

November 2020

# Briefing to the Incoming Minister

Minister for Environment

Rural Women New Zealand



# Contents

Overview.....	3
About RWNZ.....	3
Role of RWNZ.....	4
Engaging with our Rural Voice.....	4
Policy Development.....	4
Consultation.....	5
Leadership .....	5
International Instruments.....	6
Priority Areas.....	6
First 100 days.....	7

# Overview

Our rural communities are unique to Aotearoa New Zealand, are inherently resilient and unequivocally hold the economic, social and cultural strength of Aotearoa New Zealand in their hearts. Aotearoa New Zealand's history is populated by rural pioneers and entrepreneurs laced together with Te Ao Māori. Aotearoa New Zealand's rural communities are innovative, tight-knit and supportive. They value their heritage and contribution to our way of life which they hold dear and is the envy of many around the world. Rural women are the backbone of our rural communities and are vital to ensuring the communities in which they live, work, and play are strong and resilient. Rural women are leaders in their local communities. Government policies, legislation and decisions impact urban and rural communities differently.

## About RWNZ

Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) is a not-for-profit, member-based organisation that since 1925 has been reaching into all rural communities and for nearly 100 years has been, and continues to be, a credible, respected voice on rural environment, health, education, technology, business and social issues.

RWNZ is affiliated to the Associated Country Women of the World and as such upholds all United Nations, ILO, FAO and WHO conventions and outcome statements as they relate to women and rural women in particular. RWNZ is a strong supporter of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and seeks acknowledgement of these in its submissions to Parliament.

## Role of RWNZ

RWNZ strives to ensure that all rural residents, workers and families have equitable access to services, inequalities are addressed by Government, and the wellbeing of rural communities is considered from the beginning of all policy and legislative development. Our Members play a vital role as leaders in their communities and as decision-makers at local, national and international level.

## Engaging With our Rural Voice

Change begins when a community comes together to discuss issues that affect it. When given the opportunity, this togetherness allows rural communities to discuss the effects of government policy and legislation on those living and working in rural New Zealand. Rural voices must be included in consultation and policy development to ensure positive outcomes for rural communities.

## Policy Development

RWNZ sees an opportunity for the Minister to ensure that all policy development includes a rural impact analysis alongside the Ministry's gender analysis tool. It is important to identify and mitigate any potential adverse impacts of the intersectionality of gender and rural living.

Currently there are guidelines for rural proofing at the Ministry of Primary Industries which support basic rural impact analyses and the

Ministry for Women has the gender analysis tool, Bringing Gender In. Using these together should give the desired platform, in the creation of policies and plans, for testing any issues that result from the intersectionality of being a woman, or girl, in rural New Zealand.

## Consultation

RWNZ further recommends that the Minister encourages consultation and communication with rural communities to ensure effective participation and analysis.

Consultation can be achieved through the use of such mechanisms as focus groups, surveys and newsletters which are hosted and/or distributed by rural interest groups such as ours.

## Leadership

RWNZ sees an opportunity for the Minister to partner with us to identify and encourage rural women to represent their communities on District Health Boards, advisory committees, reference groups and taskforces to ensure the voice of rural communities and the health issues facing women are understood and articulated.

# International Instruments

RWNZ would like to see the Government action the United Nations Human Rights Instruments, which have been ratified by Aotearoa New Zealand, as they relate to rural women and girls, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the outcome statement of the 62nd United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62); the Beijing Platform for Action and; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Minister could advocate for actions across Government that include accepting and implementing any General Recommendations and State Party Specific Recommendations to Aotearoa New Zealand by the CEDAW Committee and any health outcome statements from CSW62.

## Priority Areas:

The wellbeing of our natural environment is a major concern for all New Zealanders and discussions regarding threats to our environment from climate change, and the opportunities to mitigate them, must include rural communities.

Financially and environmentally sustainable land-based businesses play an important part in protecting our land, water, and indigenous flora and fauna. Finding a balance between urban growth and land use policies which protect our productive land is vital for food production and community resilience.

Our natural environment and biosecurity is vulnerable to incursions by exotic pests and diseases.

The potential effects of any such incursions on our rural communities, in both an economic and social context, cannot be understated.

The quality, quantity, availability and equitable supply of sustainable water must be the cornerstones of all decisions relating to it.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that economic, environmental and sustainable land use decisions are made in partnership with landowners, land users and rural communities. There is opportunity to do this via a co-design model whilst continuing to engage with rural communities through focus groups and meetings with organisations such as ours;

- Invest in strategies and actions for effective water storage and supply systems which ensure high quality, sustainable and equitable water supplies that keep pace with climate change and population growth;

- Secure funding to support the research and development of more sustainable primary industry practices and products;

- Develop funding programs that support rural communities to make any changes needed to mitigate climate change.

- Share stories of those rural communities who have successful sustainable practices and/or strategies to ensure that others are inspired and motivated to do similar and urban New Zealanders start to understand about the sustainability of rural Aotearoa New Zealand

## First 100 days

The strategic intentions articulated in the first one hundred days of government are vital to the ongoing success of Aotearoa New Zealand and the transformational leadership needed to lead these intentions should be obvious to all New Zealanders. The economic, environmental, social and cultural strength of the nation is at its most vulnerable as a new Government settles in to its place and we look forward to hearing of the central role rural communities will be playing in those strategic intentions and leadership of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Rural Women New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to meet with you in these first one hundred days to discuss opportunities for collaboration and we look forward to hearing from your office to that end.

# He waka eke noa

Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei