



The Circular

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Making a Difference for New Zealand Women

Employers need to “make it happen” this International Women’s Day

By Claire Newton, NCWNZ Communications Advisor

Women make up almost half (47%) of the New Zealand work force. Yet according to data from the Ministry for Women a gender pay gap of 9.9% persists meaning women only earn \$18.02 to every \$20 earned by men.

Women also remain underrepresented in leadership and governance roles. Of the 121 seats in Parliament, only 36 (29%) are occupied by women and just 14 per cent of directors on NZX boards are women.

International Women’s Day on March 8 is a reminder to employers to think about what they can do to progress gender equality in their workplace.

On this day we celebrate the achievements of women while calling for greater equality. The 2015 theme is *Make it Happen* and this year, the National Council of Women of New Zealand is calling on employers to make gender equality happen in their workplaces.

Employers can make a positive impact on their workforce in a number of ways, this includes:

1. Addressing unconscious bias – Beliefs and values gained from family, culture and a lifetime of experiences heavily influence how we view and evaluate both others and ourselves. This can lead to missed opportunities and often stops people, particularly women, from reaching the top. Employers can address this by implementing workshops and courses in the workplace, educating themselves and others on the issue, and by being aware of any biases they may have.
2. Eliminating the gender pay gap – The persistence of the gender pay gap not only hurts women and their families but is also damaging for employee loyalty and

productiveness. Employers can eliminate the gap through initiatives such as periodic salary reviews specifically assessing equality or using a formula to calculate team members’ salaries.

3. Providing domestic violence provisions – One in three women experience psychological or physical abuse from their partners in their lifetime (source: Women’s Refuge). Most victims and perpetrators are in paid work. According to the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, workplaces provide an ideal place for intervention and raising awareness about domestic violence. By adopting workplace agreements which may include special paid leave and referrals to family violence agencies, employers can avoid costs related to its impact on the workplace and establish a healthier and more equitable environment for all employees.



4. Enabling flexible employment – Employees, employers, the economy and communities can all benefit from flexible employment. Such arrangements address challenges faced by parents and carers, facilitate women’s participation in the labour market, enable better choices for working parents, and promote family wellbeing. They also have positive business benefits and contribute to increased staff retention and loyalty, improved productivity and efficiency and reduced absenteeism.

Gender equality is good for everybody. Research shows it is better for business and the economy, and it is also the right thing to do.

NCWNZ urges all employers to make gender equality a priority this International Women’s Day.

Image source: www.internationalwomensday.com/linkto.asp

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Opportunities to make a difference

We've all become familiar with a number of national and international days of commemoration and many pass virtually unnoticed in our busy lives. A special day I hope we will all notice is International Women's Day (IWD) on March 8.

Celebrated since 1911 IWD is also known as United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. Around the world the achievements of women are celebrated and greater equality is called for. It is a day for organisations to make a contribution, however small, to the betterment of women's lives.

This 2015 theme is *Make it Happen* and we encourage you to take action for advancing and recognising women.

At the national level, the Board will be focusing on membership for a few months. Our early branches provided much needed intellectual stimulation and comradeship for women who often found themselves confined to a homemaking role once married. Few opportunities existed for women to mix with intellectual peers. NCWNZ, with its national and international connections, provided an ideal forum for women to expand their knowledge and use their expertise to address issues on the rights of women and girls.

I don't need to tell you that our branch membership needs growth. Intellectual stimulation is now available in many forms which were previously unknown. The accessibility of electronic media such as TV and the internet allow women to be involved and make a worthwhile contribution while pursuing busy lives.

There are two issues for us here. First, as we have identified in recent years, we need to attract youth to our ranks so that we can reflect their views and ensure the future viability of NCWNZ. Our membership

will also have to reflect NZ's diversity if we are to remain relevant in society.

Changes made to the constitution give us the flexibility to modernise our membership categories and thereby attract new members. It is time we "pass the baton on".

I don't have the answers but I wanted to raise the question with you so that we might use our collective knowledge and experience to come up with solutions. National Office will welcome your ideas and are always happy to help.

The Human Rights Commission, lead agency for the coordination and development of the National Plan of Action for the Promotion and Protection of Human rights has asked for NCWNZ's involvement.

Members are providing feedback through two action items: *Violence Against Women: A Just and Safe Aotearoa*; and *Discrimination: Enabling a Fair Go for All*, and I encourage members to keep participating in this piece of work. The plan is to be completed by 30 June 2015 and will outline recommended actions for the Government to take.

The plan is a response to the UN Human Rights Council's recommendations for New Zealand that flowed from the UN's Universal Periodic Review.



Rae Duff

Call for Remits 2015

Remits are now called for Conference 2015. These should be carefully considered.

The first step is to consult the most current Book of Resolutions 1896 - 2010, the Appendix for 2011-2012 and the remits passed at the last conference to check that the proposed remit is not already covered by existing policy. Consult the NCWNZ Standing Committee Information File to ensure that your remit follows the procedure set by National Office and the Board.

