

## Standing Committees and their Conveners

1

**BRANCHES AND STANDING COMMITTEES** See By Law 12. The 11 Standing Committee Conveners are elected at Conference. Branches are able to nominate women as conveners. Conveners may have been a representative at a Branch, or a member of a Nationally Organised Society. Branches should make contact with Standing Committee Conveners residing in their area, offer support, and consider inviting them to become Honorary Members if they are not already members.

Standing Committee Conveners may want to consult widely which could include Branch input. The Conveners establishes a nucleus committee in the local area which may or may not involve representatives from the local Branch. The nucleus group includes women with particular expertise in the portfolio.

Branches are able to, and should if at all possible, nominate woman to each Standing Committee prior to every Conference. These women are known as corresponding members, and while they may consult the Branch they are not compelled to do so. Corresponding members provide regional input into the work of the standing committees.

### 4. Guidelines - Standing Committee Conveners

#### Introduction

The Standing Committees are the powerhouse of the organisation. Members of the committee have an interest in, and in some cases, the expertise in, the particular subject matter of the committee. The committee process as outlined below has the ability to disseminate to and gather information from women throughout the country. This enables NCWNZ to say with confidence that it represents the views of a diverse range of women.

The quality of the work (and consequently our capacity to influence policy in New Zealand) is highly dependent on the hard work of our Standing Committees. The ability of a Convener to gain expert knowledge by linking with women throughout the country is the key to successful Standing Committees.

This document should be read in conjunction with the **Terms of Reference for Standing Committees 1998-2000** and **Guidelines for Standing Committee Members** which are also in the Information File.

The parts of the Constitution relating to Standing Committees are –

Rule II	The Objects of NCWNZ
Rule VIII	The Status of Conveners of Standing Committees
By Law 12(a)	The Duties of Standing Committees
By Law 12(b)	Membership of Standing Committees

How Conveners work depends to some extent on the makeup of their nucleus committee, but the decision is yours. The responsibility rests with the Convener, but you may choose to delegate some tasks, eg maintaining a regular newspaper clipping file.

Following are the questions most often asked by Conveners:

### **What is the time commitment?**

In general, Conveners report a half-day per week is the minimum. The workload, and hence the time commitment, varies with government policy, NCWNZ priorities and your particular portfolio.

If you feel at any particular time that there is too much work to be able to do it well, talk with your Board Member about prioritizing the tasks. Even when you have agreed to do a piece of work, if other submissions are clearly more important, then it may be sensible to revisit the decision and take no further action.

In general your workload will include –

- Responding to worksheets issued from National Office. Priority 1 issues are a **must** and Priority 2 can be done if you have time and interest.
- Mailing out information and a newsletter to your corresponding members monthly (maybe more frequently for urgent material). A copy of submissions made by your Standing Committee should be sent to all the members of your committee (these are photocopied in NO and included in regular mailouts).
- A monthly meeting of your nucleus committee (with occasional extra meetings for urgent material).
- Reporting to the Board of Management. This meets six times a year and the dates are in the NCWNZ Calendar (sent out with the February Circular). The report should be at the National Office at least 10 days before the meeting so it can be posted to Board members. Make sure your Board member is well briefed on the matters you want brought to the Board's attention.
- Responding to requests from the International Council of Women (ICW). Typically it will be requests to comment on the ICW Plan of Action from the Convener of that Committee and to prepare a report on the work of your Committee for the triennial ICW Conference. These requests will come from National Office and are co-ordinated through the NCWNZ International Secretary.

### **What authority do I have?**

#### **(a) In relation to the public?**

You are an office holder in the National Council of Women. However, you may not speak on behalf of the Council without the express permission of the National President. You may prepare press releases and supporting material for the President to release. You may then be asked to be available (or to appoint someone from your committee to be available) for expert comment. You will need to be thoroughly conversant with the organisation's policy in your area (*107 Years of Resolution* is a good place to start). You have a Board member appointed to your Committee and she is a ready source of advice and support.

#### **(b) In relation to the organisation?**

You, in consultation with your Committee, are the acknowledged expert in your field. You are expected to know the major issues, track emerging issues, and know how NCWNZ policy has developed. You also set priorities for work. This might be in terms of proactive work e.g. deciding that you want some particular area/s developed during the coming year.

You should also advise National Office on the reactive work, ie submissions, in terms of whether NCWNZ has relevant policy, relevant knowledge or expertise, and it can be done in time.

