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Bush Fire

Presbyterian Women
Aotearoa NZ

June 2018

2018 WE ARE...at the Well

PWANZ Executive are bringing a series of **regional gatherings** to you over 2018, supported by CWM with a "building capacity" grant.

A new generation of Presbyterian Women. Come meet with us at the well for nourishment, engagement, inspiration and connection. **MAKE A DATE IN YOUR DIARY** at the venue nearest you (see below) and organise to bring others too.



Rakaia

Thursday 21 June 2018 10.15am - 1pm with lunch
St Andrew's 97 Bowen Street, Rakaia

Cashmere, Christchurch

Thursday 21 June 2018 7pm - 9pm with coffee and dessert
Rata Lounge, Cashmere Presbyterian Church,
2 McMillan Ave, Christchurch

Stoke, Nelson

Saturday 23 June 2018 9.45am - 1pm
Whakatu Presbyterian, 271 Songer St, Stoke

Central Presbytery Saturday 14th July St Andrew's **Hastings** for a full-day of activities, including presentations with Dr Deborah Bower and Caren Rangī. (see Queen's Birthday Honours below)

Northern Presbytery in August Thursday 9th to Saturday 11th in Forrest Hill, Somervell and St David's in the Field, Hillsborough.

Kaimai and **Southern** in November – details nearer the time.

To assist us with planning and catering please register in advance email: pwanz2016@gmail.com

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Presbyterian Women Aotearoa NZ Executive Report

Child Poverty Reduction Bill – Oral Submission to the Select Committee

When we participate in the democratic process of civil society we are honouring the women who achieved Suffrage (for us) all those years ago. PWANZ filed a submission to the Social Services and Community Select Committee hearing on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill and asked to present an oral submission to the Select Committee at Parliament Buildings in Wellington which occurred on Wednesday 9 May.”

The Select Committee process is democracy in action. Members of the public (oral submitters) are given 15 minutes to present their view / opinion of the proposed Bill in front of the Committee – made up of both Government and Opposition Members of Parliament. There is the opportunity for 2 members of an organisation such as PWANZ to speak in the time allocated plus a support person to attend in the Public area. In the order of oral submissions. PWANZ was 4th of 13 for the day to speak and followed the Children’s Commissioner, 2 school principals from NZEI, and an analyst.

Once we spoke then Committee members are able to ask questions in reference to our Submission. It is important to participate in the process and accessible to all of us - unfortunately time is limited in notification of deadlines for both written and oral submission, so we must be agile and quick.

Sandra Waldrom writes “thank you to Mavis Duncanson, PWANZ UN Convenor who provided notes to take to the Social Services and Committee Select Committee hearing at Parliament Buildings, Wellington. Copies of our submission prepared by Mavis are available on request to pwanz2016@gmail.com.

AGM The AGM will be held on Saturday 15 September from 9am to 1pm from by lunch and workshops to close by 4pm at St Alban's Palmerston North. Put the date in your diary, make your travel plans and look forward to a great day put on in Palmerston North.

BushFire Ensure Presbyterian women receive their copy of your monthly newsletter – BushFire, forward email addresses to pwanz2016@gmail.com, or request a hard copy with a postal address. Remember Group Contacts to provide a list of each of your members as we recognise individual membership.

Presbyterian Women – Funding Update To 31 May 2018, of the current financial year to 30 June 2018, nearly 600 financial members have contributed over \$25,000 in donations to mission.

Presbyterian Women – Membership

Do you know a member of your congregation who would like to join Presbyterian Women for just \$10 per year? \$10 per annum provides 11 copies of the BushFire newsletter and a vote at the Annual General Meeting. Remittance forms have been emailed to members in April, if your Group Treasurer pays the fees on behalf of members please pass on to them.

This year is the year to promote membership – if we all ask one other person to join then we are on the way to becoming a vibrant relevant part of our church.

Stories of Women in our Church

At the Presbyterian Research Centre (Archives) at Knox College, we are working to collect the stories of women in the PCANZ. The voices of women are underrepresented in our collections and we would welcome material from women, including women who have been ministers. Sometimes women say to us that what they have done "was not really that important". This is not true. The experiences of women are vital in giving a full and balanced view of the life of the church, and in giving an insight into the lives of many of its members. Presbyterian women have done amazing things in Aotearoa New Zealand and we need to hear their voices. If you would like to know more about the history of women in the PCANZ or about donating material, please contact us at pcanzarchives@prcknox.org.nz or ph (03) 473 0777



Queen's Birthday Honours Congratulations to everyone who was honoured.

Luamanuvao Winnie Laban has been made a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to education and the Pacific community. Dame Luamanuvao Winnie Laban was the keynote speaker at the 2006 General Assembly (which saw Very Rev Pamela Tankersley inducted as Moderator).



She said the title of Dame, announced today, was an honour and would forever reflect her love for people. The announcement led her to think of her parents who came to New Zealand by boat from Samoa in the 1950s and gave up so much "for us". "Like many immigrants they had dreams for their children and they came here for education and opportunity.

