



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Health Select Committee on the
Mental Health Commission Amendment Bill**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 42 Nationally Organised Societies and National Members. NCWNZ has 31 Branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies as well as some 150 other societies. The Council's 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.

Responses to this Bill have been received from the members of the NCWNZ Health Standing Nucleus Committee which supports better outcomes in mental health and strongly advocates the implementation of the National Health Strategy which focuses on:

- more and better specialist services
- more and better services for Maori service
- responses to need
- mental health services in primary health care settings
- mental health promotion and prevention
- social inclusion – removing social and economic barriers to recovery
- improving the health status of people with severe mental illness.

General Comments

NCWNZ supports the purpose of this Act to amend the Mental Health Commission Act 1998 and to extend the term of The Commission until 2015 as per Section 13(1).

The Health Standing Nucleus Committee agreed unanimously with the proposed amendments to the Commission's role, in particular ensuring that the Minister of Health is kept well informed of all Mental Health Issues in respect of the New Zealand mental health strategies implementation to ensure this strategy is successful now and in the future for all New Zealanders.

Also the significance of mental health promotion and advocacy for people with mental illness and their respective families is seen as paramount.

Specific Comments

Clause 5 which amends section 2(1) (Interpretations) of the Principal Act by inserting a definition of stakeholder and defining who the stakeholder is, is clearly documented but the members felt that: (e) people with mental illnesses and their families and caregivers; and (f) groups representing the interests of people with mental illness and their families and caregivers should be listed as (a) and (b) as these two categories would appear to be the primary stakeholders in this context.





Clause 6, members consulted agreed with the new Clause 6 which sets out the Functions of the Commission.

NCWNZ members agree that these amendments to the Principal Act enhance and clarify the functions set out in the Act and those responsible for their implementation.

Members thank the Select Committee for the opportunity to make comment on this Bill.

Christine Low
National President

Christine Davies
Convenor, Health Standing Committee



