WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM

WILPF Aotearoa newsletter **May 2026**

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Reports from Section AGM:

The Section AGM was held online on Sunday 8 March from 2-4 pm. Our new constitution was approved and the Section is now re-registered as an incorporated society.

2026 membership subs are now due.

WILPF member, Treasa Dunworth gave a thought-provoking talk in which she reflected on the current dynamics of war, genocide and rising militarism and shared some thoughts about how we might be able to hold steady in these chaotic, cruel and frightening times.

President's report:

Heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed to WILPF Aotearoa's work in the past year, with special thanks due to all who have maintained the weekly protests against the Israeli government's genocide of Palestinians. That the genocide is allowed to continue should lead us all to reflect on our government's said commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Our collective thanks to all who have filled various roles at Board and Branch level during the year: Pauline Tangiora, Megan Hutching, Celine Kearney, Edwina Hughes, Prue Stringer, Barry Lee and Del Abcede. It has been a busy year and likely only to get even busier with this year being election year.

Over the past year, the Board has written regularly to the Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters calling for the Government to go beyond words of condemnation and act to fulfil their obligations as a signatory state to the Genocide Convention not only prevent but also to punish perpetrators of the crime of genocide. We have also called repeatedly on the Government to demand that the Israeli Government fulfil its humanitarian obligations under International Humanitarian Law and to reign in ever-increasing settler-violence against the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank. As a signatory to the Apartheid Convention, which defines apartheid as a crime against humanity and establishes

measures for its suppression and punishment, the New Zealand Government is once again failing to fulfill its obligations.

WILPF Aotearoa has joined many others around the globe in calling for a halt to armed violence wherever it occurs and for humanitarian assistance for the hundreds of thousands of people affected by armed conflict with particular attention to the most vulnerable. It is deeply concerning that we rarely get a response from either the Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Section has yet again been kept busy submitting on the raft of legislative proposals introduced by the coalition government including:

- Treaty Principles Bill,
- Regulatory Standards Bill;
- Oranga Tamariki Amendment Bill
- Crimes (Countering Foreign Interference) Amendment Bill
- the Resource Management Replacement Bills
- Arms Bill
- Summary Offences (Demonstrations Near Residential Premises) Amendment Bil;
- Fast-Track Approvals Amendment Bill
- The Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Act 2024

We continue to advocate for strong gun regulation as the most effective means of reducing firearms-related deaths.

Letters and submissions are circulated and posted on the website. Members are encouraged to draw on them to make personal submissions and/or write to their own member of parliament and ministers, and to encourage others to do the same.

WILPF members continue to fill valuable coordination roles with other organisations. Megan Hutchings, National Council for Women NZ; Irene Johnston, Gun Control NZ; Edwina Hughes, New Zealand Cluster Munitions Coalition/Campaign Against Landmines, ICAN Aotearoa, Aotearoa NZ Campaign to Stop Killer Robots; Claire and Linley Gregory Peace Movement Aotearoa; Nola Smith Human Rights Network (HRN) Auckland; Kate Dewes, Lucy Stewart, Angela Woodward & Prue Stringer the Disarmament & Security Centre (DSC). I have followed the agenda for meetings of the Ministry for Women's International Women's Caucus (IWC) and have taken an active role in building the Pacific Peace Network (PPN) as a standalone organisation. Many thanks to all those who take the time to represent WILPF and report back.

Celine Kearney has continued as the alternate Asia Pacific region representative on the WILPF International Board, and has had a particular focus on organising meetings for WILPF members in the region. Megan Hutching has represented the Section at the irregular meetings of the international Advisory Board and is a member of the Congress Steering Committee for this year's WILPF international Congress.

Internally, the Board has produced a final draft of a revised constitution as required by the Incorporated Societies Act, 2022. A huge vote of thanks to Megan Hutching for carrying this load. A Special General Meeting held on 15 February 2025 reviewed feedback incorporated from earlier

consultations and gathered final comments. Another revised draft has been circulated for consideration at the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) to allow for re-registration as agreed at the 2005 AGM.

The two Section Newsletters produced this year were circulated to members and posted on the website. Special thanks to all contributors and compilers.

