

**Commissioner of Police
Andrew Coster**

Tēnā koe Commissioner Coster,

Burnett Foundation Aotearoa (formerly the New Zealand AIDS Foundation) is a registered charity and non-government organisation that works towards HIV and STI prevention, support for people living with HIV, and great sexual health for rainbow and takatāpui communities. Our work includes health promotion, condom distribution, testing, counselling and support, research, policy, and information services.

As longstanding advocates for the human rights of gay and bisexual men since the 1980s, we would like to specifically thank Nick Preston, the Acting Sergeant at the Christchurch Central police station, for his ongoing support to the gay community in Christchurch and to people living with HIV. However, we are deeply troubled by the continuing homophobic attacks on gay men in Christchurch, and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with both you and the Christchurch local commander to discuss possible interventions that can both prevent this from happening again and better support victims in the future.


Our primary concerns include the following:

- There is an ongoing history of unprovoked attacks on gay men in Christchurch; how is this homophobia and violence being addressed on a systemic level?
- Some victims felt police did not have a good understanding of gay and bisexual men's culture or experiences. The fact that not all victims have come forward (despite footage of their abuse appearing online) suggests they do not have confidence in doing so. What are police planning to do to prove their cultural competence and trustworthiness to the community?
- What support were victims offered? Could police consider immediately contacting organisations like Burnett Foundation Aotearoa in the future, so we can collaborate to provide culturally competent care like counselling?
- Filming abuse is increasingly common, and victims often say they are unsure whether videos have been taken down, or what their rights are with respect to digital documentation of hate crimes; how is the police addressing this ongoing violation and supporting the community to understand their rights?
- Judge Hix is correct in noting that extended prison sentences for these perpetrators could worsen their violent tendencies, but what is the police doing to assess whether their 6 months of supervised detention has made an adequate impact?
- Judge Hix further noted that the teens may have been radicalised by violent videos they were watching on social media; what preventative measures are the police preparing to take to prevent further hate crimes of this nature?

Thank you for reading this letter and for your future actions to come that will help ensure the safety and wellbeing of our rainbow and takatāpui communities in Aotearoa. We look forward to the opportunity to have an in-depth, constructive discussion at your earliest convenience to ensure a safer Aotearoa for all of us.

Ngā mihi

Joe Rich



Chief Executive