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Submission to the Environment Select Committee on the Inquiry on the Natural and Built Environments Bill: Parliamentary Paper

Introduction

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 14 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, environmentally 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.
2. This summary submission on the Inquiry on the Natural and Built Environments Bill: Parliamentary Paper has been prepared by the NCWNZ Standing Committee for Climate Change and the Environment and the Parliamentary Watch Committee. It draws from several decades of NCWNZ policy¹ and submissions² on issues that have been endorsed by the membership of NCWNZ. A recent resolution³ advocates for a net zero carbon future for New Zealand and supports the imperative of building resilience to the effects

¹ NCWNZ. 2012. 115 years of resolution.

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/ncwnz/pages/1025/attachments/original/1585374688/115-years-Register-everything-2.pdf?1585374688>

² <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/submissions>

³ NCWNZ. 2021. Appendix "D": Resolutions of National Meetings 2011-2020. 7.13.6.

https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/ncwnz/pages/1025/attachments/original/1622428501/Appendix_D_Resolutions_2011-2020.pdf?1622428501

of climate change, disaster risk and environmental challenges. A second recent policy⁴ supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Further, the National Council of Women submitted to the Urban Development Bill⁵ in 2020.

Summary

3. NCWNZ supports the purpose of the draft Exposure Bill in principle, in that that it seeks an integrated approach to the natural and built environment. It is ambitious and the matters identified for consideration by the Select Committee in the Terms of Reference are essential to address. While the overall context of the Bill is not clear as yet, we understand it is the first of three Bills that will be interconnected. Therefore, comment is limited at this stage. We do however encourage new legislation to adopt a similar integrated approach to bring about a “just transition”⁶.
4. NCWNZ advocates for a natural and built environment that provides for the day to day and long-term well-being of women and children, Iwi Māori, diverse communities and those with disabilities. Despite comprising over 50 percent of our population, these groups are under-represented in decision-making. While they are frequently not consulted in a manner that enables effective engagement, it is advocated that the Bill provide for partnerships in planning stages between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to ensure everyone is included. Without this approach, health and well-being could be significantly compromised long term, due to poorly performing natural and built environmental outcomes including housing.
5. These matters are highlighted in the People’s Report on the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals⁷ that was presented to the United Nations in 2019.
6. NCWNZ recognises the potential for significant learnings to be included in the Bill from the principles that are manifest in the term “kaitiakitanga”⁸ that relate to a fundamental cultural relationship of Māori to the guardianship of land and water, and to well-being.
7. NCWNZ encourages the government to advocate and incentivise memberships to, and to implement learnings from, organisations such as the Sustainable Business Network⁹

⁴ NCWNZ. 2021. Appendix “D”: Resolutions of National Meetings 2011-2020. 11.13.5.

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncwnz/pages/1025/attachments/original/1622428501/Appendix_D_Resolutions_2011-2020.pdf?1622428501

⁵ NCWNZ. 2020. Submission to the Environment Select Committee on the Urban Development Bill 197-1. S20.04.

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncwnz/pages/1026/attachments/original/1585623962/S20.04_Urban_Development_Bill.pdf?1585623962

⁶ Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. 2021. Just transition. <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-development/just-transition/>

⁷ The People’s Report on the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals: An alternate report for Aotearoa New Zealand (2019). https://www.sdg.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Final_PeopleReport-2019-Dec-2019_for-web.pdf

⁸ Science Learning Hub. 2017. Understanding kaitiakitanga. <https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/2544-understanding-kaitiakitanga>

⁹ Sustainable Business Network. <https://sustainable.org.nz/>

and others globally such as IMPACT 2030¹⁰. These organisations are but two that provide leadership in values and techniques to implement the intentions of the draft Bill, while a third, Infrastructure Australia 2021¹¹ provides an assessment tool for the sustainable development of infrastructure from the point of initial strategy, including procurement, sustainable supply chains through the process to the end point. Development could be incentivised to utilise such a process to achieve improved natural and built environment outcomes. Auckland international Airport and the Central Rail Link are two examples where it is being applied in Auckland.

8. For the above reasons and including the importance of incentivising implementation tools, NCWNZ submits that this Bill is of fundamental importance for the well-being of the natural and built environments. It is also of fundamental importance to the well-being of all wāhine and children as well as less well-represented sectors of our communities.

