



13 April 2018

S18.15

## **Submission to the Education and Workforce Committee on the Education Amendment Bill 15-1**

- 0.1. The National Council of Women of New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa (NCWNZ) is an umbrella group representing 245 organisations affiliated at either national level or to one of our 19 branches. In addition, about 350 people are individual members. Collectively our reach is over 350,000 with many of our membership organisations representing all genders. NCWNZ's vision is a gender equal New Zealand and research shows we will be better off socially and economically if we are gender equal. Through research, discussion and action, NCWNZ in partnership with others, seeks to realise its vision of gender equality because it is a basic human right. This submission has been prepared by the NCWNZ Education Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee, based on previous consultation with the membership of NCWNZ and established policy.

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. NCWNZ members support the provisions in this Amendment Bill to repeal National Standards and provision for Kura Hourua Partnership Schools, as well as the re-establishment of staff and student representation on tertiary institutional councils and the increase in Polytechnic councils to ten members. NCWNZ members objected to all these provisions when they were first introduced, so it is pleasing to see them being overturned. NCWNZ members in principle support a state education system that maintains a broad curriculum and has regulated quality controls such as requiring teachers to be registered. Members are also strongly in favour of democratic representation in all public institutions, including those for tertiary education. In particular, we are committed to the ideal of gender diversity on all boards as a way of achieving good governance.

### **2. Clause by Clause**

#### **Clause 4 & 5: Removal of National Standards**

- 2.1. NCWNZ has policy regarding National Standards, from Resolution 5.14.4 passed in 2011 stating "NCWNZ urges the Government to reconsider its policy on national standards in primary and

intermediate schools”.<sup>1</sup> This position was reinforced in the NCWNZ submission on the Education Act Update discussion document in 2015, which highlighted the members’ views:

**Indicators that measured students against a norm were seen as problematic**, as it was acknowledged that children have differing abilities, learn at differing rates, and come with differing life circumstances. Whilst some members accepted National Standards as one of the suite of measures to be used, others rejected them as restrictive and unnecessary. Individual student progress was seen as an important measure.<sup>2</sup>

- 2.2. Despite some mixed views, NCWNZ members as a whole have consistently rejected National Standards as a required and pre-eminent measure of achievement and therefore support the removal of National Standards from the legislation.

### Clause 10: Repeal of provision for Kura Hourua Partnership Schools

- 2.3. NCWNZ membership was consulted when Kura Hourua Partnership Schools legislation was first introduced. Members did not support the introduction of these schools. The submission gave these reasons:

NCWNZ members see provision of education as the responsibility of government, a service to be provided by the government for the public good and not a commodity to be traded, with democratically elected Boards of Trustees who are accountable to the community. The involvement of third parties is seen to introduce unwelcome motives to the provision of education, often a profit motive. Fully qualified and registered teachers are seen to be essential. ... Flexibility for alternative approaches is already possible under the existing legislation and more could be made of this instead of introducing a new model for which the evidence of results is unclear.<sup>3</sup>

### Clause 12 & 14: Staff and student representation on tertiary institution councils

- 2.4. NCWNZ members support democratic representation on tertiary institution councils, so are in agreement with the clauses that introduce staff and student representation. Our submission on the Amendment Bill in 2014 which altered the composition of University Councils pointed out that this is also a gender issue:

As the responding members’ preferred model of governance is of a democratic, representative Council, they favour legislating for the inclusion of (at least) staff and student representatives. It was noted by some members that with the student union voice having been diminished through recent legislation, it is even more essential to keep a student

<sup>1</sup> NCWNZ. Appendix “D” Resolutions of National Meetings 2011-2017. <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Appendix-D-Resolutions-2011-2017.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> NCWNZ. 2015. Submission to the Ministry of Education on the Updating the Education Act 1989 Discussion Document. S15.33. <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/S15.33-Updating-the-Education-Act-1989.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> NCWNZ. 2013. Submission to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education Amendment Bill 77-1. S13.01. <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/S13.01-Education-Amendment-Bill-77-1.pdf>

representative on the university council, to allow an avenue for student concerns to be heard. A further point was that many of the women on university councils are staff or student representatives, and removing the requirement for such representatives is likely to increase the already skewed gender bias.<sup>4</sup>

- 2.5. Similar views were expressed during a previous member consultation regarding reducing Polytechnic councils.

