



Auckland
**Women's
Centre**
Te Wāhi Wāhine o Tāmaki Makaurau

**Facilitating empowerment
and well-being for women**

Annual Report 2017

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COMMITMENTS

Vision

A society where women are well resourced and empowered within their communities to achieve equity, safety and wellbeing.

Mission Statement

The Auckland Women's Centre facilitates empowerment and well-being for women.

Philosophy

Auckland Women's Centre is committed to working to improve women's lives from feminist perspectives.

Constitutional Objectives

1. We recognise Māori as Tangata Whenua o Aotearoa and wholeheartedly embrace and uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
2. We will create an environment for Auckland women to meet for support, discussion, information, referral, learning and sharing skills.
3. We network with other women's and community groups to promote women's empowerment in society.

Our values-based culture

We are committed to good practice, high ethical standards, collaboration, community development, evaluation and sustainability.

Auckland Women's Centre is:

- A friendly place to get involved and to belong
- Open to women of every ethnicity, income, culture, sexual orientation, age and ability
- Open and responsive to today's challenges
- Trusted in your community for over 40 years

Strategic Directions: January 2018 - December 2018

1. Deliver sustainable projects to improve the well-being of marginalised women and their families.
2. Provide affordable, accessible, quality services, programmes and resources for women in response to their needs.
3. Work to prevent violence against women and children.
4. Engage and partner with women in their communities.
5. Be an effective voice for women's equality.

GOVERNANCE COLLECTIVE REPORT

By Mira Taitz, Chairperson

2017 felt like a turning point for 21st century feminism. The Women's March and #MeToo movement have made feminist concerns a mainstream issue. Prominent feminist heroes in Aotearoa in 2017 included Kristine Bartlett, her court case a win for equal pay for low paid women, the late Helen Kelly, a great campaigner for workers' rights, Metiria Turei, who provoked a much-needed conversation about poverty for solo mother beneficiaries (at great personal cost), and of course Jacinda Ardern, our new feminist PM who is outspoken about child poverty reduction, paid parental leave increases, equal pay, and abortion law reform.

But there have been warnings that a backlash is imminent, and for this we need to make sure that our women's movement is strong. Do not underestimate the energy that the patriarchy will put into derailing social change to empower women.

Inspiring Australian feminist **Clementine Ford**, who spoke at an AWC forum in September, gave a hilarious and shocking account of the **online abuse** she receives, and how she deals with it. Although she has said this online abuse is the least interesting part of her work, her tips for dealing with it were instructive, such as asking obstructive men what they are personally doing to advance women's rights. She suggested refusing to engage with men who purport to want a 'discussion' about feminism but in fact end up wasting one's time and energy for something they do not genuinely care about. The lesson from this is that we need to be vigilant of those who seek to disrupt the progression of equal human rights for women.



Mira Taitz

As feminism makes more inroads as a mainstream movement, we need to ensure that the voices and concerns of all women are represented, not just those in privileged positions. At Auckland Women's Centre, our commitment to giving voice to marginalised women's experiences will continue. Last year at our forum on **women and homelessness** we heard about the resourcefulness of homeless women, forging deep care networks among other homeless people in a system that has failed them.

This year at our **women and poverty** forum political parties fronted up to questions about how poverty affects women, discussing the housing crisis, the effects of colonisation, and women's disproportionate share of unpaid care work. The **feminist parenting forum** provoked discussion about gender roles for children, raising Māori children to be proud of their culture, as well as disrupting the Western idea that the 'mother is everything' in raising a child.

Thank you to all the **staff** for your amazing work this year. We are also extremely grateful to our supporters. Our advocacy, women's support and community development work relies on the help of our **donors and supporters**. We trust that we can rely on the support of our community to continue our work in 2018 and beyond, working for better lives for women.

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

This year's activities fell broadly into the categories of:

- health and well-being services for women
- personal counselling
- community education
- partnering with other agencies to provide a voice for gender equity
- providing community forums
- support for lesbian and rainbow women
- and delivering a SKIP Positive Parenting Single Mums' Project.

HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICES FOR WOMEN

Women's Support: Support, Information, Referral and Advice

This year over 3,700 women from all over Tāmaki Makaurau have sought assistance from this free service available to all women. Women have made contact by phone, email or in person about: accommodation, sexual harassment, domestic and sexual violence support, women's health, mental health, relationship break-up, single parenting, educational courses and workshops, counselling support, budgeting resources, migrant support, support and events for lesbians and queer women, and much more.

In 2017 Women's Support provided **intensive support** to 96 women. Working from a strength-based approach, Centre staff and volunteers provided intensive face-to-face or telephone support to women experiencing major distress and seeking assistance with immediate needs. Empathetic listening, support and validation are provided, information is given, and referrals are made to specialised crisis care services for ongoing assistance.

Personal counselling

The Centre has benefited from having an experienced and talented counselling team - **Jane Tyrer** has increased the number of days she offers counselling at the Auckland Women's Centre and this July we also welcomed a new counsellor **Crystal McLean**. Crystal identifies as lesbian and offers general counselling as well as counselling specific to women in the Rainbow Community. Crystal has worked with women covering a range of topics including: sexual identity, transgender issues, relationships, substance abuse, addictions, trauma, anxiety, depression and stress. She offers a variety of approaches, for example: narrative, cognitive behavioural therapy and recovery model. Our counsellors are fully qualified, are members of a professional association and receive clinical supervision.



Crystal McLean

Therapeutic massage

Affordable massage for beneficiaries and other women on low incomes is available at the Centre. Our masseuse is highly skilled and supportive, consequently this service has become very popular and bookings often have to be made well in advance.

Free mammograms

Once again we were delighted to host the Mobile Breast Screening Unit at our Centre this year. They provide free screening for women aged from 45 to 69.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SUPPORT GROUPS

This year we offered two new women's health workshops. Robyn Fausett from Nest Consulting delivered a two-hour workshop on **Managing Menopause** for women wanting to know more about managing peri-menopause (the lead up to menopause) and menopause.

Janet Thackray from Continence New Zealand shared her enthusiasm and knowledge on **Continence Management** and how to prevent manage and treat different types of urinary incontinence.

We were thrilled to offer these classes again this year:

- **Amazing Assertiveness for Women** with Carol Rewega
- **An Introduction to Te Reo and Tikanga** with Anita Simpson
- **Aroha Dance** with Rosanna Marks
- **Building a New Life After Separation** with Wende Jowsey
- **CV and Job interview Skills** with Wendy Rowe
- **Get Knitting** with Barbara Woodman
- **Girls Self Defence** with Morgan Libeau
- **Memoir Writing** with Maria de Jong
- **Restorative Yoga** with Simone Bonny
- **Understanding Money** with Lisa Dudson
- **Women's Self Defence** with Barb Wallis



*Maria de Jong
Memoir Writing*

Wendy Rowe's workshops on **CV and Job Interview Skills** were hugely beneficial with some participants feeding back that they had found employment thanks to Wendy's support, approach and knowledge.

Lisa Dudson asks the **Understanding Money** participants to share the reasons why they have enrolled and then spends the workshop time responding to those motivations. Participants reported that Lisa created a "supportive atmosphere, I felt ok about asking questions," was an "engaging and knowledgeable presenter" and "explained so much about financial stuff that I didn't realise."

Providing support and connection to the **Rainbow communities** is an important part of our work. This year **Cissy Rock** delivered our **Questioning** course inviting various women from within the community to talk about their own 'coming out' journey into the community. This provided the participants with the opportunity to delve deeply into someone else's process, ask questions and feel affirmed.



*Cissy Rock
Questioning*

Our monthly **Rainbow Social Nights** alternate between watching a **DVD** followed by an informal discussion, and playing **Board Games**. This is an opportunity for women to connect within the rainbow community outside the bar and club scene.

