

Joint Submission from ‘Support for Men in New Zealand Aotearoa’ for the Universal Periodic Review of New Zealand (UPR Working Group’s 46th session – Apr – May 2024)

This is a joint submission, focusing on the human rights of men in New Zealand. The submission is endorsed, in whole or in part, by the following organisations. More information on each organisation can be found in Annex 1.

Supporters:

- Iain Fergusson
- National Council of Men
- Men & Boys Well-being Conference

Contact information: Iain Fergusson email: iain.fergusson@gmail.com phone: +640211176841

Summary for UN person condensing the document

1. New Zealand does not have equal protection of men’s human rights and as a result male victims of violence face unacceptable barriers to getting the help they need.

The New Zealand Human Rights system for men and boys

2. New Zealand is committed to ensuring women and men equally enjoy their human rights.¹ Unfortunately, New Zealand’s efforts to ensure equal rights has not been equal. The protection of women’s rights is treated very differently from the protection of men’s rights. New Zealand has a number of formal mechanisms for women’s rights and none for men’s rights. The Government assumes men’s rights are magically protected by gender-neutral law and policy. Conversely, women’s rights have specific mechanisms in place because they believe gender neutral provisions are not sufficient for protecting women’s rights and ensuring equality. As a result many human rights issues for men and boys are ignored or minimised. Here are some examples:

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

3. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an important treaty for protecting women’s rights, but there is no equivalent for men’s rights. New Zealand ratified CEDAW on 10 Jan 1985.
4. Explicitly recognising rights means those rights are more likely to be protected and taken into account by decision makers. CEDAW provides benefits to women that are not available to men.²
5. Without an equivalent treaty explicitly recognising men’s human rights, men’s rights are not equally protected in New Zealand. This is a violation of men’s right to be free from discrimination.

Recommendation: Men must have the same protections as women have in CEDAW.

Minister for Women

6. New Zealand has a Minister for Women. The Minister's responsibilities include “leading work across government and with stakeholders in business and the community to improve the lives of New Zealand women and girls.”³ There is no Minister for Men.

Recommendation: Create a Minister for Men to complement the Minister for Women

Ministry for Women

7. The Ministry for Women is New Zealand’s principal advisor on improving the lives of women and girls. There is no equivalent for men and boys.
8. The Ministry for Women provides several functions for protecting women’s rights.⁴ There is no organisation that provides the same benefits for men and boys.

Recommendation: Create a Ministry for Men to complement the Ministry for Women

Women’s equality strategy

9. The Ministry for Women created a Women’s Equality Strategy.⁵ There is no men’s equality strategy.
10. The women’s equality strategy is an “aspirational high-level set of guiding principles, that aims to improve coordination, visibility and prioritisation across government agencies”.⁶ “The Strategy seeks to provide **equality of outcomes** for all groups of women (gender equality). We recognise that focusing on equality of opportunity is not sufficient, as equal treatment will not produce equitable results.”⁷
11. The Ministry’s *Women’s Equality Strategy* recognises that men and boys are a disadvantaged compared to women and girls in some areas.⁸
12. Despite having a goal of ‘equal outcomes’ and recognising unequal outcomes for men and boys there is no strategy for men and boys.

Recommendation: The Government should expand the Women’s equality strategy to a true ‘gender equality strategy’ that explicitly include men and boys, as well as women and girls.

Gender budgeting

13. New Zealand is working on incorporating ‘gender budgeting’ into its budget development process. The Ministry for Women says “Gender budgeting is about ensuring that the different needs and experiences of women, men, and gender diverse people are considered in the budget process and in the allocation of funding and resources.”⁹
14. Although this definition includes men, in practice men are excluded from the process.
15. A gender budgeting pilot took place between September 2021 and May 2022. The pilot was evaluated using three key questions:
 - What kind of impact does the initiative have on **women and girls** overall?
 - What kind of impact does the initiative have on **wāhine Māori [Māori women]**?
 - Does the initiative impact on another specific group of **women and girls**?

16. The evaluation did not include assessment of the impact on men and boys.
17. Following the pilot, Gender Budgeting was expanded for the 2023 Budget cycle to include 15 government agencies across 27 Budget initiatives. The government's budget website describes the positives affects of gender budgeting on women and girls and ignores men and boys.

Ministry for Women supported agencies to identify the anticipated impacts on women and girls, particularly for Māori, through a Gender Budgeting Toolkit.

The Treasury – Gender budgeting¹⁰

18. Men are only mentioned as a comparison to women,¹¹ not as beneficiaries of gender budgeting. It's clear that 'gender budgeting' is not considering the needs of men and boys.

Recommendation; Gender budgeting must explicitly include the needs of men and boys, in addition to the needs of women and girls.

Human Rights Commission

19. The New Zealand Human Rights commission is New Zealand's National Human Rights Institution(NHRI). The Commission does not treat men's rights and women's right equally and is neglecting its duty to men. The United Nations manual on human rights monitoring says to be proactive in identifying and reporting on gender issues.

*Integrating gender implies a **proactive attitude** of looking at and analysing how situations affect women, girls, men and boys differently. It is also about making such differences **visible** throughout the monitoring cycle. (Emphasis in original)¹²*

20. The commission, however, is only proactive with regards to women's rights, it is not proactive with regards to men's rights. When asked to be more proactive, the commission said it was satisfied that its current passive gender-neutral approach would capture men's rights issues.¹³
21. The Commissions proactive measures for women's rights include:
- A Commissioner for Women
 - Regular specific consultations with women about their human rights.
 - Develop priorities for women's rights¹⁴:
 - Specific projects, including websites and education material specifically about women's rights¹⁵
 - Making recommendations to the government and UN about specifically women's rights

National plan of action

22. The Human Rights Commission is responsible for developing a National Plan of Action for Human Rights. The United Nations requires the Commission integrate "appropriate strategies to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights."¹⁶ However, the National Plan of Action has only included women's rights and not men's rights.

