



**New Zealand House of Representatives**  
Te Whare Māngai o Aotearoa

**Justice Committee**

Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Ture

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September 2024

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**Review briefing on the 2022/23 annual  
review of the Executive Board for the  
Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual  
Violence**

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Presented to the House of Representatives  
by James Meager, Chairperson

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# Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence

## Recommendation

The Justice Committee has conducted a review briefing on the annual review of the Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence for 2022/23, and recommends that the House take note of its report.

## About this report

A review briefing is a form of annual review that takes place outside the regular period for annual review scrutiny (November through March). It enables committees to spread their workload more evenly through the year and to focus on strategic priorities during the main annual review period.

## About the Executive Board

In 2018, a joint venture was established to enable a whole-of-government approach to addressing family violence and sexual violence. Four years later, the joint venture became Te Puna Aonui, an interdepartmental executive board under the Public Service Act 2020. Te Puna Aonui is responsible for providing Ministers with a whole-of-government strategy and advice on interventions to eliminate family violence and sexual violence. It also manages the relationship between the Government and agencies that deal with family violence and sexual violence.

The Board brings together leaders from government agencies, including:

- Accident Compensation Corporation | Te Kaporeihana Āwhina Hunga Whara
- Department of Corrections | Ara Poutama Aotearoa
- Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
- Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora
- Ministry of Justice | Te Tāhū o te Ture
- Ministry of Social Development | Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora
- New Zealand Police | Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa
- Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children
- Te Puni Kōkiri | Ministry of Māori Development.

Te Puna Aonui agencies are responsible for implementing Te Aorerekura | the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence.

This is the first annual review of Te Puna Aonui. We held a hearing with Andrew Kibblewhite, the Secretary for Justice, and Emma Powell, the chief executive for the Board.

## Summary of 2022/23 performance and audit results

The annual report for 2022/23 was Te Puna Aonui's first. It reported total revenue of \$20.5 million and expenditure of \$19.7 million, resulting in a net surplus of \$85,000 for the year.

All three performance measures for the year were achieved. These measures were focused on the first stage of establishing Te Puna Aonui. In addition, Te Puna Aonui reports on four initiatives:

- building skilled, culturally competent, and sustainable workforces
- supporting and expanding integrated community-led responses
- empowering communities to partner in change
- building Māori – Crown partnerships and collaboration to improve the system.

## Non-financial performance

In 2023, the Auditor-General released the report *Meeting the needs of people affected by family violence and sexual violence*.<sup>1</sup> The report acknowledged Te Puna Aonui's efforts to understand and address the complexity of family violence and sexual violence but raised two main concerns. First, Te Puna Aonui agencies have made little progress in the way they work together since the creation of the joint venture. Second, work by individual agencies might be reducing family violence and sexual violence but it is not consistently supporting the changes needed to achieve the aims of Te Aorerekura. The Auditor-General made several recommendations to improve Te Puna Aonui's agencies' approaches to working with other agencies and developing relationships with community stakeholders.

## Family and sexual violence service gaps and provision

### Competing priorities of government agencies

We are concerned that Te Aorerekura's work programme has been affected by the competing priorities of government agencies and recent changes to their funding. We asked whether government agencies should better align their services with the Board's strategic direction. The Board told us that it is responsible for looking at the bigger picture, so it does not monitor each agency's services. We asked if the Board had discussed how reductions in funding for some government agencies would affect Te Aorerekura's work. We heard that the Board's agencies regularly discuss what each can bring to the table and how they can integrate their activities at a local level.

### Police attendance at family harm incidents

Some of us are concerned that the decision by the Police to attend fewer family harm incidents could lead to family violence being under-reported. We heard that the Board's role is to understand the reasons for the Police's decision and consider its implications for Te Aorerekura. The board would also consider which service would be the most appropriate for stepping into the gap left by the Police. We asked what would happen if these services were not available outside business hours. The Board told us that Police would still attend a family

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<sup>1</sup> Controller and Auditor-General, *Meeting the needs of people affected by family violence and sexual violence (2023)*.

harm incident if it can, but the availability of police officers would depend on the demands at the time.

### **Triage service by phone trial**

Between January and June 2023, the Police ran a trial of a system to triage non-emergency family harm phone calls in four districts. We heard that the Police used the system to sort 2,374 cases: 73 percent of those cases did not require police attendance or the callers did not want the Police to attend. However, at meetings known as “multi-agency tables”, those cases were assigned to service providers to follow up. We asked whether the cases received adequate support to address the needs of those involved. The Board told us that in the bigger centres—Auckland, Waikato, and Canterbury—adequate support was provided. However, in Northland there were some issues with providing social support services. We heard that the Police Commissioner is still considering if family harm should be included in any future triage process.

