

Report confirms Kiwis want work-life balance



Do you find there's not enough hours in the day to juggle work, family, community activities, leisure and personal time? You're not alone. According to a report released in July by Associate Minister of Labour Ruth Dyson, most Kiwis want a balance of work and life but face significant barriers to achieving the desired balance.

The report, *Achieving balanced lives and employment: what New Zealanders are saying about work-life balance*, summarises workplace and life issues raised as part of the nationwide consultation undertaken by the Work-Life Balance Project between November 2003 and March 2004.

Long hours, low hourly wages, lack of access to childcare for working parents, undervaluing of caring and voluntary work, and pressure on small employers to 'do everything' were just some of the barriers to achieving work-life balance highlighted by the more than 700 individuals and companies who took part in the consultation.

Suggestions made on how to improve the work-life balance included flexible working hours, four day working weeks, more well-paid part-time work, employer subsidies for childcare and better access to childcare for school-age children.

A copy of the report is available from www.worklife.govt.nz

The Work-Life Balance Project was established by government last year to promote policies and practices to help people achieve a better work-life balance. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is a member of the steering group overseeing the project.

WHO TOOK PART IN THE CONSULTATION?

- 73% of the individual responses were from women
- 52% of respondents had children
- 28% were from a small town/rural area
- 12% were sole parents
- 10% were self-employed
- 9% were employed on contract or in casual employment

WORK-LIFE BALANCE



Work-life balance is one of the major areas of focus for the *Action Plan for New Zealand Women*. We have worked hard in this country to increase opportunities for women's participation in the paid labour market and there have been great improvements in that area. What we haven't done yet, is get the right balance between paid and unpaid work.

A recent report, *Achieving balanced lives and employment: what New Zealanders are saying about work-life balance*, confirms what most of us already knew: Kiwis want a better balance between work and home life, but striking that balance isn't always easy.

The report shows that people face significant barriers to achieving a desired work-life balance.

We want New Zealand to be a great place to live and work. This means people effectively using their energy and skills to participate in paid work, society and the economy. Work-life balance ideally means that employment relationships are conducted in good faith, with employers and employees able to talk constructively about these issues.

Work-life balance is not just an issue for women. Overall, a decade of a deregulated and competitive environment has reduced the quality of life for many workers, both men and women. A lot of men have more stress in their lives than is healthy. But women have paid the greater price because of the additional level of stress that accompanies their role as carers.

Māori and Pacific women face particular stresses because of their broader family

responsibilities, concentration in low paid work, higher level of community work and the younger age structure of their population groups.

As work-life balance varies for each of us, many people should ideally be able to make arrangements to suit them within their own work environment. However, the report showed that in some cases there could be a role for government to help some people achieve this balance.

The best role for government is to lead by example, addressing work-life balance issues for its own employees. Many of the barriers to people achieving work-life balance are centred on attitudes, and this is where public discussion is important – after all, government can't legislate to change people's attitudes within our communities, homes, or work places.

Department of Labour officials are now looking at how effectively existing policies – such as paid parental leave and provision of affordable childcare – support work-life balance, and considering the policy gaps for groups such as those working long hours or in non-traditional employment arrangements.

The next step is for government to consider what, if any, steps we might take to help achieve the vision of New Zealand being a great place to live and work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Dyson'.

Ruth Dyson
Minister of Women's Affairs

“We want New Zealand to be a great place to live and work. This means people effectively using their skills to participate in paid work, society and the economy . . .”

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK . . .

Do you like the new look of *Pānui*? Are the articles interesting? What other issues you would like to read about? We want to hear your thoughts on ways to improve *Pānui* or what we're doing well so that we can pack it full of useful and interesting information. We also want to know if you still want to receive *Pānui* and if you'd like to receive it electronically.

How to let us know your thoughts: Email us: mwa@mwa.govt.nz, Call us: 04-916 5821

Write to us: Editor, Ministry of Women's Affairs, PO Box 10 049, Wellington

vote!

2004 Local+DHB Elections

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is marking Suffrage Day this year by encouraging New Zealand women to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming local body and District Health Board (DHB) elections.

