



AIDE-MEMOIRE

Strengthening independent oversight of the Oranga Tamariki system and of children's issues

Date: 31 August 2018

For: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of State Services

Report No: SSC2018/879

IN CONFIDENCE

Strengthening independent oversight of the Oranga Tamariki system and of children's issues

Purpose	To draw your attention to the State Services portfolio implications of the attached briefing from the Ministry of Social Development.
Proposal	<p>The briefing appends and summarises Sandi Beatie's report following the consultation process agreed by SWC in March 2018 [SWC 18-MIN-0025 refers] and proposes next steps in engagement, analysis and decision-making.</p> <p>We recommend that you support the proposed next steps.</p>
Key issues	<p>The work from here will need to keep the current Children's Commissioner informed and engaged. It also needs to progress at pace to enable other decisions to be taken by their deadlines, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • priorities for Budget 2019 • what to do when the Commissioner's term ends in March 2019 • who the Minister for Children should appoint as the independent monitor for National Care Standards by July 2019.
Our advice	<p>SSC has been working with the MSD project team throughout this review and has had ample input into the briefing.</p> <p>We see independent oversight of the system for vulnerable children (particularly those in State care) as a critical element in protecting those children from abuse and improving their future life outcomes.</p> <p>Current oversight is under-resourced and the institutional arrangements (relying on a Children's Commissioner sole with a wide range of functions) are unclear and result in inconsistent practice. At the least, the Children's Commissioner Act requires rewriting to clarify the various roles and reflect the current context.</p> <p>We will be working with MSD on the further analysis required to determine the best options for institutional arrangements for the oversight functions, aiming for Cabinet consideration in early November. The consultation has essentially confirmed the team's analysis of what functions need to be undertaken. A key</p>

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issue is whether all oversight functions should remain together (undertaken by the Children's Commissioner) or some allocated to other agencies.

We recommend

- that you release this aide-memoire in full alongside any proactive release once Cabinet has taken the related decisions on future arrangements for independent oversight of the children's system.

Agree/disagree.

Proactive Release

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of State Services

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