

# Sexual Violence Prevention

LEAD BUSINESS UNIT:  
CONNECTED COMMUNITIES,  
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

FOCUS AREA:  
REDUCING HARM



Stakeholder engagement on the Action Plan

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**The Sexual Violence Prevention Action Plan is a collective strategic guide to preventing sexual violence in Pōneke.**

The Sexual Violence Prevention Action Plan (the Action Plan) promotes a wide range of sexual violence prevention approaches, to reflect a strengths-based approach and holistic understanding of what 'counts' as prevention. Working across organisational reform, workforce strengthening, community mobilisation, behaviour change communication, direct participant programmes, research and evaluation, and advocacy - the Action Plan promotes a systems-model approach, that targets social norms through multi-level interventions across the layers of society (individual, interpersonal, whānau, community, and society). The Action plan is led by the Project Lead - Jahla Lawrence.

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**The Sexual Violence Prevention Action Plan is WCC's response to a community call to action.**

In late-2020/early-2021, local communities raised concerns about safety in central Wellington. A key movement was the Wellington Alliance Against Sexual Violence (The Alliance) - a coalition of youth-led organisations passionate about sexual violence prevention - who called for Wellington City Council (WCC) and its partners (i.e., HospitalityNZ) to prioritise and invest in sexual violence prevention. In late March 2021, The Alliance held the



Night-time Urban Design Hīkoi

#LetUsLive rally – which mobilised the community around three main asks: 1) For HospitalityNZ, WCC, and RespectEd Aotearoa to collaborate on a joint strategy for sexual violence prevention in the hospitality industry, 2) to increase funding for local community-based sexual violence prevention, and 3) for the upcoming WCC/LGWM urban design changes to include a sexual violence prevention lens.

Concurrently, two students led an online survey on social media about people’s experiences of harm in the central city, receiving almost 3000 responses in 48 hours. The students then worked with The Alliance to produce a report, and present to Wellington City Council, to highlight the data showing the highlighting the extent and impact of sexual violence on young people in the central city. Along with a submission made by The Alliance to WCC’s Long-Term Plan, the community mobilisation efforts combined to result in a \$1.2 million investment into alcohol harm reduction and sexual violence prevention, via the development and implementation of the Sexual Violence Prevention Action Plan as part of the Pōneke Promise. This partnership saw organisations in Wellington come together under a commitment to improve safety, vibrancy and the welcoming-ness of the central city.

**“A Pōneke free of sexual violence (and the fear of harm), where everyone is free to be who they want, go about their lives without worry, and whose space is filled with joy”.**

Following extensive community, specialist and stakeholder engagement, the drafting of a Theory of Change and literature review, and early work on developing the Action Plan - a subject matter expert (SME) was brought on board to continue the development and implementation of the Action Plan and the sexual violence prevention initiatives that sit within it.

This Sexual Violence Prevention Roadmap for Change (“The Roadmap”) represents the first stage of the Action Plan, outlining WCC’s approach and method for guiding sustainable systemic change towards a city free from sexual violence, along with a snapshot of the current activities happening in this area.

**The diverse and holistic range of safety-focused projects within the Pōneke Promise, has enabled an understanding of sexual violence prevention that acknowledges the intersections between social issues, and the interplay between social, cultural, and environmental interventions.**

With sexual violence prevention as the ultimate goal, the Action Plan’s strengths-based approach promotes a understanding of success that focuses on the wellbeing of individuals, whānau, and communities, the achievement of equity for all identities, and the disestablishment of entrenched societal power structures.

The Safer Venues Project fulfils one of the Alliance asks, and was designed in partnership with the Alliance, specialists and community stakeholders. The project looks at building collective strategy for sexual violence prevention in the hospitality industry in Wellington’s CBD and led by RespectEd Aotearoa.

With the strong urban design focus of the Pōneke Promise, being part of the programme has bought to life one of the key asks from The Alliance, by applying a strong sexual violence prevention lens to the urban design changes happening in the central city. Through the Day and Night-time Urban Design Hīkoi, we were able to facilitate direct participation of affected communities into realistic changes, and then showcase those changes back to the community six months later.

In partnership with a local creative, we developed a public art installation promoting positive sexual consent - through both the art, and an audio consent education tool that sits alongside. With the artist, and several voice actors, we used the seven principles of positive sexual consent to help inform people the different ways consent can sound like in action.

As a result of strong subject matter expertise, and the strength-based approach taken by the Action Plan, we have been identified as a key partner for ACC's Regional Primary Prevention Practitioner pilot. This pilot project aims at placing five primary prevention practitioners across five different regions in Aotearoa - working to support, develop, and coordinate a regional primary prevention approach to sexual violence. WCC is the only local government partner in the pilot, a recognition that showcases the influence that WCC is having on the sexual violence prevention landscape in Pōneke.

This impact on the landscape is also seen through the establishment of the Pōneke Prevention Practitioner Network, a place for local sexual violence prevention specialists to gather, share practice, support, and collaborate. This Network has quickly become a key support system for practitioners, and has facilitated a stronger regional approach to sexual violence prevention.

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**Relationships are core and the driving force behind its success.**

Authentic, enduring relationships are the heart of this project, and remain its biggest strength. Developed from the community mobilisation of young people, many of these community connections continue to provide a strong foundation for this kaupapa, and help exemplify the Action Plan as a 'people-focused' project, that 'brings to life' the best-practice, theoretical underpinnings of sexual violence prevention.

This project has been informed, and is continuously shaped by the voices of the student associations, local sexual violence sector services, central government agencies, industry groups, community advocacy groups, individual prevention specialists, people with lived experience of harm, and the social justice NGO sector.

For WCC to invest and commit to sexual violence prevention in this manner, has boosted the faith of invested communities - sector organisations, government partners, community advocacy groups - in the role of local government, and has inspired support and trust. The ability for our communities to see their voice having a 'real life' impact has been unparalleled in building trust in local government.

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**A new kaupapa for Wellington City Council, supported by strong subject matter expertise internally and collaboration across the sector.**

For the Action Plan, having a community advocate with subject matter expertise as its lead, is one of the project's biggest strengths. As many of the key community, sector, specialist, and stakeholder relationships were already established due to the lead's roots in the community mobilisation that generated this work, meant a 'hit the ground running' approach. This cohesion has helped strengthen WCC's role in the wider regional sexual violence prevention landscape, and enabled a coordinated approach that facilitates information/resource sharing, support, and collaboration.

Engaging in sexual violence prevention is a new task for WCC - on an institutional level there is a lack of systems and processes to support the kaupapa. The lack of institutional infrastructure, and historical precedence, means that there is still an institutional uncertainty - and precarity - to conducting sexual violence prevention work. Additionally, this absence has meant that significant organisational or 'inward-facing' work is required, to create the internal conditions of success required for impactful community mobilisation partnerships. Bringing staff along on the journey has been vital, and much effort is required to enhance the understanding of different individuals/teams to remove barriers and authentically collaborate to create change.

Holding the Action Plan within the Pōneke Promise, has facilitated support across the organisation, and partners, and allowed the project to start delivery of prevention approaches across council business units, and through collaboration with influential organisations across the social justice and governance sector within Pōneke.