

Briefing to Incoming Minister

He whakamōhiotanga ki te Minita Hōu

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Ministry of Women's Affairs

October 2014



Briefing to the Incoming Minister for Women

Purpose and overview

This briefing provides an overview of the Women's portfolio. It outlines:

- issues requiring your attention in the next three months
- the status of New Zealand women in 2014
- opportunities for you as Minister for Women
- risks and challenges
- stakeholder engagement
- how we can support you.

The briefing aims to meet your immediate need for information and to begin to provide you with the advice and analysis required to create positive change for New Zealand women. It provides a foundation for further, more detailed briefings. Five supplementary briefings have been prepared for you, including a briefing on the organisation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (the Ministry).

We look forward to working with you.

Issues for your immediate attention

There are a number of work items that require your attention in the next three months.

You may wish to discuss changing the name of the Ministry to the Ministry for Women. This can be done easily.

You will be asked to sign a 2014 October Baseline Update submission for Vote Women Affairs before submission to the Minister of Finance by 1.00 pm on Wednesday, 15 October. Treasury requires all departments to provide an update of their baseline funding and forecast their financial expenditure each quarter. We will provide you with a full briefing on this process and requirements before Friday, 10 October.

In October, you will be asked to engage with the Ministry on the development of the Ministry's Four-Year Plan (4YP). By 20 November, you will receive a draft 4YP from the Ministry. You will need to endorse the final 4YP by Budget day in 2015.

In November, you are likely to be invited to attend a meeting of the Family Violence Ministerial Group, of which you are a member. The Ministry will provide you with a briefing on the agenda for the Ministerial Group meeting. The Ministerial Group oversees the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. The Chief Executive of the Ministry is a member of the Taskforce.

In November, you will have the opportunity to launch a handbook for employers in trade industries. The handbook has been developed by the Ministry to assist employers to attract and retain women in trade industries where there are skill shortages and women are under-represented. In October, the Ministry will brief you on the handbook and options for its release and launch.

In late 2014, the Minister for Social Development may ask you to contribute to the government response to the recommendations of the Social Services Select Committee's inquiry into the funding of specialist sexual violence services. The Ministry will brief you on the recommendations when they are released (the release date is unknown).

In late 2014, you will have the opportunity to launch a research report about preventing violence against Māori women. This report is new qualitative research undertaken by the Ministry to identify factors that support Māori women from ever becoming victims of violence.

You will start to receive requests for nominations to public sector boards. The Ministry will provide you with advice and support to manage these requests. The Ministry can provide you with potential nominees for any board at your request. Current vacancies include:

- The Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Trust has four vacancies for public sector trustees. The public sector trustees are jointly appointed by you and the Minister of Labour. There is no specific timeframe for initiating an appointment process for these trustees. You may wish to discuss this appointment process with the Minister of Labour.
- The Deputy Chief Censor's term of appointment expires on 31 July 2015. An appointment process for this role will be initiated in late 2014. This appointment is made by you and the Minister of Justice.

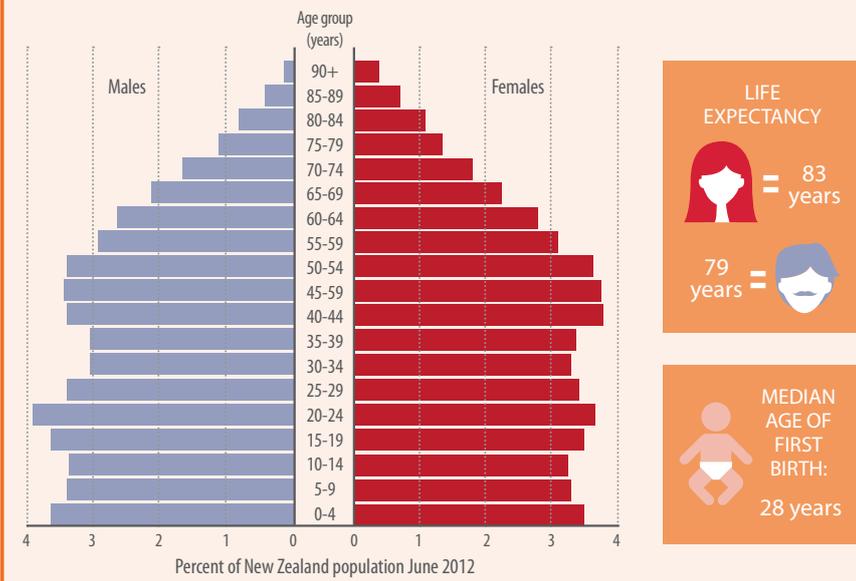
You also have an opportunity to nominate candidates for the Queen's Birthday Honours list by early January 2015. The Ministry will provide a briefing on proposed candidates to you in December 2014 and complete nomination forms for your selected candidates by early January.

