

Hon Kelvin Davis

MP for Te Tai Tokerau

Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti

Minister for Children

Minister of Corrections

Associate Minister of Education (Māori Education)



01 November 2022

Tā Mark Solomon

Chair, Oranga Tamariki Ministerial Advisory Board

By email: ta.marksolomon@gmail.com

Tēnā koe Tā Mark

Te Kahu Aroha: addendum report on quality support and service outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi whaikaha, their whānau, parents and caregivers

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2022 and report *Te Kahu Aroha: addendum report on quality support and service outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi whaikaha, their whānau, parents and caregivers*. This letter confirms my agreement to the seven recommendations in your report, including the work I have asked Oranga Tamariki to progress in response to the findings outlined in the report.

I agree that the needs of tamariki and rangatahi whaikaha, their whānau, parents and caregivers are not consistently being met by the disability sector, and I welcome the Board's identification of the system barriers which have led to these unmet needs.

I acknowledge the importance of agencies within the sector working together to address these barriers and agree that the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, and the shared commitment of children's agencies to the tamariki and rangatahi whaikaha it outlines, will have a central role in enabling this.

You will be aware of the acknowledgements made by Chappie Te Kani, Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), at the recent Crown Accountability Hearing of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into State Care and Faith-Based Institutions. Mr Te Kani observed:

"the care and protection system between 1950 and 1999 was ableist, did not always meet the needs of disabled children and children with mental health conditions and that those children often experienced discrimination and unfair treatment as a result of their disability. I also acknowledge that many deaf children, in particular, were denied their language and their place in their community. These impacts are ongoing and have also impacted their families."

I acknowledge the importance of continuing to improve disability literacy across the children's system, including within Oranga Tamariki. I welcome the report recommendations being framed within the context of Oranga Tamariki implementing the Future Direction Plan. This sets out how Oranga Tamariki is shifting to be an enabler for communities and a high-performing statutory care and protection agency.

Work to implement the Future Direction Plan is well underway, and this includes continuing to progress development of the Oranga Tamariki Disability Strategy with partners across the disabilities sector. It is my expectation that Oranga Tamariki will undertake this work with urgency.

The appointment of a Disability Advisory Group within Oranga Tamariki is a significant milestone and Oranga Tamariki was grateful to have Board member, Dr Ruth Jones, present at the recent mihi whakatau to welcome the group. I am advised that the depth of knowledge, commitment and experience these members will bring to the work in Oranga Tamariki is of an extremely high quality and I am certain this will only strength the way Oranga Tamariki responds to what your review found.

I have shared this report with my colleague Hon Poto Williams, Associate Minister for Children and Minister for Disabilities. I have also forwarded the report to my colleagues whose portfolios share responsibility for achieving the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, considering the system-wide responsibilities for supporting positive outcomes for disabled people.

I request you include progress against these seven recommendations in your future quarterly assurance reports to me.

Thank you for your commitment to this work, and for continuing to provide independent advice and assurance to me on how the Crown can improve outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi whaikaha, their whānau, parents and caregivers.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelvin Davis', with a small mark above the 'i'.

Hon Kelvin Davis
Minister for Children