"It's timely to remind women of the campaign undertaken 111 years ago by a group of dedicated women to ensure future generations could have a say about the big issues and decisions affecting both the country and their lives," said Shenagh Gleisner, Ministry of Women's Affairs Chief Executive.

Voting is a right that many women in New Zealand today take for granted and is often overlooked – anecdotal evidence shows that many young women don't vote. "I urge women of all ages to exercise their right to vote on 9 October. By doing so you can have your say about how your local community should grow and develop or the provision of health services in your region," said Shenagh.

For the suffragettes, the right to vote symbolised a major advance towards equality. It also stood for women being recognised as full citizens and a chance to influence society – it's no wonder they saw it as such an important right and fought so hard for it.

Despite being the first country in the world to give women the vote, women are still under-represented in local government.



A survey conducted after the last local body election in 2001 shows that about 27 per cent of city, district and regional councillors are currently women. Māori women and young women are particularly under-represented with only 5.5 per cent of women members being Māori and only two women members (less than 1 per cent) under 30 years old.

Local body and DHB elections will be held on 9 October. For more information visit www.elections.org.nz

Work of Women's Electoral Lobby recognised

The Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL), which has just wrapped up its national organisation after 27 years' of operation, is receiving special recognition of its work from the Electoral Commission.

Set up in 1975 – International Women's Year – WEL championed for greater representation for women. It quickly gained support, with 2,000 members across 18 branches within the first six months.

"We take women in politics for granted now but in 1975, when WEL started, there were only four women MPs and none in Cabinet. WEL has been one of the most significant and effective actors in changing attitudes towards women in politics," said Electoral Commission Chief Executive Dr Helena Catt.

"WEL has worked tirelessly to meet its aims of informing women about discrimination, pushing for relevant law change, and seeing people with attitudes and policies advancing the rights of women appointed or elected to public office."

WEL has shut up shop after a falling active membership. WEL members felt that new technology offered new methods of lobbying and different ways for women to make their voices heard.

The Electoral Commission will present WEL with a Wallace Award on Suffrage Day at an event in Wellington.

LONELY AT THE TOP

Despite anecdotal reports that suggest women are climbing the corporate ladder, the first Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life reveals a "chronic under-utilisation" of women's skills and talents in governance of top companies in the private sector.

The Census, conducted by the Human Rights Commission and New Zealand Centre for Women and Leadership at Massey University, found that only five per cent of directors of the top 100 publicly listed companies in New Zealand are women.

By contrast, New Zealand's Crown Companies have seven times the proportion of female directors at 35.07 per cent (as at February 2004).

"There's been only glacial progress from 1995 when figures showed that women comprised 3.86 per cent of board of directors of publicly listed companies in New Zealand," said EEO Commissioner Dr Judy McGregor.

"What the Census shows is that there is a pool of experienced and competent women available who have been tapped for Crown Companies, but that the majority of publicly listed companies (around 70 per cent of the top 100) have no female directors.

"We know that boards are not intended to be democracies. However, diversity and women's participation is a matter of sound corporate strategy and has nothing to do with political correctness," said Dr McGregor, who points to the positive impact on the reputation of a company, the provision of strategic input on women's product/market issues and company direction, and women's success in education as arguments for the recruitment of women to boards.

A copy of the *New Zealand Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life* can be found at www.hrc.co.nz/eeo or call (04) 496 9771.



Women's participation: "The report provides a systematic benchmark from which to make progress," says Dr McGregor. (Source: New Zealand Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life, p11)

Women on boards of publicly listed companies

New Zealand 5%

Australia 8.4%

United Kingdom 7.2%

United States 13.6%

GETTING WOMEN ON BOARD

Imagine sitting around a board room table where half of the directors present are women. While figures released in the *Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life* show that there is still a long way to go before this becomes a reality, government is aiming for 50/50 representation on state sector boards by 2010.

The work of the Ministry of Women's Affairs Nominations Service is helping to bring about change by putting forward suitably qualified women for director positions on statutory decision-making bodies.

"Each year we are consulted on appointments to over 350 statutory boards. Our aim is to affect 50 per cent of the available vacancies to ensure appointments made reflect a gender balance," says Nominations Advisor Joan Isaac.

