

# **NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 1992/1993**

### **Introduction**

This Annual Report covers the period from 1st July 1992 to 30 June 1993. During this period the Council undertook three major projects, each of which will be completed in the 1993/94 year. These projects are; Research into Women and Self Employment, a Report on Industry Training, and an analysis of Women's Current Position in the Labour Market.

The research into Women and Self Employment has been a major piece of work for the Council this year, and it has been contracted to Gray Matter Research Ltd, and Rivers Buchan and Associates. It is intended that they will carry out the research and write up the final report for NACEW.

NACEW's report on Industry Training has been the second key project for 1993. This report will focus on the issues surrounding the Industry Training Strategy, and women's access to industry training, as women have traditionally been under-represented in formal industry training.

NACEW has identified the need for more information on women's current position in the labour market, considering the recent structural and economic changes that have occurred in New Zealand. The Council therefore decided to collate information on a number of areas relating to women's position in the labour market. This material will be written up as a report and will be drawn on in providing advice to the Minister of Employment.

In 1993 NACEW's interest in legislation and its impact on women, included a submission on the Human Rights Bill 1993 which outlined, amongst other things, the grounds on which the Council felt it should be illegal to discriminate on. During the past year NACEW also continued to advocate for attention to be given to the Parental Leave Survey by the Industrial Relations Service of the Department of Labour. NACEW considers that a review of this legislation is important in order to assist in monitoring its effectiveness.

In December 1992 Margaret Wilson's term as the Chair of NACEW expired. The Council would like to express its appreciation for the work and commitment Margaret Wilson gave to the Council during her time as the NACEW Chair. At the end of 1992, Adrienne D'Ath, Chief Executive of the Wellington Regional Employers Association, was appointed as the new NACEW Chair. Adrienne's first meeting with the Council was in February 1993.

### **Women and Self Employment project**

A major piece of work for the council over this year has been the research into Women and Self Employment. NACEW developed this as a Suffrage Centennial Year project to be undertaken jointly with the Department of Labour and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The aim of this project was to increase our knowledge of why women moved into self employment and the outcomes they received. NACEW wanted to focus broadly on women's involvement in self employment and to document the diversity of their experiences associated with being self employed.

The initial stage of this project involved obtaining enough background information to enable the council to identify gaps in the available data, and to more effectively target the second stage, a survey of self employed women.

The review of the available data and literature showed that there are some interesting trends:

- a growth in self employment that is part of a world wide trend; and
- the rate of growth of self employment was greater for women than it was for men, although the proportion of women who became self employed was lower than men as the female labour force grew more rapidly.

NACEW initially proposed to undertake its own quantitative research, however after analysing the limitations of this, the council decided not to proceed with such a survey. Instead a number of case studies would be carried out. This would enable the Council to obtain more detailed information on the reasons for women's self employment, the characteristics of the women and their particular experiences of being self employed. The final report will combine the information from the case studies with the statistics NACEW has been able to purchase.

At the May 1993 NACEW meeting it was decided to accept the proposal of Gray Matter Research Ltd, and Rivers Buchan and Associates, to undertake the Women and Self Employment research project. They will administer the project, carry out the interviews, and write up the final report. This project is expected to be completed during the 1993/94 financial year.

## Industry Training Report

The focus of the Government's Skill New Zealand strategy is to increase the skill levels of those in the New Zealand workforce . The industry training strategy is a key component of Skill New Zealand and an assessment of women's access to the new system of training was determined to be a priority for NACEW in 1993. A representative from both the NZ Qualifications Authority and the Education and Training Support Agency, both of which are responsible for implementing aspects of Skill New Zealand, spoke to NACEW about the issues involved.

NACEW believes that women's access to ongoing credentialised training is important if women are to achieve the qualifications necessary to participate fully in paid employment. The Council therefore decided that there was a need to determine whether the existing structures and legislation are meeting the needs of women within the training arena. A sub committee was set up to more clearly define the work that needed to be done in this area. NACEW's goal was to prepare a report to the Minister of Employment which would outline and analyse women's outcomes under the Industry training strategy. It would then go on to identify potential problem areas and make recommendations.

Members of the sub-committee identified the following key issues that it is intended the report will address:

- To what extent are Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) tending to form in industries which have low proportions of women workers?
- What are the training prospects for women in industries where ITOs have not developed?
- Where ITOs have been developed, will women (especially support staff) within those industries have equal access to that industry training?
- To what extent are National Standards Bodies (NSB) drawing on the expertise of women when developing standards for their industries?
- Given that women's involvement in unpaid work is greater than men's, will there be adequate acknowledgment within the new qualifications framework both of skills gained in this sphere and of prior learning in general ?
- Do those sorts of working arrangements which are more typical for women hinder their access to training? For instance, are part-time workers or those with family responsibilities less likely to receive industry training?

