women talking politics
NEWSLETTER OF THE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK

Summer, 2000 New Issue No. 2 ISSN: 1175-1541

Winne Laban: New Zealand's First Pacific Island Woman MP.

By **Rae Nicholl**, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington

At a fundraiser for Winnie Laban held in October 1999, Professor Margaret Wilson, the new Attorney-General in the 1999 Labour-Alliance Coalition Government, told the crowd that the Labour Party was looking for 'women of intelligence, wit and humour'. Winnie Laban fitted that description, she said, and was just the kind of woman the party wanted.

Under the slogan 'A Vote for Labour Is A Vote for Laban', Winnie Laban's campaign was launched in mid-1999 at a Pacific Island fashion show held in Newtown, Wellington, and attended by hundreds of her supporters. Running as a list candidate, and with 20,000 Pacific Island people scattered throughout the Wellington region, she realised the need to pull votes from a wide area. To do so, she called on all her support networks including the Wellington Pacific Island Women's Group. Placed at number 33 on the Labour list, Winnie Laban entered Parliament as the first Pacific Island woman MP in November 1999.

Winnie Laban was born 44 years ago in Wellington to Samoan parents, who had migrated to New Zealand in the 1950s to provide their children with education and opportunity. She has lived in Wainuiomata all her life and has a large extended family. She holds the chiefly title, *Luamanuva,* which has come to her from her mother's side of the family and which she uses sparingly. Her grandfather was an MP in Samoa. Following tertiary education, she has worked in the public service and spent the past eight years at the Family Centre in Lower Hutt.

In this issue:

Rae Nicholl on Winnie Laban……p.1

Jean Drage and Rae Nicholl on what the 1999 election meant for women……p.2

Jaqui Van Der Kaay on Marion Hobbs 1999 election campaign……p.4

Janine Hayward compares the status of indigenous women in Canada and New Zealand. ……p.5

Marianne Tremaine describes one woman mayor's leadership style ……p.9

Rae Nicholl on the revolving door of female representation in New Zealand's Parliament. p12

Prue Hyman reflects on the New Zealand Women's Studies Association conference. ……p.17

Marian Sawyer on how women fared in the 1999 Victoria State Elections ……p.20

THE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK

The idea was born out of a meeting 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).

The newsletter is to be published twice a year. Until 1998 it was published by women from the Department of Political Studies at the University of Auckland, and the School of Social Sciences at the Auckland Institute of Technology. At the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference in December 1998, women from Victoria University of Wellington offered to take a turn at publishing the newsletter. The Editor for this issue is Jean Drage (with thanks to Rae Nicholl for her editing assistance). Also thanks to Charlotte Connell for her formatting skills.

We have had a great response to issue one of the Women Talking Politics newsletter. Your comments are welcome so please let us know what you think. We are keen to have a comments column.

Contributions and shared resources. We are interested in receiving material for publication in the newsletter – articles, book and conference reviews, information about teaching and research, relevant conferences, and letters to the editor are all welcome. Student input is also welcomed.

Also help build up resources by sharing details of relevant books, papers and web pages.

Please forward contributions to: Jean Drage, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington. Disk copies, preferably in MSWord would be appreciated.
Phone: (04) 476 7486
Email: J.Drage@xtra.co.nz

Her main reason for standing as a Labour Party list candidate was to ensure that Pacific Island women have a voice in Parliament and to increase the number of Pacific Island people in the legislature.

Her principal concerns relate to the position of Pacific Island people in New Zealand. In her election flier, she pointed out that Pacific Islanders now represent 15.9 percent of the unemployed, 40 percent are living in substandard housing, and 47 percent over the age of 15 years have no educational qualifications. She is committed to changing the position of 'her people' so that they are in a position to participate fully in society and 'live a life of dignity'. She noted also that Pacific Island people represent 6 percent of New Zealand's population. 'Six percent', she said, 'can swing an election'.[1]

Winnie Laban sees the work of an MP as being that of a public servant. It will be, she says, 'an honour and a privilege' to serve her Pacific people.

The 1999 Elections – What it Meant for Women.

By **Jean Drage** and **Rae Nicholl**, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington.

MMP continues to be good for women. With the election of a centre-left government, there are now 37 women in Parliament (30.8 percent). Included in this number is a woman Prime Minister, eleven women with Ministerial responsibilities and a woman Leader of the Opposition (see Table One).

Yet again, women's success was related to their positions on party lists. The majority of the women in the minor parties - ACT, Greens and Alliance - are list MPs as was the case in 1996. This reinforces earlier research that women do best on the list.[2]

[1]Winnie Laban, 'A Vote For Labour is a Vote for Laban', September 1999.

[2]Margaret Cousins and Rae Nicholl, 'New Voting System Brings Success to More New Zealand Women', paper presented to the Women in Politics Pacific Centre/The Centre for Asia and Pacific Women In Politics (WIPPAC/ CAPWIP) Conference, Fiji, December 1996.

There are a couple of surprises with these results.

1. Jeanette Fitzsimons is believed to be the first Green MP elected in a constituency in the world. Although Green MPs have gained seats in the European Parliament as well as legislatures in Germany, Belgium and Iceland, these have been as a result of being on party lists rather than through a constituency election. Jeanette, co-leader of the Greens, was elected to the Coromandel electorate by a majority of 246 votes. Jeanette's very impressive performance as leader of her party was evident on election night, in the weeks following when the final results were still uncertain, and after the Green Party came into Parliament having gained 5.2 percent of the party vote on the official count. The Greens policy of alternating list placings by gender clearly works as can be seen by the number of Green women MPs - three out of seven in Parliament.

2. Labour women's success in electorate seats is a major change from the 1996 election results. In the 1999 elections Labour women won 18 seats - 13 constituencies and 5 lists seats - whereas in 1996 women gained 13 seats, six constituency and seven list seats. As well, electorate seats won by Labour women in 1999 show, on the whole, healthy majorities. For example, in the Wairarapa (previously a safe National seat), Georgina Beyer has a 3033 majority. Even more startling, Stephanie Chadwick (who prefers to be known as Steve) beat incumbent National Minister Max Bradford by a margin of 4978 in the Rotorua electorate. Previous list MPs Marion Hobbs in Wellington Central, Ruth Dyson in Banks Peninsula, Nanaia Mahuta in Te Tai Haururu and Lianne Dalziel in Christchurch East all won electorate seats. The first ever woman Pacific Island MP, Winnie Laban, was also elected on the Labour list.

3. On the other hand, the National Party women picked up one new electorate seat. Lynda Scott won the Kaikoura seat by 1,486 votes. While Jenny Shipley easily won the Rakaia electorate, all the other National party women are list MPs including 2 new women, Anne Tolley and Katherine Rich. This is in contrast to the 1996 elections when there were equal numbers of list and electorate women elected in the National Party. How did this happen? Marie Hasler was beaten in Titirangi electorate by 5,800 votes and Belinda Vernon in the Mangakiekie seat by 2,558 votes. Both of these women remain in Parliament as list MPs. A real loss is Katherine O'Regan who missed out on the Tauranga seat by 63 votes and two places on the National Party list. Katherine had a positive impact on women's issues over her 15 years in Parliament.

4. Two parties in Parliament with no women MPs are New Zealand First and United. NZ First women candidates suffered from a lack of support from their party and United again only has one MP.

For the first time in New Zealand's history 11 women hold ministerial portfolios. Seven women sit around the Cabinet table - Helen Clark, Annette King, Sandra Lee, Margaret Wilson, Lianne Dalziel, Marion Hobbs and Laila Harre - the largest number ever. Four more women hold portfolios outside Cabinet - Phillida Bunkle, Ruth Dyson, Judith Tizard and Tariana Turia.

With Helen Clark as Prime Minster and Jenny Shipley as Leader of the Opposition, the success of women in New Zealand's Parliament as we go into a new century, looks very healthy.

Table 1: Number of Women Elected on List and Electorate Seats in New Zealand 1999.

Party	**No. of Women**	**List**	**Electorate**
Labour	18	5	13
Alliance	4	4	0
Greens	3	2	1
National	9	7	2
ACT	3	3	0
NZ First	0	0	0
United	0	0	0
Total	**37**	**21**	**16**

A Community Style Campaign – Marian Hobbs' Success in Wellington Central

By **Jaqui Van Der Kaay**, Wellington.

For Wellington Central's newest MP, it wasn't just winning that counted it was the style of her campaign. As it happens, Labour's Marian Hobbs did win the campaign with a 1,482 majority, leaving Act's Richard Prebble the only party leader not to hold an electorate seat. Hobbs knew she'd have a tough battle on her hands against Prebble who'd held the high profile electorate for just one term.