### **Multi-agency operating models to address family violence**

The Board told us that the Police run two Integrated Response Teams for family violence. One team is in Waikato and the other in Canterbury. These teams aim to ensure the immediate safety of victims and children, and work with perpetrators to prevent further violence. The Police also work with iwi and kaiāwhina (helpers) to implement Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke, a national framework for reducing family harm, which is run in nine locations.

The Board told us multi-agency intervention teams operate differently in each location because of differences in demand, partnerships, attendance by partner agencies, and NGO involvement. We heard that it reviewed the capability of multi-agency intervention teams across the country. It assessed the demand for services, risk assessment processes, gaps in technology and staffing, and any overlapping intervention teams in each area. The Board said there is still room for improvement, including by improving information sharing processes, enabling tiered or alternative responses to family harm incidents, and increasing support services in some communities.

## **Performance reporting and cross-agency accountability**

### **Clearly articulating measurable results**

We noted that the Board’s role is to hold participating government agencies to account for ensuring a whole-of-government approach to reducing family violence and sexual violence. We asked how the Board is measuring whether its members are improving outcomes. The Board said it has an Outcomes and Measurement Framework, which measures improvements in the family violence and sexual violence system and seeks to hold the Government accountable for implementing Te Aorerekura.<sup>2</sup> The Board told us it intends to report against the framework’s outcomes and indicators before the end of 2024. We look forward to the release of this report later this year.

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<sup>2</sup> Te Puna Aonui, *Te Aorerekura: The National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence—Outcomes and Measurement Framework*.

We heard that the Board also uses the Ministry of Justice's Crime and Victims Survey to measure the collective performance of government agencies.<sup>3</sup> Although there is some uncertainty about the data, it is currently the best measure for understanding what is happening with family violence and sexual violence. Programme evaluations are another measurement mechanism. These evaluations seek to understand which interventions are the most effective and where resources should be reallocated to enable better outcomes.

## **Working with the Social Investment Agency**

We noted that Budget 2024 allocated approximately \$6.2 million to the Social Investment Agency. The agency oversees the social investment approach and practices of government agencies. We asked how the Social Investment Agency would work with the Board at a governance level and operationally. At the governance level, we heard that formal conversations are yet to occur regarding the Social Investment Agency's involvement with the board. Operationally, the Board has partnered with the agency "on a much more practical day-to-day level". A team within the agency is dedicated to the work of Te Puna Aonui. Further, the entities have worked together to identify a family violence indicator within the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) that Stats NZ is responsible for.

We asked if the inclusion of the agency on the Board could lead to a programme that would highlight the importance of family violence prevention. The Board stressed that when done well, social investment would contribute to reducing family violence. We heard that prevention services are often provided when responding to a family violence incident. Prevention services are customised to each whānau and their situation. Other prevention is much broader—social investment in decent housing may be one way to prevent family violence.

## **Evolving reporting measures**

We note that the Board reported on three performance measures in its 2022/23 Annual Report. We heard that these performance measures assessed the board's first operational stages. The Board told us it intends to insert baseline performance measures in its annual reports. The performance measures will evolve each year to better reflect the board's strategic direction. It also intends to further develop its Outcomes and Measurement Framework, and to devise performance measures relating to the framework that would be reported on every two years. We are interested in seeing how the Board's performance reporting has evolved when we next meet with it.

We asked about the Board's role in reducing youth offending and violent offending, for which the Government has associated targets. The Board explained that it leads the work to reduce violent offending, while Oranga Tamariki takes the lead role on reducing youth offending.

We heard that the Government's target to reduce victims of serious violent and sexual crime by 20,000 has helped the Board's focus on strengthening the overall purpose of the multi-agency approach. The Board analyses the Crime and Victims Survey and other data sets to

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Crime & Victims Survey (<https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcv>).

understand what percentage of violent offending stems from family violence and sexual violence. It uses that analysis to improve its responses to family violence and sexual violence.

## Developing the next version of Te Aorerekura

### Future action plan for Te Aorerekura

Te Aorerekura is both a strategy and an action plan to address family violence and sexual violence. It contains 40 actions to change the way government agencies respond to family violence and sexual violence. The Board stressed that implementing 40 actions over two years has been challenging, but that over half of them have been completed. We heard that the Board's engagement with community stakeholders on their experiences with the action plan has identified areas that could be improved, especially regarding timeframes for service provision.

We asked about updating Te Aorerekura and particularly about what its structure would be and how many actions it would have. We heard that the next action plan would cover a five-year period, which would allow for more regular reviews of the plan. The action plan would also include key focus areas for all the government agencies to work on.

The Board is yet to finalise the number of actions for the next action plan. However, the next plan would need to be flexible to reflect the lessons it has learned, new changes, and any new opportunities or innovations that arise. We are interested to hear about the development of the updated action plan when we next meet with the Board.

