



# National Executive News

August 2009

P O Box 31 734, Milford 0741, North Shore City, New Zealand.

[www.nzfgw.org.nz](http://www.nzfgw.org.nz)

Editor: Helen Sturm [helensturm@xtra.co.nz](mailto:helensturm@xtra.co.nz)

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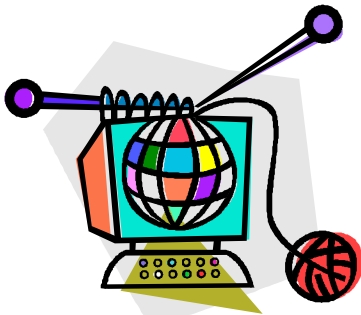
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### Website updates:

**Fellows' Reports:** Read fascinating reports from our 2009 Fellows. They have all had a very successful year and their reports are a joy to read.

<http://www.nzfgw.org.nz/reports.asp> CTRL and Click to follow link.

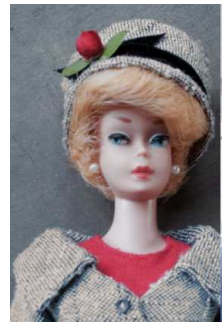
**Newsletters:** Canterbury, Manawatu, National Exec.

**Letter to local MP re cuts in ACE funding:** Canterbury Branch.

## EDITORIAL

### *Charlene Lutes, National President* **The Darker Side of Barbie**

The debut on 9 March 1959 of Barbara Millicent Roberts, an improbably curvaceous teenager better known as Barbie, marked the beginning of a cultural transformation which proceeded rapidly throughout the 1960s, culminating in the Woodstock phenomenon of forty years ago. Although too old for Barbie when she appeared, I can well understand her appeal to preteen girls.



Career Girl Barbie 1963

I myself spent most of my time in the sixth grade in my three-grade classroom designing clothes for my grownup paper dolls. I would have been delighted to have a grownup doll for whom to buy or make outfits and for whom to design rooms in the primitive 'playhouses' which my friends and I constructed. From a distance, I followed Barbie's journey as she met Ken, went off to university, dabbled in careers such as medicine, flight attendant, or commercial airline pilot. Barbie dolls met young girls' need to try out, in fantasy, roles which they might someday fill in reality, just as 'baby dolls' for even younger girls enabled them to imagine other adult roles. The fact that Barbie had a variety of careers reinforced the ideas of the later sixties and the seventies that 'girls can do anything'.

But Barbie had a darker side. Her ultra-feminine body, (36-18-33), 5'9", 110 lbs, presented an ideal which some have suggested might encourage eating disorders. Indeed, we hear of 'Barbie syndrome', striving for an unattainable body type. Her extreme sexiness and the preoccupation with adult clothing and makeup may have been an early stage in the sexualisation of prepubescent girls which is so obvious

today. Younger and younger girls play with Barbie, dress up in purchased high heels and fancy dresses, all in the ubiquitous Barbie pink. Do any little girls play with baby dolls now?

A new low, both in age and taste, has been reached with the sale of T-shirts for babies with slogans such as "The condom broke". The National Council of Women (NCWNZ) has called for a boycott of the retailer 'Cotton On', as well as issuing press releases protesting against such examples of lack of respect for children. NZFGW voted for a remit at the NCWNZ Executive meeting in 2007 opposing the sexualisation of children. NZFGW has become a fan of the Facebook group opposing the sale of these T-shirts. I don't think that we need to call for a boycott, as I doubt whether any NZFGW member would patronise a shop which sold such merchandise.

Perhaps, in addition to our organization using press releases, Facebook pages, and boycotts, each of us should make a resolution of our own to oppose child sexualisation. We could point out to our young daughters or granddaughters that 'Barbie really looks lovely, but real women don't have figures like that. That's make believe.' Or we could give them clothes in colours other than pink. We could make sure they have available quality books and toys appropriate to their age group. Women can do anything! Can we change the culture of premature sexualisation of girls?

## Conference is Getting Closer

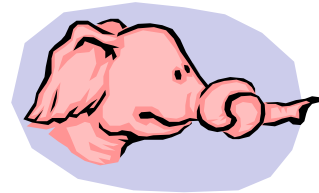
**Have you registered for Conference yet? Download forms from**

<http://www.nzfgw.org.nz/national-conference-2009.asp>

**Have your Branch delegates registered?**

**A reminder that a Branch delegation is:**

- i. the President, or her deputy;
- ii. the Secretary, or her deputy; and
- iii. additional Branch delegates based on the financial Graduate Membership of a Branch:
  - up to 15 members, no delegate;
  - 16 to 40 members, one delegate;
  - 41 to 100, two delegates;
  - 101 to 200, three delegates.



**A reminder that Jill Ellis is still waiting for some Branch Triennial reports. Please email as soon as possible to: [cjellis@xtra.co.nz](mailto:cjellis@xtra.co.nz)**

Don't forget to sort out some little gifts and trinkets to sell at our Hegg Hoffet table at Conference.

