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## **NEWSLETTER JUNE/JULY 2017**

### **REMINDER OF THE MIDWINTER LUNCH AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

As advised in the last newsletter you are invited to a midwinter lunch (paid for by the Branch) at the **George Hotel at 12.00pm on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July.**

As this will be followed by a very important meeting to discuss and hopefully come to a decision on the future of the Branch, we hope you will all make a special effort to attend.

Names to Geraldine Murphy, details above, by 15<sup>th</sup> July.

### **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

A warm welcome is extended to new member, Tara Swadi. Tara has a BSc in Microbiology, and BBioMedSci (Hons) and has also completed an Honours course on the Molecular Basis of Health and Disease. Her special interests include improvised theatre, microbiology, epidemiology and public health.

### **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN NEWS**

**Report of NCW Branch Meeting & AGM, May 2017 – Marlene Smith**

I attended the Annual General Meeting and the regular monthly meeting held on 16 May, at which the guest speaker was Tracey Jongens, a resource teacher of learning and behaviour who works with FASD CAN (Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder). She described the mental, behavioural and learning difficulties experienced

by children who are exposed to alcohol whilst in the womb; these problems extend through adulthood. Physical damage can also occur. It is estimated that in NZ, FASD affects babies in approximately 4% of live births (cf the international average of 1.4%) and 60% of children in state care suffer from the disorder. The situation is serious, with doctors diagnosing an increasing number of young people as having FASD.

President Ellen McCrae had circulated a lengthy document prepared by NCWNZ re the ballot on the proposed governance changes and Christine Low outlined the voting process. Members were invited to attend a special meeting at Ellen's home or send their comments by email before voting closed on 29 May.

The 2017 National Conference, to be held in Christchurch on 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> September was discussed.

At the Annual General Meeting of the branch, Ellen McCrae was re-elected as President. Lynne Scott and Jennifer Delaney were re-elected as Secretary and Treasurer. Committee members are Beverley Price, Anne McMurtrie (both re-elected) and Fiona Given.

### **NCW June meeting**

**Bernadette Devonport**

The main part of the evening was spent allocating jobs for the September NCW Conference being held here in Christchurch. The Canterbury branch also has a remit in the conference and this will be discussed at Ellen's place in a couple of weeks.

We welcomed two new members (young women). The 19 September Kate Sheppard celebrations are being organised by the Mayor and there will be a public event at the memorial. NCW is looking at support Geoffrey Palmer and others in advocating for a written constitution for New Zealand. Rosemary du Plessis is organising a discussion in the branch. The branch is also supporting the pay equity coalition. Rosemary and Billa Field have continued the work in the NCW book A Vision and a Dream (interviews with past branch Presidents) and interviewed the last few Presidents. This will be available on social media. Flashdrives with NCW logo for sale \$10.

Ellen showed the power point presented by the guest speaker at the recent national NCW workshop. The slides gave sobering and concerning statistics on the situation in New Zealand.

#### **Upcoming events-**

18 July next NCW Branch meeting preceded at 5.45pm by New Horizons for Women Trust awards ceremony (including presentation of GWC second chance award)

15 September Christchurch Branch 100 Years Dinner

19 September Kate Sheppard celebrations

## **NEW HORIZONS FOR WOMEN TRUST CHRISTCHURCH AWARDS CEREMONY**

You are invited to the

### **Christchurch/Ōtautahi Awards Ceremony of the New Horizons for Women Trust**

St Barnabas Church Meeting Room, 8 Tui Street, Fendalton, Christchurch/Ōtautahi (Door on your right as you enter from Tui Street) **5.45 – 7.30pm, Tuesday 18 July 2017**

RSVP: [rosemarydup@gmail.com](mailto:rosemarydup@gmail.com) by **12 July 2017**

**5.45 pm: Arrival, meeting, greeting and getting seated**

**6.00 pm: Welcome - Rosemary Du Plessis, NHWT Research Awards Officer**

**6.15 pm: Speaker - Eva Hartshorn-Sanders, Co-Chair, NHWT Board of Trustees**

**6.30 pm: Presentation of awards:**

Canterbury Graduate Women Trust Second Chance Education Award to Gina Pritchard, Bachelor of Business, Massey University  
Wāhine Ora Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga and NHWT Research Award to Jessica MacLean, MA Māori and Indigenous Studies, University of Canterbury

**7.00 pm: Soup and rolls and conversation**

**7.30 pm: NCWNZ Christchurch Branch Meeting**

Those attending the awards ceremony are warmly invited to stay for this meeting.

