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Gender pay gap must be addressed

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is deeply concerned by the recently released Quarterly Employment Survey showing an increase in the gender pay gap.

“It is extremely disappointing to see that we are moving backwards on the issue of pay equity,” says NCWNZ National President, Elizabeth Bang.

The survey shows that the average pay gap between men and women has widened to 12.81 percent.

“The debate around how to address the gender pay gap is not a new one, which is what makes the failure to make any significant progress even more disappointing.

“The Government needs to take action immediately, through legislation and other policy mechanisms, to remedy the gap and ensure that equal pay for work of equal value becomes reality,” Elizabeth Bang says.

NCWNZ agrees with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in its concern that women in New Zealand are not currently protected from discrimination and its recommendation that the Government enact and implement comprehensive laws guaranteeing the substantive equality of women with men in both the public and private sectors, in regard to equal pay and equal opportunity.

Since 1896 the National Council of Women of New Zealand has demanded that women’s participation in the labour force be recognised and valued.

“We have always been concerned by the pay inequalities that exist between men and women and the large impact this has on society as a whole. The gender pay gap has been shown to have negative consequences for economic growth and the well-being of families and communities,” Elizabeth Bang says.

“This issue needs to be taken seriously and closing the gender pay gap must become a priority.”

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