

# What We Have Understood – He aha ta mātau

National Strategy and Action Plans to eliminate family violence and sexual violence

## Summary 1 : 12 May – 19 May 2021

This paper provides a summary of submissions received between 12 May and 19 May. Submissions were made through hui discussions, the Citizen Space website, emails and postcards. Engagement runs to 30 June and this update does not come to any conclusions about what should or should not be included in the National Strategy and Action Plans.

Quotes for ‘what we have heard’ were selected as representative of a range of submissions received between 12 May and 19 May. These quotes are the voice of contributors. They have not been edited or selected to reflect any government views.

If there are ideas in this summary that you agree with, or disagree with, please take the opportunity to provide that feedback on [www.violencefree.govt.nz](http://www.violencefree.govt.nz) or to [submissions@violencefree.govt.nz](mailto:submissions@violencefree.govt.nz)

Focus	What We Have Heard	What We Have Understood	Summary
<p><b>Vision:</b> Our vision is for the end of family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand – so that people are safe, well, and thriving</p> <p>This can only occur when there is a significant increase in prevention and when tangata whenua and communities have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Can’t fault the kupu in the vision”</li> <li>• "A great vision. One that is needed especially now. There is an escalation of violence in areas of our country."</li> <li>• “No one agency, NGO, iwi, government agency can do this and a collaborative approach is also required. Let the community lead but we need to eliminate siloed responses to FVSV."</li> <li>• "As woman and children are the most frequent victims and most disadvantage I would like to see sexism addressed."</li> </ul>	<p>The majority of submissions supported the vision.</p> <p>Many submissions supported the inclusion of prevention, and community and tangata whenua-led solutions, in the vision. Some submissions also advocated that consistent and long-term collaboration is required to achieve the vision, and that this should also be included in the approach.</p> <p>Some submissions noted that victim-survivors and/or people using violence needed to be specifically referenced in the vision. This was commonly linked with a desire to see a gendered</p>	<p>Most submissions commented on the vision and overall feedback was positive.</p> <p>Many submissions emphasised that the focus should be on wellbeing, instead of violence.</p>

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<p>the power to lead solutions that meet their needs and aspirations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The end of FV and SV depends mainly on men no longer harming women and children. These people seem to have been lost from sight, again.”</li> <li>• “FVSV is not the only factor preventing safety, wellness and thriving.”</li> <li>• "We don't have to be polite in our messaging and I think people need to hear something – you have to say it in the strongest way possible sometimes."</li> <li>• "It is aspirational but unrealistic. I don't believe we will ever eliminate family/sexual violence. Of course, it sounds better politically than saying that the goal/vision is merely to reduce family/sexual violence."</li> <li>• “[who/where are] other communities, including male victims, people with disabilities, new migrants, rainbow etc.”</li> <li>• "Overly idealistic, academic, language loses the very people we need to reach."</li> <li>• "Sounds like a vision for adults – needs to happen earlier (school age)."</li> </ul>	<p>nature to family violence and sexual violence reflected in the vision.</p> <p>There were mixed views on the aspirational nature of the vision.</p> <p>Some submitters felt that using the terms family violence and sexual violence were not inclusive for particular types of violence and groups of people who experience violence, including children.</p>	
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<p><b>Principle 1:</b> <b>Oranga whānau</b> The safety and wellbeing of people, families, whānau, communities is at the centre of all we, as a country, do</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Support for long term effects of trauma? Some things you don't just get over, even years later."</li> <li>• "We need to tell victims that we believe them and it is never their fault....it is the both workplaces and the public's responsibility to speak out and report family or sexual violence to ensure the safety of victims."</li> <li>• "Accountability is missing – should be at the heart of each principle. Multi-layered, how system is accountable to its victims and allows users of violence to be accountable for their actions. Flows through to government accountability to community...Language around accountability and taking responsibility for the impact on victims is missing."</li> <li>• "Add something about addressing the root causes of violence. Unless/until these are acknowledged and addressed we'll only have band-aid solutions."</li> <li>• "Doesn't acknowledge the role of the patriarchy in how violent our world is"</li> </ul>	<p>Many submitters were not satisfied that the principles were clear enough. Most called for additional wording to make the principles more specific and meaningful. The most common additions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a therapeutic/trauma informed focus</li> <li>• accountability (to victims) by users of violence, by the public, by government</li> <li>• root causes of violence, some submitters identified these as poverty and colonisation, but particularly patriarchal and/or power structures that enable violence</li> </ul>	<p>Most submissions commented on the principles - the majority wanted to add something to make them more specific and meaningful.</p>
<p><b>Principle 2:</b> <b>Mauri ora</b> Partnerships and the empowerment of tangata whenua, communities, whānau, and families</p>			
<p><b>Principle 3:</b> <b>Healthy relationships</b> Relationships are based on mutual respect and the mana of everyone involved</p>			
<p><b>Principle 4:</b> <b>Equitable and</b></p>			

