



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

Te Kaunihera
Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Primary Production Select Committee on the Fisheries Act 1996
Amendment Bill**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 42 nationally organised societies. It has 31 Branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies as well as individual members. The Council's function is to serve women, the family and the community through research, study, discussion and action.

Since the 1920s NCWNZ has been making submissions on various aspects of the fisheries around New Zealand. It also has policy supporting the outcomes of the Earth Summit in 1992 when 'sustainability' first became an international issue. This present submission continues the long history of interest which NCWNZ members have taken in conservation matters.

It is essential that sustainability be put before production, since economic growth, in the majority of sectors, involves more energy use, and more greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, in the fishing industries, there is a serious problem with depletion of fish stocks, with some species facing extinction. The risk of allowing more fishing now is that key species, such as orange roughy, snapper, and terakihi, could be extinct in the future.

Even some fishing methods that capture untargeted species with the targeted, such as bottom trawling, are unsustainable. NCWNZ members agree that steps should be taken to ban these methods in New Zealand waters. It is vital that New Zealand puts effort into rebuilding fishing stocks, rather than allowing them to continue to be depleted. So this amendment is surely overdue.

Section 4 Information Principles

NCWNZ believes that the proposed amendment to Section 10 be strengthened. The following amendments to paragraph 10 c) have been suggested:

if information is absent or is uncertain, unreliable, or inadequate, decision makers –

- (i) shall be cautious and use the precautionary approach; and
- (ii) shall not use any of those factors as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to give absolute priority to sustainability; and
- (iii) shall consider risks to the habitat of the fishery."

With overseas corporations having part ownership of some New Zealand fisheries, it is even more important that a clear and incontestable legal framework is in place to protect our fish stocks. NCWNZ supports this amendment strongly.

Christine Low
National President

Sara Dickon
Convener, Environment Standing Committee