## Update from Louise Croot IFUW President, member Otago Branch

Grey suitcase is out again. Notes and ideas are lined up. Heading to Canada for their AGM and Conference in Winnipeg will be a new experience. Canada is now IFUW's largest affiliate. Have a look at their website at [www.cfuw.org](http://www.cfuw.org). It is good to explore and see what their issues are.

Their Conference theme this year is 'From Grassroots to the Future' with workshops and business as well as resolutions and regional meetings. Kathleen Laurila, the CIR for WG-USA, will be on a panel with Phyllis Scott, IFUW Vice President, who comes from Vancouver, and myself, on the topic 'IFUW: The Power Women Worldwide'. We have a clear division of the topic from the CIR, Ardith Toogood.



In preparing for meeting with members in another affiliate I am always grounded by what I know about New Zealand and how we do things. I will be interested to learn from the delegates and members in Winnipeg how things are done in Manitoba.

IFUW has representatives in four centres of importance to the UN. During my Presidency we have started to focus on practical information exchange partnerships with key UN Agencies in New York, Paris, and Geneva, in particular. Here we relate particularly to UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNESCO, HRC, and ILO to give some examples that relate to our IFUW priorities. Vienna works with NGO committees and their report makes interesting reading. (Apologies for all the abbreviations- I do hope you know them all.)

The UNICEF partnership is developing to a trusted relationship with our IFUW coordinator invited to some key planning and policy development meetings on the in-depth commitment of the organization in future to gender equality, as in CEDAW and creating change, and on continuing issues for girls globally. Our New York coordinator, Catherine Moore, is appreciative of the opportunity to focus on key matters for us with the IFUW priorities. Personal follow up can be done during the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2010. This activity is meaningful and builds on the 10 years of work since Mary Purcell's initiatives to have a key focus on the Girl Child. NGO Working Groups on Girls still continue in New York and Geneva. Integrating and coordinating these actions is really satisfying when we look back.



My time with Waikato Branch in July was enlightening. The issues and challenges to the Branch were made clear to me and I hope the exchange about the role of IFUW was beneficial. Thank you for all the care and support I received from Branch members.

Thanks are due to Otago Branch members for their continued support. Southland Branch members, the most southern in the world, I did appreciate meeting with some of you and hope your project plans can grow. I look forward to meeting with Canterbury after the New Zealand Conference in October.

### Public Affairs

Jean Silver [jeansilver@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jeansilver@xtra.co.nz)

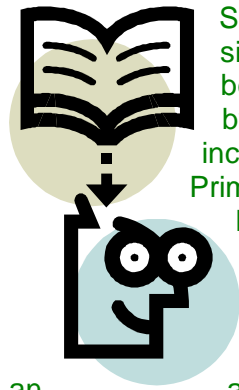
### Slash the cuts

It is the Government's intention to make significant cuts to adult and community education (ACE) next year. ACE in

schools is the biggest loser, losing 80% of its annual funding from \$16m to \$3m. The reason given for the cuts is 'the recession'. Yet, the 2008 Pricewaterhouse Coopers' report "*Economic Evaluation of Adult and Community Education Outcomes*" presents a positive economic perspective.

The report states, for example, that each dollar of government funding generates a return of \$16-\$22 (p. 5).

The Canterbury Branch has written to a local list MP, expressing deep concern about the Government's cuts to Adult and Community Education and has agreed to have their letter used as a sample by other Branches. See <http://www.nzfgw.org.nz/branchnews.html> under **Canterbury**.



Samples of letters with a similar intention have been sent to all Branches by email attachment, including one sent to the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Education on behalf of the North Shore Public Affairs group. A letter written in response to an article concerning ACE

cuts, written by the local MP, has been published in the local **North Shore Times**.

At the upcoming NZFGW Conference, the North Shore Branch is presenting the following resolution:

*That NZFGW urge the Government to reinstate funding for adult and community education to at least its pre-budget 2009 level.*

### National Standards feedback



Consultation on the Literacy and Numeracy Standards in English medium settings for Year 1-8 students finished on 3 July. Over 4000 parents, teachers, principals and trustees took part in the consultation process and over 4700

submissions were received by the Ministry of Education.

The New Zealand Council of Educational Research (NZCER) is analysing submissions and feedback and will report to the Ministry of Education on their findings.

### **Secretary of Education responds to letter from North Shore PAC**

Members of the North Shore Branch Public Affairs group studied the development of the National Standards for Literacy and Numeracy and included some of their concerns in a letter to Secretary of Education, Karen Sewell.

**Question:** Why is the time frame in which the standards are to be designed, reviewed and packaged so tight?

**Answer:** Because we are responding with urgency to the need to lift student achievement.

**Question:** Why was a decision made to relate standards to be achieved to the number of years students have been in school when there is much evidence to show that individual children develop at different rates?

