



Auckland
**Women's
Centre**

G O S S I P

4 Warnock Street
Grey Lynn
Ph 376 3227
info@womens.org.nz

P.O. Box 78 271
Grey Lynn
www.awc.org.nz
Winter 2006

Centre Hours

Mon to Fri
9am - 4pm

Library also

Sat, 11am - 1.30pm
Wed, 9am—7.30pm

Collective 2006

Abigael Vogt
Alison Greenaway
Anna Witten-Sage
Annalise Myers
Leonie Morris
Paulette Benton-Greig
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Kia ora koutou wahine ma! Greetings from the Women's Centre.

On July 13 we **launched our new website**. The site has a fresher look, carries more information, and we can update it in-house. This means the information will always be up-to-date and we can inform you of feminist news and events as we hear of them. Check out the new site on www.awc.org.nz. A big thank you to Kate Paulin who built and maintained our old site for us. Kate did all this work as a volunteer, providing invaluable support to the Centre for many years and continues to provide much-appreciated computer support. We would also like to acknowledge Kristen Wilson who has done an excellent job of building our new site. We hope you enjoy the new site and if there is any information you would like us to add, please email Leonie on akcentre@womens.org.nz.

Our recent **SKIP Positive Parenting Events** for teen mothers were very successful. The first event was **Story Time** at the Grey Lynn Library. Twenty-six teen mothers attended, many commenting that it was the first time they had been to a library with their child and they were pleased by how child-friendly the library was. Event Two was **Autumn Day Out** at the children's garden, Auckland Botanical Gardens. Many of the teen mothers who attended this event were surprised at how much fun they and their children had. The last event was **Lets Play** at Glen Innes Playcentre where everyone enjoyed a session of mucky play and socialising with other young mums. SKIP promotes positive parenting messages such as: *have as few rules as possible — but stick to them; spend time everyday just enjoying being with your child; say lots more positive than negative things*. Through a developmental approach this interactive project attracted great numbers from a parenting group that is usually very hard to engage with.



During July and August, End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking (ECPAT) is trialling an exciting new project in partnership with the Department of Internal Affairs and five internet service providers to test software aimed at halting commercial child pornography. You can support the project by clicking on the icon **keep my net clean.org** on ECPAT'S website: www.ecpat.org.nz. This will create a short cut in the toolbar of your web browser so that you can report illegal pornography with just one mouse click.

It is 20 years since Parliament passed the **Homosexual Law Reform Act** decriminalising male homosexual acts. Tighe Instone, a long-time campaigner for lesbian rights, explains "...during the reform campaign lesbians suddenly had to get used to constant and intense scrutiny. It arrived in our homes through our letterboxes, our radios and our TVs. Neighbours knocked on our doors and invited us to sign the petition against the Bill! Lesbians realised it was important to be visible and proud. We mobilised our communities and organised pickets, rallies, marches and conferences." A one-day conference celebrating the campaign and the Act will be held at the National Library in Wellington on December 2. For more information email Alison Laurie on Alison.laurie@vuw.ac.nz

AT THE AUCKLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE . . .

LIBRARY NOW OPEN EVERY SATURDAY LUNCHTIME AND LATE ON WEDNESDAYS

We are thrilled to be able to extend the library hours, making it more accessible. From Wednesday 19 July the library will be open until 7.30pm on Wednesdays and from Saturday 22 July, it will be open every Saturday from 11am—1.30pm. The library has hundreds of new books including *Something for the Birds* by Jacqueline Fahey, *Challenged by Childhood* by Kay Douglas, *The Night Watch* by Sarah Waters, *My Life so Far* by Jane Fonda and many other gems. We also have a complete set of the Women's Bookshops list of 50 of the best women writers of the last 50 years, voted by thousands of New Zealand readers. If you are wanting a particular book, ring 376 3227 to check if it is available. If it is out, when returned we can hold it for you for up to a week. Library membership is available to all women, whether you are reading for pleasure or academic study. A year's subscription is \$5 for beneficiaries and between \$10 and \$20 for those not on a benefit. Books are issued for four weeks. There is a library returns box in the alcove on the porch if you return books after hours.

