

PROPOSED REMITS for Conference 2019



National Council of
Women of New Zealand
Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa

Issued to NCWNZ members on Friday 31 May 2019

The NCWNZ Conference is an annual event and makes a number of decisions and approvals to guide the organisation. This year the conference will be held on Friday 30 August and Saturday 31 August at the National Library of New Zealand, Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa in Wellington.

Friday will be a members-only day.

Saturday will be a public day, and include keynote speakers, seminars and learning and development sessions

Members must register for Conference online: <https://ncw2019.lilregie.com>

In preparation for Conference, we share these proposed remits for members to review.

Background to remits process

Remits shape NCWNZ policy. On 19 March 2019, a call was made for remits meeting the criteria:

- a. Being strongly linked to gender equality and our mission - "By building understanding and driving action for gender equality, we enable New Zealanders to have the freedom and opportunity to determine their own future", and
- b. Being aligned to the four topic areas from the ecological model set out in the White Paper: safety and health; economic independence; influence in decision making; equality in education and work
- c. Reflecting on NZ's [2018 CEDAW Concluding Observations](#)
- d. Reflecting on the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

Of the eleven draft remits received, these five proposed remits have been returned and approved.

These are not the final versions which will go to Conference. NCWNZ members may suggest amendments to these proposed remits **by 28 June 2019**. Amendments should not alter the substance of the remit, but rather clarify or simplify the wording. Any substantial changes will be considered as amendments for debate at conference.

The final version of the remits, plus any amendments will be issues with the Conference 2019 papers and sent out on 19 July 2019. These are debated and voted on at Conference and if passed, become Resolutions which are statements of NCWNZ policy. All resolutions can be found in the *Resolution Book and its Appendix*, available on, www.ncwnz.org.nz/what-we-do/ncwnz-archive/resolutions/.

Recommendation

Please review the proposed meeting procedures and motions and offer any feedback to the Board by Friday 28 June 2019 via the NCWNZ office, by email to office@ncwnz.org.nz.

Proposed Remits

Remit 1: Recognising all genders, including trans people

Remit 2: Transparency of information

Remit 3: Period poverty and sanitary products

Remit 4: Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030)

Remit 5: Equality in Early Childcare Education

Remit 1: Recognising all genders, including trans people

That NCWNZ acknowledges the rights of people of all genders, including those who identify as female, male or non-binary, and further, NCWNZ recognises trans women as women, and trans men as men.

Proposer: Parliamentary Watch Committee

Rationale:

NCWNZ is a leading feminist organisation, advocating for gender equality. Although there has been some progress in gender equality for women, there is still gendered discrimination against those who do not neatly fit into a gender binary of women/man, and prefer not to define their gender, and those people who transition from one gender to another.

Non-binary people face discrimination as much as women do, if not more. A gender-equal Aotearoa New Zealand will not be achieved if non-binary people are not able to express their identity fully and freely. While men do not face the same levels and types of discrimination, gender stereotyping also limits men's potential to express themselves. This has been recognised in the Gender Equal NZ film *The Good Guys*, taken from the 2017 Gender Attitudes Survey.

Trans people are those that experience gender dysphoria, which is the term for substantial distress felt by people who do not feel a match with the gender they were assigned at birth. This is a more fundamental issue to challenging gender norms. For some people, gender dysphoria is strong enough that they undergo medical intervention so that they may socially and physically identify with their chosen gender. The Human Rights Commission and the CEDAW Committee in 2018 have both advocated for better recognition of the rights of trans people. Some feminists seek to exclude trans women from their organisations. This remit seeks to include trans people within NCWNZ, as gender equality will only be achieved when everyone is free from discrimination.

The front page of the Gender Equal website states some gender equality fundamental principles, including that "all genders are visible, valid and respected" and "trans women are women and trans men are men". This remit seeks to make these human rights principles into official policy for NCWNZ.

Further information:

- Desmarais, F. (2018, November 15). Non-binary finery: The Kiwis whose gender doesn't fit in a 'neat little box'. *Stuff.Co.Nz*. Retrieved from <https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/108178948/nonbinary-finery-the-kiwis-whose-gender-doesnt-fit-in-a-neat-little-box>
- Gender Minorities website: <https://genderminorities.com/>
- Gender Equal website: <https://genderequal.nz/>
- Human Rights Commission Inquiry into discrimination experienced by transgender people: <https://www.hrc.co.nz/our-work/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/inquiry-discrimination-experienced-transgender-people/>

Remit 2: Transparency of information

That NCWNZ support the Official Information Act provisions to ensure equitable, public access to official information through both individual and group requests and based on the principles of best international reporting standards.

