



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

Te Kaunihera
Wahine O Aotearoa

National Office
Level 4 Central House
26 Brandon Street
PO Box 25-498
Wellington 6146
(04)473 76 23
office@ncwnz.org.nz
www.ncwnz.org.nz

5 October 2015

S15.25

Submission to the Health Select Committee on the Financial Assistance for Live Organ Donors Bill 39

The National Council of Women of New Zealand Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa (NCWNZ) is an umbrella group representing 288 organisations affiliated at either national level or to one of our 20 branches. In addition to our organised 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 Health Standing Committee and The Parliamentary Watch Committee.

NCWNZ welcomes the opportunity to participate in this submission process. Our response is from the Health Standing Committee and its corresponding members. Consultation with our wider membership has not been possible due to the short time frame for submissions to be submitted.

NCWNZ has made a previous submission¹ relating to human organ donations, dealing with the donor registration process. NCWNZ also has a Resolution² on the availability of organs for donation.

NCWNZ members are aware that New Zealand has one of the lowest rates of organ donation in the Western World. However, projections indicate an alarming increase in diabetes in New Zealand which suggests that in the foreseeable future there will be an increased need for renal dialysis. The donation of live kidney organs is an alternative to renal dialysis. The need to encourage and enable kidney donations is of immediate importance and any barriers must be addressed.

Part 1 Income assistance

Clause 7 Amount of income assistance for applicants who forgo income from employment

Clause 9 Amount of income assistance for applicants in receipt of income-tested benefit

Clauses 7 and 8 provide for income assistance to be payable to live organ donors and to be paid in accordance with the weekly rate of the sickness benefit or under Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the Accident Compensation Act 2001. This is 80% of lost earnings for a period of convalescence after surgery for a maximum of 12 weeks.

¹ S06.29 Human Tissue (Organ Donation) Amendment Bill (2006)

² Resolution 9.16.3. That NCWNZ request the Ministers of Health and Transport allocate sufficient funds to enable information collected by the Ministry of Transport on organs for donation to be collated and made available to all Area Health Boards. (1990)

NCWNZ members believe that live organ donors should be compensated. We agree that the fairest system should be to bring compensation in line with other Government compensation such as ACC and through the Sickness benefit and Childcare assistance as is being proposed.

Clause 10 Commencement and termination of income assistance

It is well known that recovery from having a kidney removed can be variable and in some cases can be protracted. Therefore our members consider the proposed 12 week maximum payment to be too restrictive. While the 12 week payment period should be the standard base line, our members consider a review should be included on a case-by-case basis, and if the circumstances warrant, the payment period should then be extended.

Part 2 Childcare assistance

NCWNZ supports the payment of childcare assistance to donors eligible for this funding in accordance with the Ministerial Directions outlined in this section of the Bill. We further support the extension of childcare assistance payments where there is an extended period of convalescence required, and a subsequent extension to the payment period, beyond the base-line 12-week payment period.

Conclusion

NCWNZ is pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to the submission process for the Financial Assistance for Live Organ Donors Bill. We believe this Bill is important and timely in light of the fact that projections indicate an increase in diabetes and an increased need for renal dialysis. The need to encourage and enable kidney donations is immediate. The cost factor for potential donors is one of the barriers which this Bill will address.



Rae Duff
National President



Ailsa Stewart
Convener, Health Standing Committee