



NATIONAL COLLECTIVE *of*  
INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S REFUGES INC

# FRESH START

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR WOMEN WANTING  
TO BE FREE FROM ABUSE



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**This book has been published with the assistance of the  
New Zealand Law Foundation**



FRESH START



Copies can be ordered from:

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# FOREWORD

For over 30 years Women's Refuge has been leading the campaign against domestic violence in Aotearoa New Zealand. When Refuges first started in 1973, many community leaders, professionals and government departments refused to believe that family violence was a widespread problem. Most people thought it was best to keep out of 'relationship problems' and let families deal with it themselves. But Refuge workers spoke out. They spoke out to end the silencing of women and children. They knew that the silence and secret shame around family violence stopped women seeking help, and allowed abusers to continue to dominate, frighten and hurt their families.

Many Refuge workers were then, and still are, women who have experienced violence themselves. They came together to give women safety, options and support. They also sought to let everyone know about the reality of large numbers of women and children being terrorized in their own homes by partners and fathers who were meant to love and care for them. Now, many more people recognise family violence is a serious issue and a crime, but sadly, abuse still happens. Women's Refuge continues to work towards ending violence, and supporting women and children's right to live lives free from fear and abuse. We are proud that each year we help thousands of women and children move towards safety, towards a 'fresh start'.

To the brave women who dare to challenge the violence and abuse in their lives, we honour your strength and courage. We know that a better life is possible.

Kei te mihi ahau ki ngā wāhine I noho I te whare whakaruruhau, me ngā wāhine i hiahia te awhi o te whare whakaruruhau i nga ra kei te haere mai, kia kaha, kia maia. He mihi aroha nui tenei atu kia koutou katoa.



**Heather Henare**

*National Manager*

National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges Inc



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