

Gender Analysis Essential to Eliminating Domestic Violence



The Government has recently made a flurry of announcements, introduced legislation to Parliament and held a Family Violence Summit in Wellington on 7 June. Justice Minister Amy Adams has pledged to make combatting this country's shockingly high rates of intimate partner violence her top justice portfolio priority.

But what is missing from the Government's work is gender analysis. This is epitomised in the fact that the key law proposed to address the problem is called the Family and Whānau Violence Legislation Bill. Replacing the word "domestic" in the current Domestic Violence Act with "family" in the bill explicitly deletes gender from the discussion.

This is dangerous and means that Aotearoa will fail in its efforts to tackle domestic violence. Taking gender out of the equation results in policies that, for example, call for both parties to be arrested when domestic violence is perpetrated and the female victim tries to defend herself.

If the root cause of domestic violence - sexism and the view that women are inferior to men - is not tackled, how can domestic violence be eliminated? What is needed is work on many fronts to get rid of Aotearoa's hyper-masculine culture of venerating and rewarding men, and demeaning and ignoring women.

This patriarchal mentality runs through all of our institutions and pervades every aspect of life in this country, from revering male sporting successes while ignoring women's sporting achievements, to massively undervaluing and underpaying jobs regarded as "women's work."

We also cannot separate sexism from racism, heterosexism, ageism and ableism. The New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse suggests that we need;

- Men to challenge other men's violence, not engage in violence themselves, and address the root causes of violence;
- Programmes involving a "gender transformative" approach to challenge rigid gender roles and critically questions what influences these; and
- Positive messages to "invite" rather than "indict" men, and the use of culturally-relevant material.

In other countries, school, community and media-based interventions have been identified as the most effective methods of promoting gender equality. Examples are safe dating programmes, courses about abuse and gender stereotypes, and programmes working exclusively with male groups. ■



Women's Choice Election Forum

All genders welcome

There will be plenty of time for your patai and kōrero

Chair: Professor Judy McGregor
Head of the School of Social Sciences and Public Policy, AUT

Speakers

- **National Party** Erica Stanford
- **Labour Party** Jacinda Arden, MP
- **Māori Party** Cinnamon Whitlock
(Ngapuhi, Ngati-Kahu ki Whangaroa, Te Rarawa)
- **Green Party** Jan Logie, MP
- **NZ First** Tracey Martin, MP
- **Mana Party** Tracey-lee Repia
(Ngapuhi, Ngati Porou, Uenuku nga Iwi)

Monday 7 August, 7pm - 9pm

University of Auckland, Lecture Theatre Lib B28
underneath the main library, cnr Alfred & Princes Sts.



Organised by: the National Council of Women of New Zealand (Auckland Branch), Auckland Women's Centre, AUSA Women's Rights Officers, the Hard Mirror Blog and the Women's Studies Association NZ/Pae Akoranga Wāhine.