Thank you very much to all our **tutors** for their incredible work. We are proud to provide a women-centred community education programme in a supportive environment, a space where people can gain new skills, build their self confidence and increase their feelings of belonging to their community.

SKIP SINGLE MUMS' POSITIVE PARENTING PROJECT

2017 was the year that our \$70,000 of annual SKIP funding was axed and we had to cut back the project almost entirely. This was a great project where the Women's Centre, a feminist organization, was delivering on outcomes to enable peer support among over 600 single mum families across Auckland. It is wonderful that other groups are getting a chance to do SKIP work (the reason given for the cut) but the pot of money is simply too small.

Auckland Women's Centre's SKIP project was the only one of its kind working specifically with single mums. It is a sad irony that this project was cut in the year that child poverty became a mainstream concern for both major political parties. We know that many children in poverty live in single mum families, who desperately need support. We have kept the project going on a much smaller scale as we simply couldn't bear to let down the mums in our networks by cutting the project altogether. We would love to scale it up again and are eagerly seeking a funder for this work.

SKIP sessions were specifically targeted to meet participants' needs. Our **non-judgemental** approach empowered parents to connect, share parenting experiences and plan new approaches drawing on SKIP strategies which enabled positive parenting outcomes.

Single mums at **Odyssey Family House for Addictions** engaged in excellent discussions, role plays, and activities. Children's behaviour and social development improved, child-rearing attitudes changed, knowledge of child development increased and attachment between the mums and their children increased. Several families continued to keep in touch with the SKIP Single Mums' project after they left the residential programme. It is inspiring that many have built a loving and positive family life with their children.

The **SKIP Single Mums' Mother's Day** attracted single mum families who needed to come together on that day because there was no other adult in the family facilitating the appreciation and celebration of mum's role.



SKIP Single Mums' Mother's Day 2013

Our heartfelt thanks to all the single mums, their children, the peer supporters, and the volunteers who were part of this six year project. We reluctantly made our SKIP Single Mums Coordinator, **Rochelle Carr**, redundant and thank Rochelle for the generosity, wisdom and creativity she gave to the job.

We continue to offer the monthly **Single Mum Sundays, Single Mums' Mother's Day and Single Mums' Christmas Party** which bring single mums together on a supportive, social basis. Many stories of change, friendship and positivity come from the single mums as they listen to each other and be with other women who understand their lives.

FUNDRAISING

2017 has been another great year for community building and fundraising events. Alongside the **popular feminist film nights** we have hosted special events including the **Feminist Quiz Night, An Evening with Clementine Ford** and our big annual comedy show '**Feminists are Funny**'. The fabulous **Michele A'Court** was incredibly generous, not only in lining up all of the comedy acts, but also in being the event MC and contributing her own inimitable brand of humour throughout the evening.

Over 1,000 tickets were sold to fundraising events in 2017 raising over \$28,000 for the empowerment and wellbeing of women living in Auckland. We held our biggest fundraising event ever at Q Theatre, with 450 people attending.



Back Row: Ray Shipley, Melanie Bracewell, Justine Smith, Lana Walters, Livi Mitchell, Michelle A 'Court, Irene Pink; front Row: Katherine McAlpine (AWC, Stage Manager), Amanda Kennedy, Sera Devich, Louise Beuvink, Sophie and Leonie (AWC); absent: Laura Daniel. Photo credit: Nicky Noble Photography.

Feminists have kindly rallied around the Centre in response to the Government cutting our funding. We were delighted and grateful that **Anna Dunwoodie** and her friends organised two wonderful concerts, **Singing for Our Lives**, which raised over \$1,800 for the Centre. We would also like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the **Women's Loan Trust** who donated \$5,000 to the Centre.

Thank you to every single one of you who has contributed to the Centre in 2017 - it makes a huge difference! Our fundraising focuses on growing support for women's equality and our Centre, and on building relationships with our supporters, while improving our financial sustainability.



