



9 December 2020

S20.19

Brief to Incoming Ministers

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. NCWNZ warmly welcomes you as a Minister in the new Labour government. We recognise and support progress made under your government's previous term of office and look forward to further progress over the next three years. We are keen to actively work with you and your Ministry to continue and accelerate that progress. This briefing for you identifies key areas in that regard and we would appreciate an opportunity to discuss these more comprehensively with you.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Based on the views of our members and our identification of the current key issues facing women, and New Zealanders in general, NCWNZ makes the following recommendations for your consideration. We recommend that priorities for the next three years should be employment; trades training; impact of COVID-19, welfare policy; health, family and mitigation of sexual violence; housing; data and gender analysis; and climate change responses.
- 1.2. **Employment and Trades Training:** Closely monitor the effectiveness of the Equal Pay Amendment Act 2020 in achieving true equality in employment for NZ women and in particular for Māori, Pasifika and disabled women as well as those women in the lower socio-economic group or on low pay. Implement strategies to help break down occupational segregation by ensuring girls and women have better access to quality career support and trades training

- 1.3. **Impact of COVID-19:** Ensure effective dialogue with civil society to put women's needs at the centre of COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery efforts, given that COVID-19 has increased women's unpaid work at home, family violence, loss of employment and income, restrictions in women's rights and access to justice.
- 1.4. **Welfare policy:** Increase welfare benefit payments in order for caregivers to receive sufficient means to adequately feed, clothe, and accommodate their families.
- 1.5. **Health, Family and mitigating Sexual Violence:** Sustain and increase momentum and funding for the National Family Violence and Sexual Violence Strategy and Action Plan. Increased funding is needed to meet existing needs and the immediate and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Government funding is needed to provide funds for research into sexual health services for women with disabilities and LGBTQI people to ensure services are accessible, equitable and appropriate. Address the huge disparities in wāhine Māori health.
- 1.6. **Housing:** Reduce the impediments faced by women in terms of the affordability, accessibility and quality of housing available. These are significant issues for women and children, especially those on low and fixed incomes.
- 1.7. **Data and Gender analysis:** Develop a better data and gender analysis framework for the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, location, gender identity, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. This would support the application of a gender lens across all policy and implementation.
- 1.8. **Climate Change:** Address the close relationship between climate change impact and gender inequality. Effective climate action should be strengthened by ensuring a gender lens on national planning, policies and strategies for climate change and disaster risk reduction.
- 1.9. NCWNZ also would like to bring to Ministers' attention the work that we do with CEDAW NGO reporting, gender research and amplifying the voices of New Zealand women in our submission work.

2. Employment

- 2.1. At the inaugural meeting of the National Council of Women New Zealand in 1896 with Kate Sheppard as president, resolutions were passed demanding equal rights for women including legal equality in employment. The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1972, 76 years later; the Equal Pay Amendment Act, which addressed pay inequities because of occupational segregation, passed in 2020 - 124 years later. The Government is to be congratulated for the Equal Pay Amendment Act, even if it has taken a while to come to fruition.
- 2.2. In summary, NCWNZ welcomed the Bill as enshrining the agreed Pay Equity principles and process in law, providing a further step forward in achieving pay and employment equity for women¹. We

¹ NCWNZ. 2018. Submission to the Education and Workforce Committee on the Equal Pay Amendment Bill 103-1. <https://ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/S18.40-Equal-Pay-Amendment-Bill.pdf>

believed, in addition, that the process needed to be further streamlined and were pleased that the final version that has been enacted appears to make it easier for women to raise and quickly progress pay equity claims. However, we also noted the need to adequately resource the Employment Relations Authority and address issues around transparency of information.

- 2.3. Our biggest concern remains marginalised groups - Māori, Pasifika, women with disabilities and non-unionised women - who need extra support to achieve fair pay. NCWNZ supports a specialist unit as essential to the achievement and sustainability of pay and employment equity.
- 2.4. The proof of this new legislation will be in what happens to the gender pay gaps. The pay gap between all women and Pākehā men has improved in recent times, but the gendered pay gaps for Māori women and Pasifika women continue to be of concern.
- 2.5. NCWNZ calls on the incoming Government to closely monitor the effectiveness of the Equal Pay Amendment Act 2020 in achieving true equality in employment for NZ women, and in particular for Māori, Pasifika, women with disabilities and those women in the lowest income brackets.

