

SOUND CHECK AOTEAROA

A safe and inclusive culture for the music community
Hei kōrero, hei wero, hei kōkiri anō hoki

Creating culture change around sexual harm in the music community in Aotearoa

by Debbie Teale and Rachel Harrison

READ THE
FULL REPORT
[HERE](#)

SoundCheck Aotearoa Summary and Background

[SoundCheck Aotearoa](#) is an action group formed in 2020 with the 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, and we are looking at ways to work together across the music community to achieve this.

Our first project is about preventing and responding 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.

It is clear from the [Amplify Aotearoa](#) research and multiple other sources that there is a serious problem with sexual harm in our music community and we need to act urgently to address it.

Reaching out to the music community

In February 2021 SoundCheck Aotearoa commissioned independent experts Rachel Harrison and Debbie Teale to guide us through a process of reaching out across the music community to hear everyone's feedback and ideas about sexual harm and safety in the workplace. From February to April we held a series of workshops focussing on the challenges and issues in our music community, and what might be done to address them.

We heard from around 200 people across our Auckland, Wellington and online workshops. A massive thank you to those who participated in the workshops and provided valuable feedback, and to everyone who has contributed their energy, enthusiasm and commitment to this process so far.

The independent report

Following the workshops, Rachel Harrison and Debbie Teale have taken all the feedback and ideas, and drawn from their own experience and from research around the world, to produce *Creating culture change around sexual harm in the music community in Aotearoa*. The report contains a set of ten recommendations for what our music community can do to prevent and respond to sexual harm.

The recommendations

1. **Code of Conduct:** Develop and embed an industry standard Code of Conduct to set clear expectations of behaviour within the music community
2. **Training and resources:** Build skills, knowledge and capability in preventing and responding to sexual harm via training and resources
3. **Culture change initiatives:** Develop and/or support initiatives and campaigns to support culture change
4. **Improve response systems around sexual harm:** Improve complaints/reporting procedures and access to specialist survivor-safe advice, information and representation
5. **Live music events and safer spaces:** Develop and embed best practice prevention strategies for live music events and safer spaces
6. **Te Ao Māori and tangata Tiriti:** Support Māori to develop a strategy to end sexual harm in the music community and integrate Te Ao Māori throughout the wider industry strategy
7. **Develop culturally specific prevention strategies:** Support Pacific, other ethnic groups and Rainbow communities to develop culturally relevant prevention and response strategies to end sexual harm
8. **Diversity and inclusion:** Develop industry-wide diversity and inclusion strategy while supporting some initial community activities
9. **Leadership recommendations:** Industry bodies, larger entities and government bodies to provide strong leadership in the area of sexual harm prevention
10. **Implementation:** Principles and considerations for effective and safe roll out of these recommendations.

What happens next?

Now we have the experts' report, we are looking to everyone across the music community to step up and play their part towards creating a safe and inclusive music community.

Creating culture change takes time, and no one expects these recommendations to happen immediately. The report recommends a multi-year plan for implementation, and many of the recommendations require resources and funding that is not yet available. But we can make a start on this mahi together.

Some of the recommendations are addressed to industry bodies, government agencies and larger entities, calling on them to play a leadership role in driving change. But in order to be effective, action has to come from everyone across the community as well. We are calling on everyone in the music community to ask themselves: what will I do to make a change?

SoundCheck Aotearoa in partnership with Māori Music Industry Coalition will be coordinating a number of workstreams to bring people together and work on the recommendations, while continuing with the monthly [Professional Respect training days](#).

If you have questions, comments or feedback on the report and recommendations we'd love to hear from you: what do you think about the recommendations, what can you do to start driving change, and what can SoundCheck Aotearoa do to help. You can give feedback via our email address at info@soundcheckaotearoa.co.nz, our [online feedback form](#) or head over to www.soundcheckaotearoa.co.nz/news to find updates and event information.

Issues around sexual harm can be sensitive and triggering for many people. If you or someone you know is in need of support or information about sexual harm we encourage you to make use of the fully independent services listed on our [website](#).