

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

Annual Report
2021/22

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.

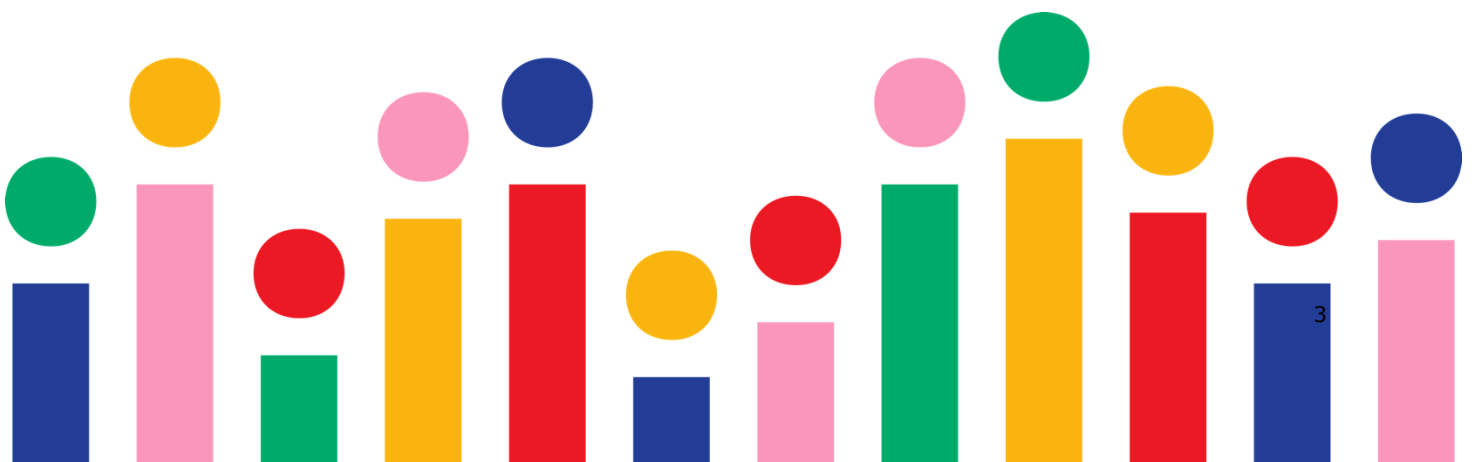
The Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand is a civil society coalition committed to protecting and promoting children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our work builds on the work of many who have come before us.

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

Children’s Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand Annual Report 2021-2022

Contents

- Chairperson’s Report.....4
- Treasurer’s Report.....6
- About Us – Our Strategic Framework.....8
- Introduction to the Team.....9
- Reporting on Children’s Rights14
- Children’s Convention Monitoring Group.....18
- Acknowledgements.....21



Chairperson's report

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa,

I would like to begin my report in the usual way 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. 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. This year we have had two new members on our Steering Committee, Belinda Tauri-Toma and Sarah Te One. Belinda is an advocate for tamariki and rangatahi oranga, hauora Māori whānau, hapū policy, and kaitiaki of rongoā Māori mātauranga. Although she is new to our steering committee, members of the steering committee have worked with her in the past during her time at Unicef New Zealand.

Sarah Te One is not so new to the Alliance either, Sarah has been a long-standing member and a previous chair of the Alliance in our ACYA days. She has an extensive background in the education sector from early years' education to working in the tertiary sector. We are very happy to have her and her extensive experience in children's rights, research and education back on the Steering Committee.

At this year's Annual General Meeting we will say goodbye to one of our steering committee members, Deb Inder. We have greatly appreciated expertise on children's participation and the family justice system in the time she has been on the steering committee. We look forward to continuing to work together in the years ahead in other ways.

We have also been incredibly lucky to have our Executive Director Andy's extensive experience guiding us through the reporting process in what has been a really busy year. I'm sure that all of our members have seen Andy's hard work and expertise first hand and I want to both formally acknowledge her personal and professional commitment to children's rights and thank her for all of her work over the last year.

