



Submission on the Oranga Tamariki (Responding to Serious Youth Offending) Amendment Bill

Ko wai mātou?

1. E Tipu E Rea Whānau Services is the hauora/social service organisation for Ngāti Pāoa Iwi trust. We use a Kaupapa Māori model of care to support mātua taiohi (young parents) and pēpi (babies) of all ethnicities and backgrounds during the critical first 2,000 days of life. We work to the belief that mātua taiohi are to be celebrated not only for who they are now but also for the rangatira they will become for their iwi, hapū, whānau and communities. We do this through comprehensive, wrap around tautoko (support) that includes employment and education/training support for young parents, tūpuna parenting programmes, midwifery and Well Child/Tamariki Ora (WCTO) services, childhood immunisations, rongoā (such as hapūtanga wānanga, mirimiri), nurse practitioner clinics for whānau health, social work, transitional housing and other housing support. What differentiates us is a comprehensive approach that combines on-the-ground services with high-level policy and advocacy efforts to address the systemic challenges we encounter in service delivery.
2. We support and endorse the submission provided by Hāpai te Hauora on this Bill

Te piko o te māhuri, tērā te tipu o te rākau (The way the tree bends shapes how it grows)

3. Impact on tamariki/ rangatahi with confirmed or suspected mental health disabilities

- a. We are deeply concerned about the impact on rangatahi with confirmed/ suspected mental health disability like Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, through the proposed creation of Young Serious Offender (YSO) declarations and the introduction of military-style academy orders. We provide support to a growing number of rangatahi in our service with suspected or confirmed FASD. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is [characterised by symptoms](#) like difficulty understanding the consequences of actions which significantly increase the risk of involvement in criminal activity and subsequent criminal records.
 - b. Rangatahi in our service with FASD often face complex challenges that will sit with them from birth throughout their life course, including learning difficulties, employment retention and mental health struggles. We have no examples within our service experience to support measures like boot camps or increased police powers as effective solutions.
 - c. Rangatahi in our service such as those with FASD often describe the discrimination attached with this diagnosis. With the additional label of YSO there is risk they will experience an increase in stigma and exclusion.
4. Below is one of the current cases within our service who would be impacted by this Bill:
 - a. A 20-year-old male father of a 2-year-old boy faces many challenges due to his diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and a history of trauma, including sexual abuse in state care. Struggling with emotional regulation, learning difficulties, and physical health issues, he has difficulty maintaining stable employment or educational engagement. His past experiences with government agencies have led to a deep mistrust of these services, further isolating him. The maternal grandmother currently has custody of his son due to concerns about his ability to parent

safely, which adds pressure to his situation. Despite seeking support from services knowledgeable around FASD like E Tipu E Rea, he continues to be misjudged and labeled by external systems for behaviors tied to his condition, worsening his mental health.

First 2,000 intergenerational wellbeing

5. This proposed Bill defies clear evidence that the Government has drawn on to inform its First 2,000 days investment priority, which shows that supporting māmā, whānau and families in pregnancy and the early years has the biggest Return on Investment for future wellbeing including reducing the risk of a young person entering youth justice¹.
6. Data on young people who end up in youth justice:
 - 95% of a sample of 63 young people involved in “ram raid” events had been exposed to family harm; 65% reported five or more such occasions.

Of those who have committed two serious crimes:

- a. 80% have a confirmed or suspected mental health or disability diagnosis,
 - b. 20% have tried to take their own lives,
 - c. 90% have significant learning difficulties,
 - d. and 50% of boys have been physically harmed three times in the past year.
 - e. Māori make up 67% of those in youth detention. Pacific youth account for 7%, and those who identify as both Māori and Pacific account for 13%. Young people who identify as neither Māori nor Pacific comprise only 13% of that population (2021 data).
7. It is our stance that if the current bootcamp program is considered ‘successful,’ it will be due to the wrap-around support services, not the bootcamp itself. The punitive measures proposed in the Bill would only exacerbate challenges for others who do not have access to the same level of wrap around support. Investment in more wrap around services without the bootcamp component will deliver more success.
 - a. Case study: A young parent within our Tūmatakāhuki housing unit has a background of homelessness, childhood abuse, intimate partner abuse, and multiple criminal convictions. Through wrap-around support, including stable housing, education and parenting support pathways, and employment opportunities, she is now thriving as a parent, is setting goals for future employment and on a path to becoming a rangatira in her community and iwi/hapū.

Further Reasons

8. Many of the rangatahi we support who would be impacted by this Bill have experiences of trauma preceding or within state care. This Bill contradicts the recommendations made by the Abuse in State Care Royal Commission of Inquiry, which called for the disbanding of institutional settings. We also note the lack of integrity in introducing this Bill after the government [has apologised last year in 2024](#) for the severe abuse faced by individuals in state "care."

¹ Gluckman, P. (2018). It's never too early, never too late: A discussion paper on preventing youth offending in New Zealand. <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-10/pmcsa-its-never-too-early-Discussion-paper-on-preventing-youth-offending-in-NZ.pdf>. Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Recommendations

9. The Oranga Tamariki (Responding to Serious Youth Offending) Amendment Bill should be abandoned, and the government must focus instead on the urgent implementation of the changes recommended in the *Abuse of State Care Inquiry report*.
10. Any support for mātua taiohi, particularly those with Māori and Pasifika whakapapa, must be culturally safe and developed in partnership with iwi and Pasifika organisations with expertise in this area.
11. The Government should also increase funding for crime prevention initiatives that address the root causes of offending by ensuring that all communities have access to liveable incomes, education and employment opportunities, and secure, stable housing. This should include strong iwi partnerships to provide wrap-around, whānau-focused, and culturally safe services that can support positive, intergenerational outcomes.
12. Quality wrap-around services without the bootcamp component should be the priority. Wrap-around services that are adequately resourced can provide excellent return of investment for preventing young people from offending and maintaining lifelong and intergenerational positive outcomes.