Left: At our screening of Wonderwoman. Photo credit: Jana from Golden Days Photography. Right: Fabulous to see members of the Mt Albert Grammar Feminist Club at our screening of Battle of the Sexes.

A VOICE FOR WOMEN'S EQUITY

Women: Diverse and Connected Forums

We held four public forums this year, shining a light on aspects of women's lives often overlooked by the media. At the first forum, **Feminist Parenting** facilitated by **Papatuanuku Nahi, (Ngāpuhi nui tonu)**, a series of inspiring speakers spoke about how parenting against the patriarchy requires empathy. Lawyer, writer, poet, blogger and Samoan feminist single mother, **Sisilia Eteuati**, said her Samoan feminism placed family at the centre of children's upbringing. She was very happy to go back to work full-time after the births of each of her children, knowing they were well cared for and loved.

Tania Pouwhare (Ngāi Tūhoe) Social Intrapreneur, Auckland Council, spoke about parenting through a feminist, Māori, social justice prism. *"Empathy is the best gift I can give to my daughter. I want her to grow up knowing she has a role challenging injustice and inequality."* **Emily**

Writes, editor, Spinoff Parents; author of 'Rants in the Dark', said she worked every day to dismantle a system that harmed children. *"We parent with radical empathy. This is taken from the feminist movement... I combat every toxic message my boys receive with kindness."*



*Tania Pouwhare, Emily Writes
and Sisilia Eteuati*

In mid-July over 130 people packed out Western Springs Community Hall to participate in the forum, **Women, Poverty and Prejudice: Feminism and the 2017 Election**. Speakers **Marama Davidson** (Green), **Anne Degia-Pala** (NZ First), **Tracey-Lee Repia** (Mana) **Carmel Sepuloni** (Labour) and **Cinnamon Whitlock** (Māori) highlighted the causes of women's poverty, such as lack of parenting support, the amount of unpaid work women undertake, low benefit levels and a punitive approach to women on benefits, as well as the housing crisis. The National Party declined to send a speaker.

A tweeter caught the mood of this forum perfectly; *'Tonight u can feel what is possible! All these wahine/women supporting each other cos we know we're all in it together.'*

Our **Women's Choice Election Forum** was organised in partnership with the National Council of Women, the AUSA Women's Rights Officers, the Hand Mirror Blog and the Auckland Women's Studies Association (Auckland Branch).

Labour MP Carmel Sepuloni pointed to the fact that women still faced a persistent poverty gap. This particularly affected single mothers, 56 per cent of whom lived in poverty and who were also more likely to be homeless. Carmel also criticised the slashing of funding for services over the past nine years and pledged that Labour would adequately fund crisis intervention for victims and perpetrators, as well as set targets to reduce family violence.

Green MP Jan Logie said the Greens had held the Government to account for gutting the Family Court, reducing sexual violence services, and reducing targets for female board appointments. The Greens have put forward solutions such as the inquiry into specialist sexual violence services funding; and bills for gender pay transparency and domestic violence victims' leave.

In September courageous and inspiring Australian feminist **Clementine Ford** held a room full of kiwis spellbound with her talk *Hate Male*. Clementine has a column in *Daily Life* and is a broadcaster, public speaker and the author of the book *Fight Like a Girl*.

Because Clementine speaks out against sexism, men send her degrading and dehumanising messages: the most common words used to describe her are “whore”, “slut”, “cunt”, “bitch” and “fat”. While many women try to survive in public life by ignoring the abuse and hoping it will stop, Clementine invites recipients to use humour to defuse the words’ power.

She showed the audience dozens of vile and threatening messages she had screenshot. “*I want you to laugh at these men to diminish the power they have in your minds. They are of no importance.*”

Auckland Feminist Action, led by Katherine McAlpine and Caryn Tasker, meets monthly to discuss topical feminist issues and local actions. The group kicked off the year by creating a large AFA banner which they proudly carried at the 40 Days for Choice counter-vigil during Lent, the Pay Equity Rally and the WeToo: Reclaim the Night march against sexual assault and harassment hosted by Young Asian Feminists Aotearoa. They attended numerous feminist events as a group including LATE at Auckland Museum's: Sing it Sister - Sexism in the Music Industry. Some of them will be volunteering at the **Auckland Young Feminist Hui** to support the next generation of feminists in Auckland.