Once you have done all your background research, cross-checked and verified all your facts, word your remit carefully and ask several independent people to proofread it for clarity and lack of ambiguity.

Final remits need to include:

- The remit
- The rationale
- The objectives, which must be achievable and measurable
- Consideration of any financial implications
- A practical follow up Plan of Action (e.g. draft letters and/or press releases) so that the Remit once passed is able to be actioned without delay.

Timeline of Remit Process

February:	Advanced notice sent by email
March:	<i>Circular</i> notification of call for remits
April:	Remits must be submitted to National Office by Thursday 2 April
	Remits to board and convener for review
	Board selects remits at the 11 – 12 April Board meeting
	Proposed remits emailed to Branches and Nationally Organised members Thursday 16 April
May:	Suggested amendments to proposed remits to NO Friday 15 May
	Amendments distributed to original proposers and allocated board member liaison for discussion and agreement (or not) Monday 18 May
	Board liaison person negotiates with proposer the final remit 18 May – 5 June
June:	Final remit confirmed by proposers to NO Friday 5 June
	Board meeting 12 – 14 June
	Final remits emailed to members on Sunday 14 June followed by notification in <i>the Circular</i>
July:	Branches vote on remits
August:	Branches vote on remits
September:	Remits voted on at Conference 26 – 27 September
October:	Passed remits published in <i>the Circular</i>

Remits must be returned to National Office by Thursday 2 April

Planning our next major membership event

From the Board

The Board has now started planning for our 2015 conference in earnest.

In the *Circular's* April edition we'll share with you our thinking about the format and content at a high level.

We can confirm that the conference will be held in Wellington on 26 - 27 September 2015 so please put this into your diaries. It will be a mixture of providing inspiration, information to update you, challenge and also having some workshops that will leave you with some template plans that you can choose to implement in your organisations and branches. Watch this space!

One of the earliest actions to prepare for conference is the development of remits. At conference last year we opened a debate on whether our current remit process is efficient and effective in terms of making a difference to women.

We've since had articles in the *Circular* which have put forward views. We now call on our members to email office@ncwnz.org.nz with any suggestions of change they seek to the process, or support for the status quo. We will discuss this at our next Board meeting April 11 and 12 and update you after that meeting. Please get any comments in to us by April 1.

Finally, enjoy International Women's Day. We're aware of a number of events our member organisations and branches are planning – so get involved in whatever way works for you.

A strong community and voluntary sector

By Sue McCabe, Chief Executive

Content in *the Circular* is usually, and quite rightly, focussed on what the council exists for – to make a difference to women through progressing gender equality.

Today I want to talk about a different way the National Council works to help its members – through its engagement with voluntary and community sector initiatives to support charities.

A recent example is our call for member input into our submission on the Policing (Cost Recovery) Bill. Thanks to those who contributed, and to our Justice and Law Reform Standing Committee Convenor Eva Hartshorn-Sanders who sent the petition opposing community and voluntary groups needing to pay for police checks. We have circulated the petition to members.

We also work in a collaborative fashion behind the scenes. One of the sector organisations we belong to is ComVoices, a network of national organisations. Its mission is:

To ensure that within Aotearoa New Zealand there is a strong collaborative voice reflecting and promoting the value and common concerns of the Tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector through information, advocacy and dialogue.

Currently ComVoices is working to improve dialogue with Charities Services within the Department of Internal Affairs in a bid to ensure that the implementation of the Charities Act is

focussed around supporting charities. As Justice Dobson said in his ruling on the council's case – the act should facilitate charitable works, not frustrate them.

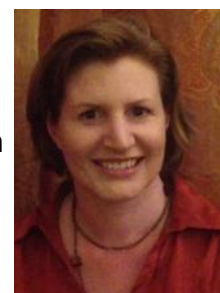
As this edition of *the Circular* goes to print, ComVoices is holding a meeting with Charities Services about key issues of interpretation as well as highlighting other problematic areas within the Act.

A driving force behind the National Council of Women Board continuing its action over its wrongful deregistration was the desire that no other charitable organisation go through what it went through. Our involvement with ComVoices helps to further that objective – to use our experience to inform change in sector regulation.

We are also members of Hui E!, the new organisation formed from the merger of Social Development Partners and ANGOA, the Association of Non Governmental Organisations of Aotearoa. It exists to strengthen and promote the sector so you can contact it for help.

Given the council's membership we can also raise the experiences of our members within these influential fora.

To find out more visit <http://comvoices.org.nz/> and <http://www.huie.org.nz/>



Recent NCWNZ submissions

NCWNZ made the following written submissions over November and December. To read the full submissions, visit www.ncwnz.org.nz (Members' Area).

