

SOUNDCHECK AOTEAROA

SoundCheck Aotearoa:

Hei kōrero, hei wero, hei kōkiri anō hoki

This document contains commentary on SoundCheck Aotearoa and our planned activities from March to May 2021. To jump to a specific section use the headings below:

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To access information and resources to help you take steps in your workplace right away, [click here](#).

Background to SoundCheck Aotearoa

SoundCheck Aotearoa is an action group formed in 2020, with a mission to foster a safe and inclusive culture for the music community. We believe that action is needed to address inequitable representation, challenge systemic discrimination, and advance impactful change across the music industry, and we are looking at ways to work together across the music community to achieve this.

You can read our aspiration [here](#).

In recognition of Māori as tangata whenua of Aotearoa and as partners of Te Titiri o Waitangi we are working with Māori industry leaders to look at ways in which Te Ao Māori can contribute to the work on these wider issues, along with considering the unique challenges facing Māori within the industry.

Currently we are operating as an informal collective and our work is being managed by a small group of people who have other roles in the music industry. We are working with external specialists to help and guide us. We have no dedicated resources, but we have the support of a number of organisations and entities that are collaborating and contributing in different ways to our work. You can see our list of collaborators [here](#) and we are inviting others to join us as our work progresses.

We have not created a formal structure for SoundCheck Aotearoa yet, as we want to hear from the music community first. We are aware that the work needs to take in a variety of voices and we need to be structured in a way that has the trust and confidence of everyone in the music community.

With all of our work, we want to offer safe, inclusive and constructive ways to get people talking. We want to hear from our music community – from artists and songwriters to sound engineers and crew, from educators and administrators to studio and venue workers and everyone in between – about the problems they see and what they think will help make a safer more inclusive music community. It is vital that the many cultures and diverse groups in our community have a voice in these conversations. We'd also love to hear more about initiatives that are already underway and how we can help and support each other towards our common goals.

SoundCheck Aotearoa is committed to the long term mahi needed to support our music community to be safer and more inclusive. But we cannot do this alone. We are calling on everyone in the music community to step up and contribute to meaningful positive change.

You can read more below about our first project on preventing and responding to sexual harm in the workplace.

Safety in Workplaces: Sexual Harm Prevention and Response

The first project for SoundCheck Aotearoa is directed at the prevention of and response to sexual harassment and assault (sexual harm) in our music community. We believe that everyone is entitled to a safe workplace where they are respected and free from harm, whether that workplace is a music venue, a festival stage, a meeting in a bar, or a recording studio.

In August 2020 we engaged an independent expert in the area of sexual harm prevention and community culture change, Rachel Harrison, to assist and guide us. Rachel works with organisations and communities across Aotearoa/New Zealand including NZ Rugby, and The Screen Women's Action Group (SWAG) to help prevent sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic violence and child abuse. She is also a regular advisor to government agencies on sexual harm prevention.

Since then we have partnered with independent specialist sexual harm support service [HELP](#), considered options for training, and investigated a variety of measures recommended by specialist advice and taken in other sectors to prevent and address sexual harm.

In November 2020 we piloted a session of Professional Respect training for industry representatives on preventing and responding to sexual harassment. This training day is based on a similar workshop format underway in the screen sector and covers definitions of sexual harassment and sexual harm, how to support

people who have experienced harm and respond to disclosures of sexual harassment, options for making a formal report or complaint and practical tips on preventing sexual harm.

Subject to receiving funding, we plan to offer the training sessions across the music community, starting in April 2021.

We would also like to develop resources, policies and procedures to support and assist everyone across the music community in preventing and responding to sexual harm. This could include a Code of Conduct and complaints process for the music community, online training module, visual resources such as posters and related materials like policies. Depending on the funding we receive and feedback from the music community, we may be able to go further and provide formal resources and support to address specific issues and complaints.

Meanwhile, we are supporting the Māori Music Industry Coalition to lead an initiative about sexual harm prevention and response within Te Ao Māori. The aim is to ground these issues within Te Ao Māori and develop strategies and approaches that work for tangata whenua, as well as feeding back to enhance the overall work of SoundCheck Aotearoa. We would also like to support an initiative to be led by Pacific Peoples in the music community.

These are some ideas we have had based on our work so far, but ultimately any measures and resources will only be effective if they are developed and adopted collectively across the music community. That's why we are calling on everyone in Aotearoa's music community to step up and contribute to meaningful positive change.

To help us prioritise what is needed, and to develop a firmer plan for the coming 12-18 months, we need to hear from people across our community about the problems they see, their views on what the industry needs to address these issues, and what would be most useful for them in their own work.

