

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK

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AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK

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The idea was born out of meetings of the NZ Political Studies Association Conference.

The aim is to promote communication between women teaching, researching or interested/involved in politics/public policy (in paid or unpaid work).

Newsletters are published three times a year.

FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER

Some themes to be covered in forthcoming issues are: women and welfare, development, collective action, elites, management, history and feminist teaching and feminist postmodernism. We are interested in receiving articles, information for our teaching and research news section, book reviews, information about relevant conferences, and letters commenting on articles printed in the newsletter. We are eager to have student input - essays on the above, or any other, topics would be welcomed.

Please forward material to:

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BACK COPIES OF THE NEWSLETTER

The following issues of the Aotearoa Women and Politics Network Newsletter are available at a cost of \$5 each from Heather Devere:

- 'Electoral Reform and Women' - August/September 1992
- 'The New Right and Women' - November/December 1992
- 'Reflecting on Suffrage' - May/June 1994
- 'Researching Women and Politics' - February 1995
- 'Women and International Relations' - July 1995
- 'Maori Women and Politics' - December 1995
- 'Women and Trade Unions' - April 1996
- 'Women and the Law' - July 1996
- 'Body Politics' - December 1996
- 'Women and the 1996 Elections' - April 1997

If anyone has any other issues which they can let us have for photocopying and for our archive, please could they send them to Heather Devere.

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NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

Aotearoa/New Zealand Women and Politics network received a letter from Minister of Women's Affairs, Chris Fletcher about the establishment of the New Zealand Women's Consultative Council as set out in the Coalition Government's Budget decision. The Council is said to be "a transitional step towards the establishment of the Women's Commissioner" which was proposed in the 1996 Coalition Agreement. Funding has been approved for three years. Chris Fletcher wrote as follows:

"The Council's role will be to strengthen the relationship between the women of New Zealand and the Government by enhancing women's ability to be heard and to have key issues considered by Government. By establishing the Council the Coalition Government recognises that there is a need for more monitoring and advocacy on behalf of women and that the knowledge and expertise of women's voluntary organisations has not always been sufficiently recognised. The Council's work will complement the excellent policy advice which the Government receives from the Minister of Women's Affairs. The Council will have six members and a Chair. Their membership terms will be for one year."

Chris Fletcher was seeking members who would: "have credibility with women in the community; have well-established contacts with women's organisations and networks; have a wide-ranging knowledge of key issues for women; reflect the diversity of women in the community; have the capacity to contribute, clear communications skills and analytical skills".

The network was offered the opportunity to suggest potential members of the Council - either members of the network or women who were active in other organisations. Chris Fletcher required nominations for membership, along with brief background information by 1 August. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time to organise a response. The Network does not have procedures for dealing with such requests that require input from members. We would be grateful to receive members' thoughts and suggestions in this regard. In the meantime, we have written to Chris Fletcher thanking her for the opportunity and requesting that we be kept up to date with Council developments.

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK

The next issue of the newsletter will be devoted to feminist collectives. We hope to include comment from ex-Broadsheet collective members. The disappearance of Broadsheet was in part a result of too few people available to carry the workload. This difficulty is confronted also by the Network. There are the obvious tasks of typing, photocopying, and mailing the newsletter, together with seeing to financial matters. The most time-consuming task, however, is seeking (and securing!) contributions. It has been suggested that one solution could be for the Network to 'go electronic'. However, there is the concern that this would reduce access to the Network for certain people. In addition, a dedicated organiser would still be required. We would appreciate suggestions from members as to how the Network might continue into 1998 and beyond.

A REVIEW OF THE FINDINGS OF BEHIND THE SCENES PART TWO - A DETAILED PROFILE OF WOMEN WHO WORK IN THE NEW ZEALAND FILM/VIDEO/TELEVISION INDUSTRY

by **ALISON COLVINE**

Communication Studies Department, Auckland Institute of Technology

Last year, I was commissioned by Women in Film and Television (WIFT) Auckland and the New Zealand Film Commission to investigate the position of women who work in the Film/Video/Television industry in New Zealand. My research comprised two parts.

Part One involved looking at crew lists for the last twelve years in *Onfilm* magazine. The aim was to find out what roles women were occupying in the industry. The main finding of this study was that women were concentrated in the same areas - Production roles, Continuity, Make up and Costume. The positions occupied by women tended to be less senior and more of the assistant-type. These roles were constantly 'feminised'. When production increased in the industry, women's roles were not diversified but merely concentrated in the same areas.

Part Two was a detailed questionnaire which was sent nation-wide with a sample of 500 women. The response rate was high at 300 replies. The questionnaire contained both long and short answers. The areas covered included: Work History, Training, Current Work Situation, Work place experiences, Opinions on Policy issues and Basic demographic information about respondents.

The Part Two report was released in a formal media launch on Friday 13th June. Not only does the report of the questionnaire contain detailed statistical information but the long answer information provides anecdotal evidence of women's experiences in the industry. Overall the report is extremely comprehensive. Three issues - funding, child care and mentoring - contained the most vigorous debates and varied findings. I have chosen to highlight these for this discussion.

From the findings in this report it appears that the issue of funding is extremely important and a pivotal issue for career direction. There are several issues to be addressed within this broad area. In accordance with comments in this report, the issue of funding bodies, who holds key positions on them, and how they operate needs to be explored further. This could even be seen as consumer advice to applicants. How funding bodies function is extremely important with regard to what sort of programme types get produced. This feature can be

seen in the comments of respondents about the clashing of ideals between New Zealand On Air and the programmers.

Many comments were made about the sort of material funded and what was not. Some respondents are speculating about what governs funding allocation decisions, however this information is not made public and it would be interesting to know what proposals do not get approved. Indeed, it needs to be known how this information would effect women in the industry.

The issue of amount of funding needs to be looked at more. Many respondents commented that although they had not necessarily applied for funding themselves, they were aware that on the productions they had worked the budget was very small. Similarly it was pointed out that the amount of government assistance to the Film/Video/Television industry was minimal compared to other countries, for example Australia and France. How funding allocation operates was also highlighted; it was mentioned that costs had increased but the pool of funding had not, so productions were now having to deal with a smaller allocation of funds. Alternative sources of funding also need to be highlighted and explored further.

