

Women's Policy

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Vision

The Greens envision a world where there is equality between men and women. We wish to ensure that all New Zealand women can enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination on the basis of sex, and that needs and experiences that are specific or common to women are valued and recognised along with the needs and experiences of men. We also wish to dismantle negative compounding effects of gender, ethnicity, disability, and class so that the diversity and uniqueness of all women can be recognized and celebrated as a strength.

Key Principles

The Green Party affirms that:

1. Structural discrimination against women must be undone.
2. Women are not a homogenous group and, to achieve equality, programmes and policies will need to be tailored to meet the needs of diverse groups of women.
3. Acknowledging and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi is an essential step towards equality.
4. Women offer unique and valuable perspectives, and the economy and society does better where women and men share leadership roles. Women's participation in such positions must be encouraged.
5. Women should receive equal pay for work of equal value and women's unpaid work should be valued.
6. Women with family responsibilities should not be discriminated against, and they should be supported in negotiating the tensions between their paid employment and family responsibilities.
7. Women's sovereignty over their own bodies should be protected and enhanced and their specific health needs addressed.
8. Women must be safe from violence, and their freedom must not be restricted by the threat of violence.

Specific Policy Points

1. Participation and Recognition

A. Women And The Economy

Women are over-represented in lower income brackets and continue to bear the burden of unpaid work. They are still subject to gender bias and discrimination.

Women who experience other forms of discrimination are often more likely to be paid even less and face additional barriers to employment and advancement. Greater equality for all women means a stronger economy and society.

The Green Party will:

1. Progress pay equity and protect the requirement for equal pay (see Industrial Relations policy).
2. Include the value of unpaid work in our national economic statistics.
3. Develop employment legislation to increase the ability of workers to care for themselves and their dependants, for example child-friendly workplace provisions; breastfeeding breaks and areas; flexible working hours; increased sick and domestic leave provisions, and create protections from attack and negative employment consequences for victims of domestic violence in the workplace.
4. Extend paid parental leave (see Industrial Relations policy).
5. Work towards a social security system that treats people as individuals rather than couples, reduces stigma, respects and enables caring for children and other dependants and voluntary community work, and ensures the ability to participate in society for all.
6. Review and reform the child support system to ensure it operates in a way to best benefit children and young people (see [Children's](#) policy).
7. Seek to raise the lowest incomes to ensure the ability to participate in society and reduce inequality, by:
 - a. Raising the minimum wage.
 - b. Improving the ability to bargain collectively.
 - c. Addressing the casualisation of work.
 - d. Reviewing remuneration for traditional women's work.
8. Tailor equity initiatives to address all forms of discrimination such as ability, age, race.

See [Income Support](#) and [Industrial Relations](#) policies for more information.

B. Education

Empowerment through quality education helps girls and women to fulfil their potential. To address the barriers that prevent women from participating equitably at all levels of education in New Zealand, the Green Party will:

1. Dismantle barriers to women's and mothers' equitable participation in all levels of education.
2. Make certain that girls and women are encouraged to pursue the full range of subjects and career paths that they are interested in.
3. Assist the creation of a supportive and encouraging learning environment for girls and women, where they can feel an integral and valued part of their community.

C. Breaking the Glass Ceiling

Companies, the not-for-profit sector, and Government will benefit from the diversity that a better gender balance will bring. The nature of ingrained oppression means that this increased representation won't happen without a purposeful effort.

The Green Party will:

1. Support organisations that are working to increase the participation of women

in high-level positions.

2. Set targets for the percentage of women to be employed in the public service and fulfil senior management roles.

D. Women and the Media

A free flow of information is an essential ingredient of open and democratic societies. The Green Party believes that there can be no full freedom of the press until women have an equal voice in news-gathering and dissemination processes.

The Green Party will:

1. Explore regulations to ensure positive representation of women in New Zealand media.
2. Develop a national campaign on the importance of equality between men and women in a democratic society and which addresses negative stereotypes of men and women.
3. Introduce legislation to establish a monitoring and reporting function by the Ministry of Women's Affairs on the representation of women in New Zealand media.
4. Implement measures, such as awareness campaigns in schools, to prevent incidence of cyberbullying notably targeting teenage girls.

E. Wahine Māori

The Green Party supports the strength and energy of wahine Māori and recognises their contribution to society. The Green Party also recognises that wahine Māori, in particular, have suffered from the effects of colonisation which has undermined their leadership, spirituality, knowledge and rights.

