



28 September 2018

S18.38

## **Submission to the Statistics New Zealand on Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand**

### **Introduction**

- 0.1. The National Council of Women of New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa (NCWNZ) is an umbrella group representing over 200 organisations affiliated at either national level or to one of our 15 branches. In addition, about 450 people are individual members. Collectively our reach is over 450,000 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 Consumer Affairs & Economics Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee after consultation with the membership of NCWNZ. Feedback from Prue Hyman, a Feminist Economist,<sup>1</sup> and NCWNZ Staff Specialists has also contributed to this submission.
- 0.2. NCWNZ has previously made numerous submissions and resolutions covering the broad scope of the proposed Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand (IANZ), in particular S18:30 to Treasury on the Living Standards Framework.<sup>2</sup>

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. NCWNZ acknowledges the steps being taken to consult widely in these issues.
- 1.2. NCWNZ supports the principle of developing a framework for intergenerational wellbeing and recommends alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- 1.3. NCWNZ recognises that collecting and monitoring of appropriate data can inform how effectively the welfare system is achieving the outcomes that are necessary for people to be able to participate in a meaningful manner in their communities. Such a framework can also keep New Zealand accountable,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://kapitiindependentnews.net.nz/prue-hymans-column-13/>

<sup>2</sup> NCWNZ. 2018. S18.30 Living Standards Framework  
<https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/S18.30-Living-Standards-Framework.pdf>

highlight the country's strengths and weaknesses, and help to identify where more work should be prioritised.

- 1.4. However, NCWNZ has significant concerns relating to the inherent difficulty in defining and measuring such concepts. To report against targets that must be measurable poses the risk of incentivising outputs rather than meaningful, less quantitative outcomes.
- 1.5. NCWNZ does welcome a framework that is not entirely reliant on GDP, which has never been an adequate measure of women's work or of gender equality, or, in particular women's unpaid work. It is important that women and their contribution, particularly in unpaid work, will be any more visible than they have often been in other frameworks and dashboards, linked to the UN System of National Accounts. Like some other NGOs at a recent NGO meeting with Statistics NZ staff NCWNZ is concerned that not all women are the same, and averages, medians and data that are not disaggregated will not reveal the diversity of New Zealanders in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability, or their needs in terms of policy related to wellbeing and to other aspects, of life. The multiple disadvantages arising from intersectionality may not be reflected in the data, and whereas disaggregated data would give a better idea of the diversity of women, their needs and the impact of policy on them. As an example, the pay gap between Pacifica women and Pākehā men, is far greater than the gap between Pākehā women and Pākehā men, and has not changed over a number of years. There has been no study related to transgender young people since 2012, yet they are at risk in a range of ways, including health, but the data related to gender diversity is not currently included.
- 1.6. As Prue Hyman notes New Zealand may be trying to get the best of all worlds by appearing to take account of the many critiques of gross national product while still maintaining their 'rigorous' approach and failing to develop indicators which truly respond to the concerns long raised by feminist and other heterodox economists.

## **2. Comments on Developing Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand**

- 2.1. NCWNZ is encouraged that a collaborative process is to be carried out to identify topics and indicators for New Zealand, based on the Conference of European Standards (CES) as a starting point.
- 2.2. NCWNZ is pleased this piece of work is undertaken in conjunction with Treasury and strongly recommends a wider cross government department/political party/sector and community steering group be established to oversee its development and implementation.
- 2.3. Different government departments, silo approaches to data collection, and contracting out of services were noted by NCWNZ members as concerns that could adversely affect consistency of any monitoring and it is NCWNZ's view that the lack of this type of collective leadership could lead to silo approaches to setting and monitoring of targets.

