



9 September 2021

S21.17 oral

## Oral submission to the Environment Select Committee on the Inquiry on the Natural and Built Environments Bill: Parliamentary Paper

### Presenters:

Christine Caughey and Julie Thomas, via zoom.

### Environment Select Committee

Eugene Sage, Chairperson, Green; Tamati Coffey, Labour; Tangi Utikere, Labour: Simon Court, ACT, Rachel Brooking, Labour, Anahila Kanongata'a-Suisuiki, Labour, Angie Warren-Clark, Labour.

Committee members not present: Scott Simpson, National; Nicola Willis, National.

### Introduction

Kia ora, tena koutou katoa. Greetings from the National Council of Women of New Zealand. My name is Christine Caughey and I convene the Climate Change and Environment Standing Committee. I am joined by Julie Thomas.

In overview, this presentation expands on our submission. It advocates healthy, natural and built environments that provide for the well-being of all women and children, tāngata and iwi Māori, diverse communities and those with disabilities

### Part 2 Purpose and Related Provisions

#### S5(1)

NCWNZ supports the purpose of the draft Bill in principle. It is ambitious in its purpose to enable Te Oranga o te Taiao. The value base of our indigenous culture offers a powerful and challenging opportunity for new approaches to connect us with our natural and built environments.

It provides a strong mechanism to move thinking beyond the silos of present structures. It enables a focus on strategic integrated planning and reporting that places value on all sectors, to support present and future generations. It can move us beyond business as usual.

This will require our diverse communities to grow an understanding of Māori value systems. It may take several decades to transform our world view to support the well-being of our natural and built environments.

**It is recommended** that resources be committed for community education and importantly for those engaging directly with the Act.

## Part 2 5(2) and S7 S8 S12

### Environmental Limits

Building flexibility for adaptation and resilience into our strategic national, regional and local planning frameworks is fundamental. Increasingly our natural and built environments are changing in ways that are unpredicted and often unpredictable.

It is suggested that the draft Bill is static and linear. The setting of environmental limits will constrain the delivery of healthy outcomes. Climate emergency, significant population growth, increasing inequality and polluted environments create unprecedented challenges that demand new and flexible responses. The IPCC report<sup>1</sup> published last month warns that climate change is rapid, widespread and intensifying. It is clear that we have little time to avert a crisis that is beyond human comprehension.

Deeper scientific research is advocated to capture change evidentially. This enables governance at all levels, and consenting, to be informed, proactive and nimble.

**It is recommended** that government puts in place an integrated national data base using such technology as Digital Earth<sup>2</sup>. This would enable geospatial mapping, measurement, monitoring and reporting and adjusting policy accordingly.

### Healthy Built Environments

Of particular advantage to the wellbeing of women and children are built environments for local communities, with safe green walkable linkages, access to educational and health facilities, local shopping and open spaces.

It also includes the design of low-carbon healthy living spaces with low running costs. Well-designed built-form that can improve health and wellbeing.

**It is recommended** that the Act provide incentives for the design of low carbon environments that deliver sustainable co-benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2021. Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis: Summary for Policymakers. [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGI\\_SPM.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dea.ga.gov.au/>

## Community Well-being

With high rates of domestic violence against women and children and people with disabilities, there is increasing evidence that many of the risk factors that increase the vulnerability of individuals, families and communities, can be changed. This includes the environments in which we live and work<sup>3</sup>.

Additional systemic factors influencing violence against Māori women and women from diverse cultural and social groups, include racism, entrenched poverty, or exclusion on the grounds of disability<sup>4</sup>. Healthy environments are essential to address these systemic factors.

**It is recommended** that a National Strategy be informed by evidence and targets, to eliminate the adverse systemic factors affecting present and future generations.

**It is also recommended** that sex disaggregated data be collected in to inform better outcomes for all women.

## Integrated Reporting

Integrated systems of values-based accounting and reporting for investment and development is advocated, to move us beyond the usual financial evaluation processes. This enables better risk assessment and effects on present and future generations.

The report issued by the Auditor-General<sup>5</sup> last week, recommends that the government take a critical path approach to identify monitor and report on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, established to assist nations to reach the targets of the 2030 Agenda.

SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 13 Climate Action, and SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals are especially relevant to this submission and are three amongst seventeen important goals.

We suggest the approach advocated by the Auditor General is consistent with and necessary, to give effect to the key purpose of the Act.

## Schedule 3 Planning Committees

There is concern that the membership of planning committees will not provide for adequate representation of women in policy making or in the consenting process. Women have greater responsibility for the wellbeing of children, the elderly and as carers and are more likely to suffer the effects of violence and deprivation. There is considerable research that points to the adverse effects of urban form on women and children, where their needs have not been actively planned for.

**It is therefore recommended** that the Act provide for the equal representation of women in all policy making and appointments to planning committees.

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs. 2013. Current Thinking on Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women [https://women.govt.nz/sites/public\\_files/Final%20Current%20thinking%20on%20primary%20prevention.pdf](https://women.govt.nz/sites/public_files/Final%20Current%20thinking%20on%20primary%20prevention.pdf) page 7

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> New Zealand. Controller and Auditor-General. 2021. The Government's preparedness to implement the sustainable development goals. <https://oag.parliament.nz/2021/sdgs/docs/sustainable-dev-goals.pdf>

## Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today, on the importance of integrating a gender equal lens across all aspects of this Bill; to give effect to the human rights of all women and children and to enhance their opportunity to create and to live in healthy, natural and built environments in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Questions

**Q: Angie Warren-Clark (Labour).** Time is short so I'm interested in what you see as the life cycle costs and I'm also interested in what you mean by quadruple bottom line. Sorry, I've abbreviated that as time is short.

**A: Christine Caughey.** Life cycle costs are where you get buildings and environments that have more sustainable approaches in actual operations. For example, with a household it is much cheaper if you have sustainable options. I'm talking about water costs, energy costs, and there are many others, and that actually assists not just the people who live there but the long-term environmental outcomes. So, there is a win-win for built and natural environments where you have those long-term life cycle costs accounted for. And quadruple bottom line is about accounting, as indeed this Act appears to do or promote. It is the environment, economy, social and cultural, and it is so important for women and children that those are all connected to get a balanced assessment and outcome.

**C: Angie Warren-Clark.** Thank you for bringing a gendered lens to this conversation.

**Q: Anahila Kanongata'a-Suisuiki (Labour).** My question is really around your membership of the Planning Committee. You talk about broadening it include a balance of women. We've heard Submissions that talk about elected officials. How would you implement your suggestion?

**A: Christine Caughey.** In many Councils of many elected officials there is a preponderance of male gender rather than female, but it is really important to get women on critical Committees. Women can be co-opted if there aren't the women in the elected positions, and that happens with Māori Advisory Committees as well in many Councils.

## Closing

Chairperson Eugenie Sage closed thanking NCWNZ for presenting today and asked for a copy of the Oral Submission as it differs from the initial Submission.