Hobbs was herself a one term MP – coming in on Labour's list in the country's first MMP election in 1996.[3] This election, she decided to make a bid for Wellington central in favour of a South Island campaign for Kaikoura.

In December 1998 Hobbs and her team decided on the best strategy for the election campaign – not only to win the seat but also to help Labour take the bulk of the party vote. They decided on the style, set up the systems and then thoroughly researched the electorate. She also set up a central city electorate office, in the same building as Labour Party headquarters in downtown Willis Street.

Hobbs knew that as a backbench MP in opposition she stood little chance of winning the seat through the media. Conversely, Prebble enjoyed a reasonably high profile and as Act's leader was able to maximise on more media opportunities.

Hobbs and her team of 14 decided to have a community style campaign using canvassing, Saturday morning meetings and school, liaison group and cottage meetings. 'We believed that if people got to know me it would help me succeed,' she says. 'Wellington is a village and people talk over the garden fence. We also made a conscious decision not to talk about Prebble or talk about anything negatively. Instead I focussed on what I thought and would do and what our policies were.'

In contrast, Prebble opted for a media based campaign. Hobbs knew she could be in for a tough campaign. But she says she never cared about what Prebble said about her simply because 'it bore no resemblance to me'. She admits campaigning can be a tough time for some women because it is easy to take comments or criticism personally. She often felt judged by the way she behaved, what she wore or even how she sounded. 'If I raised my voice I was termed aggressive but if I was too quiet I was weak.'

The hardest part of the campaign for Hobbs was the public meetings in the last few weeks of the campaign. Three were particularly noisy and there were no microphones. She describes the yelling as 'like being physically battered. They were absolutely brutal.' Hobbs' way of protecting herself was to keep her team around her and make sure she could leave when she wanted to. 'My team was vital during those times,' she says.

She says that at those meetings Prebble was cleverer than her at short comments and would deliberately focus on just one part of an argument, ignoring the rest. He often used the same incorrect facts so Hobbs learnt to pre-empt him by giving the correct version before he could distort it. 'I had to make sure I got the correct story out. I was also able to pick up issues he hadn't worked out lines for and then he didn't have answers,' she says. While this stopped Prebble in public meetings, it didn't stop him using the information in the newspapers or pamphlets. Hobbs chose to counter Prebble's myths by concentrating on spreading her own messages. 'It's all about spreading a perception to different sectors in the community,' she says. Another tactic Hobbs employed was to use one of her team members to constantly analyse her performance and give her feedback.

Reflecting on her campaign, having just been appointed as a Minister in the new Labour-Alliance Government, Hobbs believes her community style campaign did work. 'We had constant feedback from the most extraordinary quarters – the stories just keep growing and growing. I wanted to be seen as thoughtful, able to listen, network with people and have warmth, humour and personality and that's what came back.'

More than 200 people helped Hobbs in the final throws of her campaign on election day. On election night, Hobbs said she was overwhelmed that she had won. 'I didn't think I could do it without the specials,' she said.

Hobbs acknowledges that it made a difference when Alliance candidate Phillida Bunkle pulled out of the race. 'It would have

[3] Marion has initially stood as the Labour Party candidate in the Selwyn by-election in 1994. See Michael Gibbs, 'The Selwyn By-election', *Political Science*, Vol.47, No.1, July 1995 pp. 59-96.

been difficult for her but if I had been polling 10 percent and she 30 I think I would have considered it,' she says. National decided not to run a candidate earlier in the campaign in order to give Prebble a free run

Now Hobbs is looking forward to the challenge of her ministerial positions, which include broadcasting (including responsibility for RNZ, TVNZ and New Zealand on Air), environment, biosecurity, National Library, National Archives and associate communications.

Marian Hobbs was born in 1947. She has a BA from Canterbury University in English and Political Science, a Diploma of Teaching and a Master of Educational Administration. She began her teaching career at Hillmorton High School in 1972 and become deputy principal of Aranui High School in 1987 and was principal of Avonside Girls High School from 1989 to 1996. She was appointed principal of Wellington Girls College in May 1996 but did not take up the position and entered Parliament instead.

Resources for studying Women and Politics

Web Pages:

Women Prime Ministers Contains biographies of all the women Prime Ministers from Sirimavo Bandaranike to Helen Clark.
http://web.jet.es/ziaorarr/00women3.htm

Women & Politics: a quarterly journal of research and policy studies, American University, Washington, DC.
http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/spa/wandp

Inter-Parliamentary Union: Studies and Surveys on Women in Politics from 1975 to 1999.
http://ipu.org/wmn-e/studies.htm

Global Centre for Women's Studies and Politics. This site has been developed by the Feminist Institute of the Henriech-Boell Foundation, Berlin. Its mission is to connect women globally and build up an international forum for women's issues, discussed from many cultural, national and political perspectives. Check it out at:www.glow-boell.de

The 'Status' of Indigenous Women: Comparing First Nations and Urban Maori Women.

By **Janine Hayward**, Department of Political Studies, Otago University

In 1985, the Canadian legislature passed Bill C-31 to amend particular discriminatory sections of the Indian Act 1876. Canadian Indians (First Nations People) had contested the provisions of this Act for years. The Act distinguished between 'status' Indians, who were (amongst many things) eligible for government services and assistance, and 'non-status' Indians, who were not. The Act impacted most adversely on First Nations women, for reasons discussed below. Its amendment in 1985 was an attempt to remove the status criteria imposed on First Nations through the law, and thereby reduce the economic (and other) implications felt by 'non-status' Indians.

Seemingly a long way from the Indian Act (both spatially and temporally) is current debate over New Zealand's Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claim) Settlement Act 1992. The Act is the result of the settlement of the Maori commercial fisheries claim in 1992. The debate surrounding the Act is over the allocation of settlement assets. As the debate is played out in the courts, there is an increasing likelihood that fisheries assets will be distributed to the traditional tribal structures 'iwi' (for further distribution) and not to Maori who affiliate with non-tribal 'urban authorities'. In other words, in the language of the Indian Act, 'status' and 'non-status' Maori are likely to result from the legislation, with possible economic implications for Maori deemed to be 'non-status' (non-iwi).

The parallel between the Indian Act and the Fisheries Act should not be overstated, but neither should it be ignored. Both pieces of legislation encourage a hierarchy amongst indigenous peoples identified as 'status' or 'iwi' and 'non-status' or 'non-iwi'. This hierarchy also has economic implications in both cases. Most importantly, while the Acts do not necessarily *only* implicate indigenous women, in the case of the Indian Act, its provisions were most keenly felt by First Nations women, who were the bottom of the socio-economic heap. The purpose of this article is to compare the position of First Nations women under the Indian Act with the *potential* position of urban Maori women under

the Fisheries Act, and to consider the economic implications of the Fisheries Act for urban Maori women.

The Indian Act and First Nations Women: Canada

The Indian Act has been widely acclaimed as the most oppressive Act in Canadian history. When first passed, it was aimed at gradually enfranchising Indians. In doing so, it redefined an Indian, by law, as: a male person of Indian blood; any child of such a person; or a woman who is, or was, lawfully married to such a person. The Indian Act impacted on almost all aspects of Indian life, and deprived an Indian woman of her Indian 'status' if she married a non-Indian man. The children of this marriage were also denied their Indian status. As Indian 'status' brought with it (amongst other things) the benefits of tax exemption and government assistance in education and housing to First Nations living on reserve, the Indian Act had serious economic implications for non-status First Nations women. It effectively assigned them fewer rights than First Nations men, and limited their social and political rights. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the provisions of the Act as recently as 1973.[4]

While it was in force, the provisions of the Indian Act made some indigenous peoples (largely women) less 'Indian' than others (such as their male counterparts). This distinction, in addition to violating their human rights, had serious economic implications for Indian women. 'Non-status' First Nations women in Canada consistently appear at the bottom of the soci-economic 'heap'. In 1981, the United Nations Human Rights Committee stated that certain provisions of the Indian Act violated Canada's human rights obligations. In 1985, as pressure mounted, Bill C-31 was passed. The Bill was a significant (albeit limited) improvement in the position of many First Nations women.[5] After almost 200 years of injustice, Bill C-31 restored Indian status to many First Nations people, but predominantly to women and their children. By 1986, about 16,000 First Nation women and their children had regained their Indian status, with an estimated 76,000 - 86,000 eligible overall. Limited compensation was also awarded to these women and children in recognition of the damaging implications of the Act.

