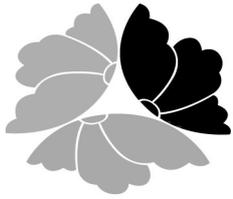


Autumn 2013



Auckland
**Women's
Centre**

Auckland Women's Centre
G O S S I P

Contact us:
Ph 376 3227

info@womens.org.nz

PO Box 78 271
Grey Lynn
www.awc.org.nz

Centre hours
Monday to Friday

9am - 4pm

Library hours
Monday to Friday, 9am - 4pm
plus
Sat 11am - 1.30pm
on the first Sat
of the month

Thanks to the Nautilus
Foundation for funding
this newsletter

Our new patron: Dr Judy McGregor

We are delighted to announce that Dr Judy McGregor has become the first ever patron of our Centre. Many of our readers will be familiar with Judy's work as the Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner at the New Zealand Human Rights Commission from 2003-2012. Just prior to finishing her second term as EEO Commissioner Judy produced 'Caring Counts', an inquiry into the aged care workforce, most of whom are women. The report found the women earn very low wages for difficult work that was "grossly undervalued". Judy took up a position at the Institute of Public Policy at AUT in December 2012 as Head of the School of Social Sciences and Public Policy. Come and meet Judy at Women's Talk on Wednesday 22 May where she'll be moderating our panel of fantastic speakers (please see inside for details).



Dr Judy McGregor

SKIP Single Mothers' Day

We welcome all single mums with children under 5 years old to our SKIP positive parenting event with special treats for Mums and activities for children on Sunday 12th May, 10am-12pm, at the Centre. RSVPs to Rochelle are essential, as numbers are limited: ph:376-3227 ext 203, m:021-0293-7195 e:skip@womens.org.nz

Courses, groups and workshops

We're excited that Term 2's line-up includes 3 new courses, *Self Esteem and Empowerment for Women*, *Expressive Art Journaling* and *Sacred Tantra Belly Dancing*, as well as some of our most popular ones, *Amazing Assertiveness for Women*, *Flourishing in Midlife and beyond* and *Self Defence*. We also welcome back An *Introduction to Te Reo*, a 6 week course, *Love it or Leave it*, a weekend workshop on letting go of your possessions and our yearly *Questioning?* A facilitated support group for women questioning their sexual orientation. Check out our brochure for more details.

Counselling

All of our counsellors are professionally trained and supervised and cater for a diverse range of issues. There is a sliding scale of fees (\$40 to \$80). Please ring the Centre for appointment availability.

Information, Advice and Referral Service

Please phone, email or drop in for friendly, non-judgmental advice. We provide support and validation to women who are distressed by events in their life. As a first point of contact for many women, staff respond to women expressing grief, anger, fear, anxiety, depression, financial stress and overwhelming pressure.

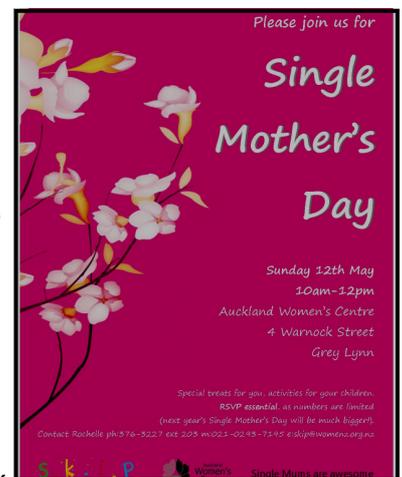
Women's Library

Our excellent library is open on the first Saturday of every month from 11am to 1.30pm, in addition to being open during our office hours.

Feedback and be in to win a \$40 voucher from the Women's Bookshop

We are in "planning mode" and would like to check in with our members and supporters around what you think of our ideas for 2013-2018. Please fill in our very short survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FLS3BDM>



DPB policy reforms based on myths

By Geraldine Whiteford

Recently, the National Government has enacted welfare reforms that impose more obligations on beneficiaries, particularly sole parents. These include work obligations for solo parents when their youngest child reaches 5 years of age.

