



Affiliated with the International Federation of Business and Professional Women

BPW
NEW ZEALAND

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12th August 2016

Public Consultation
Minister of Education,
Hon Hekia Parata

Re: Minister of Education proposes Salisbury is to close and commences consultation

Submission:

This submission is from the NZ Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW NZ) Inc.

Our Organisation

Our organisation's aims are to link professional and business women throughout the world, to provide support, to lobby for change and to promote the ongoing advancement of women and girls. 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.

International Status:

BPW International has General Consultative Status at the United Nations through the UN Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC). This enables BPW International to appoint official representatives to UN agencies worldwide and to accredit members to attend specific UN meetings.

BPW International upholds the outcomes of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee at state party level. BPW International upholds the outcome documents of the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which evaluates progress, identifies challenges, sets global standards and formulates policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

Our interest in this submission is because we are committed to advocating for equal opportunities for women and girls and for the health and safety of women

and girls. BPW New Zealand has had a long history working with and for the rights of women with disabilities.

Conventions:

CEDAW General recommendation #18¹ recognises that women with disabilities suffer double discrimination and the rights of women and girls with disabilities are upheld through international conventions and the NZ legal system:

1. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) Preamble: the need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons with disabilities, including those who require more intensive support
2. UNCPRD Article 6 – Women with Disabilities, which addresses the multiple discrimination against women and girls with disabilities and requires State Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women.
3. Salisbury vs Attorney General [80] [81] as reported by Russell McVeagh²

General Comments:

BPW New Zealand urges the Minister and the Ministry of Education to take into account that:

1. Women and girls who are discriminated against because of their disabilities: -
 - a. Are twice as likely to be victims of domestic violence than their able-bodied counterparts
 - b. Are disproportionately represented among those who lack education and qualifications, do not work or are living on a low income.
 - c. Are frequently institutionalised, while still young, in accommodation for the elderly, the ill and the dying,
 - d. Are more likely to experience poor social and economic outcomes across the course of their lives.
2. Domestic violence legislation does not cover all situations that disabled women and girls live in such as residential facilities, nor all forms of abuse, for example hate crimes such as bullying, name-calling and physical assaults by members of the public, family friends, school pupils and caregivers.
3. More responsive services including justice, education, health, social and specialist disability support could prevent or minimise harm.

¹ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_4729_E.pdf

² <http://www.salisbury.school.nz/assets/Uploads/3133368-Advice-on-Salisbury-and-Halswell-schools-v1.pdf>

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4. Girls and women with disabilities need to be provided with education and support to understand sexuality, reproduction, contraception and childcare
5. We also note that safe residential education places for girls with severe and/or significant disabilities are limited.
6. A substantial body of literature purports that girls with learning disabilities are up to seven times more likely to suffer abuse, including sexual abuse than non-disabled girls of the same age – girls going on to be revictimised whereas abused boys go on to become abusers.
7. There are minimal statistics on girls with disabilities attending tertiary education and/or vocational centres/facilities however the NZ Tertiary Education Strategy (2010-15) states that “people with disabilities are less likely to participate in tertiary education. They tend also to study at lower levels and are generally older”. The Strategy has a goal of “more disabled people completing higher-level qualifications” but does not provide recommendations on how providers how to increase accessibility, offer appropriate/suitable courses for them nor how to improve opportunities for girls with disabilities
8. Evidence to suggest girls face additional risks of sexual abuse in co-ed environments especially if have been sexually abused or particularly vulnerable
9. Girls requiring safe education spaces – residential special education – are materially disadvantaged if our nation cannot provide such places
10. Salisbury School’s support allows a vulnerable girl to go on to cope in the world alone and reduces ongoing social costs (Information provided to the CEDAW committee 2012 as a result of questions at the lunchtime meeting³)

BPW New Zealand further submits that the Minister and Ministry of Education must ensure that girls are safe from sexual and physical abuse in their chosen education environments

BPW New Zealand also asks that in keeping Salisbury School open, enrolments are such that up to 100 girls with complex learning, social and emotional needs can be accommodated. We consider that any decision made for Salisbury School is based on the

³ [Education](#)

Salisbury School is the only school in New Zealand providing residential care for post primary girls with intellectual and/or multi impairments who continue to fail to achieve in their home environment. It is a last resort for girls for whom all other means of support have failed. This group of girls has undergone multi assessments because of their complex diagnoses and challenging behaviours. However these assessments conducted by a range of professionals have not in the majority of cases resulted in successful educational placement in mainstream schools. In the past it has become very evident that the supportive environment where they are able to access a curriculum which has been sufficiently and successfully adapted to fit their very individual learning needs has not been found. That is until they have been accepted into a residential setting.

At Salisbury, girls live and learn in a tailored environment and are supported to integrate with the community. Salisbury School provides residential care and education, adapted to individual needs for girls whose needs have not been met in their home and mainstream schools situation. It is a last resort when support in the home and school environment has not succeeded. Without Salisbury School, the most vulnerable of teenage girls will never learn how to cope in the world alone.

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needs of the student's safety and welfare, educational achievement and equal opportunities. Rather than what appears to be some purely short term financial considerations. The rights of these girls should be paramount in the rationale of the outcome made for the school.

We have anecdotal evidence from a social worker in Pukekohe," with many years' experience," that has a special story of Salisbury School which has a double edged blade to it. She said:

"that she had placed one girl at Salisbury School who will complete her time there at the end of the year and the results have been amazing with this girl ready to integrate back into the community. She also said she had spent hours trying to get another girl placed there but the criteria were very restrictive. She was aware how much the girl needed such a school but despite trying all sorts of ways to get her in she could not get her placed. Since wasting so much of her valuable time on this effort she has not tried to get anyone else placed there as she believes the current entrance criteria are deeply flawed".

BPW New Zealand submits that Salisbury School must stay open.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this submission process and we hope that our comments are of use to you.

On behalf of
New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women Inc.



Vicky Mee
President



Hellen Swales
Vice President, Issues

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