The blatant abuse of human rights in the Indian Act has been recognised in Canada and some action taken to make appropriate amendments. Seemingly a world away from this issue is the debate currently being played out in the courts in New Zealand over the distribution of commercial fisheries assets to Maori. Any comparison between the Indian Act and the legislation governing fishery assets distribution in New Zealand is limited and tenuous, but beneath the starkly diverse era and purpose of these statutes, lies a common theme that should not be overlooked. Just as the Indian Act created status criteria amongst Indians (with economic implications) the fisheries legislation also potentially creates a distinction between groups of Maori, also with economic implications. Perhaps the most important comparison to be wary of, however, is the possibility that, as with the Indian Act, indigenous women will be most adversely affected by the legislation.

The Fisheries Act and Urban Maori Women: New Zealand

The pan-tribal settlement of commercial fisheries in New Zealand was enacted in the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992. The Act refers to the distribution of assets to 'iwi' – a term which can be defined as both 'tribe' and 'people'. By 1995, debate over several issues relating to the allocation of fisheries assets arose.[6] One of these issues was an appeal by urban Maori that the term 'iwi' in the Act should be interpreted as all Maori people not just traditional iwi (tribal) groupings. Urban Maori are concerned that, if the government only allocates fisheries resources to traditional iwi, the estimated 20% of urban Maori who do not know the name of their iwi, or chose not to affiliate with their iwi, will be seriously disadvantaged and will not benefit from the settlement. The decision hung, therefore, on the definition of 'iwi' in the Act as either 'tribe' or 'people'. An original finding by the High Court that urban Maori (represented by Urban Maori Trusts, rather than traditional iwi) should be included in the allocation of resources was later overturned by the Privy Council and referred back to the High Court. The outcome

[4] Kathleen Jamieson, 'Sex Discrinimation and the Indian Act', J. Rick Ponting, *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonisation*, McLelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1986, p 112.

[5] Jamieson, 1986, p 131.

[6] Mason Durie, *Te Mana, Te Kawanatanga: The Politics of Maori Self-Determination*, OUP, Auckland, 1998, p 104.

was this time in favour of traditional tribal groupings, as was the subsequent appeal to the Court of Appeal in 1999.

The tone of debate between urban and Maori factions is illuminating with regard to the implications of these rulings for Maori. In particular, the often heated exchanges between John Tamihere, of the West Auckland Urban Maori authority, and Sir Tipene O'Regan, Chairman of the Ngai Tahu Maori Trust Board are revealing. Comments by Sir Tipene infer that some Maori (those with ties to traditional iwi) are 'more Maori' than those urban Maori who have lost their kinship ties. O'Regan is quoted as saying that 'lack of, or ignorance of, whakapapa (which iwi you are descended from) should disqualify people from claiming the benefits of Treaty settlements'.[7] O'Regan's comments give cause to consider that the Fisheries Act, when compared to the provisions of the Indian Act, could make some Maori more 'Maori' than others, with serious economic implications. Underpinning this debate is the question of the purpose of settlements. If (and this is by no means clear) the purpose of the commercial fisheries settlement is to provide a future economic base for all Maori, then the possibility that some Maori are excluded from distribution on the basis of status criteria established under the Act, is dubious at best.

The 'feminisation' of poverty: Canada and New Zealand

The possibility that urban Maori might not be directly allocated these settlement assets has serious implications for the poorest of urban Maori - urban Maori women. Urban Maori women, like non-status Indian women, are at the bottom of the socio-economic 'heap' in New Zealand. The urbanisation of indigenous peoples, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, has created socio-economic dynamics within and between ethnic groups in colonised nations such as Canada and New Zealand. Recent studies in Toronto, Canada's biggest city, demonstrate that increasing numbers of urban Aboriginals, and particularly women who are lone parents, are victims of poverty. Dubbed 'the feminisation of poverty' this phenomenon is the process by which female-headed families become an increasing proportion of the low-income urban population. Many factors are said to contribute to the feminisation of poverty, including low wage rates, part-time work and the lack of job security in women's work. The conditions created by the Indian Act for many First Nation women, and their families, has also contributed to this compounding problem.[8]

The feminisation of poverty is also evident in statistics in New Zealand, and again, it is indigenous women who appear the worst off. The Maori female population was young and largely rural until the 1950s. During the 1960s many Maori families moved to urban locations where both Maori men and women took up the opportunity to participate in the large range of low-skilled occupations available. In fact, Maori women at this time were more likely to participate in the labour force than their non-Maori counterparts.[9]

Today, the Maori population is heavily urbanised (at least 80%). With regard to the economic position of urban Maori women in 1996, 45% of Maori women lived in households with an annual income of $30,000 or less (before tax). They had a median personal income of $11,200, compared to $16,000 for Maori men.[10] Only 3% of Maori women who specified their income in the 1996 census received an income over $40,000. One out of every two Maori women aged over fifteen received a government benefit (compared to one out of every five non-Maori women). For many of these women, especially sole parents, this was their only source of income. These statistics indicate that in New Zealand, as in Canada, the 'feminisation of poverty' has been most acutely felt by indigenous women. In summary, '[t]he social and economic outcomes for Maori women continue to fall well below that of non-Maori women and men'.[11] In looking to address this problem, one government department notes: '[t]he abilities of mainstream agencies to address the needs of Maori women will be a key success factor in achieving [improved socio-economic status for Maori women]'[12]

[7] Denis Welch, 'The Great Divide', *The Listener*, April 11, 1998, p 31.

[8] Allison M. Williams, 'Canadian Urban Aboriginals: A Focus on Aboriginal Women in Toronto', *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies,* Vol 17, No 1, 1997, pp. 75 – 101.

[9] Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Maori Development), *Maori Women in Focus: Titiro hangai, ka marama*, Wellington, April 1999.

[10] Te Puni Kokiri, 1999, p 10.

[11] Te Puni Kokiri, 1999, p 19.

[12] Te Puni Kokiri, 1999, p 19.

The Waitangi Tribunal has also recognised that the key to improving conditions for urban Maori (and therefore urban Maori women) is to improve the relationship between urban Maori trusts and the government as 'Treaty partners'. In its findings on Te Whanua o Waipareira (The West Auckland Urban Maori Trust Board) in 1998, the Tribunal found that for the purposes of funding welfare services, the government should not only direct funding to iwi, as the Crown's traditional Treaty partner, but to *all* Maori, including modern social groupings and individuals.[13] Despite the Tribunal's ruling in favour of the Urban Maori Trust, the government appears reluctant to extend its conception of the Maori treaty partner to include urban Maori trusts, and other non-traditional kin-based groups. The courts' interpretation of iwi in the fisheries legislation as 'tribe' as opposed to all people, is a further blow for urban trusts. Given that these trusts service some of the poorest members of Maori society, including an expanding category of urban Maori women, the government's approach signals serious social policy problems in the future.

If this comparison between the position of indigenous women under the Indian Act and the Fisheries Act seems unnecessarily provocative, I make no apology. Certainly there are important limitations to the parallels that can be drawn between these statutes, but there is also an unmistakable theme that emerges from comparative discussion of their effect on indigenous women. In both cases, these women are represented in a group (non-status Indian and non-iwi Maori) considered 'less indigenous' than others and consequently ineligible for resources available to other 'real' indigenous people. Given that urban indigenous women are the most economically disadvantaged group in both societies, this injustice requires immediate attention. In Canada, this has begun with the enactment of Bill C-31. In New Zealand, the 1999 election of a Labour/Alliance coalition government raises new possibilities for Maori in the near future. In particular, the election of John Tamihere, Willy Jackson and Sandra Lee, as Maori who have openly criticised the previous focus on iwi Maori, to the neglect of urban Maori, indicates a possible shift in future government policy. In the meantime, however, the fisheries issue remains with the courts, and the debate continues.

[13] Waitangi Tribunal, *Te Whanau o Waipareira*, GP Publications, Wellington, 1998, p 13.

New Zealand Conferences.

28-30 June 2000
'New Zealand Political Studies Association Politics 2000 Conference: Taking Stock of the Discipline' Hosted by Political Studies, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Contact: Conference Administrator: Clare, (64-3) 479-8660. Email: clare.phipps@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

28-30 July 2000
'WAKA: Pacific Communities 2000 Perceptions & Representations'. Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Contact: Vincent O'Sullivan, director, Stout Research Centre, (04) 471-5305, fax: (04) 496-5439. Email: Stout-centre@vuw.ac.nz

17-19 November 2000
'Poverty, Prosperity, Progress' 2nd Biennial Aotearoa New Zealand International Development Studies Network (DEVNET) Conference. Hosted by the Masters of Development Studies Programme, Victoria University of Wellington and DEVNET. Contact: DEVNET Conference, Development Resource Centre, PO Box 12440, Wellington. Tel: (04) 472-9545. Fax: (04)472-3622. Email: drc@apc.org.nz Website: http://www.drc.org.nz/

Don't Dream it's Over: Once the Campaign's Won, then the Battle Begins.

