

National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women: Terms of Reference 2019

1. Background

- 1.1 Established in 1967, the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW) (the Council) is a long-standing Ministerial advisory body. It has a track record of addressing issues of concern for women in employment. Its work has included addressing immediate employment needs, identifying emerging employment issues and undertaking research about concerns that may not currently be addressed by employers or government agencies. The Council has included two *contributing partner organisations* (the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU) and Business NZ) and links to five additional *partners* (the National Council of Women of New Zealand, the Māori Women's Welfare League, PACIFICA, YWCA, and Rural Women New Zealand). Prior to 2012 NACEW reported to the Department of Labour.
- 1.2 Historically, the Council was established to directly advise the Minister for Women (the Minister). Over time the Council developed its own priorities and work programme, and more recently has had a less direct relationship with the Minister. Following a review of its purpose and functions, the Council has been updated as an advisory body responsible directly to the Minister for Women. The Council is independent of the Ministry for Women (the Ministry), which provides a support (secretariat) role to the Council.
- 1.3 This Terms of Reference supersedes previous Terms of Reference.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The Council's purpose is to provide the Minister with high quality advice on employment issues for women and inform government policy development in this area that align with Ministerial priorities. Through its work it enables women's participation in employment, leading to greater economic independence and better outcomes for women.

- 2.2 The Council provides advice that assists the Minister and government in planning and delivering tangible results for New Zealand women by improving their employment outcomes.
- 2.3 The Council identifies emerging issues, providing a diverse range of views including knowledge about trends in employment.

3. Functions

- 3.1 The Council is charged with the following responsibilities:
 - a. Expressing views and making recommendations to the Minister on matters relating to the employment of women:
 - i. Identifying issues arising from current laws and regulations that affect the utilisation and/or participation of women in employment.
 - ii. Providing policy suggestions for engaging women in positive employment outcomes.
 - iii. Providing feedback on government agency performance.
 - b. Considering the views of Council partners and networks (as appropriate).
 - c. Identifying systems and strategies to improve outcomes for women in employment.
 - d. Supporting strategies to improve outcomes for women within the business community.
 - e. Being able to provide, or access, in-depth information on women in employment as needed.
 - f. Using their own networks to identify partnerships and collaborate with key stakeholders and provide feedback to the Minister on initiatives for women in employment from these groups.
 - g. Ensuring that matters of significance are brought to the Minister's attention.

4. Protocols

- 4.1 The Minister for Women will set out expectations annually, outlining the terms of reference, protocols and any other relevant expectations of the Council. The terms of reference will be reviewed at least once every three years.
- 4.2 Expectations of committee members:
 - a. Bring matters relating to women in employment to the attention of the Minister

- b. Bring perspectives on women in employment based on experience and interests.
 - c. Provide free and frank advice on women in employment while maintaining discretion beyond the Council membership.
 - d. Not disclose any information provided to the Council in confidence.
 - e. Declare any conflicts of interest.
 - f. Adhere to the convention of 'no surprises' policy at all times.
- 4.3 Government and Ministers retain the right to reject any advice provided by the Council. In addition, the Council will not publish the advice it gives to the Government. Public comment on Council matters will be made by the Chair and after advising the Minister.
- 4.4 On occasion the Council may consult with, and/or inform, *partners*, about particular issues relating to the employment of women with the approval of the Minister.

5. Membership

- 5.1 Composition of membership:
- a. Membership will include people with expertise and understanding of current and emerging issues on the employment of women.
 - b. Members will be selected for a combination of their individual skills, expertise, and networks.
 - c. The membership will aim to provide a diverse range of perspectives on the employment of women, which may include business, unions and women's organisations, and to reflect the increasing diversity of New Zealand society at any given time.
- 5.2 Specific member skill sets:
- a. Wide knowledge and experience of matters relating to the employment of women.
 - b. Strategic thinking.
 - c. A track record of results and a focus on outcomes.
 - d. Well-developed skills and experience in board or committee work.
 - e. Connections and networks related to the employment of women, including a global perspective.
 - f. Demonstrated judgement and the ability to work with and influence a wide range of people.
 - g. Ability to bring a specific perspective as required (e.g. Māori, Pasifika, science, technology).