In the 2021-2022 year our work was focussed on preparation for the sixth reporting round to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child including drafting the comprehensive report on New Zealand's compliance with the UN Convention. This included meetings in person and on-line to engage with civil society on the reporting process and to work together with our members and other organisations and individuals to contribute to the reporting process either through the comprehensive report or through thematic reports. The reporting process is discussed in more detail at pages 14 to 17 including what will happen over the coming months. We are incredibly grateful to all those who contributed to it in many and various ways.

Our work on the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System and Children and Young People's Commission Bill was another key piece of advocacy for us in the 2021/2022 financial year. We both led the development of a joint children's sector submission and collaborative advocacy as well as making our own submission on the Bill. Like many others in the children's sector, we were disappointed to see the Bill pass with only fairly minor amendments. However, we will continue to work with others in the sector to advocate for children's rights as the new legislation is comes into full force and effect over the coming year.

Another piece of advocacy work that was more successful is our complaint to the Broadcasting Standards Authority in relation to media coverage of a child under the care

of Oranga Tamariki, who was effectively 'living' in a WDHB hospital because Oranga Tamariki was unable to find them a placement.

We have also continued to engage 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 18 to 20. Our sincere thanks to Sarah Morris, Erin Gough and more recently Lauren Rutter from the Children's Commissioner's Office who have all done outstanding work over the last year co-ordinating and leading the CMG's work to advance and monitor the Convention. I also want to acknowledge the incredible work done by the outgoing Children's Commissioner Judge Andrew Becroft and the Assistant Children's Commissioner Māori Glenis Phillips-Barbara over their respective terms to advance and protect children's rights. We now welcome the not so new Children's Commissioner Judge Frances Eivers and look forward to working together with over the coming months around the reporting process and more generally.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jennifer Braithwaite', written in a cursive style.

Jennifer Braithwaite
Chairperson

Treasurer's report

The report is for the period ending 31 June 2022. A copy of the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (CRAANZ) 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.

An amount of **\$690 (2021: \$210)** was generated from donations and memberships paid to CRAANZ by organisation and individual members.

Total income for the year ending 30 June 2021 amounted to **\$845 (2021: \$61,260)**.

CRAANZ would like to acknowledge and thank every **volunteer** for their input into the governance and work programme of the organisation. Your support remains a huge and highly important resource to the organisation.

Expenditure

Total **expenditure** for the year ending 30 June 2022 amounted to \$37,691 (2021: \$50,678).

Projects and strategy

Total expenditure of \$35,920 (2021: \$44,340) comprised of:

- Engaging and supporting civil society on the UN reporting process and gathered information on children's issues for the report submitted to the UN on 15 August 2022.
- CRAANZ continued work giving effect to our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and children's participation.
- We actively contributed to on-going monitoring Aotearoa New Zealand's progress on children's rights via the Children's Convention Monitoring Group.
- Led the development of a joint children's sector submission and advocacy on the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System and Young People's Bill.

Meetings

- 2022: \$0 (2021 \$4,461) for steering committee meetings – meetings were held online this year.
- 2022: \$345 (2021: \$0), no cost were incurred for the online 2021 AGM.

Operating expenses

- \$1,161 (2021: \$1,375) for Accounting services and package, bank fees (\$40) and minor administrative fees (\$51);
- \$174 (2021: \$320) for website hosting.

Current Financial Position

This year the Children's Rights Alliance is reporting a **deficit** of **\$35,846** and **retained earnings** of **\$96,352**.

The retained earnings comprise cash funds of **\$96,352** held in the ASB account. The retained earnings will be utilised for the presentation of the 6th consolidated non-government, civil society report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and continued advocacy for children's rights implementation in Aotearoa, including through action on the recommendations from the UN Committee (due January 2023). We will also continue our work to strengthen the organisation and build our membership to ensure the CRAANZ is well placed to continue our work to monitor, report on and advocate for children's rights throughout the next children's rights reporting cycle (the 7th), which begins in January 2023. (Noting this will now be an 8 year reporting cycle with a 4 year mid-term review of progress.)

