



What kind of future do we want after Covid-19?

Meet Some of Our Wonderful Volunteers

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What kind of future do we want after Covid-19?

Women – particularly low-income women and women in marginalised communities – are bearing the brunt of the immediate COVID-response burden. Post-pandemic, will this inequity be entrenched, or can we catapult society's priorities in this time of upheaval towards caring, human rights and real gender equality?

At a macro level, the rāhui is arguably a feminist response to pandemic: it is collective action prioritising lives over short-term financial gain. This may explain why lockdown is seemingly anathema to misogynists such as Donald Trump and Boris Johnson; and why the crisis work is shouldered mostly by women. Carers, nurses, cleaners, checkout operators: these low-status, low-paid and unpaid jobs – often carried out by women of colour – are “essential”. That is, essential to keeping us all as healthy as possible.

Not that it necessarily follows that caring workers will be rewarded and protected. While more men than women are

dying from COVID19, women are collectively experiencing more detrimental effects of the pandemic response: discrimination, exclusion and violence.

For example:

- Researchers overseas expect the pandemic will have a “disproportionate negative effect on women and their employment opportunities.”
- Domestic violence and abuse will be increasing under lockdown/rāhui.
- More women than men are in the often-impossible position of working professionally from home while also looking after children.
- Home support and healthcare workers have had difficulty in accessing PPE; lack of appropriate support increases their risk of disease exposure.



Photo credit: NZ Herald, Peter Meecham

These gender inequities could be entrenched. While Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is garnering international praise for her leadership, elsewhere “*there is a serious risk that the people making decisions that will affect us all over the next days, months and years are not thinking about equity,*” states Jess Berentson-Shaw. For example, all the people named thus far on the “shovel-ready” projects taskforce are men.

What kind of future do we want after Covid-19? *continued*

The pandemic has exposed our health and social welfare systems as broken. They did not meet human needs even prior to Rogernomics and have been systematically diminished by neoliberalism from 1984. This government has made some improvements but has not taken the big bold moves necessary to eradicate the inequities in the system. The COVID-fuelled jump in unemployment will expose even more people to the many inequitable welfare rules such as the lack of individual entitlement to benefits.

However, because so much is changing so rapidly, calls for gender equality may succeed. Alison Mau points out those calls should be radical, because softly softly approaches are unlikely to work and anyway, there's no apple cart left to upset: *"the apples are already rolling down the road."*

So: how do we stop prioritising corporate well-being over human and environmental rights? How do we enable and value the care of children and our vulnerable whānau? Should WINZ wipe all beneficiary debt? What do Mātauranga Māori responses look like? Would a Universal Basic Income or Universal Basic Services help? Would the Living Wage as a minimum wage? Would public campaigns be able to encourage and support men to do half the home caring? The main limit may be our imagination.

Join us for our online kōrero with Laura O'Connell Rapira, Director, Action Station about intersectional feminist approaches to creating a better post-pandemic world: "What kind of future do we want after Covid-19? Spending for a better future for women especially wāhine Māori and others who carry a greater burden" 7pm Tuesday May 26. Details to come. ■

SAVE THE DATE

What kind of future do we want after Covid-19?

Spending for a better future for women especially wāhine Māori and others who carry a greater burden

Tues 26 May, 7-8.30pm
Online Kōrero
Laura O'Connell Rapira
Director, Action Station

Further Details TBC

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Each letter costs AWC \$1.20 to post, we would love to reduce our costs by moving most of our supporters over to email.

If you would like to receive our news into your inbox, please email us on info@womensz.org.nz with the subject line"

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We will need your name and current postal address to be able to update your listing.

Thanks for your support!



Meet Some of Our Wonderful Volunteers

We are grateful to all our volunteers whose commitment, skills, ideas, enthusiasm and aroha sustain our lively Centre community.



Ellen Michie

Forum live streaming since Feb 2019

All our forums are filmed and available on Facebook. We film via phone – Leonie’s phone once ran out of data mid-filming and I quickly had to swap it for mine! My partner is Muslim, so the Celebrating Muslim Women forum last year was special to me. But every forum I learn something.

I first came to AWC in 2018 on placement for my Masters in Health Psychology. I recently handed in my thesis on family poverty, and am now learning te reo.