Winnie was the first Pacific Island woman Member of Parliament, honoured by a Queen's Service Order in 2011. In 1992 Laban was bestowed the Samoan matai chiefly title Luamanuvao from the village of Vaiala, Vaimauga, in recognition of her work.

She has worked as Victoria University's assistant vice-chancellor (Pasifika) for eight years giving direction and support to Pacific students and staff which has seen an increase in enrolments and achievement. "My dream or passion has always been for our children to do well. "Education teaches you to think, to critique, to analyse, to debate. To be able to provide informed arguments so we can make good decisions." Taken from Stuff June 4 2018

The Very Rev Pamela Tankersley has been made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to the Presbyterian Church and the community:

She has been involved in the leadership of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ), including Moderator of the General Assembly and Moderator of the Council for World Mission. She was a member of the general committee of the Christian Conference of Asia from 2005 to 2010. She has made key contributions to increasing women's voice in the church. She has represented the New Zealand Association of Presbyterian Women at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women for three consecutive years.



"Pamela now lives in Palmerston North where she has been a driving force in the establishment of budget cooking classes, a children's playroom, and children's activities"... look out for a story on Pamela in the upcoming winter edition of Spanz

Caren Rangi has been made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit, for services to the Pacific community and to governance.



In March she had a place on Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's delegation to the Pacific — "our very own Cook Islands girl from Manihiki, Caren Rangi, a ground-breaker in terms of Pacific peoples' engagement in business and government over in Aotearoa," recorded the *Cook Islands News*. Then, in April, a ministerial appointment to chair an independent Whanau Ora Review Panel.

She has a Bachelor of Business Studies and is a member for 25 years of the Chartered Accountants institute of Australia and New Zealand, of which she was made a Fellow in 2015, Caren is of Cook Islands Maori descent, from the islands of Rakahanga, Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

She realised some years ago that there was a reason for her to feel more comfortable about being around the board table — so that her people would have voices at that level. Since 2002 she has sat on a range of boards at both Government and community level, and in 2008 established Ei Mua Consulting, of which she is principal consultant.

Taken from Hawke's Bay Today June 4 2018

Caren will be speaking at the Central Regional gathering in Hastings on 14 July

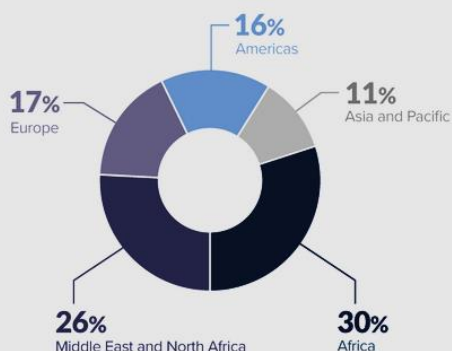
Rev Perema Leasi, minister of Church of Christ the King Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church, Porirua has been recognised with a Queen's Service Medal for his long service to the Pacific community. In 2016, Perema was also recognised with a Porirua 50th medal for his commitment to young people and his work rehabilitating prisoners and former prisoners. [Perema is the husband of Faaolataga Leasi, PWANZ Central Ambassador]



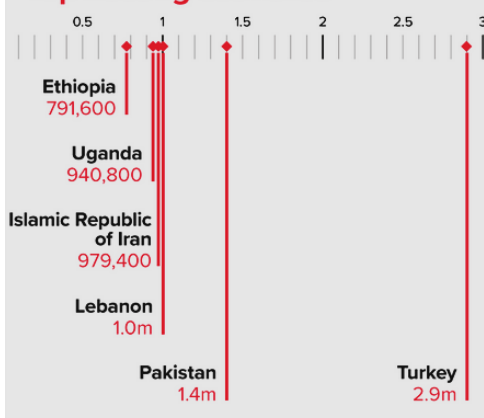
Mission Update

Refugee Sunday 24 June

Where the world's displaced people are being hosted



Top hosting countries



Each year New Zealand accepts 750 refugees per year, increasing to 1000 in July 2018.

Their status has been 'mandated' or authenticated by the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced on April 26th the appointment of Christine Schraner Burgener of Switzerland as his new Special Envoy on Myanmar. The General Assembly in December asked Guterres to appoint a special envoy in a resolution that called on Myanmar to end its military campaign in Rakhine state.

Many of Myanmar's ethnic minorities including the Karen, Kachin, Chin, Mon, and Shan have also faced decades of entrenched discrimination, conflict-related sexual violence, and other human rights violations by the Myanmar Armed Forces operating with near complete impunity. Ethnic women's groups in Myanmar have been documenting abuse for decades.