By **Marianne Tremaine**, Department of Human Resource Management, Massey University, Palmerston North.

This article is an extract from a longer conference paper which was presented to the 8th International Women and Leadership Conference held at Fremantle, Western Australia in November 1999. This research undertaken with Jill White, mayor of Palmerston North is part of a larger project on leadership and women mayors in New Zealand.

In the last issue of *Women Talking Politics*, Jean Drage discussed how women fared in the 1998 local government elections, showing that women achieved 26 percent of the country's mayoralties.[14] She pointed out that although research has shown that a higher proportion of women than men who stand for office are elected, the time-honoured barriers of finance and support still stand in the way of many potential female candidates. However, even women who overcome those barriers and win mayoral campaigns, may still confront obstacles to achieving their goals as mayor. This article documents one woman's experience, Jill White – mayor of Palmerston North, in her first hundred days in office as she enjoyed the initial honeymoon, survived a leadership crisis and managed the aftermath.

At the time that she decided to join the mayoralty contest, Jill was a backbench MP for the Labour Party having gained a seat in Parliament from her position on the party list. In the previous three year parliamentary term (1993-1996), she had been the electorate MP for Manawatu. Her local government apprenticeship had begun as a councillor on Palmerston North City Council where she served from 1983 to 1992 and she was also on the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council from 1989 to 1994. Before becoming a full-time politician, Jill was a public health nurse, so her political commitment to the community was an extension of her nursing career, but with much more scope in terms of the opportunity for social change. When the sitting mayor in Palmerston North decided he would not contest the 1998 election, a large number of hopefuls seized their opportunity to stand and some members of the local community approached Jill and persuaded her to consider standing too.[15] In common with most New Zealand councils, Palmerston North is not a council where groups divide along party political lines, but the previous council had suffered from episodes of factionalism and in-fighting.

The Honeymoon Period

Because the election in Palmerston North had been hotly-contested by no less than 15 candidates, Jill was euphoric when the results were announced and she discovered that she was the new mayor. She resigned from Parliament and was replaced by Helen Duncan as the next person on the Labour list. A councillors' retreat was held soon after the election, with workshops on legislation and committee structure. Another significant event in those early days was the first council meeting with its ceremonial swearing in of the mayor and council. Jill spoke about the need to integrate social, economic, recreational and environmental goals. She also referred to new directions that had come from the councillors' retreat, such as the desire, 'to work as a team, to work differently, … acknowledging that the people of the city have said they want change'.[16]

In the weeks that followed, Jill spent time discussing committee leadership and structure. She wanted to take the time needed to reach the sound decisions. She talked with councillors about their aspirations and ideas on how the council should function and the kinds of contributions they would like to make. Some were critical behind the scenes about the length of time she was taking to reach decisions. They wanted appointments to be made so they could get down to business. Despite a little impatience, any negative feelings people might have had were well-masked. Everyone was being pleasant and helpful and positive and there was a lot of agreement about the general shape of the future, in particular the need for council to work as a team and for decisions to be made based on what was best for the city.

[14] Jean Drage. 'The 1998 Local Government Elections – How Did Women Fare', *Women Talking Politics,* Winter 1, 1999, pp. 7-10.

[15] 15 candidates stood for the Palmerston North mayoralty, three of them women. This was the largest number of candidates for a mayoralty in the 1998 local authority elections.

[16] Myers, Jo, ' White charts way ahead', *Evening Standard*, November 3, 1998, p 1.

Later, Jill was to look back on these early days as her honeymoon period in office, a delightful time when she was still being celebrated as the new mayor, when she did not have to make any hard decisions and when everyone seemed relatively positive and happy to work together.

The Crisis

Councillors were well aware of the need to show the city that they were a united team working in the city's interests rather than fighting amongst themselves, as had been the case in the previous council. Yet, when the time came to make recommendations in a formal meeting about who should be committee chairpersons and deputy chairs, this became in Jill's words, 'crunch time' when all the work of consulting went for nothing and 'everything very nearly turned to custard'. The meeting to decide on committee leaders turned out to be a baptism of fire for Jill in her mayoralty, a turning-point when she had to face a stormy barrage of criticism. A team of councillors who prepared their ground, destroyed her carefully-considered recommendations and put their own candidates into power. There was support from some councillors, with the votes being lost by a slender majority of eight to seven.

Jill had not expected her recommendations to be accepted without a murmur. She was prepared for debate, but what she did not expect was the orchestrated attack that came in opposition. Suddenly, she realised that the charmed life she had been leading was, in fact, a honeymoon and like all honeymoons it had to come to an end. However, whereas many honeymoons end in a gradual process of coming to terms with the less attractive aspects of daily life, Jill's mayoral honeymoon ended in a few hours in the council chamber. Looking back, she is still totally convinced that the choices she made about committees and chairpersons were probably the best ones, but in hindsight she thinks she might have handled it differently.

She had done a degree of preparation by having an informal meeting of councillors the week before. In retrospect, she says that informal meeting may have been a little too much like the Head Prefect's pep talk. Everyone was warned that some people would be disappointed. After all, councillors had said that they wanted fewer committees. Fewer committees naturally meant fewer chairpersons. There had been agreement amongst councillors on the general rubric of making decisions on the basis of what was best for the city. However, for Jill the need to make decisions in terms of the city's best interests was a deeply-held conviction. For some councillors, cherished personal ambitions were involved. Some clearly felt they were owed positions of power, although there was generous acceptance of the recommendations by others, even those who had chaired committees in the past.

At the councillors' workshops, the issues underpinning the selection of chairpersons had been fully canvassed. One strongly-held view had been the egalitarian argument that chairperson's roles should be shared around. There was even talk about a rotating system so that if there were five committees and fifteen councillors, over three years each person would have a turn as a committee chair for one year. However, this suggested system of musical chairpersons, while meeting the criterion of fairness to the politicians, certainly did not necessarily meet the criterion of what was best for the city. So, long before the meeting where decisions on chairpersons would be made, there had been wide-ranging discussions about possible leadership options.

Jill had been warned that it would be a difficult meeting because supportive councillors had phoned her in advance to let her know that those opposed to her recommendations were lobbying and planning tactics to defeat her. The attack came with her recommendation that a newly-elected councillor who was a respected accountant in the city, should hold both the position of Deputy Mayor and the position of Finance Committee Chair. Although Palmerston North's Deputy Mayor in the previous council had chaired a major committee, this seemingly straightforward issue was the one that roused sharp antagonism. Jill, herself, strongly suspects that the dual role was seized upon as a handy attacking-point, because that was when the real ferocity of the onslaught started. Her opponents argued strongly that it would be impossible for a professional person, such as the accountant who was Deputy Mayor, to have time to fill a second role as chairperson of one of the four new committees, particularly the Finance committee which is seen as a demanding role.

Naturally, Jill's concern was to appoint someone with the financial expertise as well as the necessary personal qualities, to look after a crucial aspect of the city's well-being. Jill gave her assurance twice that the issue of time had

been discussed and that the Deputy Mayor would have time to fill the second position. But the attack had gathered momentum. Financial rewards were not really at issue, because chairpersons were to receive only $1000 more a year than ordinary councillors. Finally, she lost the battle and another councillor became Chair of the Finance Committee. The meeting moved on. Agreement was reached to review committees and chairpersons after the first year, but only with a view to making changes where there seemed good reason to do so.

Jill was even voted down on her preference to accept less than the maximum salary and forced to take more, which seemed a little ridiculous, especially as she has the power to adjust the amount later at her own request. She survived the meeting by keeping calm, setting her emotions to one side and going through the agenda item by item concentrating on procedure. She came out of the meeting feeling absolutely battered. But the next day the local newspaper wrote a supportive editorial about her thoughtful recommendations and lamented the outcome of the council meeting. She also began to receive support from the community. The council remained in the news for a few days because some councillors were concerned about being rebuked by the media and attempted to justify themselves, keeping the issue alive.

The Aftermath

As time went on, Jill's perception was that some of the councillors who became committee chairpersons without the mayor's recommendation were having difficulties with their responsibilities. They were realising that being the chair of a committee was not straightforward, because responsibility is involved in the position of chairperson and you have to lead the process of decision-making to an extent. Jill pointed out if your style has been to challenge and oppose, there is a different approach you have to learn and internalising a different approach is far more difficult than simply learning to apply standing orders.

