



National Council of Women of New Zealand

Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa

Oral submission to the Education and Workforce Select Committee on the Education (Vocational Education and Training Reform) Amendment Bill S19.23

By Margaret Ledgerton and Beryl Anderson on 6 November 2019

Committee

The Select Committee had been split into two as there were many orals to hear. There were three members present for our hearing:

Clare Curran(Chair)	Labour
Jo Luxton	Labour
Dr Shane Reti	National

Introduction

Good morning. My name is Margaret Ledgerton and I am a member of the Parliamentary Watch Committee of the National Council of Women of New Zealand. My colleague is Beryl Anderson, who is chair of that Committee.

NCWNZ is an umbrella group representing over 200 organisations affiliated at either a 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.

Our submission is based on related NCWNZ policy decisions and resolutions and has been prepared in consultation with members.

The Bill

We support the Bill and in particular provisions that:

- foster cooperation between providers in different areas
- ensure people living in rural regions can access vocational education
- continue the tradition of workplace learning and,
- guarantee the academic freedom of the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST).

We wish to highlight two general principles for your consideration:

- the need for gender impact assessments, and
- for gender-balanced governance within the proposed structures

Our submission makes recommendations regarding specific legislative clauses that we believe will address our concerns around those two general principles.

Gender impact assessments

We welcome the Bill's focus on meeting the needs of Maori, Pacific and learners with disabilities. We are disappointed, however, that a similar focus has not been given to meeting the needs of different genders.

- We believe that the system must also meet the needs of learners in fields traditionally dominated by one gender for example: support for women studying construction or for men studying hairdressing or in the caring industry. If the gender pay gap is to be eliminated, the gender segregation in fields of study must be addressed. *[NOTE: It is generally recognised that the gender pay gap, in part, is due to occupational segregation: We see this as not only an **issue** of equity, but as an economic imperative given the need to significantly increase the size of the trades' workforce.]*
- The United Nations Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW], in its concluding remarks after Aotearoa / NZ's eighth periodic review report in 2018 noted that:

The State Party should continue eliminating stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter girls from enrolling in traditionally male-dominated fields of study.

- NCWNZ has been calling for a gender impact analysis of proposed legislation for almost two decades. We would like to see this as a standard part of policy development. Unless gender impact analysis is a regular part of policy development, work to eliminate 'stereotypes and structural barriers' can be easily overlooked *[We believe that this should be general policy....in terms of the current Bill, gender should be included as a specific focus, along with Maori, Pacific and those with disabilities].*

Gender balanced governance

NCWNZ is an advocate for regulation to ensure that governance bodies have a gender balance. The proposed legislation for the NZ Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) includes representation of staff, students and Maori, which we support. However, again, we do not believe that the legislation goes far enough when it says that "it is desirable that, insofar as possible, NZIST's Council should reflect the...gender diversity...of NZ's population.

We strongly believe that the Minister should appoint a gender-balanced Council and that this is entirely feasible given the numbers of members appointed by the Minister (at least five) and the quality and number of women candidates available.

With respect to the membership of the Advisory Committees of NZIST and the Workforce Development Councils, NCWNZ recognises that it is potentially more difficult to ensure a gender

balance. However, achieving a gender balance can still be included as ‘desirable in principle’ – in order to encourage active recruitment of a diversity of genders to these governing bodies.

Recommendations on specific clauses

We recommend changes to the Bill in the following areas:

Gender impact analysis

We urge the Select Committee to request a gender impact analysis of the legislation before it is passed into law.

Part 15A NZ Institute of Skills and Technology

New Section 222H Matters to be considered when the Minister appoints members to NZIST’s Council

...that the gender balance on the NZIST Council be made mandatory

New Section 222M Membership of the advisory committees

...that clauses be added to encourage a gender balance on these committees

Part 4 Work-based Training

New Section 479 Establishment of workforce development councils:

...that an addition be made to sub-clause 3 to encourage a gender balance. [We provide examples]

Conclusion

NCWNZ supports this legislation in principle, as we would like to see a fairer, more cooperative vocational education system that meets the needs of the diversity of learners in Aotearoa NZ.

However, we believe there must be a gender impact analysis of the legislation before it is passed into law. We also ask that the clauses for establishing the NZIST Council, Advisory Committees and Workforce Development Councils be strengthened to ensure, or encourage, active recruitment of women, and thus achieve gender-balanced governance.

Clare Curran queried how a gender balance could be achieved for new section 222H, and if by implication the other representation should also be mandatory. In response, Margaret explained that with the number of people that the Minister can appoint it should be possible to achieve a gender balance.

Clare also queried the need for a gender impact assessment, to which Margaret responded that there needed to be a risk assessment in terms of gender impact, referring to the MfW booklet on mainstreaming gender. Clare indicated that she would ask the officials about this.