**(c) In relation to your committees?**

The selection of membership of your nucleus committee is yours within the constraints of By Law 12(b). It is essential that the makeup of the Committee should bring "consumer" experience and if possible a range of expertise and views. You can always consult outside for expert information.

You will receive a list of the corresponding members approved by the Board and you should seek to establish a good working relationship with them. Your encouragement and enthusiasm is infectious.

**(d) The wider membership?**

The membership depends on your Committee for work in this area. You are also expected to take an interest in other areas of NCWNZ work and work with other Standing Committees on matters of mutual interest. The editor of the Circular welcomes short reports of what your committee is working on, items of interest in your field and Action Items seeking input from the membership. The deadline is the 8th of the month preceding publication. Be careful that you provide accurate complete information.

**(e) Your successor?**

You should be on the lookout for a possible successor and inform the Board of potential candidates.

At the conclusion of your term of office, you must pass on your files to your successor. These include the Register of Resolutions, your Information File, a copy of ICW Resolutions and current Plan of Action, your file of submissions and reports, including CDs.

**What help can I get?**

**(a) National Office**

Your Board member is your first line of assistance for advice and support for your ongoing work. National Office is also available to answer questions and supply materials, eg additional documents, photocopy a section from a Statute. If in doubt ask.

**(b) Training**

NCWNZ has training days. National Executive meetings and Conference also give you the opportunity to network with other Conveners. If you hear of a meeting you believe to be integral to your portfolio you may make prior application for assistance with the attendance costs. This is not always possible. If you are asked to attend a meeting on behalf of the Council, you should ensure that you are briefed, receive all the papers, and that you make a report to National Office, setting out the details of the meeting and particularly identifying the implications for action by NCWNZ.

**(c) Writing submissions**

This is a major feature of your work and you will receive regular requests from National Office.

A guide to writing submissions is contained in the Information File.

Your Committee's expert knowledge of both NCWNZ policy and your portfolio is your strength. You should give your corresponding members every opportunity to contribute and, where time permits, you should consult the wider membership through the Circular. Because time is often limited, you should also develop fast track ways of responding to requests for information. Do not ask National Office to request an extension of time unless it is absolutely necessary.

**(d) Financial**

You will have a small budget for postage and copying. Submit a claim form every 2 months.

**(e) Relief**

If you are to be away, or unavailable for some reason, let National Office know as soon as possible who you have nominated from your nucleus committee as your deputy or proxy.

If you are getting overloaded, do ask for help early. Your Board member is the first line of assistance.

You are working for NCWNZ so we aim to support you as much as we can.

## **5. Guidelines - Standing Committee Members**

Standing Committees were set up in 1970 to strengthen the work of NCWNZ by making better use of the interest and expertise among its members. The parts of the Constitution relating to Standing Committees are –

**Rule II Objects:**

1. To unite organised societies of women for mutual counsel and co-operation, and all that makes for the good of humanity.
2. To promote the spiritual, moral, civil and social welfare of the community.
3. To work for such conditions of life as will assure to all the opportunity for full and free development.
4. To work for the social, legal and economic advancement of women.
5. To collect and redistribute information of service to the community.
6. To form a link with the National Councils of Women of other countries, through the International Council of Women.

**Rule VIII Special Officers:**

Special Officers shall be

1. Standing Committee Conveners of a number to be determined by Conference.
2. The Convener of the Parliamentary Watch Committee
3. Five members of the Parliamentary Watch Committee

**By Law 12**

- (a) The duties of Standing Committees shall be:
- (i) Studying questions raised by Branches and/or Nationally Organised Societies, suggesting remits arising from such study or proposing other action.
  - (ii) Providing background material for remits accepted by the Board of Management
  - (iii) Studying proposed legislation in their field.
  - (iv) Drafting submissions to Parliamentary Committees, Commissions, etc.
  - (v) Preparing informative material for circulation to Branches and Nationally Organised Societies and providing them with background material on matters of concern to the Council.
  - (vi) Suggesting follow-up to Council for action.
  - (vii) Responding to requests from the conveners of ICW Standing Committees.
- (b) (i) Members of Standing Committees shall be nominated by Branches and Nationally Organised Societies from among their members prior to Conference.
- (ii) Each Branch and Nationally Organised Society may nominate one person to each Standing Committee, except that upon election of the Convener a nucleus committee shall be formed from the members of the Council or affiliated societies resident in her area.
  - (iii) A Convener may, with the consent of the Board of Management, consult as advisors on specific topics, persons who are not members of the Council.
  - (iv) Members of Standing Committee shall serve only until the following Conference but may be re-nominated.
  - (v) A Former Convener shall be a member for one year after her term of office ceases.
  - (vi) The Board of Management shall appoint one of its members to each Committee
  - (vii) A Member who fails to respond to three consecutive requests from her Convener shall be deemed to have resigned. The Convener shall notify the National Secretary who shall inform the member's Branch or Nationally Organised Society.

