



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

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

Annual Report 2019

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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.

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
- Responsive to today's challenges
- Trusted in your community for over 40 years

2020 - 2025 Strategic Directions:

1. Whakatoa wāhine (Empowerment)

All women become more able to speak up for themselves and participate in community, enhancing their wellbeing and improving social equity. AWC models organisational empowerment and inclusivity of all women in its internal decision-making and activities.

2. Mihi ki te tangata whenua (Recognising tangata whenua)

Māori hold unique status as first peoples of Aotearoa. Our work with wāhine Māori will address persistent inequalities affecting Māori communities.

3. Marutau wāhine (Safety)

New Zealand has unacceptable rates of violence against women. We facilitate women's safety at the individual, cultural and legislative levels.

4. Mārama wāhine (Raising awareness)

Our work is based on sparking community conversations about experiences of inequality and about diverse visions of social and gender equality, including the experiences and aspirations of Māori, Pasifika, migrant, disabled and Rainbow women.

GOVERNANCE BOARD REPORT

By Mira Taitz, Chairperson

As the decade draws to a close, we celebrate another year of empowering and supporting women. Throughout the tough funding environment of the 2010s, Auckland Women's Centre has continued to be a thriving community hub, with great thanks to our generous supporters, funders and dedicated staff and volunteers.

This year we heard young people's voices en masse in the youth climate emergency movement, which will only continue to grow. The strength and commitment of young people in working for a different future is clear when we meet the young people involved in our **Youth Gender Equity project**, which moves from strength to strength. Started as a two-year pilot, the project will continue connecting and empowering high school students to speak up for themselves and others. The project has been such a success that in the new year we will launch a twin **Rangatahi gender equality project**, working with school mana wāhine groups.



Mira Taitz

Single mums remain the unsung heroes of our society, and **Single Mums on Sunday** meet-ups for kai and kōrero are a highlight of our calendar. Single mums are supported with childcare so that they can finally breathe out, relax and connect with each other in the beautiful garden adjoining the centre. Our **Rainbow Women's** social group is growing in number, providing a friendly, low-key place to connect and catch up over board games and DVDs once a month.

The most common feedback staff receive is that Auckland Women's Centre is "non-judgemental". Our **Women's Support** service fields thousands of enquiries every year, helping women and non-binary people to find the community support they need. Sometimes they find what they need with us, using our **Counselling** or highly rated **Community Education** programme. Sometimes they are in a state of crisis and we can walk alongside them as they make a difficult decision about what to do next.

This year started in the shadow of the despicable Christchurch massacre of 15 March. In June four amazing Muslim women talked about Muslim women's lives in New Zealand at our forum on **Celebrating Muslim Women**. Speakers shared stories of terrible racism, took apart stereotypes and offered non-Muslim audience members advice on how to help. In the words of writer Latifa Daud *"together, I hope we can make my generation the last that's too afraid to speak their truth, one conversation at a time."*

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

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

- health and welfare services for women
- personal counselling
- community education
- support groups
- partnering with other agencies to provide a voice for gender equity
- providing community forums
- support for lesbian and rainbow women.

HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICES FOR WOMEN

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

This year over 3,400 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: domestic and sexual violence support, women's health, housing, mental health, relationship break-up, single parenting, sexual harassment, educational courses and workshops, counselling support, budgeting resources, migrant support, support and events for lesbians and queer women, and much more.

In 2019 Women's Support provided **intensive support** to 93 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 its experienced and skilled counselling team: **Jane Tyrer, Anthea Randell** and **Crystal McLean**. Our counsellors are fully qualified, are members of a professional association and receive clinical supervision.

Jane focuses on supporting people to navigate their way through difficulties, clarify their values and strengths, and find enthusiasm for new possibilities. Anthea returned to the Auckland Women's Centre after a decade out of Auckland. She is now focusing specifically on offering sensitive claims counselling to our Centre clients. Crystal offers general counselling as well as counselling specific to women in the rainbow community. She has studied a breadth of different approaches including narrative, CBT, DBT and recovery models.



*Counsellor
Jane Tyrer*

Therapeutic massage

Affordable massage for beneficiaries and other women on low incomes is available at the Centre. Our masseuse Zaria is highly skilled. This service has become very popular. Bookings have to be made in advance.

Free mammograms

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

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

It's been a fulfilling year delivering our well attended courses and workshops.

We started 2019 with an eight-week **Mindfulness Through Meditation** course with returning tutor Emma Farry. Emma returned from a decade overseas to shift her focus from creative writing to mindfulness practice. Emma fosters wellness through promoting self-esteem and appreciation for life. We are grateful for her positive contribution.