I move that **Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand's Financial report and Tier 4 Performance Report** for the year ended 30 June 2022 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

Purpose	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.
What we want to see	An Aotearoa that actively respects and realises the rights of all children.
How we will get there	<p>Together, we work to make a difference for children by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing understanding about children's rights • Working to put children's rights into practice • Reporting on progress on children's rights • Working so all children can actively participate in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their own lives • the things that matter to them. <p>All rights. All children. All circumstances.</p>
Values	<p>Our values guide the work we do and the ways we work together. They are:</p> <p>Aroha Te ira tangata Tika Pono Whanaungatanga Manaakitanga</p>
Strategic Objectives 2021- 2023	<p>The current strategic objectives of the Children's Rights Alliance are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Priority for 2021-2022	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.

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 Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions as well as 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.



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.



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.



Sarah Te One

Sarah Te One is the Senior Researcher at CORE Education|Tātāi Aho Rau. She has a background in early years education where she has been a lecturer, professional development facilitator and researcher in several organisations including the Office of the Children's Commissioner. In her roles in tertiary education, Sarah used the Children's Convention as a platform for discussing current issues facing children and introducing the role of advocates in education. Sarah's PhD investigated perceptions of children's rights in early learning services and she continues to promote a child rights framework in her current research projects, not all of which are in education. Sarah has been a long-standing member of the Alliance and contributed thematic papers and sections on education to the main reports to the UN Committee. She was the Chair of AYCA during the 2015/2016 reporting period. Sarah remains an



interested and committed advocate for all children's rights

Belinda Tuari-Toma

He uri ahau no Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Tūwharetoa me Te whenua Moemoea hoki.

Belinda is an advocate for tamariki and rangatahi oranga, hauora Māori whānau, hapū policy, and kaitiaki of rongoā Māori mātauranga. Her contributions include a kaiarahi for Tū Kotahi Māori Asthma and Research Trust Keriana Olsen Kokiri Marae, support advisor for New Zealand Breastfeeding Alliance and rongoā Māori director for Te Pūtoiora Trust. Belinda's previous mahi included policy analyst health advice for nurses with the New Zealand Nurses Organisation, including Te Puni Kōkiri, and as the Māori tamariki advocate and policy advisor for Unicef New Zealand.



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 at 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 an opportunity to take stock of how well the rights of all our pēpe, tamariki and rangatahi have progressed, 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 on progress to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The UN Committee 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. This is our role as an Alliance and reporting on children's rights is a central part of our work.

Civil society reports, like ours, aim to tell a story, or paint a picture, of how life is for children, while recognising that 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 about what is going well, and where improvements are needed, to realise all rights, for all children, and in all circumstances. 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.

We had much support in compiling our report. Thank you to the many people and organisations who shared their time, knowledge and insights with us. Our report very much reflects a collective effort.

As well as monitoring what has happened for children over the previous five years, our report lays the foundations for our on-going advocacy for children because it informs the recommendations from the UN Committee. There have been changes to the reporting cycle this year - our next report cycle will be 8 years, instead of the current 5, with a mid-cycle review in 4 years. This has implications for the sort of recommendations we seek from the UN Committee.

The stories we are tell in our reporting belong, ultimately, to children and shape how they are seen and treated. It is important that space is created for pēpē, tamariki and rangatahi to share and shape their own stories, themselves. This is an area of the Alliance's mahi that we hope to strengthen. We acknowledge the work of the Children's Commissioner's Office, especially the Mai World team, for all they have done over this year to gather and share the views of children, including through their Mokopuna Voices report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Our 2022 report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Drafting our sixth periodic alternative report to the UN has been a priority for the Alliance over the 2021/22 year. Our comprehensive report to the United Nations, originally due in December 2021, was submitted on time in August 2022 after COVID related delays at the UN. It is available on our [website](#).