It would appear that an increase in funds to funding bodies would improve a great number of conditions in the industry. Many respondents feel the way funding applications were approved needed to be addressed and indeed many respondents favoured a more stratified method of funding. The majority of respondents favoured separate Film Funds for specific groups such as women and Maori. However, the success of this scheme depends on an overall increase in funding and how these funds are administered.

Certainly an increase in funding would appear to address a number of issues specified. Hopefully, this would herald more production, which would mean constant work for people in the industry. There were many comments in the questionnaires on the lack of regular work and its ramifications. More work would give respondents a chance to hone their skills and achieve their goals.

An increase in funding per production is also needed. A greater number of respondents commented on the appalling physical conditions in their workplace and how basic issues such as safety had been compromised. These comments ranged from respondents in the technical department discussing how their personal safety was given low priority in budget cuts. A number of respondents who worked in Costume and Make Up pointed out how low budgets meant that they did not have adequate facilities to work in. Examples were given of dressing or making up actors in cars in location instead of proper rooms with good lighting. Indeed these comments can be related to the fact that other crew members did not see these departments as legitimate.

Another finding was the issue of child care and how to juggle work:

"The essential problem remains - work in the film industry isn't just a job, it's life, and a very consuming and time demanding one".

According to this opinion and the freelance nature of the industry, the issue of childcare has become a difficult one. Even though a slight minority of respondents have children, all the

candid comments on this subject have been in account. Similarly, I feel this issue does need to be addressed and a more satisfactory solution sought rather than the current Catch 22 situation of women trying to care for children and work in an industry with incompatible child care hours. However, it is possible that this problem will exist for women in many industries. A comparison of these results to other professional women would be important to compare the quality of conditions. A number of issues arising seem to point to problems with the freelance nature of the industry, such as lack of work, competition for work, and lack of feedback. Perhaps this highlights the role that support groups should take?

Perhaps another area that needs to be addressed by industry organisations is the formation of mentoring schemes. An overwhelming majority of respondents felt that mentoring was important to young people in the industry. There was an ambivalent attitude expressed toward courses so perhaps this has been a traditional way of learning in the industry. For the continuation of education, mentoring schemes need to be formalised all over through industry organisations and places of employment. This would be beneficial for women in non-traditional roles. The specifying of skills in the survey pointed out that women were not in technical roles. Perhaps a mentoring scheme would be one way of rectifying this problem? Some of the needs and opinions expressed by the respondents in this survey need to be taken into account by training institutions if their courses are going to serve women adequately.

Similarly, there are further attitudinal differences in the industry to be established such as what sort of subject matter are the productions the respondent is involved in and what would they prefer to be involved in. Age and race were highlighted as further discriminatory issues so they should be explored further. Moreover, the issue of sexual orientation needs to be explored given the high number of single women in the industry.

In order to provide a fuller profile of people who work in the industry, a companion study for men should be conducted. This will help to determine the differences between workers better and crystallise the issues for people who work in the Film/Video/Television industry further.

Moreover, it will be important to carry out a similar longitudinal study in five-ten years time in order to determine any changes and to understand more about the position of women working in the industry in New Zealand. This would help to chart out a fuller picture of career paths and employment length of women working in the Film/Video/Television industry in New Zealand.

In terms of using the information in the report, WIFT (Auckland) lobby to improve the position of women in the industry. The report provides statistics to further their case, as well as, isolating the issues for lobby. WIFT (Auckland) have also established a formal mentoring scheme for women in the industry.

For a copy of either *Behind the Scenes* reports (Part One or Part Two), contact the WIFT (Auckland) office on (09) 378 7271. There will be a small charge for a copy.

TELEVISION COVERAGE OF SUFFRAGE 1993

by HEATHER DEVERE and ALISON WILSON,

1993 was the celebration in New Zealand of 100 years of women's suffrage. Various events were organised throughout the year with special emphasis on the month of September and in particular the 19th of September, the day the legislation giving women the vote was passed one hundred years before. There were some perceptions that the media had been saturated by coverage of suffrage and women's issues in 1993. For example, Graeme Lee, MP for Matakana, referred to the high profile of 1993 Women's Suffrage Year 'when constant radio messages and various events had almost reached overkill by July'¹. Paul Holmes, television current affairs interviewer, introduced one of his programmes in March by stating 'This is suffrage year. You'd be hard-pressed not to know this'.²

Although there was a general impression that television was saturated with women and women's issues related to suffrage, it was found that on current affairs programmes there was relatively little attention paid to suffrage year. In addition, there was almost no coverage focusing on women's political role, and suffrage was used primarily as an opportunity to promote the success of individual women, and there was evidence of trivialisation of the issue.

Our research concentrated on current affairs programmes in the expectation that in a year which focused on such an important issue for women, these programmes might provide a space for women in the public sphere, where issues on women and politics and significant political and social changes for women might be considered in some depth. We also examined programmes which were screened in prime-time viewing (excluding news bulletins) to provide an indication of the importance accorded to the topic. However, we did include some programmes aired on Sunday mornings (*Tangata Pasifika*, *Waka Huia*, *Marae*). In addition, we surveyed other special documentaries screened as one-off programmes irregularly throughout the year. We concentrated most of our attention on New Zealand-made programmes, although we also looked at some documentaries which originated overseas.

Even though it was an election year there was limited coverage on women in their political capacity and surprisingly little coverage specifically on suffrage. The word suffrage was used as the keyword, although its meaning was not really explained, and the connections between suffrage, voting and women's political role were not made. So items were promoted

¹Graeme Lee, 'Year of the Family needs higher gear', *New Zealand Herald*, 8 August 1994, p 8.

²Holmes, 2.8.93, TVNZ.

as suffrage tributes, or celebrations of suffrage and related 'suffrage' to cultural and social achievements rather than to political progress and equality for women.

