



New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services – Children and Families Policy Group Submission to the Joint Venture Business Unit on the Family Violence and Sexual Violence National Strategy

Introduction

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the National Strategy and Action Plans to eliminate family violence and sexual violence. NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Our member organisations have a long history of working alongside children and families in Aotearoa. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website www.nzccss.org.nz

NZCCSS Feedback on the proposed Vision, Principles and Focus Areas

NZCCSS is broadly supportive of the proposed vision, principles and focus areas. The following comments relate to specific areas raised by our membership.

The Children and Family Policy Group thank the Joint Venture for attending a recent hui, sharing the Vision, Principles and Focus Areas and capturing our members thoughts during the session.

This document reiterates those points, and provides a deeper look into one aspect.

During that engagement key suggestions and points of view were expressed. These included the following:

- It is crucial that the Joint Venture captures the full spectrum of violence (online, economic, emotional, i.e. not just physical)
- An explicit and clear definition of family violence and sexual violence is needed, acknowledging that this spectrum is multi-faceted and often subtle
- Strengthen education and prevention across the lifespan
 - a. In schools, at all stages with a focus on behaviours and consent
 - b. Public campaigns, particularly in relation to how to support others, what family violence and sexual violence look like or can include
 - c. Provision of formal, evidence-based training at all levels of the qualifications framework

- d. Micro-credentials for those who work with people across multitudes of sectors – for instance, “She is not your Rehab” highlight the incredible mahi that occurs in the service industry
- Whole of lifespan approach (prenatal to death), with an understanding that families themselves are multi-generational and risks occur at all ages and stages
 - Include information, experiences and services for those who commit violence
 - That violence increasingly occurs in online spaces

During Joint Venture engagement with NZCCSS Secretariat one of the topics identified is online violence.

Online Violence

Abuse online is multi-faceted, pervasive and a challenge to prevent.

Our members report the impact of social media on their ability to disconnect, gain privacy and move on from violence. Often the instigator of the violence is able to use social media to remain a presence in their lives.

Initiatives such as those led by Netsafe or Virtual Villages (as set up by our membership) have little national reach or depth of public knowledge. The Joint Venture would do well to engage with groups already working in this space, e.g. Howick Baptist Healthcare Senior Living, Zeal, Sticks ‘n Stones are all leaders in creating safe, supportive and violence free online spaces. NZCCSS would be happy to assist with creating engagement with our membership involved in these groups.

At the more extreme end is the use of online spaces for mass violence, sexualization of children and young people, indoctrination of extremism and other international issues. There is an urgent need for multi-sector training to work with these issues. Both in combating them broadly and supporting those impacted individually. We are yet to be well placed to do so.

NZCCSS recommends that the Joint Venture include the impact of online violence across the focus areas for the strategy.