



New Zealand Federation of Business  
& Professional Women Incorporated

## Submission

# Human Rights (Women in Armed Forces) Amendment

October 06

To: Clerk of Committee  
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

Re: Human Rights (Women in Armed Forces) Amendment Bill

### Introduction

1. This submission is from the New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women Inc.

Mailing address: BPWNZ, PO Box 28-326, Auckland

### Our organisation

2. Our organisation's aims are to link professional and businesswomen throughout the world, to provide support, to lobby for change and to promote the ongoing advancement of women. We work for equal opportunities and status for all women in economic, civil and political life and the removal of discrimination in all countries. We promote our aims and organise our operating structure without distinction as to race, language or religion.

Our membership is approximately 1000.

Our structure is comprised of a National Executive, 33 branches located nationwide between Kaitaia and Southland, with a number of individual members in areas where there is no branch.

**Our interest in this bill is because we are a women's group who are committed to the implementation of the CEDAW treaty which promotes women's equal opportunity in all areas of employment.**

### Our Policy

3. We have a number of pieces in our policy which refer to equal employment for women where we support Human Rights. We support the CEDAW treaty through our policy of supporting the United Nations Charter and Status of Women Commission, reference policy No 16.1.1 passed in 1952

and

Specifically in 1979 a remit was passed at National Conference that expressed confidence in the Human Rights Commission.

Policy No 16.1.2 states that *"the Federation express its full confidence in the Chairman and members of the commission appointed to carry out the many functions laid down in the Act to promote the advancement of human rights in New Zealand."*

In 2003 Policy No 17.28 was passed at the National Conference which supports our commitment to Human Rights

- a) *by resolving to join the Human Rights Network (HRN) and*
- b) *by encouraging each club within New Zealand to join the Human Rights Network.*

*(Quote from CEDAW Treaty*

*Article 2: of the treaty mandates countries to condemn discrimination in all its forms and to ensure a legal framework including all laws, policies, and practices that provide protection against discrimination and embody the principle of equality.*

*Article 11: mandates the end of discrimination in the field of employment including the right to work and to have access to employment opportunities, to equal remuneration, to **free choice of profession** and employment, to social security, and to protection of health (including maternal health) and also ends discrimination on the grounds of marriage or maternity.)*

4. We note that there is no specific discrimination in the defence department policy against women serving in combat during the instigation of hostilities, police action or peace keeping that may be requested by the government of the defence department. The policy simply refers to personnel. Therefore there would be no major re-vamp required within the defence department to implement the change.

**We support the intent of this amendment to the Human rights bill as it will provide opportunities for women in the armed forces to contribute positively in front line activities, and uphold the CEDAW treaty's policies in removing discrimination and providing opportunities for free choice of profession and employment.**