

Dear Minister of Justice,  
Members of Parliament,  
Ministry of Justice,  
and Family Court stakeholders,

I respectfully submit the attached Blueprint for Reform as a practical and constructive contribution to strengthening the Without Notice (urgent/ex parte) track in the New Zealand Family Court.

This Blueprint is based on direct experience with urgent parenting applications. It proposes balanced, evidence-based improvements that maintain fast protection for children facing genuine immediate risk, while reducing unnecessary trauma, prolonged disruption, and misuse that can affect safe families and their children.

The recommendations include sensible safeguards such as a Mandatory Rapid Review Panel, two-factor verification (Oranga Tamariki and the child's school), improved inter-agency coordination, recognition of emotional and educational harm, structured interim contact, timely review, and a remedy for the court to direct funded trauma-informed family therapy where harm has occurred.

I offer this Blueprint freely to other families, whānau, community organisations, and advocates for use in their own proceedings or submissions. Legal systems exist to provide the structures that allow families to live in peace. Responding with clarity, dignity, and a child-focused approach is more powerful than being overwhelmed by the process.

I would welcome any opportunity to discuss these proposals further and am available to provide additional information if required.

Thank you for your commitment to improving outcomes for children and families in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Respectfully submitted,

Pearl Tamara Stowers

11 April 2026