



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

Te Kaunihera
Wahine O Aotearoa

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Submission to the Finance and Expenditure Committee on the 2016 Budget Policy Statement

- 1.1. 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.
- 1.2. This submission has been prepared by the NCWNZ Economics Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee, supported by established policy.
- 1.3. The 2016 Budget Policy Statement advised that government will continue to engage in its "programme of social investment, which applies rigorous and evidence-based investment practices..." The objective is "to invest early to assist vulnerable people to change their lives and become more independent."
- 1.4. While NCWNZ welcomes the government's sustained focus on using its resources widely, it is concerned that there are many vulnerable people who may not be able to become more independent, given what is causing their vulnerability. For example, people who have mental illnesses or physical disabilities may not be able to become independent. An investment approach may not be suitable in these cases.
- 1.5. An investment approach may also not be suitable for sole parents of very young and school age children. Sole parents are by definition, on their own. This means that they have particular problems with respect to childcare. In order to be able to assist sole parents to "become more independent", there will need to be easy access to good childcare, including school holiday care. This is an issue that affects women in particular, given that the great majority of people accessing Sole Parent Support are women. NCWNZ urges the government to take these wider issues into account if it decides to apply an investment approach to sole parents.

- 1.6. Longstanding NCWNZ policy recommends on-going support for people with mental illnesses and people with disabilities, and adequate provision of well-resourced childcare for very young and school age children.



Rae Duff
National President



Deborah Russell
Convener, Economics Standing Committee