3. Trades Training

- 3.1. The NGO alternate report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)², led by NCWNZ, highlighted the central role of sensitive and informed career advice to break down the gendered participation in different school and tertiary subjects and qualifications. Good career advice has the potential, for example, to encourage girls to consider trades as a career option, and boys to consider roles in the caring and health sectors. We believe that this is a necessary part of addressing the gender pay gap that is large and persistent in Aotearoa New Zealand. We recommend the implementation of strategies to help break down occupational segregation by ensuring girls and women have better access to quality career support and trades training.

4. Impact of COVID-19

- 4.1. NCWNZ released a position paper on the impact of COVID-19 on women, which covered income and sustainable employment, caring and unpaid work, health, safety and well-being, mental health, and family and sexual violence. It also considered what a post-COVID-19 Aotearoa New Zealand could look like in terms of protecting people and the planet. A copy of this paper is available on request.

5. Welfare policy

- 5.1. Women, especially wāhine Māori, have been negatively affected this year through loss of employment. Many have needed welfare assistance to support themselves and their families.

² Women experiencing discrimination 2016: Aotearoa New Zealand non-governmental organisations report. National Council of Women of New Zealand, 2017. https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/CEDAW-2017-NZ-Alternate-NGO-Report-Women-Experiencing-Discrimination_Single-Page-Up.pdf

Welfare benefit payments for new and existing beneficiaries are clearly inadequate, with record numbers of applications for emergency hardship assistance and demand for community food banks. We echo recent calls to government from NGOs and community groups to increase welfare benefit payments so that caregivers can adequately feed, clothe, and accommodate their families. An alternative to increasing benefits would be to introduce a universal basic income, something that NCWNZ has supported since 1996.

6. Health, Family and mitigating Sexual Violence

- 6.1. NCWNZ believes there is an opportunity to build on the momentum and innovation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and make the whole community a safer place for women and all victims of violence. To enable this, we recommend that the Government sustain and increase momentum and funding for the National Family Violence and Sexual Violence Strategy and Action Plan and the Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Plan. Increased funding is needed to meet both existing needs as well as the immediate and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.2. To inform work in these areas we emphasise the importance of funding robust, comprehensive, and consistent research. Examples include research on issues for women with disabilities, LGBTQI people, on both the victims and perpetrators of family and sexual violence (this data stream has recently been discontinued by the police). Increased and better data is essential for the development of effective policies, the provision of accessible services³, the targeting of services and analysis of medium and long-term trends.
- 6.3. COVID-19 has raised awareness of those already at risk of isolation, loneliness and depression including older people, people with disabilities and their carers, and those in poverty. Women are more likely to experience a common mental disorder than men, regardless of age, and Maori and Pasifika peoples have higher rates of mental disorders and psychological distress than Pākehā.⁴ NCWNZ believes that the physiological and emotional impacts on individuals of long-term loneliness is an important public policy issue. Government and local councils can help create the conditions for social connections to flourish which would help address this issue.
- 6.4. Many mental health disorders are linked to socio-economic factors, ethnicity, discrimination, poor physical health, and substandard housing. NCWNZ believes that addressing pay inequity, increasing financial stability, and recognising the true values of caring and carers are necessary responses if the situation is to improve.
- 6.5. One third of NZ women, especially those in lower socio-economic groups, have unmet health needs. This rises to 47% of wāhine Māori. The Human Rights Commission report acknowledges these

³ We note, for example, that it is exceedingly difficult for Women's Refuges and others to provide overnight care for women with disabilities due to a lack of facilities.

⁴ Ministry of Health, New Zealand Health Survey. <https://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/national-collections-and-surveys/surveys/new-zealand-health-survey#2017-18>

statistics and further acknowledges that only real partnerships based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and human rights will effectively address health and other inequalities.

7. Housing

- 7.1. With New Zealand's ageing population, demographic forecasts predict large numbers of women reaching retirement age who will require social housing in the next several decades⁵. The affordability, accessibility and quality of housing involves significant issues for women. They include acknowledged negative factors that contribute to limiting choices and opportunities both in renting and owning houses. These factors apply throughout their working life, but also affect women's ability to have secure and affordable housing in retirement.
- 7.2. The significant negative factors for women are occupational segregation into traditionally low-paid jobs, reduced lifetime earnings due to low-paid, part-time and/or intermittent work, loss of capital as a result of marriage break-up, being the primary unpaid caregiver to children and other family members. All of these result in lower retirement savings relative to men, and limited means to afford housing costs on retirement income. With women living on average longer than men⁶, it is essential that they are adequately provided for in terms of housing in their retirement years.

