



Cronecle

Newsletter of the Lower Hutt Women's Centre

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Viewpoint

New film explores adventure in Tararuas

By Isla Ashby and Louise Hammersley

Globally there has been an explosion of women-only adventure groups. It wasn't until we went on a recent all-women trip ourselves that we discovered there was something really rich and powerful about this dynamic.

Inspired to explore this new terrain, we planned an adventure. Our intention was to understand the unique experiences of tramping as women, independent of our male friends and partners.

We also planned to capture our experience in a film (coming soon!), as there are so few examples of active women in the outdoors, having fun and feeling empowered to do so. With the support of a Federated Mountain Club scholarship, earlier this summer we set off on a two-week circuit, walking along the two major ridgelines of the Tararua mountain ranges.

Taking two journeys

At the mercy of the unpredictable and extreme weather changes, typical of the Tararuas, we had to divert our plans on multiple occasions to avoid getting blown off ridges or trapped in huts. Throughout the tramp, we visited 14 different huts. On day 14, we walked out the other side of the mountain range excited to share our journey.

Upon reflection, what we were really undertaking was two journeys. One involved the physicality of walking across a mountain range, and the other



involved a journey to reset our tramping norms and re-imagine them as women: unpacking our socialisation within the high testosterone norms of New Zealand tramping culture. What follows is the story of our second journey.

We found that we were much more transparent when checking in with each other about how we actually felt. We wondered if questions of "how are you going?" in a female-centric group are read as an act of connection and empathy, which could be interpreted more defensively by groups with typically more masculine cultures.

Power of transparency

Transparency became essential in the higher-risk and physically demanding terrain of the mountains. By being honest about when we were good to push on and when we wanted a break, we became very intune with each other. This enabled us to more confidently negotiate the intensity and pacing of our backhike.

En route, we interviewed women about their experience tramping as women. One key theme was the double standards they felt existed within outdoor culture.

For example, the double standards within tramping forums where women have their competence interrogated and

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Women's Centre opening hours

Mon.-Tues. 10am-2pm
Wednesday to Friday 9:30-3:30pm

Contact us

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Lower Hutt 5011

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Email: info@lhwc.org.nz

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Viewpoint: Backcountry is next frontier that women need to reclaim

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how the media portrays them when things go wrong. Despite over-preparing, we knew that if something was to go wrong we could be held to a different standard than a man would.

Reclaiming the backcountry

We are still in a dominant tramping culture where we have to prove ourselves. Proving you are as good as a man is still an unspoken subtext. This observation becomes very apparent when you hear the experiences of female solo trampers and how they are treated.

When talking about safety in the bush, women are at no more risk than men in terms of their

actual ability to survive or read weather or terrain.

However, there is a world of difference between the perceived safety of women as opposed to men in the bush. You wouldn't tell a man that he is "brave when he is tramping alone" or ask "where his partner is?" The battle for women's rights in urban public space has been challenged

and fought by generations of feminists.

The backcountry is the next frontier that needs to be reclaimed for women to enjoy and find themselves in. We walked out of the Tararuas feeling more connected, alive, and capable than we had ever felt before. We hope that our film makes women feel more empowered to be their authentic selves and reclaim the wild.

You can watch the video about our epic adventure online at https://youtu.be/VG0ZJvm0n4o?si=r32yctwpXJDah_6U and follow @Traversing_the_Tararuas on Facebook and Instagram.

We would like to thank FMC for giving us this opportunity. We would also like to thank some local brands for their donations of food and gear. This adventure would not have been possible without our community's immense support and generosity.



Isla Ashby and Louise Hammersley

Whakatauki

Me te mea ko Kōpū ka rere i te pae.

(The beauty of a woman is) like Kōpū (Venus) rising above the horizon.

He taonga rongonui te aroha ki te tangata.

Goodwill towards others is a precious treasure.

He hono tangata e kore e motu; ka pa he taura waka e motu.

Unlike a canoe rope, a human bond cannot be severed.

Source: <https://www.massey.ac.nz/student-life/m%C4%81ori-at-massey/te-reo-m%C4%81ori-and-tikanga-resources/te-reo-m%C4%81ori-pronunciation-nd-translations/whakatauk%C4%AB-m%C4%81ori-proverbs/>

Paenga Whāwhā April 2024

Also known as Ngahuru, ngahuru tahi, Tikaka-muturangi (Ngati Kahungunu)

Southern hemisphere: April to May, Northern hemisphere: October to November

Paenga Whāwhā refers to the Taro and Kumara harvests. Around this time, depending on the area, the leaves of Kumara go brown and are then ready for harvesting. It's a time of thanksgiving for the main crop harvests. In European Paganism, Samhain or All Hallows (celebrated at the end of October in the Northern hemisphere and end of April in the South), also celebrates these harvests and honours the ancestors for their care and attention.

Source: The Māori Oracle; <https://sites.google.com/site/themaorioracle/home/maramataka-the-maori-calendar>

Support at LHWC

Support Group For Women Who Have Experienced Rape or Sexual Abuse

A monthly three-hour support group for women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse, sexual abuse, or rape is being offered at the Lower Hutt Women's Centre.

