

ELECTION GUIDE 2011

Ahead of the election on November 26, the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) has put together a report for our members and affiliates on the various parties' policies on issues relating to women.

We asked the main political parties to provide us with specific policy details in the following areas:

- ◇ Equity in paid work
- ◇ Parenting and other unpaid work by women
- ◇ Women and violence
- ◇ Women and health

We have also included:

- ◇ A section which looks at the number of women included in the top ten of each party list
- ◇ Information about the referendum and different electoral systems

Happy voting!

* Please note that Act directed us to their website (www.act.org.nz) where all their policies are stated. We could not find any policies relating specifically to women.

Equity in Paid Employment

The Green Party

The Green Party will work to eliminate the gender pay gap by establishing a Pay Equity Commission and requiring state sector employers to undertake pay audits and job evaluations of all occupations within five years.

The Green Party will foster new employment by supporting active employment programmes, including resourcing targeted employment, self-employment and small business programmes for women, wahine Maori, and migrant women.

Labour

Labour has a strong commitment to addressing gender pay inequality and recognises that a comprehensive approach is necessary to address this systemic and enduring inequality. Labour believes that solutions will need to be available to align with our human rights and employment relations frameworks. Labour will develop legislative and policy responses that recognise the right to equal pay, require positive duty to advance equality and provide the mechanism to determine work of equal value.

Women's leadership has declined over the last two years as shown in the Census of Women's Participation 2010. Labour will reinstate a 50% goal for women on state sector boards. Labour will also investigate legislative options for requiring organisations and companies to report on women's participation at all levels in their organisation. Specifically, they will investigate provision to require EEO monitoring and the development of action plans to respond to identified problems. Labour will require the State Services Commission to ensure compliance with EEO as part of 'good employer' commitments and to advise the Government on strategies to advance employment equity.

National

Reducing the gender pay gap is an important goal. We need to look at how we can improve the number of women in leadership roles and male-dominated occupations, how women can combine work and care (providing good quality, accessible and affordable childcare), and encouraging employers to consider flexible working practices.

It's worth noting that the gender pay gap is now at a record low of 9.6 per cent, and has been trending down for the past decade. We are making progress but there is always more that can be done. Sound economic management, with a stable economy focused on growth, will provide the conditions for sustainable improvement.

Next we intend on extending flexible working arrangements. We plan to:

- ◇ Extend the right to request flexible work arrangements to all employees;
- ◇ Enable employers and employees to reach agreement without invoking a formal procedure;
- ◇ Remove the six month period before an employee has the right to request a flexible working arrangement; and
- ◇ Remove the limits on the number of requests an employee may make over a 12 month period.

Maori Party

The Maori Party has a commitment to develop strategies to bring levels of salary for women to the same levels as their male counterparts for similar work.

MANA

Overall, women in Aotearoa still earn less than men. MANA will back any legislation aimed at progressing pay and employment equity.

Parenting and Other Unpaid Work

Green Party

The Green Party will introduce legislation (along the lines of recent UK legislation) which will encourage greater flexibility in working hours. All parents should be able to negotiate with their employer greater flexibility in their working hours and their work location, especially during school holidays and when children are sick.

We will introduce a Universal Child Benefit. This non income tested, non transferable payment to the primary caregiver would be similar to the Family Benefit that was scrapped in 1991.

We will support a full and wide ranging public debate on Universal Basic Income. The UBI would recognise the value of caring for children and other dependants, as well as voluntary community work.

We will Reform Paid Parental Leave to provide 13 months leave for all employed and self employed women.

Labour

Women, due to family and caring responsibilities, are more likely to have time out of the paid workforce and move in and out of paid work. This means they are disproportionately impacted by the loss of rights against unfair dismissal during the first 90 days of employment. Labour will scrap the 90 day fire at will legislation.

Caring for children and family members at home along with voluntary work throughout the community is vital work that benefits us all. Labour also believes that in order to give all children the best start possible and to reduce stress on parents, paid parental leave needs to be extended in coverage and longevity. Labour will have children at the centre of its social policy which will include a detailed strategy for parental leave. Labour will consider and as appropriate use the findings of the Review of the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Act to promote and strengthen flexible working arrangements.

MANA

MANA recognises that the work of raising children is as important as paid work.

MANA supports the progressive extension of the time allowed for paid parental leave up to at least the one year recommended by the Families Commission in its 2007 report *It's about time*. We also support a gradual increase in PPL payments up to a maximum of 100% of the average male wage.

