

Ministry of Women's Affairs Briefing

Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Women's Affairs

December 2011

Briefing Date:	14 December 2011	Briefing No:	-
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Action sought

	Action sought	Deadline
Minister of Women's Affairs (Hon Jo Goodhew)	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]	√

Minister of Women's Affairs' office actions (if required)

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Rowena Phair
Chief Executive

Hon Jo Goodhew
Minister of Women's Affairs

Date.....

Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Women's Affairs 2011

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Purpose and overview

This briefing provides an overview of the Women's Affairs portfolio and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA). It outlines the status of New Zealand women in 2011 and the most significant policy issues that require ongoing attention. It also identifies some of the medium and longer term opportunities and challenges within the portfolio.

The briefing aims to meet your immediate needs for information and to 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 a foundation for further, more detailed briefings, and is the start of our ongoing advice to you. We look forward to engaging with you on these issues.

Key messages about the Women's Affairs portfolio

The Women's Affairs portfolio overarches all sectors. As the Minister of Women's Affairs 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. We can assist you to do this by providing high quality, evidence-based policy advice.

New Zealand is well respected internationally for promoting women's rights.

New Zealand consistently ranks highly in respect of gender equality, and our expertise in gender issues is sought after by other countries. New Zealand is currently placed sixth out of 135 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2011.¹

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 men and women.

Our work is directed towards Government's objectives of creating a stronger economy and a safer New Zealand. Greater gender equality can improve economic growth and enhance outcomes for the next generation.² Increasing women's safety from violence can also help ensure greater security and prosperity.

¹ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2011*.

² The World Bank (2011) *Gender Equality and Development*.

We are a small and influential policy agency of 28 staff with an operating budget of \$4.56 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 business model 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.

The status of New Zealand women 2011

Much has changed for women over the last few decades. Forty years ago women were more likely to be contributing to the unpaid economy, particularly if they were married and had children. New Zealand women are now more likely than their male counterparts to participate in and complete higher education, and the majority of women are engaged in the paid economy.

Alongside women's changing economic and social status there have been marked changes in family structure including a rise in de facto relationships, female headed single parent households and marital dissolution. Women are now less likely to marry and tend to marry at a later age. They are also having fewer children and delaying childbearing until later ages.³

Overall, in 2011 New Zealand performs well internationally on most gender equality indicators. New Zealand women now outperform men in terms of qualifications achieved and women's labour-force participation is high by international standards. Despite this progress, there are still areas where women do not do as well as men. Women's leadership and skills remain significantly under-employed across the economy, and high rates of physical and sexual violence continue to compromise women's safety and well-being.

Attached is an A3 snapshot of key statistics on women's status in New Zealand.

³ There are, however, considerable ethnic differences. For example, the total fertility rate for Māori women in the September 2011 year was 2.74 births per woman, compared with 2.09 births per woman for the total population (Statistics New Zealand, Births and Deaths: Year ended September 2011). The median age of Māori women giving birth to their first child in the year ending December 2010 was 23.2 years, compared with 27.9 years for the total population (Information request, Statistics New Zealand).

Demographic snapshot: Who are New Zealand women?

New Zealand women are increasingly ethnically diverse. As at 2006, an estimated 15 percent of women were Māori, 7 percent were Pacific, 10 percent were Asian, 77 percent were European or Other (including 'New Zealander') and one percent were Middle Eastern, Latin American or African. Population projections suggest that New Zealand's Māori, Asian and Pacific populations will continue to grow at a greater rate than the European population.⁴

At September 2011, the median age for females was 37.9 years, compared with 35.6 years for males.⁵ This difference is largely attributable to women's higher life expectancy. Due to higher fertility and lower life expectancies, the Māori and Pacific population is considerably younger. For example, at June 2011 the median age for Māori females was 24.4 years, compared with 21.9 years for Māori males.⁶

The New Zealand population is aging. The proportion of New Zealand women aged 65 years and over is projected to increase from a 2009 baseline of 13.7 percent to 26.6 percent in 2061.⁷

An estimated 16 percent of women had a disability in 2006. This compares with 17 percent of men. Men had a slightly higher rate of disability in the age groups under 65 years, while women had a higher rate in the age group 65 years and over.⁸

Women in leadership and the economy

Women's economic and political participation is high by international standards.