Jill was also aware that the aggressive meeting left her in a vulnerable position she could not afford to have headlines saying things like, 'Mayor Jill Burnt Again', if she wanted to show real leadership as opposed to simply occupying the role of major. However, that vulnerable time has now passed. She is committed to giving as much support as possible to all her chairpersons, because both city and council need good decisions to be made. She feels that she and the council have to take a lead in making the city a positive dynamic place with faith in its future.

Her personal model of leadership is linked to community development. She believes that as a leader you use the talents of others. This involves listening to people's goals and aspirations and trying to give them the help they need to achieve those aspirations which link it to Council's vision and policies. She sees her leadership style as one of reconciliation, bringing people together and allowing everyone's voice to be heard. At present, a major goal is to improve the economic base of Palmerston North as part of its development as a sustainable city and give the city a sense of renewed self-esteem. She wants to build the council into a cohesive force that will help the city towards a new confidence in itself.

Postscript

From a longer-term perspective. Jill's determination to hold the council together and treat everyone fairly without any bias has proven itself. Some of the councillors who were not her choice as chairpersons and had initial difficulties in the position, have begun to develop new skills and are working well in their roles. The council has faced a complicated business issue which had the potential to be divisive, but councillors remained united as they worked though the process.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

The Revolving Door of Female Representation.

By **Rae Nicholl**, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington

Incumbency is the term used to describe the length of time a legislator retains political office. Because it is notoriously difficult to dislodge a sitting MP, incumbency is seen as a major hurdle for all aspiring political candidates. Ambitious activists who have to deal with the first-past-the-post (FPP) electoral system usually wait for a constituency to fall vacant through the retirement or death of the incumbent before declaring their intention to run for office.[17] The same problem arises with systems using proportional representation, including New Zealand's mixed-member proportional system (MMP), where party lists may become clogged with incumbents and there is little space for newcomers. All first-time candidates, male and female alike, are affected by the incumbency problem.

There is another difficulty from which women alone appear to suffer. Generally, women have spent less time in legislatures than men, often because they are in marginal seats or lowly ranked on the list and they lose their seats when the government changes. But in recent years this problem has been exacerbated by women themselves as they are staying in Parliament far less time than did their female predecessors only 10 or so years ago. This is considered a problem mainly because turnover may be so frequent that women are denied the opportunity to build up a critical mass or an 'old girls' network in Parliament. They are in a constant state of renewal.[18] Why are women spending less time in Parliament.

The Revolving Door of Female Representation.

The phrase - the revolving door of female representation - was used by Christine Fletcher in her valedictory speech in October 1999 to describe the rapid turnover of women in the New Zealand Parliament.[19] The revolving door appears to be revolving faster as the years go by. From the 1940s to the 1960s, the few women who were in Parliament tended to retain their seats for long periods, often for five or more terms (15 years or more). The overall average incumbency rate for women from 1935 until 1996 was three terms (nine years). In more recent decades, the incumbency rate has been dropping and for the period from 1987 to 1996 women were remaining in Parliament, on average, for only two terms (six years). According to the Speaker of the House, Jonathan Hunt, this was the average incumbency rate for all New Zealand MPs.[20]

During the 1996-1999 session, there were 36 women in the New Zealand Parliament. By the end of the term, two women had left Parliament voluntarily, four more retired and five lost their seats, a total loss of 11 (30.6 percent) female MPs (see Table 1). Nine of the women were list MPs and two represented constituencies. Of concern was the number of first-time women MPs, all elected on party lists in 1996, who lasted one term or less. Of the 20 new women[21], seven (35 percent) left Parliament either during or at the end of the session.[22]

When examining the incumbency record of women leaving the 1996 Parliament, the average length of service had dropped to a little over one-and-a-half terms (1.7 terms) (about four-and-a-half years), which was below the average of two terms. Of the 11 women who left Parliament in 1999, three were National Party MPs. Katherine O'Regan had served five terms (15 years) and Christine Fletcher and Joy Mc-Lauchlan/ Quigley had each served three terms (9 years). Labour MP Jill White was an MP for one-and-a-half terms. New Zealand First MP Deborah Morris resigned after serving two years. Alliance MP Pam Corkery, ACT MP Patricia Schnauer, New Zealand First MPs Robyn McDonald and Jenny Bloxham, Mauri

[17]Paul S. Herrnson, 'United States', in Pippa Norris, ed., *Passages to power. Legislative recruitment in advanced democracies,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 191.

[18]R. Darcy, 'Electoral Barriers to Women', in Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman, eds., *United States Electoral Systems. Their Impact on Women and Minorities,* Praeger, New York, 1992, p. 230.

[19]Christine Fletcher, Valedictory Speech, Parliament, 8 October 1999.

[20]Source: Interview with Jonathan Hunt, Kim Hill Show, Radio New Zealand, 30 November 1999.

[21]This figure includes Annabel Young, who entered Parliament in early 1997 as the next in line on the National Party's list. She replaced National List MP Jim Gerard, who resigned to take up an appointment as High Commissioner to Canada.

[22]This figures does not include National Party MP Marie Hasler, who had been an MP from 1990-1993 but lost her seat at the 1993 election.

Pacific MP Ann Batten, and *Mana Wahine te Ira Tangata* MP Alamein Kopu all served only one term (see Table 1).

Voluntary Exit From Parliament.

The reasons why women left the New Zealand Parliament voluntarily can be divided into a number of categories which include separation from family, sexism, work practice, bullying and name-calling and the persistent intrusion of the media into the private lives of MPs. These factors led to disillusionment with the culture both within the party and within the Parliament. It is probable that a combination of all these factors led some women to abandon high political office.

Separation from family.

In her valedictory speech, Christine Fletcher, who had been an MP since 1990, cited 'separation from family' as the most important reason for her leaving her Parliamentary career. Parliament, she said, was 'especially hard on women' and it was

Table 1: New Zealand: Female Departures from Parliament - 1999

Name	Party	Date of Arrival	Date of Depar-ture	No. of Terms	Status	Reason for Leaving
Katherine O'Regan	National	1984	1999	5.0	List	Defeated
Chris Fletcher	National	1990	1999	3.0	Elect-orate	Retired to continue as Mayor of Auckland
Joy McLauchlan/Quigley	National	1990	1999	3.0	List	Retired – personal reasons
Jill White	Labour	1993	1998	1.5	Elect-orate	Resigned to become Mayor of Palmerston North
Deborah Morris*	NZ First	1996	1998	0.5	List	Resigned following collapse of Coalition Government
Pam Corkery*	Alliance	1996	1999	1.0	List	Retired – personal reasons
Patricia Schnauer*	ACT	1996	1999	1.0	List	Retired – personal reasons
Alamein Kopu*	*Mana Wahine*	1996	1999	1.0	List	Defeated
Jenny Bloxham*	NZ First	1996	1999	1.0	List	Defeated
Robyn McDonald*	NZ First	1996	1999	1.0	List	Defeated
Ann Batten*	Mauri Pacific	1996	1999	1.0	List	Defeated
Total:				**19.0 terms**		
Average length of incumbency:				**1.7 terms**		

*First-time MPs

this factor that resulted in 'the revolving door of female representation'. [23] Patricia Schnauer's

[23]Christine Fletcher, Valedictory Speech, Parliament, 8 October 1999.

valedictory speech barely alluded to her reason for leaving Parliament other than to say 'I did ultimately resign for personal reasons'.[24] Pam Corkery also mentioned that she found the separation from her family 'unbearable'.[25]

Sexism

Former National Party Prime Minister Jenny Shipley had been the brunt of sexist pranks before the introduction of MMP. In her case, she had found a 'male MP frolicking in the parliamentary swimming pool' in her swimsuit, an occurrence she found 'profoundly offensive'.[26] Christine Fletcher also had experienced problems with sexual harassment by a male MP during her first term in Parliament from 1990-93 during the FPP era:

> *I experienced a male colleague remarking to me every day at work 'so, who's looking after your children today?' As a young MP many miles from my young daughter, this constant innuendo shook my confidence.*[27]

Expectations were high among women members that the increased number of women in Parliament under MMP would lead to a decrease in sexist incidents. This hope was voiced by Christine Fletcher:

> *The new MMP environment brought 36 women MPs into Parliament and I hope this will change and improve the culture there. With greater numbers of women there is more chance that unacceptable behaviour will not go unnoticed and unreported.*[28]

These high expectations were not realised during the first session in the MMP environment, even though women now constituted 30 percent of the members. Deborah Morris found that sexism still existed:

