



the Circular

July - August 2026, Issue 658

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Making gender equality, reality.

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*Suzanne Manning,
NCWNZ President*

President's kōrero

Kia ora te whānau - and I do feel like I'm talking to family here. We've been through a good few years together. I look forward to seeing many of you at our biennial Conference, and hope you also enjoy the chance to get together with like-minded people. As NCWNZ transitions to new leadership, some things will change - and many things will continue because they are core to our mahi, our values, our collective kaupapa.

NCWNZ is not defined by any single person but by our legacy that is built on, year after year after year. For 130 years, so far! If we were simply "Kate Sheppard's" group, then we would have faded many years ago. Instead, there have been many remarkable women contributing to the mahi. We have changed their approach as society changed around us while staying true to core

advocacy for eliminating discrimination against women and making gender equality a reality in Aotearoa.



Now we all have the responsibility for carrying this legacy forward and adapting to modern times, still standing strong as we have been for 130 years. Ahead of us still lies internal mahi for us as an organisation to truly understand what it means to be a good Tiriti partner, and how to more fully include perspectives from ethnic communities, disabled peoples, young women, rural women and rainbow communities. We need to work on adapting our external advocacy for systems change based on what works while keeping to ethical standards. When we do this well, we should be able to significantly grow our membership which will contribute to financial and functional sustainability of the organisation.

I will remain a part of NCWNZ when I step down as President at the Conference in September, staying part of the whānau and contributing to the mahi of the future. I will miss the stimulating opportunities that came with the role, and I won't miss the heavy workload. Thank you all for supporting me during my time as President, and I know you will be equally supportive of the new leadership team.

Ka kite anō, fa'afetai, meitaki and thank you, and I look forward to our collective future.

Suzanne Manning

President

Te Kaunihera Wāhine o Aotearoa | National Council of Women New Zealand

NCWNZ's CEDAW Committee needs you

After considering a State party's report, the UN CEDAW Committee selects up to four sub-paragraphs from its concluding observations and requires the State party to report back on progress within two years. This is known as the follow-up procedure.

The procedure allows NGOs to submit their own information for the Committee's consideration. Submissions must not exceed 3,300 words (including footnotes) and are due four weeks before the session at which the State party's follow-up report will be assessed. A date has not yet been announced for New Zealand's mid-term report.

In the Concluding Observations issued in November 2024, the CEDAW Committee asked New Zealand to report on progress against paragraphs 21 (b), 35 (d), 37 (a) and 43. In short, these are:

- criminalize stalking through specific legislation;
- develop formal clinical guidelines to ensure culturally appropriate healthcare;
- apply an intersectional lens when assessing the outcomes of its COVID-19 response measures; and
- reaffirm its commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

NCWNZ is looking for someone to coordinate the NGO response to this request. You will need:

- strong writing skills
- good communication skills
- a working understanding of these four topics
- availability once the submission timeframe is confirmed.

We anticipate this project might take 50 hours maximum. If you are interested and need more information - or are willing to volunteer - please contact us at cedaw@ncwnz.org.nz.

By
Beryl Anderson ONZM

NCWNZ and POWER UP! Game Jam for women 2026

This year, NCWNZ is proud to be partnering with [Power Up! Game Jam](#) and promoting this amazing, fun and free event designed to encourage women and non-binary people into the computer games industry. Computer gaming is an important and thriving segment of the software development sector, and more and more young women are keen to break into this multi-million dollar industry. Encouraging more women into this field is another way we can promote gender equality in the STEM disciplines.



POWER UP! Game Jame is a free online event where women and non-binary folks unite to create games, connect and ignite their journeys into game development with support from mentors and a welcoming community. The event is non-competitive and open to hobbyists and professionals alike. Come join us for 4 days of creativity, collaboration and fun!

If you know someone who would be keen, share this opportunity with them today! The event runs from 24-28 October 2026.