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<p><b>inclusive approaches</b> To ensure that people are free from discrimination, receive culturally informed support, and have their inherent dignity and mana upheld</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "It's a gendered issue. It's statistically men's violence against women, and men's violence against men."</li><li>• "Kotahitanga needs to be added"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• an equal commitment from service provision agencies to working together to help communities</li></ul>	
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<p><b>Focus Area #1:</b> <b>Recognise te ao Māori</b> <b>Whaimana tea o Māori</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Kaimahi Māori are already battling now because of gate keeping and because of the "I know what's best for us" attitude which is hegemonic and Pākehā thinking...as long as [kaimahi Māori] are seen as second-class citizens, as long as the people we work with see being Māori as a handicap and not a taonga, then we're pushing s**t up hill."</li> </ul>	<p>A few submissions specifically commented on this focus area – all strongly supported a stronger te ao Māori centered approach.</p>	<p>The need for tangata whenua to be leading out on a te ao Māori approach links to tangata whenua leadership in Focus Area #3.</p>
<p><b>Focus Area #2:</b> <b>Bring government responses together</b> <b>Whakapiri ngā mahi o te kāwanatanga</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "the structure and delivery of WINZ needs to change and families assisted in a more meaningful way...."</li> <li>• "ACC therapy needs to be available and accessible for everyone who needs it. The amount of therapists available through ACC is abysmally low...And the number of people I know who have had awful experiences with their ACC therapists (particularly with racism!) is awful..."</li> <li>• "So specialist hubs that are connected to the community through specialist roles on the ground working with whanau but are well supported by agencies to ensure immediate needs of whanau are met...With that wellness will also come."</li> </ul>	<p>Submissions that commented on this focus area were in strong support of government agencies being better aligned and collaborating. To enable this to occur, a few submissions noted that the structure and delivery of key agencies, specifically Police, WINZ and ACC, needed to be reviewed.</p> <p>Submissions also commented on the importance of co-locating services and/or prevention and specialist HUBs to achieve integrated responses.</p>	<p>This focus area has some similarities to Focus Area #6 – there was a lot of overlap in comments.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “More than information sharing, actually strategically planning and delivering support together, in collaboration with community and iwi.”</li> <li>• “Government departments that are resourced to take on the workload of helping stop the cycle instead of trying to pass the buck from one govt dept to the other , ie health to acc, acc to health, ministry of ed to health etc. Someone needs to pick up the responsibility instead of avoiding it.”</li> </ul>	<p>A number of submissions specified that integrated agency service delivery is needed, and this delivery should be founded on a collaborative strategic plan.</p>	
<p><b>Focus Area #3:</b> <b>Recognise tangata whenua leadership and community-led approaches</b> <b>Hāpaitia te mana ō tangata whenua me kaupapa Māori</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We are constantly told at higher level family harm hui here in Tamaki that we are a preferred Maori provider and our opinions are valuable, however, no one wants to offer more funding for us to provide services but want to continue sending to us as a preferred provider."</li> </ul>	<p>A few submissions specifically commented on this focus area – all strongly supported tangata whenua and community-led approaches. These submitters identified that space, time and funding from government were needed to make this happen.</p>	<p>Most of the comments made about this focus area would have also fitted under Focus Area #6.</p>

