



# New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women (Inc.)

CANTERBURY BRANCH, PO BOX 6733, CHRISTCHURCH 8442

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SECRETARY: Geraldine Murphy  
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MEMBERSHIP SEC: Bernadette Devonport

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## NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Canterbury Branch of NZFGW will be held on **Thursday 20 October 2011 at 7.30 pm** in the Helen Kitson Function Centre, (**not** the Staffroom) Rangi Ruru School, Hewitts Rd. To get to the Centre, park in the carpark off Hewitts Rd, walk straight ahead past the Sports Field, and the Function Centre is on your left around the corner. It is only a short walk and there will be someone in the carpark to give directions if necessary.

The business of the meeting will be:

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous AGM
2. Presentation of Annual Reports and Financial Statements
3. Election of Officers
4. General Business

After the conclusion of business we will hear from two of our recent Travel Award winners. Melissa Idiens will speak on aspects of the Scott Polar Institute at Cambridge and Rosemary Baird will tell us about the oral histories of New Zealanders in Perth. Supper will be served.

**Below is a nomination form for the new committee and this year, as well as new members, we are particularly looking for a President and Vice-President. If you are a recent new member and want to get to know more people, come and join the committee. It is great fun and the duties are not onerous. If you wish to nominate yourself, or someone (else (with their consent of course), please fill in the form below or contact Shirley C'Ailceta or Geraldine Murphy.**

### NOMINATION FORM 2011/2012 COMMITTEE

We nominate \_\_\_\_\_

for the position of \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_  
(name and signature)

Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_  
(name and signature)

I agree to be nominated \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

NOMINATION FORMS TO THE SECRETARY, PO BOX 6733, UPPER RICcarton, CHRISTCHURCH BY 13 OCTOBER.

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Sadly, the death occurred recently of Patricia Morrison, a longstanding member, who would have been known to many as not only did she a regularly attend our branch meetings and lunches, but was involved in numerous organisations, particularly those devoted to peace and justice. In fact, her obituary in "The Press" was headed "Lifelong work in pursuit of peace and justice" and described how growing up in the 1920s she was influenced by the public revulsion towards the carnage of World War 1 and developed an early interest in history. At the age of 11 she won first prize in an essay competition run by the No More War movement. Patricia gained BA and MA degrees at Canterbury University and then obtained a three year scholarship to

study history at Oxford, completing a second MA in two years. Her peace activities began as a member of the Student Christian Movement at the University of Canterbury in the 1940s and after the war she became active in the Oxford University branch of the movement. She was elected to the international committee and took a job in Geneva in 1948 with responsibility for field workers and finding jobs for students who were living in camps for displaced people. Back in NZ from 1950 Patricia travelled the country promoting the SCM in secondary schools and church groups. She then worked for the YWCA in NZ and overseas. When she was offered a job by the NZ Government helping Asian and South East Asian students coming here under the Colombo Plan Patricia turned it down, preferring to stay with the Christian-based services. She was awarded the Queen's Service Medal for her work. In the words of one of her friends Patricia 'worked fearlessly wherever women were disadvantaged or disenfranchised. She brought encouragement and inspiration, promoting education and job creation in places where women were regarded as "the lowest of the low". She was essentially an educationist – that was her motivation.'

Among other societies in which she served were the United Nations Association, the Workers' Educational Association, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and other peace groups. She was instrumental in Christchurch being declared a nuclear weapons-free city.

### **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (*Val Bailey*)**

#### **Women's Voices – Recording women's experiences of the Canterbury earthquakes 2010-11**

This project was officially launched at the Suffrage evening on 13 September and its aims are:

1. To find, collect and record the stories of women living in Canterbury whose hopes, dreams, lives and security have been affected by the recent earthquakes.
2. To support women on the ground by listening to their untold tales, recording them and reporting on them.
3. To write reports, undertake presentations and in other ways publicise the findings of the research.
4. To provide a permanent record of the effects of the earthquakes on women in the region.
5. To provide a resource to inform future disaster response policy.

Approximately 100 participants will be recruited and will represent the broad range of women in Christchurch and surrounding districts. Each interview is expected to take 1-2 hours. The findings will be analysed by NVivo, a qualitative software programme. If you wish to be interviewed or to be an interviewer, please contact the NCW President at [brujude@xtra.co.nz](mailto:brujude@xtra.co.nz) or 332 5229 hm, 364 0947 wk as soon as possible.

NCW has also put together a submission on the Christchurch City Draft Plan (which is available from [rossandval@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rossandval@xtra.co.nz)). One of the comments points out that the focus is on housing, buildings and roads and asks what plans there are for social infrastructure.