## Membership

A Standing Committee consists of -

- The Convener, who is elected at the biennial Conference.
- Corresponding members who are nominated by Branches or NOS, prior to each biennial Conference.
- The Nucleus Committee, the members of which are nominated by the Convener from her local Branch(es) and NOS members resident in her area.
- A Board member appointed to the Committee.
- The former Convener (where applicable) for one year after her term of office ends.

## Work

The work of NCWNZ is divided into 3 levels –

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Level 1 | “proactive” work which is determined by the Targeted focus as set by the membership   |
| Level 2 | “reactive” work which is in response to discussion documents and proposed legislative changes through Bills from Parliament                             |
| Level 3 | “ad hoc” work which may be undertaken by a small group of women with expertise in a particular topic and not necessarily driven by a Standing Committee |

## What is expected of standing committee members?

The main activities of the Standing Committees members are:

- responding to requests for advice, comment and background material from the Convener.
- assisting the Convener in other ways, eg attending a local meeting on a current issue, assisting with the minutes of a nucleus committee meeting or production of the Committee’s newsletter.

## Communication

- This is usually with the Convener, who works with the Board of Management and reports to national meetings.
- Committee members are nominated by, but do not represent Branches or NOS, but they may draw on the knowledge and experience of their Branch or NOS and they may keep their Branch or NOS informed about the Standing Committee's interests and activities.
- Send documents to National Office electronically in “Word” or in body of e-mail.

## Responsibilities

To ensure an effective Standing Committee members need to –

- Respond promptly to requests from their Conveners. Time limits should be complied with as they are usually set outside NCWNZ’s control. Sometimes the deadlines are very tight and it may happen that the Convener is unable to consult with everyone over a particular issue. Members’ opinions are therefore very important when there is time for proper consultation.

- Reply to all letters from Conveners, even in cases when they feel they have not much, or even anything to say. If a member fails to respond to three consecutive requests they will be deemed to have resigned.
- Bring to the Committee's attention (through the Convener) matters of concern within the Committee's field of interest.

## 6. Terms Of Reference - Standing Committees 2002 - 2004

This document needs to be read in conjunction with the **Guidelines for Standing Committee Conveners**.

### I PRINCIPLES

Standing Committees:

- Reflect NCWNZ policy and the consumer view
- Reflect the principles and philosophy of the Treaty of Waitangi
- Are guided by the principles in the Beijing Platform for Action
- Respond to international issues through ICW
- Consider the effects on youth, and people with disabilities

### A. II DUTIES

These are laid down in By Law 12(a) of the NCWNZ Constitution.

### III TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### CONSUMER AFFAIRS

- Monitor all matters in relation to standards, costs, safety and new technologies. Safeguarding the well-being of families is of paramount importance.
- Maintain close contact with Consumer Organisations to encourage and support their influence of government and industry decisions affecting the consumer.
- Promote understanding and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in New Zealand at all levels and in particular as it affects the media, business ethics, biotechnology, service costs, food safety and technological research.

#### ECONOMICS

- Contribute an economic component to the development of NCWNZ policy.
- Comment on the economic implications of proposed legislation and policies.
- Inform members about current economic and financial issues especially as they concern women.

#### EDUCATION

- Promote equal access for all learners to quality, lifelong education regardless of race, age, sex, belief, needs, where they live or their socio-economic status.
- Promote the welfare and well-being of all learners and their families, whanau and caregivers.
- Promote the allocation of sufficient resources for, and the monitoring of the effect of educational changes and opportunities at all levels.

- Promote the provision of a wide ranging and realistic curriculum which meets the needs of all members of the population culturally, socially and economically.
- Lobby for national monitoring to maintain the highest possible quality of education.
- Emphasise the importance of pre-service and in-service teacher education at all developmental levels.
- Encourage parents, whanau and the community to participate and be involved in all facets of education.

#### **EMPLOYMENT**

Affirm the right of all women to work in the paid workforce, in industry and the professions. This includes: equal pay and equal training opportunities, equal employment opportunities with the right of redress against discrimination, equal pay for work of equal value, equal representation on all employment related Boards, councils and working parties and equal conditions of employment, including paid training leave, sick leave and holidays.

