



# National Executive News

**December 2009**

**P O Box 6566, Dunedin, New Zealand**

**[www.nzfgw.org.nz](http://www.nzfgw.org.nz)**

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## EDITORIAL

*Dot Page, National President*



### THREE OF A KIND?

It's a popular superstition that significant occurrences, good or bad, come in threes. I am not at all superstitious, but the rule of three has reflected my recent experience as the new NZFGW triennium has got under way. I've taken part in three national women's conferences over the past three months and at the risk of appearing a conference junkie (because I wrote about our own conference in the last newsletter) I want to look at some of the commonalities and contrasts among them.

The first was the National Council of Women's National Executive, held in Wellington in September. This was not strictly a conference but a mid-term meeting of the Board with Presidents of Branches and Nationally Organised Societies, but with a voting strength of 57, many observers and wide powers, it was close enough to qualify. The second was the NZFGW conference in Auckland at the beginning of October. With nine of our ten branches represented we had a voting strength of 37, as well as many observers. I don't intend to revisit it here except for purposes of comparison. The most recent, last weekend, was the Australian Federation of University Women conference in Sydney, where States' representatives in the federal structure exercised 30 votes in all and, again, there were plenty of observers.

The practical arrangements for all the conferences can be passed over quickly. They were all efficiently run, with the conference venue also providing accommodation, so that we could discuss business after hours, enjoy each other's company and make new friends. Held respectively in a hotel, a well-appointed girls' boarding school and a university residential college, they all had access to appropriate meeting and common rooms, and audio-visual facilities.

In each case a great deal of effort had gone into producing comprehensive and very interesting conference papers, which included full reports from branches, committees, executive members and so on. Typically, these reports were adopted with only brief comment from the presenter and, more often than not, none at all from the floor. While this obviously saved time, it made for a rather bland effect and gave conference participants little chance to engage with or show their appreciation for the energetic work behind the reports. Even issues that might have been expected to rouse quite heated debate, such as the NZFGW remit to increase dues or the AFUW one to change its name to the Australian Federation of Graduate Women caused scarcely a ripple. Only the NCW Executive allowed time for the unexpected: in its traditional soapbox session, anyone could address the gathering on a topic near to her heart. Advance planning and efficient meeting procedure worked impressively, however, in the case of the almost thirty pages of amendments to the AFUW constitution, which went through with remarkable smoothness and speed in two crisp sessions, the first to identify any areas of likely controversy and the second to deal with them.

The conference themes were all topical. NCWNZ's *Making Women Count* could be read in two ways: affirming our place in society and insisting we take responsibility for our financial sustainability. Both meanings were addressed by the invited speakers, who included Judy McGregor, Chief Executive of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, on 'The New Gender Agenda', and the Banking and Insurance Ombudsmen (both women). Retirement Commissioner Diana Crossan identified financial issues specific to women, such as lower pay, childcare costs, slower repayment of student debt and difficulty of getting impartial financial advice, and urged us to make the effort to understand our financial situation. She and others strongly recommended the website, [sorted.org.nz](http://sorted.org.nz). The practical tone of these addresses was reinforced by the

Conveners of Standing Committees, who spoke on the legislative process and where submissions fit into this, and on current concerns for women in economics, health and education.

Our theme of *Taking Effective Action* fitted well with both the NCW theme of financial literacy and the AFUW one, *Women Building Sustainable Futures*. Instead of having guest speakers interspersed with the business sessions over the length of the conference, AFUW made Saturday a Public Day. The States and Territories reported on their work and we listened to some outstanding speakers, including Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales and Chancellor of the University of Sydney, who has a record in indigenous health services, Mary Crock, Professor of Public Law in the University of Sydney, who works in immigration and refugee law, and experts on climate change and environmentally sustainable design in architecture. Later, at the formal dinner held in the elegant Sydney Women's Club, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia – the first woman to attain the position – spoke with eloquence and compassion about a recent tour in Africa. At all three conferences it was immensely heartening to see women at the pinnacle of success in public life supporting women's organisations with such evident warmth and obviously caring for the plight of women in need.

