

Tēnā koutou,

Welcome to this email from the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa updating you on:

- the key dates for our next report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and how you can be involved
- our new Strategic Framework
- upcoming children's rights events and recent developments.

Please feel free to forward this email to others, and if you would like to follow up on any of the information below, then please do not hesitate get in touch with us.

info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz

New members are very welcome. If you are not already a member of the Alliance and are interested in joining you can do so through our [website](#).

Children's rights reporting

Timeline and due dates

The coming year is a key one for us, as an Alliance. Over the next year, as part of a five yearly reporting cycle, Aotearoa is due to provide its sixth report on progress under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Children's Convention).

The next steps in this reporting process are:

- Government reports to the UN Committee on what it has done over the last five years to uphold and progress children's rights;
- The Alliance reports, from a civil society point of view, on what is going well for children and where we believe changes are needed to advance and protect their rights;
- The UN Committee, which is made up of 18 international experts on children's rights, uses the information from the reports to engage in "constructive dialogue" with the Government delegation and recommends steps to strengthen respect for children's rights in Aotearoa.

Recently, the UN Committee adjusted its timetable due to the on-going impact of Covid-19, and this has led to a slight delay in our reporting dates. The updated reporting timetable is:

Consultation on the draft government report :	Dates of the consultation period are still to be confirmed but are likely to be July/August.
Government's report submitted to the UN	31 October 2021
Children's Rights Alliance report due: comprehensive alternative report from Civil Society (20,000 words).	1 January 2021 . (Please note we plan to submit our report on 1 December 2021)!
Thematic reports due: can be submitted directly or through the Alliance (6,000 words).	1 January 2022
Children's reporting : Information from children can be submitted directly or through the Alliance. Submissions may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reports,• films,• studies,• photographs and• drawings, and	1 December 2021

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no word limit for written reports. (Please see below.) 	
Pre-session: UN Committee meets with Civil Society	February 2022 , exact dates to be confirmed.
Session: UN Committee meets with Government delegation to examine Aotearoa's progress on children's rights. The Committee issues its recommendations.	May 2022 , exact dates to be confirmed.

A quick note about the new reporting process

This Children's Convention reporting round is slightly different to previous ones because Aotearoa has adopted the UN's Simplified Reporting Process. (Find out more about this process [here](#)). As a result, the Government has been asked to report on a limited number of issues, which are set out in a *List of Issues Prior to Reporting* (LOIPR). During 2020 the Alliance reported twice to the UN Committee to help inform the LOIPR.

The list of issues that Government has been asked to report on and the Alliance's 2020 reports are available on our [website](#).

How can you be involved?

There are a number of ways you can be involved in the reporting process over the coming months. For example, you could:

- comment on the Government's draft report,
- contribute to the Alliance report,
- develop a thematic report about your area of interest/expertise, and/or
- support children to report to the UN and participate in the reporting process themselves.

If you want to help make children's rights real in Aotearoa and are interested in being part of reporting to the UN then please get in touch with us info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz. Also, please help to spread the word and let others know about the reporting process and the Alliance. The more of us who take part, the stronger and more effective our reporting will be.

Children's participation in reporting

As an Alliance, we believe that children's participation is central to the realisation of children's rights – children are entitled to know about and be part of the process of realising their rights, influencing decision-making and outcomes.

Over the coming months we will be looking to work with our members and friends to support children's participation in the reporting process. If this is something you would like to be involved in then please let us know.

What are emerging as the key children's rights issues in Aotearoa this reporting round?

Based on the UN Committee's previous recommendations, and our reporting during 2020, we have identified six children's rights issues as high-level, thematic priorities to guide us as we develop our Alliance report. These are:

- Respect for the rights of tamariki Māori (both as tāngata whenua and under the Children's Convention);
- Ending discrimination against certain groups of children, so the rights of all children are upheld equally;
- Protecting children from violence and abuse, including through violence prevention;

- Support for families and whānau, including an adequate standard of living, so all children can know and, as far as possible, be cared for by their families. This includes: warm, safe housing; and nutritious food;
- Ensuring good health for all children, including good mental health, and timely access to quality health services for all children when they are needed;
- Ensuring adequate protections for children who work.