The status of New Zealand women

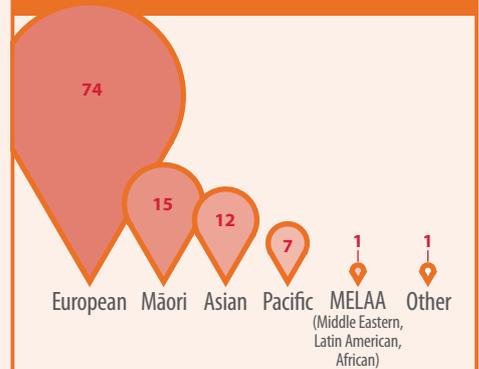
New Zealand women are diverse. Women's experiences, needs and priorities are not all the same. There are significant differences in outcomes among women, as well as between women and men. The following diagram provides an overview on the status of women.

New Zealand is well respected internationally for promoting women's rights and consistently ranks highly in respect of gender equality. Our expertise in gender issues is sought after by other countries. New Zealand is currently placed seventh out of 136 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2013.

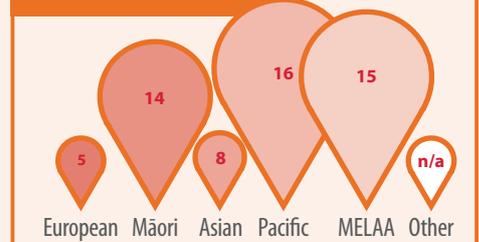
POPULATION PROFILE



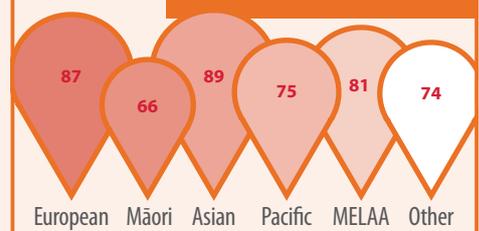
ETHNICITY OF WOMEN %



WOMEN'S RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT %



GIRLS' LEVEL 2 NCEA ACHIEVEMENT %



1 in 4 women

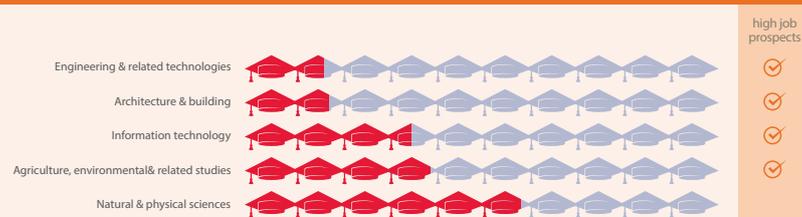
has experienced sexual violence some time in their lifetime



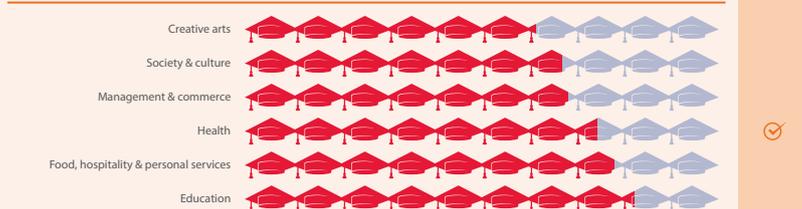
GOVERNANCE
Percentage of women on private and state sector boards



TERTIARY QUALIFICATIONS

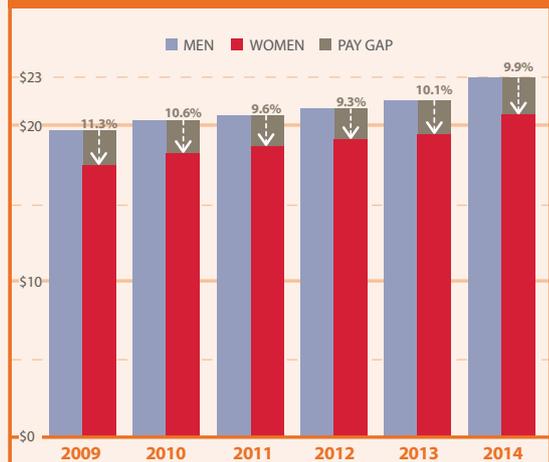


WOMEN GAINED 61% OF ALL QUALIFICATIONS IN 2013



INCOME

Median hourly earnings by gender, 2009–2013



Opportunities for you as Minister for Women

As Minister for Women you have broad responsibility for issues that affect New Zealand women. In this role you are well positioned to take an overarching view of policy issues across Government priorities and to add value by bringing a gender perspective to the policy process. You are not responsible for, or constrained by, any legislation.

