



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Ministry of Justice on
New Zealand's draft sixth periodic report under the
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella group representing 288 organisations affiliated at either the national level or to one of our 21 branches. In addition to our organisation's membership, about 260 women are individual members of branches.

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 based on research, previous policy and submissions.

The Government's draft response to the ICCPR list of issues covers a wide range of topics, with numerous references to social initiatives, legislative precedents and amendments. Much of the work being done has merit, including efforts to co-ordinate social services in order to help vulnerable children and their families, and reduce domestic violence.

The gender pay gap: a more complex issue than reported

This submission will focus on the ICCPR draft response regarding the gender pay gap. The 2014 gender pay gap of 9.9% as reported in this draft is calculated by 'median hourly earnings' according to the Ministry of Women website¹. Using the 'median' makes the statistics look better.

As well as misleading and simplistic statistics, the response concentrates on initiatives to appoint more women to private boards, even though there is still gender pay inequality in the public sector. The laws, regulations, surveys and programmes so glibly referred to have not translated to equality, and the pay gap has actually widened.

Statistics New Zealand, in their 2014 Income Survey², reported an *average* hourly rate for men of \$28.70 compared with \$24.70 for women – a gap of 14%, up from 13% in 2013. When the overall average wages and salaries are calculated for both sexes, women are fully 25% behind.

¹ <http://mwa.govt.nz/our-work/economic-independence/income/gender-pay-gap>

² http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/income-and-work/Income/NZIncomeSurvey_HOTPJun14qtr.aspx

Does education make a difference?

Tertiary qualifications don't seem to help either. Women with the same qualifications as their male counterparts – and often with better marks and exam scores – find they are earning over \$4000 less after three to five years in many industries. Maori and Pacifica women face a 27-30% gap because more of them generally occupy insecure, casual, low-paid jobs, which have no career path or wage increases for experience.

Equal pay for work of equal value?

There is also the occupational effect – women populate the lower paid jobs, and some jobs have even lost ground as they have become populated by women – teaching, for instance. A research project undertaken by the Ministry of Women's Affairs compared the qualifications and skill sets for jobs occupied by mostly one sex. The project had just reported that the physical, mental and emotional abilities required to work as a prison guard were very similar to those needed for a job in an aged care facility, but prison guards were paid up to three times as much. A short time later, the entire project was scrapped by a new government.

Why do we have a gender pay gap?

In 2002, Department of Labour analysis³ found that the gender pay gap could be attributed to a number of factors. The largest identified factor – 20-40% – is occupational. The jobs that mostly women do are paid less. Another important factor was work experience, which had less effect after about 10 years. About 10% was 'educational differences' although now, younger Pakeha women have caught up and passed their male counterparts in qualifications – and still get less pay.

About 10-50% of the gender pay gap was left 'unexplained' by analysis, but seems to be entrenched, structural gender discrimination, exacerbated by our current wage bargaining law.

A legal and moral imperative

New Zealand's laws – the Government Services Equal Pay Act 1960, and the Equal Pay Act 1972, both still in force – and our ratification of international conventions such as CEDAW and ICCPR require government action on this issue. Equal pay for women in the public sector would be an excellent place to start.

A more honest response to the ICCPR may also be in order.

NCWNZ appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft response.



Rae Duff
National President



Katherine Ransom
Convener, Social Issues Standing Committee

³ <http://cevepnz.org.nz/Gender%20pay%20gap/gender%20pay%20gap.htm>