



## Key Insights: Victims

### Improving the status of victims in the criminal justice system

Responses emphasise the need to improve the status of victims in the criminal justice system. A prevailing theme is a need for greater recognition of victims' perspectives in the justice system.

“Victims need to [be] the focus – our journeys are worse.”

“Focus on victims first.”

“Victim has to fit around defendant's rights – innocent until proven guilty. How do we balance that in our system?”

“Victims should not fear being discredited or debased and should be in a position whereby they feel able to negotiate the process with confidence.”

### More support and advocacy support services for victims

Some responses place a strong value on the role of support and advocacy services for victims including the services provided by Victim Support.

“Having an independent sexual violence advocate that walks with the person from beginning to end (formal legal process) who is independent of MOJ, but linked in with Restorative justice is critical. It can solve a lot of their issues and cushion the impact of the system on the victim. Their role has significant counselling, advocacy skills, understanding the law.”

“Nationwide communication with victims, explanation of process, not just notification.”

### Restorative approaches

Several responses emphasise the role of restorative approaches to justice in enabling victims to engage in a dialogue with the offender in a supportive environment.

“Restorative justice should have justice restored to the person who has been wronged. The victim should have a say in how they can have their mana made intact again.”

“RJ at different times (when people are ready) including when both offender and victim are ready.”

“Have a range of options that victims can elect including restorative justice options...”

## Method

We sought to engage New Zealanders in a national conversation about the future direction of our criminal justice system.

### INFORMATION CAPTURE METHODS INCLUDE:

- Around 220 face-to-face events across the country
- Around 150 submissions to the programme email addresses
- Around 160 submissions to a web survey on the Hāpaitia website
- Information captured during the national Criminal Justice Summit, held August 2018

### COMMUNITIES WE VISITED



### WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

- |                                       |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| NGOs                                  | Court Users         |
| Iwi                                   | Academics           |
| Judiciary                             | Frontline staff     |
| Lived experience (Victims, Offenders) | Community/NZ Public |

### TECHNICAL NOTE:

- Information presented here is based on qualitative information captured as part of a nationwide public conversation about the criminal justice system led by Te Uepū (Safe and Effective Justice Advisory Group) between August 2018 and April 2019.
- The results are based on individuals and organisations that took part in the public conversation and are not representative of the New Zealand population.
- The number of responses under each category are relatively small and therefore the results should be treated as indicative only.
- This information presented in this summary is based on a one-off data collection and will not be replicated.