- Recognise the voluntary contribution women make to the economy and its value to our society.
- Support and lobby for quality training facilities and programmes for women, including ease of access to quality health care and child care facilities.
- Affirm the right to equal application and payment of ACC payments, benefits, pensions and other statutory payments.
- Promote the right to be treated as an individual under law and not as a dependent or in a domestic relationship.
- Recognise health and safety matters in the workplace.
- Consider the unique situation of young women as they undertake post-school training and education, and participate in the workforce.

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

- Help NCWNZ members to be aware of issues concerning the environment in the broadest sense (including physical, biological, cultural and spiritual), and seek their views.
- Educate, support and encourage NCWNZ members to be involved in environmental matters at personal, local, international and national levels.
- Encourage branches to monitor the environmental issues in their community and urge them to express their views to the relevant bodies.
- Study and respond to papers and new legislation affecting the environment.

#### **FAMILY AFFAIRS**

- Monitor all issues which affect family life
- Educate, support and encourage NCWNZ members to be aware of family issues.
- Advocate better conditions and policies for families.

#### **HEALTH**

- Gather and study all information on health issues, especially potential changes within the health system and inform members of these.
- Update reference material as changes occur.



**JUSTICE AND LAW**

- Be aware of all of the issues concerning crime, the justice system, penalties and punishments.
- Research issues, especially those affecting girls and women.
- Propose related topics for NCWNZ members to study
- Promote legislation beneficial to women.
- Monitor and continue to advance the status of women.

**PUBLIC ISSUES**

To collate information and make comment or submissions on behalf of NCWNZ on parliamentary bills, discussion documents and any matter falling within the ambit of the public issues standing committee

- To focus responses on any of the above matters on the outcomes which serve the interests of women, children and families.
- To consider and comment or submit on the following issues;
  - Women in decision-making
  - Election systems, processes, and costs
  - Governance & legislative processes
  - Driver education and licensing
  - Privacy Issues
  - Public transport, driver education and licensing, roading, road safety and regulations
  - Ethics
  - Biculturalism
  - The Treaty of Waitangi & Waitangi Tribunal
  - And any other public issue which affects the women of New Zealand
- To involve members and invited experts, through their contributions, of factual credible information and examples to provide a diverse and well resources input into submissions and comments being forwarded form this working party, on behalf of NCWNZ.

**SOCIAL ISSUES**

- Monitor all matters which deal with the well-being of society.
- Educate, support and encourage NCWNZ members to be aware of social issues.
- To advocate social policies for a better society.

**PARLIAMENTARY WATCH COMMITTEE****I PRINCIPLES**

These will be as detailed above for the Standing Committees.

**II DUTIES**

These are as laid down in By Law 11 (a).

**III TERMS OF REFERENCE**

PWC is an elected committee of 5 members plus a convener. Members can be situated anywhere in New Zealand. It's role is:

- to provide resources from NCWNZ's library, statutes, to assist standing committee in making a submission;
- final checking of all submissions on legislation;
- appearing at select committee hearing when necessary;
- from time to time preparing a submission which does not fit within any standing committee portfolio.

## 7. TOPICS LIST - STANDING COMMITTEES

### Consumer Affairs

advertising, *biotechnology*, broadcasting standards, *business ethics*, consumer protection, costs of services, *energy*, food safety, media watch, *nutrition*, product standards, *scientific & technological research*, telecommunications, *privatisation*.

### Economics:

ACC, asset testing, *benefits*, *energy*, feminisation of poverty, *family finance/household income*, financial services, insurance, inflation, investments, *matrimonial property*, pensions, privatisation, rural development, savings, superannuation, *study grants*, taxation, trade, *tourism*, *unpaid work*.

### Education

Absenteeism, curricula, early childhood education, funding, *health education*, monitoring and testing, occupational training, school facilities, school staffing, special education, *study grants*, teacher conditions of employment, teacher training, tertiary education.

### Employment

ACC, access to employment, *occupational health and safety*, employment equity, *occupational training*, parental leave, part time employment, *tourism*, unemployment, unemployment benefit, women's employment opportunities, youth training and employment.

### Environment

afforestation, climate, conservation, *energy*, *hazardous substances*, marine life, national parks and other reserves, *public transport*, pollution, resource management, *scientific & technological research*, town planning, *tourism*, water.

