



## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF NEW ZEALAND

TE KAUNIHERA WAHINE O AOTEAROA

21 June 2012

S12.22

### **Submission to the Commerce Committee on the Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction ) Amendment Bill.**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand is an umbrella organisation representing 47 nationally organised societies and national members. It has 22 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 Social Issues Standing Committee after consultation with the membership of NCWNZ.

NCWNZ has made submissions on previous amendments to the Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction ) Amendment Bills. The last was in 2007 when we stated that many members felt that the Minimising Harm arm of this bill did not have the effect that had been hoped for. We still feel the same way and would go as far as to say the harm being done to individuals and communities by gambling has increased. We would support any further structures put in place and acted on when needed, that this amendment achieves.

Members disagreed on giving local Authorities control of the grant process as they are concerned that these monies could end up being used for ratepayers' initiatives rather than for those community groups for whom they were originally intended. Pub Charity has the ability to cater for those community groups and organisations that don't fit Local Authorities criteria and there needs to remain a distinctive separation between the two aims. Joining the two together will blur this and make for missed opportunities from some organisations where the application process is optional.

Giving Local Authorities the right to make funding restrictions may reduce the ability of local community groups to support worthwhile projects. There is also concern that increased financial costs from Local Authorities will reduce the available funds and slow down the grants process. The return of 80% of available funding to the territorial area is supported.

#### **Clause 7 When territorial authority is required, and Clause 8 TA must adopt Class 4...:**

We agree that Councils should have the power to adopt Class 4 Venue policy that reduces or even prohibits the number of venues and machines in a district or area.

## **Clause 10 New Sections 110A and 110B (4)**

The majority of Auckland's existing Class 4 policies are either capped or sinking lid. Therefore the number of pokie machines has been reducing for some time. Applications for new or relocating licences are already required. Requiring all existing venues to reapply after 12 months and for each to be reviewed every three years would be a significant and ongoing increase in the workload and cost for councils, and would significantly reduce the amount of funding available for community groups. Councils working with Trusts would appear to be a positive move. Other Local Authorities around New Zealand would have the same or similar structures in place.

Members noted that in previous submissions they supported Clause 80 identifying problem gamblers, Clause 83 dealing with the issuing of exclusion orders and Clause 86 (6) Section 313 (1) (g) restricting advertising. However, our members felt that actions to reduce the harm resulting from breaching these clauses has not had the desired effect and needs to be policed more thoroughly. We still see the effects on families from family members using 'tagged household finances' for gambling. Members also note that, as NCWNZ has pointed out in previous submissions, Pokie machine venues are still over represented in lower income communities and town centres. This still needs to be addressed.

NCWNZ has been pleased to again take part in this submission process. We realise that reducing the harm gambling causes takes time. A more robust system needs to be put in place to ensure the harm being done to local communities and families is more fully addressed. We acknowledge that funding from these venues has been used to support community initiatives. However local areas have suffered in the fallout from the harm being done by individuals gambling. So the good being done by community groups needs to be weighed up against the damage being caused.

Elizabeth Bang  
President

Belinda Greenwood  
Social Issues Convenor