Title:	Submitted to:	Date:
Gambling Amendment Bill (No. 3)	Government Admin Select Committee	30 Jan
Budget Policy Statement 2015	Finance & Expenditure Select Committee	30 Jan
Policing (Cost Recovery) Amendment Bill	Law and Order Select Committee	05 Feb
Health (Protection) Amendment Bill 234	Health Select Committee	13 Feb
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: NZ's draft sixth periodic report	Ministry of Justice	19 Feb
UN Peace Operations for CSW parallel workshop	Nonviolent Peaceforce	24 Feb
Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice & Qualifications	Nursing Council of NZ	27 Feb
UN Convention on Rights of the Child: NZ's Fifth Periodic Report	Ministry of Social Development	27 Feb

High Court Update

From the Board

We are pleased to announce that our ongoing court case with Inland Revenue and the Department of Internal Affairs Charities Registration Board has come to an end.

The last update in *The Circular* notified you that the High Court found in our favour, and backdated our registration to the date of deregistration. This meant that we were now registered throughout the period of previous deregistration, and IRD had to refund the tax we paid for that period. The High Court also provisionally awarded us costs, the first time a charity has been awarded costs in an appeal taken under the Charities Act 2005.

However, the High Court also allowed the Charities Registration Board a period in which it could challenge that provisional award of costs, and at the time of the last *Circular*, we were awaiting the expiry of that period, and the appeal period generally.

We are happy to report that the appeal period has expired with neither government agency appealing, and we have managed to agree on all costs matters without having to return to the High Court.

So, the situation is as follows: the tax we paid during our period of wrongful deregistration has been refunded, plus interest – a total refund of just over \$10,000.

We have also agreed with the Charities Registration Board that they would pay us \$20,000 plus GST in costs. Under the High Court Rules, an award of costs cannot exceed the legal costs actually

incurred – in other words, if we didn't pay any legal costs, we wouldn't be entitled to receive anything in this regard. Accordingly, we agreed that Sue Barker Charities Law would invoice us this amount for legal services rendered. The amount of legal work actually provided to us over the last two and a half years would exceed this amount many times over – and without Sue's help, we would still be deregistered and paying tax on all our income!

Where to from here? We took the case in the hope of clarifying the law, not only for us but for other charities affected by the approach taken by the regulator(s) under the Charities Act regime. It is very significant that almost every provision causing difficulty in the case had been passed through under urgency, without proper consultation. The Charities Act was originally intended to be reviewed post-implementation, but as we know the promised review was cancelled by the Government in November 2012, again without proper consultation. We hope that our experience will lay a platform from which the case can be made to Government that a proper review of the Charities Act is urgently needed. The National Council of Women is also part of a wider community and voluntary sector effort to engage with the Charities Registration Board over a range of issues charities have with the Charities Act and its implementation.

We will keep you updated on developments in this area, and Sue McCabe's column this month focuses on the work that sector representative group ComVoices is progressing to make sure the Act supports charitable work.

Information on a conference we are supporting

WISE Women 2015 is a new, one-day event on 30 April that will seek to promote the achievement and contribution of women working in technical industries. www.conferenz.co.nz/wise

The event will explore topics including leadership at board level in technical industries and realising the elements of distinctive contribution that women bring to technical industries.

This event will explore topics including:

- Leadership stories and characteristics of leadership at a board level in technical industries
- Realising the elements of distinctive contribution that women bring to technical industries
- How is NZ pitching on gender diversity within the technical industries?
- Recognising and managing the challenges inherent in technical industries
- How to influence and support change
- Attracting women to these sectors: an overview of trends of where the shifts are
- Leveraging the advantages of being a woman in these sectors.

See all the details and agenda at www.conferenz.co.nz/wise

Conferenz is offering NCWNZ members a 10% discount off the conference price (both super saver and early-bird rates). To claim your discount, please use on-line booking code: MWGWW4 or mention this article if registering by phone (09) 912 3616. Super Saver closes 5pm, 5 March.

Introducing the Opposition Spokesperson for Women's Affairs, Sue Moroney MP



Labour women's affairs spokesperson Sue Moroney

We are featuring columns from NZ parties' women's affairs spokespersons.

Last month we featured an article from the Minister for Women Louise Upston. This month it is by Labour MP Sue Moroney.

When women thrive – so does our whole community.

That's why I am delighted to return to the Women's

Affairs portfolio for the Labour Party – a role that I have held on two other occasions for Labour over the past 6 years.

If every woman can maximise her potential, without impediments or artificial barriers, then we know that everyone else will be getting a fair go as well.

That's good for families, for society and for the economy too.

And for the record, I am proud to call myself a feminist and I don't think beauty pageants are the answer to the issues women face.

I've fought for women's rights as long as I can remember – as a young woman growing up in rural Waikato; as a journalist and newspaper editor, as a trade unionist and as a working Mum.

Working for the NZ Nurses Organisation and the Hotel, Hospital, Restaurant Workers Union through the 80's and 90's, I learnt the importance of working collectively and the need for strong advocacy for women's skills to be valued.

