



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

Te Kaunihera
Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Ministry of Health on
Preventing and Minimising Gambling Harm
Strategic Plan 2004-2010**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 42 nationally organised societies. It has 33 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies. The Council's function is to serve women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research, study, discussion and action.

NCWNZ is again pleased to be able to take part by making a submission on this very important subject of preventing and minimising gambling harm. Our organisation first expressed its concern over the growing opportunities to gamble, meaning greater numbers becoming addicted to gambling, in 1902. Now over 100 years later the same is being said.

1. Do you agree with the Ministry of Health's proposed strategic approach to preventing and minimising gambling harm?

We agree that steps need to be taken urgently but we would like to see initiatives such as 'Primary Prevention' and 'Workforce Development' become operative earlier rather than later in the programme. We believe that if they are conducted well, the number of people becoming addicted should be reduced, thereby stopping people continuing on to the secondary and tertiary stages. Other than this point we think that the 'Objectives' and the 'Priorities for Action' are good, but see that they will take a while to implement with the research and planning needed before they are set in place.

2. Are there things that you particularly endorse about the approach?

Although there will always be a need for services to help people who have become addicted, we would again state how important we see Primary Prevention and Workforce Development. 'Prevention is better than cure' applies here, if one person is prevented from becoming addicted it is better for their physical and mental health, family relationships, their financial wellbeing and their standards of work. Therefore this is better for the wider community. Social factors play a big part in addressing harm. We are particularly concerned that the way the prevention programmes and help for the rising numbers of women gamblers is going to be made available. because of the potential impact on children

3. Do you suggest any changes to the Ministry's proposed approach?

NCWNZ members are concerned at the length of time that these objectives are going to take to become operative. For instance Objective 3 'Enhance the capacity of communities to define and address gambling harm' has Priorities for action that will not be fulfilled for a long time. One of these is: Develop a set of community indicators that assess, monitor and evaluate the impact of





new gambling opportunities, and another Work with whanau, hapu and other Maori communities to facilitate and manage the development and implementation of community-based problem gambling prevention programmes. Research such as this if carried out adequately will take some time.

4. Does the proposed funding plan target areas of service development that will make a significant contribution to the prevention and minimisation of gambling harm?

NCWNZ would like to be assured that the funding is going to carry on after 2007 at the rate it is proposed up to that date. We have seen service providers that are showing very good audited outcomes, having to stop because the cuts in funding cause them to have to cease operation.

In summary, while NCWNZ applauds the intent of this initiative, the need for many gamblers and their families is now. Any programmes that can prevent gambling harm or nip an addiction in the bud will have incalculable social impacts that will benefit New Zealand communities.

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National President

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Convener, Social Issues Standing Committee