At our 2025 AGM, Avril Bell spoke to us about what it means for Tangata Tiriti to be a good treaty partner: to speak frankly about colonisation that created the space for Pakeha to be here in Aotearoa; respect boundaries especially when Māori reclaim the space they need to speak in safety; and finally - perhaps especially - be prepared to sacrifice power to redress the imbalance.

This year we welcome WILPF member Associate Professor Treasa Dunworth who will enlighten us on the role of International Law and the failure of states to live up to their obligations in the recent past. Since 1999, Treasa has worked at the Faculty of Law, University of Auckland, where she teaches various public international law related courses as well as a specialized course on Disarmament Law to undergraduate students and a seminar course on International Peace and Security in the postgraduate programme. Her research focuses on disarmament law.

In the coming year, in the context of ongoing threats to the provision of public services and government's facilitation of private profit-taking it looks as though even greater efforts will be required.

We invite you to join us and to expand our reach by supporting our efforts.

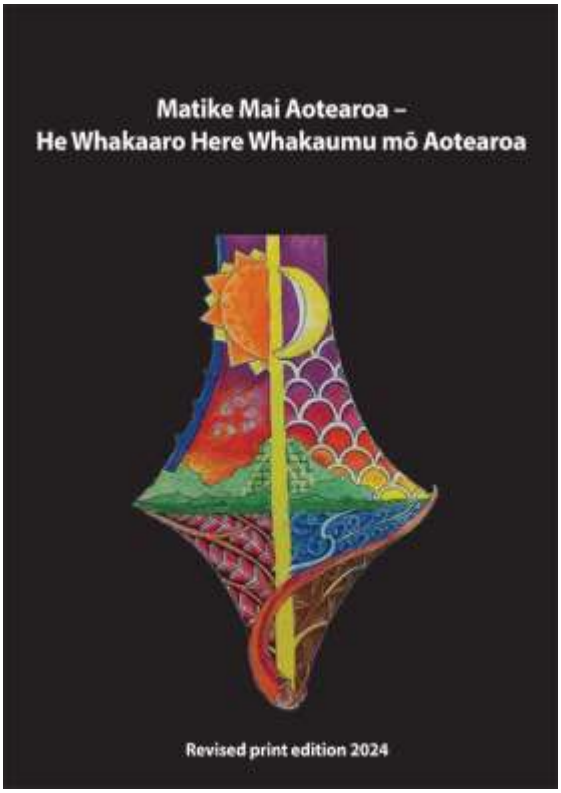
Suzanne Loughlin

Other reports:
Other written reports to the AGM can be found here.

Verbal reports were received from Wellington branch, Tāmaki Makaurau branch, and the other organisations that WILPF has connections with. (These are listed above in Suzanne's report.)

The financial report for 2025 is also available – just send a request to wilpfaotearoa@gmail.com and we will send it to you.

Matike Mai Aotearoa
A new print edition of the original report launched on Waitangi Day in 2016.

