

# New Zealand

*Women, Business and the Law 2023* (WBL2023) presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Auckland). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **New Zealand scores 97.5 out of 100**. The overall score for New Zealand is higher than the regional average observed across OECD high-income economies (95.3). Within the OECD high-income region, there are 14 economies that score 100 out of 100.

## New Zealand - Scores for Women, Business and the Law 2023



## Relative Strengths

When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, constraints related to marriage, constraints on women starting and running a business, gender differences in property and inheritance, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension, New Zealand gets a perfect score.

## Areas for Improvement

However, when it comes to laws affecting women's work after having children, New Zealand could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for New Zealand is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women's work after having children (the WBL2023 Parenthood indicator). To improve on the Parenthood indicator, New Zealand may wish to consider making paid leave available to fathers.

## Recent Reforms

No reforms were observed during the past year (October 2nd, 2021 – October 1st, 2022).



Further data details for New Zealand are available at:  
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreconomies/new-zealand/2023>



	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Mobility	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	Yes	Domicile Act, Sec. 5
	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	Yes	Passport Act, Secs. 3 and 4(1)
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Workplace	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	Yes	Human Rights Act 1993, Secs. 21 and 22
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Employment Relations Act, Sec. 108; Human Rights Act, Sec. 62(3)(a)-(b)
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	<i>Criminal:</i> No applicable provisions could be located <i>Civil:</i> Human Rights Act, Secs. 92I and 92M; Employment Relations Act, Secs. 123 and 128
Pay	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	Yes	Equal Pay Act 1972, Secs. 2, 2AAC and 2A; Equal Pay Amendment Act 2020
	Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Marriage	Is the law free of legal provisions that require a married woman to obey her husband?	Yes	Property (Relationships) Act, Sec. 1N
	Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?	Yes	Property (Relationships) Act, Sec. 1N
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Family Violence Act
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	Family Proceedings Act, Sec. 37
Parenthood	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	Family Proceedings Act, Sec. 43
	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	Yes	See parental leave
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is paid leave available to fathers?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there paid parental leave?	Yes	Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, Sec. 9
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, Sec. 49
Entrepreneurship	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	Yes	Human Rights Act, Arts. 21(1)(a) and 44
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	Property (Relationships) Act, Sec. 49
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	Companies Act, Sec. 11; Property (Relationships) Act, Sec. 49
	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?	Yes	Property (Relationships) Act, Sec. 49
Assets	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Property (Relationships) Act, Sec. 19
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	Yes	Administration Act, Sec. 78
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Administration Act, Secs. 77 and 77C
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Property (Relationships) Act, Secs. 8(1), 9 and 19
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	Property (Relationships) Act, Secs. 15, 15A and 18
Pension	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	New Zealand Superannuation and Retirement Income Act 2001, Sec. 7(1)
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	Yes	Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, Sec. 44