## **FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

### **Where to next for GWNZ?**

Last editorial we noted the ease with which a new administration can turn back the critical advances women in the USA thought they had achieved in their fight for social justice and equity. What stops this kind of push back is action by members of organisations like ours.

GWNZ has been in existence for almost 100 years. Established in 1921 it was a product of its time. Key goals were to foster peace, fellowship and international understanding in the post-World War One era. While times have changed radically, along with how GWNZ operates, our aims remain the same. GWNZ works to empower all women and girls by promoting understanding and cooperation; supporting the international effort to get all females into and through primary and secondary school; reacts positively and decisively on issues pertaining to women and their status in society (particularly education related); and

encourages research. These aims are as valid today as they were 96 years ago. We are still needed. But what do our members now need to do, to continue to fulfil our aims?

The women who founded GWNZ began by joining GWI almost immediately after our parent organisation was created in 1919. The two women who founded GWI were an American, Dean Gildersleeve from Barnard Women's College at Columbia University, and a British woman, Prof Caroline Spurgeon from Bedford College in London. They met in 1918 when Prof Spurgeon was a member of a British delegation that went to New York with the intention of establishing closer relations between universities in the USA and Britain. A friendship grew between the women and with likeminded colleagues they decided to form an association of university trained women that would 'contribute to understanding between nations.' The international perspective was of great interest to us in New Zealand and still helps us in our efforts to enhance the status of women.

In the first half of the twentieth century the emphasis in GWI and GWNZ was on advocating for peace and cooperation. Networking was essential for the success of such a mission and internationally this was achieved in the main through regular conferences and granting fellowships that enabled individual women to continue university studies in countries other than their own. GWNZ encouraged New Zealand women in university studies through awards and scholarships at the national level and in the many branches that were created throughout the country. Our major source of funding came from the hiring of regalia for university graduations. At the same time, because women in universities were still very much in the minority, GWNZ members met regularly through a network of branches to support each other in their work.

During the second half of the twentieth century international understanding remained a focus through GWI conferences and advocacy work at the United Nations. This was now augmented by developing and funding projects in less developed countries. In addition to GWI's own fund raising and advocacy efforts, GWI's more affluent member organisations were encouraged to twin

and support sister organisations in less developed countries, to support the effort of enabling women and girls to continue their education. In New Zealand, we encouraged research, asked our politicians awkward questions, gathered evidence on the status of women and used this in continued advocacy for women in education. Now that women here were no longer a minority in tertiary studies, were juggling jobs and families, and with improving technology and the development of social media, there was less need for regular meetings to provide mutual support, and the branches began to close.

At the beginning of this, the twenty-first century, we have reached another milestone in the history of GWNZ. It is time for a change in how we operate. We must continue to do all we can to empower all women and girls by encouraging and making possible their education. But it is also vital that we facilitate communication between those who are fortunate enough to have received a tertiary education and thus continue the task of 'contributing to understanding between nations'. Networking and communication remain the backbone of the practical steps we take, but how we go about this will change with the times. As the older members of GWNZ are now 'handing on the baton' the organisation is looking to the women now reaching retirement, and to younger women, to take on the task of giving others the same opportunities they have had. Younger women are benefiting from the efforts of older graduate women who started the work of breaking into male hierarchies, male dominated boards, work areas formerly closed to women, unequal pay, unfavourable and inequitable treatment, and many other barriers. This work is not yet done.

