



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

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**Submission to the Government Administration Select Committee
on the Rail Network Bill**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 41 nationally organised societies. It has 33 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies. NCWNZ also represents a number of individual women. 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.

The Public Issues Standing Committee of NCWNZ has studied the Rail Network Bill and considers it to be clear in its proposals, the key ones we understand to be to repeal existing redundant legislation and to align the objectives of the New Zealand Railways Corporation with the New Zealand Transport Strategy.

The National Council of Women of New Zealand has always been concerned with public confidence in the safety and reliability of rail services and, accordingly, would suggest that in Part 2 Clause 7 Objectives (1) that the word "reliable" could be included alongside "an integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable transport system".

In Part 2 Clause 7 Objective (2) we applaud the requirement for the entity (The NZ Railways Corporation) to exhibit social and environmental responsibility.

We note that the Bill is not clear on the process by which Board members of the entity are elected or appointed although it is implied that it is a continuance of the existing governance structure. Of the "5 members but no more than 8" specified in Part 2 Section 6 (3), we suggest that this is an area where "consumer" representation would be useful.

NCWNZ has consistently supported the Crown ownership of utilities and transport networks. Although in Subpart 2 – Disposal of affected rail network land, a range of provisos is covered, we urge that Clause 21 is stringently checked to ensure that all prior conditions have been met before the land is sold or disposed of to "any person on any terms".

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation

Christine Low
National President

Mary Gavin
Convener, Public Issues Standing Committee