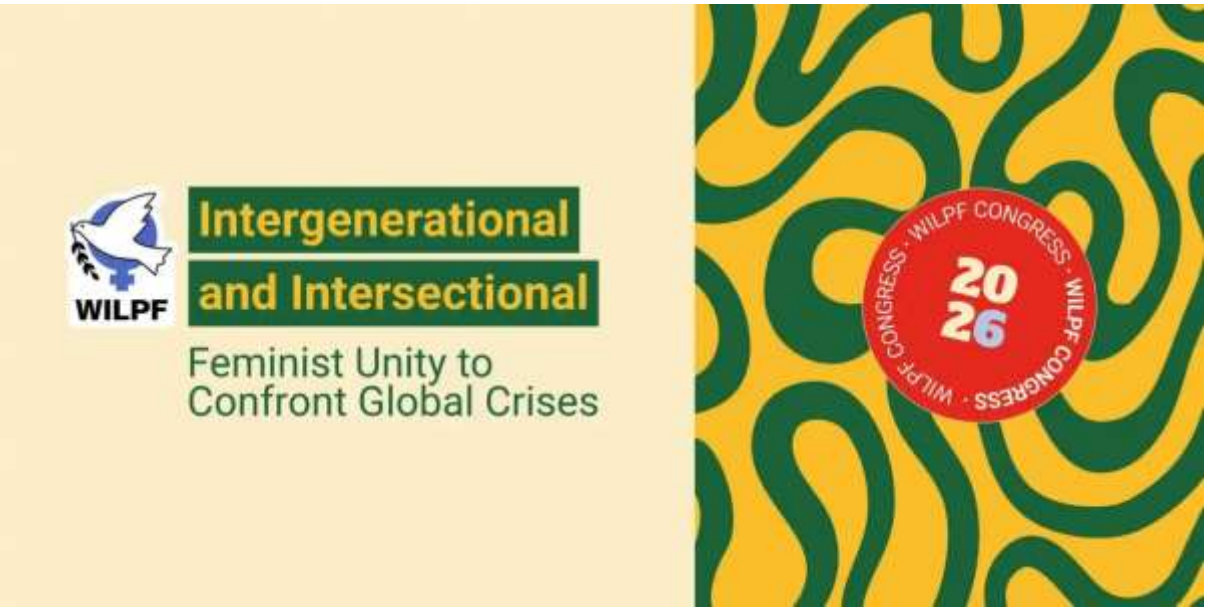


Commissioned by the Iwi Chairs' Forum in 2010, the Matike Mai Working Group held 252 hui between 2012 and 2015. Their brief was:
"To develop and implement a model for an inclusive Constitution for Aotearoa based on tikanga and kawa, He Whakaputanga o

te Rangatiratanga o Niu Tireni of 1835, Te Tiriti o Waitangi of 1840, and other indigenous human rights instruments which enjoy a wide degree of international recognition".

Matike Mai Aotearoa is essential reading for all those interested in Tiriti – based futures for our country. It gives crucial insights into views held within contemporary Māoridom about core values a constitution should express. Opening with mihi/forewords by Hone Sadler, Margaret Mutu and Moana Jackson, it provides six possible models for constitutional transformation, and contains photos of some of the consultation hui.

The book is available here: https://thebestlittlebookstore.nz/product/matike-mai-aotearoa/



WILPF Congress 2026:

WILPF's next International Congress will be held online from 17-20 July and is hosted by WILPF Cameroon.

The International Congress is WILPF's highest decision-making body and the final authority on the organisation's policies and direction.

It is responsible for approving the International Programme, admitting new Sections, electing the International Board, and adopting amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws.

The agenda is here. Please note that the times in the agenda are CEST, that is, Geneva time, so you will need to convert them to NZ time. There are three sessions each day – some at times that will not suit everyone – to make it possible for WILPF members around the world to attend at least some sessions each day. Each session will be recorded so that you can watch if you are unable to attend.

This year the theme is "*Intergenerational and Intersectional: Feminist Unity to Confront Global Crises.*"

WILPF Aotearoa will have two voting delegates at the Congress, but all WILPF members are encouraged to attend and participate. It will cost you $US25 and you can register here: https://events.humanitix.com/wilpf-congress-2026
Registration is open until 17 June.

In the week before Congress there will be online workshops, discussion sessions and information swaps. The calendar for these will be published in the Congress folder in myWILPF. (If you are a WILPF Aotearoa Section member, you can register for myWILPF – just click on the myWILPF button on the top righthand corner of the WILPF website www.wilpf.org)

Branch news:

Te Wai Pounamu

Kate Dewes and Prue Stringer at a 'No More Wars' rally in Ōtautahi Christchurch.
Photo courtesy Prue Stringer

Rob Green, Kate Dewes and Prue Stringer make WILPF's presence known at a rally in Ōtautahi Christchurch.
Photo courtesy Prue Stringer

Tāmaki Makaurau

We welcome new members, Frances Palmer and Deborah Yates.

Branch members continue to organise and attend the weekly rallies for Palestine at Te Komititanga Britomart Square in downtown Auckland. And Kathy Ross and Marika Czaja publicised the lack of acknowledgement of the Palestinian genocide at the recent (Readers &) Writers Festival.

Photo courtesy Janfrie Wakim

Some Tāmaki branch members are working to engage with Auckland Museum about their war exhibitions, and hope to persuade them that they need more nuance and context, especially with regard to those who oppose war.

WILPF Aotearoa

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