### Family Affairs

adoption, *care of the aged*, *child abuse*, child development, *child health-physical and emotional*, children in need of care, Domestic Purposes Benefit, *domestic violence*, divorce and separation, *family finance/household income*, guardianship, maintenance and child support, *matrimonial property*, parenting, rights of the child, special needs children, *unpaid work*, welfare workers. Youth issues, - including youth suicide & crime

### Health

abortion, ACC, accident prevention, *biotechnology*, *care of the aged*, *child health*, community care, conditions of employment in the health sector, contraception, dental care, domiciliary services,

*hazardous substances, health education, human reproductive technology, management of health services, maternity services, medical ethics, medical research, mental health, nutrition, occupational health and safety, sexually transmitted diseases, sterilisation, training of workers in the health sector, youth suicide.*

11

### **Justice & Law Reform**

a) Crime:- to include *child abuse, domestic violence, gangs, guns, juvenile crime, paedophilia, pornography, sex crimes, victims, violence in the media, youth crime.*

b) Courts: - to include appointment of judges, conduct of courts, court officials, evidence of children, juries, legal aid, tribunals.

c) Penalties and Punishments: - to include community sentencing, indeterminate sentences, length of sentences, parole, periodic detention, prisons, police.

### **Public Issues**

biculturalism, driver education and licensing, *ethics*, legislative processes, election costs, election processes, local government, multiculturalism, parliament, privacy, *public transport*, referenda, roading, *road safety*, transport regulation, Treaty of Waitangi, Waitangi Tribunal, women in decision making

### **Social Issues**

Alcohol:- to include abuse, advertising, drinking age, drinking hours, drinking & driving, licensing hours. Disabled persons:- to include access, accommodation, benefits and allowances, education, employment. Drug abuse; Gaming; Housing: - to include accommodation supplement, availability, cost, rental, special needs. Migrants; Refugees; *Road safety*; Social policies of the Government; *Unpaid work*; Voluntary work.

**Note:** The items in italics are included in more than one committee.

## REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

### CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Consumer Affairs Standing Committee has, over the past year, continued to be involved with many and varied consumer-related issues and concerns. Also, preparing submissions or overlapping with other Standing Committees to provide input on many other topics requiring a consumer viewpoint, continues to be an interesting and challenging experience. Comments and feedback, when received in response to a direct request, or Action Items for submission writing which were informative, provided a diversity of opinion and comment and were greatly appreciated.

Submissions prepared and submitted over the last year have included:

- *Proposed Implementation of Mandatory Water Efficiency Labelling* (Ministry of Consumer Affairs);
- *Mandatory Fortification of the Food Supply with Iodine* (FSANZ);
- *Easter Trading and Holidays Legislation* (Department of Labour);
- *Review of Tobacco Displays in New Zealand* (Ministry of Health);
- *Proposed Licence Criteria for Floor Care Products* (NZ Ecolabelling Trust).

A lighter submission workload over the first half of the year!

Historically, Consumer Affairs has made comment on and prepared many submissions on food safety issues addressed by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA). The Domestic Food Review has been a significant long-term project to develop a food regulatory programme across all sectors of the NZ domestic food industry. NZFSA is introducing Food Control Plans on a voluntary basis for some sectors of the food industry in mid-2008. As the Food Bill will not complete the Parliamentary process for a mid-2008 start as proposed, NZFSA are working to find ways to implement components of the system voluntarily under the current legislation. Food sectors intended for registration in Year 1 of transition include: food service on-site and off-site catering; general food service for immediate consumption e.g. home delivery, take-away or on premises; fresh salad manufacturers (ready-to-eat); providers to vulnerable populations e.g. infant formula.

When the new Food Bill is passed, the transition policy, implementation and registration will take place over the following five years. Greater protection for

the consumer will be a desired outcome by ensuring the safety, suitability and service of food across all sectors of the food industry.

Consumer Affairs has continued to maintain interest in both the Therapeutic Advertising Pre-vetting System (TAPS) and the Liquor Advertising Pre-vetting System (LAPS). The Code Consultative Committee meetings are held six-monthly at the Association of New Zealand Advertisers in Auckland and are attended by a representative from the Consumer Affairs Standing Committee. The meeting attendance comprises a small group of representatives from advertising agencies, pharmaceutical/medical companies, ALAC, Age Concern, Women's Health Action, NCW etc. Prior to the meetings, representatives are sent copies of advertisements for review and videos for previewing which explain the decision made re publications over the previous six months. The meetings are interesting and informative and the amount of work, the on-going monitoring and pre-vetting is carried out by the "expert" committee.

