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## **Submission to the Ministry for the Environment on the Our Climate Your Say: Consultation on the Zero Carbon Bill**

### **Introduction**

- 0.1. The National Council of Women of New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa (NCWNZ) welcomes the Ministry for the Environment's 2018 consultation document on the Zero Carbon Bill and the opportunity to make a submission.
- 0.2. 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.
- 0.3. This response to the Ministry for the Environment's call for comment on the consultation document has been prepared by the NCWNZ Climate Change and Environment Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee.
- 0.4. NCWNZ has a long history of supporting reduced emissions including urging the Government to ratify and implement the Montreal Protocol, Agenda 21 and the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>1</sup>

### **1. Climate Change**

- 1.1. Climate change is an intergenerational issue and a human rights concern, affecting a range of rights, such as the right to life, to health and to wellbeing and it believes that urgent action is required by a variety of parties. There is no shortage of signals from a wide range of stakeholders and communities that there is a need for greater and urgent action to address the causes and the effects of climate change including significant and tangible change to prevent its negative human rights impacts. Moreover, there is an obligation on government and corporations for leadership to protect people from climate change harm and other related human rights violations.

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<sup>1</sup> NCWNZ. 2012. 115 years of resolution. 7.13. <http://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/115-years-Register-everything-2.pdf>

- 1.2. We advocate for “a Rights-Based Approach to climate change”.<sup>2</sup> This would support policies that address climate change to fulfil human rights. The 2015 Paris Agreement stipulates; “Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights...and intergenerational equity”.<sup>3</sup> The parties to the Paris Agreement (including New Zealand) also acknowledge that adaptation, including capacity building for mitigation and adaptation action should be gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems.
- 1.3. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)<sup>4</sup>, NCWNZ advocates for women as powerful agents of change and their leadership is crucial.
- 1.4. All stakeholders should ensure that climate change and disaster risk reduction measures are gender responsive, sensitive to indigenous knowledge systems and respect human rights. Women’s rights to participate at all levels of decision-making must be granted in climate change policies and programmes.
- 1.5. Our aim is to provide guidance to the New Zealand government on gender-related dimensions of climate change and disaster risk reduction on the measures to adopt to ensure full compliance with their obligation to respect, protect and fulfil women’s rights.

## 2. Zero Carbon Bill

- 2.1. This submission identifies a gap in the matters under consideration in preparation for the Zero Carbon Bill. In particular matters in relation to the human rights impacts of transitioning to a zero carbon society need to be addressed. The rights of women and children are likely to be amongst the most affected.
- 2.2. In building a sustainable and productive economy, it is important to recognise the inequities of diverse needs within regions and communities. As the consultation document states, “supporting lower income households will need to be part of our approach”. Transitioning to a net carbon future will generate new and additional pressures on the lives of women and children who already suffer from less empowerment and less financial independence.
- 2.3. Global studies indicate that women and children are most likely to experience adverse effects on their health and well-being in face of climate change. This will come in a variety of forms including risks to mental health, to personal security from violence, need for access to sound contraception, in addition to affordable access to weather tight shelter, to food and clean water.

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<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Human Rights Council has recognised that climate change has implications for the enjoyment of human rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has pointed out that climate change requires global solutions, which should reinforce human rights commitments and advocates for a right-based approach to climate change.

<sup>3</sup> [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/paris\\_agreement\\_english\\_.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/paris_agreement_english_.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1\\_Global/CEDAW\\_C\\_GC\\_37\\_8642\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_37_8642_E.pdf)

- 2.4. It is crucial that the Ministry consult widely with women who understand the depth of the risks to women and children, in order to inform the Bill and how it is implemented.
- 2.5. Departments of government in formulating policy should be required to assess human rights issues including those that impact on gender equality. All policy before all Cabinet committees should be assessed and reported on for gender implications, particularly in light of the transitioning process to a net zero carbon future.
- 2.6. It is also critical that the work of the Climate Change Commission is supported in its membership with essential expertise, to ensure an integrated approach is taken in all advice and policymaking, budget setting, implementation and monitoring in relation to achieving a gender equal future for New Zealand.

### 3. Conclusion

- 3.1. NCWNZ welcomes the release of the discussion document Our Climate Your Say. It is hoped that it will generate numerous responses and raise community awareness. We look forward to the release of the Bill which is scheduled for October and the opportunity to make a further submission.



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