



## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF NEW ZEALAND

TE KAUNIHERA WAHINE O AOTEAROA

6 September 2012

S12.16

### **Submission to the Electoral Commission on the *Review of the MMP Voting System Proposals Paper***

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 47 organisations affiliated at national level and a further 41 organisations affiliated at branch level. It has 22 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of these affiliated 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 Public Issues Standing Committee. Following the release of the *Proposals Paper*, the membership of NCWNZ was re-surveyed for their comments.

- The one electorate seat threshold for the allocation of list seats should be abolished.

*Nearly everyone agreed with this proposal.*

- The party vote threshold for the allocation of party seats should be lowered to 4%.

*Opinion remains split on the threshold. About two thirds supported a 4% threshold with the rest supporting a 5% threshold.*

- Candidates should continue to be able to stand both in an electorate and on a party list at general elections.

*Most respondents supported this proposal.*

- List MPs should continue to be able to contest by-elections.

*Nearly everyone agreed with this proposal.*

- Political parties should continue to have responsibility for the composition and ranking of candidates on their party lists.

*This proposal is supported by most respondents.*

- The provision for overhang seats should be abolished for parties that do not cross the party vote threshold.

*This proposal received a mixed response, with a general acceptance that overhang seats will occur.*

- On the basis of current information it would be prudent to identify 76 electorate seats (in a 120 seat Parliament) as the point at which the risk to proportionality from insufficient list seats becomes unacceptable. New Zealand is unlikely to reach that point before 2026.

*The majority of respondents supported this proposal.*

- The gradual erosion of list seats relative to electorate seats risks undermining the diversity of representation in Parliament. Parliament should review this matter.

*The majority of respondents believe that there should be a review. There is support for diversity in the representation in parliament.*

Elizabeth Bang

President NCWNZ

Beryl Anderson

Public Issues Standing Committee Convener