

Ministry of Women's Affairs Briefing

Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Women's Affairs

December 2010

Briefing Date:	9 December 2010	Briefing No:	-
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Action sought

	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Hekia Parata Minister of Women's Affairs	To note	

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1 st Contact
Rowena Phair	Chief Executive	[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]	[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]
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Minister of Women's Affairs' office actions (if required)

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Rowena Phair
Chief Executive

Hon Hekia Parata
Minister of Women's Affairs

Date.....

Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Women's Affairs

December 2010

Introduction

- 1 This briefing provides an overview of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) and key issues for New Zealand women in 2010. It outlines MWA's current priorities and work programme, and identifies some of the immediate and longer-term opportunities and challenges.
- 2 The briefing aims to meet your immediate needs for information, and begin a process of ongoing discussion to provide you, as Minister of Women's Affairs, with the advice and analysis required to create positive change for New Zealand women. It also provides the foundation for further, more detailed, oral and written briefings, and is the start of our ongoing advice to you. We look forward to engaging with you on these issues.
- 3 A profile of MWA's management team is attached as Appendix A.

Key messages about the Ministry of Women's Affairs

- 4 Key messages about MWA are outlined below.
 - **Our work is firmly directed towards government's broader goal of lifting our country's economic performance.** Making better use of women's skills is one of the keys to increasing productivity and raising our standard of living. Government's goal for New Zealand women explicitly links women's success with New Zealand's success as a nation.
 - **New Zealand is well respected internationally for promoting women's rights.** We consistently rank highly in the world in respect of gender equality, and New Zealand's expertise in gender issues is sought after by other countries.
 - **We are a small and influential policy agency** of 32 staff with an operating budget of \$4.8 million. We work collaboratively across government and with stakeholders in business and the community to achieve positive change in women's lives, and maximise their social and economic success.
 - **Our strategy is to prioritise and deliver high-quality policy work.** We do this by identifying areas of greatest need, where we can add significant value, and where we can complement the work of others. We provide advice based on evidence and on our expertise in gender issues.
 - **We operate an efficient and targeted Nominations Service.** Our yearly gender stock-take is the only source of comprehensive data on state sector board membership. We have also developed a strong focus on private sector boards.

- **We have highly productive relationships across government, NGOs and private sector organisations.** This improves our policy advice, nominations and international work. These strong relationships enable us to act as a catalyst and an initiator for change.

The status of New Zealand women in 2010

- 5 Overall, New Zealand performs well internationally on most gender equality indicators. For example, New Zealand is placed fifth out of 134 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2010¹, which measures the size of gender-based disparities in 26 indicators across four categories: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment.² Women in New Zealand have high levels of engagement in politics, society, and the economy.
- 6 New Zealand women rank well in a number of economic indicators. In comparison to men, women have higher participation and completion rates in tertiary education, while internationally, New Zealand women had the ninth-highest labour force participation rate in the OECD in 2009.³ The gap in educational achievement at secondary level between young European women and young Māori and Pacific women is also narrowing. There are also indications that attitudes towards family violence are beginning to change as a result of the concerted national media campaign⁴ combined with the ongoing work of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families.
- 7 Despite these accomplishments and progress, there are still areas where women do not achieve as well as men. Women's leadership skills and experience are still significantly under-utilised across the economy. Despite women's educational success, a gender pay gap persists. While there has been a decline in the last two years, it is still around 11 percent. Women continue to have high levels of part-time work compared to men, indicating the uneven nature of caring responsibilities between men and women. Family violence and sexual violence, where women are overwhelmingly the victims, continue to be issues of major concern for government, with reported rates rising. There are also some groups of women who have poorer outcomes than others – for example, the Māori women's unemployment rate is almost three times higher than that of European women.
- 8 Attached as a final appendix to this document is a snapshot of key statistics on women in New Zealand.

¹ World Economic Forum (2010) *The Global Gender Gap Report*. Switzerland: World Economic Forum

² New Zealand has ranked 5th since 2007, up from 7th in 2006 when the survey began.

³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010) *2010 OECD Employment Outlook*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

⁴ Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development (2010) *Summary Report: The Campaign for Action on Family Violence*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development

The Ministry of Women's Affairs: current work priorities

- 9 Government's goal for women is firmly directed towards the broader goal of lifting our country's economic performance. This goal, women having real choices and using their strengths to maximise social and economic success, explicitly links women's success with New Zealand's success as a nation.
- 10 The context detailed above is reflected in the current government priorities for women: women participating in leadership roles across the economy; reducing violence against women; and women being fully engaged in the economy and contributing to the country's economic growth.