Double standards

23. The Human Rights Commission has a history of applying double standards in its treatment of women and men. For example:
24. In 2009, Paul Callister pointed out that the Commission describes a 14% disparity in favour of men as large, and a 14% disparity in favour of women as small.¹⁷ In 2015, Human Rights Commissioner Dr Jackie Blue described gender equality as only applying to women.

Gender equality is about accepting that at birth, half of us are intrinsically discriminated and treated differently based on sex.¹⁸

25. In 2023, the Commission's report on the Convention Against Torture showed the double standard again. When considering the treatment of prisoners, the commission recommends focusing on women because they are in a system designed to accommodate men. When considering domestic violence victims, the commission recommends focusing on women because they are the majority of victims, even though New Zealand's domestic violence system was designed for women.¹⁹

Recommendation; Perform an independent audit of the Human Rights Commission before the next review.

Discrimination against men

Biased laws

26. Equality under the law is a human right. In New Zealand, women and men are not equal under the law. Women have additional protection and consideration under the law, that men do not have. Laws that benefit women over men are:
 - Protection from genital mutilation²⁰
 - Infanticide²¹
 - Male assaults female²²
 - Adoption²³
 - Women's Health Strategy²⁴ (More information about the women's health strategy below.)

Fair treatment in the justice system

Unequal Treatment

27. New Zealand has accepted recommendations to remedy structural discrimination in the justice system²⁵ however men face unequal treatment in the justice system. Men are over-represented in prison compared to women. In March 2023, 6% of prisoners are female and 94% are male.²⁶
28. Women who enter the justice system are filtered out at every natural attrition point more than men. Men are more likely to be prosecuted rather than given an alternative like being warned or discharged without conviction. Men are more likely to be sent to prison once convicted. Men receive longer sentences on average and are less likely to be released on parole.²⁷
29. Jeffries found discrimination against men in several areas of the justice system:

In all but one case (the initial decision to imprison) sex was found to have a direct impact on the judicial outcomes investigated including: length of imprisonment term, remand status, length of custodial remand and bail conditions. With other factors statistically controlled, women's imprisonment terms were found to be substantially shorter than men's..²⁸

30. Patterson found similar discrimination against men for sexual assault cases.

In terms of police decision-making processes, compared to males, a smaller proportion of females proceeded to "court action" for their offences. Furthermore, the severity of sentences handed down to males was greater than those handed down to females, both generally and when the sexual offence could be directly matched.²⁹

31. Even though men face significant discrimination in the justice system the Department of Corrections "has made efforts to limit the number of women coming to prison, and data shows that these efforts have been successful"³⁰

32. This bias against men is consistent with international research.³¹

Recommendation: New Zealand should investigate and make a plan to eliminate gender bias in the justice system before the next review.

Sentencing Guidelines for sexual offences

33. New Zealand's rape and sexual assault law and subsequent sentencing guidelines treat women who have non-consensual sex with men more leniently than men who have non-consensual with women. Sentencing guidelines released by the Court of Appeal make a clear distinction between rape by penetration and other forms of sexual assault.³² This creates a significant difference between men and women. For example, a man having sex with a women without her consent, with no aggravating factors, is recommended a 6-8 years sentence, in the reverse situation the women is recommended a 2-5 year sentence.

Recommendation: The Court of Appeal should be directed to consider substantive gender differences that may arise from its recommendations.

Bias against men in family mediation

34. Nurit Zubery studied men's experiences of family mediation and found issues with the "mediator's bias against fathers" and "the devaluation of fatherhood"³³

Women's Health strategy

35. New Zealand has a women's health strategy³⁴ that will set "long-term priorities which will guide the health system progress towards equity and healthy futures for women."

36. The Ministry Of Health says there "will also be equity of health outcomes between men and women"³⁵ but does not have a strategy to improve men's health where it lags behind women's health.

37. The Government recognises that the Strategy "will contribute women's rights to the highest attainable standard of health and wellbeing, and rights to be free from discrimination."³⁶ Men also have those rights, but there is no complementary men's health strategy. Men have shorter life-expectancy, higher rates of amenable mortality, high suicide rates and other significant health issues.

Recommendation: Create a Men's Health Strategy to complement the Women's Health Strategy

Violence

38. Both women and men have the right to be free from violence. Violence prevention and support for victims of violence must be non-discriminatory. However, the Governments response to male victims does not meet this standard.

Poor track record

39. New Zealand has done a poor job supporting male victims of violence, especially family violence and sexual violence. For example, boys were not legally protected from women 'raping'³⁷ them until 2007.³⁸

40. New Zealand has done little research into the experiences of male victims. The small amount of evidence we have of men's treatment in family and sexual violence services shows that men are treated poorly.

*The three male family violence victims were unanimous in feeling misunderstood and discriminated against by police, reporting that police officers refused to listen to their side of the story.*³⁹

...a woman expressed concern about the lack of support for her male partner who had been assaulted by her son. To quote her:

*"my partner feels absolutely unsupported, completely unsupported. He's changed ... He's become angry, irritable, depressed. ... He's giving up."*⁴⁰

A male victim felt that it was difficult to access the counselling support they wanted and highlighted... a service gap.