In our report we endeavoured to identify and document children's rights issues in ways that signpost a way forward and lift up all our pēpē, tamariki and rangatahi, so that, daily, each and every child has what they need, including a sense of belonging and worth, and is treated with dignity and respect, now and in the future. We want to use our report to help build hope and opportunity for all children in Aotearoa as, together, we strive to give effect to the Children's Convention (CRC) during these challenging times.

Like their peers globally, our tamariki in Aotearoa are deeply affected by the challenges facing the world and this country. Poverty, inequality, violence, racism and the changing climate touch the lives of children in Aotearoa daily. Yet, too often, children remain largely invisible in the public policy discussions and developments on key issues. While the increased focus on children and their wellbeing in recent years has been a positive

and welcome development, our report demonstrated that Aotearoa is yet to reach a point where children as a population, and groups of children, are routinely considered when laws and policies are developed, and their views heard and taken seriously.

Our report illustrates that greater priority needs to be given to all rights, for all children in Aotearoa, in all circumstances. This requires improved awareness and understanding, particularly amongst decision-makers, about how children's rights can be applied and woven through the work of government at all levels, to support better experiences and outcomes for children from the very start of life and throughout all stages of childhood.

We suggest that Government's limited capacity to focus attention to children's issues has been demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic response. Although Government's public-health-focused and evidence-informed response limited the pandemic's impact, COVID-19 has exposed and, in some instances, exacerbated existing inequities in the realisation of children's rights.

The pandemic has also provided a glimpse of how, if children's rights are taken seriously and systematically implemented, there are opportunities to improve the lives of all children, now and in the future. These opportunities lie in holistic, child and community-led approaches that enable all pēpē, tamariki and rangatahi to belong, to be well cared for, and to be active participants in their own lives and the lives of those around them.

Addressing inequities in the realisation and experience of children's rights in Aotearoa is a strong theme of our 2022 report, as it has been for each of our previous reports. Significant socio-economic inequalities exist with knock-on effects for all children's rights, their experiences and outcomes. Unless prevented, climate change will exacerbate these inequities. Aotearoa needs to address discrimination, including racism, and actively work towards the rights of all children being upheld equally; to hold children central in climate change adaptation and mitigation, prioritising their future.

The unique rights of tamariki Māori

In our report we endorsed the Rights of Tamariki Māori Thematic Report prepared by Rights of Tamariki Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand Thematic Report, submitted by Te Puna Rangahau o Te Wai Ariki | Aotearoa New Zealand Centre for Indigenous Peoples and the Law, and call for greater respect for the unique rights of tamariki Māori across all cluster headings.

In Aotearoa, understanding and respecting the rights of tamariki Māori is critical to meeting CRC obligations. In addition to the rights that tamariki Māori hold with all children under the CRC, Tamariki Māori hold unique rights and protections that are especial to them as:

- The tangata whenua of Aotearoa in accordance with te ao Māori, including, in particular, tikanga Māori.
- Partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Māori language version of the Treaty of Waitangi signed between representatives of Māori and the British Crown in 1840.
- Indigenous children to whom all rights as Indigenous peoples under international law, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), attach.

Government has specific duties and obligations to tamariki Māori due to these unique rights and protections, that are additional to the duties and obligations it owes to all children of Aotearoa.

