

2026

ANNUAL REPORT



The Role of Child Matters

Our Kaupapa

Protecting children doesn't begin and end with knowing when and how to report a concern. Our wrap-around child protection support covers prevention, identification, and response to child protection concerns - helping create safer environments where tamariki can thrive.

As national experts in child protection and safeguarding, we provide tailored support to individuals, community groups, and government organisations working alongside children. Our approach is not only child-centred, evidence-based and trauma informed, but also grounded in practice that is responsive to the diverse needs of children, whānau, and communities.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Child Matters is committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi being a core value that underpins all services and relationships with iwi, hapū, and whānau. Child Matters recognises its obligations under Te Tiriti and seeks to provide culturally appropriate and supportive services.



Chair's Report



This year brought significant change, considered governance, and strategic investment for Child Matters. As Chair, I am proud that our organisation has remained firmly committed to protecting children while adapting to the changing needs of the child protection sector across New Zealand.

A key Board priority has been identifying the gaps and challenges facing those who support children and whānau. This insight has guided strategic investments in new services that build organisational capability, strengthen accountability, and create safer environments for children and young people.

During the year, Child Matters expanded its audit service and launched a specialist investigation service. These initiatives help organisations meet their child protection responsibilities with confidence and integrity.

The Board also backed substantial investment in our digital presence and learning platforms. As professional development becomes more flexible and accessible, Child Matters continues to innovate, including through the launch of the NZQA Level 3 micro-credential, Child Protection in Practice. This qualification offers practitioners a recognised pathway to build child protection capability.

These achievements came during a difficult period for the wider social sector. Rising costs, growing demand, and limited resources have placed substantial pressure on community organisations. Despite this environment, Child Matters has remained financially prudent while investing in initiatives that provide lasting value to the sector.

This year also brought an important leadership transition. On behalf of the Board, I recognise Jane Searle's outstanding contribution. Her appointment as New Zealand's Children's Commissioner reflects her exceptional leadership and lifelong dedication to improving outcomes for children. We thank Jane for her remarkable service and wish her every success in the role.

INTRODUCTION

We were equally pleased to appoint Megan West as Chief Executive. Her extensive frontline experience, deep understanding of Child Matters, and steadfast commitment to our kaupapa give us great confidence in the organisation's future.

I also acknowledge Anthea Simcock's retirement from the Board. As the founder of Child Matters, her vision and dedication over more than three decades have created an enduring legacy that continues to guide our purpose and impact.

Finally, I sincerely thank my fellow Trustees for their wisdom, generosity, and leadership, and our dedicated staff, whose expertise and compassion bring our mission to life each day.

Together, we remain committed to a future in which every child in New Zealand is safe, valued, and protected.

Edgar Wilson
Chairperson



Chief Executive's Report



I am privileged to present my first report as Chief Executive of Child Matters. Over the past seven years, I have witnessed the profound difference our work makes for children, whānau, and the professionals who support them. I am honoured to lead Child Matters into its next chapter.

This year brought growth, innovation, and a renewed focus on strengthening the child protection workforce. Informed by research into sector needs, we developed practical services and learning opportunities that directly address challenges facing organisations across New Zealand.

A major achievement was launching our investigation service while continuing to expand our audit service. Together, these services give organisations expert support to strengthen child protection systems and foster cultures of accountability.

We also continued to transform how we deliver learning. Our new eLearning modules provide flexible, high-quality professional development wherever learners are based. We complemented this work by successfully launching a NZQA Level 3 micro-credential, Child Protection in Practice, designed as an accessible, nationally recognised pathway for practitioners.

Child protection remained a prominent national issue, and Child Matters contributed informed, evidence-based commentary to public discussion. We believe greater understanding of child protection strengthens communities and improves outcomes for tamariki.

None of this would be possible without our exceptional team. Every member of Child Matters brings professionalism, expertise, and genuine compassion to their role. Their dedication ensures all our services consistently meet the highest standards.

I also thank our Board for its strategic guidance and confidence in investing for the future. Its governance has enabled us to innovate while remaining true to our mission and values.

INTRODUCTION

Looking ahead, our focus is clear: to build capability, support organisations, and help ensure every child grows up safe from abuse and neglect. I am excited about the opportunities ahead and grateful to everyone who shares this vital kaupapa.

