



**TO: GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION  
COMMITTEE**

**ON: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BILL**

**29 OCTOBER 2023**

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 This submission is from Zonta International District 16 Incorporated (*Zonta D16*).
- 2 We do not wish to make an oral submission before the Committee.

## ABOUT ZONTA D16

- 3 [Zonta D16](#) has been active in New Zealand for over 50 years. We are the New Zealand District of Zonta International (which comprises 32 Districts and has a presence in 62 countries worldwide).
- 4 Zonta D16 is an organisation of professionals working together through service and advocacy to build a better world for women and girls. We envision a world in which women's rights are recognised as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential. In such a world, no woman lives in fear of violence.

## MAIN POINTS

- 5 Zonta D16 seeks an amendment to the Emergency Management Bill (*the Bill*) to recognise that the emergency management system must play an active role in relation to the needs of persons (and in particular women) affected by, and vulnerable to, family violence during, and in the aftermath of, an emergency.
- 6 In particular, Zonta D16 submits that clause 29(1) (relating to the role of Emergency Management Committees) should be amended to include a new paragraph that reads:
  - (ha) identify the needs of persons within its area who may be affected by, or vulnerable to, family violence during and after an emergency and develop plans to address those needs:
- 7 The Explanatory Note to the Bill states that emergencies can disproportionately impact some population groups during emergency events. Some examples are given in the Explanatory Note, but there is no reference in the Note or the Bill to persons impacted by family violence during, and in the aftermath of, an emergency. This is a serious omission that needs to be rectified.
- 8 There is clear evidence that family violence spikes during and after an emergency in Aotearoa New Zealand. An escalation in family violence occurred following the Canterbury earthquakes<sup>1</sup> and Cyclone Gabrielle<sup>2</sup>, and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Domestic Violence and the Christchurch Earthquake | New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse \(nzfvc.org.nz\)](#)

[Gendered violence in natural disasters: Learning from New Orleans, Haiti and Christchurch | Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work \(anzswjournal.nz\)](#)

[The impact of the Canterbury Earthquakes on the temporal and spatial patterning of crime in Christchurch, New Zealand \(up.ac.za\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Women's Refuge says 'no surprise' family harm up 60pct since Cyclone Gabrielle | Newshub](#)

<sup>3</sup> [NZ Herald: Covid 19 coronavirus: Domestic violence is the second, silent epidemic amid lockdown](#)

- 9 There is an important role for Emergency Management Committees to understand fully, and plan for, the inevitable needs of those who are vulnerable to, and affected by, family violence when an emergency strikes. Those needs may include for example, clear communication about the availability of refuges, access to refuges, and safe spaces in emergency shelters. But we submit that it is for each Emergency Management Committee to understand thoroughly all of those needs in its area and plan for them.
- 10 We have considered whether our proposed new clause 29(1)(ha) could be dealt with as part of the National Disaster Resilience Strategy and the National Emergency Management Plan. We have come to the view that there is a risk that this very important requirement regarding family violence will be lost if it is not clearly articulated as part of the Emergency Management Committee's role in the Emergency Management Act itself.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 11 For the reasons set out above, Zonta D16 submits that the Bill should be amended as set out in paragraph 6 of this submission. Ensuring that the Emergency Management Committees understand and plan for the needs of those who are vulnerable to, and affected by, family violence (particularly women) is a critical aspect of ensuring the safety of Aotearoa New Zealand's most vulnerable during, and in the aftermath of, an emergency.