COUNSELLING

Low cost one-to-one counselling is available at the Centre. All counsellors are professionally trained and supervised. They use a sliding scale of \$30 to \$80 for fees and cater for a diverse range of issues. Please ring the Centre for an appointment.

HEALTH SERVICES

In conjunction with Well Women's Nursing Service we have now extended our smear tests and breast examinations service to include full consultations on women's health issues, such as menopause and PMS. Appointments available at the Centre on Friday mornings once a month. Next available dates are: 25 Aug, 22 Sept and 20 Oct.

MASSAGE for beneficiaries and other women on low incomes is available on Mondays between 9.30am and 1.30pm for an hour long session. Cost is \$25 for beneficiaries and \$40 for non-beneficiaries, with a discount available if finances are a problem.

SELF-DEFENCE AND PERSONAL SAFETY WORKSHOPS

Anna, our Young Women's Advocate, has been delivering self-defence workshops to girls and teenagers all over Auckland. Recently she has taught at a girls secondary school, a Pacific Island women's refuge, at our Centre, at a trust that assist young people in their transition from state care to independence, and to a support group at de Paul House. Contact Anna if you would like her to teach at your school or to a group on youngwomen@womensz.org.nz.



COURSES AND GROUPS . . .

New this term is **From the Heart**, a dynamic programme to support you to set positive life goals and provide you with the tools to create the life you want. The programme replaces Karenza Fullerton's personal development course, as Karenza is overseas this term. **Travelling Creatively and Confidently Through Your 20s** — an art therapy personal growth course that debuted last term is back by popular demand. Our **Yoga for Older Women** classes are now "pay-as-you-go" so you can attend a class when it suits. We are also very pleased to be able to offer our **Fair Play** workshop again. This is a girl DJ workshop offering absolute beginners the chance to get behind the decks instead of leaving it to the boys. The DJ process is demystified and you will discover that DJ-ing is accessible to anyone keen to put in the practice. Equipment navigation, hands on practice, mix using a cross fader, fundamentals of beat mixing, and genres of electronic music are all covered in this day workshop. Your records or ours – any style of music! For details of our community education programme go to our new website: www.awc.org.nz. There is a community education link on the home page.

Men and Women Not Equally Violent

By Dr Alison Towns PhD Dip Clin Psych MNZPsS MICP

In their article "Partner Violence and Mental Health Outcomes in a New Zealand Birth Cohort", published in 2005 in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, David Fergusson, John Horwood and Elizabeth Ridder argued that "domestic conflict" occurred in 70% of relationships and that women and men showed similar levels of perpetration and victimisation through domestic violence.

Defining domestic violence

There are many problems with this study. One is that Fergusson and his colleagues make a major leap in their conceptual assumptions of what constitutes domestic violence. They jump from domestic conflict to domestic violence. The authors do not define what they mean by domestic violence but assume that the scale they largely draw from, the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale, measures only domestic violence. International experts are very clear about the distinctions between couple conflict and domestic violence. The mild forms of couple conflict interactions that do not create fear or severe emotional distress and do not constitute a pattern of abuse, are distinctly different from the form of violence called domestic violence or battering. In the latter, there is a pattern of coercive control involving emotional violence reinforced through physical or sexual violence.

Most victims female

In New Zealand, under the Domestic Violence Act 1995, about 95% of Protection Orders are taken out by women, mostly for protection from men. Most serious assaults recorded by the Police are male assaults female, and most male assaults female apprehensions are for domestic violence incidents. In Fergusson's study, more women than men reported being afraid of their partners as a result of the violence.