In comparison to men, women have higher participation and completion rates in tertiary education,⁹ while internationally women had the ninth highest labour-force participation rate in the OECD in 2010.¹⁰ The proportion of Māori and Pacific women with upper secondary or tertiary level qualifications is also increasing at a faster rate than for European women, albeit from a lower base.¹¹ The proportion of women on state sector boards has also increased from 12.1 percent in 1981¹² to 40.7 percent in 2010, although there are sub-sectors where the proportion of women remains low.

⁴ Statistics New Zealand, *National Ethnic Population Projections: 2006 (base) – 2026 update*.

⁵ Statistics New Zealand, *National Population Estimates: September 2011 quarter*.

⁶ Statistics New Zealand, *Maori Population Estimates: at 30 June 1991-2011*.

⁷ Statistics New Zealand, *National Population Projections: 2009 (base) – 2061*.

⁸ Statistics New Zealand, *Disability Survey 2006*.

⁹ Ministry of Education (2011). *Education Counts* available at http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary_education

¹⁰ OECD, *OECD Employment Outlook 2011*.

¹¹ Ministry of Social Development, *The Social Report 2010*, pp. 44-45.

¹² The Women's Appointment File (1983) *A Guide to Getting On: A Booklet to Assist the Appointment of Women on Boards*, p.7.

Despite women's educational achievements, their skills and leadership remain underemployed across the formal economy. For example, just 9.3 percent of directors on the New Zealand Stock Market (NZSX) top 100 listed companies are women.¹³ Women are also significantly underrepresented in senior management, particularly in the private sector, and a gender pay gap of 9.6 percent persists. There is also room for greater progress in central government, with women making up 33 percent of Members of Parliament after the 2011 election.¹⁴

Most male work is paid (63 percent) and most female work is unpaid (65 percent).¹⁵ Most of women's productive time¹⁶ is spent doing unpaid work mostly within their own households, but also for other households and in the voluntary sector.

Women's greater responsibility for unpaid work is reflected in their more fragmented employment patterns. More than one in three women work part-time, and women aged 25 to 39 have a labour-force participation rate that is low by international standards. Many of the part-time roles held by women are lower skilled and lower paid, whilst extended breaks from the labour-force can impact upon women's skills accumulation and employment opportunities.

Some groups of women experience poorer employment outcomes. For example, whilst some Māori women do well, the unemployment rate for Māori women is nearly three times as high as that of European women. The same is true for Pacific women.¹⁷ New Zealand's employment rate for sole-parents is also one of the lowest in the OECD, contributing to considerably higher rates of poverty for sole-parent households than for two parent households.¹⁸ Women with disabilities also have poorer employment outcomes than women without disabilities.¹⁹

Women have lower incomes than men. Given that women have lower median hourly earnings, are more likely to work part-time and are more likely to take time out of the workforce, their lifetime earnings are lower than men's.

¹³ Human Rights Commission, *Census of Women's Participation 2010*, p. 14.

¹⁴ New Zealand Parliament website: <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/MPP/MPs/MPs/Default.htm?pf=&sf=&p=0&lqc=2>

¹⁵ Statistics New Zealand, *Time Use Survey: 2009/10*.

¹⁶ Productive activities include paid labour-force activities, household work, child and family care, purchasing goods and services, community services, and all other types of unpaid work.

¹⁷ Statistics New Zealand, *Household Labour Force Survey, Annual September 2011*.

¹⁸ Ministry of Social Development, *Household Incomes in New Zealand: Trends in Indicators of Inequality and Hardship 1982 to 2010*.

¹⁹ Statistics New Zealand, *Disability and the Labour Market in New Zealand in 2006*.