These workshops are held on the first Sunday of the month from 1pm–4pm, and are for women at any stage of their journey through abuse and recovery.

Note: To respect the privacy of its members, this is a closed group with a threshold on the number of participants. To register for the group, please contact Leah.

The purpose of this group is to offer an opportunity for women to not only survive, but thrive after experiencing trauma. The group experience promotes this by assisting its members to develop self-awareness and self-reflection at their own pace and in their own style. It is an opportunity to reclaim and retrieve split-off hurt parts of yourself and allow yourself to heal.

“If we climb high enough, we will reach a height from which tragedy ceases to look tragic.” Irvin Yalom

Day: The first Sunday of every month

2024 Dates:

Sunday, 5 May

Sunday, 2 June

Sunday, 7 July

Sunday, 4 August

Sunday, 1 September

Time: 1pm–4pm

Facilitators: Leah Foxcroft | Taiwi Pākehā; phone 920 1009

Enrollment: Enrolment not necessary; you can just turn up

If you're interested, please phone or come along

Enquiries: Phone Leah on 0225368337 or email naomifoxtherapy@gmail.com

A & D Wellbeing Support Group

Facilitator: Janet Matehe

Enrolment: Not necessary, you can just turn up

Cost: No Charge

Day: Friday afternoons every week.

Time: 1pm–2:30pm

Crèche: Is available at no charge. Please make enquiries about babies because they need more attention and we have a limited number of crèche workers.

This is a weekly support group for women that want ongoing support with drug and alcohol misuse.

This weekly group is open to all women.

If you have experienced difficulties in the past or present with alcohol and drug misuse and would like some support, then this may be the group for you.

The aim of the group is to promote wellbeing at whatever stage an individual may be. Wellbeing can

be achieved with education, therapy, along with going out into the community and enjoying experiences without the use of drugs and alcohol.

“If you want something different you need to do something different.”

“To understand a woman you must understand where she comes from.”

Facilitator: Janet Matehe is a DAPAANZ-Registered Alcohol and Drug Practitioner and NZAC Generic Counsellor and currently studying psychotherapy. She has completed Te Reo Māori me tikanga courses and has a Certificate in Supervision.

Janet comes from a recovery background and she has been in recovery for 16 years. She's passionate about her work and she lives and breathes recovery in her personal life. The underlying principles she works with are Tika (correct), Pono (honest), and Aroha (love). She practices these principles on a daily basis, both professionally and personally.

About our ongoing events

This is our weekly ongoing programme. We have regular workshops and groups that provide for a range of different needs. These are free or low cost.

All courses are held at the Women's Centre.

Tuesday

6:30–8:30pm Self Esteem

Wednesday

9:30am–3:30pm Computer lessons (by appointment)

Friday

9:45am–12pm Self Esteem

1–2:30pm A & D Wellbeing Support Group

Computer Lessons

Our computer lessons cater to a range of abilities, starting from complete beginners. Bring your questions to your lesson and our tutor Gina Solomon will help you out.

Want to learn how to:

- Surf the net?
- Find useful websites for news, shopping, books, timetables, health info, maps, online travel sites, social media, online radio?
- Use your laptop? (bring it along to your lesson)
- Use your phone—Android?
- Use your tablet or iPad?
- Use email and/or set up an email account?
- Become proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Powerpoint?
- Use Facebook, Skype, TradeMe, DropBox, or YouTube?
- Scan documents and photos?
- Manage and edit your photos?
- Upgrading or downloading apps?

We run with two computers; both run Windows 10 and Microsoft Office 2016. One is a standard desktop and the other is touch-screen.

Day: Wednesdays

Time: 9:30am–3:30pm

Appointments with our tutor Gina Solomon are 30 or 60 minutes

Bookings: Bookings are essential and you must book in advance. You can book for 3 sessions at a time (usually 2 or 3 weeks in advance) Call 04 920 1009 to make an appointment.

Free computer access

The Women's Centre has two public access computers available for all women to use during our opening hours.

Our computers

- Both computers run on Windows 10 and one is touchscreen

Other facilities

- Printing 20¢ per black and white page (*free during lessons*)
- Scanner
- Free internet access



Booking

Phone us on 04 920 1009 to book your time. You can book up to two hours for each session.

Self Esteem for Women

Our self esteem develops and evolves throughout our lives as we build an image of ourselves through our experiences with different people and activities.

Experiences during our childhood play a particularly large role in the shaping of our basic self esteem. When we were growing up, our successes (and failures), and how we were treated by the members of our immediate family, by our teachers, sports coaches, religious authorities, and by our peers, all contributed to the creation of our basic self esteem. The course is designed to give women the opportunity to develop awareness of how they live in the world, the influences on them, and how they have the ability and power to make changes in their lives.

Women will be given the opportunity to:

- develop skills to recognise the strengths in themselves
- look at the areas of self responsibility and self reflection
- be encouraged to develop awareness around how beliefs about self develop and grow
- build their emotional connection with themselves and develop a greater awareness of their own feelings and emotions
- feel a sense of personal power and belonging
- celebrate positive aspects of being a woman.