Sample unrepresentative

Fergusson's study is based on a birth cohort of 1,003 participant 25 year olds. Of these, 828 were assessed as being in, or having been in, a relationship in the past 12 months for at least one month or longer. The sample group is very small for a prevalence study and is only representative of the South Island population. Having very few Maori, it is distorted against finding domestic violence. Victim surveys in New Zealand conservatively indicate that 49% of Maori women are victims of domestic violence, compared to 24.2% of Pakeha and 23.3% of Pacific women. Fergusson's study did not address the ongoing harassment or violence that might have occurred for those participants whose relationships dissolved prior to the 12 month period. There was an assumption in the study that men and women would represent any conflict accurately. However, overseas research indicates that men tend to under-report their perpetration of

conflict. Had Fergusson and his colleagues read the author of the scale's more recent works, they would have found Straus' condemnation of the use of this scale to promote men and women as equally violent. In 1999, Gelles and Straus wrote: "*Unfortunately the data on wife-to-husband violence has been misreported, misinterpreted and misunderstood ... those who report that husband abuse is as common as wife abuse overlook two important facts. First, the greater average size and strength of men and their greater aggressiveness means that a man's punch will probably produce more pain, injury and harm than a punch by a woman. Second, nearly three-fourths of the violence committed by women is done in self-defence.*"

Keeping it real

They went on to write: "*On occasions, legislators and spokespersons ... have used the data on violence by wives to minimise the need for services for battered*

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violence against women and over-report their victimisation. Women, on the other hand tend to under-report their victimisation and over-report their perpetration.

Different types of violence

Perhaps of most concern is the use of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale to compare men's and women's experiences of domestic

women. *Such arguments do a great injustice to the victimisation of women.*" Straus wrote in 1997 that because of women's greater victimisation, "*the first priority in services for victims and in prevention and control must continue to be directed towards assaults by men.*"

WELL WOMEN'S CLINIC

Free

Cervical smear tests for women:

- ?? who are due for a smear test and are Community Service Card holders
- ?? who have not had a test in 5 years.

Advice

On managing periods, PMS, menopause, stress incontinence using natural remedies, diet & lifestyle Consultations \$45.00 (½ hour)

Clinics at Auckland Women's Centre
Ph: 376 3227
once a month and all Auckland areas

For more information ph: 523 0263



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DPB classified as "Out of Full-time Work"

In 1991 the National government slashed benefit rates, in some cases by as much as 24%, and supplementary assistance became "tightly-targeted" to those considered to be "genuinely in need". These cutbacks had devastating effects on many beneficiaries resulting in an ever-increasing reliance on food banks, and "add-ons" from WINZ simply to meet basic living expenses. This year the Government is endeavouring to "simplify matters" by introducing a Single Core Benefit. However the proposed changes will rely even more heavily on the basic benefit being supplemented by add-ons. In the past few years WINZ advances granted to beneficiaries to meet basic power costs have more than doubled in spite of declining numbers of beneficiaries. This huge increase in demand for a WINZ advance to cover an essential need, clearly demonstrates that basic benefits are far too low.

The proposed legislation, currently being worked on by the Government, undermines the historic principles of the welfare state set in place in 1938 where social security benefits provided a liveable income taking into account differing circumstances. The commitment to these principles was reconfirmed and restated in the 1972 Royal Commission on Social Security. The Domestic Purposes Benefit was introduced at that time to cater for sole parents.

The DPB has been a lifeline for many mothers and their children, especially those escaping violent and abusive family relationships. The proposed changes totally undermine parenting — with parents on the DPB reclassified to the equivalent of an Unemployment Beneficiary — rendering their status to "out of full-time work".

Labour must use this discussion of the benefit system to make good its former promises and restore benefits to the pre-1991 level. In addition, the DPB should remain a benefit for people who are unable to engage in paid work because of their domestic responsibilities. The Single Core Benefit proposal undermines unpaid work at a time when the Government is emphasising the importance of this work. We urge you to express your concerns about this proposal to Minister Benson-Pope. Further information is available from the Child Poverty Action website: www.cpag.org.nz.

Stop and Smell the Flowers

Joan Prairie

With like-minded women you will melt away the stress, connect to yourself, reflect on your life, laugh, have fun and stop the busyness. We will use art, creative movement and meditative methods in this series of Saturday workshops at the Auckland Women's Centre.

Saturday Aug 26, 10am — 4pm

Cost: \$80 to \$100 for the day

Contact: Joan Prairie 832 2848

or jprairie@free.net.nz