



**National Council of  
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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7 November 2013

S13.21

**Submission to the Law and Order Committee on the Sentencing (Protection of  
Children from Criminal Offending) Amendment Bill 94-1**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 30 organisations affiliated at national level and a further 40 organisations affiliated at branch level. It has 22 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of these organisations, 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 Justice and Law Reform Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee after consultation with the membership of NCWNZ.

**Introduction**

NCWNZ has a long history of advocating and promoting legislation to improve the health and wellbeing of children and the majority of responding members fully support the Bill.

**Comments on specific clauses**

**Clause 4**

**Section 4 amended (Interpretation)**

**“minor means a person under the age of 17 years”.**

Some responding members advocated that a minor should mean a person under the age of 18 years to correspond to other legislation.

**Clause 5**

**Section 9 amended (Aggravating and mitigating factors)**

The majority of responding members endorsed the proposed amendment.

A minority of responding members agreed that harm to children as a result of criminal offending should be minimised but voiced concern that the proposed amendment would not achieve this. The members suggested that education rather than an extended prison term would better protect children. Education could be by way of publicising judges' comments

and directing offenders to attend programmes about the detrimental long term effects of their criminal activity which is conducted in the presence of a child or children.

**Conclusion**

NCWNZ is in general agreement with the aims for protecting children from the harmful effects of adult offending.

Barbara Arnold  
National President

Cleone Campbell  
Justice & Law Reform Convenor