

30/06/2026

Committee Secretariat
Social Services and Community Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Submission: Legislation (Definitions of Woman and Man) Amendment Bill

Tēnā koe

Age Concern New Zealand (ACNZ) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Legislation (Definitions of Woman and Man) Amendment Bill*.

ACNZ leads, advocates, connects, and collaborates to support the wellbeing and rights of older adults.

In preparing our response we have considered information from Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission¹ and The Helen Clark Foundation's Mahi a Rongo *Social Cohesion in New Zealand* report released in April 2026.²

We consider the Amendment Bill is unnecessary and disregards the rights of many New Zealanders. It risks causing greater harm to the Rainbow and Takatāpui communities, including ageing members of these populations. The Amendment Bill risks being discriminatory and disrespectful of people who have a right to live with dignity, respect and safe from harm.

Approximately 12,800 members of the Rainbow and Takatāpui communities are aged 65+ according to the 2023 census.³ This is likely under reporting due to the barriers of stigma and fear of discrimination, especially among those who experienced possible criminal and other discrimination in their younger years. We are concerned at the potential negative impact of the Amendment Bill on this segment of the older population.

ACNZ does **not support** the *Legislation (Definitions of Woman and Man) Amendment Bill*, and we do not support it proceeding further.

¹ <https://tikatangata.org.nz/>

² <https://www.helenclark.foundation/research/social-cohesion-in-new-zealand-2026>

³ <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/politics/529738/census-2023-first-ever-census-data-on-nz-s-rainbow-communities-released>

About Age Concern New Zealand

Age Concern New Zealand is a trusted charity working in local communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to support older people, their friends and whānau. We have 28 local Age Concerns operating in 38 locations throughout the country and a national office based in Wellington.

Our strategic goal is:

Every older person feels connected, has positive choices and can age well.

Our values of Dignity. Wellbeing. Equity and Respect for older people are our guiding lights and underpin everything we do.

We are committed to respecting and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi as we plan and develop our support and advocacy for older New Zealanders.

Our core services include advocacy and public awareness, social connection, health promotion, elder abuse and neglect prevention, and providing support through expert information, advice and referrals.

We are active and vocal on relevant issues and work to ensure older people stay connected with their family, friends and community. We inform government and other national bodies on issues of concern for older people.

Local Age Concerns are the first port of call for older people living in their community, providing a range of services and social activities to meet their needs.

Our Comments

1. Existing laws already work well with a clear shared understanding of the terms woman and man. There is no need to define them in legislation.
2. The Amendment Bill puts at risk the Government's obligation to honour the human rights of New Zealanders who experience discrimination based on gender identity.
3. All New Zealanders, including transgender, non-binary and intersex people are protected from discrimination by the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.⁴ A 2006 finding by the Attorney-General stated that transgender people were covered by the Human Rights Act. Existing legislation must be honoured and all people respected regardless of age, gender identity and ethnicity. The Human Rights Commission also states that under international human rights standards

⁴ <https://tikatangata.org.nz/news/definitions-of-woman-and-man-legislation-not-necessary-risks-further-harm-to-rainbow-people?token=03f66278f1accf53688cff9e86f396f748e70e3e35f4c5f9c6e566b118699f59>

all people have the right to define their own gender and be free from harm based on their gender.

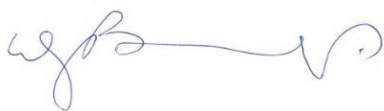
Our Recommendations

1. We recommend that the *Legislation (Definitions of Woman and Man) Amendment Bill* is dropped and proceeds no further. It is unnecessary and fails to protect the human rights of all New Zealanders as per the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.
2. That the Government protects the human rights of all New Zealanders regardless of age, gender identity, and ethnicity.

Closing Comment

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our feedback on the *Legislation (Definitions of Woman and Man) Amendment Bill*.

Nāku noa, nā,



Karen Billings-Jensen
Chief Executive
Age Concern New Zealand