"To do this we maintain a database of women with relevant skills and experience which we use to identify potential candidates. The appointments process is highly competitive with sometimes up to 100 nominations put forward from a range of sources, such as Members of Parliament, professional groups and government departments like ourselves, for a single director position.

"We are currently contributing just over one third of our target of 50 per cent," says Joan.

Want more information about the Nominations Service? Check out the updated information, including a self-evaluation test and frequently asked questions on the Ministry of Women's Affairs website www.mwa.govt.nz/nomination_service.html

A RETURN TO THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS FOR NEW POLICY MANAGER

New Policy Manager Rowena Phair is no stranger to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, having previously worked in both the Ministry and the Minister of Women's Affairs Office.

Since leaving the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1995, Rowena has worked at KPMG and has held a Senior Manager position in the School Labour Market Policy Group at the Ministry of Education since 1997.

"We looked for many skills in our new Policy Manager, but there were two that stood out for us," said Shenagh Gleisner, Ministry of Women's Affairs Chief Executive.

"First that they should be a very experienced policy manager who would bring rigour and a passion for evidence to the analytical task; secondly, we needed someone who would support our very good, but new, policy team and give them opportunities to stretch and shine. We needed someone who is intuitively excellent in relationships, positive and facilitative.

"In Rowena we have all this, and more – she has worked for the Ministry in the past and has a long standing commitment to achieving positive outcomes for women. So we are very pleased to have her."

Rowena said she was attracted by the opportunities to work across a broad range of issues and to focus on the strategic intent and likely impact of policies.

"The timing is perfect for advancing women's policy interests. There are a number of very significant policy issues that are currently on the government's agenda. In some cases, the past work of the Ministry has helped to ensure these issues are being considered," said Rowena.



Rowena Phair

Alexandra Smithyman has won a 2004 Fullbright award to carry out a Masters Degree in Law specialising in international law at New York University.

Alison Thom has been appointed Deputy Secretary Relationships and Information at Te Puni Kōkiri. Alison is of Ngapuhi descent and is the former Chief Executive of Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi Runanga.

Barbara Williams is Taranaki Rotarians' first woman district governor. A member for thirteen years, she has been involved in the programme to eradicate polio worldwide.

Her next international project is helping with water management in Northern India.

Brigit Blair, Chief Executive of Christchurch based natural bath and body care products company Linden Leaves, won the HerBusiness Businesswoman of the Year 2004.

Professor Christine Winterbourn has been awarded the Distinguished Research Medal by the University of Otago. The medal acknowledges her contribution to 30 years of groundbreaking research on free radicals.

Hekia Parata has been appointed Deputy Secretary Policy at Te Puni Kōkiri. Hekia, Ngāti Porou and Ngai Tahu, was previously executive director of Gardiner and Parata Ltd, specialising in public policy development.

Hilary Phillips has been elected president of New Zealand Young Farmers.

Lynne McKenzie has been appointed International Director for Zonta International.

Sherrill Dackers has been appointed National President of Rural Women New Zealand taking over from **Ellen Ramsay**.

Congratulations to those women who took part in the Athens 2004 Olympics, including Beatrice Faumuina who was the first Pacific Islander to carry the flag in the opening ceremony, and gold medallists Sarah Ulmer, Caroline and Georgina Evers-Swindell.

Chief Executives keep Action Plan on track

A Chief Executive Steering Group led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan for New Zealand Women.

Chief Executives from the Ministries of Economic Development, Social Development, Pacific Island Affairs, Treasury, Te Puni Kōkiri and the Department of Labour are part of the Steering Group who will meet twice a year to check on progress made.

"It is very encouraging to have the support and commitment of these other departments as it will ensure a whole-of-government approach to the implementation of the Action Plan," said Shenagh Gleisner, Ministry of Women's Affairs Chief Executive.

The interaction with members of the Steering Group will also provide an opportunity to raise understanding across government of strategic issues affecting women and a way for the Ministry to engage with other departments to progress the objectives of the government's Action Plan.

Primary Health Organisations receive a cash injection

Government will inject an extra \$415.7 million over three years to provide more affordable primary health care for everyone belonging to Primary Health Organisations (PHOs).

