



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**
Te Kaunihera
Wahine O Aotearoa

**Oral submission to the Law and Order Select Committee
on the NCWNZ submission on the
Drug and Alcohol Testing of Community-based Offenders and Bailees Legislation
Bill 238-1, S15.13**

Handed in by Patricia Byrne on 7 May 2015¹

Good Morning.

My name is Patricia Byrne and my colleague is Jean Fuller. We are members of the Parliamentary Watch Committee of the National Council of Women of New Zealand. The submission has been prepared from a background of policy decisions and recent consultations with members.

NCWNZ is concerned that help and support is given to all who need to overcome alcohol and drug dependency. This Bill appears to be mainly concerned with identifying those Offenders and bailees upon whom conditions have been applied as a result of offending whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Our concern is that there be sufficient help available for those needing it, to turn their lives around and make steps towards living a full and normal life.

Our members from various parts of the country have told us that there are insufficient support services for all who need assistance in dealing with alcohol or drug dependency. These shortages need to be addressed before we can expect any turnaround in the harm caused by those who are still 'hooked'. It would seem necessary when imposing conditions on offenders and bailees, that supervision needs to be included.

Members are also concerned about conditions of testing. Privacy must be given when mandatory testing is required. A person undergoing a test should not have his bail conditions exposed to all who are present. This would be counter-productive to the ability to build a normal life with respect from fellow-workers etc. Guidelines need to be laid down so that those involved in testing will treat ex- prisoners with the same respect as they would any other patient being tested.

¹ The Select Committee met on 6 May 2015 but the hearing time NCWNZ was given was on 7 May 2015 so this Oral submission was not able to be presented in person but was handed in.

Finally the imposition of a fine for non-compliance would simply add to the burden of the offender's family as most would not be in a position to pay; this would lead to interest accruing and a greater likelihood that the offender would turn to alcohol or drugs as an escape.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to address you.