Proposer: Parliamentary Watch Committee

Brief Rationale:

NCWNZ believes that transparency and freedom of information are essential to the health of open, accountable and democratic government. This includes:

- Access to, and transparency of, information is essential to the development of informed decisions and to holding governments, decision-makers and institutions to account.
- Public participation in the development of legislation and policy is heavily reliant on broad, easy access to official information.
- Public trust in government decision-making around policy and legislation is enhanced through the maximum disclosure of relevant information.
- At present, the release of OIA information is driven by individual cases, rather than a legal requirement to publish, which structurally discriminates against those already disadvantaged in society.
- Actions to improve practice on the Act must include specific actions to make women more aware of the Act, its relevance to them and wide and easily understandable dissemination of information that can be obtained under the Act.
- Open, transparent government underpins a democratic society.

Note:

The Government is currently considering a review of the Official Information Act (the Act) and NCWNZ has made a submission to the related consultation. NCWNZ has acknowledged improvements made to the operation of the OIA, including the improvement of its practice and actions to encourage increased participation.

NCWNZ has recommended that: the Act be reviewed; that it further reflect the increasing diversity of New Zealand society; that it should include a more proactive disclosure of information rather than only responding to specific requests; and that, as with all legislation and policy, include a gender-specific rather than a gender-neutral approach.

Remit 3: Period poverty and sanitary products

That NCWNZ petitions the Government to provide sanitary products for those in need.

Proposer: NCW Christchurch Branch

Brief Rationale:

Period poverty is a considerable problem in New Zealand with almost a quarter of respondents to a KidsCan survey of around 5,000 Kiwi women stating that they missed school or work because of their

period. Additionally, over half stated that they had had difficulty accessing sanitary products at some point due to cost. This impacts severely on the education, welfare, and dignity of women in New Zealand. Sanitary products of different types should be partially or wholly funded by the Government to enable women to continue in education and work.

Rationale:

KidsCan performed a survey in 2018 of approximately 5000 Kiwi women and girls.¹ 23.6% of women responded that they had missed school or work due to a lack of access to sanitary products. Approximately one in three respondents stated that they had to prioritise food over sanitary products. Of those respondents under the age of 17, 29% said they had missed school or work due to having their period and a lack of access to sanitary products. KidsCan also revealed that some girls take the contraceptive pill simply so they do not have a period.² Beyond education, women who have suffered economic abuse have also stated that money to access sanitary items was routinely withheld or restricted.³

There are numerous charities working to alleviate period poverty in New Zealand through a range of initiatives. My Cup has a Buy One Give One programme which funds the distribution of menstrual cups to those in need.⁴ Dignity NZ also has a buy one gift one scheme where businesses can purchase a subscription to have sanitary products delivered to their workplace, while an equivalent number are gifted to girls in schools.⁵ KidsCan also provide sanitary products to schools.⁶

Green MP Golriz Ghahraman stated in 2017 that period poverty in New Zealand should be treated as a Human Rights issue.⁷ This was echoed by the Human Rights Commission's Dr. Jackie Blue who said that "women and girls should not be facing preventable barriers".⁸ Applications to Pharmac were also made to fund sanitary items but were rejected as sanitary items were not deemed to be either medicines or medical devices and thus did not fall under Pharmac's umbrella.⁹

Period poverty in New Zealand is a major issue affecting the ability of girls and women to get an education, to go about their day-to-day lives, and affecting their dignity as human beings. No one should have to use toilet paper or cardboard or socks because they cannot afford sanitary items and yet this is routinely happening in this country.¹⁰ We believe it is necessary for the Government to fund sanitary products in schools and education centres to help to alleviate this problem.

Objectives:

The objectives of this remit are broad in scope:

¹ <https://www.kidscan.org.nz/news/kidscan-survey-exposes-extent-of-period-poverty-in-new-zealand>

² <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/some-girls-now-take-pill-stop-their-bleeding-charity-says-period-poverty-forcing-kiwi-desperate-sanitary-measures>

³ <http://goodshepherd.org.nz/media/1975/economic-abuse-in-new-zealand-gsnz-2018.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.mycup.co.nz/our-social-mission-mycupnz/>

⁵ <https://www.dignitynz.com/what-we-do>

⁶ https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12151438

⁷ <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/period-poverty-human-rights-issue-says-green-mp-golriz-ghahraman-some-girls-miss-school>

⁸ <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/period-poverty-human-rights-issue-says-green-mp-golriz-ghahraman-some-girls-miss-school>

⁹ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/91695342/pharmac-rejects-funding-bid-for-sanitary-items-on-grounds>

¹⁰ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/103341262/women-in-period-poverty-using-socks-as-sanitary-pads>

- Challenge the Government to improve on their support for people with periods. This may include funding for sanitary products in schools and other education centres as we believe this is a productive way to provide support to a wide community that includes vulnerable people who may have limited options
- Coordinate with local government about whether they have ideas specific to their communities
- Raise awareness on the problem of period poverty in conjunction with other organisations such as KidsCan.

Suggested Action Plan:

- 1) Coordinate between branches and wider organisations to establish the needs of different communities, for example, some communities may have a greater need for disposable sanitary products while others may prefer sustainable options such as reusable pads or cups
- 2) Prepare a letter or petition to the Government asking them to fund the provision of sanitary products in schools and education centres
- 3) Continue to raise awareness of the problem of period poverty and provide information as to where people can discreetly access help as needed.