The two prime-time current affairs programmes which had a more equal coverage of women, *60 minutes* and *20/20* also tended to have less of a political focus, and to concentrate on personalities and issues which make the headlines. Many of the profiles, particularly on *60 minutes*, were profiles of people in the entertainment business, with many of the profiles of women being victims - suffering from various medial conditions, rape victims, or in custody battles for their children. The only political item related to women in relationship to politics was a profile of Margaret Thatcher on *20/20*.

The New Zealand-made programmes had greater coverage of political events, personalities, and issues. *Holmes* provided quite a bit of election coverage including interviews with politicians and profiles of different electorates and opinion polls. There were several items on women - a discussion with Robin Morgan about Hilary Clinton, an item on International Women's Day about the making of movie 'Bread and Roses', an interview with Margaret Thatcher, an item on National party women, a discussion about women's issues and the election and an interview with Helen Clark, the new Leader of the Labour Party. There was also a series of five items tagged as suffrage tributes screened the week before Suffrage Day.

PrimeTime also provided more political coverage and the most substantial analysis of women and political issues. There was a history of the suffrage movements and a studio interview with Marilyn Waring, feminist politician, and Annetta Moran, from Women for Life, an item on International Women's Day about the launching of a petition calling for fifty percent of MPs to be women and coverage of the premier of the movie 'Bread and Roses' and the launch of the book 'Making Policy Not Tea' about women MPs.

On *Frontline* there were several profiles of male politicians - Winston Peters, Jim Anderton, Mike Moore and Jim Bolger - the leaders of the four main political parties contesting the 1993 election and election special programmes near to election time. However, 1993 was particularly devoid of coverage on women and politics, and there was nothing specifically on suffrage (although, interestingly enough in 1992 there had been several women with political connections profiled).

The *Tuesday Documentary* had two programmes which could be said to relate specifically to suffrage or women and politics - an interview by Paul Holmes with Margaret Thatcher and a documentary made especially for the suffrage centenary entitled 'The Nineties' which was a series of interviews with women in their nineties discussing the changes for women that they had seen in their life-times, and including archival footage illustrating key events about New Zealand women's lives in the past 100 years.

Tangata Pasifika, *Waka Huia* and *Marae* also had several items which focused on various aspects of suffrage, with profiles of Dame Whina Cooper, Dame Rangimarie Hetet, the weaver with her daughter Digger, and Tania Rei, author of 'Maori Women and the Vote', as well as coverage of events celebrating suffrage such as Cook Islands women, Mangere Women's Church group, young Pacific Island and Maori women celebrations, and the commemoration of the end of the Year of the Indigenous Nations and Women's Suffrage

Year. *Marae* also had a five-part series of uncelebrated Maori women as part of Women's Suffrage Year.

So in general, most of the New Zealand-made current affairs programmes (except for *Frontline*), did pay some attention to the issue of women and politics and more specifically to women's suffrage. But the amount of coverage was certainly not excessive and there was very little in the way of items which could be said to have been generated in response to the celebration of women's suffrage in prime-time viewing current affairs programmes. Many of the programmes which were shown as a tribute to suffrage were profiles of individual women who had achieved something unusual, and this was attributed to the opportunities made available to women by the granting of suffrage.

However, there were some miscellaneous programmes which did give 1993 a specific focus on women and their achievements. There were two other programmes which were specifically related to suffrage. One was the documentary series on the history of New Zealand women 'Standing in the Sunshine' and the other was the biographical movie about Sonya Davies, Labour MP, 'Bread and Roses'. Both these projects had received funding from the Suffrage Trust. In addition, the motion for the 1993 BNZ Festival Debate on TV1 on 16 October was 'It's Time for a Woman' and a documentary entitled 'Whina' about Maori land activist, Dame Whina Cooper, was screened on 10 April.

Another factor which may well have contributed to the impression that there was an 'overkill' in coverage of suffrage was the community advertisements which were broadcast, sponsored by the Electricity Corporation of New Zealand and the Suffrage Trust. There were 45 different 'magic minutes' introduced by the slogan 'Celebrating the past, challenging the future - supported by the Electricity Corporation of New Zealand'. These covered a variety of areas of women's achievement and compared the situation of women at various stages in history to women today. These one minute clips which were shown several times during the day, and each clip was repeated several times. The constant reminder each day of women's suffrage year could well have created an impression that there was a lot of coverage of the issue, although the one-minute clips were just a brief claim about improvements in the situation for women over the past 100 years.

We looked more closely at the items on prime-time current affairs programmes which were tagged in some way as being associated with women's suffrage. The coverage was almost totally a-political. There was very little questioning of the assumption that the situation for women had progressed enormously over the last 100 years or debate about how much equality had really been achieved. So the focus was on personal success stories of individual women, with little attempt to put these success stories into a social and political context. Marilyn Waring's fear was that suffrage year would become 'a year of retrospective naval-gazing',³ instead of being 'an energy year when we think of new agendas, new strategies, new networks' to work towards parity for women politically. This fear was certainly realised on current affairs coverage of suffrage issues.

³*PrimeTime* TVNZ, 12 February 1993.

In fact, the *PrimeTime* programme on which Marilyn Waring made her comments was one of only four items shown on prime-time current affairs programmes which looked at suffrage from a political perspective. The item screened early in suffrage year gave a historical background of the suffrage movement and had a studio interview with Marilyn Waring (feminist) and Annetta Moran (Women for Life) about the main objectives they would like to see achieved in suffrage year. Two of the other political items were also on *PrimeTime* - an item on International Women's Day about the launch of a petition calling for 50 percent of MPs to be women and an interview with Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, whose visit coincided with Suffrage year. A short item about a suffrage theatre performance by National party women MPs at the National Party conference, portrayed in a mocking way on *Holmes*, was the other 'political' item.

Most of the other 'suffrage' items were framed in a self-congratulatory tone portraying women who had succeeded against the odds to achieve individual success, although how this related to suffrage is never made clear. The link with suffrage is made obliquely by comparing the situation of women in the present to the situation of women up to one hundred years before. The messages provided in these items was much the same as the message given in the 'magic minute' community advertisement clips and was that women have come a long way from the time when they were given the vote. But there is no attempt to suggest that in fact giving women the vote did not lead to equality for women in all spheres. It could be argued that it was not suffrage which led to improvements for women, but the second world war, technological advances, and the second wave women's movement.