*There's definitely a link missing between ACC and the Ministry of Justice in terms of therapeutic services provided. In terms of making it accessible and also perhaps I felt like it was, the whole way through in terms of the rehabilitative services offered were often catered towards women.*⁴¹

*"It's deeply saddening that the definition of rape is restricted only to penetrative sex, this ignores the rights of those victims not of being penetrated but forced to penetrate."
(Māori/Pākehā, man, takatāpui, heterosexual)*⁴²

Expert opinion

41. The Ministry for Women⁴³, the Ministry of Justice⁴⁴ and others recognise the gaps for male victims. Canterbury Men's Centre released the Mind the Gap⁴⁵ report in 2016 with the views of family violence professionals, such as police officers, social workers and counsellors. The experts agree that the family violence system discriminates against male victims.

Statistics

42. Research into victims of violence is difficult. Most research into family and sexual violence has focused on women and girls.

Specialised population-based surveys of violence against women have been identified as the gold-standard for obtaining the necessary data to guide national level responses to this critical problem ... By design, these surveys also do not gather information on men's experience of violence.⁴⁶

43. Population based surveys disagree on the number of male victims. Methodological differences mean the numbers are not always comparable. However most surveys show equal or higher partner violence victimisation rates for men compared to women. Only the NZCVS shows a higher prevalence rate for women reporting partner violence. The three surveys that include sexual violence agree that women have a higher rate of victimisation than men.

Table 1: Comparison of population based partner violence surveys

Partner violence	
Survey	12 month prevalence rate male/female
NZCVS	0.26
NZFVS	2.04
Youth19	1.97
CHCH	1
Dunedin	1.26

Table 2: Comparison of population based sexual violence surveys

Sexual Violence	
Survey	12 month prevalence rate male/female
NZCVS	0.3
NZFVS	0.56
Youth19	0.37

New Zealand Crime And Victims Survey

44. The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey⁴⁷ is the Government's yearly survey of crime victimisation. These results are pooled data from the previous five survey cycles, from 2018-2021.

Table 3: New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey

Prevalence rate of violent victimisation						
	In previous 12 months				Lifetime	
	Sexual Assault	By family members	Partner violence	By other family	Sexual assault	Partner violence
Female	2.96%	3.02%	2.03%	1.09%	36.25%	23.61%
Male	0.89%	1%	0.53%	0.5%	12.54%	10%

New Zealand Family Violence Study

45. The New Zealand Family Violence Study(2019)⁴⁸ is based on the World Health Organisation violence against women methodology so it could be compared to the 2003 WHO violence against women study. The results were published in 2022.

Table 4: New Zealand Family Violence Study

Victimisation in past 12 months							
	Physical			Sexual	Psychological		
	Any	Moderate	Severe		1 or more	2 or more	3 or more
Women	2.4%	2.1%	1.3%	0.9%	12.7%	5%	1.5%
Men	4.9%	4.8%	2.1%	0.5%	15.2%	5.2%	1.9%

The Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey

46. The Youth19 Survey⁴⁹ is a survey of young people predominately in high school students in year 9-13 (~15-18 years old). The survey was conducted in 2019 and these results were released in 2021.

Table 5: The Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey

Being hit or physically harmed by others in the last 12 months							Unwanted sexual contact
Being hit by:	Anyone	Partner	Sibling	Another young person	Parent	Other adult	
Female	50.2%	3.7%	42.1%	14.1%	14.1%	3.3%	26.1%
Male	52.3%	7.3%	39.5%	25.6%	11.3%	5.4%	9.7%

Christchurch Health and Development Study

47. Christchurch Health and Development Study “is a longitudinal study of an unselected birth cohort of 1,265 children born in the Christchurch (New Zealand) urban region during a 4-month period in mid-1977”. The study on violence was conducted when the participants were 25-years-old (in 2002). The results were published in 2005.

48. The table below shows the prevalence of victimisation and the number of types of victimisation. Higher numbers of types broadly relate to severity of violence. For example, respondents reporting 1-2 types of violence generally reported minor psychological aggression, where respondents reporting 7 or more types of violence generally included an incident of severe physical violence.

Table 6: Christchurch Health and Development Study – Victimisation

Violence victimisation score	No Victimization	1-2	3-4	5-6	7 or more
Women	33.9%	33%	23.8%	4.6%	4.8%
Men	33.5%	29.2%	23.3%	7.4%	6.7%

Table 7: Christchurch Health and Development Study – Perpetration

Perpetrator reports	No Perpetration	1-2	3-4	5-6	7 or more
Women	31.1%	29.5%	32.3%	3.2%	3.9%
Men	43%	26.1%	25.3%	2.8%	2.8%

Pacific Islands Families Study

49. The Pacific Islands Families Study⁵⁰ followed the parents of Pacific infants born in 2000 in Auckland. The study on violence was done in 2002 and the article was published 2007. Importantly, both partners were included in the research allowing comparison of victimisation and perpetration from each person's perspective. They found that men in this group significantly under-reported violence victimisation and perpetration. More mothers reported perpetrating violence against their partner, than being victimised.

Table 8: Pacific Islands Families Study

	Victim			Perpetrator		
	Verbal aggression	Any physical violence	Severe physical violence	Verbal aggression	Any physical violence	Severe physical violence
Mother	86%	28%	15%	91%	37%	20%
Father	87%	8%	3%	90%	11%	3%

Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study

50. Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study⁵¹ is a high quality longitudinal study following 1037 people born in Dunedin in 1972-73. The study on violence was conducted when the participants were 21-years-old (in 1992/93), the results were published in 1997.