Remit 4: Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030)

That NCWNZ encourages the New Zealand Government:

1. *To work in collaboration with civil society and other stakeholders from academia and the private sector towards a whole-of-Government and whole-of society approach in the active implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*
2. *To undertake, or contribute to, regular Voluntary National Reviews to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) meeting under the auspices of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), with meaningful engagement of stakeholders from civil society, academia and the private sector.*
3. *To ensure strong national accountability mechanisms, crucial to make sure Government delivers on the promises they've made.*
4. *To establish an SDG 5 Fund – a financing tool focused on supporting women's rights organisations to lead the transformational change required to implement the SDGs commitment to women's rights and gender equality.*

Proposer: NCWNZ Board

Seconded: Environment and Climate Change Committee

Rationale:

This remit was raised in urgency at the 2018 AGM and whilst it was not passed it was clear that many supported it.

From 2000 to 2015 the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) provided an important international development framework and achieved success in areas such as reducing poverty and improving health and education in lower income countries. In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the UN's 193 Member States. They expand beyond the scope of the MDGs to apply to all countries, including New Zealand, and embrace 17 inter-connected goals, also known as Agenda 2030. This Agenda recognises "that social, economic and environmental factors, as well as peace and justice are interconnected and vital for sustainable development and

the elimination of poverty.” To achieve the goal of “no-one left behind” by 2030 requires the public and private sectors, and civil society to work together in new ways.

All the goals have specific targets and indicators and were developed through an inclusive process, involving many communities and levels of society around the globe.

SDG 5 is to achieve equality and empower all women and girls and is similar in many ways to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). UN Women has recently introduced Step It Up with the tagline “Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality”. This initiative specifically asks governments to make national commitments to address challenges that hold women and girls back. This is why NCWNZ should lead a call for an SDG 5 fund.

SDG 13 is to achieve climate action. Urgent action to halt climate change and deal with its impacts is integral to the successful implementation of the SDGs. Collectively, the three post-2015 agendas for action, the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction provide the foundation for sustainable, low-carbon and resilient development under a changing climate. Achieving the primary goal of the Paris Agreement to keep the average global temperature rise well below 2C degrees and as close as possible to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels - is vital to the achievement of all three Agendas. As Obama said, “Climate change has the power to prevent us reaching all or any of our goals.” Climate change raises significant human rights issues that affect women and children more and including those of other genders. Women as agents for change in climate action and resilience have a key role to “step it up” in climate change – both in leadership by women, but also in leadership for women.

An initiative like Step It Up provides an innovative and global framework for New Zealand to use to support much needed national action and thinking in order to achieve gender equality. Key to implementation is the presentation of a National Voluntary Review by each government, with input from NGOs and businesses, to the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC. In some countries like Australia, civil society and others have contributed shadow reports.

Currently NCWNZ has no specific SDG policy or framework. With reporting from New Zealand due in June 2019, we would like to see an NCWNZ policy developed to enable us to have an effective advocacy voice on this important UN framework, with key messages that can be used in all relevant submissions and oral submissions to government and other agencies. This would also reflect SDG 17, to strengthen the implementation of the SDGs and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Further information:

- <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>
- <http://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up/about>
- <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>
- <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates>
- <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/90657034/nzs-highest-rate-of-family-violence-in-the-developed-world--amy-adams-has-had-enough>

Remit 5: Equality in Early Childhood Education

That NCWNZ advocates for the need to increase the number of male teachers entering the Early Childhood Sector in Aotearoa to ensure a robust, gender balanced education sector that supports gender diversity and a more fair and equitable Aotearoa.

Proposer: Hibiscus Coast Branch

Rationale:

As a country that prides itself on being at the forefront of gender equality there has been no sustained efforts made to address the gender imbalance in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector (Dr Farquhar: ChildForum Early Childhood Education Nationwide Network).

In 2015 (latest Ministry figures available) the percentage of male teachers in the ECE Sector was 2% of the total workforce. This actually represents a downward trend from earlier statistics. Consequently, children who attend an ECE service are not being exposed to ideas about gender identity and there is little opportunity for them to experience or experiment with healthy concepts of identity.

When males are represented in a particular work sphere this has benefits for all participants (particularly women) as their work is then able to be valued according to what a man would be paid in the same or similar sphere- the current measure for determining wage equality between the genders. The ChildForum Survey 2012 reported that an effect of having more men represented in the ECE sector would be for parents to place a higher value on early childhood education.

The ChildForum Survey's findings concluded that overall most female ECE teachers considered that an increase in male teachers in the sector would:

- benefit children's access to male role models
- benefit dad and male caregiver participation in their child's ECE programme
- benefit children's behaviour and social skills
- benefit children's physical skills and development
- benefit staff relationships /team dynamics
- benefit children's learning experiences/outcomes
- benefit the social status of early childhood work.

Having more men working in the ECE sector would normalize the importance of a more gender balanced ECE sector and in fact a more gender balanced education sector at every level.