Clementine Ford and our volunteer, Jess Tappin

AWC coordinates the **Pay Equity Coalition Auckland (PECA)**, a partnership of over twenty groups. PECA worked hard to highlight the flaws in National’s equal pay bill, which undermined the 2013-5 Court judgments on the Equal Pay Act 1972. We are delighted the new Government has scrapped that bill and will be working with the new Government to ensure law that incorporates the principles agreed by the Equal Pay Joint Working Group and a straightforward claims process.

Our newsletter, **AWC Quarterly** is provided free to over 2,700 individuals and to about 250 community organisations. It informs women about the Centre’s current services and activities, provides a space for others to promote woman-focused events, and features articles on topical women's issues.

Our website **www.awc.org.nz** allows women from all over the world to find out about the Centre and to email us from our site. Visitor numbers continued to increase. We now receive about 4,500 visitors a month.

The Centre has a **Facebook page** (2,053 followers) which is updated frequently and a **Facebook group** (2,112 members) where members can post material they wish to share with other feminists, or comment on other members’ posts.

The Auckland Women’s Centre coordinates the **Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children**, consisting of eleven violence prevention groups. Our main concern is the unacknowledged hidden messages that underpin practice and implementation in the domestic violence sector and that there are no competency requirements. Another problem is the lack of understanding of how inappropriate it is for women to attend meetings with their perpetrators as occurs in commonly utilised practices such as restorative justice, couples therapy, mediation, etc.

THANK YOU!

AWC gratefully receives support from many different people, agencies and funders.

Members of the **Governance Collective** provide AWC with big picture thinking, strategic guidance and support within a collective framework. We wish to especially thank our Chairperson, **Mira Taitz** who readily gives thoughtful advice when called upon between meetings. Thanks are also due to **Ruth Busch** (Secretary), **Katie Palmer du Preez** (Treasurer), **Anita Lacey**, **Felicity Moore**, **Katherine McAlpine**, **Margo Athy**, **Nicola Brebner**, **Ratika Rai**, **Sabrina Muck**, **Sylvia Baynes** and **Tenisha Kumar** for invaluable knowledge, skills, ideas and volunteering at our events.

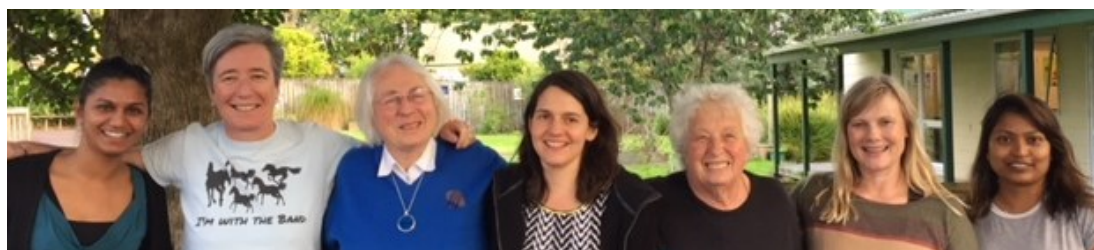
We were sad to say goodbye to **Anita Lacey** when she shifted to Melbourne in August. Anita first joined the Governance Collective in 2014 and contributed a considerable amount of useful strategic advice during her time on the Collective.



*Our Patron:
Dr Judy McGregor*

We would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to our amazing Patron, **Dr Judy McGregor**. Judy works tirelessly for women's human rights and makes a huge contribution to our Centre.

