



29 June 2018

S18.26

Submission to the Education and Workforce Committee on the Accident Compensation Amendment Bill

- 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 Employment Standing Committee and the NCWNZ Parliamentary Watch Committee.
- 0.2. NCWNZ submissions on ACC legislation as far back as 1971 firmly support the Woodhouse Report and the Woodhouse principle of comprehensive entitlement, so that the injured, regardless of earning status or accident locality, may have equal access to financial compensation and equal provision for rehabilitative treatment. In the same spirit we support the amendments proposed in this Bill.
- 0.3. In particular the following amendments will positively affect NZ women:

Clause 10 and references to this in other clauses

All clients close to or above super qualification age to receive up to 24 months of weekly compensation, removing the requirement to elect between NZ Super and weekly compensation.

- 0.4. This will provide for a fairer and more consistent relationship between weekly compensation and superannuation by allowing an injured person's financial situation to more closely reflect their income had they not been injured. Westpac NZ's survey in February 2018 shows that NZ women are saving less than NZ men for retirement.¹ This reflects the gender pay gap. The combination of this disadvantage with women's increased life expectancy is leading to an increasing number of women choosing to work past the age of NZ Super in order to augment their incomes. Loss of income due to an accident or workplace illness should rightly be compensated to the extent outlined above.

¹ <https://www.westpac.co.nz/rednews/women/women-trail-men-in-kiwisaver-contributions-and-savings/>

Schedule 1, new Part 2

Allowing surviving spouses to receive up to 5 years weekly compensation regardless of age

Clause 4

An amendment that will treat the spouses, partners and children of NZ workers posted overseas consistently as if the injury took place in NZ

- 0.5. These two amendments will support NZ families affected by death or injury in ways which are consistent with the original Woodhouse Report.

Conclusion

- 0.6. The NCWNZ has always supported Sir Owen Woodhouse's vision of a 24/7, no fault, comprehensive accident compensation system for NZ. It has proved to be the best and most efficient system in the world for supporting families through the trauma of accident and workplace illness to which women and children are more vulnerable. We support this Bill as we consider the amendments are in the spirit of the original Woodhouse principles.



Gill Greer
Chief Executive



Gabriel Brett Kelly
Employment Convenor