

Spring 2008



Auckland
**Women's
Centre**

Auckland Women's Centre

Gossip

Contact us

4 Warnock St
Grey Lynn
Ph 376 3227

info@womens.org.nz
PO Box 78271
Grey Lynn
www.awc.org.nz

Centre hours

Monday to Friday
9am - 4pm

Additional Library hours

Saturday 11am - 1.30pm

Thanks

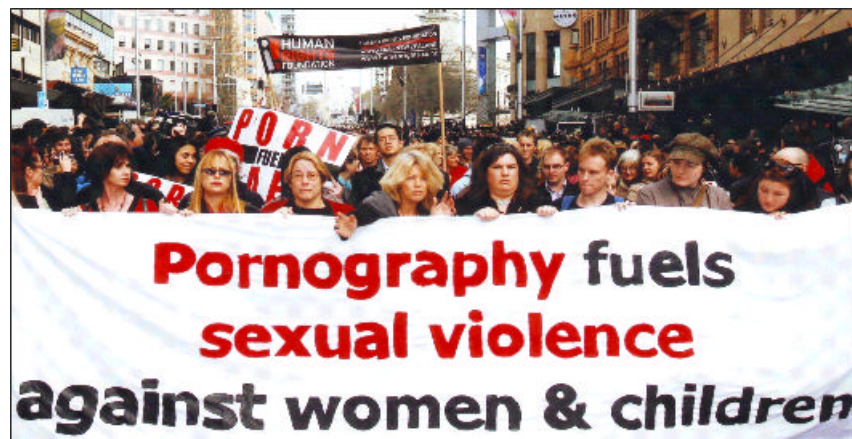
This issue was created by
Amelia, Anne, Denise,
Elizabeth, Ellie, Helen,
Megan, Maree and Leonie.

Auckland Women's Centre News

Every year, Steve Crow organises his parade down Queen Street claiming he is defending women's right to bare our breasts in public, when really the parade is part of his pornography business: profiting from objectifying and degrading women. International research finds that hard core pornography, which makes up the bulk of Steve Crow's commercial interests, "is increasingly cruel, misogynistic and degrading of women".

Unbelievably, Crow tries to sell his parade as being about women's empowerment! Yet the half-naked women riding pillion down Queen Street wear stereotypical stripper gear and strike the usual pornographic poses. The parade is part of a growing trend (along with music videos, girls fashion, advertising and movies) where pornography is being mainstreamed and normalised, giving men, women and children the message that women are objects for men's sexual gratification.

This year, the Auckland Women's Centre and Stop Demand Foundation organised protesters to march ahead of Crow's parade, to raise awareness of the links between pornography and sexual violence against women and children. Spokesperson for both groups, Denise Ritchie, told the crowd that "Sexual violence does not take place in a vacuum. It is underpinned by attitudes and messages, which are fuelled and normalised by the pornography industry. In New Zealand, that fueller is self-proclaimed porn king, Steve Crow".



Courses and Groups

Mothering alone? Want to meet other solo mums, share experiences and get parenting tips? Then sign up for our **Mothering Alone Support Group** on a Thursday morning (with free crèche!).

Recently separated from your partner? Joan Prairie's one day **separation** workshop will help you to develop coping strategies and look at how to start rebuilding your life.

New this term: Wende Jowsey's **Women and Change** weekend workshop. Wende will also be running her **Awakening at Midlife** course which focuses on midlife and menopause.

Also available: **Book Club**, **Craft Grannies**, **Coming Out**, **Irate: Women and Anger**, weekly **Hatha Yoga** and **yoga/pilates/stretch** classes. **For details: check our community education brochure or website.**

Staff: **Centre Manager:** Leonie Morris, akcentre@womens.org.nz **Teen Parent Service Coordinator:** Margaret Stewart, teenparent@womens.org.nz **Young Women's Coordinator:** Amelia Rothwell, programmes@womens.org.nz **SKIP Project Coordinator:** Shelley Fraser, skip@womens.org.nz **Team Leader, Teen Parent Project:** Annalise Myers, youngparent@womens.org.nz **Administrator:** Elizabeth Morey, admin@womens.org.nz **Women's Services Coordinator:** Ellie Lim, info@womens.org.nz

Women and the Elections

AWC is interested in encouraging voters to discuss the up-coming elections and what policies and parties would best represent women's interests. Our previous newsletter (available on our web site) featured an article by feminist and author Anne Else with her views on the National Party. Below, Anne discusses gender differences in relation to parties' support and the main parties' policies on reducing the gender pay gap.

So far there's been surprisingly little comment about gender differences in relation to the election. The women's vote was crucial to Labour's narrow victory in 2005. It's clear that since John Key took over from Don Brash, some women have transferred their support from Labour to National.

But this shift wasn't due simply to the change of leadership. It first showed up in May 2007, in the wake of Labour's support for Sue Bradford's bill removing the provision permitting parents to use "reasonable force" – that is, hit – their children. Key and National did of course end up supporting this bill. But sadly, the polls suggest that angry parents – including mothers – blamed Labour for what they appear to have seen as unwarranted interference with their "rights".