This work is extensive and certainly provides consumer protection by addressing the standards required for liquor and therapeutic advertising. Some examples are: unreadable mandatories, poor presentation, inappropriate or "hidden" references to the improvement of appearance by the use of a product, unsubstantiated therapeutic claims or exaggerated claims of health benefits, to name a few. The Advertising Standards Association made comments re the success of the complaints system and considered 80% of consumers know how and where to complain about advertisements which they found offensive, sexually explicit or of concern, particularly alcohol advertising covertly directed at youth.

Strengthening and maintaining contact with corresponding members and Nationally Organised Societies to gain a wider response network is a continuing goal for 2008-09. The Consumer Affairs Standing Committee has focused and will continue to focus on monitoring consumer rights and areas of special concern e.g. the increasing price of dairy products, continuing surveillance of dishwasher detergents concerning packaging and labelling, level of mercury in eco light bulbs and the lack of information re disposal and warning re toxicity.

### ENVIRONMENT

This has been a busy and interesting year, with some lengthy Bills requiring a lot of research.

The following Bills were received:

**Bioprospecting – harnessing the benefits for New Zealand:** this was fascinating. At the time of forming the Bill, New Zealand had only voluntary protection from overseas prospectors removing unique material from New Zealand, discovering some medical or other breakthrough with the material, and reaping billions of dollars profit without having to recompense New Zealand. This actually happened to Norway.

**The Marine Protected Areas Policy and Implementation Plan:** another complex submission. Although NCWNZ passed a resolution in 1992 supporting Marine Protected Areas (MPA), it was very disappointing in 2007 to find that we had five species of fish in danger of extinction. There was no record of the number or size of MPAs in the Policy, nor any details of the state of fish species. The conclusion of this submission stated:

“NCWNZ suggests that the next Report issued should be in the form of a progress report, with details of the numbers and areas of marine reserves, and a record of the increasing, or depleting numbers of fish.”

I was pleased to receive a report, a few weeks later, from the Ministry of Fisheries listing Benthic Protected Areas (deep sea, for Orange Roughy) with a map, but disappointed to find out later from ECO that these areas were mainly low biodiversity, and no use for fishing. I believe that this is changing now.

**Climate Change (Emissions Trading and Renewable Preference) Bill:** this covered methods of implementing the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), and listed who was liable. The Bill placed a 10 year moratorium on new fossil-fueled thermal electricity generation which was supported by NCWNZ.

Members thought that taxpayers should not be subsidising polluters, and that any action taken must result in the reduction of greenhouse gases. The conclusion stated that remedial efforts for climate change should be increased, and steps taken to ready the population for a change in lifestyle away from private cars.

**Biofuel Bill:** Again there had been previous submissions from 2001. With this Bill I changed my mind on the subject during the process of obtaining responses and researching biofuels. A great deal of negative publicity was released after the Bill was

circulated. Problems surfaced in Europe, with some biofuels being found to create more carbon dioxide emissions than fossil fuels, when growing, transport and production were taken into account. Also, in many areas biofuels replaced the growing of food.

NCWNZ supported only the ethical and sustainable production of biofuels. Amendments along these lines are now being considered by the Local Government and Environment Committee at Parliament. A successful oral submission was also made by the Parliamentary Watch Committee on the Biofuels Bill.

**NZ Coastal Policy Statement and Inquiry:** This was listed as a Discussion Document. There was support for the main objectives of this Statement: “People and communities to be able to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing through the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources in the coastal environment.” The precautionary approach was supported, and in conclusion the Policy was welcomed and an early start encouraged.

#### General:

As a follow on to last year's Annual Report, I see that Windflow Technology Ltd., the New Zealand windmill construction firm, have listed our suggestion of combining hydro with wind farms on their prospectus.

#### Social Issues

Six years ago I stood here for the first time in this role and said that I had had a very steep learning curve over that first year. Well I have now come to stand before you for the last time having completed the full term as convenor.

This last year would have to be the quietest year with mainly just Amendment Bills to reply to.

First up in August 2007 we had the **‘Social Assistance (Debt Minimisation) Amendment Bill.’** The Debt reduction refers to people on a benefit who are held in custody in remand or sentenced will have this information passed on to the Ministry of Social Development who will then be able to stop any benefit payments being paid.

We agreed that sentenced prisoners have their benefit cut but we saw several concerning points with this, firstly there is a danger that the family left to fend for

themselves could find themselves in trouble financially, with the sudden loss of the partners benefit, if there are not steps taken at the same time to adjust that persons benefit.

