

ANZASW's Response to "The People's Report"

This report, written from the unique and imperative perspective of those affected by violence in New Zealand is not only necessary but extremely timely. With the current state of New Zealand's child abuse and domestic violence statistics and the dire need to turn this around there seems to be no better time than now to encourage, contribute and commit to a system in which everyone is protected and violence can be prevented.

As an Association that has a vested interest in the wellbeing of those affected by child abuse and domestic violence as well as that of our Social Workers this report has provided vital information that highlights successes and downfalls of the social work profession and the wider support system for victims of abuse. Knowing what works, what doesn't and what could be done differently from the clients perspective is priceless.

A promising viewpoint within the report was the positive effect forms of social work have had on victims of abuse. ANZASW appreciated the fact that people valued the long-lasting support or intervention from social workers helping them to escape and recover from domestic violence and changing their lives for the better. This is particularly encouraging as it promotes the need for more of this type of social work throughout the country.

The information regarding issues within social work, and the overall support system, as well as the ability to understand them from a client perspective was also very valuable. Interestingly, many of the issues identified within this report have been echoed by our members through various consultations over the past year. Our members have highlighted issues of caseload volumes, lack of funding, issues with experience and training and the lack of time to ensure these issues are addressed. As an Association it is encouraging that our members and the clients are on the same page. This leads to a larger, more effective collective voice that can tackle issues from different angles and perspectives whilst working towards the same goal – providing services that best protect and meet the needs of clients.

The RESPECT model within the paper identifies the seven most important issues that need to be addressed. These areas have been well identified and ANZASW support the implementation of this model. Making improvements in these areas not only within the Social Work Profession, but across the board, will create a system that is designed to better protect people from child abuse and domestic violence. Simultaneously this will work to prevent child abuse and domestic violence by addressing and hopefully eliminating contributing factors such as alcohol abuse and poverty.