Finally, these three conferences all reflected both our interaction with the wider community and our advocacy for all women in our society. The Australian Federation has an impressive record in advocacy and was rightly proud to distribute at conference a resume of actions taken since the 2006 triennial conference. It ran to fifteen pages. Our own advocacy is more collaborative. The National Council of Women acts as a co-ordinating agent for New Zealand women's organisations of all kinds and as such, has a special relationship with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and some

parliamentarians. We can, and do, contribute our special expertise on educational concerns (of which there are an abundance) and collaborate on more general issues – currently, for example, the non-governmental report on CEDAW.

I've taken a great deal away from these three conferences, but one of the most important elements is the conviction that the two partnerships they represent, the one with our Australian colleagues, the other with our New Zealand sisters, should be sustained and strengthened.

## **CIR REPORT**

**Claire Matthewson, National Executive**  
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### **Mexico Conference, 5 – 9 August 2010**

PLAN NOW TO GO to Mexico City for the 30th IFUW Triennial Conference on *Education, Empowerment & Development*

PLEASE LET US KNOW: Several requests have come from interested members keen to know who else is intending to go to the Conference. At present I know informally of seven. If you have a reasonably firm intention to go to Mexico, please could you let me know?

CALL FOR WORKSHOPS: Many thanks to members who submitted proposals. Four were gratefully received – one emanating from Wellington and three emanating from Otago. Two of Otago's proposals related to **New Challenges for Sustainable Development and Towards a Just Society**. The Wellington and other Otago proposal related to **Advancing Women through Lifelong Learning**. (These will be considered in good time for meeting the IFUW 31 December submission deadline.)

### **Join IFUW's 2010-2013 Leadership Team**

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS for the Board of Officers and Standing Committees for 2010-2013 now open.

IFUW leaders play key roles in implementing policy, developing programmes and giving direction to the Federation. IFUW seeks a diverse leadership representing different ages and geographic regions. Members with vision, energy and commitment are encouraged to stand. The Committees are:

- IFUW Board of Officers
- Committee for the Award of International Fellowships
- Finance Committee
- Membership Committee
- Resolutions Committee
- Status of Women Committee

**Details:** About the positions, responsibilities, time and financial obligations and qualifications needed are available on the IFUW website – [www.ifuw.org/nominations](http://www.ifuw.org/nominations).

**Eligibility:** Any IFUW member of is eligible. Candidates must be nominated by their national Federation. Nominations must reach IFUW by 5 February 2010.

**Timeline:** If you are interested in being nominated, please contact Dorothy Page, President, or Claire Matthewson, CIR, by 15 January 2010. We have just one expression of interest so far.

**IFUW Special Committees:** A Call for Nominations for these will be made later with a closing date in late April/early May. The Special Committees include Project Development and the Hegg Hoffer Fund. One expression of interest has been received to date.

### **Consultation on IFUW Programme for Action – Phase 2**

All three Parts of this email discussion have concluded. Summaries of the discussions (of Education, Financial Independence, and Empowerment of Women) are posted on the IFUW website.

### **PGWNet Council AGM 2009**

This electronic meeting, chaired by AFUW President, Jenny Straus, is taking place currently (8 – 18 December 2009). As well

as Beverley Turner, IFUW's PGWNet membership advisor, three members of the national Executive will be "attending" – the President, CIR Claire Matthewson and PAC Linda Robertson. Stephanie Hutchinson is attending as an Observer

### **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

On 25 November, the Day's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, UNIFEM's Executive Director Ines Alberdi observed that: "We still live in a world where violence against women and girls is a major source of insecurity for half the world's population." According to some estimates, up to 70 per cent of women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

IFUW partnered with UNIFEM in the first phase of UNIFEM's campaign *Say No to Violence*. It now urges national affiliates to get involved even more strongly in the new phase *Say NO – UNiTE to End Violence against Women*. Local and individual actions might include adding your name to the Say NO petition, volunteering at local refuges or women's organisations, advocating for legislation, donating funds that support local organisations.

To view the Say NO-UNiTE website:  
<http://saynotoviolence.org/>.

