

Policy 2017

Women



Backing women to succeed

National backs women to succeed. New Zealand women are better educated than ever and getting into more leadership positions.

One of our top priorities is to close the gender pay gap. We believe men and women should be paid the same for doing the same job.

New Zealand currently has one of the smallest pay gaps in the OECD – but that's not enough. We want to eliminate it altogether.

National has a track record of backing women, with 45 per cent of senior leadership positions in the public sector held by women, and we are challenging the private sector to lift its game.

Women are participating in the economy more with the highest ever labour force participation rate.

More women are training and working in traditionally male dominated fields such as engineering and technology, but we need to lift that further.

We are reducing rates of family and sexual violence and we are backing families through better public services, better healthcare for mothers and their children, more paid parental leave and more flexible workplaces.

"We want to be the first country in the world to eliminate the gender pay gap."

– Paula Bennett, spokesperson for Women

Policy highlights

- \$2b pay equity settlement for some of our lowest paid women in the home care sector
- Introduced Pay Equity legislation so claims can be resolved fairly and cost effectively
- Extending Paid Parental leave to 22 weeks – up from 14 when we took office – and making it more flexible and widely available
- Appointed more women to state sector boards

Our results

- For the first time, 45 per cent of people on public sector boards are women
- Highest ever labour force participation rate for women – 64.6 per cent
- Girls are doing even better in schools – the proportion of girls achieving NCEA Level 2 has grown from 70.5 per cent in 2008 to 81.7 per cent in 2016
- We're the fourth-safest country in the world and we're focused on making communities even safer for families by funding an extra 1125 more Police staff

National is...

- Reforming family violence laws to better protect victims, who are predominately women, and making it easier for them to get the help they need
- Publishing guidance for the private sector showing them how they can measure and begin to close their gender pay gaps
- Encouraging women to get into science, maths, technology and engineering by setting up our STEM directory which identifies opportunities in the sector

"We'll extend Paid Parental Leave to 22 weeks so parents can spend more time at home with their children."

- Paula Bennett, spokesperson for Women

What we will do next...

- Further increase Paid Parental Leave, from 18 to 22 weeks – up from 14 when National took office
- Lift family incomes for around 1.3 million families by an average of \$26 a week
- Make cheap GP visits available to an extra 600,000 New Zealanders, taking the total receiving free or cheap visits to 2.5 million – part of our record investment in health
- For many couples having difficulty conceiving, fertility assistance is their only chance of having a baby. We'll increase the number of funded IVF cycles to three and speed up access to publicly funded fertility treatment
- We will offer one free dental course for pregnant women and mothers of under 1 year olds, at a cost of \$23m a year
- Make it easier to track your child's progress at school through expanding National Standards
- Ensure all primary children can learn a second language if they choose
- Have the public sector lead the way on tackling the gender pay gap with each department to develop a plan to close their gender pay gap
- Continue to work with the private sector to eliminate the gender pay gap
- Continue to promote more women to public sector boards and encourage the private sector to do the same