Priority Issues

Our report identifies the following issues as priorities for CRC implementation in Aotearoa:

- Greater efforts to respect and uphold all rights of tamariki Māori, recognising tamariki Māori rights in te ao Māori, under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the UNDRIP, and the CRC.
- Greater efforts to protect all children from violence and abuse, in all circumstances, including through initiatives to better understand, prevent and respond to violence.
- A supportive environment for families, so that all children can know and, as far as possible, be cared for by their families and whānau. We want to see children's rights advanced and upheld in:
 - Oranga Tamariki changes.
 - Adoption and surrogacy law reform.
- An adequate standard of living and good health for all children, with a priority focus on:
 - children's mental health and wellbeing.
 - timely access to quality health services for all children.
 - warm, safe, affordable housing.
 - nutritious food.
- Mechanisms to ensure that children and their rights are central to climate change policy (mitigation and adaptation) and climate justice initiatives; and that children are listened to and respected as active change agents on climate change.
- Adequate protections for children who work and the removal of Aotearoa's reservation to Article 32(2).
- An immediate increase to the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14, and to 16 over time; inclusion of all 17-year-olds in the youth justice system; an end to the detention of young people in Police custody and the use of physical restraints in detention; and the removal of Aotearoa's reservation to Article 37(c).

The steps in the reporting process

Now that our alternative report has been submitted, the next steps in the reporting process are:

- **September 2022**- the Pre-session - the Children's Rights Alliance and other civil society organisations, together with the Children's Commissioner and Human Rights Commission, meet with the UN Committee to answer questions and help the Committee prepare for its examination of Aotearoa's progress on children's rights.
- **January 2023** – the Session - the Government appears before the Committee to discuss progress on children's rights in Aotearoa.

- **January/February 2023** - 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](#).

Looking ahead

Over the last 30 years, since ratification, there has been slow, piecemeal, positive change for children in Aotearoa. A stronger focus on children's rights is required. We are hopeful that during the next reporting cycle we will see a more constant and concerted effort to advance and uphold all rights of all children in Aotearoa, in all circumstances.

Work on our 7th children's rights report effectively starts as soon as the concluding observations and recommendations of the UN Committee are released in early 2023, providing an opportunity to continue working together to advance and protect the rights and wellbeing of all children in Aotearoa, whatever the future brings.

Children's Convention Monitoring Group

As a member of the Children's Convention Monitoring Group (CMG), the Alliance has again this year contributed to progressing children's rights monitoring and implementation through this key rōpū. The mahi we have undertaken with and through the CMG has formed a key element of the Alliance's activity during the 2021/22 year.

Background to the CMG

Convened by the Children's Commissioner, under the Commissioner's statutory mandate to advance and monitor the application of the Children's Convention, the CMG's members include the Independent Crown entities monitoring children's and human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand, 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 monitors the New Zealand Government's implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocols to the CRC 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](#), 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.

Key CMG activities during 2020/21 and the Alliance's contribution and involvement

Over the course of the year, the CMG has undertaken some key activities and initiatives to monitor and progress implementation of children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. Of particular note have been the following activities and initiatives:

- **Monitoring and advocating on the rights of children in the COVID-19 pandemic.** Building on the CMG report published in early 2021, [Getting it right: Children's rights in the COVID-19 response](#), during the past year the CMG has continued to monitor the situation of children in the pandemic in Aotearoa New Zealand, and advocate to Government on ways to prioritise and implement the rights of all children in the context of the pandemic.
- **Successfully advocating to the Government for New Zealand to accede to the Third Optional Protocol to the CRC, on a communications procedure (OP3).** The Alliance has consistently taken a lead role on this issue over the past three years. This included making a written and oral submission to the Foreign Affairs and Trade Select Committee to inform its international treaty examination of the Optional Protocol (we made this submission jointly with Save the Children New Zealand and UNICEF New Zealand). The Committee affirmed the need for a

holistic approach to children's rights, and recommended Government consider ways that resources can be made available to support individuals or groups who may wish to bring a claim to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child if New Zealand accedes to the optional protocol. We are pleased that the Government is giving consideration to steps to support New Zealand's accession to OP3.

