

## Media Release – For immediate release | 8 August 2024

### Community-based Social Services on Edge: Funding Cuts Threaten Children

In recent months, community-based social service providers have continued their tireless efforts to support their communities and hapori, despite the uncertainty of their future and the challenges posed by a lack of communication and information from their critical funding partner Oranga Tamariki.

“Right now, there’s a clear risk to frontline services for children and whānau. At the heart of all community-based social service work are the children, rangatahi, whānau, and communities we support,” says Belinda Himiona, CEO of Te Pai Ora SSPA, “across the country, the needs of these vulnerable children and their communities are growing, yet the community-based social sector is facing \$139 million in funding reductions.”

“It was very disheartening for the many, many community-based organisations who provide quality services to children and whānau to learn that \$139 million of funding is being cut, citing quality concerns and under-delivery. It is concerning that no strategy is being communicated and many providers are not being told why their services are being cut.”

“The shock and concern expressed by community-based social service providers should prompt Oranga Tamariki and Ministers to pause in order to ensure that children are not left without the support they need before any reductions are made. The not-for-profit sector works in communities every day, and there is significant worry about how these cuts will impact child safety and wellbeing,” she says.

“As things stand, frontline services are being reduced around Aotearoa. In the last week alone we have heard from providers who are facing huge job cuts leading to thousands of children losing support and care,” says Himiona. Te Pai Ora SSPA has been inundated from organisations who are either still waiting to hear about their contracts for the 24/25 financial year or have faced cuts to funding, leading to the loss of frontline services.

“Of huge concern is that in many cases where services are being reduced, there is no plan to transition children and whānau to other services and providers who have lost contracts aren’t being told where to refer children and whānau currently on waitlists for their services,” says Himiona.

“The sweeping statements made in recent days simply do not reflect the reality of the social service sector. We have heard from many providers who have had their contracts reduced who have delivered on targets and are unaware of duplication of services in these communities.”

This is a sector filled with incredible organisations doing valuable mahi in communities wanting to work in partnership with government to support children and whānau,” says Himiona.

**ENDS**

**Belinda Himiona is available for interviews upon request: [ceo@sspa.org.nz](mailto:ceo@sspa.org.nz) | 021 0230 1029**

## Editor's Notes:

### **ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TE PAI ORA O AOTEAROA | [www.sspa.org.nz](http://www.sspa.org.nz)**

Te Pai Ora SSPA is a membership-based organisation, representing more than 230 non-profit, community-based social service organisations from around Aotearoa New Zealand. Our member organisations are diverse, including small rural organisations, Iwi and kaupapa Māori service providers, Pacific providers, and large national children's organisations. Our member organisations provide life-changing and often life-saving services and support in their communities.

Te Pai Ora SSPA's full members are funded by government to deliver social services in our communities every day, with a predominant focus on children, rangatahi, families and whānau. Our affiliate members are organisations that deliver social services for these people, and organisations and individuals working in areas aligned to the interests of children, young people, whānau or communities.

Te Pai Ora SSPA's vision is that Aotearoa New Zealand's community-based social services are sustainable, making a positive impact every day in our communities and hapori, supporting children, young people and whānau to thrive now and into the future. Te Pai Ora SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa New Zealand's social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.