Table 9: Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study

	Victimisation		Perpetration	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Verbal Aggression	83.8	89.7	94.6	85.8
Insult or swear	53.9	55.9	66.8	53.2
Sulk or refuse to talk	53.2	59.1	59.5	52
Stomp out	47.1	45.6	52.9	42.3
Cry	49.6	78.3	87.8	48.3
Do or say something to spite	33.6	40.5	46.6	43.9
Threaten to hit or throw	12.2	16.6	24	10.3
Throw-smash-hit object	17.5	12.9	14.4	18.4
Minor physical violence	26.1	31.8	35.8	21.8
Throw object at you	7.1	15	10.8	3.9
Push-grab-shove you	24.2	18.4	28.5	20.7
Slap you	6.4	23.5	19.1	6
Severe physical violence	12.7	21.2	18.6	5.7
Kick-bite-hit with fist	9	18	14.4	4.4
hit with object	6.8	12.9	8.3	1.1
beat up	2.4	1.4	0.9	1.1
Choke-strangle	2.6	1.4	0	1.4
threaten with knife-gun	0.5	1.6	0.5	0
use knife-gun	0.2	0.2	0.2	0
Any physical violence	27.1	34.1	37.2	21.8

Barriers for male victims

51. The Government has done little to remove the barriers for male victims to access support. In some cases government policy is the cause of the barrier.

Gendered narrative

52. Despite research that shows more women report using violence against their partner than men, and men make up at least half of the victims of partner violence, the government has adopted a ‘common understanding’ that family and sexual violence are primarily about ‘male violence’ towards women, that violence against women is part of a society where men

oppresses women, and is a consequence of gender power dynamics and gender inequality.

*Violence against women on this scale indicates that it cannot simply be viewed as an individual pathology or relationship dysfunction. Instead, it can only be fully understood by placing it in the context of widespread social beliefs and practices which oppress women and condone violence against them.*⁵²

53. Men are 'included' using gender neutral language. However, using gender neutral language is not sufficient for addressing male victim's needs. Especially as the dominant narrative is that domestic violence is a "women's issue". Men have gender specific needs that need to be recognised. For example, a man searching the internet for support services will find it difficult to find services for male victims. It is often unclear if a service is for male victims and results specifying males are likely to produce results for male perpetrator programs rather than support for male victims..
54. The narrative, that New Zealand is a society where men oppress women and violence against women is condoned, is not true.
55. New Zealander's condemn violence against women. The Government's "It's Not Okay" campaign found that 93% of New Zealander's agree that "**A man should never raise a hand against a woman**"^{53 54}
56. New Zealanders oppose the oppression of women. The World Values survey found that 90% of males and 90% of females strongly agree that women having the same rights as men is 'an essential characteristic of democracy'⁵⁵ Recently Parliament had a female majority⁵⁶, and the Prime Minister, Governor General and Chief Justice were all women.⁵⁷
57. The idea that New Zealand is society where men oppress women negatively influences service providers to treat male and female victims as fundamentally different. It also undermines male victims understanding of their victimisation and creates doubt in their minds if they are 'real victims'.
58. Many domestic violence researchers argue that this 'patriarchal' model is one of the reasons that little progress has been made towards reducing domestic violence.⁵⁸ Studies show that men often internalise the gendered narrative of domestic violence. These men fail to recognise the abuse they are receiving and fail to see themselves as worthy of help and support.

*In several of the men's stories we find a mindset that says "I am not a real victim" or "I ought to be able to bear this because I am a man".*⁵⁹

59.

*Men's violence against intimate female partners is considered more serious than women's violence against intimate male partners. As a result, many men fear that seeking help would label them as aggressor, especially if they defend themselves. This double standard view in society has resulted in many male victims not seeking the assistance of law enforcement as well.*⁶⁰

Across several studies, men viewed women's acts of aggression directed towards them as not violent, and women who admit to committing acts of aggression did not report using

violence.⁶¹

Most IPV services in the nation target female clients, which may make male victims feel that there is not a direct benefit for them... A lack of appropriate services makes men feel isolated...

Male victims also do not define their partner's action(s) as abuse...

Abused men may think that no one, in particular the police, views them as victims...

*there is a need for strong advocacy to increase awareness through public education on the topic of domestic violence that affects both men and women.*⁶²

60.

A number of factors may combine to justify the anticipated stigma reported by male victims:

(a) media campaigns: "I didn't realize men went through it; I thought only women were victims", "Many men do not know their rights and feel they have to endure due to the way they have been socialized. By family media and government".

(b) Service provider training, "On one occasion while being held in a cell in anticipation of questioning I was told by one higher ranking officer that I was filthy scum and that I would definitely be going to prison for several years (I was the one who had been both physically and emotionally abused)". "People say men refuse to ask for help. But in my experience men do ask for help and are told to shut up".

(c) The lack of visible services, "I first called a women's help line as there was nothing for men but I was desperate as my family had cut me off already"

(d) The language of legislation, "The [UK] Government ... are completely biased that men can be victims of DV".⁶³

Excluding male perspectives

61. The "It's Not Okay" campaign is based on research with only male perpetrators, and explicitly chose a gendered approach that excluded males victims of female perpetrators.⁶⁴ The reason given for this was that including male victims of female perpetrators might "undermine policies designed to prevent and reduce male partner violence against women". There appears to be no consideration that this approach means a significant proportion of victims are excluded.
62. The Government relies on the Ministry for Women to provide expertise on gender-based violence. The Government does not have an expert for males victims and the Ministry for Women does not have a mandate for expertise on male victims.
63. The Government endorse the White Ribbon campaign⁶⁵, and uses it as a symbol to show they are opposed to domestic violence. Unfortunately, the White Ribbon campaign is exclusively about preventing violence against women, so the Government is signalling that they are unconcerned with male victims.