Since then Labour has been on the back foot. Commenting on the *New Zealand Herald's* "poll of polls", which averages the findings of five published polls on a rolling basis, Colin James notes that this year National has averaged 51% support, while Labour has averaged just under 35%.

But, in another piece, he points out that while the percentage of National's support that comes from women has gone up, the rise has been small. In the 2005 election, women were clearly in the minority - 45% - among National supporters. Currently, according to Digipoll data, women make up only a slightly higher percentage of National supporters, at 47%. Among Labour supporters, women continue to be firmly in the majority, though to a slightly lesser extent than in 2005: 56.5% then, 55.5% now. Although the numbers for the smaller parties must be treated with caution, the Greens have roughly equal male/female support, while the Maori Party attracts more women than men.

It's not hard to see why this is so, or why women have not flocked to National in larger numbers. In fact it's a little difficult to understand why many women, other than the relatively small group with high personal incomes – or married to high-income men – would opt for National.

As Sarah Palin proves, just having women on your list is no guarantee of women-friendly policies. But in New Zealand there's a really striking gap between the two parties. The top ten on National's list include two women, Judith Collins and Anne Tolley. There are only six women in its top 30. On Labour's list these numbers are doubled: four women in its top ten, including Clark as PM, and 12 women in its top 30. The Maori Party also has four women in its top ten, including co-leader Tariana Turia. The Green Party does even better, with five women in the top ten, including co-leader Jeannette Fitzsimons.

This month the *Women's Studies Newsletter* published parties' replies to ten questions about issues of concern to women. There's an interesting contrast between Labour, the Greens and National on pay equity, equal pay and the minimum wage. Labour relies on its record. The Green Party is the only one to comment on why the equal pay legislation isn't working properly. National waffles on about higher wages for all and economic growth, uses its reply to attack Labour, and clearly does not see pay equity legislation as part of the "anti discrimination legislation" it advocates: perhaps because, unlike Labour and the Greens, it does not seem too clear about the difference between equal pay and pay equity.

Pay equity – equal pay for work of equal value (like nursing and policing)

"Labour is committed to improving the economic wellbeing of women and improving the quality of earnings and employment for women who choose to enter the paid workforce. After restoring the balance to workplace relations with legislation that included the Employment Relations Act and the Holidays Act, Labour established the Pay and Employment Equity Taskforce and has begun implementing a five-year plan to address the gender pay gap in parts of the public service, the public health and education sectors. We will continue work to implement the recommendations of the Pay and Employment Equity Taskforce and continue to develop policies to ensure that over time this pay gap is closed in other parts of the economy."

"National is a Party that wants to lift the wages of all workers irrespective of gender or occupation. It is interesting to note that the pay gender gap has not budged under the Labour Government. It is true that women tend to be clustered in low paid occupations and that is why National will have policies that support economic growth and education. Lifting wages will mean women will be better able to save in retirement, will have more money to raise children, repay student debt, and have more disposable income which ultimately will give them greater choice. Economic growth means that as a wealthier country, we can do more for our citizens and will be able to afford the best medicines, afford good health care, social and education services and pay for things like the extension of paid parental leave. In 1990, the new National Government repealed the Labour Government's Employment Equity Act because we were concerned it was flawed and established a Working Party on Equity in Employment. On its recommendation, the

"while the percentage of National's support that comes from women has gone up, the rise has been small"

Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Trust was established in 1991 to promote the business benefits of equal employment opportunities to all employers. The Labour Government has tried a range of bureaucratic mechanisms aimed at pay equity without success. National believes anti discrimination legislation is still the most effective tool to secure equal pay for equal work." [Which is not what pay equity means.]



"During the last Parliament the **Green Party** introduced amendments to legislation which ensured that the role of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner include: monitoring pay equity issues; monitoring and analysing progress in achieving equal employment opportunities; develop benchmarks to evaluate the roles played by legislation and voluntary codes of practice in achieving equal employment opportunities.

"The Green Party will review the Equal Pay Act to make it consistent with current employment legislation and to ensure it includes the 'principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value' as set out in ILO convention 100 on Equal Remuneration.

"The Green Party supports establishing an autonomous Pay and Employment Equity Commission in order to effect real change in the public workplace. It will collect, collate and analyse data on pay and employment equity, and annually report progress. Legislation will require all employers to undertake pay audits, to monitor the extent of pay equity or inequity in their workplace, and the Pay and Employment Equity Commission will educate employers and employees on this process.

"We will clarify legislation so that the definition of a good employer includes issues such as delivering equal pay for work of equal value, and amend the Employment Relations Act to make it a breach of good faith not to take genuine steps to address pay and employment equity issues."

Ensuring that the current law on equal pay is upheld

"**Labour** will retain the current law on equal pay and ensure that it is upheld. In addition, Labour will support the ability of women to earn equal pay by preserving rights such as for paid parental leave, the right to breastfeeding breaks and space where practicable, and four weeks annual leave."

