

MEDIA RELEASE – For immediate release 27 September 2013

**Louise Nicholas congratulates the Government for its inquiry into
funding of specialist sexual violence services**

National Sexual Violence Survivor Advocate, Louise Nicholas is hopeful that the Government's inquiry into funding for sexual violence services will bring about real change to people affected by sexual violence now and in the future.

She says she is truly hopeful that finally there is a government looking into the lack of funding for sexual violence services that has hampered so many people over so many years.

The Social Services Select Committee is conducting the inquiry and has called for submissions. Ms Nicholas says she believes it is critical that the Select Committee hears from as many people as possible that have been affected by sexual violence.

“Sexual violence affects people from all walks of life. I am urging everyone whose lives has been impacted by sexual violence to write or give oral submissions so that Committee members have a true understanding of the need for specialist services right throughout New Zealand.

“The inquiry needs to hear about the huge impacts sexual violence has on people and communities. This will help the Committee understand that there is no ‘one size fits all’ answer or silver bullet, but there’s a very definite need for more services, particularly for our different groups of people.”

“The inquiry can only get good information to make good decisions if it hears from not just victim/survivors but also their family/whanau and friends who have also struggled through a journey to heal while supporting a victim/survivor. All of those people must be able to access specialist services, and for that to happen there must be more funding to provide full wrap around services for everyone affected by sexual violence.”

Ms Nicholas says there is an invisibility around sexual violence – it is under-reported and hidden. And there is also invisibility around the struggles of specialist sexual violence service providers who face increasing demand but have to cut their services due to lack of funding.

Ms Nicholas acknowledged the hard work of Green MP Jan Logie in bringing this issue to the forefront. She says it is really encouraging to see the political parties working together on the Select Committee inquiry, which should mean a solution with cross-party support.

Louise Nicholas
Survivor Advocate