



waves

Waitakere Anti-Violence Essential Services

WAVES Trust

p: (09)838 4834 e: administrator@waves.org.nz f: (09)838 4835 www.waves.org.nz
7 Henderson Valley Rd, Henderson Post: PO Box 121450, Henderson, Waitakere 0650

Committee Secretariat Local Government and Environment Committee

Submission on the Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Bill, 2012

Submitted by:

WAVES Trust
PO Box 12-1450
Henderson
Auckland 0650

Contact:

Poto Williams
Manager
09 838 4656(bus)
manager@waves.org.nz

26 July 2012

We wish to speak with the Select Committee about our submission if that is possible

WAVES Trust is an interagency family violence (FV) network organisation. The membership is primarily government and non-government service providers who work in the area of FV. There are also members who are not specifically FV agencies but their work complements or supports efforts to reduce violence in Waitakere. Currently there are over 50 agencies receiving information and support from WAVES Trust.

We are committed to strengthening the work of those who support and inform victims of FV and those who hold offenders accountable and support them to make positive changes to their behaviour. WAVES acts to support and resource all member agencies to practice to the highest standards of integrity and professional ethics.

WAVES Trust provides:

- A networking forum to encourage and support statutory and community services to provide integrated and collaborative services to reduce FV
- Links to other organisations through the interagency network
- Community advocacy and representation on initiatives that target FV
- Information about best practice in FV intervention and support for the implementation of best practice

- Primary prevention, capacity building and education opportunities for those working to reduce FV
- Contract management of interagency projects and contracts
- Access to current, relevant research
- Monitoring of community initiatives such as the Waitakere Family Violence Court
- An overview of information deficits and initiation of local research

WAVES Trust is a charitable trust. Governance is vested in the Board chaired by trustee Waitakere Family Court Judge David Mather. There are 5 trustees including Judge David Mather, Penny Hulse (Auckland Council Deputy Mayor), Howard Dawson (CEO Man Alive), Steve Kehoe (NZ Police) and Tiaria Fletcher (Lifewise Family Services).

There are currently four staff members – a Manager, two part-time Coordinators, and an Administrator, as well as one contracted part-time Project Leader.

Summary

WAVES Trust and the WAVES FV Network have enjoyed a long-standing and very productive relationship with our local Council, which we look forward to continuing as the new Auckland Council matures. WAVES works with Council and the Waitakere Taskforce on Family Violence to provide FV primary prevention initiatives to the Waitakere area in line with the strategy of coordinated community action promoted by the government's violence prevention initiative: the 'It's Not OK' Campaign.

We support the view that this Bill is poorly thought through and inadequately supported by evidence, and argue that it is in direct contravention of other government initiatives like the 'It's Not OK' Campaign.

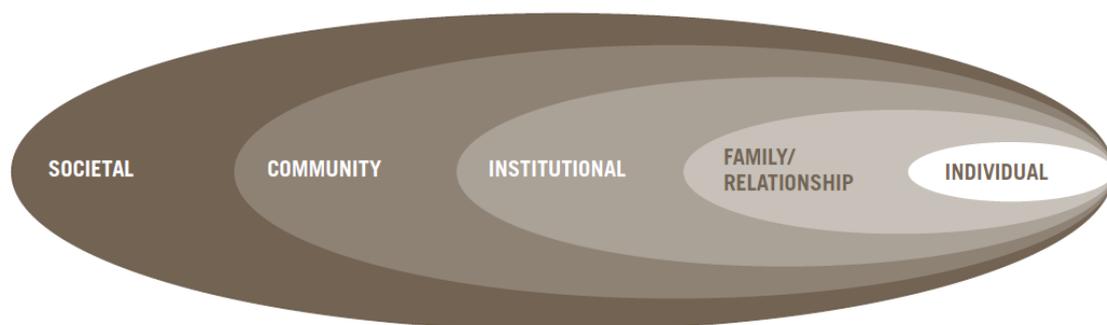
WE RECOMMEND:

1. The Select Committee should recommend that this Bill be withdrawn immediately.
2. If the Bill is not withdrawn then it should be returned to the Department of Internal Affairs for more thorough problem analysis and option assessments and redrafted according to the Department's Regulatory Impact Statement.

Background

Family Violence (FV) is a broad term that covers a range of abuses perpetrated on family members or people in a domestic relationship. The most well-known forms of FV are physical, sexual and psychological abuse but abuse can extend to other non-physical abuses such as financial or economic abuse, isolation and neglect. FV is a pervasive problem in New Zealand homes and communities. Each year New Zealand police attend over 80,000 callouts related to FV, however they believe that they are notified of only 25% of FV incidents.¹ At its most extreme, on average FV results in the deaths of 10 children, 14 women, and 6 men each year.²

The World Health Organisation (WHO) argues that ‘violence is an extremely complex phenomenon that has its roots in the interaction of many factors – biological, social, cultural, economic and political’ and as such requires a collaborative approach to prevention and intervention that is guided by a socio-ecological model (this model was originally devised to describe violence against children).³ The socio-ecological model presents violence experienced at the individual level as embedded within layers of social and community acceptance of violence, see below:



Source: Janet Fanslow, *Beyond Zero Tolerance: Key Issues and Future Directions for Family Violence Work in New Zealand*, Wellington, 2005, p.75.