Secondly we were concerned at the wording 'or Detention in Prison'. Some people are in remand for a very short time before being released and are found to have been held under wrongful arrest or go on to be found not guilty. It can then take them several weeks to get back on to the benefit.

The third concern was in regard to students who could have their student allowance cut and have their studies disrupted. This would seem a very harsh penalty especially seeing that they are trying to improve themselves.

**Gambling Amendment Bill (No 2)** was next up and the need for this Bill shows us how the Harm Minimisation Bill is not working. We just replied to 1 Clause in this Bill which changed the wording so that the person who is appointed by Management to be responsible, while on Duty, for the running of the Casino, for implementing any of the law regarding Problem Gamblers. We agreed with this as so often owners, directors or manages do not have hands on in the day to day running.

We did not agree that the penalty be halved from \$10,000 to \$5000, as it will not be a deterrent at all.

Our next concern was with the keeping of records of 'Excluded Persons'. Each establishment has to keep these records so if asked they can produce them. We felt that this was not good enough and that these lists should be sent to the Governing Body at least bi-monthly. This way there would be an insight into the areas good controls were in place, and where the biggest problems lie. This figures should be then readily available to the Minister in charge of Gambling so they can monitor how these laws are upheld.

Gambling is still causing so much social harm that I am sure this will not be the last time we have to look at this problem.

We also made the submission that Advertising Gambling should not be allowed in any shape or form. (After all it worked for smoking).

The '**Misuse of Drugs (Classification of BZP)** Amendment Bill' was next and we returned a very

strong submission in support of this Bill to make BZP illegal. We had a number of very good illustrations of what this drug can do to users and the stories were not very pleasant.

We even managed to complete yet another Housing Bill in the '**Affordable Housing (Enabling Territorial Authorities) Bill**'. As far back as 1945 we have been asking that in all housing schemes the lower income groups should be catered for. With this in mind we approached this Bill with hope that the need for affordable housing was going to be addressed.

Unfortunately it did not go nearly far enough. Firstly before a Territorial Authority can use this Bill it needs to make a housing need assessment. We felt strongly that each authority should already be aware of the state of Housing in their area and also the Housing Ministry would no doubt have this information so why is there a need for the cost involved in this research. Then if it is found that there is a need the Authority 'may decide' to make affordable housing polices. The submission also pointed out that although affordable housing is seen as a problem for many of our larger cities, it is also needed in our tourist areas such as Queenstown where there is a large number of low-paid key workers such as cleaners, shop workers who often can only afford property out of town.

The final Bill that Social Issues replied to was again on where there was no time to seek replies from our membership, but one that we have many former submissions and resolutions to base our reply. The '**Sale Of Liquor (Objections to Application) Amendment Bill** addressed the issue of what should happen when either On-Licence or Off Licence Licences are applied for. Before a licence is applied for the applicant has to carry out an evaluation of the likely social impact, including monetary and non-monetary costs, on the area to which the application relates, and the reasons given for the costs and the impact of liquor consumption. As this evaluation has to be published at the same time as the application is made it will give clarity to the process. Our main concern with this is will the applicant be required to employ an independent evaluator or as the wording suggests are the applicants able to complete the evaluation, which could allow for a definite bias. Most applicants would not be qualified in analysing this type of information.

As for as off-licences are concerned, we also suggested that the evaluation should look at the proximity to other off-licence premises and not just be restricted to fitting the physical and location requirements, (such as schools, churches etc). This would cut down the proliferation of Off-licence establishments in the low socio-economical areas. As these small independent establishments have recently seen an increase in criminal activity, becoming the victims of fatal armed hold-ups, so it is of even greater importance that all applications for such a licence be considered very carefully.

We agreed that for people who are objecting, have 20 working days instead of the present 10 working days so they have time to make their own enquires.

We have still got two minor Bills that are awaiting a date that will be processed before my oral report.

#### **PARLIAMENTARY WATCH COMMITTEE**

During the year, PWC researched 93 items for the standing committees (43 items of legislation and 50 discussion documents). This was about 20% less than last year. The Committee members are rostered on a weekly basis to identify the resolutions and previous submissions relevant to the proposed new legislation or discussion document. PWC also wrote two submissions this year as there was no Health convener.

From these, 27 submissions on legislation were checked to ensure their consistency with NCWNZ policy and that the comments relate accurately to the intention of the Bill, and 13 oral presentations were made before Select Committee hearings. For the oral submission was on monetary reform, Board Member Margaret Cook joined us on a teleconference call.

