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**Submission to the Department of Building and Housing on the
Review of the Building Code: Building for the 21st Century**

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 welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on behalf of our members.

NCWNZ has taken note that even since the advent of the Building Code we are still hearing of instances of leaky homes and problems between various contractors working for each new building.

We would first like to say that we found this Review very convoluted and it made reading and understanding each concept difficult to understand. When it is to be used by the industry and the community, it needs to be written in plain English. Our members are very used to reading these documents, but we do not know how people that are not used to this would understand them.

SAFETY

3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13. How important is it for this proposal to make provision for eventualities such as tsunamis, flooding, landslides, coastal erosion, volcanic activity and wildfire?

Our members thought that these eventualities were more to do with the site of the building rather than the building itself. Therefore it would be the responsibility of the Consent Authority when giving a consent to point to the dangers, if any, when giving consent. It would then be over to the person requesting consent to cater for any extra building requirement because of the site.

20. How important do you think it is for the Building Code to explicitly require a means of emergency egress from buildings that is accessible to people with disabilities?

NCWNZ are aware that buildings must be wheel-chair friendly and have a provision of toilet facilities to cater for the disabled. We are also aware that buildings have emergency exits but it is not until an emergency such as 9/11 that it is noted that these exits are often not user friendly to those who are disabled, especially as there would be no power so such conveniences as lifts would be out of action. We do ask that this be explicitly required.

26. Do you have any suggestions on ways to address the issue of protection of people from hot (e.g. heating systems) and cold surfaces?

Although there must be a degree of personal responsibility for one's own safety, for sustainable management all pipes should be lagged for safety and for keeping the heat in. Sources of heating that are at a low floor level should have some protection if in a family home.





HEALTH

37. How important do you think it is for the Building Code to make provision for controlling moisture generated by the use of fixtures and appliances (e.g. showers, cooking facilities, gas stoves, clothes driers and unflued gas heaters?)

This should be mandatory to the highest standard in all new houses. This would certainly help keep homes drier and healthier.

39. How important do you think it is for the Building Code to extend the provision for a minimum indoor temperature beyond aged care facilities and early childhood centres, to housing or other occupied buildings?

NCWNZ believes that it should be mandatory that all new houses should have good insulation. Maybe the standards need to vary as to the lowest winter temperature area having the greatest degree of protection. Double glazed windows although costing more at the time of building would also save fuel resources and the cost of fuel needed to heat the home. We believe that in the long run this will save non-renewable fuels, as well as health costs and these impact especially in poor housing.

46. How important do you think it is for the Building Code to make provision for the front door of every residential unit (including apartments) to meet accessibility requirements?

We feel that it is important for such people as meter readers, couriers etc. to be able to have access to the front door of any dwelling. We see this as becoming increasingly difficult with gated communities, apartment buildings that only allow entry with swipe cards etc. making this harder to enforce.

83. How important is it for provision to be made regarding the location and number of socket outlets and light switches in residential buildings?

In this electronic age there needs to be numerous sockets in each room to save having cords or multiboxes around. Light switches need to be inside every entrance to every room for safety.

85. Is there anything else about services you think the Building Code should make provision for?

As far as well-being is concerned we see the big issues of water quality and supply, insulation, energy efficiency, ease of access as all very important. Because of the need for energy efficiency and the need to use less non-renewable resources the idea was mooted that perhaps there could be a grading on houses so that buyers could know how energy efficient a home is when they come to buy one.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

100, 101. Do you have any suggestions about how the Building Code could minimize energy consumption and promote the use of renewable energy?

Good urban planning is vital so that we do not have buildings that have an adverse effect on the environment through depletion of Natural resources. Other areas that need consideration are air pollution, damage due to flooding, excess reliance on unsustainable energy sources (and sometimes sustainable ones), lack of maintenance including moisture ingress, and ineffective use of buildings. This has not been well done in New Zealand. Houses need to be built to last, with energy efficiency paramount in the design of the building solar water heating and power, and fully insulated double glazed homes should be mandatory. Initial higher costs would soon be offset with lower costs for energy, which will also be good for a sustainable environment. Building facing the North with good use of the sun is also paramount.



107. How important do you think it is for the Building code to make provision for minimising the consumption of water from network utility operators (e.g. roof water) in areas of water shortage?

Water storage tanks to collect roof water should be actively encouraged. We note that in Australia these tanks are very well subsidised and suggest that it would be very good if the New Zealand

Government provided financial incentive here. Only grey water should be used for such things as washing the car and watering the garden, as potable water used in this way is not sustainable.

112. How important do you think it is for the Building Code to make provision for banning the use of some non-sustainable materials (e.g. certain timbers)?

NCWNZ rate this as extremely important otherwise some timbers will not withstand the elements.

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