



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom *Aotearoa Section*

Newsletter July 2021

Mia Tay from Otautahi WILPF, who initiated an annual Peace Lantern ceremony decades ago, is remembered in this plaque on a park bench in Christchurch. Mia was born 1941 and died in 2014.



Photos courtesy of Otautahi WILPF

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*Reports were presented at the WILPF
Aotearoa Section AGM held on 1 May 2021*

President's report for 2020

The Section AGM was a short business meeting held by Zoom on 2 May last year because of the coronavirus COVID-19.

The Section Executive Committee is currently MH (president), Suzanne Loughlin and Pauline Tangiora (vice presidents), Celine Kearney, and Edwina Hughes (co-ordinators), Tamsin Kingston (treasurer). Prue Stringer and Meghan Stewart-Ward (South Island group), Joy Davies-Payne and Pauline Tangiora (Wellington branch), and Ruth Coombes and Helen Sumich (Tamaki Makaurau branch). We have regular monthly meetings via Zoom.

Our main activity in 2020 was applying for and receiving a grant from WILPF International via the Reaching Critical Will disarmament programme to develop a feminist budget for Aotearoa New Zealand. Ema Tagicakibau and Meghan Stewart-Ward were employed as researchers for the project, Tamsin Kingston oversaw the finances and Suzanne Loughlin and I were the points of contact for Ema and Meghan on the Section executive committee.

The report, 'Towards a Feminist Budget' was launched online on 8 March,

International Women's Day, 2021 with around 30 people from a range of organisations present. The report has received a lot of favourable feedback. I would like to thank Ema and Meghan for their terrific work under a very tight deadline.

As part of the Feminist Budget project, we also arranged for the WILPF website to be updated and used part of the grant to employ someone to do this. It now has a fresher front page with a link to the feminist budget report. The Section executive committee has agreed to pay the same web designer to look at the site as a whole and revitalise it. This work is ongoing.

I am on the WILPF international Congress organising committee which has begun to meet again after the COVID lockdowns. The Congress will be held online in June 2022, although there may be opportunities for national Sections in each WILPF region to meet in person and feed into the Congress.

I have represented WILPF Aotearoa at a couple of international WILPF Zoom calls – an Asia Pacific region meeting and a Women Peace & Security webinar – as well as attending an MFAT disarmament briefing and the celebration to mark the coming into force of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in January this year.

Celine Kearney is the Section liaison for the WILPF Asia-Pacific region group, with Lucy Stewart as backup. Meghan Stewart-Ward and Suzanne Loughlin represent the Section on the Ministry for Women's International Women's Caucus.

The WILPF Aotearoa constitution, which is now nearly 30 years old, still needs updating and we will work on this again this year. While our membership numbers have increased, we still have work to do on this, as well as holding quarterly online meetings for WILPF Aotearoa members, setting up a Y-WILPF network and increasing the profile of WILPF Aotearoa and climate change – all of which I mentioned in last year's report to the Section AGM. The Feminist Budget report and a revitalised website will help with some of this, I hope.

I want to thank you all for your contributions to WILPF Aotearoa. Without your support and feedback, we would not be able to continue. An organisation's viability is a reflection of its members' involvement – and I am grateful for yours.

Megan Hutching
President, WILPF Aotearoa Section

Vice-president's report

Pauline Tangiora reports that her focus is working to oppose Rocket Lab on the Mahia Peninsula, Hawkes Bay. She has supported a nephew to be part of a video raising awareness about the functions of the rockets being launched.



Photo source: 1-earth institute.net

WILPF Aotearoa Section Co-ordinators' Report 2020

Notes taken at Section AGM and Notes taken for regular section Exec zoom meetings

Letters

We wrote several letters, including

- NZ First MPs about Arms Amendment Act

- Foreign Minister about 'Peace plan' for Palestine and Israel

- Minister of Police opposing introduction of armed police units

- Minister of Defence opposing NZ's participation in RIMPAC. As well as a letter we participated in the Stop RIMPAC organising group, and in a protest action outside the US embassy.

We added our name to several open letters and appeal statements, including:

- the open letter re Rocket Lab's military launches (Gunsmoke-J payload).

- the open letter re Uyghur refugees being accepted as part of NZ's refugee quota.

- the open letter calling for all states participating in RIMPAC 2020 to cancel it.

- the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security open letter calling on all UN member states to prioritize women's meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security.

- the global appeal for the 2021 Global Day of Action on Military Spending.

Ongoing Actions

- We continue membership and active participation of National Council of Women

- We participate in networking information from the umbrella Human Rights network.

