

“Hands off our wombs”

An examination of New Zealand media coverage of the announcement of free long-acting contraception for welfare beneficiaries

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Policy announcement

- Prime Minister *John Key*
- Social Development Minister *Paula Bennett*




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Policy announcement

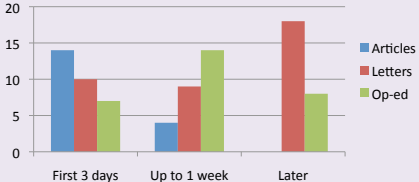

- Broad package of welfare reforms announced
- Sole parents expected to return to work part-time when child turns 5; full time when child turns 14
 - If they have an additional child while on benefit they must return to work when child turns 1
- Access to childcare and long-acting reversible methods of contraception provided to support return to work policy



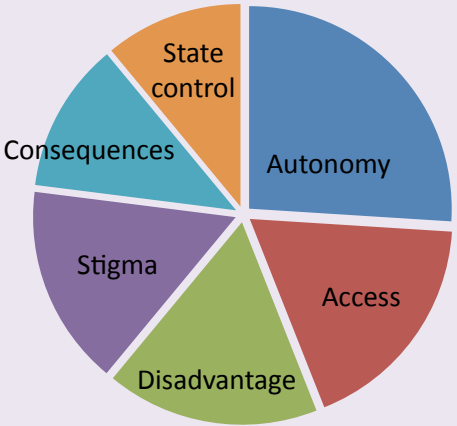
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Media articles in data set

	Articles	Letters	Op-ed	Total
First 3 days	14	10	7	31
Up to 1 week	4	9	14	27
Later	0	18	8	26
Total	18	37	29	84

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State control

Autonomy

Access

Disadvantage


Stigma

Consequences

Autonomy

“Ms Bennet denied young women would be coerced to get a contraception implant. ‘It’s not compulsory, it’s something to add to them trying to plan their family so they’ve got choices. It’s completely reasonable.’”

Nelson Mail; Article



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Access

“Some women were prohibited from the best contraception option for them because of cost, of up to \$800 in some cases, which was an “ongoing problem” for GPs.”

Otago Daily Times; Article

“Speaking outside a central Auckland Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) office yesterday, 22-year-old Rudinia Smith said she may not have had all three of her children if she been educated about contraception and had been offered it free.”

Northern Advocate; Article



Disadvantage

“The issue of free contraception for beneficiaries was bound to birth the usual arguments ... but arguing about the issue will never solve the problem of the scores of unwanted children who become trapped in a world of poverty and deprivation.”

Waikato Times; Op-ed

Stigma

“The really noxious component of the whole proposal is its extension to the teenage daughters of beneficiaries who are over the age of consent ... the inference is unavoidable ... that being a trollop is hereditary.”

New Zealand Herald; Op-ed

Reproductive consequences

“Following the announcement of free contraception for women on benefits, Mr Craig proclaimed the Government shouldn't provide anything if New Zealand girls continued to be so promiscuous.[He said] the average Kiwi female's life is one of irresponsibility, 'destructive' behaviour and wanton sexual deviance.”

Daily Post; Op-ed

State control of reproduction

“Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei said ‘The Government has no right to intrude on a woman's choice to have a child. It should get its hands off our wombs.’”

New Zealand Herald; Article

State control of reproduction

“State Seeks Entry into Bedroom ... I tend to think that the family planning decisions of New Zealanders are private affairs. It is a nanny state which seeks entry into the national bedroom.”

Manawatu Standard; Op-ed

State control of reproduction



Dominion Post

Conclusions

- Media coverage of the policy announcement
 - Demonstrates that public funding of contraception is a controversial issue in New Zealand.
 - Illustrates the wide diversity, and strength, of opinions about sexual and reproductive health issues.