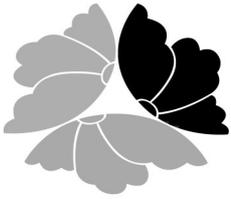


Autumn 2011



Auckland  
**Women's  
Centre**

Auckland Women's Centre

**Gossip**

**Contact us**

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Grey Lynn  
Ph 376 3227

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PO Box 78271  
Grey Lynn  
www.awc.org.nz

**Centre hours**

Monday to Friday  
9am - 4pm

**Additional**

**Library hours**

Saturday 11am - 1.30pm

Thanks to the  
Oxford Sports Trust and  
the Cuesports  
Foundation  
for funding this  
newsletter and  
our course brochure.

## Auckland Women's Centre Farewells Teen Parents

This is our last newsletter as the Auckland Women's Centre incorporating the Teen Parent Project, Thrive. In June, Thrive will become independent of AWC and will shift to the Mount Albert Community and Recreation Centre. Thrive has a FAB new Manager, Niamh Wingate (pronounced Neve) who comes directly from Community Waitakere, where she worked with many community groups supporting their funding aspirations. AWC is sad to see Thrive leave - it is an exciting, teen parent-led, innovative, support and community development project. We will also miss our lovely work mates. Goodbye Cass, Gaby, Heather, Kate and Zee. All the best to Thrive, the staff and all the teen parents they work with. To contact Niamh or to keep in touch with Thrive email [niamh@thrive.org.nz](mailto:niamh@thrive.org.nz). The departure of Thrive is an opportunity for AWC to provide more programmes for other women. Watch this space for new developments.

## Violence prevention programmes cut

The Government has removed funding for three programmes vital to women and children: Te Rito Family Violence Coordinators, Child Advocates and the Girls' Self Defence Project. All are well-established, successful programmes that have been making a big difference to communities throughout the country. Cutting them means the loss of life-saving services. According to the Social Development Ministry, the price tag for family violence is \$8 billion a year. Eliminating these programmes will lead to greater incidences of family violence and an even higher bill.

### What they do and why they are important:

**Te Rito Coordinators** support the delivery of united community-based family violence prevention initiatives. Their service is based on the premise that halting family violence requires effective collaboration between Government and community agencies – collaboration that has taken years to build and that the Government intends to sweep away. Our own Social Development Ministry (not to mention the UN and the World Health Organisation) have reported that community networks and collaboration are essential for effective prevention and response to family violence.

**Child Advocates** focus on children present in domestic violence incidents reported to police and community agencies. (Last year alone, there were 74,785 such children.) Child Advocates are active, committed, community-based workers who co-ordinate efforts to keep children safe. They deliver training and ensure that children don't get lost in inter-agency family violence work. Losing funding means children will lose out. Their needs will again become invisible.

**Girls' Self Defence Project:** Last year, 8000 girls completed an eight-hour school-based programme to learn the fundamentals of protecting themselves from all kinds of violence. They joined more than 70,000 others who have gone through the programme in the past 15 years. The programme works. Ninety seven percent of girls who have completed the courses say they now know ways to deal with unsafe situations. Offering the programme through schools means ALL girls are reached. Cutting it means relying on out-of-school courses that will not reach girls from disengaged families. Also, girls in abusive situations will miss out because their families are unlikely to send them on such a course.

The Government says that these funds are needed for their new Whanau Ora funding pool. Yet the money for Whanau Ora should be coming from somewhere else, rather than cutting established programmes that already perform well. Surely a Government that can buy itself luxury BMWs, spend billions on bail-outs to finance companies and can lend \$43 million to a private company (Mediaworks) can afford to maintain funding to prevent violence against women and children.

# Government economic misdirections

## Boldly going where they've gone before (and dragging us along by the hair)

Recently the Government has signalled the economic directions it wants to take the country in. It is a depressingly familiar scenario – we saw it 20 years ago, at the start of the 1990s. The key elements are:

- Partial or complete privatisation of State-owned assets – this is supposed to enable the Government to pay off debt.
- Tax cuts that result in those on higher incomes getting more in their pay packets than those on lower incomes – this is supposed to stimulate the economy.
- Further restrictions on eligibility for welfare benefits.
- Cuts to the public service – these are supposed to deliver “efficiencies” and reduce Government spending.
- Removal of safeguards for vulnerable workers (women, youth, Maori, Pasifika, and migrants) – this is supposed to make it “easier” for employers to hire people.