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<p><b>Focus Area #4:</b> <b>Strengthen workforces to prevent and respond to family violence and sexual violence</b> <b>Whakakaha i te hunga mahi ki te autaki me te whakautu ki te tūkinohānau</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Need recognition of family violence specialists/agencies/people – as a specialism. Trauma informed lens needed and poverty informed practice."</li> </ul>	<p>One submission specifically commented on this focus area.</p>	<p>Comments that could have been made under this focus area were made in Focus Areas #5 and #6.</p>
<p><b>Focus Area #5:</b> <b>Increase the focus on prevention</b> <b>Whakanui i te arotahinga ki te aukati</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Probably focus on the root cause of the issue, a lot of family violence is caused by stress within the family dynamic therefore if these stresses are alleviated there would in turn be less violence in the family. With sexual offending the focus needs to be on helping people before they offend, helping them recognise and talk about their feelings in a safe and supportive environment."</li> <li>• "Better funding for beneficiaries and people struggling....so that home life stresses can be reduced and the impact of poverty and struggling will help break the cycle."</li> </ul>	<p>An overwhelming number of submissions emphasised that the focus should be on wellbeing, not violence. This was closely linked with the idea that you need to focus on the "root causes" of violence – most commonly identified in submissions as poverty and financial stress – to prevent it.</p>	<p>Most submissions commented on this focus area – many people identified prevention as a key priority. Submissions commenting on wellness and wellbeing were often responding to specific questions on these topics</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Wellness can and must be maintained by encouraging whanau, family and community to reach out and not be afraid to speak up when they are experiencing family or sexual violence. In addition, wellness also means creating a safe space for victims and survivors to talk and seek protection"</li> <li>• "Understanding the balance of Te Whare Tapa Wha and its importance for our hauora could support our tamariki with understanding the different areas and how we can balance these e.g. knowing who they are, where they come from, use of purakau to better relate, coping strategies, understanding emotions, feelings, behaviours etc."</li> <li>• "In my family, we live and value respect for all and physical, sexual and emotional harm is, thankfully, not a part of the way we treat those in our whānau, and we have taught our children to call out this kind of behaviour and not tolerate it."</li> <li>• "I would say children are the most cost effective and wise target group, but youth need to probably be one of focus due to their entry into the sexual and relationship domain."</li> <li>• "We need to teach our youth emotional literacy and relationship skills. Family harm is more</li> </ul>	<p>A number of submissions talked about wellness being maintained through connecting with other people and/or having safe spaces.</p> <p>Numerous submissions commented on the importance of educating primary school children on healthy relationships, mental health and wellbeing as a proactive prevention measure.</p> <p>Educating youth about healthy relationships was also identified in multiple submissions as a priority.</p>	<p>that had been asked in surveys and hui. In future summaries, these responses will be separated out into their own section.</p>
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	<p>than just physical and abusers often are recreating learnt patterns from childhood. Helping all people know how to communicate, compromise, listen, and love well will go a long way to ending the harm."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Sex/relationship education also needs to include (in equal measure) discussion of queer/rainbow/trans bodies and relationships!"</li> <li>• "Our youth need to learn about mutual pleasure, sensuality, and respect as much as STI prevention."</li> <li>• "Members of family, Iwi, community etc need to drop the "She'll be right" and "Its not my problem" mentalities, standing up for victims and helping to seek the proper justice and support victims need. We should not be allowing these things to fester in the dark...."</li> <li>• "Men shelters so woman don't need to leave. More accountability; More education. More support."</li> <li>• "We need to have users of violence embedded in the documents as a priority to work with...Not and/or in terms of focussing on victims or users of violence. It's as well as not instead of. Working with perpetrators is what keeps victims</li> </ul>	<p>A couple of submissions also talked about the content of this education.</p> <p>Many submissions highlighted the need for public education, to combat behaviours like complacency and victim blaming, and to also inform people about how to identify abuse and what to do/say if someone reaches out for help.</p> <p>Many submissions commented that more needed to be done to help (male) users of violence.</p>	
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	<p>safe. This can be done safely by working with specialist."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Helping men who use violence learn to be non-violent is also essential. At present pathways to help are obscure, funding limited, and there is limited trained staff to provide men with what they need to heal, relearn and change."</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Focus Area #6: Develop ways for government to create changes Whakawhanake ngā mahi o te kawanatanga ā tōna wā</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "This system needs to be victim focused. Stop unnecessarily subjecting and retraumatizing the victims of abuse."</li> <li>• "...children and survivors are forced to defend themselves, not only from abusers but from the systems themselves...the 12 years of abuse was bad enough. But WINZ, family court, the police, lawyer for child, Oranga Tamariki, child support and the rest of it was even worse."</li> <li>• "The immediate core - critical part to change is create a safe, fast, simple, lasting protection order. Police should issue protection orders. The family court is keeping victims trapped in the violence and unable to escape. That there be consequences for breaches of protection orders."</li> <li>• "Why on earth do I need to prove my concern in court costing money, time, energy and retraumatizing my family at a time I need to be healing? I was encouraged to file for a protection order by the family harm unit, yet</li> </ul>	<p>Numerous submissions made general comments about reforming the justice system to make it more victim-centric. A commonly identified focus for change was increasing people's understanding of family violence and sexual violence across the system.</p> <p>A few submissions focused specifically on issues with protection orders (POs). Recommended changes included having police issue POs, better enforcement of POs and lower criteria for obtaining POs.</p>	<p>Most submissions commented on this focus area and identified it as a key priority. Some comments overlapped with those made in Focus Areas #2 and #5.</p>