Why take on this challenge? Because the gains women have made, including here in New Zealand, are not robust. The May editorial shows how President Trump has an agenda to roll back many changes, legislative and otherwise, that American women after a long hard fight achieved only three decades ago. The gains we take for granted here in New Zealand, including the opportunity for tertiary education for example, are too new and fragile to be assumed. We still, even here, do not have as strong a role in the economy or wider society as men do. Our voice

and our message is not the norm. The struggle for equality and equity continues, and is entering the next phase.

We are looking to the next generation of graduate women to carry on the struggle for social justice. How this is done will be different from before, but by working together and staying alert to changes that may restrict women's rights, advocating especially for women and girls' education and providing opportunities for those who like you, wish to contribute to society in a significant way, GWNZ will continue to make a real difference.

***Bernadette Devonport, GWNZ President***

## **Action Plan 2017**

The National Executive 2016-2018 is half way through its term of office and, while implementing the Strategic Plan, is also in the process of reviewing what GWNZ is doing and how well. Accordingly, National Executive made this the focus of its June meeting. In a later newsletter, all GWNZ members will be receiving a more detailed outline of what National Executive is doing but as an interim measure, this is a summary of our deliberations to date.

National Executive reiterated that our key customers are ALL women and girls wishing to have life-long learning through formal education. GWNZ naturally focuses on women and girls in New Zealand but we are also active members of GWI. Our purpose is empowering ALL women and girls through education and research and to achieve our aim we work with those who provide the education and/or help us support women and girls to access education. They include (external) educational institutes, government, media, other aligned organisations such as NCW and (internal) branches, Individual members and awardee alumni.

To make GWNZ more responsive and efficient National Executive is considering implementing the following and we welcome your comments:

- Create up-to-date and good promotion of GWNZ (website, pamphlets, signs...) that dovetails with Branch advertising and reflects our new name;

- Provide a forum for discussion on social media; closed page- members discuss Public Affairs issues related to women and education; open page- to engage and attract a wider range of members (potential and current);
- Keep members better informed of National Executive responses on Public Affairs issues relevant to our purpose;
- Establish a network for awardee alumni and advocates;
- Determine what research is needed relevant to our purpose, and implement the research/data gathering needed.

To achieve these ideas will require resourcing and employing those with expertise. But National Executive is aiming to be well underway by the time of the AGM in September/October. Again, we welcome comments from you.

## **Education (Tertiary and Other Matters) Amendment Bill**

A Bill currently under consideration is of significance to the provision of tertiary education in New Zealand. The Education (Tertiary and Other Matters) Amendment Bill aims to amend the Education Act 1999 in relation to tertiary education by updating legislation around running of tertiary organisations especially to the tertiary funding framework, accountability, monitoring of information collection, and oversight of provision. It is also intended to expand student protection provisions<sup>1</sup>.

The Bill is considered by the Education and Science Select Committee [submissions closing 23 June 2017] and of significance to those interested in protection of students, funding equity, and international education.

The Bill would allow a school to take disciplinary action against international students if the action

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/make-a-submission/document/51SCES\\_SCF\\_BILL\\_72305/education-tertiary-education-and-other-matters-amendment](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/make-a-submission/document/51SCES_SCF_BILL_72305/education-tertiary-education-and-other-matters-amendment)

is in accordance with a written contract of enrolment between the student and the school. A new offence would be introduced where a person would be committing an offence by knowingly or recklessly making false representation of achievement that the student achieved a credit with penalty up to a fine of \$10,000.

It also provides for funding grants in respect of an activity, approved program, or training scheme offered by one provider to need to be the same rate as funding to a directly comparable activity, program or training scheme offered by another provider. [There may be some difference in funding rates if the difference results from using a funding mechanism using a contestable funding process or is based on performance].

Arguments against the Bill focus on this as the prioritising of private for-profit providers. The Tertiary Education Union (TEU) for example argue that public institutions serve a different purpose to for-profit providers as they ensure a level of education provision throughout the country and that a fully contestable market-driven model would not ensure the same outcomes<sup>2</sup>. They go further and point out that this favours those strongest in their market control and will ultimately lead to more people being hired on insecure, short-term contracts. Arguably the majority of which could well be women [note our December 2016 editorial].

