

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Law allows information sharing about vulnerable children now - Privacy Commissioner**

**18 August 2016**

Privacy Commissioner John Edwards says he supports the Government's message that any information about a current or future danger to a child needs to be shared between the appropriate agencies.

Mr Edwards says he would be very concerned if misperceptions about privacy laws are getting in the way of preventing harm to children, but is in no doubt that this need not be so. He has on many occasions before and since becoming Privacy Commissioner urged people with information about vulnerable children to share that information and he will continue to do so in his efforts to educate agencies about the many layers of legal protection that allow for appropriate information sharing.

"Agencies should not be concerned about breaking privacy laws when it comes to vulnerable children. They should already be sharing information and not be waiting for the law reform to take effect.

Whatever changes to law are proposed, it is essential that Ministers and others involved in preventing harm to children continue to reassure teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives, child care workers and anyone else who has information about a child at risk, that they will not be in breach of privacy laws, and cannot be subject to any liability where they notify a police officer or social worker about any child or young person who has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived.

That is the law now, and it is supported by the Privacy Act in its current form.

**Note for editors**

This a response to the Minister of Social Development's [speech](#) given earlier today.

The Privacy Commissioner will be available for interviews.

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