

# ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Labour will:

- Provide leadership to eliminate violence against women and children from the Prime Minister down with the lead agency being the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Adopt a collaborative, resourced, long-term New Zealand Action Plan to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Children in consultation with other parties and the sector.
- Provide \$60 million over four years for family and sexual violence to support front line services, primary prevention, and education. This includes increased support for transitional housing.
- Reform the justice system to provide real justice to survivors while protecting the right to be presumed innocent. This includes providing specialist training.
- Review prosecution guidelines to ensure Police appropriately and consistently arrest and charge offenders, and review the operation of Protection Orders.

## THE ISSUE

On average 35 New Zealanders are killed in family violence and family violence related homicides every year. One in three New Zealand women experience intimate partner violence. 20,000 women and children needed the help of Women's Refuge last year alone.

New Zealand has a moral and international obligation to ensure women and children are safe and free from violence. New Zealand's latest UN Periodic review and CEDAW review both raised issues with our high and increasing levels of violence against women and low levels of reporting and conviction.

The level of violence against women and children – sexual and domestic – is unacceptable and out of line with many similar countries. The social and economic costs of this violence are huge – to individuals, to families and to our whole community. Action is needed to reduce the high rates of violence.

Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence is preventable. There is a body of evidence and clear understanding of what needs to be done based on substantive work put in place by the last Labour Government. Now is the time for comprehensive action – failure to do so is equivalent to being complicit in the huge harm happening in our communities.

## LABOUR'S PLAN

Labour will take decisive action with the aim of being world leading in eliminating violence against women and children focusing on prevention, support services and justice.

We will invest \$60 million in additional funding over four years and redirect existing funding to support immediate initiatives for eliminating violence against women and children. In addition we will commit to a long term, inclusive, collaborative New Zealand Action Plan.

### PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Labour will implement a national awareness programme targeted at reducing sexual and domestic violence, building on the evidence from the "It's Not OK" campaign. >>

>> We will provide sustainable funding to build a nationwide network of violence prevention services, including primary, secondary and tertiary prevention services and increase resources into primary prevention for sexual violence.

We will ensure all students receive specialist sexuality and relationship education and set a minimum standard of sex and sexuality education. We will increase and secure funding for rape prevention education with an immediate focus on schools and girls' self-defence.

### **SUPPORTING FRONT-LINE SERVICES**

Labour will restore funding to cuts made to Women's Refuge, family violence programmes, rape and sexual violence survivor support services and increase ongoing resources into the sector and continue to fund specialist front-line services for offenders.

We will build on successful services under Whānau Ora and establish secure funding for them, create a well-funded and resourced support network for survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and ensure adequate ongoing counselling services.

We will ensure specialist training for those delivering front-line services on violence against women and children, with an emphasis on power dynamics.

We will address transitional housing including funding a Pilot Programme for transitional housing for women and their children leaving domestic violence.

### **REFORMING CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Labour will allow the Law Commission to complete its review on alternative trial mechanisms, including the establishment of a specialist sexual violence court and consider reforms that provide real justice to survivors while protecting the right to be

presumed innocent, including: cross examination rules, alternative trial processes, establishment of sexual violence support, specialist training including on the dynamics of violence, support services during justice processes, and changes to the definition of consent.

We will review prosecution guidelines to ensure Police appropriately and consistently arrest and charge offenders, and review the operation of Protection Orders.

We will ensure the Police are adequately resourced and trained, embed the Bazley report changes, and focus on prevention and community safety. We will ensure specialist Adult Sexual Assault teams and Child Protection Services are properly resourced.

### **ACTION PLAN TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

Eliminating violence against women and children requires a long term unified commitment.

Labour will adopt a New Zealand Action Plan to Eliminate Violence against Women and Children in collaboration with other parties and the sector. It will be led from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to send a powerful message that the issue is taken seriously.

The plan will create a robust system for reporting and showing progress in reducing levels of violence against women and children, provide a focus on prevention and culture change, identify gaps and shortages in funding, and set the goals to be achieved and the initiatives to achieve them as well as measuring their progress.

It will ensure the Government takes a coordinated approach to sexual violence, recognises gender perspectives including power dynamics, and caters for all types of victims and offenders including disabled women, ethnic/migrant women and Māori women.