

28 January 2021

Committee Secretariat
Education and Workforce Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Email: ew@parliament.govt.nz

RURAL WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (INC) SUBMISSION

Holidays (Increasing Sick Leave) Amendment Bill

Introduction

Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) welcomes the opportunity to provide a written submission on the Holidays (Increasing Sick Leave) Amendment Bill

General Comments

1. RWNZ surveyed a proportion of its Members and this submission is based on their feedback.
2. RWNZ is concerned about both the potential for adverse financial impact on small rural businesses of extending sick leave entitlements whilst also acknowledging the need to support wellbeing and the adverse health impact on employees of not extending the sick leave entitlements.
3. Rural communities are essential to the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of New Zealand and in our view their health and wellbeing is paramount.

Specific comments

4. RWNZ is concerned that small rural businesses are advising us that they believe they will struggle financially if they have to provide 10 days' sick leave for employees, especially where, as is often the case, there are not people available to cover that employees work.

5. Two examples given are: one member advising that she was unable to replace a sick staff member during the busy calving period and another advising no extra skilled hands available in the community, such as a mechanic.
6. RWNZ agrees with the provision of maximum accrual of 20 sick leave days and the change in annual carry-over to a maximum ten days.
7. RWNZ strongly urges that a rural impact assessment be carried out because it seems to us that small businesses in rural communities could be adversely impacted at a higher proportion than those in urban communities.

About Rural Women New Zealand

8. Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) is a not-for-profit, member-based organisation that reaches into all rural communities and has an authoritative voice on rural environment, health, education, technology, business and social issues.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. RWNZ would like to draw particular attention to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality; Goal 3, Good Health and Wellbeing; Goal 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth and; Reduced Inequalities.

We look forward to discussing this further with you in our oral submission.

Yours sincerely,



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