I am passionate about the role of women in improving the future of New Zealand and I am keen to work with NCWNZ to achieve this.

We have worked successfully to achieve a slight increase in paid parental leave – from 14 to 18 weeks by July 1 next year.

That's quite a feat, considering the National Government was opposed to any increase at all.

It was submissions like the powerful one presented by NCWNZ to the Select Committee on my Bill extending PPL to 26 weeks, that forced the Government to have a small change of heart.

That demonstrates the difference we can make to people's lives when we work strategically together for positive change.

Labour's campaign to increase PPL to 26 weeks will continue, despite the Government voting my Bill down at it's third reading just this week.

When it became clear that the Government would not prioritise the needs of children and their families, I amended the Bill so that those most in need – the parents of prem babies, those born with disabilities, twins and other multiples – would get the 26 weeks PPL.

But even though the cost was reduced substantially by this amendment, the Government still wouldn't budge.

I am also working to make sure the Government honours the court decisions on equal pay for rest home workers, as this will also form an important precedent for other low-paid, female-dominated occupations.

It looks like we could be on the cusp of reducing the gender pay gap if the Government doesn't interfere by changing the law.

There is still a long way to go.

Women can't reach their potential while they are subjected to sexual and domestic violence or where rape culture exists. I will be working closely with Labour's Spokesperson on these issues, Kelvin Davis MP. It's great to see a male Parliamentarian step up against sexual and domestic violence.

Women wear the brunt of unfair workplace laws being introduced and the housing crisis that is building in New Zealand. Women are also the face of growing poverty and inequity here.



Women in Politics: Continuing Kate's Crusade

By Celia Wade-Brown, Mayor of Wellington

Kia ora wāhine of the National Council of Women of New Zealand.

New Zealand has a proud history of women in politics, and to be reminded of this, we need only look at former NCWNZ President Kate Sheppard on our ten dollar bills and giving us the go ahead to cross the road near Parliament.

Following the 2014 General Election, the Labour Party's female representation in Parliament dipped from 14 to 12 MPs, which is 37.5 per cent of their caucus. This percentage is a long way away from the Party's 50 per cent target for 2017. By comparison, the National Party have only 16 female MPs in a caucus of 59 (27.11%) and New Zealand First has only two female MPs in a caucus of 11 (18%).

ACT and United Future have one seat in Parliament each and neither have a female MP. Meanwhile, the Green Party and Māori Party both have 50 per cent female representation. At the start of 2014 there were 14 female Foreign Representatives to New Zealand (Ambassadors and High Commissioners) compared to the 41 who were male.

New Zealand is ranked 13 on the World Economic Forum 2014 Global Gender Gap Index (Iceland is number one). Our ranking moved six places in the wrong direction from 2013. It's almost unimaginable for us to know what it would be like to be a woman in the last country on the list, number 128, Yemen.

As fellow female politician Jenny Shipley said in the New Zealand Herald last October, there is still so much to do, and it is not good enough that young men and women can graduate university with identical degrees and enter the workforce, where the female is paid less.

The local government sector contributes favourably to our Global Gender Gap Index ranking, as women have had great success in this area. We're ranked 14th in the world in terms of female political empowerment, and we have a history of strength in this area. In 1893 the first ever female Mayor in the British Empire was elected when Elizabeth Yates won the election in Onehunga, Auckland.

I am Wellington's third female Mayor out of 34. Collectively, Wellington has had a female Mayor for 18 years. When I first ran, someone said, "Do you think Wellington wants another woman?" In the most recent local body elections, only 30 per cent of candidates nationally were women, a number that has been the same since 2004 after dropping from a high of 32 per cent in 2001. That's an

improvement from just three per cent when records began in 1959 – a year in which no women were elected.

It's disappointing that in Wellington City, the number of female candidates for councillor seats has fallen to 24 per cent, compared with 32 per cent in 2010. Nevertheless the women who did stand were disproportionately successful and 40 per cent of Wellington City's current elected members are women.

As Mayor, I have worked to increase the proportion of women directors of our Council Controlled Organisations. A member of an appointments panel once said, of one candidate "But I don't know her!" and I retorted, "Good! That's the point of wider recruitment!"

Given most people stand for local government because they are asked—and I was no exception—that means it is up to us to encourage women to stand for high profile and influential positions.

In 2015 we can be vocal in our lobbying for more female voices in positions of power. We have the hard-fought freedom to do Kate proud.

E ngā wāhine o te motu, o te ao whānui. kia kaha!

To all you women from throughout the country, throughout the world, be strong



Harmful stereotypes in NZ Pork advertising

By Claire Newton, Communications Advisor

"Man up" and "give mum the night off" are the slogans being used in an overtly sexist new ad campaign from NZ Pork. The ads, both in video and print, are an attempt to get men to contribute in the kitchen and to relieve women of their "duties".