- 2.4. On the other hand, if there is a genuinely intersectoral approach to implementation there will be different challenges, particularly within a tight timeframe, in relation to joined up policy approaches, ministerial responsibility and budget which will need to be carefully considered.
- 2.5. The Foundations following recommendations from the CES and being measured against "here and now" and "later" and "elsewhere" appears a sound approach to NCWNZ.
- 2.6. To ensure this intergenerational focus is embedded in the framework NCWNZ encourages taking into account Child Poverty Action Group proposed measures, particularly as these relate to all forms of households including those with and without children.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.7. NCWNZ believes topics and indicators should align and be considered against other significant national and international instruments and that as a starting point New Zealand should be ensuring all Sustainable Development Goals are met for all New Zealanders.
- 2.8. It is encouraging that this framework and the measurements will relate to the SDGs, targets and indicators, to which New Zealand has been a signatory since 2016 but has not yet made a voluntary national report.
- 2.9. The IANZ should also align with UN Human Rights Treaties and Conventions including the Convention on the Elimination all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This is particularly concerning given the highly critical examination from the UN CEDAW committee in July this year. The Committee was critical of the data collection and analysis which NZ provides on the situation of women and recommended that a centralized system be set up “for the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and ethnicity....”. It is concerned about “the deficiencies in compiling, analysing and processing reliable statistical data on the situation of women in all areas covered by the Convention including intersections between women belonging to more than one group.”<sup>4</sup> The Committee also wanted to see measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women.
- 2.10. CEDAW’s encouragement to the government to use the SDG framework was explicit. NCWNZ is currently developing a Gender dashboard with relevant, quality data across four key strategic areas, from a range of sources, but this will have a different level and purpose to the IANZ.
- 2.11. Where elements in these international instruments are missing NCWNZ recommends the proposed framework looks to include them. Such instruments are:

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<sup>3</sup> CPAG. 2018. Submission on the Treasury’s Proposal for a Living Standards Dashboard/Indicators of Material Wellbeing <https://www.cpag.org.nz/assets/180727%20CPAG%20Submission%20on%20the%20Treasury%20Living%20Standards%20Dashboard%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> CEDAW/C/NZL/CO/8 clauses 49 and 50 [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en)

- CEDAW themes (Participation in Public and Political Life, International Representation and Participation, Education, Employment, Health, Economic and Social Life, Rural, Legal, Marriage and Family - Domestic Violence)
  - NCWNZ Gender Equal Work and Gender Dashboard themes (Economic Independence, Safety and Health, Equality in Education and the Workforce, Influence in Decision-Making)
  - NCWNZ Enabling Women's Potential white paper key requirements (Understanding and Knowledge, Culture, structural changes, Data and Monitoring, Leadership and Governance)
- 2.12. NCWNZ is pleased to note the IANZ are being built on international best practice yet tailored to suit Aotearoa New Zealand and sees this as an opportunity to learn and adapt new ideas from the international best practice that will improve the quality of life in New Zealand. Drawing on international expertise from national statistical offices that have developed similar indicators can be very informative and involving international experts in peer review is welcomed. However, it is also noted that there are limitations when comparing against other country statistics and measurements and that consistency of methodology would need to be established.
- 2.13. It is noted by NCWNZ that wellbeing theory is complex, unobservable and differs across cultures, religions and beliefs and therefore the IANZ should allow for this within the culture of Aotearoa.
- 2.14. It is important to ensure engagement with Māori as many of the traditional concepts that are innately important to Māori have become integral not only to indigenous values but to the culture and values of New Zealanders more widely.
- 2.15. A number of NCWNZ members point to the need to emphasise gender diversity and equal pay in any framework adopted.
- 2.16. NCWNZ members recommend explanation be made so that the average person can understand and feel comfortable any indicators proposed. The NCWNZ white paper *Enabling Women's Potential*<sup>5</sup> outlines a model and context setting that assists in generating understanding amongst the wider community.
- 2.17. NCWNZ recognizes it may take time, ongoing promotion and awareness raising of the Framework and Dashboard before stakeholders, users and the wider community become to understand and relate to it. Hence determining how appropriate the themes may become clearer over time.
- 2.18. There is concern amongst NCWNZ members about the levels of measuring and evaluation that may be required and NCWNZ believes the demonstrable benefits should be well outlined and outweigh costs both in terms of money, time, and personnel resource.

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<sup>5</sup> NCWNZ. 2015. Enabling women's potential: the social, economic and ethical imperative. [https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EnablingWomensPotential\\_OnlineViewing-1.pdf](https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EnablingWomensPotential_OnlineViewing-1.pdf)

### 3. Conclusion

- 3.1. Overall NCWNZ support Statistics New Zealand, Treasury and others working together in developing measures focused on intergenerational wellbeing and recommends a string focus on gender analysis during the development of any frameworks.
- 3.2. NCWNZ encourages greater consultation and involvement of parties across Ministries, Government Departments, political parties, sector and community groups to ensure such framework or party be solely responsible for a tool that is to reflect the wellbeing of the entire Aotearoa community in terms of Financial, Environmental, Economic and Social Capital.



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