**Answer:** Teachers will continue to design teaching and learning programmes for students consistent with their schools' charter, the *New Zealand Curriculum*, and the needs of the individual child. The National Standards provide signposts about expectations for achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics in Years 1 to 8.

**Question:** Have the services of the New Zealand Assessment Academy been called on?

**Answer:** The New Zealand Assessment Academy is represented within the expert teams of researchers, advisers, literacy and numeracy facilitators, teachers, principals, and Ministry officials who are developing and critiquing National Standards.

Refer [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) **Information for parents, families and whānau.**

## National Standards to begin next year

The Ministry of Education expects to provide a report to the Government in August and will provide final proposals on the standards in September. The final National Standards are to be published in October, 2009, for implementation in 2010.

However, reporting data from national standards back to the Ministry, which many feared would allow news media to gather information for league tables, will not begin until 2012. (*New Zealand Education Review August 7 2009.*)



The Ministry of Education is investigating ways in which assessment information could be usefully provided to parents and schools in ways that avoid the creation of league tables.

## Degree enrolments threaten University foundation programmes

On 7 August the New Zealand Education Review reported that the University of Waikato staff are protesting about plans to reduce the institution's sub-degree programmes in 2010 as it attempts to remain within its funded number of students in the face of increasing enrolments.

Waikato's annual report shows that it had 920 equivalent full time students (EFTS) or 9.5 per cent of its total EFTS in foundation courses in 2008, whereas Canterbury had about five per cent of EFTS and at the University of Auckland enrolment (not EFTS) was about four per cent.

## CIR Report

### Stephanie Hutchinson, National Executive

The latest e-mail discussion on Women and Wealth has finished and is summarised by Jennifer Strauss, President, Australian Federation of University Women. As far as I am aware, no NZers took part. Perhaps, like me, you were one of the 'silent listeners'.

## Bridging the Gap: Women's access to second chance tertiary education

This was the title of a national project proposed by National Executive as a national project after Mid Term Council. The purpose was to find out what effects changes in the funding of tertiary institutions had on women wanting to enter or re-enter tertiary education e.g. New Start for Adults programmes.

The intention was to invite Branches:

- to determine the changes made to accommodate the new Tertiary Education Funding Scheme in the tertiary institutions in the city/town where the branch is situated;
- to determine how these changes may have impacted on:
  - a. Mature women wanting to enter or re-enter tertiary education; and
  - b. Women who have taken a break from study for family purposes

Several working party meetings were held prior to a meeting with the EEO team at Auckland University. The purpose was to find out about the work that Trudi McNaughton, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equal Opportunities), and her team were doing on this topic. They indicated that there was no evidence to suggest that changes in funding had affected their programmes. At that time this was also the view of Professor Roy Sharp, CEO of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), so no further work was done on this potential national project.

From Jennifer:

*My grateful thanks to all the contributors who took the time and trouble to send their thoughtful messages. From comments that have come to me individually, and from responses to the issue of the time that should be allowed for each stage of the discussion, it's clear that your contributions were being read and appreciated by a larger audience than those who actually wrote in.*

*The Status of Women Committee, which has charge of these discussions on behalf of the Board of IFUW, needs to review its activities. It would be really useful to have feedback from the silent listeners, as well as from contributors, on whether we can do anything to improve these email discussions - over and above the extending of the period that a topic is open, since I think it's clear that it needs to be at least 10 days, and I'll be making that recommendation in my report to the Board.*

*Jennifer Strauss,  
Moderator, Women and Wealth Discussion*

#### WHAT WOMEN NEED TO CLOSE THE GENDER WEALTH GAP – IF THEY ARE NOT TO BE FOREVER POORER THAN MEN:

- Affordable quality education from early childhood to old age; including the opportunity to return to education and training after periods when employment has been interrupted by bearing and rearing children;
- An affordable and appropriate health system that supports women's fitness to bear and raise children and to work in productive employment;
- A fair distribution of the labour involved in maintaining a household and family;
- Equal opportunity in a labour market that recognizes that some of the circumstances of women's participation are different from those of men;
- Equal opportunity in a labour market that is not shaped by stereotypes of what is a suitable job (and a suitable level of employment) for a woman;
- Control of the fruits of their labour, free of physical intimidation or social pressure;
- Access in their own right to financial resources –e.g. to fund education, the establishment of business enterprise, purchase of property;
- Right to own and dispose of property and all forms of asset;
- Equal standing in a legal system not based on the male as the norm;
- Right to a social system that recognizes women's specific needs in allocating and distributing resources;
- Right to a social system that provides an economic safety net for those unable to participate in paid employment whether because of its unavailability or their personal circumstances;
- The right and the will to participate actively in the political decision-making that shapes a nation's social and economic system; and
- The right and will to participate actively in the political decision-making that shapes a nation's social and economic system.

It's not going to happen next week, but an IFUW Program Action should help NFAs, which will each have different priorities, different starting-points, different targets that they as achievable, to keep the interconnectedness of these requirements in mind as they work in their own ways for a better deal for women and the world.



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