



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

Te Kaunihera
Wahine O Aotearoa

National Office
Level 4 Central House
26 Brandon Street
PO Box 25-498
Wellington 6146
(04) 473 7623
www.ncwnz.org.nz

23 June 2007

S07.30

**Submission to the Education and Science Standing Committee on the Education
(Tertiary Reforms) Amendment Bill**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 45 Nationally Organised Societies and National Members. NCWNZ has 31 branches to which women from more than 150 societies are affiliated. The Council's function is to serve women, families and the community through research, study, consultation and action.

NCWNZ supports the general purpose of the Tertiary Reform Bill in its aim of ensuring a streamlined system for planning, funding and monitoring tertiary education. NCWNZ also supports aligning tertiary outcomes with Government's intended economic, social and environmental interests. In March 2002 a NCWNZ submission on the Tertiary Education Reform Bill (S02.11) stressed the importance of tightening accountability of tertiary education providers. However, members had a number of concerns in 2002 which remain, and are actually increased by the more rigorous clauses of this Bill.

- The emphasis on funding and stricter monitoring in the current Reform Bill creates the fear of diminishing autonomy for tertiary institutions to enable these institutions to act according to the Education Act 1989 S162 (4) (a) (i) to develop intellectual independence, (iii) meet international standards of research and teaching, (iv) act as repositories of knowledge and expertise and (v) act as the critic and conscience of society.
- The allocation of research funding through the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) introduced in 2002 has had some negative impacts on university staffing according to anecdotal evidence although there has been insufficient time for an in-depth impact report on this impact to date. Some NCWNZ members questioned the impact on tertiary institutions of the current Reforms. It appears that tertiary institutions strategize to follow the funding. This may be at the expense of the higher educational goals listed above.
- In particular, NCWNZ passed policy in 2001, calling on the Government to ensure that gender impact assessments be undertaken to secure women from disadvantage before making changes to the tertiary education sector. Has such an impact assessment been made? New section 159AA (2) (d) refers to development aspirations of Maori and 'other population groups'. Are women an 'other population group'? It would appear that women are not intended in this group (MOE, Statement of Intent, 2007-2012, p. 65). Women already fare less well than their male counterparts in university salaries and promotions according to the 2005/07 Alternative Report to the UN for the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Partly this is because the time taken for child rearing impacts negatively on their research production. The



Tertiary Education Reform Bill with its emphasis on outcomes = funding is likely to make the situation worse for women.

- New Section 159AA (3) (a) refers to the Minister's responsibility to consult with those stakeholders in the tertiary education sector that he or she considers ought to be consulted. This is a freedom to consult like minded people or not to consult anyone.

In conclusion, NCWNZ thanks the Select Committee for the opportunity to respond to the Education (Tertiary Reforms) Amendment Bill. NCWNZ commends the movers of the Bill for their endeavours to ensure that scarce tax-payer dollars are well spent for the benefit of the country but ask that the Select Committee takes NCWNZ concerns seriously, values and protects Section 162 (4) (a) of the Education Act 1989, and monitors the impact of these Reforms on the women of New Zealand.

Christine Low
National President

Dr Frances Townsend
Convener Standing Committee on Education