The announcement, made in July, means that those New Zealanders belonging to PHOs – currently over 3.5 million people – will be entitled to cheaper primary health care such as doctors' visits, a standard prescription charge of not more than \$3 per item, higher subsidies for influenza injections for older people, and other benefits by 2007 as the programme is rolled out.

Almost all New Zealanders are expected to benefit because of the huge momentum PHOs have developed. Just two years after the first two PHOs were established in South Auckland, 73 PHOs are operating throughout the country – including five new PHOs in the Hutt Valley, Hokianga, Whangaroa, Horowhenua and Southland.

For more information about PHOs call 0800 HLTH-4-U (0800 458 448).

Action Plan for New Zealand Women Well-Being 3.1.5: Access to health services.



Making government services accessible

The pilot of Language Line, a telephone interpreting service for migrants, was so successful that government has made a commitment to fund it permanently.

Set up in April 2003, Language Line offered a way for non-English speakers to access key government services, such as passports, citizenship, births, deaths, marriages, housing and immigration.

In the first nine months, the Language Line pilot supported over 8,000 interpreting sessions across the six participating government agencies (ACC, Housing New Zealand, Department of Internal Affairs, New Zealand Police, Ministry of Social Development, and New Zealand Immigration Service). The extended service now also includes the Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce Commission, Tertiary Education Commission, and the National Poisons Centre.

"Language Line was recognition that 50,000 people in New Zealand speak no English and at least another 250,000 have only limited English," Ethnic Affairs Minister Chris Carter said.

"Many of these people were struggling to access basic government services that the rest of us took for granted."

The service offers telephone interpreting services in 35 different languages.

For more information about Language Line visit www.languageline.govt.nz

Action Plan for New Zealand Women Well-Being 3.1.3: Telephone interpreting service Implement outcomes of pilot telephone interpreting service in support of improved access to government services for non-English speaking people, and people who speak limited English.

Families Commission established

Families have changed dramatically over the past 20 years. For different people, the word can conjure up images of the 'traditional' nuclear family, whānau, multi-generational and blended families. Whatever it means for you, families are the basic building block of our society – offering support, nurturing, values and experiences that shape who we are.

The government is supporting New Zealand families through the establishment of the Families Commission – a new institution whose primary function will be speak up for families and to assist governments to provide better support for families.

“The Families Commission will work within the realities of family life today, and the diverse forms families can take,” said Social Development and Employment Minister Steve Maharey.

“Within the family, gender roles and the boundaries between work and home are much more fluid. Our ageing society is extending families further and creating new roles for older people.”

The Commission will initially focus on issues for families with children, and on improving the information and data available about New Zealand families.

The Chief Families Commissioner and five Commissioners bring a variety of family, advocacy and governance skills to their roles:

- former Race Relations Conciliator Dr Rajen Prasad (Chief Commissioner)
- bioethics specialist Sharron Cole (Deputy Chief Commissioner)
- psychiatrist Professor Mason Durie
- legal expert Sandra Alofiavae
- former Human Rights CommissionerCarolynn Bull
- long-time family advocate Lyn Campbell.

Ministry of Women's Affairs Chief Executive, Shenagh Gleisner, met with the Commissioners recently to outline the role of the Ministry and explore how the two organisations can work together. “Supporting women will help families, in all their immense diversity,” said Shenagh.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is responsible for managing New Zealand's international obligations on the status of women. New Zealand is party to many international agreements and participates in a number of international meetings which contribute to progressing priorities for women worldwide.

CEDAW Optional Protocol

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) allows individual women, or groups of women, to submit claims of violations of rights protected under CEDAW to the Committee once domestic remedies have been exhausted. The Committee has established a five-member working group to assist the Committee in carrying out its tasks under the Optional Protocol. Further information about the Optional Protocol and CEDAW can be found at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ New Zealand's sixth CEDAW report on the status of women is due in 2006.

APEC Women Leaders Network (WLN)

The 9th WLN is being held in Chile in September. The meeting brings together different outlooks and experiences from approximately 50 women entrepreneurs, academics and government representatives. Further information can be found at www.apec2004.cl

MINCO

Shenagh Gleisner, Ministry of Women's Affairs Chief Executive, attended the Australia/New Zealand Ministers Conference on the Status of Women (MINCO) in August.