> *During the coalition talks I first really experienced the sexism that exists in Parliament. As I sat around the negotiating table, a group of other MPs were outside waiting to come in. One of them just happened to make an extremely sexist comment about me to another of my colleagues. That comment was repeated to me later for my information. I quickly realised that Parliament would not be easy.*[29]

Once MP Ann Batten had left the New Zealand First Party to join the new Mauri Pacific Party, she issued a statement saying that one of her former colleagues in the New Zealand First caucus was 'well-known' for his sexist views:

> *He treated women like second-class citizens and often referred to women who worked for New Zealand First as girls and babes.*[30]

Work practice

Jill White resigned from Parliament in the middle of her second term to become Mayor of Palmerston North at the local body elections in October 1998.[31] She was not the only MP to retire from Parliament to become a mayor.[32] Ostensibly, Christine Fletcher retired from Parliament to work full-time as the Mayor of Auckland, a position she had held for one year and found more satisfying than the role of MP.[33] As an experienced third-term MP and the highest polling candidate in the 1996 election, she would have anticipated being rewarded with a Cabinet position. Instead, she was appointed a Minister outside Cabinet in the Coalition Government with the responsibility for Women's Affairs, Local Government and Cultural Affairs. Her experiences were not happy and she resigned from her portfolios nine months later.[34] The reason she gave for her resignation was 'frustration' with the way that her 'colleagues ignored established practices and processes', which she believed had marginalised her as a Minister outside Cabinet'.[35] She went on to say that she considered that:

---

[24]Patricia Schnauer, Valedictory Speech, Parliament, 8 October 1999. Also *The Evening Pos*t, 9 October 1999, p 2.

[25]*The Evening Post*, 21 January 1999, p 1.

[26]*Listener*, 16 October 1999, p 28.

[27]*The Dominion*, 29 April 1997, p 1.

[28]*The Dominion*, 29 April 1997, p 1.

[29]*Women Talking Politics,* Newsletter of the Aotearoa/New Zealand Women and Politics Network, New Series, No. 1, Winter 1999, p 15.

[30]*The Evening Post*, 13 March 1999, p 5. The former colleague in question was New Zealand First Whip Ron Mark, who responded that while he may have described a secretary as a 'girl', he had not used the term 'babe'.

[31]As she was a list MP, there was no need to hold a by-election and the next highest ranking person on the Labour list, who also happened to be a woman, Helen Duncan, took her place in October 1998.

[32]Another Labour MP, Fran Wilde, had caused a by-election when she resigned from Parliament in 1992 to become Mayor of Wellington.

[33]Rather than resign when she was elected Mayor, Christine Fletcher decided to combine the role of Mayor with that of MP for the constituency of Epsom.

[34]*The Evening Post*, 15 September 1997, p 1.

[35]*The Dominion*, 12 September 1997, p 1; *The Evening Post,* 13 September 1997, p 4.

The problems facing Parliament today had little to do with MMP but had more to do with workplace culture and bad behaviour. It has reached the point where I believe New Zealand's culture of government is becoming dangerously macho.[36]

Confusingly, while Christine Fletcher's disagreements appeared to be with the culture within her party, she had also said that she 'had no problem' with the National Party.[37] Similarly, Joy McLauchlan/Quigley placed no blame on the National Party for her decision to leave Parliament. She praised former Prime Minister Jim Bolger for the manner in which he included women MPs in discussions in the National Party caucus and listened carefully to their opinions. For her, the catalyst in her decision to leave politics was the change from being an electorate MP for two terms to becoming a list MP, a role she found neither satisfying nor enjoyable.

Deborah Morris eventually left her party on 18 August 1998. At the time, she said that 'she could no longer tolerate the constant sense of crisis' in the New Zealand First caucus and that she found 'the lack of discipline, cohesion and strategy' frustrating.[38] After a period as an independent, she left Parliament after two years as an MP on 20 December 1998.[39]

Bullying and Name-calling.

When Joy McLauchlan/Quigley announced her resignation, she said that she no longer wanted to endure the 'politicking, petty-point scoring and personal denigration' that persisted even after the introduction of MMP.[40] According to Pam Corkery, the bullying style and manipulative control of the leader of the Alliance, Jim Anderton, the chaos that existed within the party, and the expectation that all Alliance MPs would give about eight percent of their wages to the party, as well as pay the cost of party conferences and fund wages for party organisers, contributed towards making parliamentary life miserable for her.[41]

Media Intrusions.

Media-shy politicians, especially those who wish to rise through the ranks or are list MPs, are at a disadvantage. They need to draw the attention of the leader to themselves through their performance in Parliament and/or through their constituency work, yet they find it difficult to cope with the consequent intrusion of the media into their personal lives. When she left Parliament, Joy McLauchlan/Quigley revealed that she had rejected the possibility of taking up a ministerial appointment because the prospect of 'the intense public scrutiny' was so abhorrent to her. She felt that the attention of the media was like an 'assault in some cases. They are right in your face'. Media prying into the private lives of politicians, including the involvement of politicians' children, was a move towards 'personality politics', she believed, where the issues were swept aside in the rush for a photo opportunity or a sound bite.[42]

Involuntary Exit From Parliament.

Besides the six women who left the New Zealand Parliament voluntarily, five more were defeated in the election in 1999, all of whom were list MPs. Two of the women had brought about their own downfall. During the 1996 Parliament, Ann Batten had left the New Zealand First Party and joined the fledgling Mauri Pacific Party, which did not gain any seats in the 1999 election. Similarly, Alamein Kopu had abandoned the Alliance to become an independent MP before forming her own party, *Mana Wahine te Ira Tangata,* which sank without trace at the election.

During the list-ranking process, parties were not always kind to their sitting women MPs. Long-serving and loyal National Party MP Katherine O'Regan contested the electorate of Tauranga, losing by a margin of 63 votes. Even though she had been in Parliament since 1984 and had been a Minister outside Cabinet, she had been given the low ranking of 27 with several newcomers appearing ahead of her on the list.[43] As well as losing the electorate, her ranking was so low that she failed to gain a list seat. New Zealand First List MPs Robyn McDonald and Jenny Bloxham were also defeated. Over a front-page headline in *The Dominion* newspaper stating 'Peters dumps his women MPs', the report went on:

[36] *The Dominion,* 6 September 1997, p 2.

[37] *The Evening Post*, 11 September 1997, p 1.

[38] *The Evening Post*, 18 August 1998, p 1.

[39] *The Dominion,* 2 December 1998, p 1.

[40] *The Evening Post* 11 October 1997, p 8.

[41] Pam Corkery, *Pam's Political Confessions,* Hodder Moa Beckett, Auckland, 1999, p 123, pp. 87-93.

[42] Joy McLauchlan, private conversation, 7 December 1999.

[43] The reason why the National Party treated Katherine O'Regan so badly has never been explained.

NZ First has effectively dumped its two women MPs Jenny Bloxham and Robyn McDonald, by giving them virtually unelectable rankings on its party list. The NZ First list, announced yesterday, put Mrs Bloxham at No. 22 - down 17 places from her fifth ranking last election. Mrs McDonald - a former senior citizens and consumer affairs minister - was ranked at No. 20, down six places on her previous 14th ranking. On present polling they would lose their seats.

The humiliating list rankings place Mrs McDonald behind 14 little-known newcomers to the list, and Mrs McDonald behind 13 - the first six of them male. An angry Mrs Bloxham said she believed she and Mrs McDonald had been demoted because they were women.

'Those people ahead of me on the list must be super people. They obviously have skills and attributes I lack - maybe a penis.'[44]

Following the demotion of Jenny Bloxham and Robyn McDonald, former New Zealand First MP Deborah Morris offered her sympathy to the two women. She confirmed that 'women MPs were often treated shabbily in New Zealand First' and added:

I observed inadequate treatment of women in NZ First ...The women MPs were not given an opportunity to have their say, were told that they held particular views only because they were women ... Six men at the top of the list sends a very strong message to women voters: securing the interests of women MPs is not a priority for NZ First, but securing the interests of male MPs is.[45]

Winston Peters, Leader of New Zealand First, rejected accusations of sexism, and said that the reason why Robyn McDonald and Jenny Bloxham were demoted was because they had neglected their grass-roots organisations.[46] Robyn McDonald considered legal action following her demotion and instructed a lawyer to examine the party's constitution, in particular the rules detailing her responsibility for maintaining an effective electorate organisation.[47] In the end, she decided not to pursue the matter and retired from political activity.

R. Darcy has argued that keeping women politically active would have a greater effect on levels of women's representation than would the election of new women.[48] Research must be undertaken to find remedies to encourage women to stay in political life for longer. The remedies must be backed by action. For instance, one initiative that could assist women would be the introduction of rules restricting the number of terms served by all legislators.[49]

International Conferences.