To assist Conveners and Board Members, PWC wrote a paper on Action Item Essentials, to assist with the formulation of these.

Jean Fuller presented a paper to the Australian New Zealand Scrutiny of Legislation Conference on our involvement with the Select Committee process. This was very well received, and lead to a later meeting with visiting overseas politicians. PWC members regularly represented NCWNZ at meetings. This enables us to provide information to Conveners through meeting reports, and to provide the members' viewpoint on a diverse range of topics. Of

particular interest were the meetings on financial literacy, e-Government and community participation, MWA's international caucus, and trafficking. There were many people at meetings who are totally unaware of the work of NCWNZ.

Another activity we undertook this year was to meet with representatives of political parties to discuss the NCWNZ concerns about KiwiSaver. We achieved meetings with Hon Bill English (National Deputy Leader), Hon Peter Dunne (Minister of Revenue), Hon Tariana Turia (Maori Party), Judy Turner (United Future), Doug Woolerton (United First).

The work on reviewing resolutions being undertaken by two members of PWC was finalised. While challenging at times, this turned into a thoroughly enjoyable exercise and we appreciated the response to the paper circulated for Conference.

Anne McNickle withdrew from membership of PWC and her research skills were missed. . We also enjoyed the participation of Kaisa Wilson, who was interested in joining PWC but a change in job impacted on her availability. I warmly thank the PWC members for their willing contribution to ensuring the quality of NCWNZ submissions and for rearranging their commitments to appear before Select Committees. I especially thank retiring Committee member Helen Bruce, and Colleen Singleton who has been elected to the Board.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



A NCWNZ representative presented a paper to the Australian New Zealand Scrutiny of Legislation Conference on the public participatory process for engaging with the Select Committees. A further session was presented to a representative from the Bougainville Parliament; this and our latest request for educating Parliamentary officials and MPs on the public participatory process is included in Appendix 9.

Further examples include, a workshop on CEDAW for Zonta International in November 2009, a session for the Australia New Zealand Third Sector Research Conference (ANZTSR), the flyer for which is included under Appendix 11. Material generated for both presentations is available on the NCWNZ website as a toolkit for those providing training sessions on CEDAW to newcomers. This toolkit was used just last month by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions – women’s division for training purposes.

For over six years now, NCWNZ has been listed as one of a few organisations considered to be providing material for good practice in public participation: [www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/levels-of-participation/information-provision/](http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/levels-of-participation/information-provision/)

NCWNZ advances education through research. There are several systems in place for consulting our members and the general public. These include our action item process, and consultation via the GirlTalk Generations e-group which has now been replaced by our Generations Public Forum.

Under appendix 12, you will find examples of the analysis of input arising from GirlTalk-Generations e-group questions. Also included is the first report from the Generations Public forum, which is open to participation by men and women, with the feedback disaggregated according to “Generation”. This forum is available via our website.

Conveners also from time to time undertake independent research, which is supported by the national office systems. One example included under the appendix arises from the Education Standing Committee. Currently another piece of research is underway, an item from the Family Affairs Standing Committee on GST on Food.

*“The targeted foci identify and prioritise issues of importance to women, family and society. Much of the work undertaken within NCWNZ and specifically by the Standing Committees is decided upon based on its importance and/or relevance to the targeted foci. As an organisation we have moved away from assigning a priority number to issues and topics. Decisions are now based on issues and topics on which we can make an impact. That impact includes the education of the membership so that they can debate and make comment from an informed stance. NCWNZ members persist in being an exception to society’s general apathy in that they are interested and eager to be educated and to debate issues beyond the normal reporting of affairs.” Annual Report extract 2008*

The role of the Standing Committee Conveners and their Standing Committees undertake most of the analysis and report writing for submissions. It is through the commitment of the conveners, their nucleus committees and the network of corresponding members that NCWNZ is able to collect and represent the diverse view of NZ women in NCWNZ’s submissions. Committees report regularly through *The Circular*.

NCWNZ continues to make oral submissions to Select Committees primarily on issues where issues require emphasis or where additional information from Action Items has come in after the closing date. This is the final chance to stress important points that may have been made by NCWNZ before the Bill is reported back to Parliament. The Parliamentary Watch Committee (PWC) makes the majority of these presentations.

Appendix 13 includes information about the Standing Committees, the topics they work on, a sample of reports written for the National Meetings and other relevant information.