Male Deficit (anti male) Model

64. Another barrier for male victims is the Government has adopted a male deficit model. Although the majority of men are not violent and do not endorse violence, the government views the attributes of a small number of men as characteristic of all men. It sees men as a problem to be solved.
65. The deficit model is not accepted as a reasonable view in other areas. For example, the Human Rights Commission rejects the deficit model for Māori.⁶⁶
66. The Ministry for Social Development is using the deficit model with a program called 'Change is Possible'. The program is based on the assumption that men are flawed and need to change. Rather than identifying and resolving systemic issues for men, as identified above, and removing barriers for men. These are a kind of re-education/conversion therapy programs for men. Likewise, the Government supports the White Ribbon Campaign Trust which has the same deficit model and seeks to change men. The Trust's state purpose is to "change men's attitudes and behaviours".⁶⁷
67. Programs based on the deficit model will not resolve systemic problems and could harm the men they are supposed to help.⁶⁸

Poor public awareness

68. There is poor public awareness about male victims of family and sexual violence. Government campaigns have excluded male victims. Men often do not recognise their experiences as abuse. Public awareness campaigns would help this.

Limited male-targeted/specific support services

69. Male targeted and specific services are limited. More services exist for male perpetrators than for male victims. In fact, New Zealand has more shelters for male perpetrators of violence and the pets of victims, than they do for male victims.

Recommendations

- **Create a Government organisation to provide expertise about male victims' needs and experience to complement the Ministry for Women.**
- **Immediately stop discriminating against men and stop using a male deficit model.**

Other issues

Education

70. New Zealand has accepted recommendations to reduce inequities in the education system⁶⁹ however boys and men are behind at all levels of education. Historically, boys had an advantage in education; however girls have been outperforming boys for around 40 years⁷⁰ Boys are behind girls in educational outcomes, particularly in reading. Reading is critical for learning and educational success. A student who struggles to read, struggles to learn.

Pre school

71. The Growing Up in New Zealand (GUiNZ) assessed literacy skills of 4.5 year-olds using

tools that measure letter naming speed and the ability to write their name in a recognisable way. More boys (22%) than girls (16%) are in the at-risk category for naming letters. Fewer boys(41%) than girls (68%) could write their name.⁷¹

Literacy learning in early learning services

“In some services, however, boys were not well catered for and were often bored with the literacy activities provided. Most services with some differentiation provided books and resources, or planned different activities and environments, so both boys and girls had access to literacy learning that would engage them. This is not meant to imply there should be gender-specific activities available, but that teachers need to ensure that boys are engaged by literacy activities”⁷²

Primary school

72. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study shows that average reading comprehension achievement at Year 5 is lower for boys (512) than for girls (533). **The difference is larger in New Zealand than many other countries.**

73. The National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement shows the difference in average achievement between boys and girls in reading at both Year 4 and Year 8 is about one year of schooling, while in writing it is about one and a half years.

*“Some commentators suggest this finding may be indicative of gendered expectations of boys to be more active learners and girls to be more passive learners. Others argue that texts and tasks at an early age favour the interests of girls over that of boys. **Whatever the reason, the outcome is that more boys than girls are labelled as poor readers and writers and have trouble using these skills to access other parts of the curriculum.**”⁷³*

Secondary School

74. In the Programme for International Student Assessment(PISA), boys are more likely to perform below the baseline reading standard and less likely to be a top performer, compared to girls.

75. Secondary school boys are over-represented in the lowest achievers and under-represented in the highest achievers, compared to girls. This has been consistent for at least a decade

*“For female school leavers in 2019, NCEA Level 2 attainment (81%) was higher than for their male counterparts (76%). **This may indicate the importance of literacy for overall performance in NCEA**”⁷⁴*

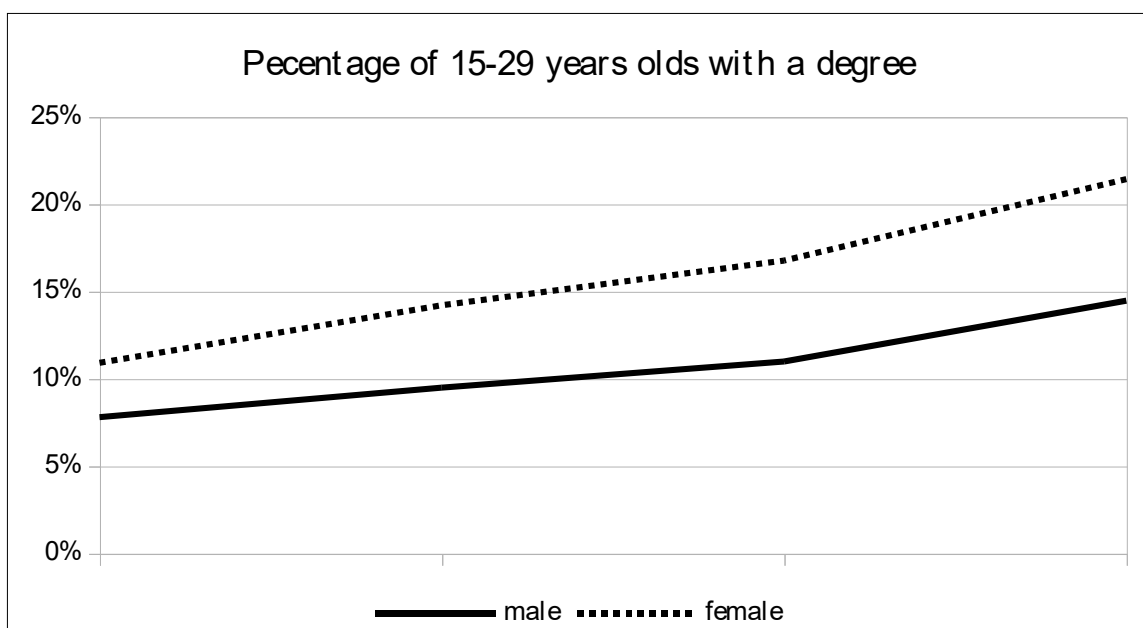
Tertiary education

76. Men are under-represented at University.

Table 10: All Universities have more females than males attending.