FV intervention at the individual level is most effective when supported by consistent messaging across the social and community sectors that violence is not condoned nor overlooked or considered inconsequential.⁴ This messaging is achieved through a coordinated community action which promotes healthy relationships, violence awareness and consistency in responses to violence across all sectors of society, e.g. government, local government, justice, health, education, social services.⁵

¹ Family Violence Indicators, <http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/initiatives/action-family-violence/indicators-may-2011.pdf>, (Accessed 19 May 2012), p.5.

² MSD, *Community Action Toolkit to Prevent Family Violence*, Wellington, c.2010, <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/documents/working-with-us/programmes-services/preventing-family-violence/prevent-family-violence-toolkit.pdf> (Accessed 14 June 2012), p.59.

³ World Health Organisation, *World Report on Violence and Health: Summary*, Geneva, 2002, p.9, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/summary_en.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2012).

⁴ Janet Fanslow, *Beyond Zero Tolerance: Key Issues and Future Directions for Family Violence Work in New Zealand*, Wellington, 2005, pp.75–9.

⁵ Fanslow, p.77.

The New Zealand government's FV primary prevention strategy, the 'It's Not OK' campaign, specifically identifies local government as playing a key role in coordinated community action and identifies that role as including:

- Providing leadership on local responses to FV.
- Supporting local campaigns to end FV.
- Using council communications to promote violence prevention messages and activities.
- Including focus on FV within work on social wellbeing.
- Sponsoring the development of local violence-free strategies and initiatives.⁶

WAVES Trust and the WAVES FV Network acknowledge the legacy Waitakere City Council and the current Auckland Council's commitment to continuing those activities listed above. Past and present Council has provided support and leadership around FV in our community as evidenced by Deputy Mayor Penny Hulse's co-chairing the Waitakere Taskforce on FV (which Advisory Group is made up of representatives from the WAVES FV Network), Council's continuing support for the FV Project Leader role within Council, and the leadership provided by Mayor Len Brown in fronting a recent public awareness-raising campaign:



Through these activities Auckland Council plays an important role in primary violence prevention initiatives in Waitakere. The value of these roles was recently affirmed at a Regional Hui on FV and sexual violence in March 2012.⁷

We present our submission below from the viewpoint that violence prevention initiatives conducted in conjunction with local communities is an integral function of local government services to support the safety and wellbeing of ratepayers and community members alike.

⁶ <http://www.areiyouok.org.nz/files/test/resources/coordinated-community-action-wheel.pdf> (Accessed 23 July 2012).

⁷ <http://www.nzfvc.org.nz/?q=auckland-hui-2012> (Accessed 23 July 2012).

Submission

WAVES Trust does not support this Bill and believes it should be withdrawn immediately.

In the event that it is not withdrawn, we present the following concerns to the Select Committee.

Quality:

We acknowledge the concerns raised by Local Government New Zealand and the Society of Local Government Managers that this Bill has been developed in haste, is not based on sufficient evidence, and if passed in its present form may 'require subsequent amendment to address unforeseen circumstances.'⁸

Purpose:

WAVES believes that there is no need for the changes to the Act's purpose as outlined in this Bill. We point out that the removal of 'wellbeing' from the purpose and limiting the Act to providing infrastructure fails to support the government's own policies in relation to coordinated community action on violence and violence prevention.⁹

Democracy:

We support the view that democratic processes must continue to allow local government to act according to their interpretation of the will of local communities not according to the prescriptions of central government; else local government processes will cease to be democratic. This Bill invests too much control over the nature and structure of council services in central government's hands and it is difficult to see how communities will benefit from this change.

Fiscal Concerns:

WAVES does not support the Bill's intention to constrain council expenditure within a defined fiscal envelope. Again, the imposition of such constraints on local government without a mandate from local communities is undemocratic.

We agree that councils should be transparent and accountable to communities with regard to budgets and financial strategy, but these should be set according to the wishes of the community as reflected in their on-going consultation with local representatives and in the outcomes of elections. We do not believe that to achieve this there must be substantial changes to the Local Government Act.

⁸ Local Government NZ and Society of Local Government Managers, *The Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Bill 2012*, 2012, p. 4 quoting Department of Internal Affairs, *Regulatory Impact Statement – Better Local Government*, Wellington, 2012, p.1

⁹ <http://www.areyouok.org.nz/files/test/resources/coordinated-community-action-wheel.pdf> (Accessed 23 July 2012).

WE RECOMMEND:

1. The Select Committee should recommend that this Bill be withdrawn immediately.
2. If the Bill is not withdrawn then it should be returned to the Department of Internal Affairs for more thorough problem analysis and option assessments and redrafted according to the Department's Regulatory Impact Statement.

We thank the Committee for their efforts on this Bill.