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Media Release

### **Gender Discrimination Alive and Well in New Zealand workplaces**

“The comments made today by Employers Association head Alasdair Thompson are deplorable and demonstrate that gender discrimination is alive and well in New Zealand,” National Council of Women NZ (NCWNZ) President Elizabeth Bang said today.

NCWNZ is a long established not for profit organisation whose objective is to improve the status, quality of life and well-being of women, their families and the community.

Elizabeth Bang was commenting on statements made by Mr Thompson during a debate on Green Party MP Catherine Delahunty's member's Bill to amend the Equal Pay Act.

“According to Mr Thompson, the reason for the gender pay gap is that women are less productive than men. This is arrant nonsense”, Elizabeth Bang said.

“These comments show an entrenched and unfounded prejudice which is worrying in itself, but even more so when it is exhibited by the leader of the organisation representing New Zealand employers.

“Gender pay equity is a huge issue in this country. The real reason pay inequality exists has been graphically demonstrated for us this morning by Mr Thompson – it is first and foremost due to workplace discrimination.

Elizabeth Bang pointed to numerous examples of discrimination against women in the workplace – from a lack of equal pay for equal work through to the paucity of women on company boards.

“New Zealand businesses are constantly striving to improve productivity. They could well start by looking inside their own organisation . Positive steps to create greater employment and career opportunities for the huge talent pool of women in our labour force would be an excellent first step. Identifying and removing those who would seek to hold this process back - the likes of Mr Thompson and his ilk – would be an excellent second step,” Ms Bang concluded.

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