By
NCWNZ Communications Committee

War on Women continues

In nearly a third of countries, laws restrict women's freedom of movement; in some, wives need their husbands' permission to work, travel or leave home. In nearly 20 countries wives can be penalised for disobeying their partner. Male-guardianship laws in several continue to

deny women full legal autonomy, even after recent reforms. Some 118m women of reproductive age live in countries that ban abortion without exception. Female genital mutilation continues in 94 countries—and in more than a third there is no law against it. There are just 14 countries with same legal rights for women and men: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

Read more at 'Trapped', [Human Rights Watch](#); 'FAQs: What it's like to be a woman in Afghanistan', [UN Women](#); 'Millions of women are still denied equal citizenship rights', [Equality Now](#); 'Women, Business and the Law 2023', [World Bank Group](#).

Resources to share in meetings and with your networks

Did you know that households account for 60% of global food waste? The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) released [a report](#) that showed that out of all the regions of the world, Oceania is the only one where the prevalence of food insecurity has worsened. Food insecurity in New Zealand affects roughly one in three households - including some full-time working families and middle-income earners. Nearly [one in four children \(22.6%\)](#) live in households where [food runs out](#), with higher rates reported for Māori and Pacific families. Food poverty for NZ teenage students can create an [achievement lag of up to four years](#). NZ ranks second worst in the OECD for number of students missing meals due to lack of money. September 29th is the [International Day on Food Loss and Waste Reduction](#). The FAO offers ways to raise awareness about food loss and waste. You can use their [materials for free](#) to spread the word about needing to be more responsible in food production and consumption. Download the deck of 14 slides at the [FAO website here](#). Shareable images and templates are available for [download here](#).



Shortchanged: The Pay Equity Investigation is a four-part Project Gender podcast launched in June 2026. Created by Angela Meyer, Erin Jackson, and Tania Domett of Project Gender - you can listen on Spotify or Apple. See more at their website: <https://www.projectgender.co.nz/>.



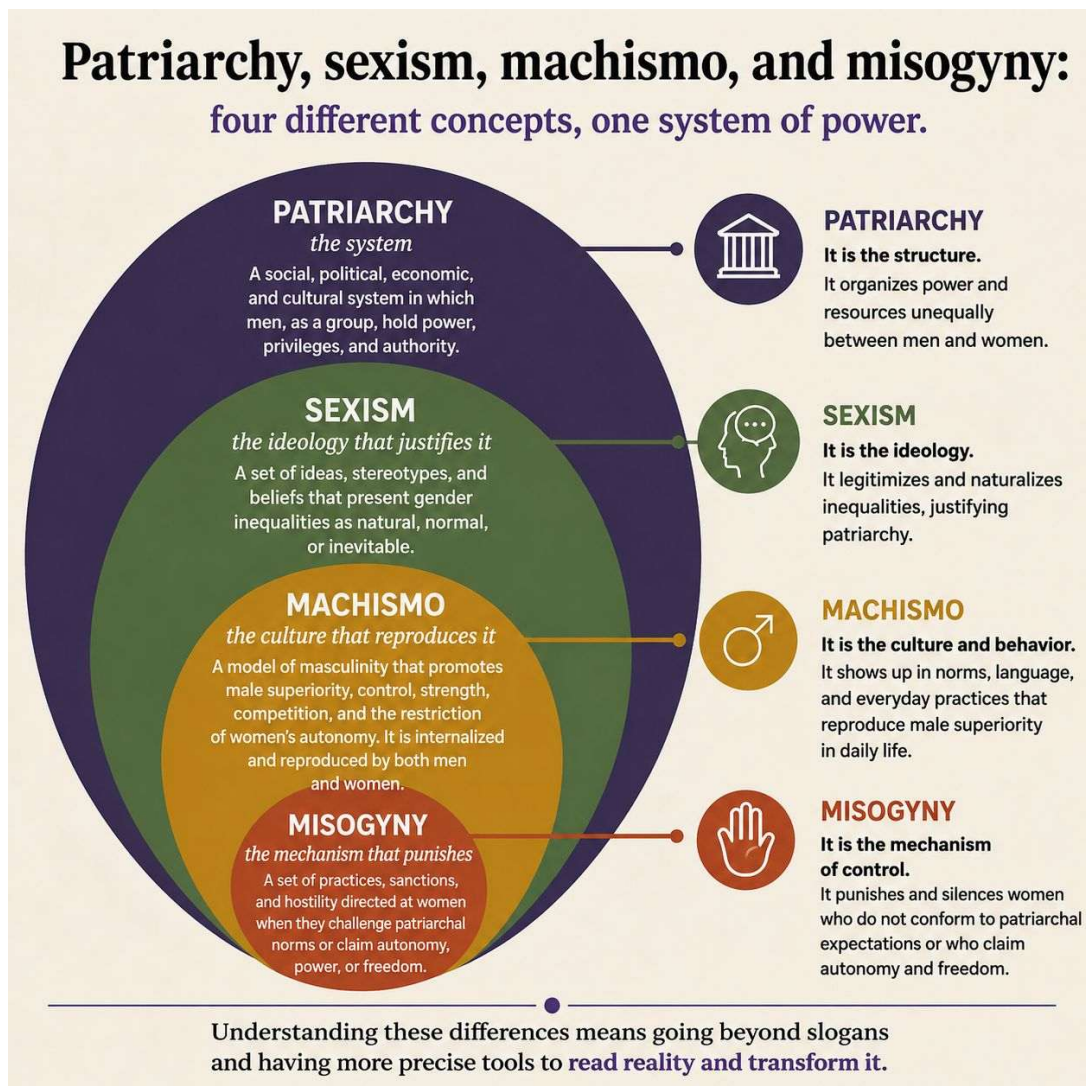
New Zealand's Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission calls for human rights-centered approach to artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies. Read their report 'AI and Digital Technologies: A Human Rights and Te Tiriti o Waitangi Approach' at <https://tikatangata.org.nz/our-work/artificial-intelligence-emerging-digital-technologies-and-human-rights>.

