

26 June 2025

**Global Women Submission to the People's Select Committee on Pay Equity**

Submitted to: [peoplesselectcommittee@payequity.org.nz](mailto:peoplesselectcommittee@payequity.org.nz)

Tēnā koutou,

Thank you for the invitation to provide a submission to the People's Select Committee on Pay Equity.

Global Women is a non-partisan organisation committed to increasing diversity and inclusion in leadership across Aotearoa New Zealand. We work with senior leaders across the public and private sectors to champion gender equity, support inclusive cultures, and lift the participation of wāhine at all levels of leadership. Over four hundred Global Women members also use their leadership and influence to push for diversity in leadership, together and as individuals.

We acknowledge the initiative of this Committee in seeking to gather evidence and perspectives on the Equal Pay Amendment Act 2025, particularly given the absence of a traditional Parliamentary select committee process. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this process and to support a comprehensive understanding of the implications of the legislation.

**Our submission**

Global Women supports the principle of pay equity as well as the right of all people in Aotearoa New Zealand to receive equal pay for work of equal value. Progress on pay equity is not only a matter of fairness and human rights, but also a critical economic and leadership issue. Achieving pay equity strengthens workforce participation, drives innovation, and improves outcomes for women, their families and communities.

We acknowledge that legislative reform can play a key role in supporting or undermining these objectives. For this reason, we would have preferred a more consultative and transparent approach to the development and passage of the Equal Pay Amendment Act 2025. We believe meaningful engagement with those most affected – including workers, employers, unions, community groups, and business leaders – is essential to good lawmaking.

*Poor process and the demoralising impact on women party to existing claims*

Before the changes introduced by the Amendment Act, the pay equity claims process under the Equal Pay Amendment Act 2020, whilst still maturing, had enabled meaningful progress in addressing longstanding gender-based pay disparities.

Our members have been consistent in their concern about the process followed both in terms of impact on law making but also impact on those women and workers with existing claims. The need to begin this claims process again has had a demoralising impact on those workforces and undermined their confidence in the societal value of their work. Many women workers, including those in sectors like care work, education support, and community services, had spent significant time and effort in the previous process.

### *Disproportionate impact on some women*

Global Women is particularly concerned about the potential for the legislative change to have a disproportionate negative impact on groups who already experience pay inequities. Research consistently shows that wāhine Māori, Pacific women, and migrant women face compounding disadvantages in the labour market, including:

- Lower average earnings across all education levels
- Higher representation in undervalued care and service sectors
- Additional barriers to workplace advocacy and representation

Any delay or disruption to pay equity progress will disproportionately affect these groups, potentially widening existing inequities. We urge that specific monitoring and support mechanisms be established to understand and address these potential impacts.

### *Concerns related to the comparator process require good evidence*

Within our membership we acknowledge the concerns of some who believe that the comparator process had become complex, challenging to interpret and apply, and with poorly understood cost implications. Others of our membership considered that the comparators were well understood and are critical to making progress on pay equity. However, the absence of proper consideration of these issues means that these perspectives are not able to be brought to the discussion.

### *Implications for employers and the broader economy*

From an employer perspective, clarity, consistency, and fairness in the legislative framework are essential. Businesses need a process that supports constructive dialogue, is evidence-based, and enables both resolution and certainty. Abrupt legislative changes may create uncertainty, particularly for organisations that were already participating in good-faith negotiations under the previous regime.

We encourage continued support for mechanisms that enable leadership and accountability on pay equity within organisations, including through voluntary reporting, transparency, and inclusive workplace practices.

## **Conclusion**

Global Women is committed to supporting progress towards gender equity in Aotearoa New Zealand. We welcome this initiative by the People's Select Committee and acknowledge its contribution to ensuring the voices of all New Zealanders – particularly those of women, workers, employers, and whānau – are heard and considered.

Nāku noa, nā



Katie Bhreatnach  
**Chief Executive**