



*Issue number 50*

## **Ensuring tuia kia ōrite now and in the future**

Earlier this month, I had the honour of giving a karakia at Waitangi as part of the dawn ceremony.

Our presence at Waitangi signals this Office's constitutional role, as well as our firm commitment to uphold Te Tiriti and to support the ambitions of Māoridom.

It's a moment for looking back, as we move forward. While the Waitangi Day celebrations marked 186 years of Te Tiriti, this year will mark 64 years of the Ombudsman in New Zealand, and my first year as Chief Ombudsman.

My focus from day one has been on how we best serve people of today's Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our responsibilities, and our numbers, have grown since the first Ombudsman was appointed.

But our core purpose—achieving tuia kia ōrite | fairness for all—remains constant.

We are delivering services in the context of declining trust in government institutions, record complaints and a society shaped by technology.

Over the past year, we have begun a strategic rebalance for the Office, to position ourselves so we can better meet the needs of people we serve, today and into the future.

We've already made some changes. Our focus on timeliness in responding to complaints has seen improvements. We are now closing more complaints than we are receiving. We are completing 70 percent of all complaints within three months, and 80 percent within six months.

After consulting our people, I have confirmed a new, more modern, structure, that will be better aligned to our strategic intentions. This will be in place by April 2026.

The structural change is paired with work to build on our already strong culture, by empowering our people and increasing opportunity for collaboration.

Ultimately, these changes are about making a difference for the people we serve—Parliament and the New Zealand public.

This edition provides a snapshot of some of that work.

John Allen

Chief Ombudsman



John Allen leads the karakia at Waitangi

## Oversight partners call for child protection system improvement



Aroturuki Tamariki | Independent Children's Monitor Chief Executive Arran Jones; Children's Commissioner Dr Claire Achmad; and Chief Ombudsman, John Allen

New Zealand's three oversight partners held their first joint media conference on 18 February to highlight the findings from the Aroturuki Tamariki | Independent Children's Monitor's (the Monitor) most recent review of progress into strengthening the child protection system.

The Ombudsman, the Monitor, and Mana Mokopuna | Children's Commissioner, together highlighted the importance of health, education, welfare, and justice agencies working together and alongside community organisations to ensure children are better protected.

The Monitor's review found that many children are still not being seen by relevant agencies in time, and that systemic issues continue.

[Read joint media statement](#)

[Read the Monitor's report](#)



## New resources for children in care

We've created a comic and a video specifically for children and young people in care about how the Ombudsman can help them if something isn't going right.

These are available in English and te reo Māori from our website.

Copies of the comic are also being sent to children in care.

Watch and read in English

Watch and read in Te Reo



At the launch of 'Dear Children' letter

## Committing to a safer future for tamariki

The Chief Ombudsman is one of more than 3,500 people who have signed the 'Dear Children' letter campaign launched by the Children's Commissioner late last year.

To highlight the Ombudsman's work in this space, we have a dedicated newsletter. If you haven't already, sign up for our children in care e-panui as the next edition will be out soon.

[Read the letter here](#)

[Subscribe to pānui](#)



Our 2025/2026 summer interns

## Building our future

Six of New Zealand's finest young people joined us in November for a three-month internship.

This is the sixth year of our highly successful tertiary student internship programme, run in partnership with Te Tari o te Kiingitanga.



John Allen speaking to attendees in Madrid

## Delivering justice in times of disaster

The OECD Roundtable on Equal Access to Justice was held late last year in Madrid.

John attended the session online and spoke on delivering justice in the context of disasters, including extreme weather events in New Zealand.

[Learn more](#)

## Out and about



We facilitated a workshop with young disabled people from I.Lea. We learned about how we can help and engage them.



We met with numerous community providers and residents across Waikato. It was a chance to tell them about our work and for us to hear about their concerns.

## Upcoming events

We are steadily working our way around the motu. Find out where we will be next by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



We spent the last weekend of January at Waiwhetu Marae in Lower Hutt meeting some 1,000 community members at Te Rā o Te Raukura



## **Overview of NZ detention facilities**

2023/24 annual report on monitoring all places of detention in New Zealand is now available.

The Ombudsman is one of several who monitor the United Nations' Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT).

[Read](#)



## **Official information practices in local government organisations**

We recently published 11 reports following OPCAT inspections of a range of secure detention facilities

[Mental health facilities](#)

[Detention centers](#)



## **Improving local government transparency**

Marlborough District Council recently announced that committee workshops will be open to the public, unless there is a good reason not to.

[Read](#)



## **Reimagining our oversight role**

We led a workshop at the Mokopuna Ora Conference in October—a Waikato-Tainui led initiative to ensure mokopuna are nurtured and protected within their whānau wherever possible.

This allowed us to gather insights on our role as an oversight agency for tamariki in the care and protection system.



## Submission to safeguard public records

The Chief Ombudsman made a submission to Parliament seeking stronger safeguards to a bill that proposes exempting some agencies from their public record obligations when operating offshore.

Watch John talking to his submission before the select committee.

[Watch](#)

[Learn more](#)

## Key strategic documents now available

John's first statement of intent and annual report were presented to Parliament in October.

[Read Strategic Intentions 2025-2030](#)

[Read 2024/2025 annual report](#)



## News from our peers

Read about the work we and other integrity organisations in the Australasia and Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) have been doing.

[Read](#)

### More news

Keep up to date with all our news.

[Read](#)

### More resources

See all our guides, training modules, case notes, and other resources.

[Read](#)

Please also check out our social media channels for the latest news updates



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**Ombudsman**  
Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

—————  
Tuia kia ōrite · Fairness for all

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