There is a range of opportunities for you to shape the Women's portfolio and create positive change for women in New Zealand. There are opportunities within the Women's portfolio for you to take a lead on issues, and there is scope to address important issues for women by contributing to work led by other Ministers. The Ministry can assist you to do this by providing high-quality, evidence-based policy advice from a gendered perspective.

Our advice, to maximise your impact, is to:

- Discuss with the Chief Executive how to best use the Ministry's resources to balance Ministerial servicing with other external outputs. The Ministry is a small policy agency with an average of 28 full-time equivalent employees, and an operating budget of \$4.63 million.
- Enlist and influence stakeholders, including your Ministerial colleagues, public sector agencies and leaders in the private and community sectors, in a targeted and purposeful way. This will enable you to partner and leverage opportunities for collaboration and to influence decision-makers.
- Focus on a small number of priorities. The Women's portfolio is potentially broad. We advise investing in the following three priority issues that potentially have the greatest impact for women and New Zealand. The Ministry looks forward to discussing with you whether you would like to continue focusing on these priorities. The Ministry has prepared supplementary briefing papers on the three priority areas and on our international commitments relating to the status of women.

Increasing women's contribution to economic growth

Over the past 40 years, women's labour market participation and educational qualifications have increased significantly. However, there is still a gender pay gap of 9.9 percent. Women also tend to cluster in a narrow range of lower skilled and lower paid occupations, where future growth is not forecast.

There is potential for New Zealand's female labour force to address current and projected skill shortages and for women to achieve greater economic success, thereby increasing their family wellbeing.

The Ministry recommends focusing on productivity gains – how and where women work, rather than how much they work. Women and girls can be encouraged to train and work in occupations where high-growth is projected and where women are currently under-represented (for example, the rebuild of Canterbury, construction and trades, engineering, ICT). Educators and employers can invest in recruiting and retaining female students and employees.

Standing behind vulnerable women with low or no qualifications so they can make a skilled contribution should be a priority. Many women heading sole parent families are poor.

You can engage with and influence:

- your Ministerial colleagues as the Government develops strategic economic policy settings and initiatives, to increase women's training and contribution to occupations where significant skill shortages exist and industries where growth is predicted
- decision-makers (such as employers, careers advisors and leaders of educational institutions) to increase the visibility of women in non-traditional, high-growth occupations, address stereotypes and unconscious bias that present barriers to women's training and employment, address workplace practices and broker relationships between girls, educators and industry.

Increasing women's safety from violence

One in four New Zealand women experiences family or sexual violence in their lifetime. The economic and social costs of family violence are high. Violence against women is preventable.

Increasing women's safety from violence is an issue on which stakeholders, including your Ministerial colleagues, are likely to look to you for leadership. You are a member of the Family Violence Ministerial Group. You can work closely with your Ministerial colleagues to ensure that women's perspectives, and the impact of family violence and sexual violence on women, remain a central focus of policy and service development. The Women's portfolio can focus on what works to prevent violence against women including sexual violence, repeat victimisation and what works for Māori and Pacific women.

More women in leadership

There is compelling evidence that gender balance in governance and leadership correlates with better decision-making, organisational resilience and performance, and delivers economic and productivity gains. However, women are under-represented in leadership roles in the public and private sectors in New Zealand. At every successive management level, significant numbers of women with leadership potential drop out or their careers stall (the 'leaking talent pipeline'). We are not utilising our full talent pool.

You can do the following things to improve the participation of women in leadership positions in New Zealand:

- publicly promote the evidence regarding the benefits of gender diversity for business and governance
- lead and support initiatives to address leaks in the talent pipeline with your Ministerial colleagues and leaders in the public, private and community sectors
- work with your Ministerial colleagues and private sector champions to increase the number of women appointed to boards in the public and private sectors
- nominate women for appointment to public sector boards.

