Government Response to
Report of the Justice Committee
on
the Petition of David White MNZM: Action to Prevent Family and Sexual Violence in New Zealand

Presented to the House of Representatives

In accordance with Standing Order 256

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Introduction

1 The Government has carefully considered the Justice Committee's report on the Petition of David White MNZM: Action to Prevent Family and Sexual Violence in New Zealand.

2 The petition requested the Government take action to:

2.1 Establish a new, nationwide, adaptable programme for the prevention of family and sexual violence; and

2.2 Recognise and include suicides linked to family and sexual abuse with violent deaths in official reporting.

3 The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 256.

4 The Government is taking action on the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendations and Government response

5 The Government would like to acknowledge the tragic passing of Helen Meads. It also recognises the importance of the issues raised by the petitioner, David White MNZM.

6 The Government thanks the Justice Committee for considering the issue.

7 The Committee recommended the Government examine the current approach to reporting coronial cases, so that searchability and accessibility is significantly enhanced.

8 The Government agrees examining the current approach to reporting coronial cases is an important exercise and the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) will work with the Chief Coroner to do so.

9 Under the Coroners Act 2006, the Chief Coroner is required to maintain a publicly available register of recommendations, summaries of recommendations, or comments. That register currently takes the form of the publicly available *Recommendations Recap*, which is a summary of coroners' findings. The Ministry will work with the Chief Coroner to examine whether this can be made more accessible and searchable.

10 Data from coroners' investigations, including causes and circumstances of death and coroners' findings, is also recorded in the Australian and New Zealand National Coronial Information System (NCIS). New Zealand users are currently unable to access data through NCIS because New Zealand's

participation arrangements were paused in early 2024 following changes to Australian legislation. The Ministry will continue work with NCIS and Australian authorities to restore New Zealand users' access.

11 This work will be managed within the legislative parameters of the Coroners Act 2006, including restrictions on making public details of self-inflicted deaths, or other prohibitions made by the coroner.

12 Whether family or sexual violence is relevant to the cause and circumstances of deaths remains an independent decision for coroners.

Conclusion

13 The Government acknowledges the important issues raised by this petition. Working with the Chief Coroner, the Ministry of Justice will action the Committee's recommendation to examine the current approach to reporting coronial cases.