

# *Suffrage Day*



## *Campaign & Resource Kit 2006*

**Brought to you by the Tertiary Women's Focus Group**

## Introduction

Hello women of TWFG!

This Suffrage Day Kit is designed to enable you to empower and inform the students on your campus and in your communities regarding ongoing issues affecting women, on this Suffrage Day on 19 September.

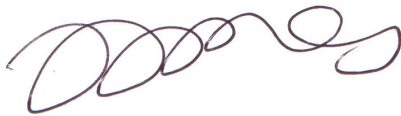
Suffrage Day is a day to pay homage to those who fought all around the world for women to secure the right to vote, and to continue the work of New Zealand's suffragettes through pushing for the equitable society they always envisaged.

I encourage you to organise speakers, advertise events and political forums in your local area, set up a stall and give out leaflets highlighting continuing barriers for women, or simply share a lunch with your women's group over discussion and debate.

We need to continue to push the message that yes, many gains have been made for women, but there are still striking inequities and long overdue advancements still waiting to be achieved.

Once again if you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me, and all the best for Suffrage Day 2006.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, consisting of several loops and a trailing flourish.

Jennifer Jones  
National Women's Rights Officer  
The New Zealand Union of Student's Associations

## **Herstory of Suffrage Day**

One hundred and twelve years ago, on 19 September 1893, New Zealand was the first country in the world to grant women the right to vote. Women's Suffrage Day is remembered each year on 19 September.

### **Worldwide movement**

The call to grant women the vote grew audible in the late eighteenth century as worldwide movements for moral reform and equality began to gain strength. In the United States the women's movement gathered momentum in support of anti-slavery and temperance. In the 1860s women in Britain worked to claim married women's property rights, better career opportunities, and the vote.

John Stuart Mill presented a women's petition for suffrage to the British parliament in 1866 (which failed).

### **New Zealand**

Women's rights gradually gained some ground throughout the last half of the nineteenth century. Girls' secondary schools were opened in New Zealand during the 1870s and women began to be allowed into universities. Kate Edger was the first female university graduate in New Zealand in 1877.

Women began making gains in the workforce, and the right of married women to their own property was guaranteed in 1884.

### **Suffrage**

Momentum for women's suffrage began to gather when voting rights for women ratepayers in municipal elections were extended from Nelson and Otago to all the provinces in 1875.

The suffrage campaigners began to attract the support of politicians, among them William Fox, Alfred Saunders, and Robert Stout.

In 1879 all men over the age of twenty-one were granted the vote. What was needed to get women the vote was for the word "men" in the legislation to be changed to "persons". Various bills designed to grant women the vote were introduced to Parliament, but failed, starting with Robert Stout's Electoral Bill in 1878, and followed by others in 1887, and the early 1890s.

### **The temperance movement**

The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), started in America in the mid-1870s, and reached Auckland in the form of Mary Leavitt in 1885. With the assistance of New Zealander Anne Ward, branches were quickly set up

around New Zealand. Kate Sheppard headed the WCTU's legislation and franchise department from 1887.

In the early 1890s the WCTU broadened the base of their support to include working-class women and the elite as well as temperance supporters. The Women's Franchise Leagues, the Canterbury Women's Institute, and the WCTU began working together, organising heightened publicity and massive petitions supporting their cause.

The liquor lobby tried to counter the growing popularity of the suffrage movement by promoting anti-suffrage petitions in public houses. Richard Seddon also remained a staunch opponent of the WCTU and women's suffrage.

### **The showdown**

Richard Seddon's opposition to the 1893 Electoral Bill, partially caused by his fear of losing the approaching election if women gained the vote, was concentrated in the Legislative Council.

In support of the bill, suffrage meetings were held all over the country, councillors were sent encouraging telegrams, and known supporters were given white camellias for their buttonholes.

The Legislative Council members were evenly divided on the bill. Seddon telegraphed one of the new councillors to convince him to vote against it. His move backfired and two councillors originally opposed to the bill changed their vote in response to Seddon's move.

On 8 September the bill was passed 20 to 18.