This year we partnered with Wahine Toa, the Women's Self Defence network, to deliver our adult **Women's Self Defence** classes. Initially, we planned to run two per year. However, demand and the clear need to nurture the at-risk pockets of our community resulted in us delivering a total of five free self defence workshops for women aged 16-plus, including a **Migrant Self Defence** workshop and a **Seniors Self Defence** class for women over 65. We will continue to offer free adult women self defence classes next year with our excellent tutor, Julie Poirier.

Building a New Life After Separation was offered twice, providing support for women facing challenges of moving through the stages of separation grief.

Positive Change was offered both as a six-week course and also a two-day weekend workshop. Participants learnt how to build on their stories about themselves to support them and change negative stories that are not useful.

We had two new wonderful tutors for **Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori**: Tutira Williams and Kahurangi Apiata. They brought humour, kindness and generosity to their teaching and received outstanding feedback from delivering their first course together.



Tutira Williams and Kahurangi Apiata

For a little light activity we offered **Dancing for Fun** with Susanna teaching Tango, Salsa, Merengue, Rock n roll and Cha, cha, cha.

We also introduced two new one-day workshops **Holistic Stress Management** and **Holistic Health Management** with Jane McRae. We also brought back Nest Consulting to run a **Menopause Information** evening and partnered with Family Planning to run **Open and Honest: Talking to children about Sex and Sexuality**.

We farewelled our much loved yoga tutor, Simone Bonny who has taught **Regenerative Yoga** at AWC for almost 15 years. Simone is off on an adventure in the South Island and we thank her for her commitment to AWC and the support, energy and healing she has given to our community. Amanda Hookham-Kraft has taken up the tutorage of these classes and has been heartily welcomed by our regulars.



Farewell to long-time yoga tutor Simone Bonny

COMMUNITY EDUCATION CONTINUED

We were delighted to offer these popular classes again this year:

- **Basic EFT** with Robyn Shepherd
- **Building a New Life After Separation** with Claire Virtue and Danielle Turnbull
- **Aroha Dance** with Rosanna Marks
- **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
- **Questioning** with Carol Davey and Alannah Morris
- **Regenerative Yoga** with Simone Bonny
- **Understanding Money** with Lisa Dudson and Jean Strock.



Wendy Rowe

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. We sincerely thank the tutors of our courses and workshops, listed on page 13. Also listed there are the many agencies we partner with to improve outcomes for women. We also acknowledge and thank our funders whose generosity enables us to provide a wide range of services in community education.

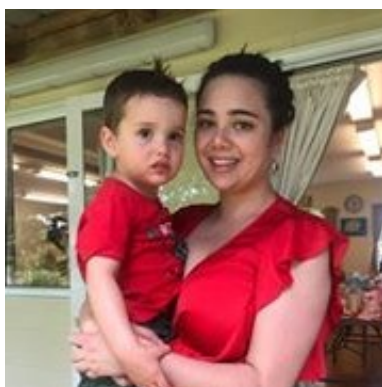


Community seedling planting in July. Many thanks to our stalwart garden volunteers Jade Weatherall (absent) and Katrina Wolff (front right)

SUPPORT GROUPS

Single Mums on Sundays

Our SKIP Single Mums project, lost government funding in 2016, but we are very grateful that SMOS is currently funded by the Auckland Foundation. Ably coordinated by our **Single Mums' Coordinator, Suzette Jackson**, the mums meet at the Centre with their tamariki. AWC provides childcare workers which enables the mums to connect with other mums in a similar situation as themselves. We also provide kai for the mums and children and food parcels for



Wyatt and Madison, attending Single Mums on Sunday

the mums to take home. The mums enjoy swapping solo parenting tips in a non-judgmental environment. The mums report they:

- Gain a sense of being connected to, and accepted by other single mums
- Develop friendships with other single mums; receiving and giving support to each other between meetings
- Find the group a safe space to admit things that they are struggling with. They learn new coping strategies; this is a huge relief and enhances their well-being
- Feel a sense of belonging to the AWC community, and learn of the opportunities provided by AWC and other agencies.

Supporting the Rainbow Community

Providing support and connection to the **Rainbow communities** is an important part of our work. This year **Carol Davey** and **Alannah Morris** delivered our **Questioning** course, a supportive space to talk about same sex attraction. Both Carol and Alannah are previous participants of the group and are now in a position to give back after attending a previous Questioning course which contributed to significant positive changes in their own lives.

