



**ORANGA
TAMARIKI**
Ministry for Children



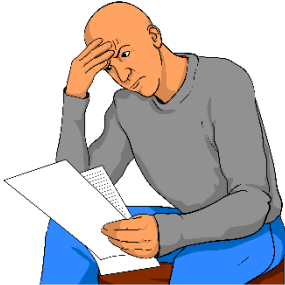
**Abuse in Care public apology:
Oranga Tamariki
Ministry for Children**



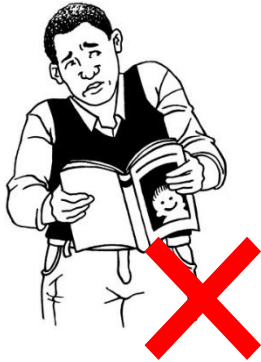
**Andrew Bridgman
Acting Chief Executive**

Published: November 2024

Before you start



This Easy Read document talks about abuse.



This information may upset some people when they are reading it.

This information is not meant to scare anyone.



If you are upset after reading this Easy Read document you can talk to your:



- whānau / family
- friends.



You can contact the Survivor Experiences Service for support.

In New Zealand you can **phone**:

0800 456 090

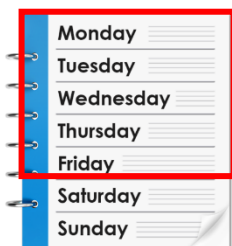


If you are calling from Australia you can **phone**:

1 800 456 032



You can call this number:



- between **8:30 am** and **4:30 pm**
- from **Monday** to **Friday**.



These times are for the New Zealand time zones.



You can also send a **text** to the Survivor Experiences Service.



In New Zealand you can send a **text** to:

8328



If you are texting from Australia you can send a **text** to:

+61 438 384 957



It does not cost any money to call / text the Survivor Experiences Service.



You can also send the Survivor Experiences Service an **email** at:

contact@survivorexperiences.govt.nz

About this document



On 12 November 2024 different parts of Government made a **public apology** to people who had been abused while in:

- state / government care
- faith-based care.



A **public apology** is when someone says sorry to a group of people in a way that means everyone can be a part of what is said.



This Easy Read is about the public apology made by the Acting Chief Executive of **Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children** Andrew Bridgman.



A **Chief Executive** is someone who is in charge of an organisation.



Being the **Acting Chief Executive** means Andrew Bridgman is working as the Chief Executive while the usual Chief Executive is on medical leave.



Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children is the part of Government that looks after things to do with children and young people.



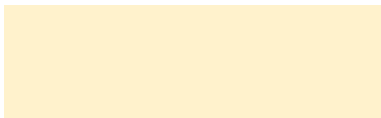
In this Easy Read we will just call it **Oranga Tamariki**.



This Easy Read document has **quotes** of what Andrew Bridgman said in the apology from Oranga Tamariki.



A **quote** is an exact copy in writing of what someone has said.



The quotes are in yellow boxes like this.



You can read the full apology on the Oranga Tamariki **website** at:

www.orangatamariki.govt.nz

The apology from Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children



Andrew Bridgman begins by saying:

“Today I stand here as the Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki, on behalf of numerous others that have held this seat before me and led Ministries for Children known by many other names.”



He is apologising on behalf of:

- other people who have done the same job
- Chief Executives of Ministries for Children that had different names.





“I stand here on their behalf, to take responsibility and to **unreservedly** apologise to the **survivors** of those who were abused in the care of the state.”



Here **unreservedly** means to openly / completely apologise.



People who have been through abuse in care are called **survivors**.



“You were children who came into our care.

You needed us to **protect** you.

To look after you.

Instead, our people and our places **harmed** you.”



Protect is to keep people safe.

Harm means to hurt people.





“You were **subjected** to physical, sexual and verbal abuse, neglect, assault, violence and humiliation.

And what is worse is we would often turn around and place the blame back on you.”



Subjected is when you are forced to go through something.

Here Andrew Bridgman says:



- children were abused in care in different ways
- Oranga Tamariki also made those children feel it was their fault.



“We are sorry for our **failure** to do right by you.

For not protecting you, and for failing to keep you safe.

Nothing that happened to you was your fault – it was ours.”

Failure means to not do something.

Andrew Bridgman says:

- sorry for not keeping children safe
- Oranga Tamariki did things wrong.





“You were children, just kids.

You had a right to a childhood filled with smiles and love, connected to your culture, at home, at your marae.



A childhood where you looked forward to ice creams in the summer, bike rides around your neighbourhood with your friends, birthdays and Christmas.



This is not the childhood we provided for you. “



We took that [childhood] from you and gave you a childhood full of fear.



Fear to be alone, to go to bed at night.

Fear of **authority** because they were the ones that hurt you the most.”



“Fear that no one would believe you, fear that no one was coming to help you.

Fear for what could happen today, tomorrow, next week.



Authority means the people / services who were meant to be looking after children and young people.



You were frightened, scared.

And that was our fault.

We are sorry for failing to provide you with a childhood that you **deserved**, that every child in Aotearoa is **entitled** to.”

Deserved and **entitled** mean the right to have something / to live a good life.



“We put in you places and called them homes – but they were the furthest thing from what a home should be.



When you asked for help – we did not listen.



When you showed us the bruises – we looked away.

When you wanted a place to belong – we left you all alone.



We are sorry for failing to give you a safe place to grow up, for not treating you like you were one of our own kids”.

We are sorry for not listening, for looking away and leaving you all alone.”



“I will not stand here today and be dishonest by saying that harm no longer occurs in our system.

We know we have work to do to make sure every child is safe and has the care they deserve.

But I will stand here and say this.

The care system today has changed.

Most will argue that it has not changed enough.

And we agree.”



“Moving forward, it is this report that will keep us **relentlessly focused** on the change you have called for.”



Relentlessly focused means to keep working on making things better.



“It will be your words that will remind us of the need to demand more, to demand better and not to settle for a system that silences the voices of children and young people who need us to listen”.



Here Andrew Bridgman says the stories that survivors shared will remind people how important it is to change things.



Today, I want to talk about the change I think matters most.

The reason why survivors shared their stories.



To make the future safer for children:

- if any child, or young person, tells us they are not safe
- If they share with us stories of harm, of hurt, or fear



we will stand by their side, we will listen to them, like we should have listened you.”

Andrew Bridgman ends the apology
by saying:



“To every survivor, and every person
who did not survive.



To the children who we failed, to the
adults those children have now
become.”



“We are sorry.”



Make it Easy
Kia Māmā Mai



This information has been written by Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children.

It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

People First NZ
Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi



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