



18 September 2007

**PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE**

### **USING YOUR VOTE WHEN IT COUNTS**

Tomorrow is Suffrage Day and the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) wants to encourage the ongoing trend of political participation of women at both local and central government levels.

In 2004, 48 percent of women that stood as candidates at the local body and DHB elections throughout the country were voted in and NCWNZ would like these numbers to continue to increase.

“With the local Body elections being held on October 13, NCWNZ would like to see women exercising their vote in their local areas,” said Christine Low, NCWNZ National President.

One reason that has been suggested why women participate more at the local government level is they want to start with something easy like standing for school boards, district health boards, then council and maybe after that, go for parliament. Also influencing whether women wish to pursue a political career includes the remuneration versus the amount of time required to do the job well, and the lack of flexibility in the hours, which does not always suit women with children.

Christine Low says of the latest CEDAW recommendations: “As central government devolves more and more decisions to local government it is really important that it is representative of the community. The last census highlighted the increase in the diversity of our communities. We need to ensure that this is reflected in our decision makers.”

According to the Human Rights Commission report, *New Zealand Census of Women's Participation*, when it comes to women's representation at the local government level, 18.9 percent of women hold the position of mayor, but by far the biggest percentage, 42 percent are members on district health boards.

NCWNZ would like the government to continue to follow through on the CEDAW committee recent recommendations concerning women and political participation. The Committee recommended that the Government: “take concrete action to establish goals and time frames to increase the number of women in decision making positions at the local level, in civil service, district health boards, statutory boards and the judiciary.” CEDAW is concerned that Maori, Pacific, Asian and other minority women are underrepresented at most levels of public and political life.

“NCWNZ feels that the local body elections are the lead up to next year’s general election where all political parties should be implementing policies that will be of benefit to New Zealand women,” said Christine Low. “The women’s vote will be crucial to any of the parties’ success”.

ENDS

Further Information:  
Christine Low, National President  
Ph: 04 473 7623  
National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ)  
PO Box 12 117  
Wellington  
Email: [ncwnz@ihug.co.nz](mailto:ncwnz@ihug.co.nz)

*"Women Influencing Policy"*