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### **Girls need to consider the trades**

There are some jobs that girls could happily and productively do but they do not get the chance, Ministry of Women's Affairs Chief Executive Shenagh Gleisner said today.

Speaking after the launch of a new research report, *Trading Choices: young people's career decisions and gender segregation in the trades*, Shenagh Gleisner said it was important to encourage young women to widen their choices when deciding on a career and, in particular, to consider the trades. Young women can feel limited in their options and those limits are reinforced by factors such as family, popular media, school systems, and peers,

'The Ministry of Women's Affairs wanted to know what influences young people when they are deciding on a career and, in particular, why so few young women enter the trades, which are relatively well paid and where many provide the opportunity to earn-while-you-learn.

'While women have entered many jobs that were once dominated by men, such as law or medicine, many jobs remain dominated by either men or women. For example, 99 percent of builders, electricians, and motor mechanics are men. Women make up over 90 percent of people working as caregivers, registered nurses and secretaries. The fact that men and women continue to do different types of jobs is one of the factors in the gender pay gap. Currently, when comparing men's and women's median hourly earnings, women earn 12.1 percent less than men.

'The young women who were interviewed said there are challenges to seeking a job in occupations such as engineering or building. These included how the trades are portrayed in the media, what friends say when they mention they might be considering working in a trade, and the extent to which schools encourage young people to consider a variety of career options.'

Shenagh Gleisner said once at work, however, girls often found ways to fit in and adapt the work around their strengths.

'We want our young women – and young men – to consider all the options when they are deciding what they would like to be. We hope this research will be used widely in discussion and policy development as part of an effort to reduce the gendered nature of career decision-making.'

The Ministry of Women's Affairs commissioned the New Zealand Council for Educational Research to carry out the research which involved focus groups and interviews with 86 young women and men, ranging in age from junior secondary students to trainees and recent graduates in trades-related occupations.

*Trading Choices* was released today by the Minister of Women's Affairs, Hon Steve Chadwick, at a senior assembly at Wellington Girls' College.

The report can be found on the Ministry of Women's Affairs website at <http://www.mwa.govt.nz/news-and-pubs/publications/trading-choices>.

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