We held initial hui in Auckland and Wellington in February/March, and throughout March and April we are offering a series of further workshops facilitated by independent experts, on the topic of a safe and inclusive music community. Due to resource constraints, the uncertainty caused by Covid-19 and the need to reach people in all regions across Aotearoa, some of the workshops will be held online.

For event information and online feedback, click [HERE](#).

To access information and resources to help you take some steps in your own workplace right now, click [HERE](#).

In May, once we have feedback and ideas from across the music community, we will circulate our draft work plan for the coming 12-18 months and offer another chance to discuss and give feedback then.

We understand that these issues are sensitive and can trigger a variety of feelings and reactions. We encourage anyone affected or anyone who has experienced harm in the music community to make use of the range of support services listed on our website [HERE](#). One of the services listed is [HELP](#). HELP is the sexual harm crisis agency we have partnered with, and it is available 24/7 nationwide on **0800 623 1700**

(you can call anonymously if you wish), info@helpauckland.org.nz, or directly via its website. HELP can provide information, support and practical assistance to anyone who has experienced sexual harm, anyone supporting a friend or family member who has experienced it, or anyone else who is affected.

Representation and Inclusion

While the first project for SoundCheck Aotearoa is directed at sexual harm prevention and response, we know there is much work to do on wider issues around representation and inclusion. With limited resources, we needed to start somewhere and commit to some concrete actions as a first step.

As SoundCheck Aotearoa we decided to prioritise sexual harm prevention and response as our first project because we believe safety is an absolute baseline that intersects other issues around gender, ethnicity, sexuality and other attributes.

We took note of the striking finding from the [Amplify Aotearoa report from Massey University](#) based on their music community survey. In that survey 45% of women, and over 70% of gender diverse people, reported that their safety in places where music is made or performed is a barrier to success in their music careers. Respondents confidentially shared examples of sexual harassment, sexual coercion and assault, unwanted physical advances and inappropriate comments about appearance. Recent media reports and social media have also highlighted the problems we face.

We believe that as an industry we need to urgently take concrete action to improve the safety of our people, and so we sought funding for a work program to do that.

We do want to expand our work into representation and inclusion more broadly, which we know is desperately needed. Amplify Aotearoa highlighted that over 70% of women have experienced discrimination or bias in their music careers. Improving the position of women and those who are under-represented across the spectrum of our community is serious and substantial work in its own right and is also a key factor in preventing sexual harm.

We have taken some initial steps: we have engaged Debbie Teale, a consultant who is experienced in diversity and culture change initiatives to advise us, and we have commissioned further analysis from Massey University on the ethnicity issues highlighted by Amplify Aotearoa. These are first steps that we hope to build on as our work progresses.

At this stage, we welcome comments, feedback and ideas on how to make our community more representative and inclusive at all levels. We will take these into account when we prepare our work plan in May and expand our work program as resources allow.

For event information and online feedback, click [HERE](#).

To access information and resources to help you take some steps in your own workplace right now, click [HERE](#).



Frequently Asked Questions

What is SoundCheck Aotearoa?

SoundCheck Aotearoa is an action group formed in 2020, with a mission to foster a safe and inclusive culture for the music community. We believe that action is needed to address inequitable representation, challenge systemic discrimination, and advance impactful change across the music industry, and we are looking at ways to work together across the music community to achieve this.

You can read more about us and our aspiration [here](#).

Who is working for SoundCheck Aotearoa?

Currently, the work is being managed by a small group of people who have other roles in the music industry:

- Jo Oliver - Recorded Music NZ
- Lydia Jenkin - APRA AMCOS
- Nicky Harrop - Rhythmethod and Recorded Music NZ Board
- Teresa Patterson - Music Managers Forum Aotearoa

We took on this work because we believe it needs to be done, and we each have the full support of the organisations we work for. We are working with external specialists to advise and guide us. We collaborate across a wider group of organisations in the music industry that share our aspiration – see our list of collaborators [here](#) - and we are inviting others to join us as our work progresses.

We have not created a formal structure for SoundCheck Aotearoa yet, as we want to hear from the music community first. We are aware that the work needs to take in a variety of voices and we need to be structured in a way that has the trust and confidence of everyone in the music community.

Who is funding SoundCheck Aotearoa?

Our initial work has been funded by Recorded Music NZ and APRA AMCOS with funding for specific projects contributed by NZ Music Commission, NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho. We have applied for further funding from other government sources, and we are looking for other suitable funding opportunities so that we can roll out the long-term strategies needed to create culture change in our industry.

Is SoundCheck Aotearoa a reaction to recent media coverage?