National Council of Women of New Zealand find the ads reinforce negative stereotypes of both genders and have taken a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority. We believe that the sexism used by NZ pork contributes to serious gender inequality in New Zealand.

We find the ads damaging on three levels:

1. Representation of women – Women in the video advertisement are presented as highly sexualised objects lacking any agency (it blatantly states "gratuitous shots of women wearing not much"). The slogan "mum's night off" reinforces the stereotype of women as belonging in the kitchen and the video depicts women as "hot-heads" (e.g. "like your missus is probably doing, let it stew in its own juices").
2. Reinforcement of rape culture – The "man up" message over the image of two lions copulating invokes the myth of men's "animal instincts",



something that is often used as an excuse for violence especially that of a sexual nature. This also undermines men's control over their own actions and again reinforces masculine ideals.

3. Stereotypes of men – Men are portrayed as incapable of understanding a recipe ("recipe instructions men can understand") let alone cooking a meal and the message of "Man Up" reinforces damaging masculine ideals. Such ideals create attitudes among men which contribute to the shocking levels of violence in this country.

We accept that this is an attempt at humour and while we do not take offence to every advertisement that instils gender stereotypes we do believe that NZ Pork has taken it too far.

Please join us in standing up to harmful stereotyping in New Zealand advertising by making a complaint at http://www.asa.co.nz/complaint_form.php.

Pub Charities Circular funding

We are very pleased to announce that we have received funding for some of the Circular costs from Pub Charities for the next five months.



The money received covers some of the costs of printing, postage and time spent on layout by our Communications Advisor, Claire.



PWC update

By Beryl Anderson, Parliamentary Watch Standing Committee Convener

The Parliamentary Watch Committee welcomes Bernice Williams of Wellington Branch to the team, joining Patricia Byrne, Judy Whitcombe and Helen Reilly. PWC would welcome further new members especially if you can be flexible with your time arrangements. What we do is:

- scrutinise legislation that comes into Parliament
- recommend whether NCWNZ should be making a submission
- provide policy research
- peer review written submissions before they go to Select Committees
- write and present oral submission to Select committees of Parliament.

Contact the convener, Beryl Anderson if you wish to become involved.

Education update

By Suzanne Manning, Education Standing Committee Convener

Ngā mihi o te tau hou – Happy New Year. What can we look forward to in Education this year?

School costs

As usual at the beginning of the school year, the media gets hold of the idea that education in Aotearoa is not as 'free' as it is purported to be. Susanne Ruthven posted this picture of the invoice from her 7 year old's school on Twitter:

Description	Amount Received	GST Content
School Donation - 1st / Only Child	\$200.00	-
Activity Contribution Term 1	\$15.00	-
Activity Contribution Term 2	\$15.00	-
Activity Contribution Term 3	\$15.00	-
Activity Contribution Term 4	\$15.00	-
Total	\$260.00	
2015 Stationery Rm 8 - Yr 4&5	\$41.20	\$5.37
Mathletics/ Reading Eggs	\$22.50	\$2.93
Total	\$63.70	
		\$323.70

Yet this is cheap compared to "donations" for secondary schooling. Costs add up over a person's schooling, and for parents trying to educate a family. The Australasian Scholarship Group (ASG) recently released research that quantified (from a sample of 1000 of their members) what average schooling costs were. The media is also full of stories of families struggling at this time of year to buy the things that are required by their school, a school which they often feel a lot of loyalty towards. The Minister of Education's (MoE) response was that all students between the ages of 5 and 19 were entitled to a free education and parents could not be forced to pay donations. I'm not sure that helps parents faced with an invoice like that above. Where the school requires the student to Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) to use at school – such as an iPad – then the costs are even higher on the family. Such policies, whilst are shown to be effective teaching, do have the effect of shifting costs from the school/government funding onto families/private funding. The debate centres around what things the schools feel are necessary for teaching, and what things the government feels are necessary – and who pays.

National Library cuts

A related debate regarding the move to more technologically based resourcing of schools (and who pays for it!) surrounds the cuts to the National Library service, specifically the ability of schools to request books in hard copy. From term 3 this year, *The Circular No. 580 March 2015*

requests from schools on curriculum topics will be made available digitally rather than by sending books. This is concurrent with the MoE's project to connect schools to ultrafast broadband. However, there will be a number of books available in "reading for pleasure" packages. Not a clear-cut answer on this one, I feel.

Better Joint Plan Initiative



Last year I wrote an outline of the government's Investing in Education Success (IES) policy (Circular 570, Mar 2014) which had recently been announced. That policy is still going to be rolled out (see IES website in sources below). However, the primary and ECE teachers union, NZEI Te Riu Roa, voted not to accept the policy – specifically not to agree to change their collective employment agreement that would recognise and pay teachers on different rates according to the policy. As the NZEI Te Riu Roa said "We asked for genuine discussion with educators. We asked for flexible, locally-driven ways to support collaboration. We asked for resourcing to support kids and their learning, not just for new roles. We rejected top-down, one-size fits all models and said we should build off existing successful practice. We voted against National Standards being the determinant of resourcing or roles. We asked for evidence-based approaches." The MoE and NZEI Te Riu Roa have now reached agreement to negotiate a new approach that will be acceptable to union members, and this work will be undertaken this year. To my mind, government listening to the teachers is a win-win situation.