Our monthly **Rainbow Social Nights** run by **Ellie Lim** alternate between a DVD night and a Board Games night. These nights are a fun, inexpensive, relaxed opportunity for lesbian, bisexual, takatāpui, trans and queer women to connect outside the bar and club scene.



Donation of rainbow books from the Rule Foundation

It is a culturally diverse group with between 12–30 women attending each time.

For some women, being part of this group, being accepted and included, feels like a homecoming.

HIGH SCHOOL PEER SUPPORT PROJECT

By Gabriella Brayne, Youth Coordinator

The focus of the project this year has been leadership training, moving beyond our established connections with high schools and encouraging collaboration between rangatahi in our network. Although we have engaged with a variety of new schools, we have mostly focused on creating opportunities for connecting and building leadership outside of individual school communities.

In June we hosted a leadership training workshop, bringing together 12 student leaders from around Tāmaki Makaurau. We discussed ways for rangatahi to



High School Peer Support Project participants with Gabriella Brayne

engage with the community, and heard from Lizzie Marvelly and Ollin Perez-Raynaud about their experiences with community-building.

The highlight of my year has been our Rangatahi for Reproductive Justice Campaign. In August, we

hosted another hui connecting rangatahi with rangatira, and started organising our campaign. We were fortunate to have Terry Bellamak from ALRANZ, Marama Davidson MP and Ella Shepherd from CFC as speakers. Our rōpū then created an informative video with young filmmaker Ruby Harris (attracting over 4.5k Facebook views), wrote an online guide for rangatahi on reproductive justice, wrote a submission to the Select Committee, and were invited to present an oral submission.

I ran two workshops on the importance of reaching young women from diverse communities at the Wāhine Kākano conferences, facilitating kōrero with over 60 students on Māori wāhine and the justice system, sexual violence, mental health and abortion law reform.

In collaboration with National Council of Women (NCW), we hosted a hui at the Centre on Gender Inequality in Aotearoa for UN



Marist College students inspired by our Youth Coordinator's outreach

Youth. I chaired the political youth panel and presented on engaging with rangatahi at the NCW Conference — a great opportunity to connect with young women in Wellington, who are keen to support our ongoing campaigning efforts.

Overall, 2019 has been a successful year! I cannot wait to see what exciting opportunities and developments for the project are in store for 2020.

FUNDRAISING

Our highly skilled and hardworking fundraiser, Sophie Richmond, brought our community together for several wonderful evenings again this year. Alongside **feminist film nights** we held our big annual comedy show **"Feminists are Funny"**.

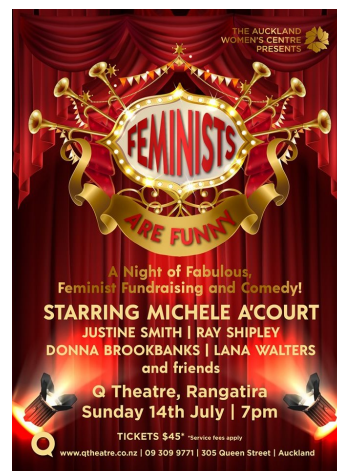
Auckland's Q Theatre hosted a very successful evening of fun, feminism and fundraising for the Auckland Women's Centre on 14 July. Audience feedback was excellent. Much of the credit must go to the fabulous **Michèle A'Court** who was admirably generous, not only in lining up all of the comedy acts, but also in MCing the event and contributing her infectious and intelligent style of humour throughout the evening.

The acts were: Michèle A'Court, Justine Smith, Donna Brookbanks, Lana Walters, Ray Shipley, Ruby Esther, Courtney Dawson, Kura Forrester, Becky Umlers and Audrey Porne.

A huge thank you to these comedians and everyone who made it such a wonderful event. We are also grateful to those who came to support us - we are only as strong as our supporters.

A special thank you to our dedicated regular donors who sustain our services. Special thanks also to: Katherine McAlpine (for her excellent volunteer work on "Feminists are Funny" and everything else!), Christine

Henderson, Stefania at Red Design, the Lido Cinema and Q Theatre's team. Over 1,000 tickets were sold to fundraising events in 2019. These included film showings of *On the Basis of Sex* on 3 February and *Late Night* on 11 August.



The cast of Feminists are Funny



This year Christine Henderson, one of our amazing volunteers, stepped up to cover Sophie's parental leave and has remained with us so that Sophie can reduce her hours. Chris is a problem-solver, dedicated to AWC and a team player. AWC is lucky to have Chris on board.

