



## National Council of Women of New Zealand

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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### **Submission to the Ministry of Social Development on the Discussion Document: Care and Protection Resource Panels**

#### **Introduction**

The National Council of Women (NCWNZ) forms an umbrella group for 42 women's nationally organised societies. Its purpose is to work for the good of women, families and societies through study, discussion and action. Branches of the national societies, together with many local organisations are represented at the 34 NCWNZ Branches throughout New Zealand. It forms a widespread and effective network, especially through its monthly publication known as The Circular. Submissions and responses are prepared on the basis of policies set at national meetings and, when time permits, from answers to questions published in The Circular.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the discussion document – Care and Protection Resource Panels. NCWNZ does not intend to comment specifically on the questions contained within the discussion document because of the short time frame and the fact that the matter was to be considered over the summer holiday period when our branches are not in session.

NCWNZ is not able to give a more detailed submission on this Discussion Document as we were not able to canvas a range of views on this subject. We received only three responses to the document, one of which was from a current Care and Protection Resource Panel member. These responses therefore cannot be seen as representative of NCWNZ views as a whole.

NCWNZ has concentrated on the issue of the best interests of the child being paramount for many years. NCWNZ has constantly advocated for this principle to be upheld when considering the care and protection of children.

NCWNZ has a concern that Child Youth and Family (CYF) no longer has connections within the community and that it needs to engage the community and agencies earlier in the process. Two other issues of concern are:

- Selecting people who can confidently express cultural viewpoints and articulate cultural issues, and
- the processes for the appointment of Co-ordinators, and the filling of Panel vacancies.

#### **Conclusion**

NCWNZ has long been concerned for the well-being of children who fall under the care of the Child, Youth and Family Service (CYFS), and in particular its under-resourcing and excessive unallocated case load lists. It would appear that a community based body to closely monitor the operation of CYFS is in the interests of children.





However, we are not in a position to form an opinion as to whether the current structures perform this function well or not, nor suggest how they might better be able to operate. NCWNZ will continue to monitor the developments and any proposed changes to Care and Protection Resource Panels with a keen interest, and hopefully, next time, given a longer and more suitable consultation period, we may be able to make a more thorough submission.

Beryl Anderson  
**National President**

Christina Reymer  
**Convener, Family Affairs Standing Committee**