Women's health and well-being

Women live longer than men. Between 2008 and 2010, life expectancy at birth was 82.7 years for females, compared with 78.8 years for males,²⁰ although this gap has been closing since the mid-1980s.²¹ There are also marked ethnic differences in life expectancy. In 2005-07 female life expectancy at birth was 83.0 years for non-Māori, and 75.1 years for Māori.²²

Women are more likely than men to suffer from a mood disorder. Women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with a mood disorder, including depression.²³ In 2008 New Zealand's female youth (15 to 24 years) suicide rate was higher than that of any other OECD country.²⁴ Furthermore, whilst the suicide death rate is higher for males, almost twice as many females as males are hospitalised for intentional self harm.²⁵

New Zealand also does not perform well in comparison to other developed countries in terms of our adolescent fertility rates, ranking 34th in the OECD.²⁶

Rates of smoking are particularly high for Māori women. In 2009 half of Māori women were current smokers (defined as someone who has smoked more than 100 cigarettes in their lifetime and currently smokes at least once a month), more than twice the rate of women in the total population.²⁷ While the number of Māori women who are current smokers remains unchanged, the proportion of Māori women who smoked on a daily basis declined from 49 percent in 1996/97 to 40.1 percent in 2006/07.²⁸

Violence against women

A quarter to a third of New Zealand women will experience partner or sexual violence in their lifetimes.²⁹ Young and Māori women are most at risk of violent victimisation. Violence against women is associated with a significantly increased risk of mental, reproductive and physical health problems, teen pregnancy and self-inflicted harm and suicide.

²⁰ Statistics New Zealand, *New Zealand Abridged Life Table, 2008-2010*. Accessed from:

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/life_expectancy/abridged-period-life-tables.aspx

²¹ Ministry of Social Development: *The Social Report 2010*, p. 26.

²² Statistics New Zealand, *New Zealand Period Life Tables: 2005-07*. Accessed from:

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/births/new-zealand-life-tables-2005-07.aspx

²³ Ministry of Health, *A Portrait of Health Key Results: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey*, p.171

²⁴ Ministry of Health, *Suicide Facts: Deaths and intentional self-harm hospitalisations 2008*, p.34

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp.3, 42

²⁶ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2011*, pp. 130-140.

²⁷ Ministry of Health, *Tobacco Use in New Zealand: Key Findings from the 2009 Tobacco Use Survey*, p 17.

Smoking is the main cause of lung cancer in New Zealand and is a prominent risk factor for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cardiovascular disease, upper aerodigestive cancers (includes cancers of the mouth, oesophagus, pharynx and larynx), and many other cancers and chronic diseases.

²⁸ Ministry of Health (2008) *A Portrait of Health: Key Results of the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey*.

²⁹ Families Commission (2009) *Family Violence Statistics Report*. Wellington: Families Commission.

Ministry of Justice (2011) *Confrontational Crime in New Zealand: Findings from the 2009 New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Justice.

The economic cost of family violence was estimated at up to \$5.3 billion per year in 1994,³⁰ \$8 billion in today's figures.³¹ In 2003/04 the cost of sexual violence to the New Zealand economy was estimated at \$1.2 billion per year. It was by far the most costly crime per incident.³²

There are low rates of reporting and conviction of sexual violence offences. Less than a third of partner violence incidents and less than 10 percent of sexual violence offences against adults are reported to the New Zealand Police.³³ Of the small proportion of reported sexual violence offences against adults, only around 13 percent result in a conviction.³⁴

Improving the status of women

MWA's current priorities are set out in our Statement of Intent as agreed by the previous Minister. They focus on the Government's priorities of lifting our country's economic performance and building a safer New Zealand. We look forward to discussing with you whether you would like to continue with these three priorities.

The following priorities are areas where women are not doing as well as men and where New Zealand is not benefiting from the high level of women's skills and experience.

Increasing women's participation in leadership

Increasing women's participation in leadership provides women with voice and can make institutions more representative. There is also a compelling business case for increasing the number of women in leadership roles. Evidence shows that there is a strong correlation between the presence of women in top leadership roles and improved corporate performance.