### **Challenges to Women's Empowerment in the 21st Century**

A reading recommendation was received from a Waikato member to Branches interested in the IFUW 2010 Triennial Conference topic of women's empowerment (perhaps as a basis for a local workshop):

*Women and Politics: New Zealand and Comparative Perspectives*. Kate McMillan, John Leslie & Elizabeth McLeay (eds), Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2009.

## **AFUW 34<sup>th</sup> TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE REPORT**

### **Former National CIR Stephanie Hutchinson**

The AFUW Conference (26-30 November), with the theme "Women Building Sustainable Futures" was held at the University of Sydney's historic Sancta Sophia College. It was attended by NZFGW members Louise Croot (as IFUW President), who spoke at the Opening Social Event, Dot Page, Dorothy Meyer, Stephanie Hutchinson and Cynthia McKenzie.

Three Fijian Association of Women Graduates were also present, as well as two indigenous women graduates sponsored by individual AFUW members and the Office for Women's Policy (NSW Government).

There were 25 delegates from the Australian States and approximately 40 observers

There were a number of highlights and points of interest:

#### **The Speakers**

Two women who are outstanding in public life – Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir (Governor of NSW, Chancellor of the University of Sydney) opened the Conference, and Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Governor-General of Australia was keynote speaker at the Gala Dinner.

#### **The Business Sessions**

AFUW had a number of Constitutional changes to be made, mostly, as at our Conference, to bring membership rules into line with IFUW rules, as well as "tidying up" various areas of their Constitution. The key change was a change of name to Australian Federation of Graduate Women (recognising that graduates of tertiary institutions other than universities are eligible for membership).

Also of note was the drop in membership numbers to just over 700 members, mirroring the NZFGW situation.

## Advocacy

The most impressive area of AFGW action is in its advocacy areas. It has very strong links to two large networks of Australian NGOs, which have considerable influence at both State and Federal levels

This was a most enjoyable and stimulating Conference.

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORT**

**Linda Robertson, National Executive**  
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### **Submission to the Law Commission: Alcohol in our lives**

A letter of support from NZFGW was sent applauding the overall direction of the Law Commission's proposal on alcohol.

Essentially the letter stated that advertising providing half truths about the impact of alcohol consumption is irresponsible and that NZFGW believes women have the right to know about the impact of alcohol on their bodies. For a fuller discussion of this issue see the NCW website:

[www.ncwnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Microsoft-Word-S09.36-Alcohol-Review-Oct-09.pdf](http://www.ncwnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Microsoft-Word-S09.36-Alcohol-Review-Oct-09.pdf)

### **Reminders of the Policy remits endorsed by the 2009 NZFGW conference**

- Early Intergenerational Dysfunction in Families
- Review of HIV/AIDS intervention/prevention programmes in NZ (a full report of Hutt Valley's report on this topic is available on the NZFGW website: see the Branch news and Projects)
- Reinstating funding of Community Education.

## **The Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment Bill**

One issue affecting women are changes to ACC funding. Elizabeth Bang, National President National Council of Women of New Zealand, in a press release says that NCWNZ believes that the changes to ACC are in conflict with the government's obligations under CEDAW (Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women). Women, who are seeking ACC subsidised counselling for experiencing trauma as a result of a sex crime are being discriminated against through policy that removes access to appropriate assessment and treatment. The NCWNZ website provides a full list of the impacts of the ACC plans for changes to sexual abuse counselling.

[www.ncwnz.org.nz/acc-changes-to-sexual-abuse-counselling/](http://www.ncwnz.org.nz/acc-changes-to-sexual-abuse-counselling/)

### **ACC cuts target older women**

The New Zealand Association of Gerontology (NZAG) is shocked at ACC's proposal to cease funding the Otago Exercise Programme for Falls Prevention (OEP). It joins with the Australian and New Zealand Society of Geriatric Medicine in calling for an explanation from ACC and Government Ministers.

New Zealand is leading the way with its Exercise Programme for Falls Prevention which targets people over 80 years old who have had a fall and are living in the community. The OEP is a home-based, individually-prescribed exercise programme that takes place over a twelve-month period. It consists of a series of progressive leg-strengthening and balance-retraining exercises that a trained instructor prescribes during a series of six home visits.