Our current work

- 11 MWA's current work programme is tightly focused on addressing the three policy priorities outlined above, on meeting its service commitments relating to nominations to state sector boards and New Zealand's international obligations on the status of women.
- 12 A summary of MWA's priorities for 2011 is set out below (as submitted by the Acting Minister of Women's Affairs to the Prime Minister in late November 2010). A list of work requiring your attention and/or input up until 31 January 2011 is attached as Appendix B.

Priority 1: To increase the participation of women in leadership roles across the economy

- 13 Evidence shows a correlation between the presence of women on boards and improved corporate performance. MWA focuses on increasing the numbers of women on boards in the state and private sectors and influencing private sector practices by:
 - operating a Nominations Service, with some focus on important, under-represented areas in the state sector and an emphasis on Māori women
 - providing advice to women on governance roles and how to develop their governance competencies
 - addressing women's low participation on company boards by working in partnership with private sector organisations to build awareness among business leaders, and identifying a pool of suitable women directors.

Priority 2: To ensure that all women can be fully engaged in the economy and contribute to the country's economic growth

- 14 Women's skills are under-utilised in the economy. Their increasingly higher skills are not translating into significant labour market improvement. This represents lost opportunities for women, for their families and for the country as a whole.
- 15 MWA's work in employment focuses on addressing factors that contribute to the gender pay gap, currently around 11 percent, and on removing barriers to women achieving their full potential through workforce participation. This work includes, for example, providing

evidence to promote and highlight exemplars for flexible work and encouraging more young women to move into and remain in less-traditional and higher paid careers.

Priority 3: To reduce the damaging impact of violence against women, particularly sexual violence

- 16 Violence against women has significant social and economic costs to the victims, their families and the country. MWA provides advice and support to government to reduce violence against women, based on evidence of what works to enable victim/survivors to be restored to well-being as soon as possible.
- 17 This includes, for example, contributing to a Ministry of Social Development-led stock-take of government expenditure on sexual violence services, and contributing to the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families.

New Zealand's international obligations on the status of women

- 18 Priorities for 2011 include the presentation of New Zealand's seventh report on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and participation at the next session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), to be held in New York in February and March 2011.
- 19 The CEDAW report is a four-yearly report that covers the status of New Zealand women, relevant recent legislative and policy changes, and remaining challenges for gender equality. This report covers the period March 2006 to March 2010. The date for our presentation of the CEDAW report is not yet confirmed, but we expect it will be towards the end of 2011.

Second-opinion policy advice

- 20 MWA has an ongoing role in providing a gender perspective to policy being developed by other agencies. All papers presented to the Cabinet Social Policy Committee are required to include a gender implications statement [Cabinet Office Circular, CO (02) 2, March 2002]. We carefully prioritise the focus given to this work based on each proposal's significance for women and for our priority areas.
- 21 There are some major or significant government policy initiatives underway that MWA is either already engaged in, or will seek to be at the appropriate time. Examples include the Welfare Working Group, the Early Childhood Education Taskforce, and the recently released *Business of Ageing Report*. Other major policy initiatives of interest in the pipeline concern social housing and savings.

Related documents attached

- 22 Attached for your reference are the following documents:
 - Letter on priorities for the Women's Affairs portfolio from the Acting Minister of Women's Affairs to the Prime Minister, dated 25 November 2010 (Appendix C)

- Four-year Budget Plan for MWA, submitted to the Minister of Finance on 1 December 2010 (Appendix D).

The Ministry of Women's Affairs: our approach

- 23 MWA is a policy agency, and is focused on being innovative, outward focused and leadership based. In recognition of the need to adapt and innovate in order to continue to be effective, MWA works in the following ways.
- We often act as a catalyst for initial action and change, succeeding in getting key issues on the agenda of government and other relevant organisations.
 - We are active in providing accessible, evidence-based information to inform and assist others.
 - We are strongly solutions-focused, with advice that is tailored and persuasive.
 - We aim to bring the voices of the experiences and priorities of different groups of New Zealand women to government.
- 24 We continue to work very closely with other state agencies and with women's NGOs, but increasingly we are working with a wider range of stakeholders, including the private sector.
- 25 Our advice and influence is based on good research and evidence, but we also need to be persuasive by making sure our arguments are relevant to the stakeholders with whom we work. An example of this is the business case for more women on boards, launched by the Prime Minister in May 2009. The case was co-sponsored by MWA, Business New Zealand and the Institute of Directors in New Zealand, and focuses on why having more women on boards is good for business, rather than purely for equity reasons. MWA continues to work very closely with business on this issue including, more recently, the New Zealand Shareholders' Association. We are taking a similar approach with flexible work by, for instance, working with the the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants to show how good flexible work practices can help to retain the skills the sector needs for the future.
- 26 Over the years MWA has successfully used its initiative and influence to achieve positive gains for New Zealand women. All these achievements involved sustained effort and working closely with external stakeholders. Examples include:
- Ground-breaking sexual violence research (2007-2009):** These sexual violence research findings were widely welcomed by stakeholders, and the New Zealand Court of Appeal has used the research already in revising sentencing guidelines for sexual violation offences.
- Increasing the number of women on state sector boards:** The Ministry's Nominations Service has been instrumental in significantly increasing the percentage of women serving on state sector boards and committees (currently 41.5 percent).
- Improving the effectiveness of sexuality education in schools:** In 2007, MWA initiated and commissioned the Education Review Office's *Review of Sexuality Education in New Zealand Schools Years 7 to 13*. This widely cited review resulted in a stock-take of

sexuality education resources, and a literature review of best practice in sexuality education.

Influencing domestic violence legislation: In 2007, MWA published research on women's experiences of protection orders, and provided significant input into the recent review of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) and resulting legislative changes, such as the ability of police to issue on-the-spot safety orders. This built on previous changes to the DVA, initiated by MWA, such as the treatment of firearms.

Refocusing Out of School Services sector: In 2007, MWA, in conjunction with the Families Commission, initiated nationwide consultation with parents, carers and children.⁵ This work was key to developing the Five-Year Action Plan for Out of School Services, which included the establishment of extended services in low-decile schools.

Introduction of Paid Parental Leave: MWA undertook much of the policy work that led to the introduction of Paid Parental Leave in 2002 and had significant input into the design and implementation of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection (Paid Parental Leave) Amendment Act 2002 No 7.

Opportunities

- 27 We look forward to discussing with you the opportunities to progress women's economic empowerment to support the government's economic growth agenda. As the OECD has recognised, the recent economic crisis has made it even more obvious that failing to realise the full potential of women carries a huge economic and social cost. Gender equality is an OECD priority issue.⁶
- 28 The forthcoming publication of the CEDAW report highlights areas where New Zealand women are making progress, and where there remains room for improvement. Engagement flowing from publication of this report will provide an opportunity to enhance New Zealand's reputation as an international leader in gender equality.
- 29 MWA's status as a policy-only agency gives it considerable freedom to prioritise and provide contestable advice. MWA is in the unique position of having an overview of issues from the perspective of women, which may cover many portfolios. This allows us to see connections and impacts that may not always be immediately obvious to agencies with a single focus, and to provide advice and evidence accordingly.
- 30 There are numerous and wide-ranging opportunities for MWA to improve outcomes for women in both the short- and medium-term. The direction by government for better value for money from the public sector, for example, presents an opportunity for us to promote our evidence on what works for victims of sexual violence in the stock-take currently being led by the Ministry of Social Development. Other government initiatives include MWA linking

⁵ Families Commission (2007) *When School's Out: Conversations with parents, carers and children about out of school services*. Wellington: Families Commission

⁶ OECD, *Strategic Orientations by the Secretary General*, Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level, 27-28 May 2010, C/MIN (2010)1

into the work of the Productivity Commission, where women's skills can be seen as a driver for increasing New Zealand's productivity.

Risks/Challenges

- 31 MWA recognises that the challenges faced in the current economic environment requires New Zealand to lift productivity, make better use of our human resources, and have more effective, value-for-money public services. MWA has responded to these challenges by continually striving to adapt and innovate, in order to be a highly effective, well-performing ministry.
- 32 One example of action taken is that MWA is currently reviewing its administrative and support services. The context for this review is the government's clear expectation that all government agencies achieve improved efficiencies where possible and that overall, a shift in resourcing is made from the 'back office' to 'front office'. For MWA, the 'front office' is the policy and nominations advice it provides to you, as the Minister of Women's Affairs.

Next Steps

- 33 We will discuss with you the matters requiring your input and/or agreement (Appendix B), particularly the forthcoming publication and release of the CEDAW report.
- 34 We will provide you with a number of more detailed briefings prior to Christmas. These briefings will focus on each priority area for MWA, and specific issues and opportunities within these areas.

Women in the Economy focuses on women in employment, but also includes a number of critical areas for women in the broader economy, such as housing, welfare, and women in retirement.

Women in Leadership discusses women's participation in leadership roles, with a particular focus on governance roles in the state and private sectors.