Underlying these reforms are several nasty myths:

- *Sole parents are teenagers who can't be bothered working;*
- *There's work if they want it, they just don't want it;*
- *People on the DPB are ripping off the system; and*
- *(unbelievably) The DPB is a dream solution for women and their children.*

In a succinct and compassionate paper written by Virginia Dale, the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) attacks these myths. Dale notes that in New Zealand around one in two mothers have spent some time as a sole parent by the time they reach 50 and that nearly 36% of sole parents are in full time work and 19% in part-time work, figures that are better than the UK and Australia.

The major cause of women becoming sole parents is relationship breakdown, with about two thirds of sole parents having been previously married, defacto or in a civil union. Some of those have come from violent relationships and the DPB enables them to care safely for their children and rebuild their lives. We do not have the figures regarding this pathway to the DPB, because the Government does not prioritise this research, but in the United States approximately 70% of single mums on a benefit have come from abusive relationships.

A shortage of suitable jobs

Rather than coercing sole parents into paid work, the government should provide well paid full time and part time jobs and meaningful educational opportunities. Reinstating the Training Incentive Allowance would be a start. Further, the evidence is that "employment levels among sole parents move with the current state of the economy."

In addition to the lack of suitable jobs, there are many other barriers to paid work for single mothers, for instance over one quarter of all children with disabilities live in sole parent households (the stress of a disabled child can lead to the break up of the relationship).

Median age of DPB recipients: 32 years

Despite the myth that most sole parents are teenagers, the median age for those on the DPB is around 32 years. People younger than 18 who become sole parents have a median time on the DPB of only 7.3 years. And while total numbers on the DPB may remain similar for long periods, there is a high turnover: 25% of those on the benefit at any one time have been on it for under a year.

A difficult and strenuous job

Dale concludes that far from being a dream, sole parenting on the DPB is more a nightmare, "a difficult and strenuous job..." and one that puts at risk the health of mothers and their children. Thanks CPAG, let's give sole parents on the DPB a fair go and treat them with the dignity that is their right.

Sing for your Supper!
Saturday 22 June

Good company, great performers, world's best MC
and a yummy supper at the Grey Lynn Community Centre
No door sales B.Y.O alcohol

And Iiii...eeee...iiii
will always...
lurve yooou...

Sat 22 June
7pm doors open
7.30pm - 10.30pm
Cost: sliding
scale
\$30-\$60
\$50 for 2

Auckland
Women's
Centre

Thank you very much to our performers for donating their time and talent.
All welcome - this is a mixed event
Tickets are available from AWC and The Women's Bookshop
For payment options, email info@womens.org.nz or phone 09 376 3227

Marriage Equality and the Human Rights Act

By Katie Palmer du Preez

The Marriage Equality Bill is a wonderful success. It will assist to erode homophobia and sends a strong message that all members of our community, whatever their sexual orientation, should be treated with respect. However its passage is tinged by sadness that, in the end, human rights legislation wasn't powerful enough to win it for us, and for the rest of New Zealand. Have we, the LGBTI minority, merely been delivered by the political goodwill of the majority? We won in the court of public opinion - but we couldn't win in the court, because New Zealand's Human Rights Act has still not been accorded primacy in New Zealand law.

In a time when the present Government is about to enact legislation that will retrospectively condone GCSB spying on NZ citizens, and sharing the information with foreign intelligence agencies, all New Zealanders may come to regret that our Human Rights Act, though we all voted for it, may protect none of us.

When Quilter et al went to the High Court in 1996 it wasn't so much about getting married - it was about the failure of the then government to ratify the primary status of the Human Rights Act. Quilter et al said "Before we were gay, we were human" - they wanted the court to uphold our legal right not to be discriminated against in any other law.

We can get married in August. But what will happen to persecuted or disenfranchised New Zealanders, who wait for their humanity to be upheld in law, with or without the approval of Parliament?

The Marriage Equality debate in the house centred on the hope and dignity of inclusion in family/societal ritual, it honed in on a particular (contested) definition of love and of the family. The discussion about the emotional contracts a person might make in relationship is something other than the legal contract the state enters into with its citizens with regard to their entitlements and responsibilities.

To paraphrase queer theorist and feminist Annamarie Jagose: *I disagree that marriage equality should be a key issue that we are focussing on. I think it's far too narrow and I think it returns us to some feminist principles around the idea that marital status shouldn't define our access to social justice and forms of belonging.*

Thanks to Lins Zelf for the points on the Quilter et al case and human rights mentioned above.