"**National** believes that women should be paid the same as men for doing the same job, and we are committed to ensuring this happens. We support the current law reflecting this principle and we will ensure it is upheld."

"The **Green Party** is concerned that some employers are evading Equal Pay legislation because they are still able to hide salaries in individual contracts. We will support amendments to the Equal Pay Act to allow investigation of equal pay claims by Labour Inspectors with union participation."

Raising the minimum wage

"Since 1999, **Labour** has raised the adult minimum wage from \$7 an hour to \$12. This rate now also applies to workers as young as 16 years after a very short time in paid work, compared to 20 years in 1999. Our aim is to continue this progress, as economic conditions allow."

"**National** believes everyone should be paid more. We believe one way to do that is to lower taxes which will not only put more money into people's pockets but will improve incentives to work, save and invest. In the long run, the best way to raise incomes is to promote a growing economy. We will consider how to keep the minimum wage relevant."

"**Green Party** policy is to set the minimum wage at 66% of the average wage and for this to be reviewed annually. This policy, implemented now, would give a minimum wage of \$15/hr."



Other measures that lift women's wages

The persistent gender pay gap is partly due to the kinds of jobs where women cluster, compared with the jobs where men cluster. Working with machines and money is rewarded much more highly than working with people.

But women also get a much lower return than men for their investment in education, and this gap begins from the time they enter the workforce. Women with no qualifications earn, on average, \$8,000 a year less than men with no qualifications. For some post-school qualifications, but not a degree, the gap is \$10,000. For a degree, it's \$14,000. Focusing on "economic growth" will do nothing to change these patterns.

Pay equity initiatives help, but so does raising the wages of state-employed groups such as teachers and nurses, and the funding which covers the wages of armies of low-paid women such as caregivers. Tax cuts make such increases much less likely. They also help the better-off more than those on low incomes.

When public sector nurses' wages went up, the private sector had to follow suit. National wants more private sector involvement in public provision, which is likely to have the opposite effect.

Eden's Love Your Body Day 2008

Eighty percent of New Zealand women are dissatisfied with their bodies, and up to one in five struggle with disordered eating. In our current climate there are very few opportunities to celebrate and appreciate our bodies as they are and to acknowledge the beauty and natural diversity of all body shapes and sizes.

So, put your hands up for body satisfaction on 'Love Your Body Day', **Wednesday 15 October 2008**. In **Aotea Square** in Auckland between **midday and 2pm**, Kiwis will be voting for Body Satisfaction and creating a colourful petition by placing their signed hand-prints on a huge canvas. On the eve of the election, this will be a compelling visual statement to those making decisions about service provision for disordered eating in New Zealand.

But the body celebrations and visual petitions don't end there. For those aspiring to love their bodies and who want to spread the message, funky **Love Your Body Day T-Shirts** are available via the EDEN website from September to December – www.eden.org.nz. Proceeds from the sale of these t-shirts will support EDEN's work with eating difficulties.

EDEN is an Auckland-based charity providing services to people with eating difficulties and working in the community to promote body satisfaction and prevent disordered eating.

EDEN, 1 Garnet Road, Westmere, PO Box 78005, Auckland.
Phone: 09 378 9039 Email: info@eden.org.nz www.eden.org.nz



At the Auckland Women's Centre...

Election Forum

Come and hear three of the candidates for the Auckland Central electorate, **Nikki Kaye** (National Party), **Denise Roche** (Green Party), and **Judith Tizard** MP (Labour Party) present their policies on women's issues. There will be plenty of time provided for your questions and discussion. **Tuesday 14 October, 12noon to 2pm**, at the **Women's Centre**. Bring your lunch; tea and coffee provided. **RSVPs essential** to Leonie - akcentre@womensz.org.nz

Library: recent additions

We have recently added many books to the library including *Labyrinth* by Kate Moss, *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks, *Surviving and Moving On: For Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse* by Kim McGregor, *Free Thinking* by Stephanie Dowrick, *Searching for the Secret River* by Kate Grenville, and *Further Under the Duvet* by Marian Keyes. It costs \$5 for beneficiaries and between \$10-\$20 for non-beneficiaries to join the library per year. Books are issued for a month, and there is a library returns box in the alcove on the porch if you return books after hours. **As well as being open during the week the library is also open every Saturday from 11am to 1.30pm and is staffed by a team of wonderful volunteers.**

Therapeutic massage

Available for beneficiaries and other women on low incomes on Mondays between 9.30am and 2.30pm, for an hour-long session. Cost is \$25 for beneficiaries and \$40 for non-beneficiaries.

Health services

Have your cervical smear taken at the Women's Centre by WONS: Nursing, Education and Health Promotion Services; the experts on women's health issues. If you wish, at the same time, you can also have a breast examination and/or a full consultation on women's health issues, such as menopause and PMS. The next clinics are on Friday, 24 October and 14 November. Appointments are essential. Cost is \$45, or free if you meet certain criteria. Ring 376 3227 to book or for details.

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 appointment availability.