- We have participated in the Women Peace and Security National Action Plan discussions and provided input and comment on government's draft report.

Section Communications

- Updates from a range of women's, peace, disarmament and human rights groups have been forwarded to members.
- Three newsletters compiled: April, July and November.
- Regular posts on the section Facebook, which now has 826 'likes'
- Content for Aotearoa WILPF website ongoing: including short interviews of some WILPF members in Tamaki Makaurau, completed in 2019, to be loaded – in part- on updated website. More short interviews in other branches to follow.

Section Co-ordinators:
Celine Kearney, Suzanne Loughlin,
Edwina Hughes

Branch Reports

The South Island Group: 2020

The South Island group is not currently very active. We did however hold our annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration last August. It was very well attended and as always was a very moving occasion.

We were pleased to be able to involve two young people from the DSC in the organising and hope to pass over most of the work to them in the years to come.

We keep in touch with members around the South Island, and try and support each other in our various peace-related endeavours.

Prue Stringer

Tamaki Makaurau Branch: 2020

We were fortunate to be able to hold our branch AGM in person on 18 July 2020 and, as usual, combined it with our annual Matariki meeting. The branch co-ordinator is Megan Hutching, and committee

members are Del Abcede, Ruth Coombes, Claire Gregory, Tamsin Kingston (treasurer), Nola Smith, Helen Sumich, and Angelina Weir.

Our branch activities were, of necessity, contracted by COVID-19 and the various lockdowns.

We did, however, manage to run our annual commemoration of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the Ellen Melville Centre on Sunday 9 August, although it was a much smaller and more informal gathering than usual.

Branch member, Kathy Ross co-ordinated a peace craft stall at the Festival of Roses in Parnell in November. Members helped out on the stall which are a good opportunity to publicise WILPF and our work. We also had an information stall at the International Cultural Festival in March this year and handed out WILPF material, as well as having some useful and engaging conversations with people who passed by.

Ruth Coombes and Del Abcede attend the monthly meetings of the Auckland branch of NCWNZ on our behalf. Branch members Nola Smith and Beverley Turner manage the Human Rights Network email message list. Irene Johnson is our contact for Gun Control New Zealand

Ruth Coombes and Helen Sumich have been our branch representatives on the WILPF Aotearoa Section executive committee for many years but wish to 'retire', so we are in the process of choosing who to replace them. Thank you to all of them for their work over the year.

I want to thank all the Branch members though – they come to meetings, respond to email messages, send feedback and suggestions and are engaged in our big

work of international peace and disarmament. Organisations like ours need this engagement at the personal level to survive and to do the mahi that keeps us going. Nga mihi nui ki a koutou nga wahine pai.

Megan Hutching
Branch co-ordinator



Qiane Matata-Sipu *Photo by Del Abcede*

Megan reports on Qiane Matata-Sipu's talk at Tāmaki Makaurau branch 2021 Matariki meeting

Qiane began by telling us about her links to the whenua at Ihumātao before talking about her work as a journalist and her company Qiane + Co. Qiane has a 27-generations long link to Ihumātao and describes it as 'my identity'.

The kaupapa for her work is to tell the stories of marginalised people and their communities so that she can change the narrative for future generations. Her current work is NUKU, interviews with 100 indigenous women, which is a multimedia project including audio podcasts for each interview, portrait photographs and behind-the-scenes videography filmed during the interviews. The podcasts are released weekly and can be found on the website:

www.nukuwomen.co.nz A book of the

interviews will be published in October this year.

Qiane explained that her criteria for choosing who to interview for NUKU was that they had to be 'kick ass' women who were not afraid to share their opinions, they are mostly women of colour, they are people who identify as female, and they are doing something different.

She noted that there are themes which run through the interviews. The first is that of what she calls 'enoughness' and what it feels like to be enough. For example, 'If I don't know my language, am I indigenous enough?' Second is success and the different things that means to people.

When she spoke about Ihumātao, Qiane described how she and five cousins got together in 2014 and decided that they had had enough of what was happening to their whenua. (Fletchers had bought the land that year for housing.) SOUL, their campaign to stop the 'development' on their land, began then. She explained that 'We have never wavered from our why', that is, that the land that is their home and their identity needs to be preserved for the generations to come.

Note: Māori Television will be screening the documentary series, 'Ake, Ake, Ake' about the struggle for Ihumātao at the end of July.

Qiane is a moving and inspirational and entertaining speaker, and we were moved, inspired and entertained but also grateful that she made the time to share her stories with us for Matariki.