Tragically, all of these policies have been inflicted on us before and did not work. The Government is ideologically incapable of recognising this.

### The privatisation of State assets

The privatisation of State assets undertaken under Douglas and Prebble in the late 80s and continued by the Bolger and Shipley regimes in the 90s, resulted in publically owned enterprises being flogged off to companies that saw them only as “cash cows”. The most extreme example of this was NZ Rail, which, under private ownership, was so mismanaged that it teetered on the brink of total non-viability until the Clark Government repurchased it.

### Tax cuts for middle & upper income earners

The tax cuts have not worked to stimulate the economy, precisely because they have been used as they were before, as a sop to middle and upper income wage and salary earners to buy an election victory and to distract attention from measures that cost us more. These included in the 90s, “user pays” charges and increases in fees for all sorts of basic services.

The current Government’s tax cuts are no different. They came hand in hand with an increase in GST, which effectively wiped them out for lower income earners, most of whom are women (women are over one-and-a-half times more likely than men to live in a household with a total annual income of \$30,000 or less.)

Even without the GST rise, however, the tax cuts have been gobbled up by sharp price increases, particularly in food, rents and petrol. People are now spending more to buy less – that’s no stimulus. The wealthy did not spend their tax cut investing in job-creating export industries: recent property sales figures show they spent their tax cut on buying expensive properties.



Ironically, when huge amounts of revenue are now needed to rebuild Christchurch, a large and growing number of people actually favour a temporary tax increase for that purpose – but this Government is so mired in its ideological position that it has ruled out such a measure completely.

### Restricting access to welfare benefits

The report from the Government-appointed Welfare Working Group suggests a range of attacks on beneficiaries and proposes privatising the delivery of many welfare services. The Working Group has been widely criticised for its lack of knowledge on welfare issues. Its recommendations include: losing your eligibility to the DPB once your youngest child turns three, reducing your income support if you have a child while receiving a benefit, and foisting long acting reversible contraception on vulnerable teenagers.

The Working Group wants Work and Income to be totally restructured, with a lot more focus on the contestable contracting out of services. Basically the report is advocating removing welfare from the political arena and running it along corporate profit-making lines.

Yet again, this is a repeat of the policy approach of the 90s, where beneficiaries (instead of unemployment, poverty and the lack of support for mothers in the workforce) are presented as the problem.

## Cutting jobs in the public service

Bill English has boasted that his policy of "capping not cutting" the public service has resulted in thousands of job losses in that sector. He would like us all to believe that his targets are just "suits" who do unnecessary work in the "back offices". In fact, nearly 60% of the public service are women, and a lot of its "back office" work is essential for maintaining the quality of front-line services. Women need these services more than men because they earn less than men and also because they take a larger share of the responsibility for children than men do.

## Labour market "reforms"

In the 1990s, National-led Governments effectively disempowered workers through law changes such as the Employment Contracts Act. These were aimed at partially "deregulating the labour market" which again was supposed to make it easier for employers to hire workers. Currently the Government has extended the infamous 90 day law to include all new workers, and has recently passed a raft of other measures that will strip workers of union protection. "Reforms" of this nature, however, never result in employment gains, for the simple reason that during

times like these of high unemployment, employers are able to intimidate and force their existing workforce to work harder and longer for less. Why buy a new horse when you can flog the old one half to death?

If NZ sticks with these policies, we can expect to see our economy take longer than most other OECD economies to climb out of recession, and to be saddled by a huge debt burden, the result of Bill English's "borrow and hope" strategy. Workers' rights will continue to be eroded as the business sector uses the crisis to leverage anti-union "reforms" out of the Government. Real wage and salary levels will continue to fall, and skilled professionals will continue to leave the country in droves. Our public services, notably health, education, and social services will continue to slide towards third-world standards.

All of these negatives: lower real wages, restricting access to benefits, eroded working conditions, and fewer Government services, impact more heavily on women than men. We will also see an increase in the number of women and children, particularly Maori, living in poverty.