The Green Party will work with wahine Māori to:

1. Recognise and support the leadership of wahine Māori on both social, environmental and economic issues.
2. Resource a series of nation wide hui of wahine Māori to discuss and determine their priorities and needs for the future.
3. Implement programmes and policies to reduce existing social and economic disparities between Māori and non-Māori women.
4. Ensure that all health, education and other government policies and priorities recognise and aim to improve the well being of wahine Māori.

2. Violence Against Women

The Green party's aim is that women live without fear of violence. The causes of violence against women are complex. Reducing violence against women and increasing women's safety is a long-term commitment for the Green Party.

All women may experience violence regardless of their status but the likelihood of experiencing violence and ability to access appropriate support and find safety are significantly different for different groups of women. We need responses that will meet the needs of all women.

A. Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is a significant and long entrenched problem in New Zealand. The nature of the crime is to target the vulnerable, for example children, women, trans* people, people with disabilities, and gay men.

The Green Party has a political commitment to preventing sexual abuse, supporting survivors, and rehabilitating perpetrators. The Green Party will:

1. Develop a comprehensive plan to appropriately respond to and ultimately reduce the levels of sexual violence.
2. Ensure services are accessible to all and are able to develop capacity to meet specific needs.
3. Ensure the justice system is sensitive to the needs of all victims of sexual abuse of all types.
4. Fund research to ensure interventions are based on the current best practice and meet the needs of marginalised groups.
5. Develop a coherent cross-ministry funding model and level of funding to meet crisis and recovery support, rehabilitation and prevention.

B. Intimate Partner Violence

New Zealand has very high rates of intimate partner violence with approximately one in three New Zealand women experiencing this. The police, on average, respond to an intimate partner violence incident every seven minutes yet estimate they see less than 20% of incidents (according to statistics from Women's Refuge).

Our aim is to improve whole-of-system response to intimate partner violence.

The Green Party will:

1. Build an integrated response to intimate partner violence by bringing together departments, agencies and service providers working across and outside government.
2. Build a shared understanding of intimate partner violence across all sectors and reflect this understanding in legislation.
3. Develop common risk assessment and risk management frameworks.
4. Develop complementary codes of practice to ensure consistent responses by individual agencies.
5. Centralise funding for services and evaluation to assess effectiveness.
6. Improve training in intimate partner violence across all professional disciplines where decisions may be made or advice given in cases involving family violence.
7. Develop a case management approach that prioritises victim safety.
8. Improve public knowledge about risk factors and the co-occurrence of intimate partner violence and child abuse and neglect.
9. Ensure all measures are in place to enable those who have experienced intimate partner violence to successfully rebuild their lives.
10. Ensure high quality, more efficient and accessible services by incorporating the insights of those individuals, family and whānau who have experienced intimate partner violence.
11. Promote the primary prevention of violence against women (primary prevention deals with culture, and shifts societal mindsets. It aims to prevent the problem from happening in the first place. For example the 'Its Not Ok' campaign was an exercise in primary prevention).

C. Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage

The Green Party will:

1. Address the lack of in-depth understanding amongst service providers, statutory agencies and judiciary of the dynamics of honour-based violence and forced marriage.

2. Remedy the lack of national data specifically on the issue, which limits our ability to ensure appropriate intervention and prevention programmes are available.
3. Treat forced marriage as a violation of human rights issue rather than an immigration issue.
4. Meet the need for a dedicated service targeted at younger survivors of 'honour-based' violence and forced marriage through the provision of a culturally appropriate refuge along with a transition programme tailored to their requirements.

3. Sexual and Reproductive Health

A. Contraception

Good access to contraception gives women more freedom to plan their lives, and reduces the rates of abortion and unwanted pregnancy. Because different forms of contraception and sterilisation have different side-effects and other associated issues, individuals and couples should be able to choose the form of contraception that is best for them.

Women have the right to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, and affordable contraception, and the right to culturally appropriate health care services.

The Green Party will:

1. Improve access to culturally appropriate information about different contraceptive methods
2. Ensure costs and waiting lists are not a barrier to accessing appropriate contraception in New Zealand.
3. Ensure accessibility of Family Planning Clinics throughout New Zealand.