We also created a **five-year fundraising strategy** in collaboration with Maitland and Associates. Our fundraising focuses on growing support for women's equality and building quality relationships with our supporters. We look forward to increasing opportunities for supporters to engage with the Women's Centre and improving donor experience.

A VOICE FOR WOMEN'S EQUITY

Insightful and hopeful

Terrorism, prisons and misogynistic porn. In various ways our forums this year supported the voices of marginalised women and increased cross-cultural understanding to address key challenges women face today. The mood was often hopeful and always supportive: celebrating remarkable women working to resist threats and increase women's empowerment.



Prof Tracey McIntosh and Paula Penfold lead our last forum for the year

In the aftermath of the 15 March terror attacks in Christchurch, Muslim women in Aotearoa have provided excellent leadership in national discussions on freedom, care and responses to racism. Our forum **"Celebrating Muslim Women"** acknowledged and amplified their strong voices. Panellists included charismatic journalist **Mahvash Ali**; refugee advocate councillor **Fahima Saeid**; and writer **Latifa Daud**. Chaired by news producer **Carol Hirschfeld**, speakers touched on the effects of religious and racial discrimination. Commonwealth Young Leader **Fatumata Bah** in New York sent a pepeha and video from New York.



Attendees at "Celebrating Muslim Women"

Fahima presented her research on older Muslim refugee women in NZ. For many, the hijab symbolises empowerment and resistance against the imposition of Western culture, as well as religious commitment. Mahvash noted that Islam does not demand women cook or clean. Latifa challenged the audience to "break the echo chambers": read books and listen to music by people with different backgrounds to yours; watch news produced in different countries.



Fahima Saeid, Latifa Daud, Carol Hirschfeld and Mira Taitz at "Celebrating Muslim Women"

AWC's next forum, superbly chaired by investigative journalist **Paula Penfold**, was on "**The Problem with Porn**". As psychologist Prof **Nicola Gavey** put it: "Our 'enemy' is not pornography per se, but the sexism, racism and misogyny that saturates most... easily accessible porn... I find it incomprehensible that we can tolerate a genre that is so systematically patterned in a way that's denigrating to women and girls... [It is] fundamentally incompatible with an egalitarian society."

Dr **Jade Le Grice** (Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa), gave a moving kōrero about the effect of oppressive pornography on Māori rangatahi, leaving the audience questioning: what does it mean to be aroused by your own subjugation, or by the denial of your own dignity or someone else's?



Attendees at "The Problem with Porn"

Jo Robertson, research and training lead for The Light Project (an information hub about porn and young people), picked up on a similar point. "Boys have said to me 'I have thought about hurting girls' and they're distressed." For young regular users, porn is shaping their beliefs about sex and gender: they think girls are weak and passive; boys are dominant, powerful and in control.

Lizzie Marvelly favours New Zealand introducing compulsory sexuality education in schools. She offers "The REAL Sex Talk, www.therealsextalk.com a free, humorous, evidence-based web series that includes an episode encouraging young people to think critically about porn.



Attendees at "Kōrero with Tracey McIntosh"

Our final sold-out forum for the year featured Professor of Indigenous Studies Tracey McIntosh (Tūhoe) addressing her remedies for an unjust society. She called for ceding of power to hapū, honouring all tamariki as *valuable* rather than *vulnerable* and radical honesty about our society as well as the imagination to conceive of different ways of doing things.

Significant change was vital to change broken systems, rather than a culture of 'heads must roll', Tracey said. In Oranga Tamariki, we have "good people working in bad systems". Valuing the expertise of lived experience of marginalised people, Tracey challenged us to exercise our imaginations to dream up a better world, advocating generosity towards those resistant to change because of fear. She advised creating the sense that it's in their broad interest. "Complex and challenging, but we can absolutely do it!"

AWC coordinates the **Pay Equity Coalition Auckland**, a partnership of over 20 groups. The Government tabled the Equal Pay Amendment Bill this year, designed to clarify what a pay equity claim is and make it easier for employees to make a claim. We welcome the Bill, but are concerned about the many opportunities for employers to delay the process of settling a claim.

We also run the **Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children**, consisting of 11 violence prevention groups. Our main goal is to progress a gendered and intersectional analysis of the underlying determinants of violence against women and children, and policy and practice responses to the issue.

THANK YOU!