The Child Poverty Action Group has distributed a scorching manifesto calling on all political parties to meet the targets set in the [Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018](#). The material hardship statistics now stand at 14.3%, with 47,500 more children falling into hardship in the past three years. CPAG's group of eleven researchers and child wellbeing advocates addressed five priority areas: incomes, housing, health, disability and education. Download the paper here: <https://www.cpag.org.nz/our-campaigns/a-manifesto-to-reduce-child-poverty-2026>.

Readings to consider

From Social Change School LinkedIn post:

Patriarchy, sexism, machismo, and misogyny are not synonyms. Understanding the differences is already a political act. In public debate, these terms are often used interchangeably. In reality, they describe different layers of the same system of power.



See more at their [post on LinkedIn](#). *NOTE:* you don't need to login if you don't have a *LinkedIn* account - just press X on the popup and you can view the full description of the chart along with suggested readings.



With the potential merger of UN Women and UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva encouraged dialog and consultations for potential solutions. On 31 July 2026, the NGO Committee held a hackathon, inviting all to contribute their ideas to a single document. There were nearly 90 different statements with many insightful views and diverse perspectives. The final statement recorded left a sting: 'Questions need to be asked about why it is UN Women and UNFPA that have been highlighted for merger - why not other agencies.' The results of this event were consolidated into a synthesis report of one-and-a-half pages. It is well worth reading. You can [download the .pdf file here](#).

Stories to celebrate

from Beryl Anderson:

Vaine Wichman, President of the Cook Islands NCW, has been successful in the 2026 Cook Islands general election, with the provisional results showing her the successful candidate in the Penrhyn seat.

Penrhyn (also known by its traditional Māori name, Tongareva) is the northernmost and most remote atoll in the Cook Islands, located about 1,365 km northeast of Rarotonga. It features a massive 233-square-kilometer lagoon and supports a small population living across two main settlements: Omoka and Tetautua.



from European Commission Press Release:

The European Commission published in March 2026 its new *Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030*. 'Gender equality is a fundamental right and one of the EU's core values.' The new Strategy will work on the following:

- Continuing the fight against gender-based violence with a strong emphasis on fighting cyberviolence.
- Engaging men and boys in the fight for gender equality.