Self esteem workshops are run on Tuesday evenings and Friday mornings. Each workshop is separate. You may attend one or as many as you like. Self esteem runs on a 20-topic basis. Once the 20 topics have been completed, the cycle begins again.

Tuesday evening workshops

Time: 6:30–8:30pm

Cost: \$5

Facilitator: Diana Rickman (she/her)

Booking: You don't need to book; just turn up

Friday morning workshops

Time: 9:45am–12 noon

This workshop starts at 10am and latecomers won't be admitted

Cost: \$2

Facilitator: Naomi Millane (she/her)

Booking: You don't need to book; you can just turn up

Creche: Creche is provided for pre-school children only without extra charge only on Friday morning. If you want to bring your children, please turn up earlier, with time to settle your children in, and bring some food for their morning tea. Please make enquiries about babies because they need a lot of attention and we only have one creche worker.

Tuesday evenings in 2024

16 April	Expressing pride in self
23 April	Letting go of the past
30 April	Respecting self and others
7 May	Striking for pure motives
14 May	Putting yourself in neutral
21 May	Having the courage to be imperfect
28 May	Developing courage
4 June	Willpower
11 June	Anger as a strength
18 June	Developing self knowledge
25 June	Self love
2 July	Acknowledging self
9 July	Enhancing self in terms of awareness
16 July	Acceptance and use of strengths
23 July	Positive thought and talk
30 July	Messages about self
6 August	Accepting responsibility for self
13 August	Coming to grips with feelings
20 August	Talking about ourselves

Friday afternoons in 2024

12 April	Developing courage
19 April	Willpower
26 April	Anger as a strength
3 May	Developing self knowledge
10 May	Self love
17 May	Acknowledging self
24 May	Enhancing self in terms of awareness
31 May	Acceptance and use of strengths
7 June	Positive thought and talk
14 June	Messages about self
21 June	Accepting responsibility for self
28 June	MATARIKI: NO WORKSHOP
5 July	Coming to grips with feelings
12 July	Talking about ourselves
19 July	Beliefs about self
26 July	Expressing pride in self
2 August	Letting go of the past
9 August	Respecting self and others
16 August	Striving for pure motives
23 August	Putting yourself in neutral
30 August	Having the courage to be imperfect

About our workshops

The following workshops are designed around the group process where in the making and functioning of a group the participants learn from each other, from the group activities, and from the facilitator.

All group participants learn different things, depending on their own life journey and what they are needing at the time.

We welcome you to experience something new in yourself.

All courses are held at the Lower Hutt Women's Centre: 186 Knights Road, Waterloo, Lower Hutt. Courses must be paid in full to confirm your enrolment.

For enquiries or to book, call us on 04 920 1009

Workshop Topics for 2024

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Now is the time for all good women to stand up and say who we will be.

Self Defence for Women and Girls Including Gender Diverse People (who feel comfortable in women-centric spaces)

This is a strength- and empowerment-based workshop for tamariki (8+) and the women (16+) in their lives to learn together how to defend themselves with physical and mental skills and have fun!

It includes a mix of action, discussion, and practice. It is suitable for all abilities.

You must be available for both workshops as the workshops build on each other. Please bring kai to share for lunch.

Facilitator: Naomi Millane (she/her) is a qualified counsellor and addictions practitioner, experienced self-defence teacher, and a Mum. She has been involved with the Centre for 7 years and has a passion for working with women and girls. In her spare time she loves to play music and paint.

Two Courses in 2024

Course 1:

Sundays, on 28 April and 19 May, 10am–4pm

Course 2:

Sundays, on 2 November and 16 November, 10am–4pm

Cost: \$40 waged/\$20 unwaged (this covers both workshops in each course)

Minimum: 6 participants

Phone to register interest

Enrolment:

Enrol by payment or deposit to Lower Hutt Women's Centre. Phone 04 920 1009 for deposit details.

Facilitator: Naomi Millane (sher/her)

Anger as a Strength



Anger is a misunderstood emotion and energy. This training is skill based on providing opportunities and techniques to express anger using tools of assertiveness. Anger is necessary for survival, but through the ways many women have learned to express anger or not express anger issues have been created.

Through these unhelpful learned methods of handling anger personal and relationship, issues have been created. When problems arise around how to deal with conflict, or times when you want to speak up about a problem—people haven't learned constructive or helpful ways of dealing with these issues.

This course will be an opportunity to explore the use and misuse of anger, and explore ways to express anger in constructive ways.

Facilitator Bio: Kay Riddler is a registered social worker, mother, and nanny. She is passionate about working with women and has been involved with Women's Centre and with groups for more than 15 years as both a participant and facilitator.

Kay's approach is gentle and inclusive. It's important to her that learning is relatable to our real-life worlds.

Two Courses in 2024

Course 1 (Day):

Dates: Six weeks on Wednesdays, 1 May–5 June

Time: 12:30–2:30pm

Course 2 (Night):

Dates: Six weeks on Wednesdays, 16 October–27 November (with a break on 6 November)

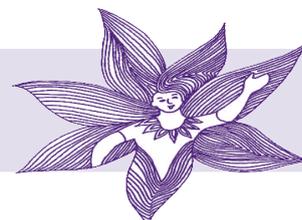
Time: 7–9pm

Cost and enrolment: \$40 waged/\$20 low or unwaged.