A *PrimeTime* programme in February 1993 indicated that television might treat seriously the celebration of women's suffrage. The introduction to the item commented on the celebrations to mark the 'greater role' women were taking on public issues, but asked the question 'has enough been achieved?'. A background history of suffrage was concluded with the words 'But since achieving the vote just 35 women have become MPs compared to 1100 males'. Political equality it seems, is just as elusive as it was 100 years ago. The scene seemed set for some analysis of why it was that despite gaining the vote, women were still a long way from achieving parity in political power. However, this was the only item which treated the issue of suffrage in any depth as a political issue and which questioned how much gaining the vote had contributed to women's achievements.

It is acknowledged that it is difficult for television to deal with complex political and social issues and that television often resorts to personalising the issues. The issue of suffrage was personalised by television coverage which told stories of how individual women had achieved success in different fields, and in particular areas where there had previously not been many women. However, there was not much reference to the success of individual women in the field of politics in this sort of television coverage.

The perception of saturation coverage of suffrage was not borne out in our study of prime-time current affairs programmes. There are several reasons why there might have been such a perception. Firstly, when women do appear as sources and subjects in news, they often serve as a sign for 'women' in general (as long as they are white women). In suffrage year it appears that all women then signified as 'suffrage'. Anything that was connected to women or women's issues in suffrage year was automatically associated with suffrage.

In addition, the extensive use of teasers and 'promos' and self-advertising meant that the impression was created that there was more content coverage of the issue than there actually was. So, for example, on the *PrimeTime* programme in February, the programme headline is 'And a century on from winning the vote, is it time to celebrate women's rights in New Zealand?' Then after the news and before the ad break it is announced 'Coming up, one hundred years on since New Zealand women won the vote. How much equality has really been achieved? That's next'. The item is introduced by the words 'It was an uphill battle but one hundred years ago New Zealand made history by giving women the right to vote'.

The word 'suffrage' was in fact used as the keyword for the celebrations of one hundred years since women gained the vote. There was very little attempt to explain what suffrage meant, but various items were shown as 'tributes' to suffrage. The 'magic minutes' shown regularly and several times a day, with pictures of Kate Shepherd, white camellias and women's faces meant that the images associated with suffrage were constantly reinforced and the refrain 'Celebrating the Past, Challenging the Future' rang in the ears.

Suffrage coverage on prime time current affairs television, then, was a muted celebration of what some successful women had achieved in the past one hundred years.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

NEW ZEALAND POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE, WAIKATO UNIVERSITY, HAMILTON, 6-8 JUNE 1997

by RAE NICHOLL AND LEIGH WARD

This year's NZPSA Conference was held in the splendid brand new S Block at Waikato University. It was here that the tasty morning and afternoon teas were served, but the serious business of lunch - and the conference banquet - was held elsewhere on campus at The Station, the name of the university's staff room. Outside caterers had been summonsed to meet the culinary needs of veteran conference attenders.

The conference was organised by a committee comprising Ann Sullivan, Priya Kurian, Jack Vowles, Geoff Cupit, Mike Goldsmith and Alan Simpson, with Ann Sullivan and Priya Kurian publicly providing the capable nucleus of the team during the days of the conference itself.

On Friday night, 6 June, the Conference got off to a rousing start with drinks at The Station and on opening talk by Bryan Gould, Vice-Chancellor of Waikato University. After this, delegates scattered around the town and those that had not visited Hamilton for a number of years were delighted to find that there was a choice of eating places. Eight women clustered around a table in a local Italian cafe - seven from Victoria University (Elizabeth McLeay,

Jean Drage, Fiona Barker, Rachael Hoskins, Leigh Ward and Rae Nicholl) and Heather Devere from Auckland's Institute of Technology. The Victoria contingent chose to stay out in the country at Te Rapa, where they all enjoyed the space, the starry night sky and the spa pool (after imbibing the Baileys, of course).

The conference began on Saturday morning. Three streams ran throughout the weekend which proved to be an annoyance to many people. For a start, Bryan Gould, Helena Catt (Auckland University) and Paul Moorcraft (Waikato University) formed a panel and discussed, in a witty, stimulating and entertaining way, the 1997 British election. But this panel clashed with two others, one on environmental policy, the other on foreign policy and trade. This is an illustration of the anguish delegates suffered constantly throughout the conference.

However, because of the many choices available, we were able to pursue our own interest areas and so covered many of the papers delivered at the conference. Here, we discuss only papers or sessions by and about women. The first session was the *Women and Politics Panel* presented by Jean Drage (independent researcher based at Victoria University), Rae Nicholl and Margaret Cousins (both from Victoria), and Meliors Simms (Waikato University). Jean Drage presented a paper on *Pacific Women and Politics* and demonstrated how, on the whole, women are not being elected to central governments throughout the Pacific, with the exception of Guam. Rae Nicholl and Margaret Cousins discussed *What the Campaign Rhetoric of 1996 Meant For Women* and showed how political parties had, so far, tried to stick to their campaign promises. Meliors Simms talked about *Teenage Pregnancy* - how young mothers are both stigmatised and powerless. Overhead transparencies were used to their full effect by all the presenters, with Meliors Simms generating some humour with her use of cartoons from past times.

Following the *Women and Politics* session, Rae Nicholl and Margaret Cousins convened a *Women's Police and Practice* panel, which comprised women MPs from the five parties in Parliament - the Hon. Robyn McDonald, Minister for Senior Citizens and Consumer Affairs, NZ First List MP; Joy McLauchlan, National Party List MP; Dianne Yates, Labour Party List MP; Phillida Bunkle, Alliance List MP; and Patrician Schnauer, ACT List MP. Each panellist spoke about their area of special interest for ten minutes (sometimes more!) and then answered questions from the floor. This session was able to continue into the next block, with a *Workshop on Current Research on Women and Politics*, convened by Jean Drage.