Seventh Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers' Meeting (7WAAM)

A delegation from New Zealand attended 7WAAM meeting in Fiji earlier this year. A copy of the communique from the meeting, which outlines the new 10-year Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005 – 2015 can be found on www.thecommonwealth.org under 'documents'.



The New Zealand delegation at 7WAAM (from left to right) Dr Ana Koloto, Beryl Anderson (NCWNZ President), Mi'I Teokotai, Minister Ruth Dyson, Kitty Bennett (MWWL President), Shenagh Gleisner.

NEWS IN BRIEF

UNICEF's 'strong women for strong women' campaign

UNICEF's 'strong women for strong women' campaign was launched by Prime Minister Helen Clark at Parliament in July.

The campaign, which celebrates the achievements of women in New Zealand and asks for support for the development of girls overseas, focuses on three key issues over three years: gender parity in education, child protection and protection from HIV/AIDS. For more information see the UNICEF website www.unicef.org.nz

PLUNKETLINE PARTNERSHIP WITH HEALTHLINE

New Zealand children and their families will benefit from the new partnership between PlunketLine and Healthline.

"Bringing these services together will bolster PlunketLine's ability to deliver its specialist well child health advice to parents" said Plunket Chief Executive, Paul Baigent. The Healthline and PlunketLine toll free number is **0800 933 922**.



Pay and Employment Equity Conference

Leading world experts on pay and employment equity engaged in a lively debate at the New Zealand Conference on Pay and Employment Equity for Women, convened by the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW), in June.

Women's Affairs Minister Ruth Dyson opened the conference: "Pay and employment equity are fundamental planks in building a fair and just society. Our vision is for all New Zealand to be a great place to live and work for all New Zealanders – including women."

The conference contributed to the pay and employment equity debate by informing interested parties on the issues involved in broadening pay and employment equity to the wider public and private sectors.

WHAT'S COMING UP

The inaugural *Māori Language Week Awards 2004 Gala Dinner* is to be held in Wellington on 14 September 2004. The Awards will celebrate and recognise efforts to promote Māori Language week in July. 'Give it a go, Korero Māori' is this year's theme. For more information see www.nzreo.org.nz

Author Sheila Jeffreys, a University Lecturer from Melbourne, will speak about 'reshaping women – beauty, fashion and advertising the in 21st century' at the *Smokefree Women's Suffrage Breakfast*, 19 September, to be held at the Auckland Hilton Hotel. For more information contact info@womens-health.org.nz or phone 09 520-5295.

World Rural Women's Day will be celebrated on 15 October.

The *Senior Women Executives and the Cultures of Management conference* will be held 29-30 November 2004, at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. The programme will focus on the experience of women managers, characteristics of cultures that sustain and support women, how cultures change when women are in senior positions, and challenges still to be faced. For more information visit www.uts.edu.au/oth/wexdev or email jane.clifford@uts.edu.au

ACTION PLAN: COMING TO A REGION NEAR YOU . . .

Shenagh Gleisner is getting out and about in the next couple of months to speak to groups about the *Action Plan for New Zealand Women*.

MASTERTON – 6 October, 7:30 – 9:30pm, Ranfurly Club, Chapel Street

HAWKE'S BAY – 11 October, 5:30 – 7:30pm,

Pettigrew Green Arena, 480 Gloucester Street

AUCKLAND – 26 October, 6:30 – 8:30pm, Kohia Teachers Centre,

Gate 1, 78 Epsom Avenue

MANUKAU – 27 October, 6:30 – 9:30pm, Papatoetoe Chambers,

335 St George Street

DUNEDIN – 1 November, 7:30 – 9:30pm, Salvation Army Hall,

King Edward Street, South Dunedin

GREYMOUTH – 9 November, 7:30 – 9:30pm – *venue to be confirmed*

Keep an eye on the Ministry of Women's Affairs website www.mwa.govt.nz under 'Women in New Zealand' for details of upcoming meetings.

Pānui is published by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, New Zealand. We welcome your feedback and ideas.

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