Phone to register interest. Enrol by payment or deposit to Lower Hutt Women's Centre.

Facilitator: Kay Riddler

Wellbeing for Teens



An eight-week wellbeing course for girls (including gender-diverse young people who feel comfortable in a women-centric space) aged 13 to 17 years.

Do you want:

- to learn more about yourself?
- to have fun?
- to be more confident?
- to grow in self respect?
- to grow in self worth?
- to grow in self esteem?
- to accept yourself as you are?
- to develop an understanding and respect of yourself and others?

We're all different. Who are, what we like and don't like, our cultures, and our backgrounds. There is no one else quite like you. Once you accept yourself, there is no reason to hold anything back. This is your world. Honour it as your own and enjoy its gifts.

Facilitator's Bio: Naomi Millane (she/her) is a qualified counsellor and addictions practitioner, experienced self-defence teacher, and a Mum. She has been involved with the Centre for 7 years and has a passion for working with women and girls. In her spare time she loves to play music and paint.

Two Courses in 2024

Course 1:

Dates: Eight weeks on Thursdays, 2 May–20 June

Times: 4–6pm

Course 2:

Dates: 1 August–19 September

Times: 4–6pm

Cost: \$20

Phone to register interest

Enrolment:

Enrol by payment or deposit to Lower Hutt Women's Centre. Phone 04 920 1009 for deposit details.

Facilitator: Naomi Millane (she/her)

Resilience: The Identification and Use of Resilience in Everyday Life



Resilience is the ability to have difficult feelings, experiences, mistakes, disappointments or loss, and to be able to move through them in constructive ways that allows us to maintain our authenticity and grow from the experience.

Resilience is a crucial ingredient in what determines how high we rise above what threatens to wear us down, from battling an illness, to relationship breakup, to carrying on after a national crisis. Resilience can be defined as the capacity to cope and bounce back. In this course participants will identify strategies and techniques to recognise unhelpful ways of being and replace them with a mindset that enhances resilience.

We are all resilient in many ways, and this course will assist in participants connecting with their capacity for resilience. A person connected to their capacity for resilience will return to equilibrium after a disturbance.

“It does not matter how strong your gravity is, we were always meant to fly.” —Sarah Kay

“Through suffering, comes wisdom. Through surrender, comes strength. Through resilience, comes hope. Keep going.” —Rita Said

Two Courses in 2024

Course 1 (Day):

Dates: Six weeks on Thursdays, 16 May–20 June

Times: 10am–12pm (noon)

Course 2 (Night):

Dates: Six weeks on Mondays, 14 October–18 November

Times: 7–9pm

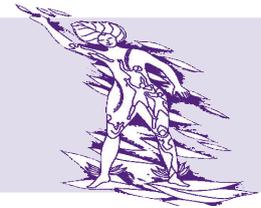
Cost: \$40 waged/\$20 low or unwaged

Enrolment:

Enrol by payment or deposit to Lower Hutt Women's Centre. Phone 04 920 1009 for deposit details.

Facilitator: Stephanie Drake-Brockman

Assertiveness for Women



Assertiveness is the ability to express yourself and your rights without violating the rights of others.

It is appropriately direct, open, and honest communication that is self-enhancing and expressive. Acting assertively will give you the opportunity to feel self-confident, and will generally gain you the respect of yourself and your peers and friends.

Assertiveness can increase your chances for honest relationships, and help you to feel better about yourself and yourself in everyday situations.

Course in 2024 (Day)

Dates: Six weeks on Thursdays, 8 August–19 September (with a break on 22 August)

Time: 10am–12pm (noon)

Cost: \$40 waged/\$20 low or unwaged

Enrolment:

Enrol by payment or deposit to Lower Hutt Women's Centre. Phone 04 920 1009 for deposit details.

Facilitator: Stephanie Drake-Brockman

Circle of Security® Parenting™ Course

For Mothers of Pre-School Children

Course 2 Duration (Daytime Course): 8 weeks on Wednesdays, 24 July–18 September (with a break on 4 September)

Time: 12:30–2:30pm

Facilitator: Kay Riddler

Cost: \$40 waged/\$20 unwaged or low waged

Creche: We provide creche, but you'll need to register that with us on enrolment.

About the Course:

Over the course of eight sessions the focus moves from discussing secure attachment and children's needs to reflecting on self and developing new skills and resources for relating to your children.

Video clips of parents and children are used to introduce you to attachment theory in an accessible manner—while enhancing observational skills, and engaging in reflective dialogue regarding your strengths and struggles in parenting.

“We spoke about filling her child's cup, finding multiple times every day to snuggle her, cuddle her, talk with her, hold your arms open, make eye contact, delight in her, hug her, protect her. To consistently be available to her. Because in filling your child's cup, it just may be that her forever empty will also feel a little less lonely.” —www.circleofsecurity.com

At times we all feel lost about what our child might need from us. Imagine what it might feel like if you were able to make sense of what your child was really asking from you.