Maori Party

We will reinstate the Training Incentive Allowance to support sole parent into work and we will support investment in Teen Parent Units.

We will encourage employers to develop part-time and flexible healthy working arrangements and subsidise childcare, to support whanau to benefit from quality time with their children as a vital ingredient in whanau ora and in doing so, addressing 'time poverty' as a cause of stress.

One of our key focus areas is Whanua Ora which is about restoring the capacity of whanau to take care of their own.

National

The arrival of a new baby is a major event for any family and any increase in financial support at this time is always helpful. It is important that we strike a balance between supporting parents and taking into account what is affordable and fair for taxpayers.

National has increased Paid Parental Leave payments for each of the past three years, putting extra money into the pockets of families with new babies.

Women and Violence

Labour

New Zealand has a serious and worrying problem with family violence and the consequences of this violence are huge. There are costs to individuals, families and the community. A comprehensive approach is required to deal with the consequences of violence against women and change the culture that leads to such violence. Labour believes this will require a long term unified commitment by politicians, women's and community organisations, government agencies and New Zealanders.

Labour will ensure that policies to deal with family and sexual violence recognise the gender perspective. We will ensure that all of our policies recognise the needs and issues of all women; for example, the particular needs of disabled women and the particular needs of ethnic/migrant women.

Labour will establish a Commission of Sexual and Family Violence which will draw on the work of the Taskforce on Sexual Violence and the Taskforce on Family Violence and will provide ongoing evidence based advice to Government. This will include advice on building a consensus on a long term unified and adequately resourced plan which has cross party support to eliminate violence against women. We will complete the passage of all matters contained in the Domestic Violence Bill and review the impact of the Whanau Ora funding model on services dealing with violence against women and girls and respond to any problems and unmet needs this has created by once again establishing an ongoing funding mechanism to ensure security of service provision. Labour will support organisations like Women's Refuge, Rape Crisis and Girls' Self Defence which play both an advocacy and service delivery role focused on the needs of women and children.

Maori Party

In her capacity as Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment, Tariana Turia refocused \$12m into boosting frontline services and facilitating a co-ordinated approach to help families in crisis. Our policy focus has been on supporting and resourcing providers with a track record of success in attaining mauriora; and in preventing family violence; but we are also very strongly in support of families becoming empowered to develop the capability and confidence to address any violence within their midst.

We will introduce a Cross Government Accord (a 'wellbeing framework') to keep whanau free from all forms of violence; including physical, economic, sexual and racist including prevention of elder abuse and neglect.

We will review He Whaipaanga Hou and other restorative justice models, including Project Mauriora, to relearn and develop our own responses to challenges

We will establish Peace Week, from 31 October to 5 November, to honour the heroism and peacemaking heritage established at Parihaka.

We will also establish a Ministry of Families inclusive of children, young people and whanau. The new Ministry will include functions from the Families Commission, the Children's Commission; Family and Community Services, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Child, Youth and Family. The new Ministry's sole focus will be the care and protection of children and the prevention of family violence and sexual violence. We will support the delivery of frontline services to whanau to restore safety and wellbeing while still maintaining zero tolerance for violence. We will review the Domestic Violence Act 1995.

Please see next page for Green Party, MANA and National policies...

Women and Violence

Green Party

We will increase educational and training programmes to deal with attitudes and behaviours that result in violence

We will secure financial support for agencies that provide safe houses and refuge for women and children living in violent relationships.

MANA

MANA seeks to promote in every way practicable a culture of non violence in homes, schools and communities.

We advocate that government must provide stable, sufficient long term infrastructure funding for women's refuge, rape crisis, men's stopping violence groups, hauora, and other organisations working to support those affected by family and sexual violence.

The roll out of the Whanau Ora policy has meant that funds for addressing domestic violence have been cut to programme providers who were not named as Whanau Ora providers. This policy initiative needs to be properly funded if it is to be effective for whanau, so that no providers lose funding if not included in Whanau Ora.

Those affected by domestic and sexual violence should be provided with free counselling and free – or well subsidised – legal support.

National

National is committed to taking action on violent crime, domestic violence and sexual abuse.

We've passed a number of laws since coming into office. This is sending a clear message that domestic violence, violence against children, and sexual violence are not acceptable.