Auckland
Women's
Centre

Promoting empowerment
and well-being for all women

Women's Talk
22 May 2013
7pm

A evening of talk for women, by women

Auckland Women's Centre
4 Warnock Street Grey Lynn
Members: free (you can join on the night)*
Non members \$5.00
Wine/soft drink available cash only

What does being a feminist mean? How do we relate feminist concepts to our daily lives? Come to **Feminisms through different lenses**. Dr Judy McGregor, the Auckland Women's Centre Patron will moderate a lively and feisty panel. Join in the discussion as our fantastic panellists share some of their thoughts.

- * **Dr Camille Nakhid** - From Trinidad and Tobago. Chair of Auckland Council Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel. Senior Lecturer, Social Sciences AUT University.
- * **George Parker** is queer identified and interested in non-binary ways of thinking about and doing gender, sexuality, relationships and relating more generally
- * **Jenny Rankine** has worked in journalism, public relations and media research. She identifies as Pakeha, feminist and lesbian.
- * **Lexie Matheson** identifies as whakawahine, academic, teacher, parent, wife and martial artist.
- * **Marama Davidson**, Te Rarawa/Ngāpuhi/Ngati Porou, a social justice advocate and political commentator with Te Wharepora Hou Maori women's collective.
- * **Rachel Rayner**, Blogger, and organiser of feminist meet up BKD. Pakeha, cis, straight and feminist.

Women's Talk is a series of exchange for women by women - creating the space to reflect, discuss and converse. If you have ideas for speakers/topics contact us at the Auckland Women's Centre.

* membership visit www.awc.org.nz or phone 376 3227

Auckland Women's Centre

Your Women's Centre Needs You...

The Women's Centre, like most other community agencies, has received less income from both the Government and philanthropic trusts in recent years. For our financial year to 30 June 2013 we are expecting a loss of \$30,000!

This is the first year that the Centre will be in deficit since its revitalisation in 1992. While this loss is concerning, it is not devastating, as we have some funding in reserve. However, we want to avoid a crisis so we are reaching out to our supporters to ask them to pledge or donate to the Centre, we do not want our situation to continue to deteriorate.

We would love you to establish a regular pledge via online banking. Our account number: 12 3012 0782605 00. Please put your name as a reference, as all donations will receive a receipt and are tax deductible. Thank you very much for your on-going support.



Ameer Parker

Most of our expenditure is on salaries which provide essential services, so reducing expenditure is difficult. The Centre staff and Governance Collective members are doing what we can to reduce the projected deficit by making small expenditure cuts, scoping additional collaborations and organising fundraising events.

As a Women's Centre we are only as strong as the support you give us. We already receive considerable backing from many of you for which we are grateful. Many women volunteer by assisting the paid staff and bringing fresh ideas and approaches. Many give books, cash donations, tutor our workshops/courses unpaid, help with our mail outs, etc.



Lara Simo

In addition to our fabulous volunteer Governance Committee, we have three new volunteers staffing our frontline service; Ameer Parker, a musician, artist and keen traveller who has recently joined Feminist Action, Cleone Campbell, who is also involved in Zonta and the National Council of Women and Lara Simo, an artist and performer, who belonged to The Red Tent, a feminist group in the UK.

The Centre continues to provide valuable service and voice to the women of Auckland. In addition to our many services and programmes (see www.awc.org.nz for details) we are an independent voice for women's equality.



Cleone Campbell

This work includes; coordinating the Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children (a collaboration of eleven preventing violence agencies), initiating and coordinating Auckland 26 for Babies, (a network of

twenty two organisations supporting Sue Moroney's Bill extending paid parental leave) and, in partnership with Women's Health Action, facilitating Silent Injustice (a group focusing on the lack of justice for children and mothers in the Family Court).



Nicola, Aorewa, Ellie, Cissy, George, and Natalie wanting your support

In today's funding environment we need your financial support more than ever. A small number of generous women have been pledging (between ten and sixty dollars each month) since 1992 and it would secure the Centre's long term sustainability if we could increase this number to 100 women by the end of the year.