



19 July 2007

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**SEE NO DISCRIMINATION, HEAR NO DISCRIMINATION, SPEAK NO DISCRIMINATION**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) regrets that Judy Turner, United Future MP hadn't actually taken the time to read the NCWNZ facilitated report on discrimination against women before making a statement to the media. This report was first given to the Member in February of this year.

"Had the Member read the report, she would have understood that areas of discrimination against women remain unaddressed and that these discriminations extend markedly beyond sexist jokes, although it should be noted that such jokes perpetuate a culture or social viewpoint that requires modernisation," said Christine Low, NCWNZ National President. "Judy Turner's viewpoints appear Victorian, i.e. not only should women be seen but not heard, but heaven forbid they express what is actually happening in their lives."

In the report that will be presented to the United Nations on 30 July 2007, critical issues will be outlined, such as the appalling violence rates against women and children, the lack of movement on the gender pay gap and continued lack of pay equity, the need for gender analysis on financial policy as well as social policy, the barriers to women climbing the leadership ladder, and the cradle to grave raft of discriminatory factors that women have to contend with.

"The Council notes Judy Turner's concerns that men have issues too, however the Convention that NCWNZ has responded to, and to which the Government has ratified, relates to women only. It would be a nonsense to report men's issues against a Convention that seeks to prevent discrimination against women," said Christine Low. "The Member can take heart that NCWNZ shares her concerns on the lack of male teachers and has advocated at a Government level for this to be changed."

"Women's groups and NGOs with a wider focus, but critical gender-specific information, exist for a variety of reasons. As the United Future's spokesperson for the Community and Voluntary sector, NCWNZ is a little alarmed that UF would be suggesting that Women's Refuge, Family Planning Association, YWCA, Rural Women New Zealand and the Disabled Persons Assembly (New Zealand) Inc need to validate why New Zealand society still needs them," said Christine Low.

"By framing the NGO report as though it is an exercise in pushing for more funding, the enormity of the work involved in producing this work has been trivialised," said Christine Low. "As a result of the Member making such a comment, NCWNZ feels pressured to not explore this option when presenting to the United Nations, which is certainly a useful means from the Government perspective of ensuring the UN Committee is not aware of all the problems NGOs are experiencing."

To date the Council had not asked participating NGOs if they wanted the report to be used in this manner, despite the knowledge that many women's groups are in dire need of funding, particularly if they are to make a difference in their specialist fields. Such groups for example include Women's Refuge in domestic violence, Family Planning Association in women's health, Rape Crisis Centres in violence against women. Representing what is best for women has been a driving factor for NCWNZ for over 110 years; the Council will now ask contributing NGOs if they believe there should be investment in the women's sector as there is in health, sports, and social services and will present the response to the UN committee.

The United Nations CEDAW Committee has long held the view that New Zealand and the NGO reports submitted provide an important benchmark against which other countries can be measured.

"New Zealand is further down the 'developmental track' when it comes to equal rights, and removing chronically overt forms of discrimination. Scenarios such as the trafficking of women into the sex industry, which certainly was a feature in the last NZ NGO report, given the Thai sex worker scandal, are sadly not reserved to developing countries. However in New Zealand we are all hopeful that such occurrences are infrequent in nature; the social conditioning and gender mainstreaming that is in place in New Zealand which encourages "everything is OK in paradise" thinking, however is not occasional," concluded Christine Low.

ENDS

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*"Women Influencing Policy"*