After more than ten years the programme is showing show real benefits and is also shaping best practice. It is internationally respected and other countries are beginning to implement it. The OEP has been proven to reduce falls in people over 80 years old, by 35%, which means a

significant reduction in related injuries and subsequent treatment costs.

“There has to be some rational debate on this issue between the different parties so this programme is not lost in order for one part of the sector to save money,” Dr Wright-St Clair NZAG President.

Information taken from:

[www.scoop.co.nz/stories/GE0910/S00124.htm](http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/GE0910/S00124.htm)

### **Business Leader Award**

World-renowned opera singer Dame Kiri Te Kanawa has become the first Māori woman to receive the Aotearoa New Zealand Māori Business Leader of the Year award for her talent and business acumen over a more than 40-year distinguished international career.

### **Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards – Does it Matter?**

Professor Susan Vinnicombe OBE from the Cranfield School of Management (UK) is well qualified to speak on this topic. For 10 years she has been producing the annual Female FTSE Report and regular research studies in the area allow her to identify the key trends, with comparisons to other countries. In her presentation to the University of Auckland’s Business School (October 8<sup>th</sup>) she looked at general myths on women in leadership, before studying the position of women on the top UK corporate boards. The following is a brief summary of some key points extracted from her power point presentation:

#### **Myths**

- Women aren’t interested
- Women aren’t seen as having the right leadership style
- Women haven’t got the right experience
- Women don’t take risks

#### **Why does it matter that so few women make it to the top?**

By 2010 just 20% of the workforce of the UK will be white, male and under 45.

Eighty percent of workforce growth will be among women. Women will form a significant part of the available talent pool.

Females outperform males at every level of education; 80% of consumer decisions are made by women.

Women own 48% of Britain’s personal wealth and this will rise to 60% in 2025.

Companies with women on the board perform better financially (ROE) and have better corporate governance.

Better corporate decision making. The biggest difference shown by Canadian Research is in non-financial performance measures by boards with more women (e.g. innovation, CSR, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, communication, strategy implementation).

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

***Jean S Fleming, National Executive***

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Applications for Independent Membership continue to arrive in my email via the National NZFGW website. Some of these are from overseas New Zealanders, but most are from women in parts of the country without a local Branch. We now have nearly 50 Independent Members, the majority of whom are on email. I welcome all these women to this “Special Branch”. Over the summer I will be contacting you to ask if you would be happy to have your e-contact details circulated to members in your immediate location, so that in future email-based discussion groups might be possible on local issues. There are a few members from Tauranga, for example, which recently lost its Branch.

### **Get connected!**

For Independent members who are not on email, I would encourage you to be brave and truly independent and take the plunge to connect. Contact SeniorNet ([www.seniornet.org.nz](http://www.seniornet.org.nz)) or your local library for help. Better still, get your kids

to give you this for Christmas! I am happy to provide you with telephone contact details for your local SeniorNet, who provide training and support. The world is moving far too fast for people to reject the Internet and electronic connection. Of course I realise a few may be unable to access a computer or don't want to read their newsletter on-line. However the work and cost of printing and mailing newsletters, especially with the trend to Independent Membership, means the hard copy newsletter is no longer sustainable in a world trying to reduce its carbon footprint.

That said, a big welcome to two new Independent Members, **Vanessa Van Uden** from Queenstown and **Sandra Paulus** from Manakau, who joined in November!

I hope you all have a safe and happy summer, despite the weather.

## **FOUNDATION PROFESSOR OF PACIFIC STUDIES APPOINTED TO AUT**

Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop has been appointed as the Foundation Professor of Pacific Studies at Auckland University of Technology and takes up her role at the end of October.

As Professor of Pacific Studies, the former Director of Va'aomanu Pasifika will continue to develop her research looking into the influence of societal changes on Pacific families and communities as well as fostering and facilitating Pacific research and scholarship at AUT.

Professor Ian Shirley, Pro Vice Chancellor Research at AUT, says Professor Fairbairn-Dunlop's appointment is an extremely significant initiative by the University.

"Not only does Professor Fairbairn-Dunlop hold the chiefly title of Tagaloatele but she has also built an outstanding reputation as a researcher and a scholar."

