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Revvng it up for sensitive claims

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is heartened by the support being offered by some members of the motorcycling community who are likewise opposed to the insensitive changes to the ACC clinical pathway for female and male victims of sex crimes.

“We have been receiving feedback from supporters, such as ‘most decent human beings cringe at this and fully support your cause’ and, ‘any cost savings should not target these vulnerable victims, levies on sex offenders would be far preferable’. This demonstrates to us that this issue is by no means bound by one sector,” says Elizabeth Bang, NCWNZ National President, “rather, it grates at the core for a diverse range of people.”

The National Council of Women is also listening to the position taken by the motorcyclists.

“It is pretty clear cut to us that Government cannot impose increased levies and take away the rights of the motorcycling community,” says Elizabeth Bang. “The moves against them are discriminatory and by all accounts not justified statistically.”

The Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment Bill, which is currently before the Select committee, if signed off on, will unfairly exploit the community.

NCWNZ believes that the changes to ACC are in conflict with the governments obligations under CEDAW (Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).

Women, who are seeking ACC subsidised counselling for experiencing trauma as a result of a sex crime are being discriminated against through policy that removes access to appropriate assessment and treatment.

“When considering the IPRC Amendment Bill, the scenario is one of ‘damned if you do’ and even ‘more damned if you don’t’,” says Elizabeth Bang. “The proposed increases in levies for employers, employees and car owners will be significantly and substantially increased if this legislation does not get accepted by Parliament.”

NCWNZ believes that the community is increasingly concerned that the political agenda is manoeuvring ACC to become a more saleable commodity. For the last 23 years, NCWNZ has been in opposition to the privatisation of publicly-owned assets; to date this has included the postal system, the roading system, energy and water systems.

“Groups such as the motorcyclists, the National Foundation for the Deaf, the Mental Health Foundation, NZ Association of Counsellors, ACC Coalition and many others are all voicing their concerns. But through this diversity of interests, all share one mutual concern, ACC,” concluded Elizabeth Bang.

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