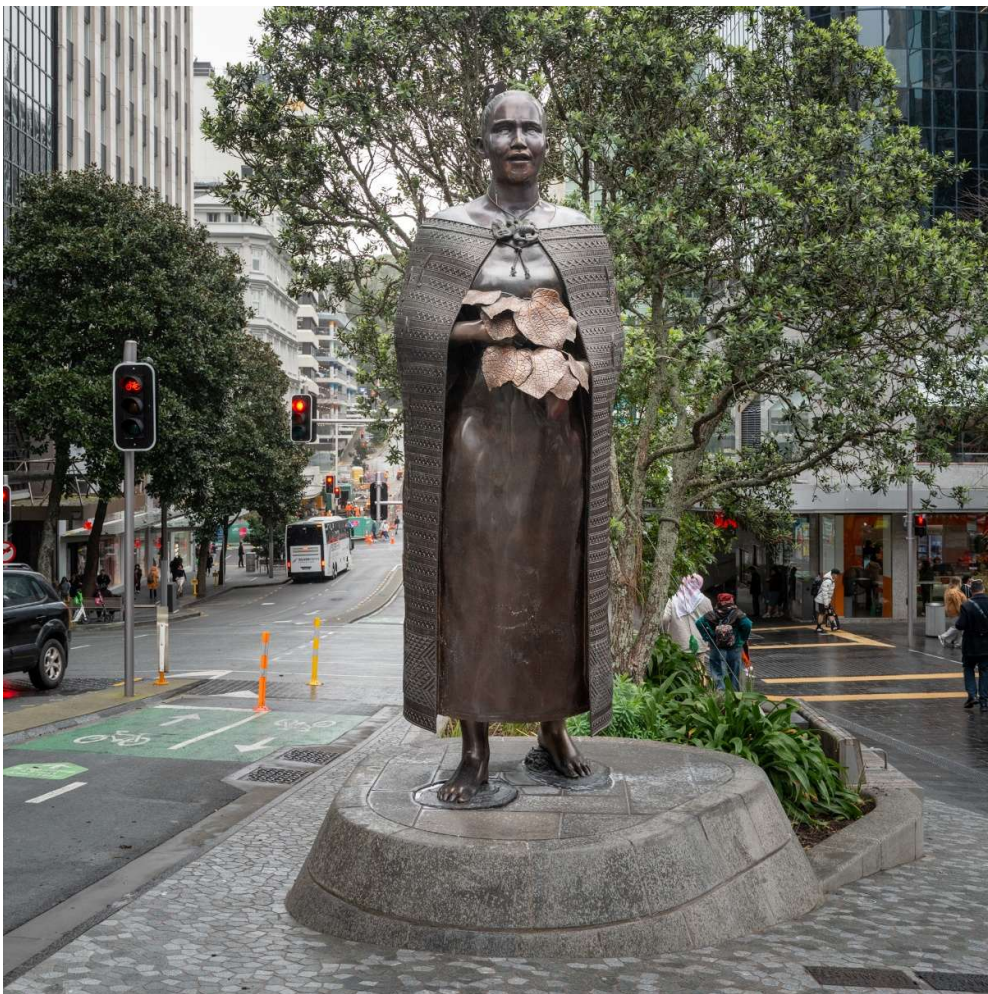
- Promoting the highest standards of health and healthcare systems built for all.
- Boosting prosperity by promoting gender equality across economic sectors.
- Tackling the gender pay and pension gaps.
- Taking further steps to support women's equal and safe participation in politics.
- Continue to promote gender equality on the global stage.

The 3-page strategy can be downloaded here:

[Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030](#) (European Commission, 5 March 2026).



Wāhine is a 3.7-metre-tall bronze sculpture on Victoria Street West in Auckland CBD, depicting a Māori woman performing a karanga call of welcome. The statue is located near the north-eastern exit of the [Te Waihorotiu Station](#) on Victoria Street West, Auckland CBD, and faces up the hill toward toward this new station for the City Rail Line.



Wāhine, photo by Rich Greissman

The figure stands on a low basalt plinth, wears a [korowai](#), woven cloak, and [hei tiki](#), pendant, and carries [kawakawa leaves](#), a sacred tapu plant. She is positioned to greet people as they emerge from the station - and her mouth is open as if she is singing.