8. Data and Gender Analysis

- 8.1. New Zealand needs a better data and gender analysis framework. This has been commented on in NGO reports to CEDAW. In the latest Concluding Observations, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern about deficiencies in this area. NCWNZ recommends that the Minister fulfil the recommendation of the CEDAW Committee that national data include "... disability, ethnicity, location, gender identity and sexual orientation and socioeconomic status". In support of this recommendation, NCWNZ has made a submission⁷ to Statistics NZ for the Sex and Gender Identity Statistical Standards consultation⁸.

9. Climate Change

- 9.1. Climate change impacts can exacerbate existing gender inequalities such that women face higher risks and bear higher burdens in responding to natural hazards, pandemics, access to resources,

⁵ Dale MC; St John S. 2020. Women and retirement in a post COVID-19 world.
<https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/business/about/our-research/research-institutes-and-centres/RPRC/OtherPapers/Women%20in%20Super%20September%202020.pdf>

⁶ Edmunds S. 2020. New Zealand women's problem: Less money, longer lives.
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/money/300078162/new-zealand-womens-problem-less-money-longer-lives>

⁷ NCWNZ. 2020. Submission to Statistics NZ on the Sex and Gender Identity Statistical Standards. S20.18.

⁸ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/consultations/sex-and-gender-identity-statistical-standards-consultation>

employment, household and community responsibilities and safety⁹. These inequalities are further exacerbated by the intersection of gender with other demographic factors such as ethnicity or income. Preparedness for new and emerging crises is critical, as well as learning adaptation and mitigation skills and new behaviours in our homes, communities, and workplaces. Enabling gender equality and supporting greater contributions from women would help achieve this.

- 9.2. NCWNZ recommends that effective climate action be strengthened by ensuring a gender lens is applied in national planning, policies and strategies for climate change and disaster risk reduction. [Appendix A](#) identifies key areas for action across government and we seek to support government to achieve these outcomes.

10. CEDAW

- 10.1. New Zealand has not had a person serving on the CEDAW monitoring Committee since Dame Silvia Cartwright served 1993-2001. The latest elections, on 9 November 2020, saw the election of the Australian woman, Natasha Stott Despoja AO, to the CEDAW committee, becoming the only Oceania representative on that committee¹⁰. NCWNZ congratulates Natasha and further recommends that the government propose a New Zealand candidate for the next 2022 CEDAW elections. This would enable a stronger Oceania representation and allow for greater collaboration between our countries with respect to making gender equality a reality.

11. Gender Attitudes Survey

- 11.1. Gender Equal NZ, led by NCWNZ, has conducted two Gender Attitudes Surveys¹¹ with Research NZ in late 2017 and 2019. The survey tested attitudes around gender roles – at home, at school, at work and in the community – giving us a biennial snapshot of where we are at in New Zealand on gender. [A copy of the 2019 survey report](#) can be found on the Gender Equal website, with some results summarised in [Appendix B](#).

12. Submissions

- 12.1. Our Parliamentary Watch Committee monitor parliamentary processes and developments, as well as other government agencies consultations, and liaise with our membership to produce submissions that reflect the views of members. In 2020 to date, NCWNZ has made 18 submissions on Bills and discussion documents, as listed in [Appendix C](#).

⁹ Habtezion S. 2016. Gender and climate change: overview of linkages between gender and climate change. <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/UNDP%20Linkages%20Gender%20and%20CC%20Policy%20Brief%201-WEB.pdf>

¹⁰ Australian Office for Women. <https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/international-forums/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women/australias-candidate>

¹¹ Gender Equal NZ, NCWNZ. Gender attitudes survey. <https://genderequal.nz/ga-survey/>

12.2. NCWNZ regularly attends parliamentary select committees, presenting the views of our large and diverse membership on the range of policy issues relevant to women, and indeed, to all New Zealanders.

13. Conclusion

13.1. Old ideas about gender roles limit us all. Our society's structures and processes are based around binary ideas of gender which places unequal value of femininity and masculinity. If we could break down these rigid expectations of gender, there would be more room for everyone to express themselves in mana-enhancing ways, caring for each other and for our environment would have higher priority, and power would be distributed more evenly. Opening our minds to the possibilities of a Gender Equal Aotearoa New Zealand also invites us to consider the possibilities of a society where there is no discrimination based on race, or income, or religion, or sexuality. It's an ideal worth striving for, and we look forward to playing our part alongside the government to progress this goal.

Mauri ora,

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President, National Council of Women New Zealand

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MAKING EQUALITY REALITY



Appendix A: Climate change

NCWNZ recommends that effective climate action be strengthened by ensuring a gender lens in national planning, policies and strategies for climate change and disaster risk reduction. We have identified the following key areas for action across government.