### Clause 13: Increasing the size of Polytechnic councils

- 2.6. NCWNZ members objected to the original 2009 legislation that decreased the size of Polytechnic councils, expressing the view that ten members on such councils should be considered a minimum.<sup>5</sup> This was reiterated in the NCWNZ submission on decreasing the size of University councils in 2014.<sup>6</sup> The reasons NCWNZ members objected to the original legislation related to achieving a gender balance, the political independence of the council, and for Polytechnics, representation of the community.
- 2.7. There is currently under-representation of women on Boards in general, and increasing the number of members on a tertiary education institution council has the potential to improve that. This is particularly the case as women on the councils have been predominantly staff and student representatives, as noted above. Several members contributing to the NCWNZ submission on Polytechnics “felt very strongly about this issue, especially because historically government appointments to Boards have been predominantly male and drawn from the business sector in which women are not so widely represented”.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.8. A further concern was the balance of ministerial appointments to elected positions, as shown in these quotes from previous submissions:

A ‘top-heavy’ council of people appointed by government can also lead to possible changes after each election. These ministerial appointees can also feel obligated to follow government thinking and there is concern that they may not speak up if and when policies are poor.<sup>8</sup>

Responding members have several concerns with the proposed increasing proportion of Ministerial appointments to university councils. NCWNZ members perceive Ministerial appointments to be subject to political bias. One of our experienced life members recalls that being party to a decision that was disliked by the Minister of Education resulted in not being

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<sup>4</sup> NCWNZ. 2014. Submission to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education Amendment Bill (No 2) 193-1. S14.08. <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/S14-08-Education-Amendment-Bill-No-2.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> NCWNZ. 2009. Submission to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education (Polytechnics) Amendment Bill 70-1. S09.30. [https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/S09.30 Submission to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education \(Polytechnics\) Amendment Bill \(70-1\).pdf](https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/S09.30%20Submission%20to%20the%20Education%20and%20Science%20Select%20Committee%20on%20the%20Education%20(Polytechnics)%20Amendment%20Bill%20(70-1).pdf)

<sup>6</sup> NCWNZ. 2014. Submission to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education Amendment Bill (No 2) 193-1. S14.08.

<sup>7</sup> NCWNZ. 2009. Submission to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education (Polytechnics) Amendment Bill 70-1. S09.30.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

re-appointed for a further term. ... Members feel that such political appointments compromise the traditional and legislated-for academic freedom of the Universities.<sup>9</sup>

- 2.9. The lack of representation from the community was also raised as an issue, as this is seen as important in the Polytechnic model of education. Our 2009 submission made these statements:

NCWNZ is strongly of the view that four Ministerial appointments out of a council of eight, including a chairperson and deputy chairperson appointed by the Minister, provides an unequal partnership between the Crown and the community.

We strongly believe that with the suggested composition of a council of eight members it will be virtually impossible to ensure adequate representation of women, Maori, in some areas Pacific peoples, and also the socio-economic diversity of the community. This is especially so where a polytechnic serves a widespread region or particularly diverse catchment area.<sup>10</sup>

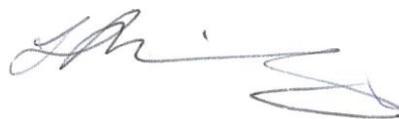
- 2.10. Increasing the size of Polytechnic councils to ten members has the potential to increase representation from the community, especially from the range of genders, although this is not guaranteed. Further guidance may be required to achieve this idea.
- 2.11. Given these views, it can be said that members support legislation that not only increases the size of Polytechnic councils, but also increases the number of elected members.

### 3. Conclusion

- 3.1. NCWNZ appreciates the opportunity to re-present their views on National Standards, Kura Hourua Partnership Schools, and democratic representation on tertiary education institution councils, this time in support of the proposed legislation instead of opposing it.



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<sup>9</sup> NCWNZ. 2014. Submission to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education Amendment Bill (No 2) 193-1. S14.08.

<sup>10</sup> NCWNZ. 2009. Submission to the Education and Science Select Committee on the Education (Polytechnics) Amendment Bill 70-1. S09.30.