Jenny Naea

Quarterly mailout for several years

I met Leonie when we were both protesting the sad closure of the Grey Lynn Post Office in 2011. Now whenever they do a Quarterly mailout, I go in and help. The best

part is meeting a lot of different women. We talk about what we’ve done, how things are going. The Centre’s a good meeting point for women. I also enjoyed taking AWC weaving classes and memoir-writing classes.

I also volunteer for Age Concern, visiting people, and for St John as a “Caring Caller” team leader.



Lucie Blaževská

Women’s Support since Feb 2020

I am an introvert so reception is challenging – which is what I wanted – and also enjoyable.

I am learning how to respond to Women’s Support phone calls from women in crisis. The amazingly funny and kind Ellie is training me. She’s a great mentor.

One of my creative projects is “Born to Create” artworks celebrating inspirational women, on canvas and on skateboards. In the Czech Republic, I worked for skateboard companies who always wanted unisex or male-oriented design. So now I design skateboard art for girls.



Katrina Wolff and Jade Weatherall

Responsible for the AWC Garden since 2018

Our job is to make the garden look colourful and pretty. We’ve grown sunflowers, beans, fennel... strawberries for the kids... We once grew a surprise giant purple cauliflower!

The food scraps are feeding the garden; we use no chemical fertilisers. Thanks everyone for putting your teabags in the compost bin!

I run my own business, teaching composting and edible gardening. Seeing the AWC community stand as such staunch advocates of human rights inspires me to speak up on behalf of the soil and for food rights. It makes me realise I’m stronger than I think.



Jade Weatherall

Organic gardening since 2018

Katrina invited Oaklynn students to garden with her at AWC, and I said

yes. I like hanging out with my friends who work at AWC. And I like to go and hang out with the Monarch butterflies. When we arrive, the first thing we do is find out if there are any caterpillars on the swan plant. I can tell the caterpillars apart, and I talk to the worms in the compost bin.

When I’m not at AWC, I like playing games on my phone and riding my two horses: Star and Red.



Maria Boow

Single Mums on Sundays creche worker since 2018

My Mum was a single mum, so it made sense to give back to the type of community I come from.

Every Single Mums session we entertain around ten young kids. I really enjoy getting to know them, listening to their stories, watching them grow.

I admire lots of the mums who come along; many have gone through stuff that no one should have to go through.

I also helped with the pro-choice rally sign-making in February. All the people I meet via AWC teach me a lot.

Continued on page 04



Mina Patel

Women's Support since Feb 2020

I loved helping at the Hinemoa Elder forum. When people get together for a higher purpose, then there's energy, there's love in the room. I also felt it in Girls in Technology events, when working in AUT industry partnerships.

I'm British-Indian and have been in New Zealand for about 20 years. I brought my daughter up by myself, so I have some insight into the roles sole parents play and how undervalued those roles are.

The AWC community is full of supportive women with strong hearts – that's a key reason I got involved.



Toni Chase

Quarterly designer since 2016

For each Quarterly, I figure out how to lay things out so they're clear and easy to read. I enjoy reading the articles and pulling out the bits of information that are really key.

I kept designing Quarterly when I was in the UK last year and I hope to go back to Europe after the pandemic. I love travel. I've also been doing a lot of meditation lately, taking classes from the local Buddhist Centre.



Rewa Grimsdale

Long-time forum volunteer & board member since Dec 2018

I first joined the Single Mums group six years ago, when I was feeling immense pain due to my eldest son passing away, while also being Mum to my other kids. The group was amazing in helping to regenerate my strength when I felt lost. With time, I returned to teaching raranga harakeke (flax weaving) in community centres.

I feel very privileged to be a Mana Wahine Māori representative on the AWC Board. I fulfil this role with a high respect for Leonie, Ellie and everyone I've met at AWC.■

Contact

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www.awc.org.nz

Centre Hours

Monday to Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Library Hours

Monday to Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Services

- Women's Support: free support, info, advice and referral
- Community Education
- Community Events
- Counselling
- LGBTQ support
- Low Cost Massage
- Self Defence Classes
- Opportunities to talk and support feminism
- Diversity Forums
- Support Groups
- Support for High School Feminism