

## **Submission in Support of Employment Relations (Employee Remuneration Disclosure) Amendment Bill**

### **Introduction**

1. This submission is from Zonta International District 16 Incorporated (*Zonta D16*).

### **About Zonta D16**

2. Zonta D16 has been active in New Zealand for over 50 years. We are the New Zealand District of Zonta International, which comprises 32 Districts and has a presence in more than 60 countries worldwide.
3. Zonta D16 is an organisation of professionals working together through service and advocacy to build a better for women and girls. We envision a world in which women's rights are recognised as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential.
4. A central part of this mission is the pursuit of equity in leadership, employment and education. This includes the need for pay equity, which remains a persistent challenge both in New Zealand and globally.

### **Key Submissions**

5. Zonta D16 is pleased to provide this submission in support of the Employment Relations (Employee Remuneration Disclosure) Amendment Bill, which seeks to protect employees who discuss or disclose their remuneration. We see it as an important step in encouraging pay transparency and equity in employment.
6. Pay transparency is an important tool to address systemic inequities in compensation. Research consistently shows that secrecy around pay perpetuates discrimination, including the gender pay gap. Women in New Zealand currently earn, on average, less than men for equivalent work, a disparity that is even more pronounced for Māori and Pasifika women.
7. Pay transparency can play a role in identifying and addressing these inequities by:
  - a) **Empowering Workers:** When workers can freely discuss their remuneration without fear of retribution, they are better equipped to identify disparities and advocate for fair treatment.
  - b) **Encouraging Accountability:** Pay transparency creates an environment where employers are more likely to regularly evaluate and rectify pay inequities within their organisations.
  - c) **Promoting Equity Across Marginalised Groups:** While gender pay inequity is a critical issue, we acknowledge that other marginalised groups, including people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, also face significant pay disparities. Transparency benefits all workers by bringing systemic inequities into the light.
8. Legislation to prohibit the punishment of employees for discussing their pay is a crucial step in fostering a culture of openness and fairness in workplaces. Without explicit protections, employees may feel intimidated or fearful of retaliation, which undermines the broader goal

of achieving pay equity.

9. This proposed law also aligns with New Zealand's commitment to advancing human rights and promoting gender equality, as reflected in our obligations under international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

## **Conclusion**

10. Zonta International District 16 supports the proposed legislation and commends parliament for taking this step to advance pay equity. By enacting laws that protect workers' rights to discuss their remuneration without fear of reprisal, New Zealand can move closer to achieving a fair and equitable workforce for all.