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16 November 2018

Hon Julie-Anne Genter
Minister for Women
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Tēnā koe Minister Genter,

Auckland Council support for the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

I am writing to express Auckland Council's support for the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and for the New Zealand government's actions to achieve progress on CEDAW goals.

On 5 July 2018, Auckland Council's Community Safety and Development Committee, which I chair, held a special meeting focussing on CEDAW. At that meeting we were fortunate to have presentations from the Right Honorable Helen Clark, Dr Jackie Blue (then Equal Opportunities Commissioner) and several speakers from women's organisations with a long history of engagement in CEDAW. The speakers discussed national and international gender issues and key issues from their upcoming submissions on CEDAW to the United Nations (UN) Committee for the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women.

Shortly after that meeting, the Acting Minister for Women represented the NZ Government at this UN committee, which noted NZ's progress on CEDAW since 2012 and expressed a range of concerns and recommendations relating to NZ's progress on the CEDAW goals.

On 15 November 2018, my committee considered another report on CEDAW and resolved to:

- endorse the CEDAW goals as providing a strong framework to advance political and economic equality for women in NZ
- endorse several Auckland Council work programs as aligning with, and helping to deliver on, a number of the key CEDAW Goals
- monitor progress on these work programs, in the context of CEDAW goals
- seek to identify other work programs that align with and help deliver on CEDAW goals
- express Council's commitment to CEDAW and support for the Government's work programs to achieve CEDAW goals.

Council's commitment to CEDAW goals and to addressing gender issues is an important part of our commitment to diversity and inclusion. One of Council's key diversity and inclusion goals is that its senior leadership team will reflect Auckland's diversity. Council has a number of work programmes underway that align to, and can help deliver on, the CEDAW goals. These include work programmes that address gender issues for Council staff as well as community facing work programmes.

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Auckland Council is a member of Champions for Change and participates in the Gender Pay and Gender Tick programmes and will shortly be piloting an accelerated women's leadership programme. Council is actively developing relationships with government agencies who hold databases of candidates for appointment to boards, to expand the pipeline of candidates for our Council Controlled Organisations. Our six demographic advisory panels ensure that we hear the diverse voices of all Aucklanders when developing policy.

Council also supports a wide range of community initiatives which respond to the diverse needs of Auckland women and help to ensure that our policies and services support women and do not perpetuate gender bias. We are also tracking our engagement with Aucklanders by age, gender and ethnicity and will be actively encouraging a diverse range of Aucklanders to vote, and stand, in next year's local government elections.

Auckland Council officers are in contact with your officials in the Ministry for Women and we will continue to update them on progress with our work programmes.

I am thrilled to champion Auckland Council's support for CEDAW and look forward to working with you to achieve further progress on the CEDAW goals.

Ngā Mihi

Councillor Cathey Casey

Chair, Community Development and Safety Committee

Auckland Council