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Media Release

### **NCWNZ a long time advocate of mandatory reporting**

“The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) believes that mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse is essential to reducing New Zealand’s child abuse rate,” NCWNZ President Elizabeth Bang said today.

Elizabeth Bang was commenting on proposals contained in the Social Development Ministry’s Green Paper on Vulnerable Children, which include mandatory reporting of child abuse.

“The statistics tell us that around 15 percent of children in New Zealand are born at risk of abuse. It’s an unacceptably high rate which puts us among the worst in the world.

“NCWNZ has long advocated mandatory reporting of child abuse. There needs to be greater coordination between professionals - teachers, health professionals and welfare agencies - who may suspect child abuse.

“Friends and neighbours, as well as the wider family, also have a responsibility to speak up when things don’t seem right. It is no longer acceptable to hide behind excuses such as, “It’s not my job” or “It’s not my business.” It is everyone’s business to keep our children safe and ensure they receive the care and protection that is every child’s right,” Elizabeth Bang said.

NCWNZ advocates training in child protection, to ensure professionals such as teachers, nurses, and carers recognise the telltale signs and know what to do.

“Increased support for parents, including parent education, will also assist in improving the quality of parenting, and help reduce the incidence of abuse. Our children are our future and investment in their care is non-negotiable,” concluded Elizabeth Bang.

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