



National Council of Women of New Zealand

Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa

Oral Submission to the Education and Workforce Committee on the Health and Safety at Work (Volunteer Associations) Amendment Bill

By Dr Judy Whitcombe and Margaret Ledgerton on 8 August 2018

Education and Workforce Committee

Chairperson: **Parmjeet Parmar**, National List; Deputy: **Jan Tinetti**, Labour List; **Simeon Brown**, National Pakuranga; **Harete Hipango**, National Whanganui whose member's bill it was standing in for Nikki Kaye, National Auckland Central; **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; **Nicola Wills**, National List.

Ata marie, Good morning, my name is Dr Judy Whitcombe and my colleague is Margaret Ledgerton. We are a members of the Parliamentary Watch Committee 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 have been written following consultation with the members of our organisation.

Comments on the Bill

As our submission states, NCWNZ is opposed to this Amendment Bill. This Bill removes the duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 on voluntary organisations which also employ people for up to 100 hours a week.

The amendment proposed to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 is contained in Clause 4. Here the meaning of volunteer association is changed in Section 17 of the Act which covers PCBU (a person conducting a business or undertaking)

The Explanatory Note to the Bill acknowledges that Volunteer associations play an important part in New Zealand. However, to exclude from coverage of the Act those associations that employ one or more people for not greater than 100 hours per week appears to contradict this importance.

NCWNZ has contact with some of these organisations as 245 organisations are affiliated at national level or at one of our 19 branches. Our submission also noted that the majority of volunteers (59%) are women and over the years resolutions have been passed and submissions made on legislation relating to health and safety issues relating to women. Volunteers should not be subject to a lower level of Health and Safety protection.

Conclusion

This Bill is not supported as it as it would provide exemption from the basic provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act for volunteer associations and those who work for them. And as already noted in our submission, the majority of volunteers are women.

This Bill is out of step with a modern approach to properly valuing women's work whether it is paid or unpaid and urge the withdrawal of this Amendment Bill.

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

Questions

Harete Hipango (the MP proposing the Bill), asked about our familiarity of the coverage of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 – and had we made a submission on that?

NCWNZ had made submissions on the earlier Review of the Health and Safety in Employment Bill. There was knowledge of the Act but NCWNZ had not made a submission on the 2015 Act.

Harete Hipango raised the issue of whether NCW had sought legal advice on the Bill.

NCW made the point that, while all Bills are important, this was a relatively specific and brief Bill and we had not sought a legal opinion, although this may be done on some Bills. The need to consider NCW's limited resources was also noted.

Marja Lubeck sought clarification around the volunteers involved with Associations and were there issues related to female dominated organisations.

Chloe Swarbrick asked about the volunteers and their experience and qualifications.

NCWNZ has many volunteers who have wide experience and qualifications – some examples were given

Following the Select Committee hearing, Marja Lubeck requested a photo of the two NCW presenters for her women's caucus