We focus on increasing the numbers of women on boards in the state and private sectors and influencing private sector practices by:

- operating a Nominations Service, which puts forward appropriate women candidates for a range of governance roles
- advises women on advancing their own governance participation and experience
- advises decision-makers on how to improve women's participation in leadership roles.

³⁰ Snively, S. (1994) *The New Zealand Economic Cost of Family Violence*. Wellington: Family Violence Unit, Department of Social Welfare.

³¹ It's Not OK campaign. *Recent Statistics*. <http://www.areyouok.org.nz/statistics.php>

³² Roper, T., and Thompson, A. (2006) *Estimating the Costs of Crime in New Zealand in 2003/04*. *New Zealand Treasury Working Paper 06/04*. Wellington: New Zealand Treasury.

³³ Ministry of Justice (2010) *The New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey: 2009. Main findings report*. Wellington: Ministry of Justice.

³⁴ Triggs, S. Mossman, E., Jordan, J., and Kingi, V. (2009) *Responding to Sexual Violence: Attrition in the New Zealand Criminal Justice System*. Wellington: Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Increasing women's economic independence

Economic independence means women have access to a full range of economic opportunities and resources so they can shape their lives and meet the needs of their dependents.

Women are gaining higher qualifications, but their increasing skills are not yet translating into commensurate labour market improvements. This has implications for women's lifetime earnings and, consequently, women's capacity to achieve economic independence for themselves and their families.

Our work on economic independence focuses on the factors that can support women to more fully access economic opportunities and resources. These include:

- supporting women on low incomes and benefits into sustainable, quality work
- strengthening enablers of women's employment, such as affordable, quality childcare, flexible work and a tax-transfer system that ensures an adequate net return from paid work
- encouraging women into higher paid, less-traditionally female work.

Achieving greater economic independence can be more difficult for women who are dependent on welfare, who experience violence, and who want to but are unable to move from low-skilled, low paid employment. For these women additional policy settings such as: benefit abatement rates and tax credits that ensure work is worthwhile; support to achieve safety and reduce the risk of cycling back into violent relationships; and pathways to quality, higher paid employment are all important.

Increasing women's safety from violence

Increasing women's safety from violence requires a combination of activities aimed at: promoting a safe and equitable society; preventing violence before it occurs; responding to violence and preventing it from recurring; and mitigating the impacts of violence and restoring women to well-being. It also requires an integrated approach across a range of government systems, including health, housing, education, justice and welfare.

New Zealand's current policies primarily focus on responding to violence and mitigating the impacts. A number of government agencies and NGOs work in the area of violence response and mitigation, but more needs to be done to align efforts.

Increasing women's safety also requires a focus on preventing violence. Other jurisdictions are giving increasing attention to violence prevention, built on the recognition that this will require long-term efforts, but will have significant ongoing economic and social benefits.

Our recent work has focused on:

- building on our 2009 research project, which looked at effective interventions for adult victim/survivors of sexual violence
- breaking new ground with our policy work on revictimisation, particularly sexual violence
- developing a more comprehensive picture of the links between different forms of violence against women across the life course, and making links across different outcome areas for women, such as the connection between intimate partner violence and welfare dependency
- monitoring progress and outcomes of policy developments in other countries, to learn and apply lessons relevant to New Zealand.

Opportunities on the horizon

There are a number of current and significant opportunities within the Women's Affairs portfolio, as outlined below. While there are opportunities for you to take a lead in some areas, there is also scope to address important issues for women by contributing to work led by other Ministers. We can assist you to do this by providing you with high quality, evidence-based policy advice from a gendered perspective.

Advancing violence prevention. Internationally, increasing attention is being given to preventing violence against women. There is an opportunity to progress New Zealand's approach to violence prevention. As a cross-sector agency with specialist expertise in violence against women, MWA is uniquely placed to support you with advice on preventing and responding to violence.

Lifting women's economic independence. Both the Ministerial Committee on Poverty and the Government's focus on ensuring job and skills training for the jobless offer opportunities to lift economic outcomes for women, particularly for sole-parents and young Māori and Pacific women.

