



Manatū Wāhine
Ministry for Women

Fortnightly Report Minister for Women

27 September 2024

Current priority outcome areas

Update on Gender Pay Gap calculator tool

The Ministry has had good engagement with business on the testing of the methodology for a gender pay gap reporting tool.

There is high interest in getting a common methodology for how to calculate the gender pay gap consistently and broad agreement on a number of the key components of the calculation. However, there are two areas where there are a range of views:

- Who is included in the reporting. Most agree the Chief Executive should be included, but there is variation around whether to include contractors and people in partnerships (eg lawyers and accountants).
- What pay is included. There are three levels of pay that could be included – base pay, total cash pay and total remuneration.

We are intending to take the feedback we have received on these two areas to the Champions for Change Governance Group meeting. We will also discuss these matters with National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women for an endorsement of the recommended approach.

We will also be seeking endorsement from the Champions for Change Group to launch the calculator and associated materials at their Summit in Auckland in November.

The materials being launched will include a downloadable tool, which is currently being tested with businesses, including Strategic Pay, who offer a free online tool. Guidance has been drafted in line with the development of the methodology. This will also be reviewed and tested by a number of businesses prior to release and will be available on the Ministry's website.

Development of the web element of the calculation and supporting action plan is underway now that the initial testing phase is almost complete. The Ministry will develop partnerships with businesses to also host the calculator – for example Champions for Change, Business NZ, and Mind the Gap.

To further support this work and demonstrate the value of gender pay gap reporting, we are seeking case studies from businesses that have already implemented reporting across their organisation.

Pharmac to fund oestradiol gel from 1 November 2024

On Thursday this week, Pharmac announced its decision to fund oestradiol gel (branded EstroGel) from 1 November 2024.

In response to the global supply issue affecting oestradiol (Estdot) patches, Pharmac ran a public consultation on its proposal to fully fund oestradiol gel without dispensing or eligibility restrictions. In the past three years, demand for oestradiol patches has more than tripled – growing from 1.3 million patches dispensed in 2020/21 to over 4.6 million patches in 2023/24. From 1 November, oestradiol gel will be fully funded when prescribed for anyone who needs it. It is estimated that this could benefit more than 18,000 people in just the first year of funding, increasing to 47,000 people over the next five years.

Media and stakeholder interest in this announcement is likely due to the ongoing global supply issues with oestradiol patches, which continues to have an impact in New Zealand. The Ministry is working with Pharmac to promote this announcement via our social media channels.

An update on preparations for the CEDAW examination

The Ministry's preparation for New Zealand's Convention against the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) examination is well underway.

The delegation will be examined by the CEDAW Committee across two sessions of three hours each on 10 October 2024 in Geneva. We are not provided with a list of the questions the Committee will ask ahead of time, so we have worked extensively with agencies to prepare a delegation pack which we expect will cover the most likely issues that the Committee will raise and provides key messages for each issue. We are also coordinating with agencies to arrange quick-turnaround support in Wellington should follow up information be required after the examination.

To date, nine NGOs have indicated to us that they plan to have in-person representation at the examination. They are:

- Waitaha Executive Grandmother's Council
- BPW New Zealand
- PACIFICA
- Shakti, Pacific Women's Watch
- Tiaki Taonga Trust Wai 262
- Māori Women's Welfare League
- Multicultural NZ
- YWCA.

The Human Rights Commission will be represented by Saunoamaali'i Dr Karanina Sumeo, and two New Zealand MPs (and members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union), Hon Rachel Brooking MP and Kahurangi Carter MP, are planning to attend in person to observe proceedings as they will be in Geneva for a separate event.

New Zealand joins Women Leading Effective and Accountable Democracy in the Digital Age (Women LEAD)

Following your agreement last week [MW BR 24-25 0070 refers], we have advised United States contacts that New Zealand is able to support their Women LEAD initiative. This aligns with the Ministry's existing work to support women into leadership and governance, and our emerging work to support women in the spotlight experiencing online abuse and harassment. It also supports our existing membership of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-based Online Abuse and Harassment.

We will keep you updated on any future actions or opportunities arising from New Zealand's participation in this initiative.

New Zealand joins statement on gendered disinformation

The Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse (Global Partnership) is releasing a statement calling attention to the urgent need to counter the spread of gendered disinformation.

Gendered disinformation is a specific type of harm, where women and marginalised groups such as LGBTQIA+ people, are disproportionately targeted and harassed by spreading deceptive or inaccurate content about them. The techniques for spreading gendered disinformation are diverse, and can include comments that reinforce gender stereotypes, sexualisation and transmission of graphic content, online harassment including threats of violence, and even cyber-attacks.

New Zealand joins fellow Global Partnership members Australia, Chile, Denmark, France, Iceland, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and United States of America in signing the statement which reads, in part:

“We call upon states to join us in recognising and taking action to counter the threat of gendered disinformation to democracies globally. We urge technology and other private companies to take appropriate action to respond to this threat, including a commitment to a Safety-by-Design approach to the development and deployment of platforms and technologies. We ask states and all stakeholders to defend and protect the ability of women, girls and LGBTQIA+ persons to participate in public life freely, safely and without fear.”

The statement went live on the United Kingdom website (www.gov.uk) on Tuesday 24 September 2024.

Australian Senate inquiry into menopause and perimenopause

On 19 September 2024, the Australian Senate Community Affairs References Committee released a report on the inquiry into issues relating to menopause and perimenopause.

The inquiry began in November 2023 and included 290 submissions and seven public hearings across Australia. The 169-page report addresses issues such as women’s experiences of menopause, and the broader health, social, workplace, and economic impacts of it. It also explores the lack of evidence, information and support on issues relating to menopause, as well as the challenges around diagnosis and treatment options, policy directions and government approaches.

