



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Social Services Committee on the
Social Security (Clothing Allowances for Orphans and Unsupported Children)
Amendment Bill 95-1**

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 Family Affairs Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee drawing on established NCWNZ policy resolutions.

Introduction

NCWNZ has a long history of promoting legislation to improve the outcomes for children and their families together with welfare of the child being paramount. This particular piece of legislation addresses an inconsistency between funding for foster children and funding for orphans and unsupported children. It is about children and their equity in circumstances beyond their control.

It follows NCWNZ policy established in 2002.

Resolution 16.3.5.10 states "That family/whanau undertaking the care of related children after the death of a parent or parents or because of other specified family difficulties should receive assistance equal to that reimbursed to foster parents."

The Bill

The Bill's General policy statement points out the current situation where the Work and Income weekly benefit for the unsupported child or orphan is the same as for a foster child. However, the unsupported child or orphan does not currently receive a clothing allowance.

The proposal in clause 4 introduces a new section 29B **Clothing allowances for orphans and unsupported children** to be inserted after section 29A in the Social Security Act 1964 (The principal Act). The will bring parity to the unsupported child or orphan.

NCWNZ membership supports the inclusion of this new clause 29B to the Social Security Act 1964 (The principal Act).

Conclusion

While the membership is in support of this proposed new legislation, concern has been expressed that the disbursement of the entitlement of the clothing allowance should be straight forward and the grandparent or kin carer is respected and treated appropriately. There needs to be a clear understanding of all entitlements available to grandparents or kin carer families. If we are serious about better outcomes for children, then all children in New Zealand, regardless of their background, regardless of their parent's situation, deserve the best and the same opportunities in life.

Children are, after all, our future, so an investment in the well-being of all children is an investment in our future as a nation.

Barbara Arnold
President

Billa Field
Family Affairs Standing Committee Convener