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

We owe a huge vote of thanks to members of the **Governance Board** who 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 frequently called upon between meetings. Sincere thanks are also due to **Ruth Busch** (Secretary), **Charon Leasing** (Treasurer), **Jo Elvidge**, **Katherine McAlpine**, **Marewa Grimsdale**, **Margo Athy**, **Ratika Rai**, **Sarah Dunn**, **Tenisha Kumar** and **Tiara Betham** for their invaluable knowledge, skills, ideas and volunteering at our events.

We would particularly 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.



*Our Patron:
Dr Judy McGregor*

Others generously contributed time, skills and effort to our crèche, mail-outs, forums, garden, posters and newsletter design, fundraising, Women's Support, research, writing and our library. These volunteers include:

Alannah Morris, Anne Lennox, Anthea Randell, Aorewa McLeod, Aysha Aspinall, Carol Davey, Caryn Tasker, Cindy Simalai, Danielle Turnbull, Elizabeth Morey, Ellen Michie, Fran Hazid, Isabella Holdsworth, Jade Weatherall, Jenny Naea, Katrina Wolff, Lana McCarthy, Lisa Williams, Lucy MacKenzie, Manisha Das, Marewa Grimsdale, Maria Boow, Marilyn Johnson, Nikki Wendel-Symonds, Orlando Kwok-Cameron, Pauline Pope, Priscilla Frame, Raine Shirley, Rochelle Carr,



Board members

Back row: Margo, Tiara, Charon and Ratika

Front row: Sarah, Tenisha, Mira and Rewa

Absent: Jo, Katherine and Ruth

Rosiena White, Sarah Dunn, Sandra Furness, Stefania Saranaki (Red Design), Tiara Betham and Toni Chase.

We supervised three students this year **Ann-Katrin Lang, Alina Clarke and Marta Mulatu** who contributed their careful reflection, compassion, publicity and social work skills.

We also wish to express our special thanks to **The Women's Bookshop** for kindly donating books to our Women's Library. We sincerely thank the **tutors** of our courses and workshops, listed on the following page. Also listed on the next page are our **funders** whose generosity enables us to provide a wide range of services and programmes to women.

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

FUNDERS

ANZ Staff Foundation
Akarana Community Trust
Auckland Foundation
Grassroots Giving
BlueSky Community Trust
Blue Waters Community Trust
COGS
Dragon Community Trust
Foundation North
Four Winds Foundation
John Ilott Charitable Trust
Lion Foundation
Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust
Milestone Trust
NZ Lottery Grants Board
NZ Community Post
New Zealand Community Trust
One Foundation
Pub Charity Inc.
Rainbow New Zealand Charitable Trust
Rano Community Trust
Rule Foundation
Sir John Logan Campbell Residuary Estate
The Trusts Community Foundation Ltd
Trillian Trust
Waitamatā Local Board

Cissy Rock
Claire Virtue
Danielle Turnbull
Emma Farry
Jane McRae
Jean Strock
Julie Poirier
Kahurangi Apiata
Katherine McAlpine
Lisa Dudson
Maria de Jong
Morgan Libeau
Robyn Fausett
Robyn Shepherd
Rosanna Marks
Simone Bonny
Susanna Ramos
Tutira Williams
Wendy Rowe
Zaif Khan

AGENCIES

Auckland Lesbian Business Association (alba)
Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP
Auckland Women's Refuge
AWA Associates
Barnardos
Belong Aotearoa
Breast Screen NZ
Business and Professional Women, Auckland
Charlotte Museum
Child Poverty Action Group
CADS
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Dayspring Trust
Eastern Women's Refuge
Family Works Northern

Framework Trust
Grey Lynn Community Centre
Grey Lynn Library
Hearts and Minds
Human Rights Commission
Inner City Women's Group
KiwiHarvest
Leys Institute Library
Lifewise
Living Wage Movement Aotearoa NZ
National Council of Women
New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House
NZ Pacific Women's Watch
North Shore Women's Centre
Oranga Tamariki
OUTline NZ
Rainbow Auckland
Rainbow Youth
Rape Prevention Education
Salvation Army
Shakti Asian Women's Centre
Shine
Stop Demand
Te Rito Rodney
Te Wharepora Hou
The Women's Bookshop
Tū Wahine Trust
Violence Free Waitakere
Waitamatā Local Board
Women's Health Action
Women's Centre Rodney
Women's Centre Waitakere
Women's Studies Association
Working Women's Resource Centre
Youthline
Zonta Club of Auckland

TUTORS

Alannah Morris
Amanda Hookham-Kraft
Anna Keyter
Barbara Woodman
Carol Davey
Caryn Tasker

The Auckland Women's Centre would like to thank our funders for their support:



Photos in the Annual Report by Rochelle Carr

