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Submission to Department of Labour on the Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organization representing 38 Nationally Organized Societies. It has 31 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies as well as some 150 other societies, and many individual members. The Councils function is to work for the well-being of women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research, study, discussion and action.

NCWNZ is very pleased to have the opportunity of replying to the Immigration Act Review. We have two main reasons for this, firstly we have always supported the idea that it is very good for New Zealand both economically and socially to welcome immigrants. The second reason is because our organisation has been enhanced by the diverse back-grounds of many of our members and the great contribution they can make to our organisation.

Section 1.2.7 OVERVIEW

NCWNZ agree that it is very important to have a service that will ensure that we have a modern, globally competitive service. We realise that there is a world-wide competition for skilled immigrants so New Zealand needs to be seen as being a safe, family friendly destination, and if our systems are too complicated then we may lose them to other countries; having said that we also endorse the need for our people to be aware of high security at our borders.

Section 4.1.115-119 THE VISA AND PERMIT SYSTEM

NCWNZ agrees with the single, integrated visa system. We feel that this system would be easier for immigrants to understand as the visa would specify conditions and exemptions that would have been previously covered by the visa and permit system. NCWNZ is also in support of the empowering of the Minister of Immigration to suspend exemptions for a group of people in a pandemic.

Section 5.1.182 DECISION-MAKING

NCWNZ supports Option B – **Enable delegated senior immigration officials to make positive exceptions to residence policy.** We believe that this option will be very useful in making decisions more swiftly in cases such as a person who is in an occupation such as a doctor who is over 55 who wishes to stay in the country but at the moment would have to apply to the Minister for approval to stay. We would not wish to see the Minister distance herself/himself totally from the individual decision-making as it would remove the safety mechanism we currently have.

Section 10.1.1 606 - 607 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

NCWNZ are concerned about the sharing of information not only between Government Departments but also between employers and the Department. There would have to be very stringent guidelines and regulations, and we would see these only being used in exceptional





circumstances. Everyone entering New Zealand would have to be made aware that if the occasion arises and they are being investigated, their personal information can be gained in this way.

Section **10.1.2. 663 – 664 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**

NCWNZ understands that there are times when Immigration Officers need the power to detain people in the absence of the police. We would see this clause being used only in exceptional circumstances and that it is used only when there are 'reasonable grounds' and when the health and safety aspects were in place. We agree that special training would need to be given to those empowered to detain.

NCWNZ can see the need for this Review as even within the last five years there have been situations that were not taken into account in the Act. Terrorism has become a much greater threat to New Zealand, and the possibility of a pandemic coming to our shores is another scenario that needs legislating for. We thank you for the opportunity to make this reply.

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National President

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