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	<p>seven months later they have not even interviewed him yet. Why am I doing this with no support from them?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “There are currently zero restrictions for young people to access porn site unless parents put software in place. ....If our rangathai don't have a steady diet of sexual aggression and misogynistic messaging it will go a long way in shaping healthier attitudes.”</li> <li>• “Fund services like HELP and Shine, so they don't always have to be fundraising! [However,] HELP is for women and children, there are some (few) services for men, but I've found nothing for those of us who are neither.”</li> <li>• "Significantly more funding into supporting victims....but if you have parents with issues, they can only teach you what they know. The support for victims might be secondary prevention for them, but primary prevention for their kids."</li> <li>• “Only \$4m for users of violence. Need to start with what's already being done and ensure every user of violence can access these services. Current situation is that we can't support all those that want to change."</li> </ul>	<p>Some submissions commented that the Government needed legislative restrictions around alcohol advertising and access to pornography.</p> <p>Many submissions commented that better funding was needed for current, new and long-term victim support services.</p> <p>Some submissions focused on more funding for users of violence.</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Men /women that perpetrate family harm do so out of not addressing their own issues from the past. Until they do so how does one prevent it. How do you compel people to do this? You can't normally until it has gone too far and even then the courts often don't enforce their counselling orders."</li> <li>• "Doesn't matter how supportive your family/friends are if you can't access counselling (~\$200 an hour)...Fund accessible counselling. Whanau's job is to support but they can't provide specialised advice and support."</li> <li>• "Accessible counselling and mental health services. It's the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff approach, but right now, the ambulance isn't even on the scene."</li> </ul>	<p>Numerous suggestions focused on government providing accessible, subsidised counselling and/or trauma-informed therapeutic interventions to break the intergenerational cycle.</p>	
<p><b>Focus Area #7:</b> <b>Enable continuous learning and improvement</b> <b>Whakamanatia te mātauranga me te whakapai tonu</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Want to see quantitative research. Need government to do it as they have the data"</li> </ul>	<p>One submission specifically commented on this focus area, referencing the need for more quantitative research in family violence and sexual violence.</p>	<p>A few comments that could have been made under this focus area were made in Focus Area #6.</p>