Others who generously contributed time, skills and effort to our crèche, mail-outs, forums, posters and newsletter design, fundraising, Women's Support, researching, writing and library include: **Aorewa McLeod**, **Catriona MacLennan**, **Charon Lessing**, **Cissy Rock**, **Debra Becker**, **Elizabeth Morey**, **Ginnie Denny**, **Jenny Naea**, **Jessica Tappin**, **Kim Shephard-Thorn**, **Laura Ward**, **Lisa Williams**, **Marewa Grimsdale**, **Marilynn Johnson**, **Miriam Ludbrook**, **Raine Shirley**, **Rochelle Carr**, **Rosiena White**, **Shravani Mudumbai**, **Stefania Saranaki (Red Design)**, **Suzi Upton**, **Tessa Morgan**, **Tiara Betham**, and **Toni Chase**.



*Governance Collective members: Tenisha, Margo, Sylvia, Mira, Ruth, Katherine and Ratika.
Absent: Felicity Moore, Katie Palmer du Preez, Nicola Brebner, Sabrina Muck*

We supervised two social work students this year, **Samah Shazia** and **Nikki Wendel-Symonds** who contributed their careful reflection, compassion and social work skills.

We wish to express our special thanks to **Jo Montague (Harcourts)** and **The Women's Bookshop** for supporting all of our fundraising events, and to our volunteer photographers, **Leah Foxcroft**, **Nicky Noble Photography** and **Jana (Golden Days Photography)** who took most of the photos in this report.

THE AUCKLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FUNDERS, TUTORS AND AGENCIES THAT SUPPORTED OUR WORK:

FUNDERS	Maria de Jong	National Council of Women
ANZ New Zealand Staff Foundation	Morgan Libeau	Nest Consulting
Auckland Council	Rosanna Marks	New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House
BlueSky Community Trust	Simone Bonny	NZ Pacific Women's Watch
COGS	Wende Jowsey	North Shore Women's Centre
Dragon Community Trust	Wendy Rowe	Odyssey House
First Sovereign Trust	AGENCIES	Oranga Tamariki
Foundation North	Auckland Lesbian Business Association (alba)	OUTline NZ
Four Winds Foundation	Auckland PlayCentre Association	OUTSupport
GABA Charitable Trust	Auckland Regional Migrants Services	Pakuranga Plaza Playgroup
Infinity Foundation	Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP	Plunket
John Ilott Charitable Trust	Auckland Women's Refuge	Public Service Association
Lion Foundation	Barnardos	Raeburn House
Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust	Breast Screen NZ	Rainbow Auckland
Milestone Trust	Business and Professional Women, Auckland	Rainbow Youth
NZ Lottery Grants Board	Catholic Social Services	Rape Prevention Education
NZ Community Post	Charlotte Museum	Salvation Army
New Zealand Community Trust	Child Poverty Action Group	Shakti Asian Women's Centre
North and South Trust	CADS	Shine
Pub Charity Inc.	Citizen's Advice Bureau	Solo Parents NZ
Rule Foundation	Continenence NZ	Stop Demand
Sir John Logan Campbell Residuary Estate	Dayspring Trust	Te Rito Rodney
The Trusts Community Foundation Ltd	Eastern Women's Refuge	Te Wharepora Hou
Trillian Trust	E tū	The Women's Bookshop
Waitamatā Local Board	Family Planning Association	Tu Wahine Trust
TUTORS	Family Works Northern	Violence Free Waitakere
Anita Simpson	Grey Lynn Community Centre	Waitematā Local Board
Barbara Woodman	Human Rights Commission	Women's Health Action
Barb Wallis	Inner City Women's Group	Women's Centre Rodney
Carol Rewega	KiwiHarvest	Women's Centre Waitakere
Caryn Tasker	Lesbian News Aotearoa	Women's Studies Association
Cissy Rock	Lifewise	Working Women's Resource Centre
Katherine McAlpine	Living Wage Movement	Zonta Club of Auckland
Lisa Dudson	Aotearoa NZ	Youth Horizons Trust
		Youthline