University	Females for every 100 males
Massey	213
Waikato	178
AUT	170
Otago	156
Victoria	150
Canterbury	138
Auckland	133
Lincoln	117

77. Women with degrees outnumber men with degrees. The gap between women and men is increasing.



Health

78. New Zealand has accepted recommendations to reduce health inequalities⁷⁵ however men have worse health outcomes than women in many areas. Much of the work done to reduce health inequities is focused on occupational classes or ethnic groups. However, inequities for men have not been addressed as directly as with other groups. While men do tend to exhibit unhealthier behaviours and take up riskier occupations, these are factors that should be addressed as they are with other health inequities.⁷⁶ The WHO identifies “Three distinguishing features, when combined, turn mere variations or differences in health into a social inequity in health. They are systematic, socially produced (and therefore modifiable) and unfair.”⁷⁷ A study on men’s health in 2007 found “Our current ‘gendered’ health strategy in New Zealand *is not inclusive of men.*”⁷⁸

Mortality

79. Traditionally men have higher mortality than women. Men have higher mortality rates for chronic lower respiratory diseases, diabetes mellitus, ischaemic heart disease, other forms of

heart disease and motor vehicle accidents.⁷⁹ Men also have worse amenable mortality. Amenable mortality is defined as ‘deaths from those conditions for which variation in mortality rates reflects variation in the coverage and quality of health care delivered to individuals’⁸⁰ Males are twice as likely to die from amenable causes as non-amenable causes compared to females.⁸¹

Alcohol and drug use

80. The New Zealand Health Survey⁸² shows some issues with men’s use of alcohol and drugs in 2022.

Table 11: Alcohol and drug use by sex

	Men	Women
Heavy Smokers ⁸³	9%	4.3%
Hazardous drinkers	30.4%	16.7%
Cannabis use weekly	5.4%	3.2%
Ecstasy use past year	4.8%	3.9%
Amphetamine use past year	1.6%	1.0%
Hallucinogen use past year	3.2%	1.8%

Mental health

Suicide

81. In 2021 453 men and 146 women died from suspected suicide.⁸⁴ Historically the gender ratio for men has varied from around 2 times to 4 times that of women.⁸⁵ Of the mental health service users who died by suicide in 2014, 32% were female and 68% were male.⁸⁶ This may indicate that mental health services are not addressing men’s needs adequately.

Boys mental health

Table 12: Mental health issues for children by sex

	Boys	Girls
Anxiety	4.5%	3.5%
ADHD	5%	0.8% ⁸⁷
Emotional and/or behavioural problems	8.6%	3.8%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	2.6%	1.4% ⁸⁸

Other health issues

82. Men are more likely to suffer a serious injury from assault, self-harm, motor vehicle accidents, and in the workplace. Women are more likely to suffer a serious injury from falling due to elderly women being more vulnerable to falls.⁸⁹

Annex 1: Supporting organisations

National Council of Men: An organisation for the promoting of well-being for the benefit of men, boys and families

Men & Boys Well-being Conference: A conference to explore & discuss the struggles of Men & Boys in New Zealand

-
- 1 New Zealand has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Article 3 of both treaties required the government to ensure equal enjoyment of rights for women and men.
 - 2 For example: Judges and courts take CEDAW, and other international treaties, into account when making decisions and interpreting the law.

Education is provided to the judiciary and lawyers by the relevant professional bodies on CEDAW and women's rights.

The Ministry of Justice ensures international human rights treaties, including CEDAW, are considered in legislation and policy development.

The government is required to report on its CEDAW obligations to the United Nations, so CEDAW provides a regular review and reporting of women's rights. The Government does comprehensive consultations with women's groups, community organisations and service providers to gather information about women's issues and to discuss Government's priorities for women.

The Government raises awareness of the rights contained within the Convention, and encourages public engagement. It makes information on CEDAW widely available, and actively engages with ministers, government agencies and community groups on CEDAW processes.
 - 3 [Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – Ministerial portfolio: Women](#)
 - 4 For example: Provides gendered policy analysis and advice to the Government. The Ministry's mandate is limited to women and girls so their gendered analysis and advice can't extend to men and boys.

Data analysis and research on issues affecting women and girls.

Develops the Government's priorities for women. There are no priorities for men and boys.

Develops the Women's Equality strategy. There is no strategy for men. More information below.

Monitoring and reporting on women's rights to the United Nations. This provides visibility to women's rights issues nationally and internationally. Visibility means that the problem is more likely to be solved.
 - 5 Ministry for Women – [Women's Equality Strategy Aotearoa New Zealand 2023](#)
 - 6 Ministry for Women – [Women's Equality Strategy Aotearoa New Zealand 2023](#) – Page 6
 - 7 Ministry for Women – [Women's Equality Strategy Aotearoa New Zealand 2023](#) – Page 8
 - 8 Ministry for Women – [Women's Equality Strategy Aotearoa New Zealand 2023](#) – Page 7
“In 2021 fewer girls than boys left school without any qualifications, and 80.9 percent of female school leavers had NCEA Level 2 or higher, compared with 76.5 percent of male school leavers. 65.3 percent of those who gained bachelor degrees and above were women.”
 - 9 Ministry for Women – [Gender Budgeting](#)
 - 10 The Treasury – [Wellbeing Budget 2023 – Gender Budgeting](#)
 - 11 The Treasury – [Wellbeing Budget 2023 – Gender Budgeting](#)
 - 12 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Chapter15-20pp.pdf>
 - 13 Author's correspondence with the Human Rights Commission.
 - 14 [Women's Rights in New Zealand](#) – Submission of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission for the Seventh Periodic Review of New Zealand under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 11 June 2018
 - 15 For example: https://www.hrc.co.nz/files/2814/2426/6962/09-Jun-2005_21-17-40_work_women_and_human_rights.pdf
 - 16 [Substantive Issues Arising in the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) General Comment No. 16 – E/C.12/2005/4 – United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - 2005
 - 17 ['Missing men': The politics of gender analysis.](#) – Callister, Paul. (2009).
 - 18 [Dr Jackie Blue: HeForShe Speech Nov 27th](#) – New Zealand Human Rights Commission 2015
 - 19 [Submission of Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission](#) – Examination of Aotearoa New Zealand's 7th Periodic Report under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment – 12 June 2023
 - 20 Crimes Act 1961 Section [204A](#) and [204B](#)

-
- 21 Crimes Act 1961 Section [178](#)
 - 22 Crimes Act 1961 Section [194\(b\)](#)
 - 23 Adoption Act 1955 [Section 4\(2\)](#)
 - 24 Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 [Section 45](#)
 - 25 Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – New Zealand [A/HRC/26/3 – paragraph 128.75](#)
 - 26 Department of Corrections – [Prison statistics](#)
 - 27 Criminal Justice in New Zealand – Julia Tolmie, Warren Brookbanks, 2007 p 302 – ISBN 0408718846, 9780408718844
 - 28 [Does Gender Really Matter?](#) Criminal Court Decision Making in New Zealand. Samantha Jeffries – New Zealand Sociology Volume 17 Number 1 2002
 - 29 [Disparities in police proceedings and court sentencing for females versus males who commit sexual offences in New Zealand](#) - Patterson, Hobbs, McKillop & Burton (2019), Journal of Sexual Aggression, 25:2
 - 30 [Examination of Aotearoa New Zealand's 7th Periodic Report under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) – Human Rights Commission– 12 June 2023
 - 31 [The Effects of Suspect Characteristics on Arrest: A Meta-Analysis](#), Daniel J. Lytle, Journal of Criminal Justice, Volume 42, Issue 6, 2014,
 - 32 R V AM CA27/2009
 - 33 [How Men Experience Family Dispute Resolution Mediation](#) – Zubery, Nurit. – Diss. ResearchSpace@ Auckland, 2021.
 - 34 Ministry of Health – [Women's Health Strategy](#)
 - 35 Ministry of Health – [Women's Health Strategy](#)
 - 36 Old version of webpage. <https://archive.ph/gfWoJ> Quote removed in current version.
 - 37 Legally, rape is an act of penetration, so here the term is used colloquially to mean sex without consent of the victim.
 - 38 When the Crimes Amendment Act 2005 came into force.
 - 39 [Victims' Voices: The Justice Needs and Experiences of New Zealand Serious Crime Victims.](#)
 - 40 [12 Week Review of Cases Referred to The Family Violence Integrated Safety Response \(ISR\) Pilot](#) – Review Of 129 Cases Active With ISR From May To August 2018
 - 41 [Improving the justice response to victims of sexual violence: victims' experiences](#) By: Boyer, Tania. | Allison, Sue | Creagh, Helen | Gravitas Research and Strategy Wellington, New Zealand : Ministry of Justice, 2018
 - 42 ["In Our Own Words" – Student experiences of sexual violence prior to and during tertiary education.](#) –Thursday's in Black
 - 43 *"In particular, service providers indicated that the following groups of survivors might experience the most difficulty in having their needs met: ... men; ... collect data on under-researched groups, such as ...men."* - [Restoring soul: Effective interventions for adult victim/survivors of sexual violence](#) – October 2009 by the Ministry of Women's Affairs
 - 44 *"[Men] are significantly less likely to report violence against them [and] are significantly less likely, when they do report it, to have it taken seriously"* - [Restorative Justice – Practice Standards For Family Violence Cases](#) March 2018 Ministry of Justice
 - 45 Mind The Gap – Canterbury Men's Centre 2016
 - 46 [Methods for the 2019 New Zealand family violence study- a study on the association between violence exposure, health and well-being](#), Fanslow, Gulliver, Hashemi, Malihi & McIntosh (2021) Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online, 16:1, 196-209,
 - 47 [NZCVS Cycle 5 resources and results](#) – Ministry of Justice
 - 48 [Prevalence of interpersonal violence against women and men in New Zealand: results of a cross-sectional study.](#) Fanslow, Janet & Malihi, Zarintaj & Hashemi, Ladan & Gulliver, Pauline & McIntosh, Tracey. (2022). Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 46. 10.1111/1753-6405.13206.
 - 49 [Youth19: Safety and Violence Brief](#)
 - 50 [Prevalence and concordance of interpersonal violence reports from intimate partners: findings from the Pacific Islands Families Study.](#) - Schluter PJ, Paterson J, Feehan M. - J Epidemiol Community Health. 2007 Jul;61(7):625-30. doi: 10.1136/jech.2006.048538. PMID: 17568056; PMCID: PMC2465737.
 - 51 ["Gender differences in partner violence in a birth cohort of 21-year-olds: bridging the gap between clinical and epidemiological approaches."](#) Magdol, Lynn, et al. - Journal of consulting and clinical psychology 65.1 (1997): 68..
 - 52 [Specialist Family Violence Organisational Standards](#) - Joint Venture - Family Violence and Sexual Violence
 - 53 [Attitudes, Values and Beliefs about Violence within Families 2008 Survey Findings](#) –Prepared by Fleur McLaren Prepared for Centre for Social Research and Evaluation Te Pokapū Rangahau Arotake Hapori – March 2010
 - 54 For context, it is hard to get that much agreement even for well established facts: “Most New Zealanders (91%) believe the Covid-19 virus is real. Three-quarters of New Zealanders (74%) believe that climate change is mainly caused by human activities. Most New Zealanders (85%) accept the official account of the March 15, 2019 terrorist attacks.” - [The Edge of the Infodemic: Challenging Misinformation in Aotearoa](#) – New Zealand Classification Office
 - 55 [World Values Survey Wave 7](#) (2017-2020) New Zealand Study # WVS-2017 v3.0