Opponents of the bill petitioned the Governor Lord Glasgow to withhold his consent, but he signed the bill into law on 19 September, ten weeks before the next general election.

**Historically, Suffrage Day has been an opportunity for women all over the world to celebrate acts of women's courage and determination. It has also been an opportunity to demand that women's rights be recognised and to call for change when injustice occurs. The herstory of Suffrage Day is a herstory of taking action.**

**In 2006, whilst celebrating Suffrage Day, it is fundamentally important to focus on the actual reality for women. Though in many countries (including New Zealand) women have legal equality with men, this has not translated into actual equality.**

**We must all continue to fight for women's rights until true equality is achieved.**

# Ongoing Inequities for Women in New Zealand

There continue to be ongoing inequities for women in New Zealand, despite some significant and necessary gains over the years, and despite the protests of many detractors that women are already equal. As a society we need to acknowledge these inequities and barriers, and challenge those who have the power to make positive change to do so. The following is a list of areas where women continue to face issues and barriers.

## Income

- New Zealand women's average hourly pay rate is only 82% of the average hourly pay rate of New Zealand men.<sup>1</sup>
- The gender pay gap has widened, from 86% in 2004.<sup>2</sup>
- Differences in men's and women's median incomes are greater for those with who had attained a higher degree than for those with lower qualifications.<sup>3</sup>
- On average, a woman with a bachelors degree will earn \$8,000 less than a male with a bachelors degree.<sup>4</sup>
- As well as earning less on average, women take home less at the end of the week. Women's average weekly earnings (including overtime) are only 77.62% of what men earn - \$720.52 compared to \$928.29. This is mainly because women work less hours (around 10% less), are unable to put in overtime due to family and household commitments.<sup>5</sup>
- Apart from the gender pay gap there is also an ethnicity pay gap. For example, in 2005, on average, a Pakeha male earned \$22.34 per hour, whereas Maori and Pasifika women earned, on average, \$15.85 and \$14.35 (per hour) respectively.<sup>6</sup>

## Work

- Women are three times as likely as men to work part-time – 36% as compared to 12%.
- Around eight out of ten women work as paid employees. Women are less likely than men to be employers or self-employed and more likely to be unpaid workers in family businesses<sup>7</sup>.
- Women have higher rates of participation than men in all categories of unpaid work both within and outside the household<sup>8</sup>.
- There are still considerable differences in the occupational distribution of men and women, with clerical and service and sales jobs accounting for 43% of the female workforce. Women were also more likely than men to be in professional or technical and associate professional jobs<sup>9</sup>.
- Women hold 7.13% of board directorships in companies listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZX)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics NZ, *NZ Income Survey 2005*, June Quarter (released October 2005)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Statistics NZ (2005) *Focusing on Women*

<sup>4</sup> NZ Vice Chancellors Committee Graduate Survey Full Report 2005

<sup>5</sup> Statistics NZ Quarterly Employment Survey, June 2006 Quarter

<sup>6</sup> Statistics NZ, *NZ Income Survey 2005* June Quarter (Released October 2005)

<sup>7</sup> Statistics NZ (2005) *Focusing on Women*

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Commission (2006) *New Zealand Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life*

- Women hold 35.43% of board directorships in New Zealand Crown Companies as reviewed by the Crown Company Monitoring Unit<sup>11</sup>.
- Women hold only 17.2% of legal partnerships in New Zealand legal firms (with 10 or more partners)<sup>12</sup>.
- In the current government there are 39 women (32.2%) from a total of 120 Members of Parliament.<sup>13</sup> This is the most women in parliament so far, which is an increase from the 2002-2005 term of 35 members (29.16%).
- International comparisons of the numbers of women directors of publicly listed companies reveals New Zealand to be trailing behind Norway, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the United States.<sup>14</sup>

