



Women's Policy

National backs women to pursue their aspirations and succeed in all walks of life.

While New Zealand has made improvements across many of the key indicators of women's progress, we acknowledge there is still more work to do. We want all women in New Zealand to be able to access opportunity and participate fully in our economy, so will provide more support for new mothers and will work to reduce barriers to women's participation in the workforce.

The impact of the pandemic on our economy means many jobs have an uncertain future, so we will put in place significant support to help women retrain, gain new skills, and get back into employment. National has a proud record of increasing the number of women in leadership positions in New Zealand, and this will continue to be a key focus for a National Government.

We also need to ensure we are doing all we can as a country to protect women from sexual and physical abuse, and to advocate and support survivors of historical abuse.

Policy highlights

National will:

- Give all expecting mothers an entitlement worth up to \$3000 that can be used to commission services to support their child's first 1000 days of development.
- Continue work to reduce unjustified disparities in pay between men and women doing similar work, and identify and address barriers to women's participation in the workforce.
- Invest in retraining programmes to help unemployed women get back into the workforce, including SkillStart, which will pay training providers \$4000 for every unemployed Kiwi they can retrain and get back into full time employment.

- Provide targeted funding of \$20 million over four years to reduce mortality rates of gynaecological cancer, and a further \$200 million to purchase drugs for the treatment of cancer.
- Re-establish funding for the National Sexual Violence Survivor Advocate, the position previously held by Louise Nicholas, to advocate on behalf of survivors.

Investing in the first 1000 days

The first 1000 days of a child's life is the most critical period in their development and has an outsized impact on that child's life outcomes. This is the period when a child is at its most vulnerable, but it is also the stage of life where the brain is growing rapidly and is at its most malleable. Failure to invest in the wellbeing of women and children during this crucial period leads to worse economic outcomes in the future through lower productivity and higher health costs. We will empower parents to make decisions about their children and their own wellbeing.

National will:

- Empower parents with an entitlement worth up to \$3000 for all expecting mothers that can be used to purchase services to support their child's first 1000 days of development. Mothers and babies who have higher needs will be entitled to up to \$3000 additional funding (\$6000 in total), along with the support of a "navigator" to help them choose the services they need.
- Implement enhanced screening, with pre-birth & post-birth GP visits, and a revamped B4 School check at age three to identify developmental concerns, screen for trauma, brain injury and foetal alcohol syndrome, and trigger early intervention services.
- Increase postnatal stays to three days for all new mothers to be able to stay in a postnatal facility of their choosing.



- Implement a system of child passports – an enhanced version of the current Well Child/Tamariki Ora book with electronic record-keeping, this will record needs identified through screening and track progress to key physical, emotional, developmental and education milestones. It will be used to ensure that, where required, early action is taken to address issues or additional needs.
- Parents will be given a choice about when they take their paid parental leave – either one parent at a time, as they now can, or both parents at the same time if that's what they prefer. We believe both parents should have the opportunity to bond with their baby during the first months of life, and we support parents to make the best decisions for their baby and family.

There is a growing body of evidence about the significant impact a child's experiences in their early years have on their later development. We believe in an holistic approach to child development that both recognises the vital role parents play in supporting their child's healthy development and that allows parents to have confidence that their children's developmental needs are being met at home and in early childhood education settings.

National will:

- Establish a National Centre for Child Development, headquartered at a university, that will bring together the best of child health, neuroscience and education research. Its job is to improve best-practice for child development throughout the early childhood system.
- Invest in interventions to support parents to read to children.
- Invest in programmes which help support the development of self-regulation in children and in programmes that support emotional and behavioural development.
- Improve families' access to early intervention services by ensuring early intervention assessments occur within 30 days of request.

Investing in the first 1000 days

National is committed to ensuring women have choice and opportunities in the workplace. We will be a champion for women to gain the skills needed to seize opportunities as part of our economic recovery plan.

National will:

- Continue work to reduce unjustified disparities in pay between men and women doing similar work, and identify and address barriers to women's participation in the workforce.
- Increase initiatives that support flexible working arrangements, and make it easier to work remotely. National has committed \$1 billion to upgrade our technology infrastructure, with a target of 100 Mbps uncapped internet speeds for everyone on the Ultra-Fast Broadband or Rural Broadband Initiative networks by 2030.
- Invest \$120 million into SkillStart to incentivise tertiary providers to develop and deliver rapid retraining and job placement programmes that get Kiwis who have lost their job back into the workforce.
- Expand the use of our Jobs and Skills Hubs to match women who are out of work with training services or jobs created through our \$31 billion investment in transport infrastructure.

Encouraging women in leadership

National has a proven track record of increasing the representation of women on state sector boards and committees. We are proud of our record and we will expand support for initiatives that promote women in leadership and governance roles, especially in the private sector. The more women in management and leadership roles, the greater the pool of women who can be appointed to directorships.



National will:

- Work with the private sector to promote more women in senior management positions, leadership roles and directorships.
- Expand the Future Director's programme which allows up and coming directors to sit in on state sector boards. This will help grow the diversity of the pool of directors to sit on boards in the state and private sector.

Fighting cancer

We want all New Zealanders to have access to cancer testing and clinical trials. Regardless of where people live, getting a test should be simple. National believes for those who are diagnosed with cancer a greater range of quality drugs should be available. Some cancers perniciously impact women. For example, more than 1000 women are diagnosed with gynaecological cancer each year. We recognise such cancers need specific initiatives to make screening and treatments more accessible.

National will:

- Establish an independent Cancer Agency that will have primary responsibility for providing better access to diagnosis, treatment and care, and will report directly to the Minister of Health.
- Improve cancer management through the new Cancer Agency, accelerated bowel screening, local radiotherapy units and faster cancer treatment targets.
- Dedicate \$200 million to the purchase of drugs for the treatment of cancer. This will go a long way to supporting positive health outcomes for women.
- Provide targeted funding of \$20m over four years to reduce mortality rates of gynaecological cancer through greater awareness, updated clinical guidelines, increased testing and greater access to clinical trials. This will benefit all women, but particularly rural women for whom access to healthcare can be more limited.

Supporting vulnerable women

Disgracefully, too many women are still subject to physical and sexual violence. Domestic violence can have a corrosive impact on women and children. National unashamedly will ensure victims are at the forefront of the justice system, and will work across the social sector, with public agencies, whanau, communities and schools to create a culture of child protection and to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of women and children.

National will:

- Expand the Integrated Safety Response cross-government approach to preventing family and sexual violence.
- Make the non-disclosure of child abuse a criminal offence, with a maximum three year prison sentence.
- Re-establish funding for the National Sexual Violence Survivor Advocate, the position previously held by Louise Nicholas, to advocate on behalf of survivors of sexual violence.
- Support programmes to reform the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic violence.