The current Rohingya crisis differs only in that it is much larger in scale. First-hand research and interviews done by local women's organizations working in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh provide evidence that Myanmar Armed Forces raped well over 300 women and girls in 17 villages in Rakhine State. With over 350 villages attacked and burned since August 2017, this number is likely only a fraction of the actual total number of women raped. Women and girls were caught and gang-raped in their homes, as they were running away or when trying to cross the Bangladesh border. Some were horribly mutilated and burned alive. Sexual violence involved hundreds of soldiers and occurred across a vast part of Rakhine State.

Rohingya refugees have been fleeing violence in Myanmar at a staggering rate – and the numbers keep growing. They walk for days through jungles and mountains, or brave dangerous sea voyages across the Bay of Bengal. They arrive exhausted, hungry and sick – in need of international protection and humanitarian assistance. Over 713,000 refugees have fled to Bangladesh since 25 August 2017.

UN Report Ashleigh Smith's feedback:



Ashleigh is in her final year of Nursing Studies at Otago Polytechnic and was the youngest women in our 2018 delegation. Last year Ashleigh was named winner of the New Zealand's Queen Young Leader Award.

There were many things I expected to feel at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Excited, nervous, amazed, inspired and maybe even a little overwhelmed. It's hard not to feel overwhelmed, it's the United Nations. The first thing I did when I arrived at UNHQ was find the New Zealand flag and when I finally found it, I felt proud. Proud to be from such a beautiful country and proud to be representing it.

Over the course of my two weeks at the United Nations this sense of pride was over thrown by something much stronger. I didn't expect to leave the UN everyday feeling sick to my stomach. I didn't expect to leave with the weight of a ball and chain firmly grasped to my heart. But that's exactly how I felt. Each day I could feel myself dropping deeper and deeper into a hole of hopelessness. Every new reality I learned was another shovel of dirt from beneath my feet. However, almost every day there were also rays of light. I would hear the stories of woman that had fought through the most unimaginable hardships, now representing their NGO's and countries. Their stories often gave me the inspiration I needed to get through each day.

However, by the end of CSW the hopelessness hole was very deep. Why?

Two points that really struck me:

- Over 200 million women and girls around the globe have suffered from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Most commonly occurring between the ages of 5-7 years, young girls are taken and forced to have their vaginas mutilated. No anaesthetic, no consent, no

pain relief, no sterile equipment. What are the benefits? Zero. What are the negative side effects? There are too many to list. Most significantly the implications to the urinary and sexually reproductive systems, let alone the psychological impacts.

- On one of the first days of CSW I heard a story of a Woman from Africa. At the age of 11 she was kidnapped from her village, by a group of men and taken to the mountains, where one man raped her. Can I repeat, only 11 years-old?! Now that she had lost her virginity she would not be fit to marry anyone else. Her father forced her to marry the man that raped her. This is not an isolated incident. This is happening to children every day.

The theme for this years United Nations Commission on Women was based around woman living in rural areas. Summing up why the theme is important is pretty easy. Rural women are over represented in almost every statistic I've mentioned above. If not all of them. I grew up in a rural community and had an awesome childhood. However, during my time growing up in the Maniototo I noticed a number of a challenges women and children living rurally face. For example

- Higher level of difficulty in accessing specialist healthcare
- Lack of reproductive and sexual health care/ clinics
- Social Isolation
- Higher level of difficulty in accessing mental health care.

As time went on, these issues I identified as being important just felt more and more trivial. I felt incredibly privileged to have grown up in New Zealand, but often to the point I would feel guilty about being privileged. This was something I really battled with and have battled with in past. Thankfully I have found some light on this topic.

I had the childhood that every child has the right to. I had food on the table. I had parents that loved and supported me in everything I've ever dreamed of doing. I had an education. I had access to health care. I didn't carry any worries beyond what tree I was going to climb after school. So yes, I am incredibly privileged, but it's what I do with it that counts.

I'm not sure why we have all been put on this planet and given an opportunity at life. But there is one thing I am certain about - because we are here, surely our life mission should be to fight our hardest to leave this place better than what we found it. Privilege is only a bad thing when it is misused.

Now that I had established that conclusion I was still left this deep hole of hopelessness. The problems the world is facing just seem so incredibly huge that anything I tried to do about them would be pointless. It was during a session run by nurses that I found clarity! (Good old nurses right)!! This quote seemed to pull together all the ideas running around in my head. It was written by His Holiness Dalai Lama in "ONE HUMAN FAMILY"

"I believe that to meet the challenges of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for his or her own self, family or nation, but for the benefit for all mankind. Universal responsibility is the real key to human survival. It is the best foundation for world peace, the equitable use of natural resources, and through concern for future generations, the proper care of the environment.

Today's world requires that we accept the oneness of humanity. In the past isolated communities could afford to think of each other as fundamentally separate and even existed in total isolation. Nowadays, however, events in one part of the world eventually affect the entire planet. Therefore, we have to treat each major local problem as global concern from the moment it begins. We can no longer invoke the national racial or ideological barriers that separate us without destructive repercussion. In the context our new interdependence, considering the interests of others is clearly the best form of self-interests".