Women and Violence provides you with information on the impacts of violence on women, communities and New Zealand as a whole; government's priorities in this area; and MWA's role in addressing violence against women.

International obligations of New Zealand on the status of women highlights the current priorities on MWA's work programme and advice on New Zealand's participation at CSW in late February 2011.

MWA's key relationships covers our wide range of stakeholders in the state sector, in business and in the community; and provides basic information on our communications programme.

- 35 We will also provide you with more detail on the Nominations Service.

MWA management



Rowena Phair – Chief Executive

[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]

Rowena Phair took up the role of the Ministry’s Chief Executive in July 2010. Rowena was Policy Manager at the Ministry from 2004 to 2007 before going to work at Treasury. Her roles there included Manager, Children and their Families, State Sector Performance Group; Acting Assistant Secretary/Deputy Secretary, State Sector Performance Group; and Manager, Tax Strategy



Anne Shaw – General Manager Policy (Acting)

[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]

Anne has worked across the public sector including Tertiary Education, State Owned Enterprises, Treasury and Housing. Anne has been with the Department of Internal Affairs since 2005, first as a local/central government Relationship Manager, then managing the Community and Sector Policy Team. Anne has been with the Ministry on secondment from DIA since September 2009, firstly as Deputy Policy Manager and now General Manager Policy until February 2011. Anne has a Masters of Public Management.



Pamela Cohen – Director, Nominations

[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]

Pamela joined the Ministry in 2008. She was previously at the Asia New Zealand Foundation, where her roles included Education Director, Deputy Director, and Acting Executive Director. Earlier in her career, Pamela worked on leadership and international education programmes at the Academy for Educational Development in Washington, DC. She migrated to New Zealand from the United States in 1994.



Martin Sebire – General Manager Corporate

[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]

Martin joined the Ministry in 2005. He has a Degree in Commerce and Administration from Victoria University, and is also a qualified chartered accountant. Martin began his government career as a policy analyst with the Housing Corporation and then moved into a range of financial management positions in large government departments including Commerce, Inland Revenue and Conservation. His most recent previous position was at the Historic Places Trust where he was the Corporate Services Manager.

Other staff with whom you may have contact

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Input/Agreement required from you to 31 January 2011

Priority area	Issue	Action required	Date with Minister	Comment
International	The CEDAW report produced and published by the Ministry of Women's Affairs was lodged at the United Nations in late November 2010.	Discussion of communications plan for release of the report.	December 2010	The printers are expected to deliver the report to MWA on 9 December 2010.
Women in leadership	Three EEO Trust public sector appointments/reappointments, made jointly by the Minister of Labour and Minister of Women's Affairs.	[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]	December 2010	We will brief you on the process to date.
International	The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be held in New York in February 2011. The Minister of Women's Affairs is responsible for agreeing on the structure of the New Zealand delegation to CSW.	Your decision will be sought on composition of delegation.	December 2010	New Zealand traditionally pays for one NGO representative to attend with the government delegation. This also requires the approval of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
Women in leadership	[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]	[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]	Late January 2011	[Withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982]
Women in leadership	A high volume of requests for candidates to be considered for appointment for various boards and committees.	You may wish to endorse or suggest candidates. Some requests may require a Ministerial letter in response.	Dependent on individual requests	We will want to discuss with you the involvement you wish to have in the nominations process.

Other organisational related issues

Priority area	Issue	Deliverable	Date with Minister	Comment
Violence against women	A research report has been recently completed for MWA by the Whariki Research Group. The report is entitled: <i>Sexual Coercion, Resilience, and Young Māori: A Scoping Review</i> . The report does not contain recommendations, other than to highlight areas for future research.	Report to be published on MWA website in mid-December 2010.	N/A	This pilot study will be used to engage with key government non-government stakeholders to discuss and develop a shared understanding of the issues and implications of this review. Please indicate if you would like further information on this research.
Women in leadership	Completion and launch of governance self-assessment tool	Online tool will be released on MWA website	January 2011	The tool is designed to provide advice and guidance to women on their current suitability for governance roles and how to develop their governance competencies.
Organisation	Review of Administrative and Support Services	MWA is contracting an external provider to assist us to determine the nature and level of support services it needs to perform its core roles, and to advise on how these services might be delivered.	N/A	The review is likely to be completed by 30 March 2011.
Organisation	Performance Improvement Framework (PIF)	SSC-led formal review of MWA performance and capability, concurrently with review of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs.	June 2011	This review is expected to start in December 2010, and presented to the responsible Minister by June 2011

[Information withheld under Section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act 1982]

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Snapshot of Women in New Zealand