## **Women's Current Position in the Labour Market**

The Council decided that one of its priorities for 1993 would be to look at the current position of women in the labour market. NACEW decided to collate information on the impact on women of the Employment Contracts Act, coupled with the effects of restructuring, a tighter economic environment, and the changing nature of employment. It is intended that the information collected will be drawn on in providing advice to the Minister of Employment.

The report will cover the following areas:

- Occupational segregation
- The earnings gap
- The level of women's employment
- Unemployment
- The nature of women's employment - part-time, casual, and temporary employment for women
- Self employment
- Women's access to, and participation in post compulsory education and training
- Employment conditions (as negotiated in employment contracts)
- Types of employment contract coverage for women
- EEO programmes
- The position of young women in the labour market

## **Human Rights Legislation**

NACEW prepared a submission on the Human Rights Bill 1993 which welcomed the extensions to the grounds on which discrimination would be prohibited and saw the extensions as simply legislative recognition of growing practices. These grounds are disability, political opinion, employment status, and family status. It was also proposed to outlaw age discrimination in all areas, rather than in the area of employment only, as was the case in the previous legislation. Changes in this area are likely to be of much benefit to women, both in the paid workforce and in society in general.

In addition to the proposed grounds on which it would be illegal to discriminate, NACEW's submission identified two further areas in which it saw that discrimination should be prohibited. These were:

### 1. Sexual orientation

NACEW strongly endorsed the Associate Health Minister's proposed amendment prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, and widening the definition of disability to include 'the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing illness'.

Under this proposed amendment NACEW regarded the use of the term 'homosexual' as unsatisfactory. NACEW suggested the alternatives of either

'lesbians and gay men', or 'homosexuals (including lesbians and gay men)'. One of the reasons for this was that many of those who might be categorised as homosexual, and possibly discriminated against for that reason, do not use the term homosexual of themselves. This is particularly so of women, many of whom use the term lesbian. Some might thus not identify the clause as applying to them, and would not realise they were covered. Consequently, women in particular would be disadvantaged if only the term homosexual is present in the legislation.

NACEW also argued that legal protection for those with HIV or AIDS could increase the numbers seeking medical advice and undertaking tests for HIV or AIDS. Fear of discrimination currently limits the effectiveness of health education in this area.

## 2. Trade union affiliation

The Council in its submission on the Human Rights legislation, stated that it was necessary to protect employees against discrimination due to trade union affiliation. This would also maintain consistency with clause 28(1) of the Employment Contracts Act 1991 which states that an employee should not be discriminated against because of their involvement in the activities of an employees organisation.

NACEW's submission also welcomed the removal of gender as a ground for differential treatment in superannuation and insurance policies. The removal of these grounds is likely to result in more women being covered by such policies.

## Looking Ahead to 1994

The Council's efforts over the next twelve months are likely to focus on:

- The continuation and completion of the three projects that are currently underway:
  - i. the Women and Self Employment Research.
  - ii. the Industry Training Report.
  - iii. Women's Current Position in the Labour Market.
- Input into the Task Force on Employment Policy.
- Involvement in the survey of the Parental Leave legislation being undertaken by the Industrial Relations Service of the Department of Labour.

## Membership

The membership of the Council as at June 30 1993 was as follows:

Adrienne D'Ath (Chair)	Wellington	Ministerial Appointee
Prue Hyman	Wellington	Ministerial Appointee
Rawinia Mathews	Havelock North	Ministerial Appointee
Yvonne Oldfield	Auckland	Ministerial Appointee
Anae Si'anaua Ostler	Wellington	Ministerial Appointee
Linda Schofield	Auckland	Ministerial Appointee
Merepeka Sims	Lake Rotoiti	Ministerial Appointee
Linda Sissons	Wellington	Ministerial Appointee
Anne Broome	Wellington	State Services Commission
Barbara Burton	Wellington	NZ Employers Federation
Lynn Middleton	Wellington	NZ Council of Trade Unions
Lois Hampstead	Auckland	NZ Council of Trade Unions
Diane Salter	Wellington	Department of Labour
Anne Riley	Wellington	Ministry of Women's Affairs
Prue Densem	Wellington	Ministry of Education
Liz Seymour	Wellington	Ministry of Youth Affairs

Adrienne D'Ath  
Chairwoman