The cuisine at the conference banquet on Saturday night was excellent, but we feel the evening could have benefitted from a more structured programme. The problem we encountered was that people from different universities did not mix easily together during the evening, and tended to drift away after the meal. An MC would have helped break the ice and given the occasion some shape. An after-dinner speaker or some other form of entertainment would have rounded off a memorable night. Seasoned NZPSA Conference attenders have fond and vivid memories of the hilarious performance by journalist Jane Clifton at the 1995 conference dinner in Wellington. While Jane Clifton is a hard act to follow, some focal point to the evening is needed to draw people together.

Sunday morning started with Elizabeth McLeay (Victoria University) and Helena Catt giving papers in the session on *Adapting to MMP*. Other women speakers at the conference were Fiona Barker (Victoria University) and Susan Banducci (Waikato University), who both presented work on *Parties, Policy Space, and Voter Disillusion*. Elena Polletti (Otago University) spoke on *The Metaphor of Business and Public Sector Reform in New Zealand*. Anna Broome (Washington University of St Louis) talked on *Privatisation within the Housing Sector: Non-Incremental Change?* Janine Hayward (Victoria University/Waitangi Tribunal) and Ann Sullivan (Waikato University) presented papers during the session on *Maori and New Zealand Politics*. Juliet Roper (Waikato University) delivered a paper on *Political Campaigns in Cyberspace: An Expansion of the Public Sphere?* And Heather Devere addressed participants on *Love, Friendship and the Invisible Women: Personal Politics in Ancient Greece and Rome* during the session on political theory.

In addition to presenting papers, women were also visible in the role of chairing and as discussants. Pirya Kurian (Waikato University) both chaired and provided the discussion for the session on *Environmental Policy*, Susan Banducci performed the same task in the *Electoral Politics* section, as did Catherine Kingfisher (Waikato University) for the *Women and Politics* papers.

Many people we spoke to felt that both women's panels on Saturday should have been run without competition from the two concurrent streams. This would have enabled many more conference participants to take advantage of the presence of the five women MPs, who had travelled to Hamilton especially for this section of the programme.

From a woman's perspective, this conference proved far more satisfactory than last year's NZPSA Conference at Auckland University where, as we reported in *Aotearoa New Zealand Women and Politics Network* in December 1996, there were slim pickings for feminists - both as political science practitioners and as participants. In an effort to rectify the imbalance, the possibility of holding a one-day or half-day conference on Women and Politics, in conjunction with the next NZPSA Conference, was suggested at the 1996 Women's Caucus Lunch. While this did not eventuate, papers presented both by, and about, women did form a significant part of the mainstream conference in 1997. Even so, a separate day for the women's stream next year would ensure that interested people are able to attend all sessions devoted to women politicians, women's politics and women's interests.

BEYOND POVERTY: CITIZENSHIP, WELFARE AND WELL-BEING IN THE 21ST CENTURY - 14-16 MARCH 1997, MASSEY UNIVERSITY, ALBANY

by JANE SCOTT

Department of Political Studies, University of Auckland

The 'Beyond Poverty' conference was arranged by the Auckland Unemployment Workers Rights Centre (AUWRC), in conjunction with Massey University, to coincide with the 'Beyond Dependency: A Watershed for Welfare' conference organised by the Department of Social Welfare (principal sponsor EDS). AUWRC opposed 'Beyond Dependency' on the grounds that the expensive registration fee excluded the participation of beneficiaries, low-income earners, and community groups and that the Centre itself had been denied an opportunity to address the Conference. In addition, AUWRC was concerned that the objective of 'Beyond Dependency' was to provide a forum for overseas welfare 'experts' to

propel public debate in New Zealand towards a more punitive approach to recipients of social security.

The alternative 'Beyond Poverty' conference began with a powhiri, followed by street theatre performed by AUWRC members. A theme of the performance centred on the question of exactly WHO in society is 'dependent' upon WHOM. The chorus of the song which followed each skit suggested an answer: "Corporate clones eating the flesh off the people's bones"! Keynote speaker, John Tamihere of the Waipereira Trust reiterated this perspective. There was a "feeding frenzy on the poor". The State and corporate elites were "feasting on us"; they were "dependent on us". Sue Bradford of AUWRC subsequently argued that the current economic strategy was 'dependent' on the low waged and the unemployed.

Mike O'Brien argued that the concept of benefit 'dependency' is relatively new in the history of policy discourse. He identified the saturation of government reports with 'dependency' talk since 1993. Political debates assume that being in receipt of State social assistance is the equivalent of being in a state of dependency. Employer dependence on workers, worker dependence on employers, and male dependence on females are situations seen as unproblematic. The emphasis is on the problem of welfare dependence, rather than that of the job market and income levels. O'Brien identified a framework which rendered dependence on the family to be 'good' and dependence on the State to be 'bad'. He argued that there was no evidence of long term benefit usage. Rather, "fluidity" and "mobility" were typical owing to the changing nature of employment, opportunities, and individual behaviour. There was also no evidence that beneficiaries responded directly to financial disincentives. And there was no evidence that beneficiaries lived in a culture characterised by a set of beliefs and values that differed to the rest of society. In fact, the opposite was the case; the 'work ethic', for example, was strong. What was missing were the opportunities.

Prue Hyman argued that there was no 'good' dependency left. All the poor were seen as dependent, and therefore undeserving. Although she conceded that perhaps low-income earners were deemed slightly more deserving! Hyman critiqued the term 'dependency' from a feminist perspective. Everyone makes a contribution to society - it is just that the resources are not distributed on this basis. People can do the same jobs, but one group is paid and the other group is not. She raised a difficulty in terms of contesting 'dependency' discourse. When feminists argue for economic 'independence' for women, they seem to get caught up in the dominant view that dependence is 'bad' and independence is 'good'. Therefore, she argued for notions of "mutuality" and of "voluntary patterns of interdependence", while still valuing autonomy.

Celia Briar also focused on the position of women to critique the term 'dependency'. Dependency is understood as "the result of idleness", hence policy is directed towards treating mothers as part of the paid workforce, as if their domestic labour had no value. Any counter-strategy must involve a critique of the concepts of dependence and independence - the latter is said to be attained only through wage labour -and an acknowledgement of the work that women already do.