This course emphasises the importance for parents in maintaining a balance between being “wise and kind”, able to follow the child's needs whenever possible, and being “bigger and stronger” than the child—able to take charge when necessary.

Circle of Security® PDF: <https://lhwc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/full-circle-new-small.pdf>

Facilitator Bio:

Kay Riddler is a certified Circle of Security® Parenting™ program facilitator and is a mellow parenting practitioner with over 15 years social work experience working with parents/families and individuals. She is a mother, grandmother, and registered social worker. Kay is passionate about minimising the blame and shame game while supporting parents to build strengths without ignoring their struggles.

Weaving with Harakeke



We provide all materials including harakeke (flax).

Learn the correct kawa (protocols) of cutting harakeke, preparing, weaving, and leave with a finished product.

Come along and experience making something from natural fibres in a supportive and fun environment.

Attend one or as many as you like. If you attend more than one workshop, you can begin to learn the skills so you can remember when you are by yourself at home, and independently make a kono or kонаe.

Bring food to share for lunch.

Enrol in each workshop separately.



Dates: All dates on Sundays in 2024

21 April - Full

9 June - Full

22 September - Full

10 November (spaces still available)

Times: 10am—4pm

Cost: \$10. Phone to register interest.

Enrolment:

Enrol by payment or deposit to Lower Hutt Women's Centre. Phone 920 1009 for deposit details

Tutor: Michelle Barrett

Register for Workshops and Other Activities Through the LHWC Website

You can register for workshops, activities, or courses online using the LHWC website.

To register for a workshop through the website, follow these steps:

1. First go to the LHWC's homepage: <http://lhwc.org.nz/>.
2. Next, click on the "Workshops/Groups" tab at the top of the page.
3. When you click on the "Workshops/Groups" tab, select "Workshops/Activities/Courses" from the small drop-down menu. A page listing upcoming dates will appear.
4. When you find the Workshop/Activity/Course you'd like to attend, click on the purple "Enrol and Pay" button on the lower left-hand side of each workshop listing.
5. That will take you to the enrolment form.



Endometriosis Awareness Month

March was Endometriosis Awareness Month in New Zealand. Endometriosis, a condition affecting millions of women globally, often remains veiled in mystery and misconceptions. Endometriosis Awareness Month seeks to dispel the shadows, bringing knowledge, support, and understanding to the forefront.

Endometriosis Awareness Month is needed

Endometriosis Awareness Month is aimed at raising global awareness about endometriosis. It's a time for educating communities about the symptoms, challenges, and available treatments for those affected by this condition. Moreover, it's a rallying cry to support research efforts and improve the quality of life for those living with endometriosis.

A health issue too big to ignore

Endometriosis is a common inflammatory disease estimated to affect 176 million individuals worldwide in their reproductive years, and 120,000 in New Zealand. This means that roughly 1 in 10 girls, women and those assigned female at birth in New Zealand will have endometriosis. In most cases, there can be symptoms including period pain, pelvic pain, and sub-fertility or infertility. In other cases, there may be no obvious symptoms and the diagnosis is made during the course of medical

procedures for other reasons.

Endometriosis occurs when tissue similar to the lining of the uterus (endometrium), is found in places outside of the uterus.

The tissue can form nodules or plaques, which may be visualised at surgery. Endometriosis is commonly found in the pelvic region on the thin pelvic lining called the peritoneum. It may be also be found on the pelvic ligaments, ovaries, and bowel. Endometriosis is occasionally found in places outside the pelvis such as in scar tissue, the bellybutton, or lungs.



For more information:

- Endometriosis New Zealand: <https://nzendo.org.nz/>
- Endo Warriors Aotearoa: <https://www.endowarriorsaotearoa.com/>
- Insight Endometriosis: <https://www.insightendometriosis.org.nz>
- Women's Health Action Trust: <https://www.womens-health.org.nz/endometriosis/>

Free Legal Advice

The Women's Centre has free 30-minute consultations available during the first week of each month.

The primary objective of a consultation is to advise you if you have a legal problem, and whether you need to see a solicitor. If you do need to see a solicitor, the lawyer can advise you about your eligibility for Legal Aid and give you some idea of the legal procedures involved in solving your particular problem.

If you don't have a legal problem, the lawyer is sure she can give you some sound practical advice anyway.

The lawyer can also advise you about facilities available to help you solve your own problems, such as the Disputes Tribunal, Family Court Counselling, etc. All consultations are held in private and are strictly confidential.

When: First week of the month

How to book: Please do not contact the lawyers without first booking with the Women's Centre. Phone the Women's Centre at any time during the month to register your interest in an appointment. We'll phone you at the beginning of the month to check if you still require an appointment, and if you do, we'll give you the phone number to make an appointment directly with the lawyers.

Where:

Thomas Dewar Sziranyi Letts
Level 6, Queensgate Tower, 45 Knights Road, Lower Hutt

LHWC to re-register as an incorporated society: What you need to know about the legislative update

The Incorporated Societies Act 1908 has been updated to Incorporated Societies Act 2022.

To remain an Incorporated Society, the Lower Hutt Women's Centre needs to re-register. This process includes making changes to the Centre's constitution document to comply with the 2022 Act.

