



New Zealand Federation of Business  
& Professional Women Incorporated

11 July 2005

## SUBMISSION

**To: Secretary of the Transport & Industrial Relations Select Committee**

**Re: Employment Relations (Flexible Working Hours) Amendment bill**

### Introduction

1. This submission is from the New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women, Inc. (BPW NZ)
2. We wish to appear before the committee to speak to our submission. Contact person: Angela McLeod (Legislation Convenor)  
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### Our organisation

3. 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 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, together with a number of individual members in areas where there is no branch.

***We are interested in this bill because it supports the family and will improve conditions of employment for working parents, in particular women with dependant children.***

### BPW NZ Policy

4. We have several policies which support our stand on this amendment. The following subjects are covered: caregiver leave, pay equity and equal

opportunities for women, paid parental leave, family friendly facilities in the workplace and childcare.

Specifically, in 1994 a remit was passed at the National Conference which includes flexible work times as a supportive policy which provides for adequate coverage of childcare for employees.

Policy number 7.10 states that *“Being aware that there are some employers who have implemented policies and practices to assist employees with family care,(BPW NZ) urges the New Zealand Employers Federation, the New Zealand Manufacturers Federation and the New Zealand Chambers of Commerce to actively encourage their members to investigate and implement supportive policies and programmes to provide for adequate coverage of childcare for their employees.*

*We offer the following ideas which have been collected from surveys in New Zealand and the United States.*

- 1 *Provide for **flexible work times***
- 2 *Contribute to out of school care programmes*
- 3 *Foster the establishment of work teams which provide cover to support workers who need time off for family commitments*
- 4 *Contribute to home care service for sick children*
- 5 *Provide access to an information and referral service for employees*
- 6 *Consider setting up a crèche as a joint venture with other companies.*

Flexible work hours had also previously been considered at the 1981 conference.

*At which the following Policy was adopted :*

*“That BPWNZ advise the Minister of Labour that it endorses the views expressed by the New Zealand Planning Council in the publication “EMPLOYMENT” of October 1980, and supported by the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, that increased flexibility in employment and greater personal choice by those in the labour force (women in particular) would be achieved:*

- (a) *by the removal of those restrictions on part-timers which would deprive them of the opportunities to train, earn promotion and have careers; and*
- (b) *by the greater use of such measures as **flexible working hours** and job sharing*

*The Federation expressed the hope that policies will be developed and ways and means found of encouraging employers and unions to effect these desirable changes speedily.*

### **CEDAW**

*New Zealand is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Article 11, supports (a) The right to work---, (b) The right to the same employment opportunities---, (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion ---.*

*Hours of work can be a major barrier preventing parents with dependant children from taking up employment. This particularly inhibits women who usually take primary responsibility for children, from enjoying the rights enshrined in the Convention.*

*BPW NZ is pleased that the Bill is congruent with the Convention and will enhance the rights of parents, in particular women, in relation to employment.*

***We support the intent of this bill in its entirety as it is family friendly, and will improve the ability of parents/primary care givers with dependant children to maintain productive employment and continue to develop their careers.***