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# (Tolley, A., 2016)

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### New ministry dedicated to care and protection

Anne Tolley

Social Development

Social Development Minister Anne Tolley says that a new child-centred, stand-alone ministry with a new Chief Executive is to be established to focus on the care and protection of vulnerable children and young people.

Cross-agency advice from the State Services Commission, Treasury and MSD has recommended that, given the significance and scale of the proposed reforms to state care and protection, a stand-alone department is most likely to provide a single point of accountability, clear organisational focus and the ability to attract strong leadership. This reflects the advice given by the Minister's independent expert panel, and has been agreed by Cabinet.

The new department, named the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki will begin operating by April 2017.

"The new ministry, new name and completely new operating model reflects our determination to remain absolutely focused on the individual needs of each child," says Mrs Tolley.

**"The inclusion of an aspirational Maori name as part of the title reinforces our clear expectation that much more needs to be done to address the fact that 6 out of ten kids in care are Maori.**

**"This is not a rebranding exercise. It is how this ministry performs, rather than its name, which will make a difference for vulnerable young people. It will also require strong leadership to implement the massive changes required over the next 4-5 years, as well as embed the necessary culture change within staff."**

Following an in-depth analysis and a detailed business case from the expert panel, the Minister recently announced wide-ranging state care reforms as part of a radical long-term overhaul, which will see the current crisis-management CYF system replaced by a completely new model which addresses the short and long-term wellbeing of at-risk children and supports their transition into adulthood.

This new ministry will focus on five core services – prevention, intensive intervention, care support services, transition support and a youth justice service aimed at preventing offending and reoffending, and will have the ability to directly purchase vital services such as trauma counselling as soon as they are needed by children.



A major transformation programme is underway at the moment, supported by \$200 million of initial new investment in Budget 2016, and this is taking place alongside normal CYF operations which have received an extra \$144 million for cost pressures.

Legislation is currently going through Parliament which will raise the age of state care and protection to a young person's 18th birthday, ensure that children's voices are heard in decisions which affect them, and establish an independent youth advocacy service.

"The long-term outcomes for young people in the current system are simply atrocious," says Mrs Tolley.

"When we started this process nearly a year and a half ago, I promised that there would be no more tinkering around the edges. Fourteen reviews and numerous reorganisations have not improved the outcomes for children.

"A detailed, long-term plan over a number of years is required.

"Too many kids who come into contact with CYF end up on a benefit, or in prison, or with few qualifications. This has to stop. They deserve better than this, and the new operating model will put the needs of children first, above everything else, so that they can have the opportunity to live happy and successful lives.

"I'm also pleased to announce that a new Youth Advisory Panel comprised of young people in state care or with experience of state care will advise me and the transformation team as the new system is developed over the next few months.

"For too long the needs and opinions of children and young people in the care system have been ignored. The Youth Advisory Panel, the independent youth advocacy service, and legislation requiring that children's voices must be heard in decisions affecting them, will mean that the new system is truly child-centred."

The new Ministry will be reviewed after two years to ensure that it is working as it should and that it is delivering the expected results for children and young people.

Cabinet papers relevant to the overhaul of care and protection are available at:

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/investing-in-children/index.html> (<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/investing-in-children/index.html>)



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