Graduate Women New Zealand Awaits the report back from the Select Committee which could make significant changes to future of New Zealand tertiary education.

***Pip Jamieson***  
***Public Affairs Convenor***

The TEU also argue that in changing the funding model for tertiary education by shifting money from NZ's public institutions into private organisations, the Tertiary Education Amendment Bill may well have flow on effects that may impact negatively on particularly women and women's access to tertiary education. One example is that

many of our public institutions have developed quality child care centres on site that provide easily accessible child care for staff and students. We know good reliable childcare supports particularly women's access to tertiary study as well as supporting women in employment. For-profit providers have no incentive to establish quality child care for staff or students.

### CANTERBURY HISTORY FOUNDATION ANNUAL JIM GARDNER LECTURE

To be held on **Sunday 23 July, 2pm** in the **Jack Mann Auditorium, University of Canterbury Dovedale Campus.**

Dr Evgeny Pavlov will be speaking on the Russian Leadership during and since 1917.

2017 is the centenary of the Russian Revolutions.

This will be followed by afternoon tea in the Foyer of the Auditorium

### JUST PUBLISHED

**Connon Girls: a study in twentieth-century New Zealand women at university, by Marie Peters (226 pp. 70 photos)**

'Connon girls' were well known in the twentieth-century Canterbury College/University community as the residents of Helen Connon Hall, a hostel for women students founded in 1918 and closed in 1974, when the university completed its move to the Ilam campus. This book tells their story. It examines the hall's place in the university community. Above all, with the help of interviews with more than thirty women resident between 1919 and 1974, it gives a lively account of their experience of university and hall life – highly regulated, unlike that of their male contemporaries or their modern counterparts. The book also briefly explores the backgrounds and later careers of these 'Connon girls'. Marie Peters, herself both a student in and warden of Helen Connon Hall, taught for more than thirty years in the University of Canterbury History Department.

**For further information and arrangements for purchase please email [connongirls@gmail.com](mailto:connongirls@gmail.com).**

<sup>2</sup> <http://teu.ac.nz/2017/05/tertiary-bill-debate-opens/>

## FOR ANYONE VISITING AUCKLAND

**The Women's Bookshop has a series of events:**

**Ladies' Litera-Teas** - Sunday 3 September & Sunday 29 October, both from 1pm to 5.30pm, with a lavish afternoon tea We are doing TWO this year due to popular demand and because there are so many marvellous new books! Authors confirmed so far: Fiona Kidman, Fiona Farrell with a new novel, Elizabeth Smither, Mandy Hager with her brilliant adult novel *Heloise*, poet Selina Tusitala Marsh, former Women's Bookshop staff member Michalia Arathimos with her first novel *Aukati*, & Dunedin poet & novelist Sue Wootten. Tickets on sale from Monday 17 July **The Women's Bookshop** 105 Ponsonby Road, Auckland [www.womensbookshop.co.nz](http://www.womensbookshop.co.nz) [books@womensbookshop.co.nz](mailto:books@womensbookshop.co.nz) (09) 376 4399.

## OR WELLINGTON

**From Bridget Williams Books**

A wonderful exhibition, He Tohu, has just opened at the National Library in Wellington. This includes the Women's Suffrage Petition, alongside other iconic New Zealand documents – the Treaty of Waitangi and He Whakaputanga/The Declaration of Independence

Our new publication, *The Women's Suffrage Petition 1893*, documents this history and the women who signed it. Introduced by award-winning historian Barbara Brookes, the book includes beautiful facsimile pages from the petition, and biographies of over 150 women who signed. The petition itself is 274 metres long, and was signed by nearly 24,000 women, from many walks of life. *The Women's Suffrage Petition 1893* is available from good bookstores and online at <http://bwb.co.nz/books/womens-suffrage-petition-1893>