Megan West

Chief Executive



Over the past seven years, I have witnessed the profound difference our work makes for children, whānau, and the professionals who support them. **I am honoured to lead Child Matters into its next chapter.**

Megan West

Statement of Service Performance

Training Statistics



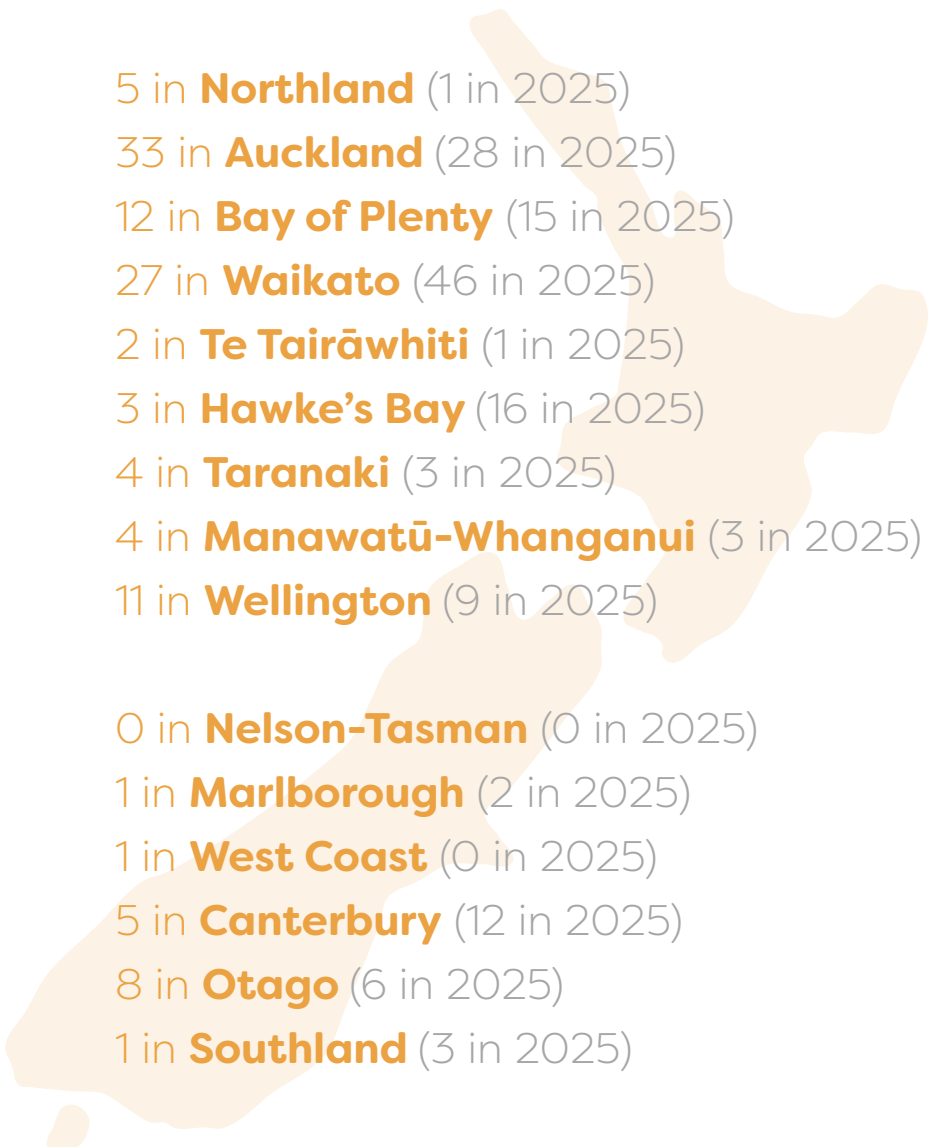
5,489 total people trained

3,039 people trained face-to-face and live online
2,450 people trained via pre-recorded online training

6,684 in 2025

Training Locations

From July 2024 to June 2025, Child Matters ran 158 child protection diploma blocks, programmes, workshops, seminars and presentations. From July 2025 to June 2026, Child Matters ran **153** child protection diploma blocks, programmes, workshops, seminars, presentations, and webinars. **The statistics below represent the regions of the 3,039 people trained face-to-face and live online.** Pre-recorded online training of the remaining 2,450 people is not represented.