Anne Else (author of *False Economy*) believed that the problem rested with the breakdown of the old division of labour. The post-war welfare State was based on a gender division of labour and full employment. This is no longer the case. More women are in paid employment, fewer women are living with men, women are having fewer children, and more women (and men) are turning to the State for support. This is a problem because benefits have never been generous, and are even less so since the 1991 cuts so poverty is increasing. But poverty is not seen as the problem. Else noted that it is not mentioned in the Department of Social Welfare's briefing papers to the Government in 1996. In general, there is no discussion of the impact of benefit cuts, housing policy, the Employment Contracts Act and the repeal of Pay Equity. Rather, the focus is on the benefit system and the need to increase self-reliance. The point is not to resolve poverty, but get people off benefits. The New Right understand dependency to be a symptom of the problem, which is the welfare system. Poverty is denied, and welfare dependency is seen as a sign of moral decay which is evidenced by the increased number of sole parents. The new moral panic is over women; women having children outside marriage. Illegitimacy is being restigmatised, particularly in the case of teenage mothers.

There were many references by paper givers to the need for a universal basic income. John Tomlinson argued that "if dependence was really the problem then dependency could be abolished by introducing a universal income guarantee... What we know is that governments, conservatives and economic rationalists believe if they constantly harp about dependency then they increase the stigma associated with income support receipt, thereby limiting outcomes and reinforcing recipients' need to express gratitude. For governments, conservatives, and economic fundamentalists then dependency is the solution rather than the problem". Tomlinson believed that a universal basic income would not be a nightmare for conservatives and liberals: it was affordable according to leading economic writers in many countries; it was simple therefore efficient; it would increase household spending; it would decrease labour costs because the State would be subsidising wages; and families might even stay together to share expenses! It sounds rather more like an elites' dream! Especially, claimed Tomlinson with tongue in cheek, given that "there would be continuing inequality, the system of market democracy would still hold sway, class antagonisms would still be there, they would still be able to assert their superiority over non-owners of capital". What's in it for socialists? Nothing radical, but workers would be less subject to the whims of the market - poverty, uncertainty, subordination, and stigmatisation would decrease.

A group called Universal Basic Income for New Zealand puts out a periodic newsletter. For information: Private Bag 11 042, Palmerston North ph (06) 350 6316, fax (06) 350 6319.

Small group workshops were held during one of the conference sessions to discuss strategies for 'Beyond Poverty'. The strongest point to emerge was the need to focus on communication. Information had to be "passed on and out", groups had to work strategically around events and issues and with each other. The critique of the New Right had to be sustained through protest action, research, lobbying MPs, writing to newspapers and magazines and ringing talkback. It was deemed vital to utilise the structures already in place; exchange information and use the networks of each group.

What is clear is that contemporary welfare debates, increasingly, are framed in terms of 'dependency' rather than of poverty. This is not merely a quibble over semantics; it was

evident from the 'Beyond Poverty' conference that language matters - concepts are the subject of political contestation. As Prue Hyman noted, deconstructing 'welfare dependency' is vital. The 'Beyond Dependency' conference brochure claimed that "welfare dependency is a growing, long-term and cyclic problem", therefore it follows that the goal is "to reduce dependency", rather than to combat poverty. The idea is to shift as many people off welfare rolls as possible. It does not mean addressing macro-economic strategy, industrial relations issues, the nature of 'work', or the adequacy of income support. Quite the contrary. 'Beyond Dependency' conference speaker Jean Rogers, of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development confirmed the priority of any welfare 'reform': "caseload reduction". Wisconsin's welfare system trains its frontline workers to address client's immediate needs "with as few resources as possible". Here is one of her examples: "if all they need is childcare assistance or food stamps for a few weeks, don't sign them up for a welfare cheque"! ('Beyond Dependency', *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, Issue 8, March 1997).

'Beyond Poverty' conference proceedings can be obtained from AUWRC, PO Box 3813, Auckland. The following papers were delivered:

- Mike O'Brien, 'Arguments about Dependency', Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University, Albany.
- Susan St John, 'Recent Wrong Turns in the Welfare Maze', Economics, University of Auckland
- Prue Hyman, 'Deconstructing "welfare dependency"/"welfare reform": A critical review of the language and concepts. Towards alternative models and policies', Economics, Victoria University of Wellington
- David Tolich, 'Civil Society, Emerging Concepts and Language in a NZ Context', Policy Analyst Methodist Mission.
- Karen Adams, 'The Importance of Housing for Well-being and Participation in NZ Society and the Impact of Housing Policy Reform', NZ Council of Christian Social Services.
- Dorothy Meyer, 'Poverty on the North Shore', National Council of Women of New Zealand.
- Vicki Terrell and Julie Kneebone, 'Access is far more than a ramp - A Journey through Poverty in the Disability Sector since 1991: Cartoons and Headlines', Connectus Consulting Network.
- Penny Hulse, 'Welfare and Wellbeing - a Local Authority Perspective', Waitakere City Council
- Katherine Peet, 'Redefining WORK', Federation of Workers Educational Associations (WEA)
- Charles Waldegrave, 'Participation in Poverty Research: Drawing on the Knowledge of Low Income Householders to Set the Poverty Line', Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit.
- Michael Goldsmith, 'Relating Poverty Measures to Basic Income Levels - Poverty and the UBI', Political Science and Public Policy, Waikato University.
- Keith Rankin, 'Social Wage Tax Credits', Economics, Auckland University.
- Tony Allwood, 'The WIN on Poverty Campaign', Women's Information Network (WIN).
- Steve Boulton, 'Beyond the Market and the State - Alternative Local Socio-economic Development', Auckland Unemployed Workers Rights Centre.
- Paul Blair, 'Building Active Resistance', Wood Industries Union, Rotorua.
- Celia Briar, 'Dependency as the Result of Idleness? The Example of Working Women's Poverty', Social Policy, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- Anne Else, 'The Meaning of Dependence'.
- Catherine Kingfisher, 'Taming the Savage Poor: The Rhetoric of Welfare Reform in the US and New Zealand', Women's and Gender Studies, Waikato University.
- Sue Bradford, 'Beyond Dependency - on whose terms?', Auckland Unemployed Workers Rights Centre.
- John Tomlinson, 'There but for the grace of wealth go I', Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.
- Garth Nowland-Foreman, 'The Future of Work, Poverty, and "Dependency" in a Changing World', Consultant in social policy and voluntary organisations.
- Phillida Bunkle, 'How Market Theory Propels Social Inequality - a Theoretical Critique of the Market', Alliance.
- Nesta Devine, 'Public Choice Theory', Education Department, Auckland University.
- John Peet, 'Human Needs and Sustainability', Chemical and process Engineering, Canterbury University.
- Graham Howell, 'The Beneficiary Price Index', National Unemployed and Beneficiaries Movement, Wellington.
- Lowell Manning, 'Privatisation of Success as an Incubator of Poverty'.

