

Fortnightly Report Minister for Women

21 November 2025

Current priority outcome areas

Report of young women's pay conversation experiences released alongside expanded Gender Pay Gap toolkit

The YWCA survey report on young women's experiences of talking about pay was released on Thursday 20 November on the YWCA and Ministry websites, following the launch of the expanded Gender Pay Gap toolkit.

The report underpins the guide to support young women to confidently discuss pay at work, which was included in the suite of new resources for the expanded toolkit.

Over 1,300 women from across New Zealand responded to the survey. Key findings included:

- Confidence in navigating pay-related matters was low.
- Almost one third of respondents had never asked for a pay rise or negotiated their pay – despite wanting to.
- Almost half of the respondents did not feel appropriately involved in decisions about their pay.
- Taboo, secrecy, and fear were commonly cited barriers to talking about pay at work.
- Employers can help reduce these barriers through clear systems, safe spaces, and pay transparency in the workplace.

A copy of the report has been sent to your Office.

The Ministry will continue to work with the YWCA to promote the report and the toolkit's guide for young women.

Women's experiences a key focus in the recently released Review of Retirement Income Policies

The Retirement Commission launched the 2025 Review of Retirement Income Policies report on Friday 14 November, in Auckland. The Ministry's Chief Executive, Kellie Coombes attended.

The Commission is required to review New Zealand's retirement income policies every three years to ensure the retirement income system remains fit for purpose.

The 2025 report includes a dedicated focus on the experiences of women, identifying that cumulative disadvantages across a lifetime result in significantly lower retirement savings for women. It makes 12 recommendations, including targeted policy reforms to address the most pressing retirement savings gaps. The key recommendations expected to positively impact women are:

- Providing all KiwiSaver members who take parental leave a one-off payment of \$1,000 per parental leave period, regardless of whether the parent also contributes.
- Increasing the Government's contribution for lower-income earners, who are more likely to be women, Māori, Pacific and/or self-employed.

The Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Hon Scott Simpson, is expected to take the recommendations to Cabinet. We will provide further advice to your Office on potential opportunities for improving outcomes for women stemming from the review and our further work with the Retirement Commission.

Champions for Change launch new parental leave framework

On Thursday 13 November, Champions for Change launched its parental leave framework, which sets out a minimum standard that all Champion organisations must meet in their parental leave policies. The framework also sets out a midpoint and an aspirational standard for organisations to develop towards. Kellie Coombes, Secretary for Women, attended the launch event.

The framework was designed in consultation with Crayon and covers additional paid leave, partner leave, KiwiSaver contributions, flexible return, leave and wellbeing, and parental leave transparency. At the minimum standard, organisations are required to make employer KiwiSaver contributions while employees are on leave and to offer two weeks of partner leave at full pay.

Champions for Change presented their draft framework to NACEW earlier in the year. This has informed NACEW's upcoming advice to you on parental leave.

Ethnic Xchange 2025 and support for women entrepreneurs


The Ministry for Ethnic Communities' second annual Ethnic Xchange Symposium took place in Auckland on Friday 14 November. The theme was 'Going for Growth: Expanding Ethnic Enterprises' and focused on empowering ethnic entrepreneurs and strengthening global connections through the talent and networks of New Zealand's ethnic communities. The Ministry provided the Ministry for Ethnic Communities support for the event.

Hon Nicola Willis, Hon Mark Mitchell and Hon Chris Penk attended and spoke as a panel on what the Government was doing to support business in New Zealand, with a particular focus on regulatory reform and support through free trade agreements.

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities used the symposium to launch a report it had commissioned into the experiences of ethnic women entrepreneurs. The report highlights the achievements and resilience of ethnic women entrepreneurs and the barriers they still face, which include access to capital, mainstream networks, advice and information, and biases.

The Ministry is exploring further work to support women entrepreneurs in New Zealand. As part of this, we are planning to provide support for the Ministry of Awesome's Electrify Aotearoa conference, which will take place in May or June 2026. We are also working with Ministry of Awesome to have a physical presence at the event to promote the Nominations Service.

withheld 9(2)(f)(iv)



withheld 9(2)(f)(iv)

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence takes place from 25 November to 10 December.

This year, the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Protection (FVSVP) is partnering with UN Women Aotearoa to run a campaign featuring the voices of diverse, high-profile women across New Zealand on a future without violence.

As part of the campaign, FVSVP will be sharing your awareness video alongside Minister Chhour to acknowledge the campaign and promote action to end violence against women and girls.

The Ministry will also be sharing videos and related content to acknowledge the campaign throughout the 16 days. The campaign aligns closely with the Ministry's work to support women to navigate online harm through the Free to Lead Toolkit. We will share videos of the women who took part in the social content highlighting the tips and actions as part of raising awareness for the campaign.

We will be sharing social content on our LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook platforms in support of the initiative.

When women effectively “work for free” – 2025 calculations

On 13 October, the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU) issued a media release on “work for free days”. These are symbolic dates from which various groups of women are effectively working without pay, given their pay gaps with men. They are often used by NGOs and other groups to raise awareness about gender pay gaps.

NZCTU stated that from 9 October 2025, Pacific women had been working for free, and that from 30 November 2025, all women will have reached their work for free day. NZCTU's calculations were based on a different methodology, using mean (average) pay, rather than median pay and using European men rather than all men as the basis for comparison. Stats NZ uses median pay in reporting the national gender pay gap to control for the distorting effect that high-earning individuals can have on survey sample data. For the same reason, the Ministry uses this method to calculate pay gaps for intersectional groups. The Ministry also calculates gender/ethnic pay gaps using the comparison group of “all men” so that these gaps can be meaningfully compared to the national gender pay gap of 5.2 percent.

Based on the above, the Ministry calculates the work for free days for various groups of women in 2025 as follows:

- Pacific Women: 4 November
- Wāhine Māori: 18 November

- All Women (national GPG): 13 December *
- European Women: 29 December *

The Ministry for Women does not intend to mark any of these dates as part of its social media activity.

** note that the above dates are calculated on the basis of a 365-day calendar year. If calculated based on 260 “working days” (Monday to Friday) the work for free day for all women is 12 December, and for European women it is 30 December.*

Ministerial Servicing

Event and meeting briefings in progress			
Type	Title	Log number	Due date
Aide memoire	NACEW meeting, 1 December	MW AM 25-26 0088	26 Nov
Aide memoire	Meeting with EEO Commissioner	MW AM 25-26 0086	4 Dec
Aide memoire	Meeting with Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children	MW AM 25-26 0089	8 Dec

Official Information Act requests in progress		
Subject	Log number	Due to requester
Ministry OIA requests		
Breakdown of GPG roadshow costs	MW DOIA 25-26 0024	24 Nov
Documents on endometriosis	MW DOIA 25-26 0025	28 Nov

Cabinet paper consultations		
Title	Agency	Due date
withheld 9(2)(f)(iv)		

Proactive release

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