

At home and at work, all women need . . .

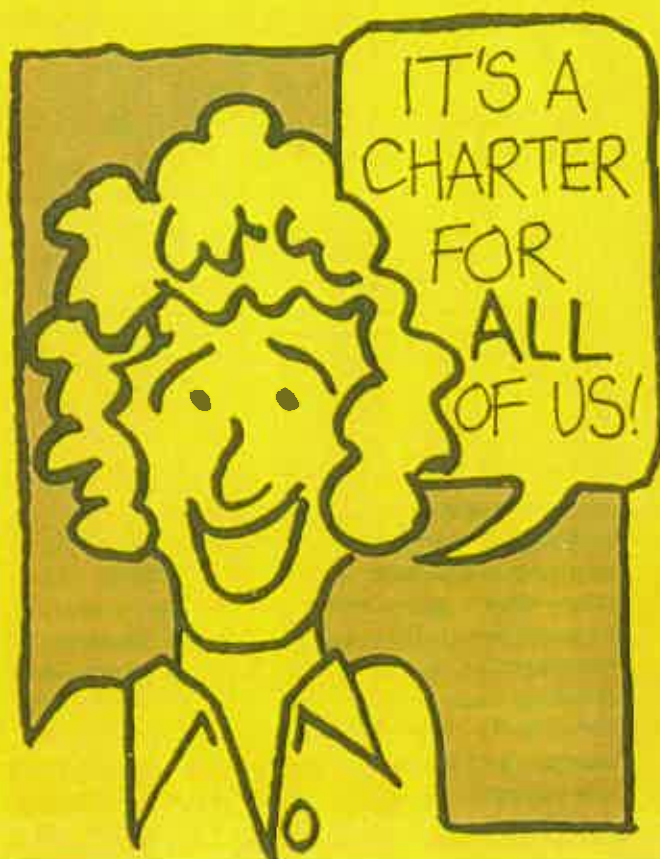
THE WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER

**The Working Women's Charter is a Bill of Rights
for working women.**

WOMEN in Australia, Britain and Ireland have endorsed similar charters. In 1977 the N.Z. Working Women's Council convened a gathering of 400 women, who came from all over New Zealand and who represented women at home as well as women in the paid workforce. This convention debated and approved the Working Women's Charter. The Charter was later endorsed by two Annual General Meetings of the Working Women's Councils. Then the Charter was presented to the union movement for discussion. After two years of education and discussion it was endorsed by the 1980 Federation of Labour Annual Conference.

The Charter represents a step forward for New Zealand women. Both working women and working men strongly support it.

This pamphlet prints the full Charter and explains why you should support it too.



1 CHOICE ONE: THE RIGHT TO WORK

If you *want* a job, you should *have* a job. No one who is qualified to do a job should be turned away because they are female, or Maori, or married, or a parent — or have anything else about them which has nothing to do with how well they can do the job.

2 CHOICE TWO: FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION

We have a Human Rights Commission which is supposed to monitor and discourage discrimination. But a Commission can't prevent discrimination — it can only take the worst cases to court. To end discrimination against women and all other groups which have traditionally been discriminated against we all have to get involved, making people more aware of their rights and how they can use them.

3 CHOICE THREE: EQUAL PAY

Yes, there is an Equal Pay Act — but did you know that women still earn on average only 75% of what men earn?

The Labour Department is still concerned that the Act is not being properly enforced, but in most cases these lower wages are due to women being stuck in jobs which are poorly paid. Which is why we need . . .

4 CHOICE FOUR: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Picture a typist.

You pictured a woman? Yes — because 99% of typists are women. Picture an engineer. You pictured a man? Yes — because over 95% of engineers are men. There are so many, many jobs which are almost entirely men only or women only. This sort of sexual separation represents a frustrating and expensive waste of talents, since both women and men have the same sorts of skills and intelligence. While for women it often means being stuck in jobs with low pay and low status. But what else can they do? They need . . .

5 CHOICE FIVE: EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

If women are to have well paid, interesting jobs, they need the right training, the right attitudes and the right assistance. Starting from kindergarten they need to be offered the same chances as boys. To play with building blocks at age 5 and build houses at 50, as well as playing with tea sets at age 5 and keeping house at 50. Girls need to be encouraged to study sciences and mathematics as well as commerce and cooking. In fact they need to be encouraged to stay at school! There are just as many bright girls as boys but only one third of university students are female. A good education is the key to so many life and work opportunities — boys and girls should be given the same options and encouragement right from the start.

6 CHOICE SIX: UNION MEETINGS IN WORK TIME

Not only are all women working women — most women have two jobs. The unpaid work they do at home and the paid work they do outside. Many women (and more men, as they realise that the home and family is their responsibility too) come home to a "second shift" of household duties. House workers are often too tired or too busy to put the time into union affairs that they should, if their union is to be truly democratic and representative. Both women and unions would be happier and healthier if union business could be dealt with in work time.