Sustained, integrated, gender-responsive climate action

A holistic, integrated approach is needed, with cross-sectoral collaborations from across government, NGOs, iwi and private sector, and drawing on specialist knowledge from climate scientists, human rights experts, mātauranga Māori, and civil society groups. Gender-responsive climate action is part of the solution, and includes ensuring a gender balance in all working groups and decision-making fora, and gender-responsive budgeting.

Recognising that the health of society is connected to the health of the planet

The health of our planet, our biodiversity and ecological balance. play an important role in the emergence and spread of infectious diseases¹². We will not be able to achieve long-term advances without focussing on environmental impacts and climate change including revision of procurement policies and mandatory emission reduction frameworks. This should also be integral to our Aid policies and programmes, and NGOs' work with Pacific partners.

A sustainable economic reset and just transition

A sustainable economic reset which addresses the intersection of gender, ethnicity, age, social, environmental, and economic inequalities is needed for the transformational delivery of intersectional women's rights. A just transition which invests in activities that support the health of our natural environment, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and are climate resilient is essential.

Meeting our obligations in the Pacific region

Our Pacific neighbours are on the frontlines of climate change and, like Aotearoa New Zealand's tangata whenua, also play a significant role as stewards of natural resources and the region's biodiversity. We have both a responsibility and an obligation to work with and learn from Pacific nations in developing and implementing solutions to climate change.

Measure change to make our contribution count

We must be guided by our obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and ensure that reporting on our progress towards meeting climate obligations including the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019¹³ and the Paris Agreement¹⁴ is rigorous to monitor progress and ensure accountability. Meeting commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁵ will track our progress towards achieving a healthy economy, society, and planet. Climate justice will underpin our achievement of all other goals.

¹² Dasgupta P. 2020. The Dasgupta Review –Independent Review on the Economics of Biodiversity: Interim Report. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882222/The_Economics_of_Biodiversity_The_Dasgupta_Review_Interim_Report.pdf

¹³ Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2019/0061/latest/whole.html?search=ta_act_C_ac%40ainf%40anif%40aif_ac%40bn%40rn_25_a&p=8#LMS183736

¹⁴ United Nations Climate Change. 2015. The Paris Agreement. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

¹⁵ United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The 17 goals. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Appendix B: Gender attitudes survey results

Most New Zealanders do believe gender equality to be a fundamental human right for all. When asked what the impact of achieving gender equality would be in 16 possible areas, over fifty percent of respondents agreed gender equality would have a positive impact in terms of:

- Women in employment receiving the same pay as men' (79%).
- Women having improved job opportunities' (73%)
- More equal sharing of childcare responsibilities between men and women' (70%)
- More equal sharing of household chores between men and women' (69%)
- More women in senior management positions (69%).

Importantly though, there still exists a minority with outdated beliefs and/or attitudes that keep the status quo of gender inequality in place. Two results on job and career aspirations suggest further work is needed to shift mindsets of key influencers in the education-employment system, and to ensure girls and women have better access to quality career support at key decision points:

- Almost one half of respondents (48%) agreed that, 'people must work full time if they want to progress in their career'.
- Significantly more respondents from the younger age group (18-34) felt that, 'women feel pressured to choose between being a good wife/mother or having a professional/business career' than those in the older age group (55+) (61% and 46% respectively).

Appendix C: Submissions made in 2020

S20.01 Crimes (Definition of Female Genital Mutilation) Amendment Bill
 S20.02 Sexual Violence Legislation Bill 185-1
 S20.03 Education and Training Bill (joint with GWNZ)
 S20.04 Urban Development Bill
 S20.05 Holidays (Bereavement Leave for Miscarriage) Amendment Bill (No 2)
 S20.06 Better protections for contractors
 S20.07 Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 218-1
 S20.08 Death Funerals Burial and Cremation
 S20.09 Organic Products Bill 221-1
 S20.10 Fair Trading Amendment Bill
 S20.11 Electoral (Registration of Sentenced Prisoners) Amendment Bill
 S20.12 Screen Industry Workers Bill
 S20.13 NZ Public Health and Disability Amendment Bill
 S20.14 Child Support Amendment Bill
 S20.15 Inquiry into operation of COVID-19
 S20.16 In confidence
 S20.17 Stakeholder input into the Briefing to the Incoming Minister for Women
 S20.18 Sex and Gender identity statistical standards

(Submissions can be found on the NCWNZ website: <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/submissions>)