4-6 October 2000
'Australasian Political Studies Association Conference 2000.' Australian National University, Canberra. A copy of the registration form can be found: http://apsa.anu.edu.au/Registration.htm. Email it to: apsa2000@anu.edu.au, or fax to: Mary Hapel, Political Science Program, RSSS, ANU, (02) 624 93051

4-7 December 2000
'The Pacific Islands Political Studies Association. Pipsa 2000: Canoes Adrift? Wealth and Poverty in the Pacific.' Hosted at Lucala Campus, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji Islands. Contact: Dr Sandra Tarte, Department of History/Politics, University of the South Pacific, PO Box 1168, Suva, fiji Islands. Fax: (679) 301 487 Email: tarte_s@usp.ac.fj

[44] *The Dominion*, 4 November 1999, p 1.
[45] *The Dominion*, 6 November 1999, p 2.
[46] *Sunday Star-Times*, 7 November 1999, p A5.
[47] *The Evening Post*, 4 November 1999, p 1.
[48] Darcy, 'Electoral Barriers to Women', p 230.
[49] Darcy, 'Electoral Barriers to Women', p 221.

Hui Raranga Wahine / New Zealand Womens Studies Association Conference: Impressions – and Where to From Here?

By **Prue Hyman**, Associate Professor of Economics and Women's Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

The 1999 Conference of the NZWSA was held at Victoria University in November 1999, the 25th anniversary of Women's Studies at VUW as well as Victoria's centennial year. As these observations are for a women and politics audience, it seemed appropriate to reflect on the important and perennial questions of relationships between theory and activism/politics with respect to women's studies. We were certainly concerned about the possibility of the conference clashing with election day (it didn't), anticipating cancellations from those most closely involved. This expectation of significant amounts of political activism among women's studies devotees, while not scientifically tested, was at least confirmed by plenty of discussion about the election and the issues.

I should reveal my position as one of the conference organisers, in terms of a predisposition to judge it a success and an inability to attend as many sessions as I would like due to other tasks! However, it is also fair to report that we received much favourable feedback, on the atmosphere, varied and energising content - and the Student Union food! But the 150 or so who were at the conference for part or all of the time was a little less than at some past conferences and than our hopes: I reflect on this later.

Three plenary sessions were included, with the opening panel having Phillida Bunkle and others reflect on 25 years of women's studies - and beyond. Ngahuia te Awekotuku spoke passionately on 'Mana Wahine Maori: patterns, relections, predictions in the academy', taking us through the content, and absences/gaps in Maori women's content in Maori and Women's Studies departments and elsewhere in the universities. She also introduced us to many resources of value to those seeking to fill these gaps. Jane Kelsey's talk 'Take back control' rousingly pointed to the ways in which the inexorability of the 'There Is No Alternative' approach to globalisation and structural adjustment is being attacked and undermined by some seemingly strange coalitions. Far from being confined to 'loony radicals', the excesses of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, unreciprocated free trade policies by New Zealand, expropriation of Maori intellectual property, genetically modified food, and threats to producer/marketing boards have attracted opposition from local government, farming bodies, small manufacturers and even Chambers of Commerce, as well as the active pressure groups in each area.

We planned to have three special streams, on politics, the environment, and health, in addition to a self-run Maori hui within the conference, and whatever else was offered. Only the environment stream fully eventuated but this does not mean that politics was neglected among the 60plus papers. Anyway, what is politics in this context? Those, in addition to the plenaries, which clearly 'fit' include Toni Allwood's paper on the Women's Information Network campaign on alleviating poverty for women, Celia Briar on gender-sensitive measures of poverty, inequality and well being, Judith Galtry's paper on the International Labour Organisation's Maternity Protection Convention, my own on globalisation and fightbacks, Ann Magee's on women making a difference in local government, and Gwenyth Wright's on the Women's Loan Funds. Maori and non Maori workshops were held on coalitions making alternative reports to the government on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, reflecting the realities rather than the sanatised version of the impacts on women of the 'experiment'. There were also a number of papers on impacts of recent policies/philosophy on sole parents and on women in paid work, with discussion of priorities to the fore. This focus on action was also reflected in workshops on how to advance the universal basic income approach, Feminist Action's focus on fighting for justice and social change by young third wave women, and Jenny Rankine's media advocacy strategies.

But the controversial 'personal is political' slogan from early second wave feminism is apposite in judging many other papers also to be political. At the beginning of the alphabet alone, there was Joy Anderton on the garden as an ecofeminist site, Glenys Barker on menstrual etiquette, discussing the impact on womens lives of medical patriarchs' social construction of menstruation, Claire Benson on ways of eliminating partner rape, and Pauline Boyles on action research by disabled students to reclaim their power - all political in my book.

And the Maori sessions, most open to all, covered some political areas, including environmental issues - Huhana Smith on Ngati Tukorehe women's vision for re-vegetating the Ohau River and Tracey Whare's on the need for change in environmental decision making to reflect Maori women's world view.

Among specifically lesbian papers, Miriam Sapphira reported on the Lesbian Health Survey, Rachel Kirkbride on her survey on use of alcohol and drugs, and Allison Kirkman on lesbian medical professionals' identity management at work. And there was much else besides: theoretical, historical, drawing on overseas experience (Canadian resource management, Indian public/private spheres). Apologies to those omitted. As ever at multi streamed conferences, there were as many experiences as attendees and I always await the publication of the papers with eagerness to discover the many I missed.

Whither Feminism?

While musing on this article, I came across a recent piece by Sandra Coney[50]. It seemed so relevant to my thoughts that I decided to to discuss it along with the conference and current changes in the management of the Association. On the quarter century plus since the first Women's Convention of 1973, she concludes that 'feminism is paralysed by its own success in elevating a few women'[51] and by the general decline of social activism or at least its bad press, and hence considers it 'hard to see a way out of this bind as we enter the new millennium'.[52]

I have an (irritating?) tendency to be optimistic when I encounter pessimism and vice versa so my immediate reaction to this is 'yes, but'. Of course, I agree with Sandra about the widening gap between women which makes class and ethnic inequalities more urgent - though these clearly intersect with gender issues. Of course, reformist, equal rights feminism can succomb to the rhetoric of the market - which enables the Jenny Shipley's of the world to argue that the Employment Contracts Act was the best possible move for women in paid work. And Coney's view that 'the feminist movement - as an organised radical force - collapsed after nasty power-plays and internal arguments about tactics'[53] has some force, if the movement ever was that organised and unified. But it was inevitable that unity would disappear with growing size and diversity, as those who were not white, middle class, and heterosexual began to assert the importance of the differences. And feminists have dispersed into activism on any number of issues and areas. Many feminists (whether or not they identify with the title) are working in places like the Trade Union Federation and the dozens of other organisations, Maori-specific and general, fighting the current forms of colonialisation, globalisation, and environmental degradation.

So is the bind that intractable? It surely also says something that, as Coney notes, of six speakers at the 1973 United Women's Convention, four have been in Parliament, Margaret Shields, Margaret Wilson, Marian Hobbs, and Phillida Bunkle, (3 currently). I agree with Sandra that these and other women (feminist?) Members of Parliament have had a hard time enacting policies with positive impacts on most women, let alone real feminist policies, but the current crop, including Marian and Phillida as Ministers, may have the best opportunity yet. And of course Phillida was a university women's studies academic.

Coney rightly argues that second wave feminists wanted to free women from synonymity with their biology, only to find now that they are 'expected to do everything, chosen and imposed: be career woman, 'babe' and mother too'.[54] And yes, the constraints on real choices mean that many return to paid work fast after childbirth in fear of their job disappearing, while welfare functions are devolved to women relatives, and motherhood is just a role to be slotted in, with reproduction constructed as individual choice not deserving state support. Yes, young women are hardly exposed to authentic feminist thought, getting instead the supermarket pick-and-mix of success, power, money, glamour, fun and sex, with many seeing corporate success as the way to go, and arguing that the elevation of individual women would benefit women as a group. They have indeed 'grown up with the valorising of individualism'[55] and are carrying debt that makes many want, expect and believe they deserve high paid jobs. But there are a minority, well

[50] Sandra Coney, 'After the Roaring Stopped', *New Zealand Books* 9/5, December Millennium Supplement, 1998, pp. 1/2.
[51] Coney, 1999, p 2.
[52] Coney, 1999, p 2.
[53] Coney, 1999, p 2.
[54] Coney, 1999, p 1.
[55] Coney, 1999, p 2.

represented at the conference, as concerned with social justice and feminist issues as ever.