7 CHOICE SEVEN: EQUAL GUIDANCE AND TRAINING

Even if you get the sort of schooling talked about in Clause 5 of the Charter, you may find you need more education to get on well in your job. Research among teachers has shown that the women don't get as much access to training as the men do. Other women workers report the same problem. Women should be encouraged and assisted to receive as much training and study leave men do.

— THE — WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER

1. The right to work for everyone.
2. The elimination of all discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, political belief, marital or parental status, sexuality or age.
3. Equal pay for work of equal value.
4. Equal opportunity of entry into occupations and of promotion regardless of sex, race, religion, political belief, marital or parental status, sexuality or age.
5. Equal education opportunity for all.
6. Union meetings and special trade union education courses for all unionists to be held with paid time off for participants with special attention to gain more active participation of women unionists.
7. Equal access to vocational guidance and training, including on-the-job training, retraining, study, and conference leave for all workers.
8. Introduction of a shorter working week with no loss of pay, flexible working hours, and part-time opportunities for all workers by union agreement.
9. Improved working conditions for all workers. The retention of beneficial provisions which apply to women and extension of these to men. Other benefits to apply equally to women and men.
10. Removal of legal, bureaucratic and other impediments to equality of superannuation, social security benefits, credit, finance, taxation, tenancies, and other related matters.
11. Consultation with and special to the needs and requirements of all workers from ethnic communities with special attention to those of women.
12. Wide availability of quality child care with government, employer and community support for all those who need it, including industrial creches, after-school and school holiday care.
13. Introduction of adequate paid parental leave without loss of job security, superannuation or promotion prospects.
14. Availability of paid family leave to enable time off to be taken in cases of family need.
15. Sex education and birth control advice freely available to all people of appropriate age, and legal, financial, social and medical impediments to safe contraception, sterilisation, and abortion to be removed so as to allow the individual concerned to make their own decision.
16. Comprehensive government-funded research into health questions specific to women.

That is the text — what is the message?

- All women are working women.
In homes or in factories, in offices or in classrooms — wherever they work and whatever they earn, all women are working women.
- Housewife or teacher, nurse or mother, lawyer or machinist, cleaner or secretary, driver or librarian . . . whatever work a woman does she should have the same rights and opportunities as other workers.
- The Working Women's Charter seeks to ensure that all people, women as well as men, have the same access to suitable and satisfying work, and the same control over pay, hours and conditions of work.
- All women are not yet treated equally and fairly — the Charter sets out the rights which working women need to gain if we are to live in a truly equal and just society.
- The key message of the Charter is choice. Every clause of the Charter deals with a basic right which will allow working women to choose from the same range of options in life that working men take for granted. When these rights are guaranteed, then whether you choose to use them or not is up to you. But remember — unless we have these basic rights, none of us has a real range of choices.

8 CHOICE EIGHT: SHORTER WORKING HOURS

Male and female workers who have home and family responsibilities need more flexible working hours and a shorter working week. Working fewer hours will ease the unemployment situation as more workers are hired to make up the extra hours. More *permanent* part-time work (where workers have the same protection and benefits as full-time workers) will allow parents to share breadwinning and child care responsibilities more equally, making for more satisfied parents and happier, closer families.

9 CHOICE NINE: IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS

If work is too dirty, dangerous or unhealthy for women then it is too dirty, dangerous or unhealthy for men. Medical studies prove that working late night shifts and broken shifts is bad for all workers, not just women workers. If women are to have the same job opportunities as men then men must have the same protective provisions as women.

10 CHOICE TEN: OTHER EQUALITIES

Some bank managers still won't lend money to a woman without a male guarantor, even when she's earning good money of her own. A married woman still isn't entitled to an unemployment benefit, even though she and her family may rely on her income. Some landlords refuse to let their houses to solo parents . . . and so on . . . All this discrimination is based on unthinking prejudice — it's unfair and it's got to go.

11 HEPANUI TEKAU MA TAHI: He kaupapa ki nga hiahia o nga wahine, a, ki nga kaimahi hoki o roto i o tatou iwi



**Maori, iwi
mangumangu.**

Ua fou nei le ganga o le Papalagi ia te oe, o ou matua ma le tou aiga e afe maila o tou vāvā ai ma o nofoaga uā malulu ma faigata ona fa'omasani i ai, o lou galuega fo'i ua eseese lava ma o tou galuega i Samoa, ma ua e le masani tele fo'i i uiga ma tulaga o le olaga Papalagi, o osi tama'ita'i i galuega faleoloa ma oaga e pei lava ua faigafie ma masani uma i nei tulaga o le olaga, ae e pei lava ua e le masani tele i ai . . . e faigata tele ona tatou fa'amasani i le olaga Niu Silo i tulaga faigaluega ma tulaga fa'aletama'itai. Awhinatiamai nga wahine nei kia taea ai e ratou te whai te mātauranga ki tu tangata ai ratou i roto i te ao pakeha.