5 in **Northland** (1 in 2025)
33 in **Auckland** (28 in 2025)
12 in **Bay of Plenty** (15 in 2025)
27 in **Waikato** (46 in 2025)
2 in **Te Tairāwhiti** (1 in 2025)
3 in **Hawke's Bay** (16 in 2025)
4 in **Taranaki** (3 in 2025)
4 in **Manawatū-Whanganui** (3 in 2025)
11 in **Wellington** (9 in 2025)

0 in **Nelson-Tasman** (0 in 2025)
1 in **Marlborough** (2 in 2025)
1 in **West Coast** (0 in 2025)
5 in **Canterbury** (12 in 2025)
8 in **Otago** (6 in 2025)
1 in **Southland** (3 in 2025)

27 Public Webinars

9 In-house Webinars

Financial Matters

In the 2026 financial year, Child Matters made an income of \$1,047,294 and had a loss of \$293,119. The financial loss was primarily attributable to a decline in revenue from service fees, student fees and grant income reflecting broader challenges in the charitable sector. We also faced increased costs to deliver and promote our services.

Sources of Income	2025		2026	
Student Fees	\$183,745	15%	\$202,981	20%
Grants & Scholarships	\$149,058	12%	\$147,544	14%
Government Funding	\$126,688	10%	\$63,762	6%
Fee for Services	\$698,321	57%	\$600,259	57%
Other	\$69,992	6%	\$32,748	3%
Total	\$1,227,804		\$1,047,294	



Six Year Results	
2021	\$135,171
2022	-\$19,693
2023	-\$1,089
2024	\$162,129
2025	-\$66,280
2026	-\$293,119

Our Governance



Chair

Edgar Wilson, a highly accomplished professional, serves as a Justice of the Peace and a Marriage Celebrant. With over 40 years of experience in teaching and educational leadership, Edgar has significantly contributed to secondary education both in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. He is presently contracted to Wintec as Community Advisor through the process of Wintec being reestablished as a stand-alone Institute of Technology. His leadership skills are demonstrated through his recent tenure as Chair of Trust Waikato, and Chair of K'aute Pasifika, a community organisation dedicated to supporting Pacific peoples in New Zealand. Currently, Edgar holds several key positions: he is the Chair of Child Matters, and a Trustee of the Waikato Housing Initiative (WHI), contributing to the development of housing solutions in the Waikato region. His extensive experience and dedication to various sectors underscore his commitment to community service and leadership.



Co-Deputy Chair

Andrea Twaddle is a director at DTI Lawyers, a specialist employment lawyer and workplace investigator. Andrea has extensive experience advising and representing clients on people and culture matters, including privacy and health and safety. Andrea has a special interest in the education and mental health sectors, and acts in Coronial Inquiries. She is a Deputy Chair of New Zealand's Sports Tribunal. Andrea is an educator on legal issues and a member of the New Zealand Law Society Employment Law Committee, which monitors and makes submissions on proposed changes to employment legislation and maintains a close relationship with the judiciary and relevant government departments.



Co-Deputy Chair

Brendon McLean is the Head of Procurement and Sales Operations Planning at Prolife Foods. Brendon has extensive experience in the fast-moving consumer goods industry in New Zealand, Australia, and Asia, bringing with him strategic and commercial knowledge. Brendon has a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and Management. He was also a member of the Community and Enterprise Leadership Foundation programme in 2016, whose mission is to build future leaders who can reimagine a stronger Waikato from a social, environmental, cultural, and economic perspective.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Trustee

Andrew Clements is the Director/Lawyer and Notary Public at Grayson Clements Lawyers. Andrew regularly advises businesses, business families, private wealth clients (domestically and internationally), and charitable entities. He specialises in structural design, family governance, trusts and succession. He is a past New Zealand editorial advisor to the British Trusts and Trustees Law Journal and a full member of the Society of Trusts and Estate Practitioners (TEP). Andrew has managed national and local training providers and consulted at the board level in the STEM, educational and philanthropic sectors.



Trustee

Anthea Simcock has a background in both education and child therapy and was the founding Chief Executive Officer of Child Matters, a role she held for 23 years. In 2012 she was awarded an ONZM for services to children. She has held many local and national roles, memberships and appointments in the social services and NFP sectors and now brings her knowledge and experience to a governance role on the Child Matters board.



