

Vote Women's Affairs

Baseline Alignment Proposal

8 March 2010

Submitted by:

Hon Pansy Wong

Section 1: Alignment to Government Priorities

One of my first tasks on becoming Minister of Women's Affairs was to re-orient my Ministry's focus towards achieving the government's driving goal to grow New Zealand's economy. I set a new goal: 'Women having real choices and using their strengths to maximise social and economic success'.

In Budget 2009, it was agreed that the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) would focus on three priority areas and these have been further sharpened with the allocation of funding to address the gender pay gap. And so the focus for the current year has been on violence against women, women in leadership, and the gender pay gap.

This focus will continue into 2010/11 and beyond.

Progress in 2009

A number of major milestones have been achieved in this portfolio over the last year. In October 2009, I launched MWA's completed research on effective interventions for adult victims/survivors of sexual violence. This work was drawn on heavily by the Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence (TASV) and will be of significant value to the government's post-TASV activity.

I have engaged extensively with business leaders and ministerial colleagues on the international evidence of the value that women can add to boards. My leadership in this area has resulted in numerous organisations initiating activities to increase women's participation on boards.

I have asked MWA to look at some creative and innovative approaches to re-framing and tackling the gender pay gap. Four work streams have begun: women in trades; career pathways; income differences amongst tertiary graduates; and flexible work.

Proposed priorities for 2010

I will be contributing to a step change in New Zealand's economic performance by:

1. increasing the participation of women in leadership roles across the economy
2. tackling the pay and employment gap so that all women can be fully engaged in the economy, and contribute to the country's economic growth
3. reducing the damaging impact of violence against women, in particular, sexual violence.

[Information deleted in order to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expressions of opinions].

Section 2: Reprioritisation

The Ministry of Women's Affairs will continue to provide one output class: high quality policy advice and nominations services. But there will be a continuing refinement of the work programme to ensure the approach is even more effective and practicable.

To increase the participation of women in leadership roles across the economy

There is strong evidence that boards with a balance of men and women consider a wider range of issues and options, leading to improved decision-making. Women's participation on boards improves governance practices and correlates positively with corporate performance.

I will be seeking more women in leadership roles across the economy, in particular on important state sector boards and committees (state-owned enterprises and crown entities, research and financial institutions), and on private sector boards.

My approach is to inspire ministerial colleagues and business leaders to seek out highly qualified women candidates because of the value they can bring to board roles. I see this as more effective than pushing for quotas for women's participation. My Ministry will take the lead in finding top-performing women across sectors to nominate as candidates for state sector boards, and developing, in co-operation with business leaders, initiatives for increasing the participation of women on private sector company boards.

There are no legislative changes planned.

To tackle the pay and employment gap so that all women can be fully engaged in the economy, and contribute to the country's economic growth

Women's skills are under-utilised in the economy, and this represents lost opportunities for women themselves and for government, which gets a lower return on investment in education and skills training. One of the factors that perpetuates this cycle is the differential between men's and women's earnings.

MWA's work will continue to focus on the four workstreams: women in trades; career pathways; income differences amongst tertiary graduates; and flexible work.

I expect to find more young women in less-traditional careers, particularly trades where there are shortages, and a gender-neutral culture in emerging and future trades. I also expect that: women who work in flexible and part-time roles are able to progress in their careers; post-graduate income differences between men and women narrow; and career pathways are created for low-paid occupations, so that women can move out of precarious and very low-income jobs.

My Ministry's work programme looks at all of these issues. However, I do not intend to take many papers to Cabinet on these matters. Instead, I have asked my Ministry to take a more innovative, outward-focused, and leadership-based approach. I would like to see it assisting and encouraging different sectors to remove barriers where they exist.

The approach is one of using business cases to promote and highlight exemplars. Examples are: a business case for flexible work to be promoted in the accountancy industry; understanding the reasons for the pay gap between graduates within the same fields of study and then working directly with universities and the graduates themselves to increase

awareness; and promoting a pathway to enrolled nursing for support workers in residential and home care.

To reduce the damaging impact of violence against women, in particular sexual violence

The issue I hear most often in my discussions with New Zealand women is violence against women. Too many women are repeat victims of sexual and domestic violence, which has significant social and economic costs to the country. My Ministry has developed niche expertise in this particular area, and I expect that my colleagues, Minister Power and Minister Turia, will continue to draw on this expertise.

I am aiming for: a system that encourages lower tolerance and increased reporting of sexual and domestic violence; friends and family equipped and knowledgeable to get help and support for victims; and services that work to restore victims to well-being as fast and effectively as possible.

My main role, and that of my Ministry, is to ensure that the niche expertise is used appropriately. As a member of the Family Violence Ministerial Group, I will be fully supporting the initiatives of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families and the efforts of Minister Turia in leading this work. I will also be following through on the post-TASV focus with Minister Power. More specifically, MWA will provide a gender focus to Whānau Ora, and support the Ministry of Justice in leading the next steps in the policy work on sexual violence following the government response to the TASV report, with stronger evidence from the MWA research and including a victim-centred focus.

Other work will include: examining the issues relating to intimate partner violence in ethnic communities, in collaboration with the Office of Ethnic Affairs; supporting work on the prevention of sexual violence; and undertaking research on resilience in young people, targeting Māori youth.

Other commitments

As part of New Zealand's international obligations, I will be seeking Cabinet endorsement to submit New Zealand's seventh report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to the United Nations in September 2010. CEDAW is the primary instrument that guides women's rights in an international context. I will also lead the New Zealand delegation that appears before the CEDAW Committee in late 2011.

New Zealand was one of the first countries in the world to give the vote to women, and I intend to raise the profile of Suffrage Day by organising a big event and other activities in September 2010 to mark the occasion.

Finally, my Ministry in this portfolio is a small agency, and both the Ministry and I need to build relationships with others in order to influence outcomes. Relationship building is taking place with external women and appropriate organisations. The public profile and relevance of the Ministry of Women's Affairs is a key factor in communicating the three priority goals.

Section 3: Summary of Financial Movements

I do not propose any changes to Vote Women's Affairs appropriations from the latest baselines set in the February 2010 Baseline Update.

A copy of the Financial Summary Report is attached.

Baseline Alignment Proposal - Financial Summary Report

Vote: Affairs	Women's	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
		(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)
Baseline (2009/10 FBU)		4,864	4,635	4,554	4,554	4,554
Share Allocation		0	0	0	0	0
Centralised Saving		0	0	0	0	0
Reprioritisation						
Total Reprioritisation		0	0	0	0	0
Transfers Outside Vote						
Total Transfers Outside Vote		0	0	0	0	0
Total Changes		0	0	0	0	0
Total Proposed Baseline		4,864	4,635	4,554	4,554	4,554