These thematic priorities are not set in stone or exhaustive. For example, it is likely that the impact of climate change on children's rights will also be a key theme in our report, together with the on-going impact of Covid-19. We would welcome feedback on these priorities – are they where we need to focus our energy (and word limit)? What would make the biggest difference for children in these areas?

New Strategic Framework for the Alliance

Over the last six months we have developed a strategic framework to help guide our mahi until 2023.

As an Alliance, we work to advance, promote and report on children's rights, so that all children in Aotearoa actively experience all their rights, in all circumstances. We want an Aotearoa where:

- all our children are cared for,
- respected and protected,
- have what they need, and
- participate in their own lives, families, whānau, communities and wider society.

All children. All rights. All circumstances.

A copy of our [Executive Summary](#) and the [Strategic Framework 2021-2023](#) is attached for your information.

Bulletin board

Here are a few upcoming children's rights events and recent developments that may be of interest.

[UN's Day of General Discussion – Children's Rights and Alternative Care](#)

Each year the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child holds Days of General Discussion. The aim of these days is to foster a deeper understanding of the Children's Convention as it relates to specific articles or topics.

The 2021 General Day of Discussion, to be held in September, is on Children's Rights and Alternative Care. The overall objective of the day is to examine the current alternative care situation globally, in all its complexity, identifying and discussing areas of concern to do with the unnecessary separation of children from their families and appropriate ways to respond to family and child separation when it is unavoidable.

The UN Committee is calling for submissions, including from children, to feed into and guide discussions. This discussion is very relevant to us here in Aotearoa, given current developments in our care system and in Oranga Tamariki.

Find out more, including how to make a submission, [here](#).

Children's Convention Monitoring Group releases "Children's Rights in the Covid-19 response"

Earlier in the year the Children's Convention Monitoring Group (CMG) published a report looking at children's rights in the Covid-19 response in Aotearoa.

Download the report [here](#).

The CMG is convened by the Children's Commissioner to monitor Government's implementation of the Children's Convention and advocate for processes that embed children's rights across government, such as good information, including from children themselves, and planning and budgeting for children. The Children's Rights Alliance is a permanent member of the CMG, along with:

- Save the Children New Zealand,
- the United Nations Children's Fund New Zealand (UNICEF), and
- the Human Rights Commission.

[Learn more about the CMG](#)

A final word on making children's rights real

It can be easy to slip into thinking about children's rights in the abstract, losing sight of what rights mean for children in their everyday lives.

In this thought-provoking [interview](#), Fionnuala Ni Aolain, the UN special rapporteur for the protection and promotion of human rights while countering terrorism, talks about the importance of upholding children's rights and New Zealand's obligations to children in Syrian detention camps. She says *"If we really mean that the Convention on the Rights of the Child means something for every child equally then we don't get to choose which children we decide to honour with protection and those who we deem insufficiently deserving of that protection."* It is well worth a listen.

Similarly, in a 2020 Youth Court decision Judge Fitzgerald said:

"It is important to emphasise here, that when New Zealand ratified the CRC in 1993, that amounted to a promise that every single child in New Zealand was entitled to the protection of every single right, provided in every single one of the 54 articles, without qualification or compromise."

The judgment, which reviewed the life experiences of a young person before the Court, serves as a powerful reminder of why our work together as the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa is so vital. Ensuring Aotearoa meets its promise to all children, all the time, takes sustained, collaborative effort. We hope you can join us.

Many thanks for reading to the end of this rather long update! Once again, please feel free to get in touch if you are keen to be part of the Alliance or have any comments or questions about the information above.

Ngā mihi māhāna ki a koutou,
Andrea.

Andrea Jamison, Executive Director
Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand