

20 January 2016

Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Women
c/o Ministry for Women – info@women.govt.nz

Dear Minister

IPENZ Comments on the Eighth Periodic Report by the Government of New Zealand in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

We read with interest the Government's Eighth Periodic Report. Thank you for making the draft report available and for the opportunity to comment on it.

We applaud the Government's and others' work to eliminate gender discrimination in New Zealand. It is reassuring to see so much progress being made.

We note the draft report mentions the Government is working "to encourage women and girls to train and work in occupations where high growth is projected and where women are currently underrepresented, in particular STEM and ICT industries, and construction and trades" (paragraph 129). We are also active in this area.

We are conscious of the need to make the technology, engineering and science workforce more representative of the community, and as such we encourage the recruitment and training of Māori and Pasifika, and women in traditionally male-dominated areas such as engineering and IT.

Since 2003 we have been delivering Futureintech, a Government-funded programme to promote careers with science, technology, engineering and mathematics to schoolchildren and their parents. The Futureintech programme sees young engineers, technologists and scientists ("Ambassadors") visit schools to engage with children and help them see the potential opportunities available to them if they pursue a career in STEM.

In terms of gender diversity, women make up 40 per cent of the technologists, engineers and scientists who go into schools to share their stories as Futureintech Ambassadors. While many are in relatively gender-diverse professions such as food technology and environmental science, female Ambassadors are also well represented in traditionally male-dominated areas. About 33 per cent of our engineering and 28 per cent of our Digital/IT Ambassadors are female, compared with the workforce figures of approximately 14 per cent and 26 per cent.

Through Futureintech we have also contributed to other initiatives to engage female school students with STEM subjects, for example [STEAM Ahead events](#) for teenage girls and their mothers, and [visits to IT companies](#).

We recommend the draft report be amended to mention Futureintech and the effort that is being made to encourage young women into STEM careers.

In addition to delivering Futureintech, since 2011 we have had our own programme to increase gender diversity in our membership and in the wider engineering profession.

Approximately 10 per cent of our members are female, roughly in line with the proportion of the profession that are female (14 per cent). The majority of our female members are young and mostly in our Student and Graduate Membership classes. We recognise female engineers can face many barriers during their careers, from poor careers advice to issues balancing work and family, bias and discrimination. We have actions in place to address these issues, including:

- providing networking events to reduce the potential isolation female engineers can face and to give them opportunities to hear from inspirational speakers and share any issues they are facing
- profiling both male and female engineers in our publications to give all engineers visible role models
- direct liaison with engineering organisations to make sure they follow good practice and are supportive of all their engineers
- analysis of annual remuneration data so we can track gender pay gaps and encourage gender pay equity
- connection with other organisations, including the New Zealand Council of Engineering Deans, the Asia Pacific Nation Network (a group under the International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists), and the World Federation of Engineering Organisations, to help us to keep up with good practice.

While we acknowledge the IPENZ programme is not a Government programme, we are confident it will make a difference for current and future engineers. We recommend it be mentioned in the draft report, as has been done for the Ultimit programme, Got a Trade Got it Made programme and the Worldskills New Zealand programme in paragraphs 116–118.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Freeman-Greene', written in a cursive style.

Susan Freeman-Greene
Chief Executive