



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

Te Kaunihera
Wahine O Aotearoa

National Office
Level 4 Central House
26 Brandon Street
PO Box 25-498
Wellington 6146
(04) 473 7623
www.ncwnz.org.nz

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S00.73

**Submission to the New Zealand Association of Optometrists on the
Consultation Document Optometrist Independent Prescribing**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 43 nationally organised societies. It has 34 branches spread throughout the country to which women from some 150 societies are affiliated.

General Comments

This document was circulated to the Health Standing Committee members, many of whom discussed the issue with pharmacists and other related health professionals. Six members felt that the document was well written, described what was needed, and was argued convincingly. Those members considered that no further comment was needed.

In the area of related matters, NCWNZ has contributed to the recent Nursing Prescribing paper on which members were divided (Submission No S00.67). The following specific comments were made on the matter however.

Specific Comments

Two members of the NCWNZ Health Standing Committee who had discussed the document with other health professionals made the following comments.

- Concern was raised around the issue of confidentiality. These members also thought that patient National Health Index (NHI) numbers may need to be used. This would need to be discussed with health officials.
- Patient allergies would need to be known and therefore medical records may be required and patients would need to give informed consent before the records were uplifted from the GP. As an example, reaction to bacterial infection was cited.
- Drug interactions, for example, topically applied and systemic eye preparations would need to be researched carefully. Perhaps drugs with no known interactions should be the only ones available to be prescribed without medical intervention.
- We would support feedback to the patient's GP following each appointment when medication has been prescribed.
- When introduced an audit system should be established for five years and randomised checks done on prescription use.

Conclusion

As our members generally agreed with this document and felt that optometrists are trained in this field, we would support the desire for independent prescribing.

We look forward to seeing the final document and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Barbara Glenie
National President

Elizabeth Bang
Convener, Health Standing Committee

