



Summary

Working in new ways to address family violence and sexual violence

New Zealand has high and enduring rates of family violence and sexual violence. These affect hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders every year and contribute to poor economic, cultural, and social outcomes for some of our most vulnerable and marginalised communities.

In September 2018, the Government announced the formation of the Joint Venture for Family Violence and Sexual Violence (the joint venture). The joint venture is accountable for significantly reducing family violence and sexual violence. The agencies' chief executives are collectively responsible for transforming the way government agencies work together to achieve this.

The joint venture approach involves new ministerial arrangements, new public service governance arrangements, and new ways for agencies to work – both together, and with Māori and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the family violence and sexual violence sector.

We wanted to take an early look at this new way of working. This meant that any recommendations for improvement could be made early.

Many people we interviewed said that the joint venture is not yet operating as effectively as it needs to. We agree.

To achieve transformational change, everyone involved, from Ministers to agency staff, needs to have a clear and shared understanding of what they are seeking to achieve, their respective roles, and accountabilities. The joint venture also needs to agree with Māori what their partnership means in practice.

In our view, the joint venture's partnership with Māori can be successful only when government agencies and the responsible Ministers are realistic and clear about what a partnership means.

Similarly, the joint venture needs to invest significant time and effort in building relationships with NGOs and other stakeholder groups. The agencies involved also need to consider that resourcing the joint venture's work is core to their role. Sustained and urgent action is required to realise the potential of the joint venture to improve the lives of New Zealanders affected by family violence and sexual violence.

The joint venture is an important initiative to address this goal. We therefore intend to carry out further work to review its ongoing development and achievements.