Helen Leslie, 'Banking on Foodbanks for Poverty Alleviation? A Critical Appraisal of Foodbanks' Response to Poverty in New Zealand', Development Studies, Massey University, Palmerston North.
Robin Peace, 'Excluded by Social Exclusion: who misses out under the new language regime?', Waikato University.
Ewen Derrick, 'Employment Issues', Community Worker.

NOTICES

CONFERENCES

The Super Seminar on Compulsory Superannuation

Saturday, 16 August 1997 - 1.00 - 5.00 pm
Parnell Community Centre

Early registration: \$8 waged, \$4 unwaged or NZFUW member
After 31 July: \$12 wages, \$6 unwaged

Speakers:

Jeff Todd, Chair of Todd Taskforce
Ann Batten, NZ First List MP
Dr Wayne Mapp, National MP, North Shore
Susan St John, Economics Department, Auckland University
Susanna Stuart, Coopers & Lybrand

AUSTRALASIAN POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATE 1997 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

29 September-1 October 1997
Department of Politics, The Flinders University of South Australia

Papers are invited representing any stream of political studies including: Australian or New Zealand politics and public policy; comparative government and politics; international relations; international political economy, gender and politics; political philosophy and political theory; postgraduate student caucus.

Special panels are likely to include: the Coalition government in Australia - a mid-term assessment (domestic policy and foreign policy); electoral politics (Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and North America); judicial and constitutional politics; nationalism and the nation-state; the politics of Australia's relationship with Asia; the politics of immigration, multiculturalism and ethnicity; the politics of the media and communication; the changing nature of the public sector; the politics of trade policy; the future of arms control and disarmament.

Keynote speaker: Professor John Dunn of King's College, Cambridge will be keynote speaker. Professor Dunn is the author or editor of many influential books, including *Democracy: The Unfinished Journey*, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future*, *Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State*, *Interpreting Political Responsibility*, *The Economic Limits to Modern Politics*, *The Politics of Socialism*, *Contemporary West African States*, and *Modern Revolutions*.

Registration

For financial members of APSA - A\$160
For non-financial members of APSA - A\$235
For bona fide full-time students and retired persons who are financial members of APSA - A\$80

For bona fide full-time students and retired persons who are not members of APSA - A\$110
 Conference dinner - A\$30
 Late fee (after 31 August 1997) - A\$25

Registration fee includes access to all academic sessions, keynote address, complete set of Conference Proceedings, cocktail party, morning and afternoon tea/coffee, scheduled bus transfer from Glenelg, if required.
 Cheques should be drawn in Australian dollars and should be made payable to "APSA 97, Flinders University of South Australia".

Send to APSA 97, Department of Politics, Flinders University of South Australia, GPO Box 2100, Adelaide, SA 5001, Australia.

Email address: apsa97@flinders.edu.au

Telephone: 08 8201 2186 (international 618 8201 2186)

Fax: 08 8201 5111 (international 618 8201 5111)

Conference WWW page for the most up to date information: <http://www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/Politics/apsacon.htm>

A limited number of single college-style rooms will be available on campus at Flinders University Hall. Contact details: telephone 8291 6378, fax 8291 6006, email: gary.shaw@flinders.edu.au

Recommended hotel accommodation is located in Glenelg tourist-shopping precinct on the Adelaide seashore.

6TH NATIONAL WOMEN & LABOUR CONFERENCE

November 28-30, 1997

Hosted by the Australian Women's Research Centre at Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria.

Theme: Feminist Social Change Across the Generations: Diversity, Power, Communication and Strategies for Change.

"We want to gather women together who are interested in improving the lives of all women in Australia; to share information and research and formulate strategies for change; to involve community workers, activists and academics and to form a broad-based national women's organisation. The 6th National Women & Labour conference is about all the work/labour that all women do in all spheres of life - it is a broad definition of work."

"Past Women and Labour conferences have played a key part in the history of the Australian Women's movement. In the 1970s and 80s they attracted thousands of women from all over the country, and sparked much action and debate".

"Within our theme we are planning an opening session where Zelda D'Aprano and others will speak. Doreen Kartinyeri will give us an update on issues around Kumarak (Hindmarsh Island) which is still ongoing, and also talk about native title and the Stolen Children enquiry. Joan Kirner will talk about a new scheme to get more women into Parliament, Emily's List, Jocelyne Scutt will convene a panel reclaiming the work and identities of women in the women's movement who have 'disappeared', Sheila Jeffreys will speak on 'How to Survive Queer Politics' and Jocelyne Scutt on reclaiming women's 1950s activism. Some examples of papers offered include Belinda Probert on women's labour market experiences in the 1990s, Marilyn Lake on 'Women into Politics' and Denise Thompson on social welfare policy and 'the unemployed'. Other speakers, workshop leaders and discussion starters include Geelong's local Aboriginal co-operative, Wathaurong, on local health, education and media projects, the Australian Women's Party, the Coalition of Activist Lesbians, Radical Women, Carmen Lawrence, Veronica Brady, Jan Armstrong, Suzanne Bellamy, Margaret Alston, Sue Brumby, Stephanie Gilbert, Susan Hawthorne, Wendy Weeks, Susan Feldman, Renate Klein, Marilyn Beaumont, Diane Bell and many, many more".

"We are programming plenary sessions on women and work, feminist women's services, feminist mothers and daughters, lesbian issues and more. Suggestions for panels include Prostitution and the Traffic in Women from the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, tax effective strategies in fundraising for women from the National Foundation for Australian Women and lesbian health from Lavender from the Coalition of Activist Lesbians".