We've increased penalties and introduced tougher sentences for offences against children, strengthened the responsiveness of criminal justice agencies to victims of domestic violence, and introduced police safety orders. These orders allow police to remove an alleged violent person from the home for up to five days. They have proven successful in helping stop domestic violence before it escalates.

We've also introduced maximum jail sentences with no parole for the worst serious violent offenders under the three strikes law.

National has also increased support and services for victims of sexual violence. This includes special advisors for victims, support services and increased grants.

From here, National will continue contributing to initiatives to end violence against women.

Please see previous page for Labour and Maori Party policies...

Women and Health

National

The National Government is very focused on improving services for families. We have announced that there will be an extra \$33m spent on maternity over the next four years. This will enable the establishment of regular local reviews of maternity professionals to make changes that improve the safety and quality of services for mothers and their babies.

We are also in the process of revamping new parent information services. This will provide better information to women and their families on how to access quality maternity care, and support to help them to prepare for childbirth and parenting.

Standardised referral guidelines will be rolled out nationwide and will assist lead maternity carers to make appropriate and timely referrals to other practitioners. This will help new mothers access a full range of health and social services and provide broader support for mothers who need it.

In addition, the National Government recently announced that an extra \$21m will be invested over four years for Well Child visits.

MANA

Safe, reliable and appropriate contraception should be free and accessible to all. MANA is opposed to any move towards government requiring Work and Income to pressure women into using long term contraception, as indicated in one of the recommendations of the Government Welfare Working Group's report released in February 2011.

* Note: The working group 'considers that one component of addressing this incentive [to have additional children] is to provide support for people on welfare to manage their fertility, including through contraception and advice about expectations.' The report can be found at: <http://ips.ac.nz/WelfareWorkingGroup/Downloads/Final%20Report/WWG-Final-Recommendations-Report-22-February-2011.pdf>

Green Party

We will support and extend targeted smoking cessation programmes for Maori women, and young women

We will develop a National Infertility Prevention strategy that focuses on ways we can protect fertility and reduce infertility and research environmental causes of infertility in women and declining sperm counts in men.

We will ensure the waiting time between surgery for breast cancer and radiotherapy is within internationally recognised time of 12 weeks.

Maori Party

We want our whanau to be the best that they can be and to be supported by an equitable, sustainable health system. We want to accelerate clinical and service integration; and more of a focus on targets which enable public reporting.

Labour

Most women in the course of their lives have significant contact with the health system, not only for their own health needs and when they are sick but also when they are healthy and having children and caring for others. Labour will focus on the social determinants of health and access to healthcare services. Our policy encompasses maternity, primary family centres, breastfeeding support, Well Child handover, youth pregnancy and parenting, dental policy for women, sexual and reproductive health, young women and migrant women's health. The details of these initiatives are in Labour's women's policy which is available online at www.ownourfuture.co.nz

Women on Party Lists

The Maori Party has six women in the top ten:

Kaapua Smith (2)
Wheturangi Walsh-Tapiata (3)
Tina Porou (4)
Davina Murray (6)
Hon Tariana Turia (7)
Josie Peita (10)

MANA has four women in the top ten:

Annette Sykes (2)
Sue Bradford (4)
Misty Harrison (5)
Angeline Greensill (8)

The Green Party has four women in the top ten:

Metiria Turei (1)
Catherine Delahunty (4)
Eugenie Sage (6)
Jan Logie (9)

Labour has four women in the top ten:

Annette King (2)
Ruth Dyson (5)
Maryan Street (7)
Sue Moroney (10)

Act has three women in the top ten:

Catherine Issac (2)
Kath McCabe (8)
Robyn Stent (9)

National has two women in the top ten:

Judith Collins (7)
Anne Tolley (10)

Referendum

This year, there's a referendum on our voting system. On the referendum paper there are two questions to answer:

- ◇ The first is whether you think New Zealand should keep MMP (the current system) or change to another voting system.
- ◇ The second asks which of four other voting systems you would choose if New Zealand decides to change from MMP.

What will happen as a result?

- ◇ If at least half the voters opt to keep MMP, there will be an independent review of MMP in 2012 to recommend changes that should be made to the way it works. The Electoral Commission will conduct the review. It must include a number of matters that have been decided by Parliament including the thresholds that parties must meet to be eligible for a share of list seats, whether voters should be able to change the order of candidates on a party list and whether candidates can stand in both an electorate and on the party list. The size of Parliament and Maori representation will not be reviewed, but the Commission may consider any other aspects of the MMP voting system.
- ◇ If more than half the voters opt to change the voting system, Parliament will decide if there will be another referendum in 2014 to choose between MMP and the alternative voting system that gets the most support in the second question in the 2011 Referendum.