Key changes in the new Act are in these areas:

- Reduce the number of minimum members required from 15 to 10
- Gain consent from people when they become members
- Appoint a contact person so the registrar can get in touch
- New duties for officers, which include complying with the 2022 Act and the constitution
- Stating that the majority of officers of the Board must be financial members of the society
- The purpose of the society



Incorporated Societies Act

- Updates to the process of becoming a member and the conditions of membership
- Make-up of the society's board, its roles, functions, powers, and procedures
- How the society will hold general meetings (use of written resolutions), make decisions (mail/proxy votes, convenor casting vote), and elect or appoint officers of the Board.

If you're a financial member of the Centre, we'll send you more information about how you can be part of the discussion before voting on the changes at the AGM in September.

Saturday Coffee Group Starting at LHWC in April

The Saturday Coffee Group starts on the fourth Saturday of each month, starting April 27, from 10am-12pm (noon) at the Lower Hutt Women's Centre

The group is facilitated by Susan Bailey and is free.

This is a space for women to meet and connect over coffee in a safe and comfortable environment. Come down to the Centre for a hot drink, some morning tea and some great yarns.

We look forward to seeing you here!

The Virago Book of Friendship

by Rachel Goodson

A fond, fascinating look at female friendship using the writings—fictional, diaries, letters—of friends.

Friendship has never been more talked about. Some of this has to do with the internet (the perils of WhatsApp groups, and of ghosting), and with the realisation that loneliness in our society is increasing.

Friendship is being written about, and researched, seriously, by therapists and scientists alike. We all now know of the importance of friendship. However, it's hard to get inside friendship: its particular intensity; its singular ease; the way it can wax and wane; its ability to cause uncommon pain.

This is the territory of novels and letters, poems, and graphic novel, which is where *The Virago Book of Friendship* steps in. Celebratory, but also explanatory and wide in scope, from school friends to the loss of friends in old age. This wonderful book includes Jane Austen, Nora Ephron, Toni Morrison, Vivian Gornick, Helen Garner, LM Montgomery, Dolly Alderton, among nearly one hundred others. This book is truly the first of its kind, looking at female friendship through literature.

For more information: <https://www.virago.co.uk/titles/rachel-goodson/the-virago-book-of-friendship/9780349018430/>



Whāngai is crucial for fixing our broken foster care system

Re-printed from: <https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/whangai-can-help-fix-the-foster-care-system/>

By Taryn Dryfhout

The New Zealand foster care system has long had disproportionately high numbers of Māori children. A report in 2019 by Oranga Tamariki showed that an alarming 1 in 14 Māori children are at risk of being removed from their families and placed in foster care, compared to 1 in 50 Pākehā children.

In addition, Māori children are four times more likely to be uplifted than Pākehā. To make matters worse, three quarters of the harm that happens in state care happens to Māori children.

It's clear that removing 1 in 14 Māori children from their parents isn't keeping Māori children safe. Not only are Māori children not safe in state care, but they're also often separated from their cultural heritage and whānau connections.

This cultural disconnect increases the challenges that these vulnerable children already face. In failing to provide culturally responsive, nurturing environments for Māori, the state system is failing Māori children and their families.

Even with such a clear need for change, the foster system is now set to take a turn for the worse. The government's solution is to repeal the current law that aims to protect Māori in state care.

The repeal will nullify Section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, which outlines the state's obligation to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi principles, and to find placements for Māori children within their own whānau, before looking elsewhere.

Section 7AA also requires working with the child's community (whānau, hapū, and iwi), maintaining important connections with the child's family, and the protection of whakapapa (genealogy and lineage).

This section was introduced to reduce the disparities that exist between Māori and non-Māori children in state care, and its repeal will likely perpetuate these disparities.

Colour-blind system

While the government argues that Section 7AA encourages race-based solutions, and that the repeal will allow for a colour-blind system, this is a naive view. A system made up of almost 70 percent Māori can never be colour-blind. A system that is "colour-blind" is one that attempts to apply a foster-care framework that doesn't recognise the diverse cultural needs of the children who inhabit it. A system that doesn't fight equally for the cultural wellbeing of every person, especially when those cultures differ, will only result in further failures for Māori.

This repeal is a clear breach of the Treaty of Waitangi, and also breaches the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC). Article 8 of CRC emphasises the right of a child to his identity, nationality, and family relations. It recognises the importance of a child's cultural background, and the need to respect and preserve identity, for a child's overall wellbeing.

If this repeal goes through, our government will be breaching not only our founding document, but also the global right of children, as outlined by the UN, leading us backward down a disastrous path that must be addressed.

Te ao Māori offers answers

So what's the alternative? We don't have to look far for answers within te ao Māori, where the practice of whāngai offers a culturally rich, relational alternative to the proposed repeals.

Whāngai practice embraces a child's identity, cultural heritage, and community. Incorporating these principles of whāngai would allow for the construction of a system that prioritises the cultural wellbeing of children, and

promotes a nurturing, community-based framework for the care of vulnerable children.