- **Contributing to strengthening the connections between the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.** Through this focus of the CMG's mahi, the Alliance has played an instrumental role, for example, in the review of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, and in advising the Ministerial Group for the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, convened by the Prime Minister, whom we met with in March 2022. This has included on children's rights issues such as children's mental health, the rights of children in work, children's participation rights, the rights of children in emergencies (such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic), and advocating for the lifting of New Zealand's reservations under the CRC.
- **Advocating for the lifting of New Zealand's CRC reservations.** The CMG has continued to advocate for the Government to lift all of New Zealand's reservations to the CRC. Again this past year, the Alliance has taken a key role on this kaupapa. We are pleased that the Government is actively considering the lifting of reservations, and note that the lifting of reservations was a Labour Party Manifesto commitment.
- **Reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.** Through the CMG, as well as independently, the Alliance has over the course of the year provided key advisory and support on the reporting process under the CRC to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Working together with and through the CMG, including with the government DCE's group, has been a key aspect of the Alliance's reporting mahi this past year, as we prepare for the 6th periodic reporting cycle to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This has included providing comprehensive feedback on the Government's draft report to the Committee, in addition to the preparation of civil society reports.

Farewelling a Children's Commissioner, Welcoming a Children's Commissioner

In late 2021 the CMG farewelled Judge Andrew Becroft, the outgoing Children's Commissioner. Judge Becroft's contribution to the kaupapa of the CMG and the strengthening of the CMG has been significant. During his time as Children's Commissioner, he led the CMG with unwavering commitment to the monitoring and advancement of children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. In particular, the Alliance acknowledges the actions of Judge Becroft to shape and strengthen the CMG's Terms of Reference, the lead he played in strengthening the relationship between the CMG and the DCE's Group, and his active contributions to the children's rights mahi undertaken by the CMG on a range of kaupapa.

The CMG also farewelled Glenis Phillip-Barbara, Kaikōmihana Māori mō ngā tamariki ō Aotearoa this past year, as she moved on to a new role outside of OCC. The Alliance has been grateful for opportunities to work alongside Glenis in this mahi, and especially acknowledge her contribution to the CMG's mahi which has been undertaken with a focus

on children's rights monitoring and advancement under the CRC, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

As a member of the CMG, the Alliance was very pleased to welcome Judge Frances Eivers to the CMG following on from her taking up the role of Children's Commissioner in November 2021. We welcome Judge Eivers' commitment as Children's Commissioner to the kaupapa of children's rights and the ongoing strengthening of the mahi of the CMG, and are looking forward to continuing to work alongside her in the CMG's future work.

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 envisage that a key focus of the CMG over the coming year will continue to be the 6th reporting cycle under the CRC. As a CMG member, the Alliance looks forward to constructively working with the DCE's Group as we monitor the Government's implementation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's forthcoming recommendations in its concluding observations, expected in 2023.



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, Lauren Rutter and Martini Miller-Panapa at the Office of the Children's Commissioner, who have continued to steer the CMG forward with warmth, energy and professionalism.

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 Amnesty International Aotearoa New Zealand, Ara Taiohi, Barnardos, Child Poverty Action Group, Cure Kids, IHC, International Play Association Aotearoa New Zealand, New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, OMEP Aotearoa, OraTaiao:NZ Climate and Health Council, KidsOnScreen:The New Zealand Children's Screen Trust, Save the Children New Zealand, Social Service Providers Aotearoa, Te Ngākau Kaukura, Te Puna Rangahau o Te Wai Ariki:Aotearoa New Zealand Centre for Indigenous Peoples and the Law, UNICEF Aotearoa, VOYCE-Whakarongo Mai, Whānau Āwhina Plunket, YouthLaw, Youthline and others, as well as individuals committed to advancing children's rights in Aotearoa.

We would particularly like to acknowledge Claire Mason and her colleagues at Te Puna Rangahau o Te Wai Ariki: Aotearoa New Zealand Centre for Indigenous Peoples and the Law for the generous way they have contributed to growing our collective understanding about the unique rights of tamariki Māori in Aotearoa.

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

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