Teachers' voices

Literally – not whether they can speak out in public, but whether their physical voice is affected by teaching. A University of Auckland study led by Sylvia H.S. Leão found that many teachers suffered voice problems, although the majority did not seek treatment; it was also found that female teachers were more at risk than male teachers, suggesting that physiological differences in vocal cords might be an issue. The study recommended that it was particularly important for women entering teaching to have vocal training.

Sources: ASG Education costs: <http://www.asg.co.nz/edcosts>.

IES policy: <http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/specific-initiatives/investing-in-educational-success/>

Leão, S. et al. (2015). Voice problems in New Zealand teachers: A national survey. *Journal of Voice*. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2014.11.004>

Morton, J. (2015). Cost of 'free' education in New Zealand. *NZ Herald*, 23 Jan. Retrieved from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/education/news/article.cfm?c_id=35&objectid=11390477&ref=rss

NZEI Te Riu Roa. (2014). *Better Joint Plan Initiative*. Retrieved from <http://www.nzei.org.nz/joint-initiative>.

Responsible Lending Code

By Deborah Russell, Economic Standing Committee Convener

The Ministry of Business and Innovation has been working on a Responsible Lending Code. The Code aims to protect people from predatory lending practices when they enter into consumer credit contracts, such as credit cards, hire purchase agreements and pay day borrowing.

The code has responsibilities for both borrowers and lenders. Responsibilities for lenders include being clear about the costs of credit, and assessing whether a person can afford to make repayments within their budget.

Borrowers are encouraged to understand how they can repay debt faster. For example, one option in the draft Code is for credit card bills to include information about how long it would take to repay the balance making just the minimum repayment. This may encourage borrowers to make higher repayments.

The Code is voluntary. Many reputable lenders would find the requirements of the Code relatively easy to implement because they already have

appropriate lending processes in place. However some lenders may not sign up to the Code, such as some payday and shop truck lenders. Research shows that these lenders deliberately tempt and pressure low income families to buy on credit.

Women in particular may be affected by problems with consumer credit contracts, because women are often responsible for managing household budgets, and for ensuring that children are clothed and fed. When there is no cash, the pressure to buy from shop trucks on credit can be too hard to resist. Young women can be pressured to borrow by family members and partners. Budgeting agencies report that the majority of their clients are women.

The final Responsible Lending Code is due to be issued by March 2015.

Further reading: "Why escaping the debt trap is so hard for poor Auckland families" in *Metro*, December 2014, available on-line at: <http://www.metromag.co.nz/current-affairs/escaping-the-debt-trap-auckland-families/>

Family affairs: Affordable access to water education

By Belinda Greenwood, Family Affairs Standing Committee Convener

Approximately 10 years ago, Family Affairs wrote an item for *the Circular* on NZ's drowning statistics.

Since that item, approximately 500 people have drowned in NZ waters—19 in the first month of 2015 and 90 for the whole of 2014.

Thirty years ago the majority of NZ schools had swimming pools and every child was taught to swim. It is a requirement of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum that all students are given the opportunity to learn fundamental aquatic skills by the end of Year 6. But in the past six years 150 school swimming pools have been closed, with another 30 more at risk of closing this year. On average, 80 school swimming pools are closed every year.

The cost of maintaining/replacing school swimming pools is given as the reason for these closures. At an estimated cost of \$1,000,000 to build and maintain a swimming pool, what school can justify the necessity? With NZ being entirely surrounded by water and the cost of schools transporting

children to their nearest swimming pool for lessons putting pressure on already stretched family budgets, isn't it time to re-evaluate funding options to ensure water education is made more affordable for schools and families? The aftermath cost of losing a family member to drowning, as with any loss, shouldn't come down to what it would cost to provide the skills to stay alive.

Watching reality TV shows depicting lifeguards in action and reading news reports of a drowning or near drowning event shows the high majority of those who can't swim and get into difficulties in the water.

Summer at the beach is a Kiwi way of life and surf lifeguards do an incredible job in patrolling our beaches and pools. Parents also need to take personal responsibility to keep their children safe. But how many of those parents can swim and/or are keeping an eye on their children in the water? Community swimming pools are not babysitting services and shouldn't be treated as such.

We all need to ensure NZ children can swim and have easy, affordable access to swimming lessons.

