



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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S04.52

**Submission to the Government Administration Select Committee on the
Historic Places Amendment Bill**

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 and some 150 other 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 supports any measures which offer better protection of historic places and areas, wahi tapu and wahi tapu areas for future generations to appreciate. NCWNZ repeats comment made in our submission S99.60 to the Transport and Environment Select Committee on the Resource Management Act Amendment Bill that a National Policy Statement for historic heritage needs to be put in place.

This submission is based on the responses to an item inserted in the September issue of the Circular, the newsletter of NCWNZ. Responses were given by 13 branches, one Nationally Organised Society, two individuals, the Parliamentary Watch Committee and the Public Issues Standing Committee members.

Part 1

Amendments to the principal Act

3 Interpretation

(4) Section 2 of the principal Act is amended by omitting from paragraph (b) of the definition of **working day** the expression "15th", and substituting the expression "10".

NCWNZ strongly objects to this change which shortens the recognised summer 'shut down' period. The completion of submissions over the summer holiday period is, and always has been a problem, for voluntary organisations such as ours, which do not meet during the summer months. The move would also impinge further on those submissions which require consultation with other people: many firms close for the summer period and will not change their times to suit this new legislation. As one branch commented, the time frame is tight enough as it is with current shut down from 20 December to 15 January.

Cynically NCWNZ wonders whether this is a move so that unwelcome legislative changes can be pushed through. We hope that this move does not establish a precedent for a similar change in other legislation.

9 New section 28 substituted

The new section is a rewriting of the original, and is much clearer and has the support of NCWNZ. We do have concern, however, that although this new section ensures a submission process, voluntary organisations, such as NCW, with broad interests may be ineligible to submit. Individual submissions from the general public are not allowed, and this is a cause of concern as local residents often have a good insight into local heritage issues.





13 New sections 32A to 32D inserted

These new sections clarify the registration of historic area and wahi tapu area proposals, and are supported.

[NCWNZ wonders whether instead completely deleting section 29 and 30, it would not have been simpler to install section 31 as the former section 29, install section 32 as section 30, new sections 32A, 32B and 32C as section 31 and new section 32D as 32].

Clause 17 New Zealand Historic Places Trust (Pouhere Taonga)

The majority of responses supported the recognition of the Trust as a Crown entity for the purposes of the Public Finance Act 1989. A minority, however, felt the Trust document was sound and accountability was already transparent as Part V of the Public Finance Act 1989 applies to the Trust as if it were a Crown Entity.

19 New section 42 substituted

Although there was some agreement with the reduction in size of the Board from 11 to 9 members, there was strong opposition to the proportionality of 6 being appointed by the Minister and only 3 elected by Trust members.

As one branch responded, “at present the geographical areas represented by elected members are too large for them to be truly effective. How can the national membership be fairly reflected when representation is reduced to three members.”

One response suggested that the Minister should appoint the Chair and two Board members, with a requirement that he ensure there is appropriate Maori representation. The members should elect six. The current configuration, which assumes that no Maori will be elected, so will have to be appointed by the Minister, is patronising and puts both Maori and the Minister into a false position. It is preferable to give the Minister discretion so that if there is inadequate representation of any particular group or region among those elected (s)he can redress the balance.

The same response also noted that NZHPT is a strongly membership-based organisation and relies enormously on the goodwill, money and knowledge of New Zealanders from many walks of life, professions, trades and regions. It is very important to reinforce democratic participation at the governance level.

Other responses suggested that if a reduction in size is deemed necessary, 5 members should be appointed by the Minister and 4 elected by Trust members. It is important that the Trust continues to work outside any political agenda.

22 Powers of the Trust

NCWNZ felt that by giving the Trust the ability to appoint and remove Board committees and their members, and establish and disestablish Branch committees, the Trust was given draconian power.

Members could see that conflict could occur if assessments and work of branch committees did not conform to that of the Board. However, local committees are often in a better position to assess local concerns. On the other hand a committee or branch could be ineffective and strong action needed. Even in that situation, NCWNZ feels the power given to the Trust is too dictatorial and any problem should be solved by other means.

The Trust should only be able to disestablish Branch committees and remove Board committees and their members in specific circumstances, which must be listed in the legislation.



NCWNZ strongly disagrees with this proposal as it stands, as it demeans the value of the volunteer and has the potential for abuse.

Conclusion

NCWNZ supports the main thrust of this Bill which clarifies the Act, but would prefer the changes we suggest be incorporated.

NCWNZ feels that the Trust, although having some ability to direct and contribute financially to registered Historic Places, remains hampered by the lack of sufficient central government funds. Larger representation of government appointees would need to be accompanied by an increase in central government funding.

We thank the select committee for giving us the opportunity to comment.

Christine Low
National President

Queenie Ballance
Acting Convener, Public Issues Standing Committee

