



29 June 2018

S18.27

Submission to the Education and Workforce Committee on the Health and Safety at Work (Volunteer Associations) 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. The majority of volunteers are women (Department of Internal Affairs 2014, 59% of volunteers are women and 41% are men¹) therefore NCWNZ has a particular interest in the health and safety of volunteers going about their valuable and essential work. NCWNZ has passed a number of resolutions over the past century about the need to recognise and acknowledge the value of voluntary work carried out by NZ women.
- 0.3. This Bill removes the duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work 2015 Act on voluntary organisations which also employ people for up to 100 hours per week.
- 0.4. The NCWNZ opposes this Bill because:
- we believe the health and safety of every New Zealander is equally important regardless of their employment status
 - the size of the voluntary organisation's paid workforce has not up till now precluded a duty of care to manage workplace risks and we see removing that duty of care as a backward step
 - we believe all organisations should develop a culture of making health and safety a priority for everyone; this does not need to be an onerous, bureaucratic exercise but rather an application of common sense.

¹ [https://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/URL/Volunteering-and-Donating-Indicators-September-2014.pdf/\\$file/Volunteering-and-Donating-Indicators-September-2014.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/URL/Volunteering-and-Donating-Indicators-September-2014.pdf/$file/Volunteering-and-Donating-Indicators-September-2014.pdf)

- exempting some voluntary organisations from a duty of care may result in injuries and illnesses which could have been avoided and add to ACC costs.

Conclusion

- 0.5. NZ society has historically often undervalued the voluntary work of women, which is very broad, and of Māori women in particular (e.g. whāngai). When this voluntary work developed into paid professions such as nursing and social work it was still undervalued and underpaid due to discrimination and a basic lack of fairness which this government has undertaken to turn around. We see this Bill as out of step with a modern approach to properly valuing women's work whether it is paid or unpaid and urge withdrawal of the Bill.



Gill Greer
Chief Executive



Gabriel Brett Kelly
Employment Convenor