The work needed to create SoundCheck Aotearoa had begun before publicity emerged around a group of Wellington musicians last year, and recent media coverage around other incidents in the NZ music community. While recent media coverage has highlighted the importance of this project, our initial phase and focus of work has been informed by the [Amplify Aotearoa](#) report from Massey University about a survey of the music community in Aotearoa. That research found that 45% of women, and over 70% of gender diverse people, report that their safety in places where music is made or performed is a barrier to success in their music careers. Respondents to the research (confidentially) reported instances of sexual harassment, sexual coercion and assault, unwanted physical advances and inappropriate comments pertaining to appearance.

Will SoundCheck Aotearoa act on complaints about sexual harassment or abuse in the music community?

At this time we are not able to receive, investigate or take action in relation to formal complaints of specific cases of sexual harm. However, as our work progresses, we aim to provide resources, information and training that can assist everyone across the music community to prevent and respond to sexual harm.

We can connect you with other resources, and we encourage anyone who needs support or information about complaints to first make use of the range of support services listed on our [website](#). One of the services listed is HELP. [HELP](#) is an independent sexual harm crisis agency, and it is available 24/7 nationwide on 0800 623 1700 (you can call anonymously if you wish), info@helpauckland.org.nz, or directly via its website. HELP can provide information, support and practical assistance to anyone who has experienced sexual harm, anyone supporting a friend or family member who has experienced it, or anyone else who is affected.

We don't believe that anyone should be pressured into taking action, and we support the survivors' right to choose. The options available for someone to make a formal complaint, if someone chooses to do so, include:

- the relevant employer or other person responsible for a job or workplace
- the [Human Rights Commission](#) - if in an employment, contracting or volunteer setting.
- [Employment NZ](#) if the issue occurred in an employment setting.
- [Police](#) if the incident is a criminal offence.

Why will the first step take 12-18 months?

SoundCheck Aotearoa aims to take some steps to assist everyone across the music community in a program of culture change. This sort of change doesn't happen overnight and building awareness and consensus will take some time. Representatives from the screen sector tell us they have seen a real difference in attitudes towards sexual harm after the first year of their work and we believe we can do the same in the music community, but that would be only the start of an ongoing programme.

While the longer-term work is continuing, we will do our best to make practical resources available so that you can take some steps in your workplace right away. There are several resources and practical ideas available from our [website](#).

From April 2021 we will be offering Professional Respect (sexual harm prevention and response) workshops on a regular basis and we encourage everyone to sign up for a session and learn more.

What can I do in my own workplace right away?

While the longer-term work of SoundCheck Aotearoa is ongoing, there are practical things you can do right now to make a difference. Check out [Sexual Harm Prevention: Things you can do to help](#) and our other resources [located here](#).

SOUNDCHECK AOTEAROA

Event Information and Online Feedback: Workshops on a safe and inclusive music community in Aotearoa

Throughout March and April we are offering workshops facilitated by independent experts, on the topic of a safe and inclusive music community. For further background on SoundCheck Aotearoa and the workshops click [here](#).

Below are the dates and times for the workshops and a link for you to RSVP. We need to limit the number of people attending each workshop and prioritise members of the music community, so people will need to register in order to attend. The sessions will not be open to media or to the public generally to ensure that discussions can be open and honest. One of the sessions is restricted to women, non-binary, transgender and gender non-conforming people.

If you cannot attend a workshop you can give feedback online at any time [HERE](#).

We encourage you to RSVP early to reserve your spot, as spaces are limited.

ONLINE WORKSHOP

How do we create a safe and inclusive culture for the music community in Aotearoa?

Monday 22nd March | 6pm to 9pm (online)

This is an online event with a workshop style format, with the opportunity for discussion and feedback via breakout groups.

[RSVP HERE](#)

ONLINE WORKSHOP

How do we create a safe and inclusive culture for the music community in Aotearoa?

Tuesday 23rd March | 6pm to 9pm (online)

This is a second online event with a workshop style format, with the opportunity for discussion and feedback via breakout groups.

[RSVP HERE](#)

IN-PERSON WORKSHOP

How do we create a safe and inclusive culture for the music community in Aotearoa? (For women, non-binary, transgender and gender non-conforming people)

Tuesday 6th April | 6pm to 9pm (in person, Auckland, venue TBC)

This is planned as an in-person event which can move online if needed due to Covid-19 alert level changes.

This event is restricted to women, non-binary, transgender and gender non-conforming people

[RSVP HERE](#)

The workshops will be run by specialist facilitators to ensure that the discussion is safe and respectful. However, these issues are sensitive and can trigger a variety of feelings and reactions. If you have any concerns about the workshops and would like to discuss how to attend or contribute in a safe way, please contact Rachel Harrison (the workshop facilitator) directly by email [HERE](#). Any contact to Rachel will be treated confidentially.

If you would like to discuss these issues and give feedback in a different way (eg in person, in a women only session, on an individual or small group basis) please let us know [HERE](#) and we will do our best to accommodate you with the resources we have.