

Victims of Family Violence (Strengthening Legal Protections) Legislation Bill

October 2023



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Victims of Family Violence (Strengthening Legal Protections) Legislation Bill. We support the kaupapa to grant further protections to individuals and whānau who suffer family violence, but mirror the concerns of the sector that this Bill may, in its current form, have unintended consequences for these victims.

Taunakitanga | Recommendations

Our main points are:

Item One

We support the Kaupapa to remove the capacity for abusers to use the court as another instrument in their abuse. We tautoko this understanding that litigation abuse in family proceedings is a real and damaging form of coercive control perpetrated by abusers, and that all forms of abuse are worthy of legislative intervention.

Item Two

As outlined by those with lived experience of these systems, there may be unintended consequences from the limiting of applications. Those seeking to protect their children from abusers often need to bring multiple applications before the court to do so, and this change may have the consequence of limiting their capacity to keep their children safe.

Recommendation – Ensure that any changes cannot be used to further impact the victims of abuse as they fight for their safety, and the safety of their children.

Ko wai tātou | Who we are

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.

Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 230 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. We believe in working to achieve a just and compassionate society for all, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website www.nzccss.org.nz.

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