



## Media Release – For immediate release

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### **Social Service Providers Aotearoa says *Te Kahu Aroha* report an opportunity to work collectively for children, rangatahi and whānau**

Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA), the national membership-based organisation representing over 200 NGO social service organisations, welcomes today's release of *Hipokingia ki te Kahu Aroha Hipokingia ki te katoa*.

Dr Claire Achmad, SSPA Chief Executive, says that the publication of the report by the Ministerial Advisory Board to Minister Kelvin Davis, Minister for Children, highlights the importance of strengthening families and whānau, so that children and rangatahi can grow up loved, cared for and safe from harm and neglect.

"In *Te Kahu Aroha*, we have four eminent Māori leaders shining a light on the importance of ensuring all our children and rangatahi can grow up safe and well, nestled within the security of whānau. It shows the work that is ahead of Oranga Tamariki as the statutory care and protection agency, and for all of us working collectively in the social sector and wider care and protection system, to prevent harm from occurring in the first place. SSPA sees this as an opportunity to do things differently through shared decision-making, equitable sharing of resources, and Māori and community-focused mahi. SSPA sees the urgency involved, because this is about the lives of whānau, children and rangatahi", Dr Achmad says.

SSPA welcomes the Ministerial Advisory Board's recommendations relating to relationships between whānau, hapū and Iwi and Oranga Tamariki, and prioritising professional social work practice throughout the organisation, for the benefit of tamariki and whānau outcomes. SSPA believes that all children and rangatahi who are in Oranga Tamariki care should be safe while in care, experiencing all of their rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. SSPA says there is a lot announced today that aligns with the SSPA *Agenda for Change*, put together with SSPA members from throughout Aotearoa in 2020.

SSPA also welcomes the recommendation for a whole-of-system workforce development plan and addressing pay equity, and the strong focus on enabling Māori collectives and communities to lead preventative mahi to keep children and rangatahi safe from harm, and to strengthen families and whānau. Dr Achmad says that "SSPA members are NGO, Iwi and kaupapa Māori organisations providing social services to children, rangatahi and whānau every day, at all points of the child protection spectrum, from Te Tai Tokerau to the deep South. SSPA member organisations have vast expertise and skill in prevention mahi to strengthen families and whānau and help to keep children and rangatahi safe. Our members will be able to play a key role in contributing to delivering on the vision of *Te Kahu Aroha*, by working in community-based approaches with whānau, Iwi and hapū, with each other and with Oranga Tamariki."

SSPA has members in every region of Aotearoa and says that the regional ways of working envisaged by *Te Kahu Aroha* resonate. "SSPA member organisations range from small to large, specialist to generalist, rural to urban. But there are two things they have in common: they all put children and whānau at the centre of their mahi every day, and they are all deeply rooted in and trusted by their local communities. SSPA member organisations will be able to make a strong contribution to the regional approach envisaged for Oranga Tamariki, as a part of collective prevention and response to keep children and tamariki safe and thriving", Dr Achmad says.

Dr Achmad says that SSPA is keen to support the community engagement process relating to collective preventative work to keep children and rangatahi safe, so that all families and whānau are provided with support when they need it, in ways that work for them. "The Government's acceptance of all the Advisory Board's recommendations means that we can now continue, together across the care and protection and social sector, to focus on putting child and whānau outcomes at the absolute centre of everything we do, working as communities, grounded in strong relationships with whānau. SSPA is committed to supporting these outcomes throughout Aotearoa. SSPA looks forward to working collaboratively with Minister Davis, the Ministerial Advisory Board, our Oranga Tamariki colleagues and our member organisations on this kaupapa, which is ultimately about nurturing the wellbeing of all children and whānau in our country, now and into the future", Dr Achmad says.

**ENDS**

**Contact for media enquiries:**

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**SSPA spokespeople from regions throughout Aotearoa are available for interviews, including:**

- Dee-Ann Wolferstan, Chair SSPA National Executive
- Victoria Newcombe, Deputy Chair SSPA National Executive
- Marihi Langford, Member National Executive
- Judy Matai'a, Member National Executive
- Fiona Guy, Member National Executive
- Dr Claire Achmad, Chief Executive Officer

**ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AOTEAROA | [WWW.SSPA.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.SSPA.ORG.NZ)**

Social Service Providers Aotearoa is a membership-based organisation, representing some 200 non-profit organisations from around Aotearoa.

The SSPA *Agenda for Change: Big Ideas to Tackle Big Problems* is available at: <https://sspa.org.nz/information/agenda-for-change>

SSPA's members are funded by government to deliver social services in our communities every day, with a predominant focus on children, rangatahi, families and whānau. Our affiliate members are organisations that deliver social services for these people, and organisations and individuals who work in areas aligned to the interests of children, young people, whānau or communities.

SSPA's vision is that Aotearoa's NGO social services are sustainable, making a positive impact every day in our communities, supporting children, young people and whānau to thrive now and into the future. SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa's social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.