



9 May 2019

S19.07

## **Submission to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee on the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission/Te Waihanga Bill No. 130-1**

### **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.
- 0.2. NCWNZ welcomes this opportunity to submit to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee on the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission/Te Waihanga Bill No. 130-1.
- 0.3. This submission was prepared by the NCWNZ Public Issues Standing Committee, within the framework of the NCWNZ Gender Equal NZ Movement and the Observations of the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In particular, the submission refers to the [2018 CEDAW Concluding Observations](#) on the New Zealand 8th periodic report, which recommends in clause 12(c) that the state party include a gender-specific, rather than gender-neutral approach in its legislation, policies and programmes. This is in line with paragraph 5 of CEDAW's general recommendation No. 28.<sup>1</sup>
- 0.4. It has not been possible to consult with all NCWNZ branches, individual members and member organisations within the timeframe for submissions.

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<sup>1</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. 2018. Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of New Zealand. CEDAW/C/NZL/CO/8.

[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)

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. NCWNZ strongly supports the establishment of the Infrastructure Commission and its purpose to coordinate, develop and promote an approach to infrastructure that encourages infrastructure, and services that result from the infrastructure, that improve the well-being of New Zealanders.
- 1.2. However, whilst we acknowledge references to inclusiveness in the Bill we recommend they be expressed through explicit statements accompanied by provisions to ensure there is a gender balance on the Commission; and that in carrying out its functions, the Commission specially seeks out and reflects diverse perspectives including gender, ethnicity, durability and age.
- 1.3. NCWNZ therefore recommends that Clause 8 include the requirement for consideration of gender balance in the membership of the Commission.
- 1.4. NCWNZ also recommends that Clause 10 be amended to provide that any future public and sector consultation undertaken by the Commission should specifically includes these perspectives and be reflected in setting of priorities.
- 1.5. NCWNZ considers climate change of such fundamental importance, that this should be included in the general policy statement and main function of the Commission and Clauses 9 amended accordingly.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1. NCWNZ strongly supports the establishment of the Infrastructure Commission and the General Policy Statement that *“Good infrastructure is vital to improving the well-being and living standards of New Zealanders, and delivering a sustainable and inclusive economy”*. NCWNZ particularly supports the acknowledgement that well-planned, integrated infrastructure is important for inclusion, enabling participation in the economy and society by everyone. The important role of the Commission in developing broad public agreement on long-term infrastructure strategy is also supported.

## 3. Gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness

- 3.1. However, it is recommended that this policy statement is strengthened and given practical application with an explicit provision that ensures there is consideration given to the diversity of the New Zealand population in terms of the Treaty of Waitangi, gender, ethnicity, disability and age in the Commission’s functions. Furthermore any future public and sector consultation undertaken by the Commission should specifically include these perspectives and be reflected in setting of priorities and Clauses 9 and 10.

## 4. Climate change

- 4.1. Climate change is a crucial concern for NCWNZ and recognised as an intergenerational issue and human rights concern, affecting a range of rights, such as the right to life, to health and to wellbeing and we believe that urgent action is required by a variety of parties<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.2. In building a sustainable and productive economy, it is important to recognise the inequities of diverse needs within and between communities, between demographic groups and between regions. Tackling climate change, including 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. Well-planned, efficient and sustainable infrastructure will make a significant contribution to reducing the impact of climate change. In particular, NCWNZ has always supported an efficient and safe public transport system and long term integrated planning of land use, transport and utilities, will have a marked emphasis on public transport, as a way of reducing the use of carbon-producing private vehicles and congestion.

## 5. Specific recommendations

### Clause 8 Members of Commission

- 5.1. The Bill provides that the Commission must have no fewer than three, and not more than seven members, and that the members of the Commission constitute a board under the Crown Entities Act 2004.
- 5.2. There is no requirement for gender or ethnic balance on the Commission to reflect inclusiveness. Whilst NCWNZ acknowledges the progress made on women on public sector boards, the under representation of women on public sector and private sector boards is an on-going issue. This is a particular challenge for the infrastructure industry, hence the establishment of the Women's Infrastructure Network launched by Infrastructure New Zealand in 2016 to increase the number of women in leadership roles in the infrastructure sector. The establishment of the Commission is an opportunity to give women that leadership role.
- 5.3. NCWNZ recommends that Clause 8 include the requirement for consideration of gender balance in the membership of the Commission.

### Clause 9 Main function of Commission

- 5.4. NCWNZ strongly supports the overall function of the Commission to co-ordinate, develop, and promote an approach to infrastructure that encourages infrastructure (and resulting services) that improves the well-being of New Zealanders. However, as argued above in paragraph 1.5 NCWNZ believes climate change to be of such fundamental importance that consideration of the current and future impact on infrastructure should be explicitly included as a main function of the Commission.

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<sup>2</sup> NZNCW 2018 Submission to the Ministry for the Environment on the Our Climate Your Say: Consultation on the Zero Carbon Bill S18.28 <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/S18.28-Our-Climate-Your-Say.pdf>

### Clause 10 Additional functions of the Commission

- 5.5. NCWNZ agrees with the strategy and planning and support functions specified in Clause 10. However, in order to achieve the overall aim of developing infrastructure that enables everyone to participate in an inclusive economy, Clause 10 should be strengthened to include the requirement that in carrying out these functions, the Commission gives consideration to the Treaty of Waitangi and the diversity of the New Zealand population specifically, gender, ethnicity, disability and age.
- 5.6. This recommendation is made with reference to the [2018 CEDAW Concluding Observations](#) on the 8th periodic report of New Zealand which recommends in clause 12(c) that the state party include a gender-specific rather than gender-neutral approach in its legislation, policies and programmes, in line with paragraph five of the Committee's general recommendation No. 28.6.

### Clause 11 Infrastructure needs and priorities for infrastructure sub clause

- 5.7. Clause 11 11 (b) (iii) states that the Commission:  
*"Must have regard to long term trends that impact on, or are impacted by matters relating to the mitigation of the effects of climate change (including through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases) and adapting to the effects of climate change"*  
 NCWNZ welcomes this inclusion, but considers climate change to be of such critical importance, that it should be included in the statement of main function of the Commission and Clause 9 amended accordingly.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1. NCWNZ welcomes the establishment of the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission - Te Waihanga as a significant step towards infrastructure that is better planned and integrated, effectively addresses climate change, and reduces gender and other inequities by enabling all demographic groups and communities to participate in the economy and society.
- 6.2. However, to achieve this NCWNZ believes this Bill needs to be strengthened with requirements on the Commission to achieve gender balance in its membership; reflect diverse perspectives in consultation, advice and reporting; and have addressing climate change as a major focus.



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