



## National Council of Women of New Zealand

Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa

### Oral Submission to the Education and Workforce Committee on the Employment Relations Amendment Bill

By written by Bernice Williams,  
presented by Margaret Ledgerton and Gill Greer on 29 March 2018

#### ***Education and Workforce Committee Committee***

Chairperson: **Michael Woodhouse**, National List; **Jan Tinetti**, Labour List; **Simeon Brown**, National Pakuranga; **Denise Lee**, National Maungakiekie; **Marja Lubeck**, Labour List; **Jo Luxton**, Labour List; **Mark Patterson**, NZ First List; **Jamie Strange**, Labour List; **Chloe Swarbrick**, Green List. (Absent: Nikki Kaye, National Auckland Central).

Ata marie. Good morning. My name is Margaret Ledgerton, immediate past Employment Convenor, and my colleague is Dr Gill Greer, CE, both of the National Council of Women of New Zealand, (NCWNZ).

The submission we present has been prepared from a background of policy decisions and previous submissions on related matters, which were written following consultation with the membership of our organisation.

We welcome the opportunity to convey our organisation's views to the Committee and wish to record NCWNZ's support in general of the proposed Bill.

We support the intent of the Bill to protect vulnerable workers through the restoration of key minimum standards, the repeal of discriminatory practices, and the strengthening of collective bargaining and union rights in the workplace.

Our organisation's view is that women feature in significant numbers among workers engaged in casual, temporary, fixed-term and zero-hour employment that can be characterised by low and/or fluctuating pay, uncertain duration, and with limited or no access to training, career progression and employment rights and benefits such as sick leave and holiday pay.

Legislation that generates improvements for vulnerable workers is good news for women in the workplace, and it is anticipated that enhancements to collective bargaining and union rights will generate broader improvements for women not only in terms of decreasing their vulnerability, but in making progress towards pay equity, and closing the gender pay gap.

It is further anticipated that improved conditions such as those proposed in the Bill, will lead to increased stability in the workplace, and increased productivity resulting from

improvements to the general wellbeing of the workforce. Doubtless the security of employment for workers will have a flow-on effect with positive impacts felt in the wider community and society.

The right to collective bargaining is fundamental to the provision of safe and secure working conditions in workplaces where employees are valued, and free of exploitation, and it is heartening to see this Bill reinstate these critical tools for protecting all workers.

While consensus by NCWNZ membership was not gained regarding some sections of the Bill, such as the 90-day probation period and paid meal breaks, there has been universal support for the requirement for collective agreements to include rates of wages or salary.

As noted in our written submission, NCWNZ strongly supported Jan Logie's Equal Pay Amendment Bill in 2017 which sought to remove discrimination in pay rates between men and women in the same jobs by making publicly available statistical information relating to their rates of remuneration. The inclusion of pay rates in collective employment agreements will be a good start in providing transparency around salaries.

## **Conclusion**

NCWNZ supports all efforts to enhance working conditions for women workers. We believe increased fairness and protections for employees will lead to more productive workplaces, and to long-term benefits to women in the workforce. NCWNZ supports this Employment Relations Amendment Bill and its proposed changes, which seek to positively affect the most vulnerable members of society.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of our organisation on this Bill.

## ***Questions and comments***

The questions raised by the Select Committee included a question from **Scott Simpson** about the process used by NCW to gather views and opinions in order to make a submission and the opportunities for members to have an in depth, knowledge base.

**Mark Paterson** asked whether in NCWNZ's opinion raising the minimum wage would negate the need for collective bargaining.

The Chair, **Michael Woodhouse**, asked how women, like those he once employed in a hospital who worked through their lunch hour so they could leave early to collect their young children from school, would benefit from legislation that would now make that illegal.

The CTU preceded us and received a lengthy and wide ranging list of questions.