Did you understand that? Did you know what languages it was in? It said, "English is a new language to you, your parents and grandparents are thousands of miles away, the city is cold and confusing, your new job is so different from work back where you came from, you are not familiar with pakeha customs, the other women at work, at the shops and the playground all seem to be able to cope better than you . . . it's hard fitting in as a worker and as a woman in New Zealand society. Women from ethnic communities need special assistance if they are to get equal education and opportunities, and achieve equal success."

*** CHOICE ELEVEN: SPECIAL ATTENTION
TO THE NEEDS OF WORKERS AND WOMEN
FROM ETHNIC COMMUNITIES**

Not all! New Zealanders come from the white European background most of us take for granted. How would you like to have the problems of the immigrant outlined above? Women and workers from ethnic communities need the right to decide on their own needs and to have those needs met by society as a whole.

12 CHOICE TWELVE: QUALITY CHILD CARE

Ever tried to find a reliable babysitter just after moving to a new home? Ever wished someone would mind the kids for one or two afternoons a week while you go shopping, go to a class, do part-time work, play a sport or just have some time to yourself? Ever dreaded the school holidays because it is so hard to find good care for the kids while you're at work? Ever felt trapped at home, needing and wanting a job but unable to find good care for your child?

At some time or other most parents could use quality child care services. Services which are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year *not* so that kids can be "dumped", but to cover all possibilities. The possibility of both parents working outside the home 35 hours a week, or the possibility of sickness in the family, when you'd like the security of knowing that the children are well cared for while you cope with the crisis. The possibility of a child-free afternoon to go shopping, or the possibility of a night out with no worries about whether the teenage babysitter can cope. Lots of different families, lots of different possibilities . . .

A quality child care centre is a warm and exciting place for a child to be. Loved by its parents, stimulated by the variety of playmates, playthings and adult carers at the centre . . . research now tells us that quality child care is not harmful to children and may be very positive for them. Children as well as parents benefit from quality child care.

13 CHOICE THIRTEEN: PARENTAL LEAVE

Perhaps you'd rather look after your child yourself at home. It should be your choice. But children don't stay small forever and you may be wanting your old job back before too long. That's why the Charter stresses parental leave

as a choice for parents. Not just maternity leave, because sometimes fathers will want to be the parent at home while the mother is out at work. Some countries now offer generous paid short-term parental leave and unpaid long-term parental leave. It gives you security both as a parent and as a worker, and that's a right worth having.

14 CHOICE FOURTEEN: FAMILY LEAVE

Both parents are at work, the kids are at school, when suddenly **DISASTER!** Young Sally breaks her collarbone. She'll have to be visited in hospital, then nursed at home. It's no use wishing Mum was at home full time to do all the running round. 50% of the female workforce in New Zealand is married and chances are she's out at work, earning the money to feed and clothe young Sally and pay her doctor's bills. So workers need to be able to take time off to deal with emergencies like these — it's a small additional right like the right to take ^{paid} leave yourself when you yourself are sick.

15 CHOICE FIFTEEN: BETTER BIRTH CONTROL

Bringing up children is important and sometimes difficult work. It's a job that all parents do as well as their normal paid work. Until recently the unpaid work of child rearing was women's responsibility, but now more and more women want the recognition, stimulation, independence and essential income that goes with paid work, while more and more men want to play a greater part in family life, to see more of their kids while they are young and actively experience the joys and trials of parenthood.

So whether to have children, or when to have them, is a vital issue to all workers. Vital to the children too — they have a right to be wanted, loved and well cared for.

For workers and children to be secure, potential parents need easy access to safe and effective birth control. Everyone needs to know how bodies work and how to avoid unwanted pregnancy. For most people that means knowing about and using some form of contraception. The choice should be yours and yours alone — it's your body.

Unfortunately, we don't yet have foolproof sex education, foolproof contraception — or foolproof people! To many people (about 5,000

New Zealand women a year) abortion is an acceptable solution to the problem of unwanted pregnancy. Once again the Charter states that the individual should have the *choice*, unrestricted by laws which represent the views of those who say they would make the opposite choice.

If a woman is to control her working life, she must be able to control her fertility. The choices a woman makes in this area will affect all her other life choices, so the rights outlined in Clause 15 are an essential basis for all other women's rights.

16 CHOICE SIXTEEN: HEALTH RESEARCH

No one needs to be reminded how much our happiness, as workers and women, depends on our health. It is also obvious that women have special health needs because they bear children. Good quality maternity care, safe and effective contraception, a good knowledge of how our bodies work, knowledge of how to stay healthy and how to treat minor disorders should all be our right in this day and age. Filling gaps in our knowledge of women's health should be a priority for society — the health and happiness of half its citizens should be seen as vitally important.