Abortion law reform

By Julie Fairey, NCW Auckland President

Abortion law has been identified by some social liberals as the next priority piece of legal reform, now that marriage equality has been passed by Parliament. Activism continues around the country, seeking law changes that adopt a more "pro-choice" legal framework from some, and changes to law and practice to restrict access further by others. Public conversation on this issue is becoming easier, with women more willing to share their own personal stories and experiences. Many political parties and candidates were expressly asked their views on abortion law reform in the General Election campaign in late 2014, with those interested in this issue sharing what they have heard in response. By and large politicians are still unwilling to take a public position on abortion law reform, often replying that it is "a conscience issue" and then giving no indication of where their conscience would likely lead them to vote.

March and April is a particularly tense time of year in regard to abortion law reform, as there is a move by anti-abortion groups to hold prayer vigils and protests outside abortion services throughout Lent. Pro-choice groups then organise counter-protests to protect those accessing services or undertaking activities to give support to the clinic staff, such as sending flowers and thank you cards.

As National Council of Women undertakes its action plan in relation to the remit in favour of abortion law reform passed at the 2014 National Conference, I hope that we will be able to continue to role-model constructive conversation on this sometimes divisive issue.

ALRANZ 2015 Pro-Choice Gathering

By Dr Morgan Healey, National President ALRANZ

The Abortion Law Reform Association of New Zealand (ALRANZ) is delighted to announce that it will be hosting a pro-choice gathering in Wellington on 21 and 22 March. It is open to anyone interested in abortion politics and will provide a space for discussing, listening, meeting awesome people, making plans, and probably even protesting!

The two-day schedule is still to be finalized but we already have an amazing line-up of speakers: Marama Davidson, Gill Greer, Dr Simon Snook, Jackie Edmond, Jan Logie, Jessie Lipscombe and Rachael Goldsmith. We hope you can join us.

For more information on the event and how to register please go to our blog:

<https://alranz.wordpress.com/gathering-2015/>



Celebrating women's achievements this Founders' Day

By Claire Newton, Communications Advisor



The first meeting was held in Christchurch 119 years ago.

April 13 marks a special date in NCWNZ's calendar – the anniversary of the council's first meeting.

NCWNZ historian Dorothy Page writes "The first meeting of the National Council of Women of New Zealand, held in Christchurch in golden early autumn weather on 13 April 1896, was imbued with a sense of occasion. Mindful that this was the first nationwide gathering of enfranchised women to be held anywhere in the world, the organisers sought permission to hold their sessions in the historic and dignified Provincial Council Chamber. The programme too recognised the high seriousness of the occasion. No subject, it clearly signalled was beyond the right or capacity of women to debate, an important principle to which the council has adhered steadily ever since."

Today, 119 years on, a lot has been achieved for women – women's employment rates have increased from 26 per cent in 1893 to 58 per cent in 2013, as have the number of women in higher-education (from 39% to 56%). However, there still remains a lot to be achieved for NZ women including pay equity, reducing/eliminating violence against women and increasing representation in leadership and governance.

Let us know what you are doing in your communities to celebrate Founders' Day and to progress the council's work toward gender equality.

NCW Manawatu and the Palmerston North City Council by-elections

By NCW Manawatu Branch President, Helen Chong

For many years NCW Manawatu has helped ensure that our electorate is informed by holding "Meet the Candidates" sessions.

In the year of the local body elections, we invite all women candidates for the Palmerston North City Council, Horizons Regional Council and the MidCentral District Health Board to speak to the community.

In the following year, for the general election, the branch invites all candidates for our three local electorates (Palmerston North, Manawatu and Te Tai Hauāuru) to do the same.

In the third year when there are no scheduled elections the branch concentrates on other matters.

However, 2015 is different. The Palmerston North Mayor, Jono Naylor, resigned on becoming a list MP generating a mayoral by-election. The campaign was conducted over the summer.



Constitution on the web

It's official – we have a new constitution. At our conference in October members approved an updated constitution. It's now gone live on the Companies Office website www.societies.govt.nz/cms and it can also be found on our website at www.ncwnz.org.nz/get-involved/join/ (previously it was only available in our members' only section).

On a Sunday afternoon in late January NCW Manawatu hosted a meeting for all nine candidates. Over 100 people attended the meeting.

Branch members had discussed the questions that the candidates would be asked and settled on three - the role of the mayor, their plans for improving business in the city and their plans in relation to young people. There was also an opportunity for the community to ask questions from the floor.

Because Grant Smith, the newly elected Mayor of Palmerston North, was a sitting councillor there will be another by-election for a councillor. Nominations for this position close on 20th March and the Branch will, once again, host a "Meet the Candidates" session.

The Branch's triennial election cycle will begin again in September. To celebrate Women's Suffrage Day, the NCW Manawatu will host an introductory meeting for women interested in standing for the local body elections in 2016.

The Treaty is sometimes called a covenant, what does that mean?

The Treaty is sometimes referred to as a covenant to describe a binding spiritual relationship. In the Old testament of the Bible, a covenant was made between God and the people of Israel. In the New testament, a covenant was made between god and the Church.