Raising three whāngai children

I'm a wahine Māori who has both studied the practice of whāngai as an academic, and has also been blessed with the responsibility of raising three whāngai children.

When our biological son was three years old, we welcomed a new child into our home. She was seven weeks old, healthy, happy, and had whakapapa Ngāi Tahu, like myself.

After whānau group meetings, and discussion with the birth family, it was decided that we would become her permanent caregivers. When she was 13 months old, we were offered the opportunity to also care for her three-week-old brother. My husband and I both felt strongly that our children should be raised in a community, with transparency around their identity.

Four years later, another son also joined our family. He was the biological sibling of our other two whāngai children, and was five months old when he made the trip from the South Island to our Auckland home.

My youngest son's entrance to our family reaffirmed our commitment to raising all of the children within a rich whānau network. Because the children are a sibling group, the community aspect of our whāngai

arrangements came together very naturally. Keeping the children together means that they will grow up with a sense of belonging—not just to us, or to their birth parents, but to each other.

In addition, the children

have grandparents and half-siblings with whom we maintain a connection. This has meant that they're able to create lifelong whānau relationships from a very young age.

These connections are helpful for piecing together family

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Photo Credit: Supplied

Author Taryn Dryfhout writes about the practice of whāngai as an alternative to proposed appeals to foster care legislation.

“[Principles of] whāngai would allow for the construction of a system that prioritises the cultural wellbeing of children, and promotes a nurturing, community-based framework for the care of vulnerable children.”



Photo Credit: Supplied

Taryn Dryfhout and her tamariki.

Whāngai supports transparency, cultural connection, and retaining whānau relationships

Continued from previous page
information and whakapapa, allowing important identity material to be shared and made available to the entire whānau.

As our children mature, they naturally have questions about their background. Through open family relationships, they gain access to their wider birth family, and help to establish a sense of connection and belonging.

Promoting openness

Part of our philosophy is about promoting openness and abandoning secrecy. Over the past 13 years, we've tried very hard to create a transparent system, communicating openly within our wider family networks, and with the children, in a way that is age appropriate. As they mature, these discussions will become deeper and more frequent, and our commitment to transparency shall remain.

We believe that being open with the children will allow them to develop a deeper understanding of their identity and achieve a greater sense of wholeness. It's my hope that this will also allow them to develop a better understanding of the reasons surrounding their placement, and will decrease the feelings of abandonment that closed adoptions can prompt.

This openness has also included a commitment to exposing the children to their cultural heritage, which I believe will help to preserve their connections to their tīpuna and increase their sense of belonging in te ao Māori. Whāngai does not replace or extinguish the biological concept of family, but rather deepens and broadens it.

Our experience of welcoming children into our home was one of transparency, and whanaungatanga. We raise them with knowledge of their identity in their whānau, and in te ao Maori, and ensure that they retain relationships with their siblings also in permanent placement.

These actions are not legal categories, but are rich practices from whāngai—they are a Māori reality into which we can step. The whāngai arrangements that my family has experienced have provided us all with a richer experience of whānau than Western foster care systems or adoption would have enabled.

A legal grey area

Though whāngai was practised by pre-contact Māori, its practice after the arrival of the British shifted according to laws imposed by the settlers. For this reason, its history has at times been challenging and difficult, as the

practice of whāngai struggles to survive in a culture that has shifted away from collective living and group responsibility for child rearing.

New Zealand adoption and foster care law refuses to acknowledge whāngai. As a result, since the early 19th century whāngai has been practised outside of Pākehā law, within a legal “grey area”. To date, New Zealand still operates under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, which breaches Te Tiriti o Waitangi, as it denies Māori full and exclusive control of their taonga.

Steps toward aligning practices

Oranga Tamariki has taken commendable steps towards aligning its practices with whāngai and Māori worldviews, promoting a more culturally sensitive approach to child welfare. The recent introduction of the Māori-centred processes has influenced the placement of children, emphasising adherence to tikanga and ideas of kinship.

Additionally, efforts to prioritise family or iwi placements over those with strangers, and the commitment to transparency in child placements, reflect a positive shift towards culturally-grounded practices.

Whāngai provides a superior alternative to the repeals and the flawed foster care system. Though the child is raised in a different home, the role and status of the birth parents are not displaced by the whāngai arrangement. This relational approach ensures the preservation of the child's cultural identity, and fosters a strong sense of connection and belonging. Whāngai children are raised in a system that provides cultural, social, and practical support.

The government must abandon its focus on the repeal and allow Māori to lawfully draw on whāngai principles to address the needs of our most vulnerable tamariki.

About the author: Taryn Dryfhout (Ngāti Pōrou, Ngāi Tahu) is currently completing her PhD at the University of Otago.

Her research interests include Māori and indigenous theology, whāngai and adoption, and the intersection of Maori worldviews with Western theology. Taryn is the author of several non-fiction books and other writing, and is a NZ registered secondary school teacher. In 2020 she was inducted into Mensa.

Treaty of Waitangi: Questions and Answers

What is the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

The UN Declaration brings indigenous peoples' rights, both collective and individual, together into one international human rights instrument.

