



**Influencing Policy for Women to Thrive**  
*Affiliated to the International Council of Women*

29 February 2012

S12.05

**Submission to the Local Government and Environment Committee on the  
Manukau City Council (Regulation of Prostitution in Specified Places) Bill**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 51 nationally organised societies and national members. It has 23 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies as well as individual members. NCWNZ's function is to represent and promote the interests of New Zealand women through research, discussion and action.

This submission has been prepared by the NCWNZ Board and the Parliamentary Watch Committee using input gathered from previous submissions on this topic over several years. In 1996 NCWNZ supported the introduction of legislation to decriminalise prostitution in the belief that the legislation would make the lives of sex workers safer. In 2004 NCWNZ adopted policy at Conference stating that NCWNZ does not condone prostitution or the purchase of sexual services. NCWNZ's main concern is the safety of women.

NCWNZ is seriously concerned about the on-going problems with street based prostitution in Manukau. It is clear that the Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) 2003 has failed to protect sex workers where they work outside commercial places. The Ministry of Justice Review of Street-based Prostitution in Manukau City April 2009 noted that street-based prostitution was a problem in some specific areas in South Auckland. Complaints about street-based prostitution have focussed on the areas of Hunters Corner and Manurewa town centre where an estimated maximum of 20 street-based workers work on any given night. Community complaints include noise, antisocial behaviour (including sexual acts occurring in public places) and litter (including used condoms, syringes, bottles and food wrappers and human waste). Cr Dick Quax, (MCC) who was responsible for community safety, argued that the Manukau experience was unique. "We have CCTV images that capture young women controlled by gang members; streets workers who are drunk. Recently we saw a middle-aged woman and her teenage daughter touting for business. They were also caring for the teenager's baby. ...A 2008 review of the law highlighted the unsafe environment for street workers; they remain vulnerable and marginalised, and must be encouraged to move indoors. (Source: Manukau City Web-site 9.9.10).

NCWNZ is aware of the arguments of the NZ Prostitutes Collective (NZPC) in policy advice given to the former Manukau City Council which argues that this Bill is contrary to section 3 of the PRA (200) in that it seeks to regulate street based sex work through a bylaw that would make street-based sex work an offence in specified places. By doing so, it negates all benefits of the PRA for street based sex workers, and places their human rights, occupational safety and health at risk, and leaves them open to exploitation and heavy fines. Another concern is that Auckland City now includes Manukau

City and this proposed law could have far reaching effects in the wider Auckland area. However, NCWNZ is of the opinion that the PRA, which we supported in 2003, has not protected women sex workers adequately and consequently a different solution will be needed.

NCWNZ thanks the Local Government and Environment Committee Select Committee for the opportunity to consider this issue and we look forward to making a fuller response in due course. It will be necessary to consider the whole issue from the point of view of the rights of the sex workers and the rights of businesses and other residents in the problem areas.

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