For some Māori the Treaty was and is seen in the same way – being referred to as a sacred covenant; Whereas a legal contract is witnessed by people with the state as guarantor, covenants are witnessed by God with God as the guarantor. The Treaty of Waitangi is seen as a living document with a much wider context. There is concern about it being taken into the narrow legal framework where the spiritual element is being ignored. Even legally, however, contracts remain in force unless there is an expiry date included, or until both parties agree to changes.

Source: *The Treaty of Waitangi: Questions and Answers published by Network Waitangi, 2012 edition. Reproduced by Creative Commons License: Can be accessed at www.nwo.org.nz*

Next Circular: Where was The Treaty signed?



Progressing our work with the International Council of Women

By Vanisa Dhiru, International Secretary

Our desire to continue to strengthen NCWNZ's relationship with ICW has been an important focus for NCW following our representation at the Asia Pacific Regional Council meeting in Bangkok last year. For the upcoming 34th ICW Council meeting in June, NCWNZ has submitted a proposed resolution, one of seven which will be discussed in Turkey. We thank our friends from the National Council of Women Australia for seconding our remit. An update to members on progress with this remit and others will be included in the August 2015 Circular.

Remit to ICW: Working for sound regulations on fracking technology

Noting that the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) in June 2014 to promote universal energy access, increase the use of renewable energy, improve energy efficiency and address the nexus between energy and health, women, food, water and other development issues.

Noting that the initial two years of the Decade would be focused on a campaign for energy access for women and children's health; acknowledging that the world faces an energy problem with shrinking resources and that natural gas, whose production is boosted by hydraulic fracturing or fracking, could be a means of building greener economies with new, more efficient energy technologies; being aware that the methodologies used in fracking have often been dirty and environmentally harmful many countries and states have called a moratorium on the practice.

The International Council of Women calls upon its National Councils to:

1. strongly encourage their members to understand the sustainability, environmental and health issues associated with fracking;
2. investigate if their country or state has regulations for fracking technology; fracking through a strong regulatory framework and regular environmental monitoring to prevent degradation of air, water and health.

Notes:

Hydraulic fracturing or fracking is the process of drilling and injecting large amounts of water, sand and an array of chemicals into the ground at high pressure to fracture rock layers and to increase the extraction rate and recovery of fossil fuels. These techniques are increasingly being used on shale rocks to release natural gas. For much of the world the possibilities that fracking opens up for energy availability is very attractive and appears more environmentally friendly than other options.

Risks and concerns associated with fracking include: contamination of groundwater, methane and air pollution and its impact on climate change, exposure to toxic chemicals, blowouts due to gas explosion, waste disposal, large volume water use in water-deficient regions, fracking-induced earthquakes, workplace safety and infrastructure degradation. Thus it is necessary to be aware of the advantages of more intensified energy production, without losing sight of the drawbacks of these new technologies, when they are applied indiscriminately and without prior regulations

These concerns have led to moratoriums on the practice in many states and countries. In other countries or states there is a push for tight regulations such as compelling drilling companies to disclose the nature, quantity and mix of chemicals used and a ban on deep well injection for the disposal of fracking waste water. Regulation is also necessary to safeguard the health and safety of well-head workers, farmers, communities and the environment.

Behind this debate is the dual concern about conserving global energy and providing dignity and employment opportunity for all. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon says "Modern energy services are the key to changing people's quality of life. Clinics can store life-saving vaccines. Children can study after dark. Cleaner cook stoves can save the lives of millions of women and children every year. Electricity can power street-lights that will make women safer".

Calendar

March

- 08 International Women's Day
- 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

April

- 07 World Health Day
- 13 NCWNZ Founder's Day
- 17 Day of Silence (LGBTQ)

May

- 05 International Midwives Day
- 10 Mother's Day
- 12 International Nurses Day
- 15 International Day of Families
- 17 International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia

June

- 05 World Environment Day

July

- 12 Malala Yousafzai Day
- 17 World Day for International Justice
- 30 International Day of Friendship

August

- 01 - 07 World Breastfeeding Week
- 12 Youth Day

September

- 19 Suffrage Day
- 21 International Day of Peace
- 26 World Contraception Day

October

- 01 - 31 Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October cont'd

- 02 International Day of Non-Violence
- 15 International Day of Rural Women
- 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

November

- 13 World Kindness Day
- 16 International Day for Tolerance
- 20 Universal Children's Day
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

December

- 03 International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- 05 International Volunteer Day
- 10 Human Rights Day

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The deadline for material for the April Circular is Wednesday 11 March 2015.

If you would like to contribute to the Circular, please contact the Editor via NCWNZ National Office to discuss what you can do.

Email: claire.newton@ncwnz.org.nz Phone: 04 473 7623

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this Circular are not necessarily those of the National Council of Women of New Zealand.

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