



National Council of
Women of New Zealand
Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa

**GENDER
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MAKING EQUALITY REALITY

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S22.02 oral

Oral Submission to the Finance and Expenditure Committee on the Budget Policy Statement 2021

Presenters:

Gabriel Bretkelly, Margaret Ledgerton

Finance and Expenditure Committee

Duncan Webb, Chairman, Labour; Barbara Edmonds, Labour; Andrew Bayly, National; Simon Bridges, National; Ingrid Leary, Labour; Anna Lorck, Labour; Greg O'Connor, Labour; Damien Smith, ACT; Chloe Swarbrick, Green; Simon Watts, National; Helen White, Labour

Introduction

1. Kia ora koutou katoa. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with the select committee. As you can see from our written submission the National Council of Women of New Zealand are concerned about the various barriers to New Zealand women earning fair and equitable incomes. We are watching with interest the progress of the 23 current pay equity claims. Some of workers covered by these claims have been waiting for many years to get fair pay. One of the named claimants in the DHB Admin Clerical claim confided to me last year that she may have to retire before the claim is settled. Our submission on amendments to the Equal Pay Act welcomed changes to the Act but we cautioned that the process seemed unduly complicated, and we were concerned it could become slow and ponderous.
2. An additional concern is that all 23 pay equity claims are from the public sector. We need full transparency so that the laborious work of establishing accurate comparators doesn't have to be repeated in the private sector. We are pleased that the Education and Employment Select Committee will be conducting a briefing into pay transparency and look forward to reading it. We support the YWCA's Close the Gap campaign for pay transparency in the corporate sector.

Conclusion

3. Last but not least, we are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls. Further research into the downstream effects of the pandemic is urgently needed. Our written submission outlines a number of areas where we lack information and where we anticipate that women have been disadvantaged particularly in the areas of work. What we do know is that the front line occupational groups most affected by the impact of COVID are female dominated ... in particular by Māori, Pacific and disabled women.
4. We support the Human Rights Commission campaign to include ethnicity as well as gender in the Equal Pay Act.
5. Thank you for your time.

Questions

Q: Helen White [Labour List] Asked for stories to support anecdotal information about effects of low pay, lack of related data, impact of Covid

A: Gabriel talked to our written submission commencing that we had anecdotal stories about young women dropping out of school during Covid lockdowns to mind younger children or pick up casual work to supplement family incomes. We don't know if those young women are returning to school this year or if they have abandoned their education pathways. We called for more research and data on what is actually happening and support for women and girls to return to education.

Q: Name. Helen White: Asked about the impact of private sector employment agreements and confidentiality clauses concerning in them. Should these be not allowed?

A: We agree that employees should not be gagged from discussing their salary details. However, pay transparency is a wider issue than just individual agreements. We support calls for employers to include gender in the pay data they already must provide to MBIE as per Jan Logie's private member's bill. We support the YWCA Mind the Gap campaign on corporate pay transparency.

Conclusion

All select committee members were present. Active engagement largely from government MPs.