

Press Release

## **Closure of Relationships Aotearoa**

The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) Chief Executive Lucy Sandford-Reed is concerned about the closure of a national service which provides a wide range of services to rural and urban communities throughout New Zealand.

What makes the closure puzzling is that services provided by Relationships Aotearoa clearly fit within the MSD Community Investment Strategy, *“supporting adult victims / survivors and perpetrators and reducing family and sexual violence”*. The cost of closing down Relationships Aotearoa, re-contracting with other providers and transferring client must surely be greater than the cost of supporting Relationships Aotearoa.

The mental health services rely on community and social services such as Relationships Aotearoa to support their mutual clients. The community based support provided is preventative and as a result people don't need to access tertiary mental health services for support.

This is a huge loss and another very concerning indication of the needs of the community not being understood, especially in light of the changes to the Family Court counselling services. ANZASW believes there are less and less options available, at a reasonable cost, for those who need support. ANZASW is concerned about the slippery slope of loss of supports for families, couples, those requiring family violence services.

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