

OUR POSITION

The Commission agrees that more discussion and public awareness of the issue of suicide is likely to contribute to improved prevention, but it is opposed to the reporting of more detail on the methods of suicide used.

OUR GOAL

A decrease in New Zealand suicide rates.

WHAT THE COMMISSION HAS DONE SO FAR

- > The Commission has had discussions with health and justice officials about the increased risk of suicide to recently separated men engaging with the family court and other government agencies (Child Support, CYF etc). Additional training for Family Court staff to help recognise and deal with men at risk of suicide was discussed.
- > The Commission provided the Prime Minister with an overview paper on suicide in New Zealand (November 2010)

COMMISSION'S VIEW

- > Families and whānau have a critical role in preventing suicide.
- > It is important to speak out for vulnerable whānau – whakapakai i te whānau
- > More people commit suicide in New Zealand in a year than die on our roads. In 2008 497 people committed suicide, around nine people a week. Total youth suicides in 2008 were 115, around two young people a week.
- > These figures may be partly due to our good data collection processes; nevertheless, against similar countries with similar data collection systems we are still higher.
- > Factors contributing to suicide are numerous and complex. We do not really know why New Zealand's rates are comparatively high, but we do know what helps to prevent it.

Prevention should focus on:

- promoting mental health and wellbeing for families and whānau
- strengthening whānau as a pathway to waiora
- improving access to mental health services and support
- investigating and preventing the root causes of depression and other mental conditions leading to suicide
- reducing access to the means of suicide

REFERENCES**Families Commission:**

Families Commission Whānau Strategic Framework 2009-2012 ref. p. 6

Ministry of Health:

www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/suicide-facts-2008

Social Explanations for Suicide in New Zealand – a suite of five reports

