

## **Oral submission to the Environment Select Committee on the Urban Development Bill 197-1**

**By Christine Caughey, Beryl Anderson and Margaret Ledgerton**

### **Introduction**

Good afternoon. My name is Christine Caughey and I convene the Climate Change and Environment committee of the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ). I am joined by colleagues Beryl Anderson and Margaret Ledgerton, members of the Parliamentary Watch Committee.

The National Council of Women is an umbrella group representing over 200 organisations affiliated at either a national level via one of our 15 branches and includes individual members. Collectively, our reach is over 450,000 , some membership organisations representing all genders.

Based on our policy and resolutions our submission was prepared by the Climate Change and Environment Committee.

### **General comment**

NCW supports the purpose of the Urban Development Bill [the Bill] in general, and its aims to address housing need and to improve the supply of affordable housing for New Zealanders.

We support the purpose of the Bill to transform urban development, to contribute to sustainable, inclusive and thriving communities [Clause 3(1)]. However, we believe this is where the Bill falls short.

Our submission includes 13 specific recommendations for proposed change.

### **1. Transformational change**

We believe this is essential to demonstrate urban sustainability in Aotearoa/New Zealand. There's no shortage of examples: eg Malmö in Sweden and Copenhagen, that plan to be carbon neutral by 2025.

The UN C40- Cities, of which Auckland is a member, has programmes to support low carbon urbanisation where early engagement with communities can determine shared values and outcomes.

## **2. Inclusive, sustainable cities**

The UN Sustainable Development Goals aim to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. For cities to be inclusive, new urban development projects must incorporate an equity perspective which takes into account differential needs including gender, age, ability and income.

To be sustainable, these priorities must intersect with consideration for both short and long-term environmental impact. This should include, women and children-friendly public transport options, protected bike lanes and walking paths, green spaces with safe play areas, and affordable, climate-smart housing oriented to vulnerable groups. The Bill should be amended to support community connectivity and existing green spaces. Green spaces after all are the lungs for the urban environment and the planet, and also the lungs for a healthy community. It's about thinking local. Our recommendations highlight need for change in this respect in the Bill.

## **3. Human Rights and gender equality**

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW], including the Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Rights of the Child, are increasingly referring to the negative consequences of climate change, environmental degradation and disaster. In any disaster, those most at risk are women and girls. Our recommendations include that the Bill has strengthened frameworks for ensuring mitigations against the effects of climate change and possible disasters in all its projects, providing better for diversity and human rights.

## **4. Cities and climate change**

In April 2019, The Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii reported carbon dioxide levels had reached a point that could have catastrophic effects on human health ..... dangerous for the planet overall and dangerous of those in urban areas. Not only is New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions continuing to increase, so too is the carbon footprint of urban areas.

NCW submits that the Bill embrace the risks and costs associated with climate change. We believe that there is an inadequate commitment in the Bill to addressing these key issues including the inadequacy of the planning stages prescribed in the Bill. It is submitted that the Bill actively address the requirements of the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 and refer to the latter by its correct title.

## **5. Support for transition and affordable housing**

We are concerned that the Bill does not require that new urban development projects support cities in transitioning to reduce their emissions. A recent NZ study identifies how setting climate targets for buildings can align with the 2 degrees C Paris climate target. Our submission provides examples of these targets. page 4

And importantly we submit that the provision of **affordable** housing must account for more than capital costs of development. The long term operational costs of any residential building is significantly greater than its initial capital costs. Affordable housing should be designed for lifecycle performance including operational efficiencies to minimise daily running costs to affordability for its occupants. The New Zealand Green Building Council offers a tool kit to achieve these outcomes. Recommendations support this approach.

**6. United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals** ... state that "A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnership between government, the private sector and civil society." where values and shared goals place people and the planet at the centre at all levels.

Consistent with those goals, we believe that the Bill should provide for cross sectoral frameworks that unlock genuine transformative development. Review and monitoring frameworks, regulation and incentive structures need to be tooled to reinforce this approach.

## **7. Accountability and Reporting**

National reporting and audit mechanisms should be included in the Bill. The Bill provides for unprecedented powers that are largely unchecked. Annual reporting to Parliament, local authorities and the public is essential.

Recommendation 1

## **Conclusion**

**In conclusion**, NCW considers that the Bill will not deliver affordable housing or high quality urban environments for healthy communities and that significant further work is needed.

The Bill must embrace the risks and costs associated with climate change, support lower carbon emissions and mitigate potential effects in the event of disaster. We believe that the Bill has the potential to generate human rights issues, where women and children and the poor are unequally disadvantaged by hardship.