The report makes 25 recommendations to the Australian Government, including:

- undertaking research about the impacts of menopause and a menopause awareness campaign
- considering menopause policies in workplaces, legislative amendments to ensure women can access flexible work during menopause, and sexual and reproductive health leave
- including menopause in the health curriculum, medical training, and professional development programmes, and expanding the scope of practice of nurse practitioners to ensure better support for women experiencing menopause in rural areas
- addressing menopause hormonal therapy shortages and accessibility
- developing a menopause action plan.

Cross-agency work to improve collection and visibility of data

Officials have continued to participate in the cross-agency consultation led by Stats NZ to progress the development of an administrative data-based census for 2028 and we have expressed overarching support for this work. 9(2)(g)(i)

9(2)(g)(i)

Officials have also recently met with the Ministry of Education to discuss raising the visibility of the Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) data that has a gender lens, and in particular, the intersectional experiences of NEET Māori and Pacific women and men. We will keep your office updated on any developments in this space.

Calls to recognise the systematic discrimination of women and girls in Iran and Afghanistan as gender apartheid

The Iranian Solidarity Group Aotearoa New Zealand co-hosted a panel discussion with Labour MPs Camilla Belich and Ingrid Leary at Parliament on 17 September 2024 about the realities of life as a woman in Iran and Afghanistan. The event was held in honour of the second anniversary of Iranian woman, Mahsa Jina Amini, who died unexpectedly on 16 September 2022 while in custody of Iran's Gasht-e Ershad (Guidance Patrol) for "improper" clothing. The incident sparked outrage in Iran and widespread protest followed.

Panellists at the event spoke about how discriminatory laws in both countries affect virtually every aspect of women's lives, including marriage, divorce, travel, and access to employment, education and health care.

United Nations experts and NGOs argue that these State-sanctioned discriminatory policies, practices and laws constitute an unparalleled system of oppression against women and girls tantamount to "gender apartheid" and call for the international community to recognise and codify this as a crime in international law. Work is currently underway at the United Nations on draft legislation. Speakers encouraged New Zealand to take an official position and signal support for this work, building on from New Zealand's past support for the removal of Iran from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Ministry Officials are following up with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for developments and updates in this space.

Cabinet papers the Ministry has been consulted on

Suicide Prevention

In August we provided comments on a draft Cabinet paper seeking agreement to release a draft suicide prevention action plan for public consultation.

We supported the paper and suggested:

- including pregnant women and new mothers in the Cabinet paper (to reflect their inclusion in the draft action plan)
- clarifying the sections on prevention and early intervention
- including family violence and sexual violence as one of the wider factors impacting on suicide.

The Ministry of Health has released the draft action plan for public consultation. They will soon be proactively releasing decision-making material, which shows that we were consulted but not our specific comments.

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New Zealand's Fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Human Rights – Cabinet Paper Release

On Friday 27 September, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) will proactively release a cabinet paper that you received as part of Ministerial consultation, regarding the Government response to recommendations received during the fourth UPR. Cabinet decided to support or partially support 180 of the 259 recommendations received. All recommendations and agreed actions to implement them are included in the public *Human Rights Monitor* launched on 26 September. This timing coincides with the formal adoption and publication of the UPR response by the United Nations Human Rights Council, on 26 or 27 September European time. MOJ will be responsible for dealing with general media queries relating to New Zealand's participation in the UPR, including the submissions process and coordination the of the response. MOJ or the Minister of Justice will respond, after consulting with other agencies as appropriate. MOJ will inform relevant agencies of all queries and responses.

Communications

Upcoming Social Media highlights			
Type	Title	Description	Due date
LinkedIn, Instagram stories	Women in Governance Awards 2024 recap / congrats	Sharing photos and information on the WIG2024 awards. We will profile each of the two winners of our category (Northern Region Football, MinterEllisonRuddWatts) on social media, and congratulate Traci Houpapa on her Lifetime Achievement award.	23 – 25 Sept
Facebook, Instagram	Mental Health Awareness Week	Sharing resources from the Mental Health Foundation and other health organisations to support women's mental health.	23 – 27 Sept
Facebook, Instagram	Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Month	Sharing information on cervical screening (national screening service, self-test)	30 Sept
Facebook, Instagram	Breast Cancer Awareness Month	Sharing information on breast cancer in NZ (stats, where to get support)	01 Oct

Ministerial Servicing

Policy advice and reports in progress			
Type	Title	Log number	Due date
Briefing	Parental Leave	MW BR 24-25 0072	17 Oct
Briefing	October Baseline Update (OBU)	MW BR 24-25 0068	08 Oct

Event and meeting briefings in progress			
Type	Title	Log number	Due date
Aide Memoire	Meeting with Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa	MW AM 24-25 0055	09 Oct
Aide Memoire	PSA Briefing to the incoming Minister for Women	MW AM 24-25 0071	30 Oct
Aide Memoire	Women Deliver Conference	MW AM 24-25 0067	27 Nov

Written Parliamentary Questions		
Subject	Log number	Due date
Flexible working – Francisco Hernandez, Green Party	MW WPQ 24-25 0016	26 Sept

Official Information Act requests in progress		
Subject	Log number	Due to requester
Ministry OIA requests		
Job cuts, baseline savings	MW DOIA 24-25 0013	01 Oct
Advice and policy options	MW DOIA 24-25 0014	07 Oct
Wall Walk participation	MW DOIA 24-25 0015	08 Oct
Parental Leave Policy	MW DOIA 24-25 0016	10 Oct
Paid advertisement on social media	MW DOIA 24-25 0017	18 Oct

Proactive release

This Fortnightly Report will be considered for release within three months of publication, under the Ministry's 'proactive release of documents' policy.