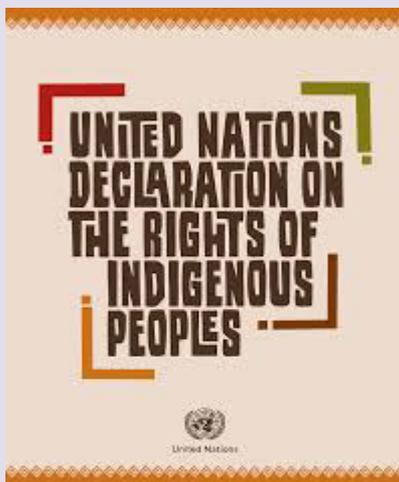
It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, wellbeing, and rights of the world's indigenous peoples.

The UN Declaration has 24 preambular paragraphs and 46 Articles that cover a range of human rights and fundamental freedoms related to indigenous peoples. These include the right of self-determination, ownership and use of traditional lands and natural resources, the honouring of treaties and agreements between states and indigenous peoples, protection against genocide, protection of cultural and intellectual property, and rights:

- To preserve and develop their cultural characteristics and distinct identities;
- To maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures, and traditions;
- To participate in the political, economic and social life of the society in which they live; and
- To pursue their own visions of economic, social, and cultural development.

The UN Declaration highlights the requirement on states to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples before making any decisions affecting their property, territories, rights, or interests.

It explicitly encourages "harmonious and cooperative relations" between states and indigenous peoples, and refers to procedures for resolving disputes between indigenous peoples and governments.



The UN Declaration had a lengthy and arduous journey through the UN system, beginning in 1985 when representatives of indigenous peoples' organisations and states began drafting the text, and 22 years of negotiations where some states, including New Zealand—attempted to weaken its



provisions.

It was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the UN General Assembly in 2007, with a recorded vote of 143 states in favour, 11 abstentions, and 4 (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States) against.

The four states that voted against the adoption of the UN Declaration subsequently made announcements of support for it: Australia in 2009, then New Zealand, Canada, and the United States in 2010.

Although it is a non-binding text (that is, a Declaration rather than a Covenant or a Convention that can be signed and ratified), the UN Declaration is used by the UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies as a standard to judge state compliance with the legally binding human rights instruments they monitor (as, for example, CERD did in 2013 in relation to New Zealand), and as a normative framework by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other UN human rights mechanisms.

The importance of the UN Declaration was

emphasised by the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (a high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly), which was held in September 2014 at the UN Headquarters in New York to agree an action-oriented Outcome Document on the UN Declaration.

The Outcome Document begins with a paragraph welcoming indigenous peoples' preparatory processes for the World Conference, including the 2013 Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference held in Alta (Norway) and the Alta Conference Outcome Document.

The Outcome Document reaffirms UN member states' support for the UN Declaration and their commitment "to consult and cooperate in good faith with indigenous peoples through their own representative institutions to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them".

The Outcome Document also reaffirms the solemn commitment of UN member states "to respect, promote and advance and in no way diminish the rights of indigenous peoples"; and includes commitments on specific actions to implement the UN Declaration.

The UN Declaration text and related documents are available at www.converge.org.nz/pma/deciprs.htm

Source: Network Waitangi (2016). Treaty of Waitangi: Questions and Answers. Christchurch: Network Waitangi. Web: <http://nwo.org.nz/files/QandA.pdf>

LHWC givealittle page

We have a page where you can make a donation to the Lower Hutt Womens Centre.

Please help us to help women.

To find us, go to the givealittle website and search for Lower Hutt Women's Centre.

Donations

We welcome donations of:

- Clean women's and children's clothes
- Books and toys
- Small household items

Drop off items to the Women's Centre.

Note: We cannot accept any large items such as furniture.

Lower Hutt Women's Centre philosophy

The Women's Centre:

1. recognises and works in the spirit of the Tiriti O Waitangi
2. confronts women's oppression and empowers women to take control of their own lives
3. opposes discrimination by those who have power against those who do not. This includes discrimination against women who identify and live as women, including Māori women, Pacific Island women, women of colour, lesbians, transwomen, those who are differently abled, young, old, working class and those with different spiritual beliefs
4. promotes a safe supportive environment for all women and children
5. promotes the sharing of power and resources
6. acts as a resource and information centre for the community

Contribute to Cronecle

We welcome your input into the next edition of Cronecle—due out in June 2024.

If you have articles, ideas for articles, drawings you've done, or services, please email your ideas to: info@lhwc.org.nz

The Women's Centre reserves the right to withhold publication of information which conflicts with the Centre's philosophy.

Thanks to all the women who helped out with this edition, and to the women who donate graphics to Isis International Manilla.

Become a member

Benefits

As a member of the Women's Centre you get free access to our library and can borrow books for up to a month. You also get sent a colour copy of our quarterly newsletter—by post or email.

Annual cost

Waged: \$27
Low or unwaged: \$15
Teenager: \$10
Child: \$5

Payment

Cash: pay at the Women's Centre
Online banking: Account number 03 0531 0528525 03
Reference: your name and 'join'.

Your fees go towards the running and ongoing maintenance of the Women's Centre.

We thank you for your support. Join us!