



Serving the needs of older people

28 April 2010

Hon Nathan Guy
Associate Minister of Justice
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister Guy,

Re: Wills Act 2007

I understand you are currently considering issues raised through the Statutes Amendment Bill 2010 in regard to the Wills Act 2007. I wish to bring to your attention Age Concern New Zealand's support of the late submission made by Mr Chris Corry to the select committee in relation to this legislation.

Mr Corry's submission raises issues regarding the witnessing of a will maker's signature when that will maker is not able to sign the will himself.

Age Concern has many years experience working with older people and in particular, older people who have been abused by those closest to them. Based on this experience, we consider that the amendment to the Wills Act 2007 proposed in the Statutes Amendment Bill offers opportunity for abuse or coercion. For example, a person who has been financially or psychologically abused may be coerced into making a will which benefits the perpetrator of this abuse. We believe that enabling a signature to be applied to a will on behalf of the will-maker without witnesses to this request, is playing into the hands of the unscrupulous. Accordingly, Age Concern New Zealand endorses in principle the recommendations Mr Corry has made.

The report of the government administration committee on the Statutes Amendment Bill notes "We consider it important for the responsible Minister to consider the issues raised," Please advise the action being taken in this respect.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Martin
Chief Executive

CC: Hon. Simon Power, Minister for Justice

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