

Winter2009



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

Auckland Women's Centre News

This winter we say "haere ra" to **Amelia Rothwell**, our Young Women's Coordinator who is taking a year's parental leave. We wish Amelia all the best and look forward to making a fuss of her and the baby when they come to visit. Ellie Lim will organise our community education programme while Amelia is away and **Heather Keats**, our new Youth Researcher, will coordinate the Teen Mothers Support Programme.

Heather trained in the UK as a community specialist public health nurse before working as a specialist nurse for teenage pregnancy in South London. Since moving to New Zealand last year she has been a member of our Governance Collective and working as a community Plunket Nurse and as a staff nurse at National Women's Health, Auckland Hospital. Her passion lies with teen parents, so she is excited to be involved with the project as a staff member.



Heather is working on our research project — scoping the development of a Teen Parent Centre in Auckland. Currently she is organising a piece of research called Photovoice involving teen parents taking photographs which illustrate their vision and ideas for the new Teen Parent Centre. Heather will exhibit these photographs for the family and friends of the young parents and draw on the young parents' ideas to plan for the new centre.

The winners of the **Preventing Violence YouTube Competition** were announced recently. Organised by the Auckland Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children, the competition highlighted male violence in young peoples' relationships and explored some of the myths about this violence. The judges felt that the five entries screened at the Award Ceremony were all of a very high standard and it was hard to pick the prize winners. The first prize of \$2,000 was awarded to **Fiona Young** for *Her World* and the second prize of \$1,000 to **Hannah Spierer** for *A Mug's Game*. Check out the prize winning entries on the side bar of the front page of our website: www.awc.org.nz

Vote Yes – Referendum 09



**If it's not ok to hit adults –
why is it ok to hit children?**

Staff: **Centre Manager:** Leonie Morris, akcentre@womens.org.nz **Teen Parent Centre Development Manager:** Annalise Myers, youngparent@womens.org.nz **Teen Antenatal Coordinator:** Sally Teiniker, preganacy@womens.org.nz **SKIP Project Coordinator:** Gaby Ugalde, skip@womens.org.nz **Administrator:** Elizabeth Morey, admin@womens.org.nz **Women's Services Coordinator:** Ellie Lim, info@womens.org.nz **Funding Coordinator,** Helen Vicary, funding@womens.org.nz, **Teen Parent Community Researcher:** Heather Keats, research@womens.org.nz

Domestic violence: female offenders

A report analysing all female offenders arrested for domestic violence in Auckland City Police District over a six month period (April to September 2008) identifies key differences between male and female offenders.

Written by **Deborah Mackenzie from Shine** (Safe Homes in New Zealand Everyday, formerly Preventing Violence in the Home), the report presents crucial insights into the dynamics of female domestic violence offending.

While not condoning offending by females, the report highlights the **significantly lower incidence of offending by women:**

- In 2005/6, of the 29,491 arrested domestic violence offenders, 14% were females.
- In the six month period studied, female offenders comprised 10% of all domestic violence arrests, a rate which remained constant in this period.

In the six month period, 60 women were arrested for family violence in Auckland City. Of these 60 cases:

- Twenty involved female victims: 9 lesbian (ex-partners), 10 family members, 1 dependent of a caregiver.
- Forty, or two-thirds, of the cases involved male victims: 35 ex/partners, 4 family members, and 1 unknown relationship.
- Nearly one-third of all female offenders had previously been victims of the men they offended against.
- None of these female offenders, previously known as victims, were assessed as high risk by NZ Police and only one offender was reported as being of moderate risk.
- Ten of the offenders were not known previously as victims or offenders. Of this group, only two of the victims reported being scared of the offender.
- Over half of the female offenders in heterosexual relationships had endured sustained and serious violence from their male partners in the past. Often the violence they used was minor compared to what they had endured as victims.
- Overall, most female offenders were reported as no apparent risk or low risk, with none reported as extreme risk.

"... Over half of the female offenders in heterosexual relationships had endured sustained violence from their male partners in the past"

In the overwhelming majority of cases, the male victims did not report feeling scared of the female offenders.

In about ten cases, both the offender and victim were arrested, known as a dual arrest. The report suggests that increased numbers of dual arrests are one of the unexpected outcomes of pro-arrest policing policies. Victims of violence arrested for using violence as self-defence or retaliation are further endangered by this dual arresting practice and much more unlikely to contact the Police in future.

In order to ensure safety for victims of violence, arrest policies need to distinguish between victims of "battering" who use responsive or retaliatory violence, from offenders who are perpetrators of sustained and intentional abuse. The latter group is known as the predominant aggressor in international literature.

The report argues that safe responses to domestic violence need to reflect the real differences in the nature, motivation, impact and context of female offending from that of male offending.

These responses require the Police to:

- Discourage dual arrests in domestic violence cases.
- Identify the primary person in need of safety.
- Determine which party is the predominant aggressor.
- Take only the predominant aggressor into custody.
- Develop specialised prosecution policies for cases where an offender has used retaliatory violence.

The full report is available on our website: www.awc.org.nz click on HOT TOPICS.

At the Women's Centre ...