Whither Women's Studies?

Returning specifically to women's studies, where is it going and can it guide, appeal to, learn from, and increase this minority? In the universities are the tendencies for it to be mainstreamed, depoliticised, marginalised and/or co-opted bound to lead to its demise, totally or at least as a political force? Certainly student numbers are declining in most university women's studies departments, with Waikato's programme and staffing decimated, other departments being subsumed in faculty 'efficiency-driven' reorganisations, and probably none totally safe. Women's Studies is struggling also in the polytechnics and in the community, with financial and time constraints severe for many potential teachers and students. Whether a Labour government feebly enacting that student loans will not incur interest during the actual period of study will make any difference to the declining proportion of mature women students able to afford to attend will be seen in the next couple of years. Meantime universities are becoming managerialist, with threats to academic values and freedom, overly directed from the top, despite theoretical devolution moves, and client (student EFTS) fashion/choice directed in a way unlikely to help women's studies - unless we too market in a jazzy manner.

Sandra Coney's view is clear. 'Feminism in the universities has been overtaken by post-modernism, which posits language as the site of struggle and subversion and which rejects social activism as futile'.[56] The argument that theory (particularly postmodern theory) is in itself activism holds no truck with her or me. However, I certainly do not underestimate the importance of theory and the contribution of much (earlier?) feminist theory deconstructing the assumptions and results of patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism to activism. But again I am more equivocal than Coney about either the nature or the totality of the impact of post-modernism in terms of rejecting activism. I am still energised by my Feminist Economics classes, admittedly smallish and self selected with some awareness, in which even the younger ones reared on Rogernomics/Ruthanasia become horrified at the assumptions and impacts of the fifteen year 'experiment' and its worldwide counterparts. I am encouraged also by a recent article[57] which points out that many current student leaders, including men, have taken women's studies, and argues that 'Wisc has the ability to set the fires of inspiration burning in the belly of the learnee. Wisc opens up a new world of thought from the moment you set foot in the sadly underfunded department. The first intellectual door the subject opens is to challenge centuries of inherent socialisation. Feminist methodologies make the student think carefully about values that they have unquestioningly accepted'.[58] Both groups of students want not only to learn but also to do something about it - surely we must still be doing something useful!

Whither the Women's Studies Association?

What of the Association itself and the conference? Yes, it was held in a university - which would exclude those alienated from such places, but we did try otherwise to make the conference accessible, through low and tiered prices (maximum $120) with the lowest of $50 not even covering food costs. We tried to reach a diverse group, with the efforts of Lorna Kanavatoa and others producing a very lively Maori stream. Certainly and happily most of the 'old stalwarts' of the Association were there, but fewer young feminists than we would have liked. Our failure to attract many to the conference and to membership is a serious one, reflecting Sandra Coney's reflections on feminism generally. But we did have Feminist Action running a workshop and one of its key activists, Ange Jones, bringing the energy of the next generation of feminists to the opening panel. In the last month, discussions on an email list based on the Association has suggested strong efforts be made to get more feminist community organisations involved, and the group in Christchurch investigating holding the next conference in April 2001 is committed to this. It is worth noting, though, that only about one third of the Wellington working group were academics.

So how does the future of the Association look? We are back to holding national conferences every 16 months or so from times in the 1990s when there were three year gaps. Membership has fallen somewhat and stands at about 200, with the relatively healthy finances arising from a high proportion paying at the top

[56] Coney, 1999, p 2.

[57] VUW Women in Law, 'Women's Studies' in *Lemon*, Vol. 1, Victoria University of Wellington Law Students Society, 1999, pp. 38/39.

[58] VUW Women in Law, 1999, p 38.

income rate, reflecting the age and class structure discussed earlier. One move made at the AGM to attempt to widen the base was a cut in the low income fee from $15 to $10 and the introduction of a $5 fee for secondary school students. In addition, the headquarters of the Association is moving to Wellington from Auckland, where a wonderful, partly changing group has maintained it for over twenty years. New energy and ideas for the Wellington group are warmly welcomed. The Association's Journal is from 2000 to 2003 to be run by a national electronically communicating Editorial Board, coordinated by Massey Women's Studies staff, Lynne Alice and Lynne Star.

So the immediate future looks at least secure: whether it is bright depends on all our efforts, and on us and others being instrumental in changing the wider environment in line with the activist aims of the Association ('a feminist organisation formed to promote radical social change through the medium of women's studies', acknowledging oppression on the grounds of race, sexuality, class, and disability - the last ground was inserted at the 1999 AGM - as well as sex and gender) This looks only a slightly better prospect, in my view, with the change of government, and only if the Alliance and Greens succeed in 'keeping the government (and Labour party) honest'. But my hope is that many of us will continue to contribute to these aims in varied ways, and will also participate in ongoing debates about the role and future of women's studies, the Association, and feminist theory and activism in the context of those aims.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

Record Number of Women In Victorian Cabinet.

By **Marian Sawer,** Political Science Program, Australian National University, Canberra.

Following the September 1999 State election Victoria gained a Labor minority government supported by three Independents. The number of women in Parliament went up markedly (to 24 per cent in the lower house and 27 per cent in the upper house), but what was more remarkable was the big increase in women in Cabinet. In October, when the new Labor Cabinet headed by Steve Braks was sworn in there were eight women out of 18 Cabinet members (44 per cent). This is a record for an Australian government. The new ministers will have a fairly steep learning curve, as a number have come straight into Cabinet without any parliamentary experience. Most of them hold nurturing portfolios (social policy/environment), but two in less traditional areas are Candy Broad, Minister for Energy and Resources and Monica Gould, Minister for Industrial Relations.

The election of Labor women was assisted by EMILY's List, a feminist fund-raising trust that provides financial and other campaign assistance to endorsed Labor women candidates who have made commitments to work for gender equality and the right to choose. EMILY's List is headed by former Victorian Premier, Joan Kirner, and leadership has also been provided by former Western Australian Premier, Carmen Lawrence. Eleven of the successful Labor women candidates in Victoria had received EMILY's List endorsement, including Jacinta Allan who won a crucial regional seat for Labor on her 26th birthday. EMILY's was launched in late 1996 and more details about it can be found at: www.emilyslist.org.au/. This kind of feminist reinforcement is particularly important in the Australian context, where the formal factional system of the Labor Party tends to line women up against one another.

The non-Labor parties are also increasing the number of women leadership positions, despite the fact that the Coalition has only about two thirds as many women as Labor in Australia's nine parliaments. (Labor has a mandatory target requiring all its parliamentary caucuses to have 35% female membership by 2002, something the Coalition describes as demeaning to women). In Australia parties now often seek to 'rebadge'

themselves in times of adversity by turning to a woman leader. While there are currently no women Premiers, in New South Wales and Tasmania the Liberal Opposition Leaders are women, as is the Chief Minister in the ACT and the Deputy Opposition Leader in Victoria. On the Labor side, the Opposition Leader in the Northern Territory is a woman, as is the Deputy Opposition Leader in South Australia. At the federal level, the Australian Democrats have an all-female leadership team - Meg Lees as Leader, Natasha Stott Despoja as Deputy Leader and Vicky Bourne as Whip.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

New Zealand: Women in Cabinet 1999

Ranking in Cabinet	Name	Portfolios	Party
Inside Cabinet			
1	Helen Clark	Prime Minister; Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage; Security Intelligence Service; responsible for Ministerial Services	Labour
6	Annette King	Minister for Health; Racing.	Labour
7	Sandra Lee	Minister of Conservation; Local Government; Associate Maori Affairs	Alliance
11	Margaret Wilson	Attorney General; Minister of Labour; Treaty Negotiations; Associate Justice; State Services	Labour
14	Lianne Dalziel	Minister of Immigration; Senior Citizens; Associate Education	Labour
18	Marian Hobbs	Minister for the Environment; Biosecurity; Broadcasting: Associate Communications; responsible for National Library and National Archives	Labour
20	Laila Harre	Minister of Women's Affairs; Youth Affairs, Associate Labour	Alliance
Ministers outside Cabinet			
21	Judith Tizard	Minister of State; Associate Arts, Culture and Heritage; Transport; Assisting Prime Minister on Auckland issues	Labour
22	Ruth Dyson	Minister of State; Associate Accident Insurance; Health; Social Services and Employment; responsible for disability areas	Labour
23	Tariana Turia	Minister of State; Associate Maori Affairs; Corrections; Health; Housing; Social Services and Employment	Labour
24	Phillida Bunkle	Minister of Customs; Consumer Affairs; Associate Economic Development; Environment; Women's Affairs	Alliance