



Tēnā koutou katoa – Greetings to everyone

Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes this important discussion on violence against indigenous women.

In Aotearoa New Zealand preventing family violence and sexual violence against indigenous women requires an understanding that violence is a transgression of the important Māori concepts of mana (which we might translate as one's personal dignity or honour) and whakapapa (meaning genealogy). Cultural identity and indigenous philosophies and practices are recognised as integral to solutions for preventing violence against Māori women.

In December 2021, Aotearoa New Zealand launched a new National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence called Te Aorerekura, meaning the enduring spirit of affection. The purpose of the Strategy is to set out a framework to eliminate family violence and sexual violence, drive government action in a unified way, and harness public support and community action.

This strategy is underpinned by, and gives effect to, the founding constitutional document of our country, Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi.

The Strategy requires that government legislation, policies and practices which aim to eliminate sexual violence and family violence be aligned with the intent and articles of The Treaty.

Te Aorerekura is a 25-year strategy, aimed at an intergenerational journey towards wellbeing. It recognises the high rates of family violence and sexual violence particularly against Māori women who are disproportionately affected.

There are six shifts for change in the Strategy that require government to deliver actions that are specific, time-bound, and resourced to strengthen how government works together with indigenous people, communities and specialist sectors.

One of those actions is to strengthen Māori women's leadership, focused on supporting Māori women to share and develop cultural practices that support families and genealogy. This action establishes initiatives that recognise the central role of Māori women in families and communities, through initiatives that enable Māori women, including those impacted by violence, to access integrated and culturally inclusive

responses to enable their safety and wellbeing. This is expected to support Māori women and their communities to build their resilience, particularly in the context of COVID-19 and increased risk of disruptive events as a result of climate change.

Through actions like these, we are working together with Māori women and their communities, to create pathways that will build and strengthen Māori women leadership, as Māori women determine this to be.

We recognise we have a long way to go. Our Aorerekura strategy is a step in the right direction, but continued work is required, including through the leadership of Māori women, to ensure violence against Māori women is eradicated in our country.

Ngā mihi ki a koutou – thank you all for the opportunity to speak on this important topic.