B. Pregnancy Termination (Abortion)

Currently, abortion is a crime in New Zealand. It is only legal if two consultants agree that the pregnancy would seriously harm the woman's mental or physical health or that the fetus would have a serious disability.

The Green Party recognises this situation as problematic, because:

- The time taken to see two consultants means abortions happen later in the pregnancy. This is more dangerous, and it makes it difficult to access medical abortions (those which are conducted using medicine rather than surgery), which can only be performed at under 9 weeks gestation.
- Rape (sexual violation) is not grounds for abortion under NZ law.
- The fact that 99% of abortions are approved on 'mental health' grounds reveals the dishonesty of the current legal situation.
- The current laws reinforce abortion stigma, and are discriminatory towards people with disabilities.
- Abortion's continuing criminal status helps reinforce geographical variations in access to abortion services.

We trust women to make decisions that are best for them and their whānau/family. We want to ensure equal access to all potential options is available to pregnant women.

Decriminalisation will also reduce the stigma and judgement that is often the result of the reason a woman chooses to have an abortion (e.g. rape being seen as more justified grounds for abortion than poverty), and will enable abortions to be performed

earlier in pregnancy, which is safer.

The Green Party supports the right to choose.

1. To prevent coercion either for or against abortion, the Green Party will:
 - a. Ensure neutral counselling is available (but not mandatory).
 - b. Discourage non-neutral counselling which provides women with biased, inaccurate health information.
 - c. Ensure medical oversight agencies, such as the Medical Council, maintain, publicise and enforce codes of ethics mandating that personal beliefs (including religious, political and moral) are protected, however the practitioner is required to refer the patient to a neutral practitioner in a timely manner.
2. To support the freedom to have an abortion the Green Party will:
 - a. Decriminalise abortion by removing it from the Crimes Act.
 - b. Allow terminations after 20 weeks only according to current practice.
 - c. Legislate to protect the right to have an abortion.
 - d. Ensure that all options to terminate a pregnancy are equally available to every woman in NZ.
 - e. Reconcile NZ law with Treaties to which we are signatory, including CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and other Human Rights Treaties).
3. To protect the freedom to choose to continue a pregnancy, the Green Party will:
 - a. Ensure that options are presented in an understandable manner, with support from independent advocates or translators where necessary.
 - b. Ensure those who are competent to make informed decisions on their sexual and reproductive rights have the freedom to do so.
 - c. Provide increased support to vulnerable pregnant women so they feel they can continue with their pregnancy if this is their preferred option.
 - d. Ensure women are not penalised financially for choosing to keep their child (see [Income Support](#) policy).
 - e. Address concerns about pressure for and overuse of antenatal screening, which should be an individual choice, and ensure that parents are fully informed about available and potential supports for families and people living with disabilities. [See our [Disability](#) policy].

C. Fertility treatment and surrogacy

1. Develop a National Infertility Prevention strategy that focuses on ways we can protect fertility and reduce infertility.
2. Research environmental causes of infertility and require reviews of chemicals and hormones that are found to be affecting fertility and health.
3. Change the law to provide a clear mechanism for parenthood through surrogacy.
4. Oppose commercial surrogacy, but support actual cost reimbursement in altruistic surrogacy situations.
5. Support equal criteria for lesbian and heterosexual women in assessments of their suitability and eligibility for parenting and adoption.

4. Sex work

The Green Party will:

1. Continue to support sex work being legal and regulated under civil rather than criminal law.
2. Continue to support legislation and policy initiatives that:
 - a. Protect minors and those forced to work in prostitution, while criminalising clients who have sex with prostitutes aged under 18.
 - b. Improve the health and safety of people working in the sex industry.
 - c. Protect the safety of street prostitutes.

5. Women in Policy Development

Women are workers, taxpayers, unemployed, business owners, mothers, students, farmers, and decision-makers. Their day-to-day experiences, and the different roles women play mean that women offer a unique and valuable perspective which must be included in the development of Government programs and priorities.

The Green Party will:

1. Develop a national action plan towards gender equality based on wide consultation with a variety of women, and ensure government priorities reflect the plan.
2. Require all legislation and government policy to be analysed to determine the different effect on men and women, including a gender analysis on all Government bills before the House.
3. Review the adequacy of funding for the Ministry of Women's Affairs and identify ways to increase their ability to influence policy development.
4. Ensure that the needs of marginalized and vulnerable women are identified, prioritized, and met.