*Women's Health Action, Auckland Women's Centre, and AERANZ invite you to*

## Abortion Then & Now speaking tour

**Wednesday 4th May 2011**

**6 - 7.30pm**

**Garnet Station Espresso Lounge  
85 Garnet Rd, Westmere**

Please RSVP to [nikki@womens-health.org.nz](mailto:nikki@womens-health.org.nz) or phone 5205295



Do you love being with other women and talking  
about things that are important to you?

**Are you action focused?**

Have you ever thought - "Its time to reclaim feminism!"?



We are a group of women that meet from 7pm- 9pm  
on the first Wednesday of the month at AWC.

Please NB our meeting on May 4 is starting at 7.30pm to  
accommodate those attending Abortion Then and Now

**All women are welcome to be part of this inclusive, fun,  
friendly and flourishing group. Contact Leonie for more  
info: [akcentre@womensz.org.nz](mailto:akcentre@womensz.org.nz) ph 376 3227 x 205**

# Available at the Women's Centre...

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## Information, Advice and Referral Service

Phone, email, or drop in for friendly, non-judgemental assistance.

## Women's Library: recent additions

Thanks to the kindness of several women, we have had heaps of good books donated to the library over the last few months. We have also purchased a few goodies. Come in and have a look at the new and recommended shelf and choose something great to read. We love it when women return books and let us know how much they enjoyed a particular book. Here are few of the new and recommended books:

- *From Under the Over Coat* by Sue Orr
- *The Open Accounts of an Honesty Box* by Julie Helean
- *The Violinist* by Clare Galambos
- *Abortion Then and Now: NZ abortion studies from 1940-1980* by Margaret Sparrow
- *Leading the Way: How NZ women won the vote* by Megan Hutching
- *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks
- *Ned and Katina* by Patricia Grace
- *An Equal Stillness* by Francesca Kay
- *The Long Song* by Andrea Levy
- *Collision* by Joanna Orwin

We are always very happy to have books donated. Suitable books by women authors can be added to our library. The remaining books go on the sales trolley which generates funds for purchasing new releases for the library.

It costs \$5 for beneficiaries and between \$10-\$20 for non-beneficiaries to join the library per year. Books are issued for a month, and there is a library returns box in the alcove on the porch if you return books after hours.

**As well as being open during the week, the library is also open every Saturday from 11am to 1.30pm and is staffed by a team of wonderful volunteers.**

## Therapeutic massage

Available for beneficiaries and other women on low incomes on Mondays between 9.30am and 2.30pm, for an hour-long session. Cost is \$25 for beneficiaries and \$40 for non-beneficiaries. Please book well in advance as demand is high.

## Counselling

Low cost one-to-one counselling is available at the Centre. All counsellors are professionally trained and supervised. They use a sliding scale of \$30 to \$80 for fees and cater for a diverse range of issues. Please ring the Centre for appointment availability.

## Courses and Groups - Three New Courses, 2 free places

Have you always wanted to knit but know you would struggle with paying our course fee? Due to a kind donation we have two free places available in our *Get Knitting* course, one in Term 2 and one in Term 3 for women in financial difficulty. Please ring us if you're interested, we would love to hear from you.

This term we are offering three new courses. A new seven week facilitated support group called *Questioning?* is for women who want to talk about same sex attraction, in a confidential safe space. The wonderful Kate Millington is coming back to run a two day mosaics course on *Exploring the Female Form* and local sculptor Elspeth Fougère is running a two day papier mâché sculpture workshop on the same theme.



Our *Crafty Goodness* goddess Sarita is providing a focus for our crafters to try different types of mediums. This year she has run a screen printing night and a felting night, you can still bring your own projects and be part of the atmosphere or join in on the craft of the evening. This group is free to attend, please contact us if you'd like to know what the focus will be next month.

As the days get shorter and the darkness falls earlier, our *Women's Self Defence* and *Girls' Self Defence* courses return to arm you with the skills and confidence to help protect yourself.

*Solo Mums: Resourcing the Source, Amazing Assertiveness for Women, Prep for Parenting, Active Parenting Workshops, the Women's Book Club, weekly Yoga and Pilates* and our monthly *Lesbian DVD Night* are all being offered. We look forward to hearing from you.