"Other offers include papers and workshops on reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, the Stolen Children enquiry, women and education, issues around disability, occupational health and safety, the unpaid work of mothers at home and family caregivers, women's writing, pay equity in relation to childcare workers, the role of the internet for rural women, lesbian women, globalisation and gendered work cultures, censorship, speech and feminism, effects of restructuring on women's work, finding the energy for activist work, women and the media, women and unions, health, ageing, retirement, women's access to justice, the police force, and the list goes on".

"We will host a welcoming BBQ and an opening ceremony, a conference dinner, an entertainment program and plan a closing session to discuss conference outcomes and actions. We will have stalls from community groups and

publishers at a small cost and invite groups and individuals to mount displays or exhibitions of their work and launch books and other projects".

Registration: Early Bird by August 10, 1997: Fully waged \$165; concession \$80

After August 30: Fully waged \$180; concession \$90; day rate \$60/\$30.

All registrations, dinner bookings and accommodation enquiries should be sent to the university's conference manager at this address: 6th National Women and Labour Conference, Commercial Operations, Deakin University, Geelong 3217, (03) 5227 2063, Fax (03) 5227 2031

WOMEN AND POLITICS IN THE UK

Notice forwarded by Diana Gardner, a graduate from the Politics Department, Auckland and now studying at Oxford University:

Just thought you might appreciate an update on the UK situation post-election. First of all we had the promised Minister for Women being added, as an afterthought, to the duties of Harriet Harman on top of her role as Secretary of State for Social Security, now we have a new junior appointment. This appointment is Joan Ruddock who takes on the role of Minister of State - this is good news but wait, there's a catch. It seems that Ms Ruddock has been asked to undertake this role but not be paid for it but to remain on the usual MP's salary (about 48,000 pounds) whereas all other Ministers of State (of which about 3/4 are men) are to receive around 65,000 pounds. Ironically, one of the first things which Ms Ruddock will have to address is the continued economic disadvantage of women - expressed primarily in the continuation of gender inequalities in pay!!!!

P.S. Scotland's Minister for Women is HENRY McLeish, MP. As former leader of Fife Regional Council he was supportive of local feminist activists (both members and officers) in their attempts to devise equality policies and childcare facilities.

WIN ON POVERTY

Women's Information Network (WIN) is an informal network of national community organisations, which focuses on the needs of women. The WIN on Poverty campaign is supported by: YWCA, Rape Crisis, Wellington Community Law Centre, National Council of Women, Women's Division of Federated Farmers, Affirmative Action, Prostitutes Collective, Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations, Positive Action Self Defence Network, Barnardos, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women's Electoral Lobby, Labour Women's Council, Citizens Advice Bureaux, NZ Nurses Organisation, WEA, Society for Research on Women, Federation of Women's Health Councils, Anglian Social Justice Commission, Council of Tonga Women in Aotearoa NZ, New Mother Support Groups, NZ Association of Anglican Women, PACIFICA, Child Poverty Action Aotearoa NZ, Catholic Women's League, Council for International Development, NZ Federation of Family Budgeting Services, Women's Education Coalition Aotearoa (WECA), Age Concern New Zealand Inc.

In the new MMP environment we have decided to lobby around the issue of poverty. We are concentrating on specific changes which would make a practical difference now in the lives of those on low incomes, most of whom are women and children. Unless there is a strong voice for women on low incomes their concerns will remain invisible and at the bottom of the policy making agenda. Our goals represent building blocks towards longer term solutions for the eradication of poverty.

WIN philosophy is: All New Zealanders are entitled to an adequate income, affordable housing, safety, good health care, and quality education. We must value and include the contribution of women on low incomes who bear the brunt of poverty. We need to narrow the gap between rich and poor as we strive to increase personal dignity and social cohesion.

For more information contact the Women's Information Network, PO Box 9315 Wellington, tel. (04) 384-8117, fax. (04) 384-3301.

ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION

http://www.shsu.edu/~pin_www/journal.html

The first on-line academic publication dedicated to examining and expanding feminine leadership worldwide debuted in March. The website, *Advancing Women in Leadership*, will offer a professional, refereed electronic journal providing scholarly insight, perspectives and advice for aspiring women. The forum will be co-edited by Genevieve Brown and Beverly J. Irby, professors of educational leadership at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. It will be linked with *Advancing Women*, an international on-line network for women in the workplace published by Gretchen Glasscock.

"Our mission is to provide a forum for accomplished women to share with an international audience their experiences or research on women's and girl's issues," Irby said. "The articles published in the journal will report, synthesize, review, or analyze scholarly inquiry and issues important to women and girls".

Authors represented in the journal will include women from business, arts, economics, engineering, medicine, education, and other professional areas. Following a refereed format, all journal submissions will be evaluated by an editorial review board composed of scholars representing a variety of professions. Only articles demonstrating scholarship, relevancy, and currency will appear in the journal, Irby explained. "The ultimate goal of *Advancing Women in Leadership*", Brown said, "is to expand the global support network for women in leadership positions. The internet, with a reach transcending national and cultural barriers, offers an exceptional medium for this groundbreaking endeavour".

Anyone out there who happens to find interesting political/feminist sites can pass this info on to us via Heather Devere e-mail: heather.devere@ait.ac.nz.

ADVERTISING IN NEWSLETTER

Full page ads \$30.00. Half page ads \$18.00. Please contact Heather Devere.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL NOTICE

AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK 1996

Kia Ora!

Subscriptions for 1997 are now due. Please complete the attached form and forward it with your subscriptions of \$10 (for individuals) or \$35 (institutions) to:

Heather Devere
School of Social Sciences
Auckland Institute of Technology
Private Bag 92006
AUCKLAND
Email: heather.devere@ait.ac.nz

**AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK
1997 SUBSCRIPTIONS**

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Enclose \$10/\$35

Please make cheques payable to: Aotearoa/New Zealand Women and Politics Network, and send to: Dr Heather Devere, School of Social Sciences, Auckland Institute of Technology, Private Bag 92006, AUCKLAND