International commitments relating to the status of women

New Zealand is signatory to a number of international instruments in relation to the status of women and gender equality. The two main instruments are the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The Women's portfolio is responsible for co-ordinating progress reports, attending international fora and ensuring that New Zealand is fully compliant with our international obligations to improve the status of women.

As Minister for Women, you have the opportunity to represent the New Zealand Government to fulfil our international obligations. When attending international meetings, you have the opportunity to hold bilateral discussions with Ministers from other jurisdictions. The first significant commitment for you is to consider how you wish to be involved in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women which is meeting in March 2015 in New York to discuss progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Risks and challenges

A perennial challenge for the Women's portfolio is how to manage the breadth of policy responsibility for issues that affect New Zealand women. There is a risk that our impact is limited by spreading our attention too thinly across a range of issues that affect women. The Ministry's operating model is to focus on carefully selected priorities, to collaborate with influential stakeholders and to deliver high-quality evidence-based policy advice.

The quality of gender analysis across the public sector is variable. The Women's portfolio is responsible for bringing a gender perspective to the policy process. This is achieved by:

- identifying and engaging with influential stakeholders
- creating and promoting an evidence base and tools to address the issues that matter to women; membership on working groups (in the public, private and community sectors)
- commenting on policy and Cabinet papers; and publicly speaking about issues that matter to New Zealand women.

There is also a Cabinet Office requirement that all papers going to the Cabinet Social Policy Committee include a gender implications statement.¹ The role the Ministry has in monitoring and improving the capability of government agencies to undertake gender analysis is an issue for discussion.

Stakeholder engagement

As Minister for Women you will engage with a range of stakeholders across the public, business and community sectors. You will also have the opportunity to represent the New Zealand Government in a number of international fora.

You will engage with individuals and organisations that have a specific interest in the three priority areas. The supplementary briefing papers for each priority area provide more information about these stakeholders.

Ministerial colleagues

You will have the opportunity to work with your Ministerial colleagues. Ministers you are likely to engage with include the Ministers of Business, Innovation and Employment, Social Development, Justice, Police, Education, Health, Finance, Māori Development, Pacific Peoples, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Tertiary Education and State Services.

¹ Refer to Cabinet Office circular CO(02)2.

Community sector

The major non-government organisations (NGOs) you are likely to work with are:

- National Council of Women of New Zealand – advocates and lobbies on a broad range of issues
- Māori Women’s Welfare League – the main organisation representing Māori women’s interests nationally. It exists to support whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori to develop and build their social, cultural and economic foundations at the local, regional and national levels
- PACIFICA – focusing on Pacific women in New Zealand and the development of Pacific nations
- YWCA of Aotearoa New Zealand – international and national advocacy on issues affecting young women
- Rural Women New Zealand – a charitable, membership-based organisation supporting women in rural communities
- Zonta District 16 (New Zealand) – women executives and professionals working together to advance the status of women worldwide through service and advocacy
- UN Women – New Zealand’s National Committee of the United Nations entity which focuses on women's empowerment and gender equality.

Since 2004, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs has convened the Caucus on International Women’s Issues, a forum for government agencies and NGOs to work collaboratively on international issues relevant to the interests and wellbeing of women.

The Women’s portfolio works closely with a number of public sector agencies that have advocacy roles for example, the Human Rights Commission (HRC). Dr Jackie Blue, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner at HRC, is likely to contact you to discuss equity issues, including women’s participation in the economy and society, women in leadership and the gender pay gap.

Private sector

You are likely to engage with a range of business leaders such as Business New Zealand, Global Women, New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPWNZ), and large employers in trade industries such as Fletchers. The Ministry can brief you on these stakeholders and provide advice on an engagement strategy if this would be useful to you.

How the Ministry can support you

As a policy agency, we are focused on providing you with high-quality and evidence-based advice. The Ministry supports you to:

- engage with and influence your Ministerial colleagues and other decision-makers in government on policy matters
- engage with and influence leaders in the private and community sectors to improve outcomes for women
- provide nominations for public sector boards
- manage the Government's international reporting obligations in relation to the status of women.

The Ministry provides you with:

- an evidence base and credibility on current issues for New Zealand women
- advice, in the form of oral and written briefings
- advice on influential stakeholders in the government, private and community sectors
- support to host events to influence stakeholders, share knowledge and develop solutions
- Ministerial support services, including a Women's portfolio Private Secretary for your office, draft replies to Ministerial correspondence, draft responses to requests to you under the Official Information Act and draft responses to parliamentary questions
- administrative, advisory and research support for the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW). NACEW is an independent advisory body to you on women's employment.