Peace Movement Aotearoa
2020 report from **Claire and Linley
Gregory**

This last year we attended the Peace Movement Aotearoa AGM held via zoom, where grateful thanks for the support WILPF has given to Peace Movement Aotearoa's work was expressed.

Peace Movement Aotearoa's primary focus is networking and providing information and resources for anyone interested in peace related issues to use. They also make their own submissions to government and report to UN bodies on matters of concern (ongoing, for example, to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the militarisation of children and young persons, and military spending), and assist others to do so. All of their work is done collaboratively with members and supporting groups and individuals.

Peace Movement Aotearoa provides national coordination for five global humanitarian disarmament campaigns: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Aotearoa NZ (ICAN ANZ), ANZ Cluster Munition Coalition and Campaign Against the Landmines Joint Working Group, ANZ Campaign to Stop Killer Robots (ANZKRC), ANZ Campaign on Military Spending, and the Network on Explosive Weapons; and for the WW1 Centenary Peace Project. They have maintained extensive topic-focused national networks for each campaign, and on other issues including conscientious objection, Christian peace solidarity, the Treaty of Waitangi and human rights, women, peace and security, and support for non-violent initiatives. They provide web pages for member groups such as the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship; for ANZKRC, Matike Mai Aotearoa, ICAN ANZ, White Poppies for Peace and the White Poppy Peace Scholarships; and for all of NZ's disarmament statements to provide easy access to them.

Highlights since the last WILPF AGM include: virtual ANZAC Day and online Hiroshima / Nagasaki commemorations in 2020, the return of the ANZAC Day vigils in 2021, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Entry into Force, launching the killer robots petition, and further expanding the Youth Disarmament Project.

WILPF Asia Pacific Region

In her role as one of Aotearoa WILPF's Asia Pacific representatives, Celine Kearney (photo below) sent a zoom greeting to Australian WILPF for their recent national meeting.



Kia ora tatou/ Greetings to our Australian WILPF sisters ...from Aotearoa

We wish you well as you gather for your Wilpf conference. We hope it will be fruitful in terms of your deliberations and actions, and as well allow social time together, strengthening friendships and channels of communication.

Aotearoa WILPF's recent work, with a wider Pacific focus, has been on supporting a national campaign to stop our military participating in the Rimpac military exercises off the coast of Hawaii. Also supporting the Korea Now! campaign to formally end the war in Korea.

With a focus on our own society, we have continued to work on the NGO working group for Women Peace and Security, aiming to influence government policy and budgets to support women and hence a more just, equitable society.

In support of this aim, earlier this year, we launched A Feminist Budget, to encourage the reallocation of military spending towards social spending. Even more important now in this Covid pandemic.

We continue to work in support of Te Tiriti o Waitangi: including encouraging government support of the teaching and learning of Te Reo, the Maori language, in schools. We mark the anniversary of women's suffrage here in Aotearoa.

We also continue to support gun controls and policies, especially after the horrendous murder of 51 people of Muslim faith, in two mosques in 2019, and the consequent ongoing physical, mental and emotional repercussions.

Nga mihi nui / with all good wishes

Celine Kearney

Website update

We are currently updating the WILPF website: www.wilpf.nz to make it easier to find out what we do, get access to information about how to join and to get involved in our work.

It is a work in progress, but you will be seeing some changes over the next few weeks.

International WILPF News

Next year's WILPF Congress will be held mostly online at the end of July 2022.

There are advantages and disadvantages to it being online. Advantages include members being able to participate without having to travel to Congress. Congress will come to you!

The disadvantages are negotiating the different time zones around the world and finding one time when everyone can be present online together.

WILPF International is going through an organisational review process at the moment which will start by asking for feedback and ideas from all WILPF members to feed into the development of our next International Programme which will be formally adopted at the 2022 Congress.

You will have received the updates and requests for participation in the regular WILPF Membership News emails.

This is your opportunity to have input into WILPF's work so I hope you are able to do so.

Megan Hutching

Contact us

www.wilpf.nz

wilpfaotearoa@gmail.com

And see us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/wilpfaotearoa.newzealand

Young WILPF – YWILPF

<https://www.wilpf.org/our-members/#young>

WILPF Aotearoa

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Aotearoa New Zealand

President: Megan Hutching

Vice-Presidents: Pauline Tangiora, Suzanne Loughlin

Section Treasurer: Tamsin Kingston

Section Co-ordinators: Edwina Hughes, Celine Kearney



Tamaki Makaurau branch members with Qiane Matata-Sipu at their recent Matariki gathering.

Photo by Del Abcede