



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Ministry of Economic Development on the
Energy Safe Consultation Paper**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 46 nationally organised societies. It has 35 branches spread throughout the country to which women from some 150 societies are affiliated.

This submission has been prepared by the Economics Committee with a small number of individual comments. NCWNZ is particularly concerned with safety in the home and the greater part of these comments have been made with this in mind. We welcome the fact that this Energy Safe consultation is taking place.

Our comments below are related to individual recommendations.

Recommendation 7. Exemptions for homeowners etc

There are certainly some occasions when work can be done by homeowners but it is essential that there be a well resourced auditing system if terms of exemption are not kept.

Where householders are able to do some electrical work – i.e. in the matter of fuse replacement and other minor adjustments it is essential that if certification is required it should not be by a registered tradesman who might see his job opportunities being eroded and might consequently wish to charge as though for the full job.

Recommendation 9. Licensing

While we appreciate that in an increasingly technical age there will be modular specialisation we are in favour of retaining a core of identifiable domestic electricians and gasfitters who are qualified to carry out the full range of electrical and gas work required by domestic consumers.

Recommendation 12. Safety Compliance Certification

We are very happy with the idea of a safety compliance mark on any document used for certification but would stress that if an invoice is being used for this purpose it is essential that the actual work done be itemised. An invoice simply stating “Repairs carried out” would be inadequate. The customer must also be made aware that this is a certification document which must be retained.

Recommendation 13. Third Party Inspection

Individual members do not fully understand the possible difference between “inspection” by an inspector and “certification” by a third party. We would not be in favour of removing the electrical inspector type of classification. In particular we feel it is essential that in a new house the switchboard be properly inspected before it is connected.

Recommendation 16. No fault investigation

We would like more time to consult individual members before we could comment on this. We would also like more information on costs and on the size of any problem. We understand there may be accidents or near accidents not reported for fear of prosecution.





Recommendation 20. Complaints procedure

We appreciate the review of complaints procedure which we believe is currently complicated and does not produce quick solutions. We are somewhat concerned at the proposed scheme in that the investigator would be employed by the Board before which he would also conduct prosecutions. We wonder whether these duties are sufficiently “at arms length”. Could there be an independent committee of, say, three people who would assess the complaint rather than just the Registrar?

Recommendation 23. Publicity

We believe this is most essential. Much of the previous legislation is still not fully understood by the woman in the house (or in the workplace).

Recommendation 30. Supply of Power to New installations

As we noted in our comments on Recommendation 13 we feel inspection of new switchboards is essential. This would also apply to substantially altered boards. Gas fittings in domestic buildings should also be certified, or the Gas company should sight a Certificate of Compliance before the gas supply is connected.

We do see situations however where certification of gas installation would be unduly expensive and in this respect we refer to your pamphlet on the Gas Industry P.11 which states “Work on LPG installations supplied from small LPG cylinders would require a licensed worker or equivalent and certification”. It is probable that many of these installations will be in remote buildings and if certification is required and not obtained there may be insurance problems. Certification however may be difficult to obtain. In these cases self-certification or that of the relevant tradesman could be acceptable.

Recommendation 31. Disconnection of Dangerous Installations

We support the idea of providing a mechanism for the person on the spot to be empowered to disconnect some installations. This would be particularly necessary in the event of an earthquake or very severe storm. Where the matter is not an emergency of this type it would be sufficient to empower a Local Authority to intervene if necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to make these submissions. Our members will continue to watch matters with interest.

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