### Education

- The average female bachelors graduate may take longer to pay off her student loan compared to her male equivalent, due to factors such as the gender pay gap.<sup>15</sup>
- Within one year of graduating, women with business and commerce degrees are earning \$8,000 less on average than their male classmates.<sup>16</sup>
- Women are more likely to be studying part-time than men.<sup>17</sup>
- Women are disadvantaged by the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme, with only 6.2% of apprentices involved in the programme being female.<sup>18</sup>
- 27% of those involved in Industry Training are women; 90% of those studying hairdressing, community support and pharmacy were women and only 2% of building, boating and plumbing trainees were women.<sup>19</sup>
- Women hold only 16.9% of senior academic positions (professors and associate professors) in New Zealand's eight Universities.<sup>20</sup>

### Health

- Approximately one in five females have a disability, most commonly mobility, agility and hearing disabilities.<sup>21</sup>
- Maori females have a higher rate of death than non-Maori in all age groups.<sup>22</sup>
- Females have higher rates of arthritis, osteoporosis, asthma and chronic obstructive respiratory than males.<sup>23</sup>
- Females have higher cancer registration rates than males between the ages of 20 and 50 years.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> New Zealand University Students' Association calculations using the Iverson Model (under review)

<sup>16</sup> New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee (2004)

<sup>17</sup> Statistics NZ (2005) *Focusing on Women+*

<sup>18</sup> Statistics NZ (2005) *Focusing on Women*

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Education, (2004) *Profile and Trends: New Zealand's Tertiary Education Sector*

<sup>20</sup> Human Rights Commission (2006) *New Zealand Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life*

<sup>21</sup> Statistics NZ (2005) *Focusing on Women*

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Statistics NZ (2005) *Focusing on Women*

### **Rape, Violence and Sexual Abuse**

- In NZ in 2005 there were 3,271 reported sexual offences with the police. Only 1790 were resolved. This level of reporting has remained the same over the last 10 years, with the lowest being 3,026 in 1999.<sup>25</sup>
- 30% of females aged 15 and over experienced some form of victimisation in 2000, with each female experiencing an average of 2.7 victimisations.<sup>26</sup>
- From October to December 2005, Women's Refuge provided 29,230 bed-nights for 15,562 women and 13,668 children. This is a massive increase from 13,837 women and 8,686 children in 2004.
- Research from the Auckland University published in 2004 showed that 33% of women in Auckland and 39% of women in the Waikato had experienced at least one act of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime.<sup>27</sup>

## **No Big Events happening where you are?**

Hold your own! Hold your own Suffrage Day Breakfast at a café and maybe invite a speaker to come along. Hold a Suffrage Day stall at your campus. This can help you raise awareness of women's issues and gain new members for your women's group or raise awareness of your women's room.

Suggestions for the day...

- Choose a theme for the day...Pay equity, Violence against women, Reproductive rights, Achievements of women (in work, education etc)...
- Distribute leaflets highlighting ongoing inequities for women in New Zealand today (such as the \$8.20 notes which will arrive soon)
- Organise entertainment: a debate, bands, comedians, theatre, movies...
- Speakers/forum, perhaps on a particular topic of concern to women in your community...(MPs, community organisations, lecturers, students)
- Thursday's In Black stall/promotion
- Decorate noticeboards with posters, painting etc advertising Suffrage Day
- Lobby your institution on a particular issue (eg: childcare on campus, safety on campus)
- Share ideas and experiences with other women over food...
- Promote your Women's Room (or lobby to get one!)
- Hold a stalls and information day for women on campus
- Recruit members for your women's group/establish a women's group on campus
- Attend a local community organised event
- Hold a rally on campus/in your community (with speakers etc)
- Hold a fundraiser for a local women's organisation (Rape Crisis, Women's Refuge, Women's Centre...)
- Be creative...!

**Good Luck with your celebrations of Suffrage Day and lobbying in 2006. Don't forget to send in photos so we can put them on the TWFG website!**

Jennifer Jones  
National Women's Rights Officer 2006  
NZUSA

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<sup>25</sup> Statistics NZ (2005) *Focusing on Women*

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Fanslow, J., and Robinson, E., "Violence against women in New Zealand: prevalence and health consequences" 26 November 2004, *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, Vol.117, No.1206