



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

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**Submission to Pharmac on the Proposal Regarding Widening Access
to Aromatase Inhibitors for Early Breast Cancer**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 40 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 has a longstanding history of encouraging the promotion of social and health issues, particularly as they affect women.

Because of time constraints we were unable to consult widely with our membership. It is unfortunate that Pharmac, while seeking public comment, works to such tight time frames. This could be seen to be compromising the claim to be consulting widely. Because of the way standing committee members and branches are dispersed around the country, time needs to be factored in to issuing them with the information and the time taken for replies to be returned and collated.

NCWNZ, over many years, has been a consistent supporter of the early detection of cancers in all forms and likewise, the access to appropriate follow up treatment at the earliest possible time.

NCWNZ is therefore, supportive of this proposal to widen access to aromatase inhibitors for the treatment of early breast cancer. The proposed criteria for access to letrozole and anastrozole (2.1) requires that, "the cancer is advanced (Stage IIIb, or metastatic Stage IV)". NCWNZ is concerned that access to aromatase therapy is to be restricted to such an advanced stage of the disease.

NCWNZ thanks you for this opportunity to make comment on this discussion paper and looks forward to a positive outcome.

Christine Low
National President

Catherine Gurnsey
Convener, Health Standing Committee

