



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

Te Kaunihera
Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Health Select Committee on the
Home and Community Support
(Payment for Travel Between Clients) Settlement Bill**

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

Introduction

NCWNZ welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Home and Community Support (Payment for Travel Between Clients) Settlement Bill (the Bill). The provision of home and community support and the fair remuneration of workers in the sector has been of concern to the NCWNZ for a number of years. In 2004, the NCWNZ established policy on the issue requesting:

- The Government to include costs of travel in the remuneration for government contracted providers of home-based care.

Our related policy includes that:

- The Government require every aged care provider and disability support provider to raise the remuneration level of all care workers to more fairly reflect the value of their work. (2013)
- The Government give greater emphasis to the planning and provision of healthcare service for older people both at home and in residential care, with more publicity for the services available in the community. (1999)
- Recognised supporting services such as household help, community nursing services, meals on wheels, be encouraged to expand. (1979)

Comment

NCWNZ supports the Bill and welcomes the collaborative, negotiated approach to the issue on the part of the Government, employers and unions. We see this as a very positive step forward in the development of policy and legislation.

The majority of home and community support workers are women. NCWNZ believes that this, in itself, is a factor in the sector's current low pay and lack of recognition. 'Women's work' continues to be under-valued as is evidenced by the number of equal pay for work of equal value claims currently underway. It is heartening to see that this historical situation is now beginning to be seriously addressed.

We see the Bill as an important step towards achieving needed change in the sector and we applaud the move towards fair remuneration for the workers involved. We note that workers in the sector care for around 40,000 people in their homes every day: older people, people with chronic health conditions, disabled people. We also note that New Zealand has an ageing population and the need for home and community care is growing rapidly. NCWNZ sees the Bill as a significant response to that demographic change.

We particularly support the proposals related to developing a more permanent and sustainable workforce. A career path for workers in the sector, guaranteed hours, access to training, recognition of training and fair and safe workload allocations all acknowledge that the work is becoming increasingly complex and demanding. Those proposals, in our view, will improve the quality of care for the elderly and disabled, enhance the status of work in the home and community support sector and encourage the recruitment and retention of staff.

Workers and clients living in rural areas in which travel can be a significant issue will particularly welcome the Bill's proposals. The proposals will help ensure that those living in rural areas receive the same access to home and community care as those living in urban areas.

Conclusion

NCWNZ welcomes the introduction of the Bill and supports its proposals.



Rae Duff
National President



Margaret Ledgerton
Convener, Employment Standing Committee