the CMG since its establishment in 2011, alongside the Te Kāhui Tika Tangata the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, Save the Children New Zealand and UNICEF New Zealand.

The CMG has the mandate to monitor the New Zealand Government's implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols and the Government's response to recommendations from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The CMG functions under a Terms of Reference, adopted in 2017 (and reviewed and amended in 2020), and meets regularly throughout the year to monitor and review New Zealand's progress towards implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in New Zealand.

The CMG also meets twice a year with the Children's Convention Deputy Chief Executives Group (the DCEs Group). The DCEs Group is the coordinating mechanism for the Government with regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Meetings between the CMG and the DCEs Group provide a standing forum for discussing how the Government is advancing the rights of children in line with the Convention. The Monitoring Group and the DCEs Group signed a Terms of Engagement in March 2018.

### Main CMG activities during 2020/21, and Children's Rights Alliance contribution and involvement

Despite the disruptive nature of the pandemic in Aotearoa, the CMG has again this year been an important forum through which the Alliance has been able to have impact for children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Alliance has been involved in and contributed to all aspects of the CMG's mahi during the year, to monitor implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in Aotearoa, and to advance, promote and progress this.

Particular highlights to note during the 2020-21 year are:

- Publication of a new CMG Report published in the 'Getting it Right' Series, entitled '*Children's Rights in the COVID-19 Response*'. This is the third report published by the CMG in the Getting it Right Series. Through the report and the follow-up mahi undertaken by the CMG since publication, the CMG places a focus on what has worked for children in the COVID-19 response and recommends ways to better implement children's rights in laws, policies and practices.
- The Alliance has played a key role in leading CMG advocacy to the Government on ratifying the third Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Optional Protocol relates to a communications procedure which enables children and groups of children to make direct complaints regarding their rights under the Convention to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Complaints to the Committee can only be made by children (or their representatives) after domestic remedies have been exhausted. The Alliance is encouraged by the

engagement with government that has occurred on this kaupapa during the past year, and we continue, through the CMG, to be available to give advice to government on New Zealand's future ratification of the Optional Protocol.

- The CMG has also this past year been advocating strongly to the Government on lifting its reservations to the Children's Convention. The Alliance has played a key role in contributing to and in some instances leading this advocacy, in particular through the DCEs Group Forum.
- Throughout the year, the CMG has been providing advice on how the rights of the child are adequately embedded and applied across all areas of the New Zealand Child Wellbeing Strategy.
- Throughout the year, the CMG has continued to push for Government to take steps to advance children's rights training for public servants working in policy roles, and the wider promotion and use of the Child Impact Assessment tool.
- Throughout the year, the CMG has focused on how the rights of tamariki and mokopuna Māori under the Children's Convention and Te Tiriti o Waitangi are promoted and upheld through its mahi, which the Alliance has been supportive of.

Activity reports published by the OCC covering all CMG activity during the 2020-21 year can be found [here](#), under 'Quarterly Activity Reports'.

## Looking ahead

The CMG continues to be an important forum through which the Children's Rights Alliance contributes to the monitoring and promotion of children's rights implementation and progress in Aotearoa, on behalf of civil society.

We acknowledge the leadership of Judge Andrew Becroft, Children's Commissioner and the way that he has worked collaboratively in partnership with other members of the CMG during his term as Children's Commissioner. We look forward to a strong focus on promoting and protecting children's rights in Aotearoa being continued by the next Children's Commissioner, and the Alliance will continue to be an active member of the CMG as this mahi continues. We have also been grateful for the opportunities the Alliance has had through the CMG this past year to work with Glenis Phillip-Barbara, Kaikōmihana Māori mō ngā tamariki o Aotearoa. We look forward to continuing mahi together with Glenis through the CMG with a focus on tamariki and mokopuna.

Looking ahead, a significant focus at the CMG will be on preparing for New Zealand's sixth periodic reporting cycle to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. A key element of this will be supporting children's reporting to the Committee as part of the process, as an expression of their right to participate under Article 12 of the Children's Convention.



## Thank you and kia ora to our funders, members and supporters!

The Children's Rights Alliance would like to thank all those who have contributed to and supported our work over this year.

We would particularly like to acknowledge the generous support of the JR McKenzie Trust, who have provided funding, guidance and, through meeting their other Kaikōkiri, connections and inspiration over this year and the entire five years of our grant.

We would also like to acknowledge the continued support of Save the Children who, in addition to administrative support, continue to share their people, expertise and insights with us.

Thank you to Sarah Morris, Erin Gough, and Ruby Sands at the Office of the Children's Commissioner, who have continued to steer the CMG forward with warmth, energy and professionalism.

We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Children's Commissioner, Judge Andrew Becroft, as he nears the end of his term of Office. Judge Becroft began as Commissioner in 2016, just as Aotearoa was presenting its 5<sup>th</sup> periodic report to the United Nations, and during his term he has worked tirelessly and passionately to advance and monitor children's rights. We will miss him, the generous way he shares his knowledge and commitment to children, and his T-shirts!

Many thanks to the organisations and individuals who have given their time and expertise to support our work over the last year especially drafting of our sixth periodic report, including Child Poverty Action Group, Barnardos, Kids on Screen - the New Zealand Children's Screen Trust, IHC, Cure Kids, Te Ngākau Kahukura, Peace Movement Aotearoa, Talking Trouble, OMEP and IPA, YouthLine and Backbone Collective.

And lastly, but by no means least, a huge thank you to our members, past and present. Our work builds on the work of many, over many years, to advance and uphold children's rights. It is a privilege to work together on this shared kaupapa.



## Get in touch with the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa

To find out more about being involved in the reporting process and joining the Children's Rights Alliance please get in touch in one of the following ways:

Email us: [info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz](mailto:info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz)

Visit our website: <https://www.childrensrightsalliance.org.nz>