#### **From Linda Robertson, National Executive The Function of the Charities Commission**

In the August newsletter, there was an article from Dot Page about the deregistration of the National Council of Women by the Charities Commission who said that "the extent advocacy is an acceptable activity for a not-for-profit organisation seeking registration with a Charities Commission and how charitable purposes should be defined are questions of importance to many voluntary organisations". Furthermore she said that "we (NZFGW) are likely to be affected by changes either to the Charities Act or the Incorporated Societies Act and should keep a careful eye on developments.

The North Shore branch sent an email to Mr English and & Mr Ryall supporting the case put forward by the ANGOA position paper which was about doing a more thorough review before the proposed absorption of the Charities Commission into the Department of Internal Affairs. Their letter was referred to Hon Turiana Turia (Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector) who provided an informative response as follows:

"I am pleased that you and the North Shore Branch of the New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women (NZFGW) have taken the time to make your views known to me. As you know, Cabinet has agreed that the first principles review is to be completed by 2015. The review will consider whether the legislation is fit for purpose and reflects the needs and composition of our charitable sector. My officials have already begun to note concerns about the functioning of the Act that will inform the scoping of the review. Your correspondence will be helpful in this regard.

Any change to the legislation may, among other things, have a significant impact on the tax revenue base and will require careful consideration and engagement with all relevant stakeholders. It is, therefore, not a process that can be rushed. Also, some other work needs to be completed to inform the review and any proposed

changes. This includes work related to data collected by the Commission and Statistics New Zealand for the 2011 Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account that is scheduled to be published in 2012-2013.

The second area of work is the Law Commission's reviews of the law of trusts (including the Charitable Trusts Act 1957) and the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. The Law Commission's recommendations on these reviews are due in 2013-2014 and will have implications for the charitable sector. Once the Law Commission reports on these matters, the Government will then consider its response to the recommendations

As you will appreciate, it is important that the review of the Act aligns closely with, and takes into account, the Law Commission's reviews. This will allow any changes to legislation which impact on charities to be consistent, coherent and undertaken in an integrated manner. Completing the first principles review of the Act before the Law Commission has reported on its work could result in fragmented regulatory reform and fragmented regulatory instruments, which could be costly and disruptive for all involved.

You have suggested that the Commission place a moratorium on deregistration, and refusals of registration, until a review of the Act has taken place. The Commission was established as an autonomous Crown entity and must discharge its statutory functions, including decisions on registration and deregistration, independent of direction from Ministers. Accordingly, it is not possible, nor would it be appropriate for the Government to require the Commission to place a moratorium on aspects of its decision making.

Even though the Commission is required to take into account Government policy, the Government cannot require the Commission to set aside its statutory responsibilities as provided for in the Act. As the Commission's Board is responsible for the way the Commission carries out its legislated functions, I suggest the North Shore Branch of the NZFGW may wish to consider raising these concerns directly with the Board.

Lastly, I note your concerns about the deregistration of the National Council of Women by the Charities Commission. I have personally acknowledged the Council for the great work it has done in creating an enduring legacy for generations of women to follow. As you will be aware, in applying the law, the Commission determined that the Council's main purposes are advocating for changes in the law, policy or decisions of central government and that it is not established and maintained primarily for charitable purposes, as required by the Act. While it is too early to speculate on the terms of reference for the review, I do expect that the definition of charitable purpose and its alignment across different statutes would be a key focus.

I look forward to having a constructive conversation with interested groups and the wider community and voluntary sector as the review progresses. Thank you again for writing. **Heoi anō. Hon Tariana Turia**

### **From Dot Page - Opting In or Opting Out? The Voluntary Student Membership Debate**

At the same time as our Government is on the point of passing the Voluntary Student Membership Bill, which removes the requirement for tertiary students to become paid up members of their student associations, the Australian Parliament is debating a bill to reverse significant parts of their voluntary student membership legislation, which was introduced in 2006.

National student unions on both sides of the Tasman are strongly opposed to voluntary student membership (VSM). The President of the Australian National Union of Students has pointed out that since it was introduced in Australia no fewer than six University student organisations have collapsed and hundreds of services have disappeared, as reduced income forced the associations to restructure and cut services. Universities have needed to call on more state support to bail out the student organisations. The President of the New Zealand Union of Student Associations (NZUSA) commented in response that in the current fiscal situation, New Zealand universities would not have the resources to pay for student services without taking funds from their core business of teaching and research. A study by Pricewaterhouse Cooper for NZUSA shows that between 48% and 73% of services would be lost if membership of student associations became optional.