Championing women's increased participation on boards. Cabinet recently invited Ministers and Chief Executives to increase the number of women appointed to state sector boards, resulting in a sharp increase in the appointment of women. The NZX and business leaders are also looking at options to increase the participation of women in senior roles. There are opportunities for you to champion these efforts.

Leading gender equality on the world stage. International organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) are increasingly focused on making better use of women's abilities and skills, as an important strategy for improving economic growth. With New Zealand's high standing in gender equality on the world stage, you will have much to contribute to the international community in this regard.

Risks and challenges

As Minister of Women's Affairs, there are a wide range of opportunities for you to contribute to changing women's lives for the better. However, to achieve significant change, a targeted focus on key priorities can be important.

We are also looking at how we can better engage with young women. Engaging with young people is a challenge faced by many government agencies and NGOs. To ensure sustained improvements in gender equality it is important that solutions are targeted to the needs of younger women. For example, improved awareness of the long term impacts of occupational choices can help improve employment outcomes, whilst educating young people in schools about respectful relating has been shown to reduce violence.

Areas for immediate attention

There are a number of areas that will require your immediate attention in the next month or so.

Responses to questions from the United Nations Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We are currently preparing New Zealand's responses to questions issued by the United Nations Committee for CEDAW, in preparation for New Zealand's presentation of its seventh report on the implementation of CEDAW in New York mid-2012.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The next meeting of CSW will be held in New York beginning 27 February 2012. The theme of this meeting is the empowerment of rural women. This meeting will be preceded by a meeting of Commonwealth Heads of National Women's Machinery on 25 and 26 February 2012.

Four year budget plan. All departments are required to submit a Four Year Budget Plan to the Minister of Finance by 31 January 2012, as a first step in the budget process.

[Note some parts of this section have been withheld under Section 9(2)(g) of the Official Information Act 1982]

How we can support you

As a policy agency, we are focused on providing you with high quality advice based on good research and evidence.

We also recognise the importance of being innovative, outward focussed and taking leadership on gender issues. We will support you to improve the lives of New Zealand women by taking the following approaches to our work:

- by acting as a catalyst for action and change and by getting key issues on the agenda of government agencies and other relevant organisations
- by proactively providing accessible, evidence-based information to inform and assist others

- by being strongly solutions-focused, with advice that is tailored and persuasive
- by bringing the voices, experiences and priorities of different groups of New Zealand women to government
- by continuing to work closely with other government agencies, women's NGOs and stakeholders within the private sector.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs: the organisation

We are a specialist high-performing policy agency with 28 staff and an appropriation of \$4.56 million. This appropriation covers:

- providing policy advice on issues that affect women
- providing suitable women nominees for appointment to state sector boards and committees
- managing New Zealand's international obligations in relation to the status of women
- providing support services to you as Minister.

Over the years we have successfully used our 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:

- gaining private sector commitment towards increasing the number of women on private sector boards
- significantly increasing the number of women on state sector boards
- ground breaking research on sexual violence, which influenced the Court of Appeal in revising sentencing guidelines for sexual violation offences
- contributing to the introduction of Paid Parental Leave and Flexible Work provisions
- refocusing Out of School Services, including contributing to the establishment of extended services in low decile schools
- influencing domestic violence legislation
- contributing to improving the effectiveness of sexuality education in schools.

Over the past year we have focused on improving our organisational capability, efficiency and delivery of policy advice. We recently invited the State Services Commission to undertake a Performance Improvement Framework (PIF) review of our capability and performance. We also engaged an external reviewer to assess our administration and support functions.

As a result we have implemented a new structure, shifting resources from support services to high priority policy development. We have also introduced a programme to ensure enhanced leadership and direction across the organisation and an improved process for stakeholder engagement.

We also annually engage the New Zealand Institute for Economic Research (NZIER) to assess the quality of our policy advice. In 2011, NZIER ranked MWA first out of 22 departments for the quality of its briefings to the Minister.

Attached as Appendix One is a list of key contacts at MWA and an organisational chart.

What happens next?

We will provide you with a number of more detailed briefings following discussion with you.

Appendix One

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

Snapshot of Women in New Zealand

