

Young Women and Work in 2022 and Beyond.

At the YWCA we work with young women every day, supporting them to be seen and heard, and to realise their aspirations for a life well lived. There are two things that stand out in regard to work/employment that should be included in how we shape a Women's Employment Action Plan:

1. Young women are shocked when they hear that discriminatory pay gaps still exist. While they can acknowledge that through their education they have seen that we still have a society that favours pakeha men, they do not expect to be punished in how they are paid because of their gender and ethnicity.

We must address this in the context of an employment plan for women and not lock in existing penalties that keep women poor and vulnerable. Requiring standardised and transparent Pay Gap Reporting is a valid and proven place to start. We are already seeing this have a positive impact in the Public Sector in NZ and there is momentum in the business community towards this. 2022 is the year to make this happen.

2. This generation of young women stepping into independence and work is not just thinking about being a full-time employee. Young women are starting their own businesses or combining part time employment with part-time for-purpose work they are passionate about it. We are seeing a wave of active citizenship, but our education, language and support mechanisms are well behind.

We need to incorporate into the Employment Action plan acknowledgement of social and enterprise entrepreneurship by young women and ensure their are tailored supports such as mentoring, access to grants and capital. We need to move away from talking about jobs and employment and lift our sights to 'making a living'.

Post Covid, Aotearoa's success relies on tapping into all our diverse and emerging talent and supporting new pathways to fulfilling working lives that are fair and not just about a 40 hr week.

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