Since 1999 any New Zealand university has been able to introduce VSM on the basis of a student referendum. Only Auckland and Waikato chose to do so, and Waikato later reversed the decision, returning to universal student membership. In October 2009 the ACT party proposed the Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Bill to extend VSM to all New Zealand Universities without a referendum. At present, students have the right to opt out of association membership; under the proposed legislation, they would have to opt to join.

The Bill has already been considered by the Education and Science Select Committee, which recommended that it proceed with only minor changes, despite the fact that 98% of the almost 5,000 submissions it received

opposed the Bill. The National party support the Bill, whereas Labour MPs have been trying to delay its passage. It is regrettable, although probably inevitable, that the issue has become a party-political one.

There are clear arguments for and against voluntary membership. Its proponents emphasise freedom of choice. Students' associations, their argument runs, are simply unions and universal membership is compulsory unionism. They stress the financial burden for students who are compelled to pay for services they do not want or use. Some add to the mix the perceived Left-wing bias of student leaders and the occasional misuse of funds by an association. Advocates of universal student membership, on the other hand, place emphasis on its long history of effective service to the student community.

In the case of Otago University, which happens to be the one I know best, the students' association (OUSA) dates back to 1890 and has traditionally provided and managed a range of services. It is represented on the University Council and key policy-making committees, offers independent advocacy for students, especially in relation to landlords, provides welfare and health support and communicates effectively with Otago's 22,000 students through its newspaper and radio station, as well as providing quality facilities for sporting and cultural clubs and societies. OUSA owns the modern Student Union building with meeting rooms and café, the outstanding University Bookshop, a well-appointed Clubs and Societies building catering for a hundred organisations and a very popular student gym. Until very recently the association employed 45 permanent staff, many of them able and long-serving professionals. But in these times of uncertainty things are changing. Reporting the resignation of OUSA's General Manager in April the *Otago Daily Times* noted that he was the fourth senior member to leave in the previous six months: the Managers for Reception and Services, Student Support Services, and Clubs and Societies had already gone. All were replaced by temporary staff, in view of the probability of sharply reduced funding from 2012 if the VSM Bill became law and student levies were replaced by voluntary association subscriptions.

The situation of the Otago students' association exemplifies the threatened loss of a tradition of student provision of welfare and advocacy, and of sporting, intellectual and social activities common to our tertiary institutions. This tradition is not only a memorable aspect of the student experience but also a formative element in higher education, broadly defined. Its loss is society's loss.

MEETINGS OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS which may be of interest. Anyone is welcome to attend.

The October meeting of the Canterbury Historical Association takes place on Tuesday 11 October at 6.30pm in Arts Lecture Theatre A5. Our speaker and paper will be:

**Baden Norris (Lyttelton Historical Museum) – 'Scott in New Zealand. Official version or the truth'**

Baden Norris will be well known to many members for his longstanding contribution to history in Canterbury. Over the years, he has visited Antarctica on thirteen separate occasions, as well as publishing on the subject. His paper will outline Captain Robert Falcon Scott's experiences in Lyttelton before his Antarctic expedition, using both official and private sources, including conversations with some of the men involved..

Once again, Baden's talk will be preceded by a social gathering in room 311 of the History building, with which members will be familiar from previous AGMs.

Other History events

During October and early November, the central library (James Hight Library) on campus will be running a public exhibition which may be of interest to members:

**'Through a glass, darkly': Canterbury's King James Bible, 400 Years of Mystery, Power & Imagination**

In addition, on 9 November at 7.30pm, CHA regular Chris Jones (UC, History) will speak on 'The King James Bible from James I to Barack Obama'.

**WEA ANNUAL LINCOLN EFFORD MEMORIAL LECTURE:**

**The lignite plans of Solid Energy and why the coal must be kept in the ground - Jeanette Fitzsimons**

When: Thursday 13 October 7.30-9pm

Where: Canterbury Workers' Educational Association, 59 Gloucester Street

All welcome! Any queries, please phone WEA, 366 0285; or email: [cwea@xtra.co.nz](mailto:cwea@xtra.co.nz)

The Press Christchurch Writers Festival has a very special event on MONDAY 10 OCTOBER at RICcarton Park at 7.30 pm with TV3 News anchor, MIKE McROBERTS, who will be discussing his new book –BEYOND THE FRONT LINE. He expands on the events that have taken him to many of the world's war zones and disaster areas. Hear about the process of reporting and stories behind the scenes- the ones you don't get to see or hear about on television. Not to be missed! Tickets: \$15 from [www.dashtickets.co.nz](http://www.dashtickets.co.nz) or 0800327 484.