6. Appointment

- 6.1 General appointment process:
- a. All members of the Council and the Chair are appointed by the Minister for a term of up to three years (through a public nominations process).

- b. The current contributing partner organisations, the NZCTU and Business NZ, will be allocated one member each on the Council. Each organisation will put forward three candidates for nomination, with the Minister making the final appointments.

6.2 Conditions of appointment:

- a. There will be a maximum of nine members at any time (and a minimum of seven).
- b. Members and the Chair may be reappointed from time to time. There is no limit to the length of service. Any reappointments are made at the Minister's discretion.
- c. Any member of the Council may resign at any time by advising the Minister in writing.
- d. The Minister may, by written notice, terminate the appointment of a member or the Chair.
- e. Council members will receive fees and allowances in accordance with the government's Fees Framework.
- f. From time to time, the Minister may alter or reconstitute the Council to ensure it meets the needs of the Minister.

7. Accountability and reporting

7.1 The Council is required to:

- a. Provide a six-monthly progress report to the Minister summarising any advice it has given to the Minister.
- b. Meet at least four times a year. Minutes of meetings will be maintained and will remain private and confidential. All members should endeavour to attend every meeting unless extenuating circumstances prove otherwise. The Minister will attend these meetings.
- c. A simple majority of members is needed to be present in order to have a quorum (including either the Chair or Deputy Chair).

7.2 The Minister will:

- a. Provide an annual expectations letter which sets out the terms of reference, the protocols and any other relevant expectations of the Council.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Chair will act as a member of the Council as well as fulfilling the position of the Chair for a period of twelve months or as specified in the notice of appointment.

8.2 The Chair will be responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that the Council develops and implements processes and systems to maintain its effectiveness.
- b. Establishing an agenda for meetings with the Secretariat.
- c. Overseeing meetings.

- 8.3 The Chair will be supported in this role by the Ministry.
- 8.4 The Minister may appoint a Deputy Chair to assist the Chair in his or her absence, and as required from time to time.
- 8.5 The Deputy Chair is also expected to:
- a. Take over the role of the Chair when the Chair is unavailable.
 - b. Determine the appropriate action if the Chair has a potential conflict of interest.
 - c. Attend meetings the Chair has with the Minister (as required).
 - d. Provide support to the Chair to facilitate the running of the committee and so the objectives of the Chair can be met.

9. Conflict of interest

- 9.1 Members must:
- a. Perform their functions in good faith, honestly and impartially and avoid situations that might compromise their integrity or otherwise lead to conflicts of interest.
 - b. Sign a declaration of conflicts of interest upon commencement of their term. Every conflict of interest must be recorded in the Conflict and Declaration of Interest Register.
 - c. Members are to advise the Chair of a matter that could be seen as a potential conflict of interest.

10. Administration

- a. Secretariat support will be provided from the Ministry for Women and the Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment.
- b. The Ministry for Women will undertake all administrative responsibility, such as preparation of meeting agendas, taking of minutes, planning of meetings, as well as preparing papers as directed by the Council and following up on actions as required.
- c. Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment will contribute to the preparation of papers for the meeting and will provide access to appropriate data where available.
- d. The Minister shall undertake a satisfaction survey of the Council every twelve months.
- e. The Council will meet with the Minister up to four times every year.
- f. In addition, the Council will be expected to communicate prior to Ministerial meetings to discuss, prepare advice, and prepare adequately.
- g. Ministerial meetings will take approximately two hours.
- h. Any questions about the Council will be referred to the Secretariat, info@women.govt.nz, (04) 915-7112.