Women's Library: recent additions

We have recently added many books to the library including *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison, *In the Kitchen* by Monica Ali, *Beside the Dark Pool: A Memoir* by Fiona Kidman, *The Angel's Cut* by Elizabeth Knox, *Limestone* by Fiona Farrell, and *What I Loved* by Siri Hustvedt.

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 11.00am to 1.30pm and is staffed by a team of wonderful volunteers.**

Books wanted for Women's Library

Due to the recession, we are limited in the number of new books we can buy for the library, and would love it if you could search your bookshelves and donate recent books (published this year or last year) that you have read and perhaps no longer wish to keep. If you cannot visit us during opening hours, please put them in the library returns box on the deck of the Women's Centre building. Please note that we only carry books by women authors in the library and if we already have the book, we would put it on our sales trolley to raise funds to purchase new books for the library.

Courses and Groups at the Centre

- *Introducing a new course!* **Amazing Assertiveness for Women** with Carol Rewega is a 6-week programme designed to help you make positive changes in your life through being assertive.
- It's not too late to pick up those needles and **Get Knitting!** Learn how to knit something cosy to keep those winter drafts at bay. This course is suitable for complete beginners and those who want to improve their basic skills.
- **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.
- **Girls Self Defence Workshop** for girls aged 7-12 years — a serious subject dealt with in a fun way.
- **Teen Antenatal Classes:** This series of 4-week programmes includes **Early pregnancy classes for pregnant teens**, **Teen childbirth classes** and **Your bundle of joy** (which covers issues such as: sleeping, crying, introducing solids and baby's milestones).

Also available this term: **Women's self defence workshop**, **Book Club**, **Irate: Women and Anger**, weekly **Hatha Yoga** and **yoga/pilates/stretch** classes.

For details: check out our community education brochure or website.

To book a place on any of our courses: phone 09 376 3227, email info@womens.org.nz, or drop in and see us.

Counselling

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

Therapeutic massage

Available for beneficiaries and other women on low incomes on Mondays between 9.15am and 2.30pm, for an hour-long session. Cost is \$25 for beneficiaries and \$40 for non-beneficiaries.

Women's Health Clinics

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. Appointments are available at the Centre on Friday mornings. Next available dates are **Friday, 14 August and 9 October**. Appointments are essential. Cost is \$45, or free if you meet certain criteria. Ring 376 3227 to book or for details.



The death of night classes in New Zealand?

Have you ever done a night class from our community education programme or at a school? The Government recently announced a \$13 million cut to the subsidy for these classes from January 2010. The remaining 20% will be spent only on numeracy and literacy classes.

The Auckland Women's Centre has received funding for night classes for over 20 years, offering courses such as computing for women who missed the electronic revolution, to today's knitting classes, especially relevant in our current economic situation.

When he was in opposition National's Finance Minister, Bill English, was strongly supportive of night classes: "For more than 50 years, night classes have provided a leg-up for people wanting to return to the education system. National supports these low-cost courses. The current system of night classes through schools works well and should not be tampered with".

In one slash-and-burn move the government has ended its commitment to life-long learning and displayed its contempt for what the Minister, Anne Tolley, derides as just "hobby" classes.

Remember, this is a Government which found \$35 million extra to increase the subsidy for the privileged who attend private schools, but can't maintain just half that amount for night classes that benefit the entire community.



The community education sector is rightly angry and determined to fight the cuts. Community Learning Association in Schools (CLASS) President, Maryke Fordyce, says over 200,000 adults enrol in Adult and Community Education (ACE) courses every year and these funding cuts "will change the landscape of community learning as

we know it". She says the association is devastated by the likely impact of the cuts on communities.

The 212 high schools involved employ a part-time co-ordinator each, and between them the schools employ some 15,000 tutors. Schools are required to use at least 9.5 percent of their ACE funding to fund programmes provided by community groups. In addition to

In 2007, research by Price Waterhouse Coopers estimated the national economic gain of night classes is in the range of \$4.8 billion to \$6.3 billion per year, at a cost to the Government of \$16 million per year.

the Auckland Women's Centre classes, this includes assistance for refugees and migrants, preparing healthy food, anti-violence courses and courses for Maori and Pasifika communities.

Without the Government subsidy course fees at the Auckland Women's Centre, currently between \$40 to \$80 for a 6-week course, would cost between \$180 to \$220 making them unaffordable for most women.

The benefits of night classes include:

- A diverse and dynamic range of activities are provided.
- Learning is easier in a non-formal setting.
- Provides an opportunity for people to connect with others in their community.
- Promotes inclusiveness.
- Develops confidence and self-esteem.
- Facilitates learning pathways into further education.
- Meets the learning needs of its community.
- Helps to strengthen social cohesion.

In times of economic recession these are all outcomes we need more of, not less of.

This budget cut is scheduled to be introduced at the beginning of next year. If enough people are angry and let their local MPs know, then the Government will reinstate this funding. If you don't do it for yourself, make a call to your MP or send a letter on behalf of your friends, family and neighbours who may be learning Moroccan cooking or how to manage the family budget in a recession.

Join the campaign to re-instate night classes.

Sign the petition at

www.stoptnightclasscuts.org.nz