The artists, master carver Arekatera “Katz” Maihi (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Tainui, Ngāpuhi) and weaver Beronia Scott (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei) wanted the artwork to show a Māori woman with the mana and seniority to perform the ritual of manaakitanga, welcoming visitors. Katz Maihi conceived *Wāhine* as a counterpart to the 1960s sculpture *A Māori Figure in a Kaitaka Cloak* by Molly Macalister which stands near the Ferry Building facing the Waitematā Harbour. The \$744,000 cost for *Wāhine* was mostly covered by a targeted rate from the city centre businesses and property owners.

With the opening of the new City Rail Line, both the *Wāhine* and her companion piece *Horotiu* (a 7.2-metre-long statue depicting a tuna kūwharuwharu, longfin eel) were unveiled in a ceremony led by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei on July 29, 2026. Read more about these two statues on the Auckland Council website at <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/news/2026/07/epic-artworks-bring-themes-of-mana-wahine-and-kaitiaki-to-new-crl-station-precinct/>.



from Beryl Anderson

The Honourable [Fiamē Naomi Mata‘afa](#), President of the Samoa National Council of Women and Prime minister of Samoa from 2021-2025, has become the newest member of its Arnhold Distinguished Fellowship Program. This Program enlists world leaders to elevate the climate and conservation dialogue to the highest levels of government and industry, helping to create the political space for diplomacy and bold action to protect nature for people and promote peace. For more information, see <https://www.conservation.org/press/conservation-international-names-newest-fellow-honorable-fiamē-naomi-mataafa-former-prime-minister-of-samoa>

Dates to note for September 2026

2 Sept - Annual Women's Debate, 'Vision for Women & Girls in Aotearoa', 6-7pm, Lecture Theatre 2, Rutherford House, Wellington. Register on Humanitix: <https://events.humanitix.com/annual-women-s-debate-2026-vision-for-women-and-girls-in-aotearoa>

3 Sept - 'Digital Hate, Real Harm: Mapping the Landscape of Online Misogyny' symposium, 8.30 am-5pm. Wellington CBD + online for some sessions. Keynote speaker Professor Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Founding Director of the Polarisation and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL), and author of 'Man up: the new misogyny and the rise of violent

extremism.' See more at <https://events.massey.ac.nz/digital-hate-real-harm-mapping-the-landscape-of-online-misogyny/>

5 Sept - International [Day of the World's Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

11 Sept - [Mahuru Māori](#) begins the challenge to use more te reo Māori - spoken, written, sung, read, etc.

12 Sept - [NCWNZ 130th Anniversary Conference 2026 and AGM](#), Tāmaki Makaurau, 8.30am-2pm

18 Sept - International [Equal Pay Day](#)

21 Sept - International [Day of Peace](#)

26 Sept - International [Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#)

28 Sept - International [Day for Universal Access to Information](#)

29 Sept - International [Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste Reduction](#)

Quotation to ponder

During the years 2019–2022 there were reductions in child poverty rates [in New Zealand] because of policy changes. It's proven. What's missing is sustained political will. ... Let's be clear – we are already paying for child poverty. Fiscal restraint doesn't save money; it just shifts the costs on to hospitals, emergency housing, mental health services and the justice system – this amounts to billions of dollars a year. The real question is whether we pay early, through prevention of poverty, or pay far more later, through crisis intervention.

– Auckland University Professor Emeritus Innes Asher,
27 August 2026, lead author of [A Manifesto to Reduce Child Poverty](#).

Whakataukī to share

Ehara, ko koe te ringa e huti punga ana.

Indeed, you are the arm that raises the anchor!

This saying is a compliment for someone - and we offer this to Suzanne Manning on an outstanding effort in all she does, especially her years of wonderful leadership of NCWNZ.



The Circular is the official newsletter of The National Council of Women of New Zealand. Archived copies are available at the National Library of New Zealand (ISSN 2815-8644).

Do you have some news to share? Please send an email to newsletter managing editor, Randolph Hollingsworth, at circular@ncwnz.org.nz.