"There is little doubt that Professor

Fairbairn-Dunlop is one of the Pacific's leading researchers."

Professor Fairbairn-Dunlop has had a distinguished career as a Pacific scholar working with all the small nation states of Oceania as well as the Pacific Regional Office of UNESCO, the Asia-Pacific Forum, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, NZAID and the South Pacific Commission.

Last year Professor Fairbairn-Dunlop's contributions to research and training in the area of Pacific development issues over the past 30 years were recognised with an Insignia of an Officer of the NZ Order of Merit.

Professor Fairbairn-Dunlop has worked with AUT in the past through the Pacific Islands Family Study in the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences and through the Building Research Capability in the Social Sciences (BRCSS) Pacific Research Network, welcoming the Bibliographic Index of Pacific Theses which the Office of Pasifika Advancement produced earlier this year.

She was the inaugural director of Va'aomanu Pasifika, the Pacific Studies unit at Victoria University.

Professor Fairbairn-Dunlop has written a wide range of reports and publications including *Tamatai Samoa: Their Stories*, *Samoan Women: Widening Choices and Making Our Place: Growing Up PI in New Zealand*.

## **FELLOWSHIP REPORT**

### ***Lauren Lindsay, 2009 recipient***

Lauren Lindsay studied for a Masters degree in comparative, European and international legal studies at the European University Institute at Badia Fiesoleana. She was one of 11 students worldwide to be accepted into the programme, in which every course of study must be conducted in at least two languages. Lauren was recently awarded her LLM.

## **Extract from Lauren's Blog**

### The EUI and Florence

I completed a year at the European University Institute, reading for an LLM in European, Comparative and International Law. The EUI is essentially a doctoral and post-doctoral university although the law faculty offers a Masters programme. It is situated in San Domenico, a sleepy hamlet which sits above Florence and below Fiesole, a lovely "hill top" town.

Florence was a wonderful city to live in – vibrant and permanently awake. I felt fortunate every day to live and experience it. I lived alone in an apartment in the city centre on via dei servi (street of the slaves) which lies between the Duomo and the Piazza SS Annunziata. As a street it connects two of Brunelleschi's architectural wonders: the Dome of the Santa Maria del Fiore church (known as the Duomo) and the Museo degli Innocenti, which used to be an orphanage.

### The Workload

Villa Schifanoia, meaning a villa to "avoid boredom", is home to the EUI law and history students. As an LLM student I took seminars with the PhD students for the first two terms. I had three seminars twice a week as well as my Italian and French language classes (around 16 contact hours per week). The core workload of the

LLM is researching and writing a 30,000 word thesis. Centred around the thesis are your readings for each seminar; two oral presentations per term, including one in a non-mother tongue; and two 5,000 word papers.

I took a diverse range of seminars, which I enjoyed immensely, covering international human rights law to cultural diversity, legal philosophy to legal methodology. The seminars were informally arranged with one or two professors facilitating the debate/discussion around the theme of each class. It was daunting being surrounded by PhD students, other professors and post-doctorates but I felt

that my New Zealand perspective could on occasion offer something unique. I am pleased that I tackled a jurisprudence paper as this came in very handy in my thesis. My thesis required detailed consideration of the concepts "competence" and "dignity". These in turn required much research into the areas of autonomy, choice and theories of rights.

### My Thesis

My thesis was submitted in September of this year and considered the limitation of parental authority to consent to a genetic test on behalf of their child, when the child itself is unable to provide consent.

Identifying my research question was the main challenge which took a few months of solid research.

The essential difficulty lay in isolating a topic which would be feasible in 30,000 words. When I look back, two things really assisted me in arriving at a decent research question: access to excellent research facilities and some relevant legal conferences. As to the former, access to the EUI library (with its amazing inter library loan service) and the Oxford University Library (through a membership as a postgrad researcher) gave me more than everything I needed.

*A full copy of Lauren's blog is on the NZFGW website, under "Reports from Awardees".*

## **HAPPY CHRISTMAS**

### ***From the National Executive***

We hope you all have a restful and wonderful break over Christmas and New Year.

Please note, the next newsletter will be mid February.

In the meantime, enjoy a safe holiday period with your friends and family.