Trustee

Siaki Tokolahi is a Registered Social Worker and a member of the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) for the Social Workers Registration Board of New Zealand. He currently serves as the Practice Manager for the Te Haumirimiri Ngākau Mokopuna program, a partnership initiative between Kirikiriroa Family Services Trust, K'aute Pasifika, Tuu Oho Mai, and Oranga Tamariki. This program responds to Reports of Concern in central Hamilton and works alongside whānau to develop strategies that enhance child safety and wellbeing. Siaki has previously held several leadership positions within District Health Boards (DHBs), often pioneering innovative roles that were the first of their kind. Siaki is of Tongan descent, and he brings both a strong work ethic and a deep commitment to strengthening the wellbeing of children and communities across the region.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Trustee

Sarah-Jane Tiakiwai (Te Rarawa, Waikato) is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Māori at the University of Waikato. Sarah-Jane's PhD was in Māori Studies with a focus on Māori success in education. She has over 20 years' experience in the tertiary sector as a lecturer, researcher and executive leader working in Universities and Wānanga as well as 7 years as inaugural academic Director of the Waikato-Tainui College for Research and Development, an iwi-led academic and research institution. She is passionate about working in spaces that connect and enable her to contribute to advancing the needs of Māori and indigenous communities in Aotearoa and worldwide.



Trustee

Cynthia Ward is the founder of True Colours Children's Health Trust. She was CEO & Nurse Specialist for 21 years at True Colours. Previously she worked for Hospice Waikato with her Masters work being instrumental in setting up Rainbow Place. She continues to be on national working groups in improving services for children who have complex health conditions. Her PhD - an evaluation of models of care for children with serious illnesses and their families – continues to be relevant in considering what is important to children and their families when going through challenging times. Cynthia received a QSM award for her services to children and their families in Waikato. Throughout her time leading children's health services, mentoring colleagues has been an aspect of her role. Since leaving the operational side of True Colours in 2025, she now provides professional supervision to health professionals.

Leadership Updates



In July 2026, the Child Matters Board of Trustees appointed **Megan West** as Chief Executive. After seven years as the National Services Manager, Megan was the natural choice to step in to the CEO position.

Board Chair, Edgar Wilson, says “Megan joined Child Matters in 2019 as our National Services Manager. Her frontline experience in Oranga Tamariki – and its predecessor organisation – has been invaluable to Child Matters and will be even more so looking into the future. Megan is excited to lead Child Matters through its next phase of development, including strengthening child protection training and our consultancy services. She is extremely well placed to take this work forward and continue advocating relentlessly for the rights and protection of New Zealand children.”

Megan joined Child Matters in 2019 after a long career with Oranga Tamariki including as a frontline social worker, specialist child witness interviewer, and supervisor. She holds strong networks across the sector and currently sits on a number of panels and boards who are focused on raising the voice of children.



Megan West (left) and Jane Searle (right) pictured at the 2026 PRINZ Awards.

TEAM UPDATES



The CEO position at Child Matters became vacant when outgoing Chief Executive, **Jane Searle**, was appointed as Children's Commissioner. Jane stepped into her new role on 1 August 2026 for a five-year term.

Board Chair, Edgar Wilson, says “under her [Jane’s] leadership, Child Matters has become financially self-sufficient, significantly widened the breadth and accessibility of its services, and developed national and international networks to assess and translate global best practice for the New Zealand environment. Just as importantly, Jane has been an unwavering public advocate for the safety and protection of New Zealand’s children through the media, and directly with Government agencies and politicians. We are proud and grateful that she will be able to make an even greater impact for New Zealand children, their protection, and wellbeing in her new role as Children’s Commissioner.”

We are proud and grateful that she will be able to make an even greater impact for New Zealand children, their protection, and wellbeing in her **new role as Children’s Commissioner.**

Edgar Wilson about Jane Searle

Farewells



Anthea Simcock was instrumental in the establishment of Child Matters in 1992 and officially joined the organisation in 1994, where she worked until 2017. Throughout her 23 years with Child Matters, Anthea made an extraordinary contribution to the organisation and to the wider child protection sector. She developed training packages, devised unit standards, and successfully incorporated Child Matters' training into the NZQA framework. She also published numerous books and shared her expertise on child protection nationally and internationally.