Matters that are essential to consider in the Bill

Part 2 Purpose and related provisions

Section 5 (2) (b) outcomes for the benefit of the environment must be promoted

9. NCWNZ recommends that this subsection is strengthened by replacing the word “promoted” with a more directive/binding word. Alternatively, a hierarchy of terms such as “Must”, “Should” or “May” could be appropriately applied to defined circumstances. Without such a change, it is unlikely there will be adequate ability to give effect to the purposes of the Act in 5 (1) (a).

Section 8 Environmental outcomes

10. This approach is supported in that it can achieve more efficient systems based on excellent design and science practice. It can provide for the setting of policy and measurement to support and evaluate policy outcomes.

It is recommended that the Bill moves beyond Business as Usual approaches

11. In the development of a built environment, accounting for life cycle costs can enable planning and management decisions that provide for the well-being of both the natural and built environments, and their respective communities of interest.
12. The International Integrated Reporting Council¹² is now well established and provides examples of the benefits of this approach. It enables an integrated approach to the way investment is evaluated and provides for the accounting of the long-term performance costs and benefits of development. This approach quantifies the otherwise “unaccounted costs” that may be carried forward to the next generation, costs such as healthcare, policing, waste management, air and water pollution. With integrated

¹⁰ IMPACT 2030. Partnering for impact. <https://www.impact2030.com/home>

¹¹ Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA). <https://www.isca.org.au/Who-We-Are>

¹² Value Reporting Foundation. <https://integratedreporting.org/>

planning and joined up thinking and outcomes in the investment process, these costs can be significantly reduced.

13. Getting this right at the start enables a long-term strategy for evaluating and costing effects on the natural and built environments for long term. It provides for greater benefit and affordability for the end user over time. With respect to housing as part of the urban form, it enables design for high quality performance outcomes, for built form that is cheaper to operate (reduced energy and other consumption costs through the life of a building) and provides for healthy indoor and outdoor living environments. In particular these are environments that are of importance to the well-being of all women and children. This demonstrates an investment approach to development outcomes that contrasts with an approach of a developer with a shorter-term vision.
14. The New Zealand Green Building Council¹³ provides a lead in its approach to building design and performance of healthy environments.

Part 4 Natural and built environments plans

15. It is essential to enable an urban form that is designed for connected healthy communities and a healthy environment. These outcomes can share multiple co-benefits. It is recommended that the Bill provides for multiple co-benefits in the prescribed planning process¹⁴.
16. It is submitted that the requirements and scope for natural and built environment plans be broadened to provide for an integrated approach in plans. This will improve the wellbeing of communities and in particular of women and children.
17. It is recommended that the Bill move beyond siloed planning and outcomes, and require that plans and consequential development result from collaborations and partnerships. This enables joined-up thinking to provide for the evaluation of the convergence of ideas to bring about integrated planning and outcomes.
18. It is recommended that quadruple bottom line reporting be introduced to provide for a new standard of evaluation and integrated planning and implementation outcomes. This supports achieving a “just transition” outcome.

Part 4 Section 23 and Schedule 3 Planning Committees

19. Membership of Planning committees requires broadening to provide for a balance of women, a voice for Iwi Māori, other diversity, and a voice for science. Considerations relevant to planning committee decisions require broadening to demonstrate integrated planning that supports well-being of both the natural and built environment and hence the community.

¹³ NZGBC. <https://www.nzgbc.org.nz/>

¹⁴ Collaborative on Health and the Environment. <https://www.healthandenvironment.org/environmental-health/environmental-risks/built-environment>

Conclusions

20. To conclude the National Council of Women NZ recommends that the Bill:

- Move beyond business as usual.
- Recognise how an integrated approach based on partnerships can build a more sustainable natural and built environment that supports the wellbeing of women and children, Iwi Māori, cultural diversity and people with disability.
- Enables a value-based approach and account for longer term life cycle planning to better grow a healthy natural and built environment.
- Introduce quadruple line reporting across all sectors.
- Amend the criteria in plans to include the above.
- Broaden the planning committee membership, form and function to enable integrated environmental and community outcomes to better serve both the natural and built environment.



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