### Local input into the next action plan

The Board emphasised the importance of including a locally led response in the next action plan. It regularly engages with community stakeholders on Te Aorerekura's key priorities. This engagement provides a better understanding of perpetrators of violence and the experiences of children. We asked if the new action plan would account for areas where there are high rates of family violence and insufficient social services. The Board explained that understanding diversity of demand and identifying gaps in services was part of its work under Te Aorerekura. We heard that this work would continue under the updated action plan.

The Board said it has struggled to improve how government agencies respond to family violence and sexual violence at the local level. We heard that the Board continually seeks to understand the coverage, accessibility, and visibility of services in different areas, and aims to fill the gaps. Needs in specific areas would be addressed by the most appropriate agency, which could be Oranga Tamariki, the Police, the Ministry of Social Development, or a local iwi provider.

### Incorporating recommendations and observations

We note the recommendations made by the Ministry of Social Development's report, *A report outlining family violence and sexual violence service gaps in Aotearoa*, and the Auditor-General's report.<sup>4</sup> We asked whether the Board would incorporate their

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Social Development, *A report outlining family violence and sexual violence service gaps in Aotearoa*.

recommendations into the second action plan. The Board told us it sees value in the reports' criticisms because the reports identified issues with the board's operations and agency programmes.

We heard that the Ministry of Social Development's recommendations would encourage government agencies to make changes. The changes could be made without the Board's involvement if they aligned with the Board's aim of reducing family violence and sexual violence. The Board told us its next action plan will focus on areas where collaborative work is difficult. This would sharpen accountability for achieving the Board's intended outcomes and address the concerns of the Auditor-General.

## **Responsibility for addressing family violence**

Some of us suggested that some ministers are hesitant to take responsibility for addressing family violence. We asked whether the government agencies involved with Te Puna Aonui are also hesitant. The Board observed that this hesitancy is "one of the age-old public management problems". It commented that every minister and government agency it interacts with instinctively addresses the issues they are solely accountable for. We heard that the Board works to counteract this tendency. It said it is important to keep government agencies accountable for reducing family violence and sexual violence. However, the Board is aware that there is still room to improve its accountability mechanisms.

## **Detailed data on family violence**

We note that family violence is often an underreported area. We asked if the Board has a programme of work to gather more detailed data on family violence. The Board said the Outcomes and Measurement Framework plays a large role in understanding the scope of the issue. It also aims to import more of the board's data into the IDI. This can help the Board better understand the experiences of individuals and whānau with government agencies after family violence has occurred. When analysing the data, the Board can get a sense of the drivers of family violence. We heard that the Board received some funding to build its capability to curate the information to make better sense of the data.

The Board told us it is important to understand what is happening on the ground in different regions. It aims to build on output measures that monitor the demand for services and responses by government agencies. The Board also collects data from community stakeholders on how well the Board is operating at a local level. The Board said a top-down and bottom-up approach would effectively measure the prevalence of family violence over time and any changes in the rates at which family violence is reported and help is sought. We look forward to hearing more about this work programme when we next meet with the Board.

## **Other matters considered**

We also discussed the following matters. For more detail, refer to the pages noted below in the *Hansard* transcript of our hearing, available on the Parliament website.

**Raising the alarm on services that do not meet needs**—We discussed the Board's role in raising the alarm if government services are not meeting the needs of survivors of family

violence. The Board told us it considers the implications of significant changes to services made by each agency on the board. However, it does not second-guess what an agency is doing or insert itself into the decisions they are making. (*Transcript pp 7–8.*)

**Evaluating programmes**—We asked about work to ensure that programmes are evaluated in a robust and reliable way. We heard that there is a programme of work that evaluates social sector commissioning and the effectiveness of social service contracts. It also uses a social investment approach to evaluate programmes' results. (*Transcript pp 14–15.*)

**The Board's functions beyond developing an action plan**—We are interested in what the Board does beyond developing an action plan to reduce family violence and sexual violence. The Board told us that it shares insights, looks for connections, and deconflicts competing ideas to ensure that participating agencies are working together to achieve the Board's purpose. (*Transcript pp 24–25.*)

## Appendix

### Committee procedure

We decided to conduct the 2022/23 annual review of the Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence as a review briefing. We met between 22 August and 26 September 2024 to consider the review briefing. We heard evidence from the Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence on 22 August 2024 for 90 minutes. We received advice from the Office of the Auditor-General.

### Committee members

James Meager (Chairperson)  
Hon Ginny Andersen  
Jamie Arbuckle  
Cameron Brewer  
Tākuta Ferris  
Paulo Garcia  
Dr Tracey McLellan  
Rima Nakhle  
Tamatha Paul  
Todd Stephenson  
Hon Dr Duncan Webb

### Related resources

We received responses to written questions in March 2024 as part of the regular annual review procedure.

We received the following documents as advice and evidence for this review briefing. They are available on the Parliament website, along with the Hansard transcript and recording of our meeting on 22 August 2024.

- Office of the Auditor-General (Briefing on the Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence).
- Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence (Responses to additional written questions).