For more information on voting in the referendum, visit www.elections.org.nz or call 0800 36 76 56

Electoral Systems

Mixed Member Proportional

This is the system we currently use to elect our Parliament.

There are 120 Members of Parliament (MPs). There are 70 electorates, including the Maori electorates. Each elects one MP, called an Electorate MP. The other 50 MPs are elected from political party lists and are called List MPs.

Each voter gets two votes. The first vote is for the political party the voter chooses. This is called the party vote and largely decides the total number of seats each political party gets in Parliament. The second vote is to choose the MP the voter wants to represent the electorate they live in. This is called the electorate vote. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes.

Under current MMP rules, a political party that wins at least one electorate seat OR 5% of the party vote gets a share of the seats in Parliament that is about the same as its share of the party vote. For example, if a party gets 30% of the party vote it will get roughly 36 MPs in Parliament (being 30% of 120 seats). So, if that party wins 20 electorate seats it will have 16 List MPs in addition to its 20 Electorate MPs.

Coalitions or agreements between political parties are usually needed before governments can be formed.

First Past the Post

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each of the 120 electorates, including the Maori electorates, elects one MP. Each voter has one vote to choose the MP they want to represent the electorate they live in. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes.

Large Parties – and in particular the winning party – usually win a share of the seats in Parliament larger than their share of all the votes across the country. Smaller parties usually receive a smaller share of seats than their share of all the votes. A government can usually be formed without the need for coalitions or agreements between parties.

Preferential Voting

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each of the 120 electorates, including the Maori electorates, elects one MP. Each voter ranks the candidates – 1, 2, 3, etc – in the order they prefer them. A candidate who gets more than half of all the first preference votes (that is votes marked '1') wins.

If no candidate gets more than half the first preference votes, the candidate with the fewest number '1' votes is eliminated and their votes go to the candidates each voter ranked next. The process is repeated until one candidate has more than half the votes.

Large parties – and in particular the winning party, usually win a share of the seats in Parliament larger than their nationwide share of the first preference votes. It is hard for smaller parties to win seats in Parliament, but votes for smaller party candidates may influence who wins the seat because of second, third, etc preferences.

A government can usually be formed without the need for coalitions or agreements between parties.

Electoral Systems

Single Transferable Vote

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each electorate has more than one MP. This includes the Maori electorates. It is likely the 120 MPs would be divided between 24 to 30 electorates, each with three to seven MPs.

Each voter has a single vote that is transferable. Voters either rank the individual candidates – 1, 2, 3, etc – in the order they prefer from all the candidates, OR they may vote for the order of preference published in advance by the political party of their choice. MPs are elected by receiving a minimum number of votes. This is known as the quota and is based on the number of votes in each electorate and the number of MPs to be elected.

Candidates who reach the quota from first preference votes are elected. If there are still electorate seats to fill, a two-step process follows. First, votes the elected candidates received beyond the quota are transferred to the candidates ranked next on those votes. Candidates who then reach the quota are elected. Second, if there are still electorate seats to fill, the lowest polling candidate is eliminated and their votes are transferred to the candidates ranked next on those votes. This two-step process is repeated until all the seats are filled.

The number of MPs elected from each political party roughly mirrors the party's share of all the first preference votes across the country. Coalitions or agreements between political parties are usually needed before governments can be formed.

Supplementary Member

There are 120 Members of Parliament. There are 90 electorates, including Maori electorates. Each elects one MP, called an Electorate MP. The other 30 seats are called supplementary seats. MPs are elected to these seats from political party lists and are likely to be called List MPs.

Each voter gets two votes. The first vote is to choose the MP the voter wants to represent the electorate they live in. This is called the electorate vote. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes.

The second vote is for the political party the voter chooses. This is called the party vote. The share of the 30 supplementary seats each party gets reflects its share of the party vote. For example, if a party gets 30% of the party vote, it will get about nine List MPs in Parliament (being 30% of the 30 supplementary seats) no matter how many electorate seats it wins. This makes SM different from MMP where a party's share of all 120 seats mirrors its share of the party vote.

Under SM, one or other of the major parties would usually have enough seats to govern alone, but coalitions or agreements between parties may sometimes be needed.