Following her retirement as Chief Executive, Anthea continued to contribute to Child Matters for a further nine years as a Trustee on the Board, providing invaluable insight and guidance across both operational and governance matters.

After decades of dedicated service to the sector, we wholeheartedly thank Anthea for her endless contributions, wisdom, guidance and knowledge. Her commitment has had a lasting impact on Child Matters and the many people and organisations she has supported throughout her career. We wish Anthea all the very best for a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.



Helen Heta worked as a Child Protection Consultant with Child Matters for over eight years. During this time, she travelled across the motu, delivering training and sharing her extensive knowledge and experience. We continually received wonderful feedback from those who had the privilege of learning from this knowledgeable and courageous wahine.

Helen's mahi during her time at Child Matters has made an indelible impact on the people she trained and those she worked alongside. Her commitment, wisdom and passion for keeping tamariki safe will be greatly missed. We wish Helen every happiness and good health in her retirement as she embarks on many new adventures and enjoys precious time with her mokopuna.

Ngā mihi mō tō mahi.

New Additions



Richard Corbidge joined Child Matters as our Audit & Investigations Manager in June 2025. Richard is a former senior police detective and has led multi-agency child protection, adult sexual assault, and sex offender management teams.

Richard is a skilled and empathetic investigator with vast experience in the field of child abuse prevention and detection.



Tahlia Armstrong joined the Child Matters team in November 2025 as our Digital Marketing Specialist. Tahlia has a strong focus on social media strategy and content creation, with a special talent for design.

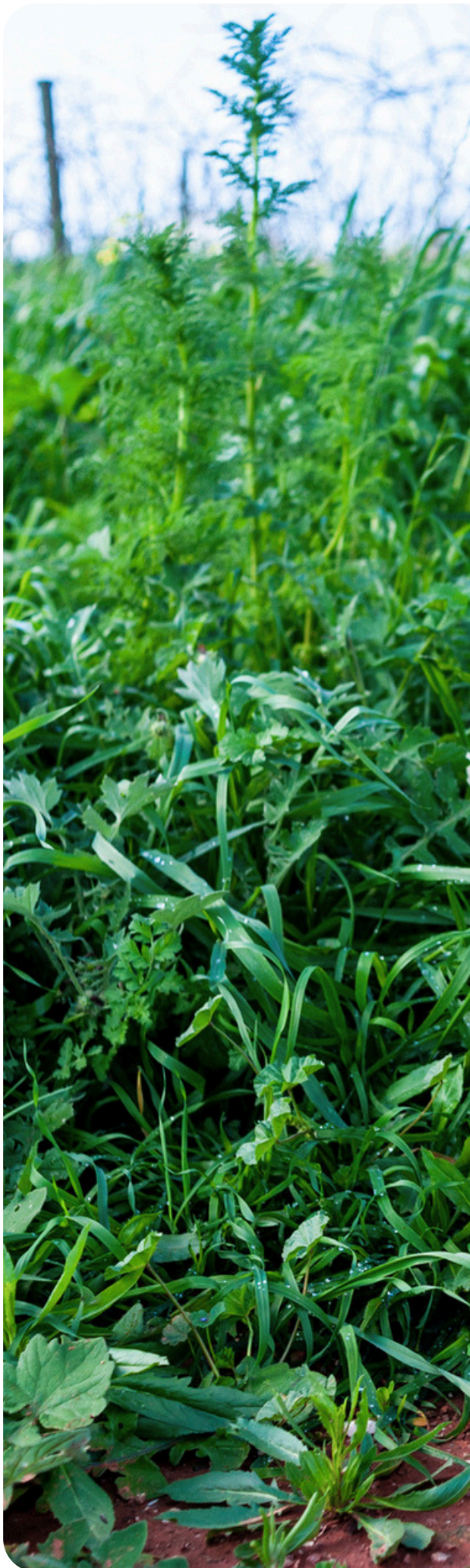
Known for her creativity, attention to detail, and collaborative approach, Tahlia brings both strategic thinking and practical execution to Child Matters online identity.



Brooke Dawson joined the Child Matters team in July 2026 as a Child Protection Consultant. Brooke is a registered social worker with over a decade's experience supporting children, young people, and their whānau.

Throughout her career in the NGO sector, she has worked across a range of Care and Protection and Therapeutic Foster Care roles, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience in supporting tamariki and those who care for them.

Nau mai, haere mai.



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