-
- Scores of 8,9, or 10 on a 1-10 scale where 1 represents “Not an essential characteristic of democracy” and 10 represents “An essential characteristic of democracy”
- 56 [New Zealand’s Parliament becomes majority female — ‘about blimmin’ time’](#) – Adela Suliman Washington Post – October 26, 2022
- 57 [Women in charge: Female Governor-General, Chief Justice and now PM](#) – Angela Woods – New Zealand Herald 20 Oct, 2017
- 58 [Gender and Domestic Violence: Contemporary Legal Practice and Intervention Reforms](#) – Russell, Hamel – Oxford University Press 2022 – ISBN-13: 9780197564028
- 59 [Consequences of intimate partner violence for male victims: findings from Norway](#)
- 60 [Male Victims of Intimate Partner Violence in the United States: An Examination of the Review of Literature through the Critical Theoretical Perspective.](#) - Shuler Ivey, Caroletta. (2010). - Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences. 5. 973-5089.
- 61 Men’s Experience of Psychological Abuse: Conceptualization and Measurement Issues. - McHugh, M.C., Rakowski, S. & Swiderski, C. - Sex Roles 69, 168–181 (2013).
- 62 Help-seeking among male victims of partner abuse: Men’s hard times. - Tsui, Venus & Cheung, Monit & Leung, Patrick. (2010).- Journal of Community Psychology. 38. 769 - 780. 10.1002/jcop.20394.
- 63 Barriers to Men’s Help Seeking for Intimate Partner Violence
- 64 [An innovative approach to changing social attitudes around family violence in New Zealand: Key ideas, insights and lessons learnt The Campaign for Action on Family Violence](#) - Centre for Social Research and Evaluation - March 2010
- 65 <https://whiteribbon.org.nz/>
- 66 [A fair go for all? Rite tahi tātou katoa? Addressing Structural Discrimination in Public Services](#) – Human Rights Commission 2012
- 67 [White Ribbon Campaign Trust – Deed of Trust 2013](#)
- 68 [The belief that masculinity has a negative influence on one’s behavior is related to reduced mental well-being](#)
- 69 [A/HRC/41/4/Add.1](#) – Paragraph 51 - referring to [A/HRC/41/4](#) paragraphs 122.103 and 122.104
- 70 The New Zealand Official Year-Book, 1985 Section 38 New Zealand Women: Their Changing Situation, 1970-1984 <http://archive.li/h8uKR>
- 71 Ministry of Education – [How our education system is performing for literacy](#): Progress and achievement of New Zealand learners in English medium settings – 2021 – Page 9 and 10
- 72 Ministry of Education – [How our education system is performing for literacy](#): Progress and achievement of New Zealand learners in English medium settings – 2021 – Page 25
- 73 Ministry of Education – [How our education system is performing for literacy](#): Progress and achievement of New Zealand learners in English medium settings – 2021 – Page 14
- 74 Ministry of Education – [How our education system is performing for literacy](#): Progress and achievement of New Zealand learners in English medium settings – 2021 – Page 16
- 75 [A/HRC/41/4/Add.1](#) – paragraph 42
- 76 [Improving men’s health in New Zealand](#) – A review of the benefits of men’s health awareness activities and a proposal for the development a targeted men’s health programme – Johnson, Field and Stephenson - 2006
- 77 Whitehead, Margaret, and Göran Dahlgren. "[Concepts and principles for tackling social inequities in health: Levelling up Part 1.](#)" World Health Organization: Studies on social and economic determinants of population health 2 (2006).
- 78 McKay, James Gregory Higano. [Men's mental health: what helps or hinders men's access to a community mental health team.](#) Diss. University of Otago, 2007.
- 79 See: <https://www.tewhātuora.govt.nz/our-health-system/data-and-statistics/mortality-web-tool/>
- 80 Ministry of Health – [Ngā pūnaha hauora tūtohu: Health system indicators](#)
- 81 Ministry of Health. 2010. [Saving Lives: Amenable Mortality in New Zealand, 1996–2006.](#)
- 82 https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2021-22-annual-data-explorer/_w_b3a9ec44#!/home
- 83 Data shown for 2021, 2022 data was not reliable.
- 84 The coroner has yet to confirm these deaths are suicides.
Health New Zealand Suicide web tool: <https://tewhātuora.shinyapps.io/suicide-web-tool/>
- 85 Ministry of Health. 2006. New Zealand Suicide Trends: Mortality 1921–2003, hospitalisations for intentional self-harm 1978–2004. Monitoring Report No 10. Wellington: Ministry of Health <https://bit.ly/2t3KCat>
- 86 Ministry of Health. 2017. Office of the Director of Mental Health Annual Report 2016. Wellington: Ministry of Health. <https://bit.ly/2HKjB0V>
- 87 interpret with caution as the RSE is over 30%.
- 88 interpret with caution as the RSE is over 30%.
- 89 Count of fatal and serious non-fatal injuries by sex, age group, ethnicity, cause, and severity of injury, 2000-16 – Stats NZ - <https://bit.ly/2LQ0tkN>