



29 March 2021

S21.06

Submission to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee on the Land Transport (Drug Driving) Amendment Bill 317-1

Introduction

- 0.1. The National Council of Women of New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa (NCWNZ) is an umbrella group representing over 200 organisations affiliated at either national level or to one of our 15 branches. In addition, about 450 people are individual members. Collectively our reach is over 450,000 with many of our membership organisations representing all genders. NCWNZ's vision is a gender equal New Zealand and research shows we will be better off socially and economically if we are gender equal. Through research, discussion and action, NCWNZ in partnership with others, seeks to realise its vision of gender equality because it is a basic human right.
- 0.2. This submission has been prepared by the NCWNZ Consumer Affairs Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee.

1. Summary

- 1.1. The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) welcomes the Land Transport (Drug Driving) Amendment Bill 317-1 which will amend the Land Transport Act 1988 and establish a new random roadside blood testing regime for drugs, based on saliva testing, and a regulatory regime which will give the police powers to stop any driver of a motor vehicle and administer a saliva test.

2. NCWNZ Support

- 2.1. We support the proposed regime which requires drivers to comply with the directions of enforcement officers, and the penalties that are set out in sections 57D-65AB. We see this section as a logical extension to the drunk driving enforcement regime.
- 2.2. We strongly support section 167B which would establish independent panel of experts, including scientists and researchers, to advise the Minister on what qualifying drugs should be included in the regime and on the setting of levels for qualifying drugs. We think the establishment of an independent panel is especially important as the regime should be evidence-based and based strictly on the advice of independent experts in this field. Setting the appropriate level where impairment may occur requires technical expertise in the area. It is also a potentially controversial issue and is one that should not be politicised in any way.

- 2.3. At present the proposed regime is limited to six classes of drugs, including psychoactive drugs like methamphetamine and MDM and cannabis. We are aware that there are a number of legal prescription medicines which can have an impairing effect on drivers, and we are pleased that the bill includes opiates and benzodiazepines and envisage that the regime of qualifying drugs could be extended over time.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1. We strongly support the intention of the proposed regime – namely, to reduce the road toll and make driving on New Zealand roads safer by getting drivers who are impaired by drugs off the road, thereby reducing the harm to themselves and others.



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