

**Under** the Inquiries Act 2013  
**In the matter** of the Royal Commission into Historical Abuse in State Care and in  
the Care of Faith-based Institutions

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## **Oranga Tamariki: Brief of Evidence of Claudia Ann Boyles for Institutional Response Hearing**

**8 August 2022**

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**Solicitor**

Julia White  
General Counsel, Crown Response to the Abuse in  
Care Inquiry  
[Julia.White@abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz](mailto:Julia.White@abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz)

**Counsel**

Rachael Schmidt-McCleave  
Kate Sheppard Chambers  
PO Box 5606, Wellington 6140  
[www.katesheppardchambers.co.nz](http://www.katesheppardchambers.co.nz)  
[Rachael.Schmidt-McCleave@kschambers.co.nz](mailto:Rachael.Schmidt-McCleave@kschambers.co.nz)

Max Clarke-Parker  
Meredith Connell  
PO Box 24546, Wellington  
[Max.Clarke-Parker@mc.co.nz](mailto:Max.Clarke-Parker@mc.co.nz)

# Brief of evidence of Claudia Ann Boyles

I, **Claudia Ann Boyles** of Wellington, Public Servant, state:

## Introduction

- 1 My full name is Claudia Ann Boyles.
- 2 I am the Chief Advisor Disability at Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children (**Oranga Tamariki**). I was appointed to this newly established role in October 2021. My term of appointment is for 12 months.
- 3 The Chief Advisor Disability role is responsible for providing insight and advice to the Chief Executive on a range of disability matters including strategic, organisational, and operational issues in order to meet the needs of disabled tamariki, and rangatahi and their whānau or caregivers.
- 4 I am working directly with the Chief Executive and Leadership Team to lead a significant shift in disability policies, practice and supports, aligned to the New Zealand Disability Strategy, Whaia Te Ao Marama and the social model of disability. This work supports our ongoing commitment to United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In addition to working with the Disability team across the Ministry, I am developing close working relationships with both the disability sector and Government agencies to improve outcomes and services for children and parents living with disabilities.
- 5 I am a disabled person, a paraplegic and wheelchair user.
- 6 Before joining Oranga Tamariki, I held senior advisory roles in the public service including Principal Advisor roles in ACC and in the Ministry for the Environment.
- 7 My current role and previous experience means that I am well-placed to give evidence about matters affecting disabled people in the context of the care system.
- 8 My role as Chief Advisor Disability is about encouraging new ways of thinking in relation to disability and examining how thought patterns might influence the decisions made by public servants affecting disabled people on a day-to-day basis.
- 9 I am interested in the 'mental models' that people bring to disability, and how that drives all of the decisions we make about resource allocation, practice and policy.
- 10 This is a role where I feel I can really have an impact, both for children and young people with disabilities and for parents who have a disability and who are caring for children.
- 11 My underlying philosophy that I bring to the role is that there is a need to start thinking about disabled people's strengths, instead of thinking about people as broken or needing our help to fit in. I firmly believe that what disabled people

need is support and removal of barriers to be able to live lives they value. This informs my work as Chief Advisor Disability.

- 12 I would like to see Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrating inclusivity to the world. Addressing disability is so much more than ramps and braille and sign language interpreters – creating a sense of “belonging” for disabled people isn’t achieved through an accessibility tick box exercise. Creating an inclusive society is about fulfilling a promise of tolerance, acceptance and compassion between human beings.
- 13 Oranga Tamariki has recognised the distance we need to go and has taken action to close the gap. This is a signal to disabled tamariki and rangatahi that we see them and we want to be better when it comes to understanding and meeting their needs.
- 14 I intend to use my extensive experience to help to lift Oranga Tamariki’s practices in relation to disabled people, and support best practice in the delivery of services to, and engagement with, them.

### **Scope of evidence**

- 15 I understand that the Commission is interested in the following issues:
- (a) Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the guarantee of tino rangatiratanga over kāinga (te Tiriti);
  - (b) Priority groups: tāngata whenua, Pacific peoples, disabled people (Priority Groups);
  - (c) System and organisational monitoring, oversight and safeguarding (Monitoring, Oversight, Safeguarding);
  - (d) The relationship between the state and faith in the care system (State and Faith);
  - (e) Entry into care;
  - (f) Staff and caregivers;
  - (g) Provision of care;
  - (h) Complaints, Referrals and Criminal Justice;
  - (i) Funding and resources; and
  - (j) Lessons learned.
- 16 I have read, and am familiar with, the brief of evidence filed by our Chief Executive, Chappie Te Kani. I am appearing in the Commission with Mr Te Kani to give evidence as needed to supplement his evidence.

17 In particular, I am able to answer questions in relation to the following aspects of Mr Te Kani's brief of evidence:

(a) Priority groups, specifically disabled people.

Signed: 

Claudia Ann Boyles

Date: 8 August 2022  
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