

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM



WILPF Aotearoa newsletter December 2025

Contents:

- Message from Suzanne
- 2026 Section AGM date
- *Breath of Peace* documentary
- Branch news
- WILPF International
- Report from Earth Charter 25+ conference at The Hague

From the president

Kia ora sisters

At the end of a troubling year, may you all enjoy the Christmas break and begin the New Year with new energy to continue to build the feminist future we imagine, one of peace and security for all people everywhere.

Heartfelt thanks to all those who have worked tirelessly for many years - and over the past two years especially - to shine a light on the egregious situation not only in occupied Palestine but also in Sudan, Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of Congo and many other places subjected to violent conflict. If only the resources used to repress were put toward health and education for all what a different world it would be.

Now is the time to enjoy family and friends and return refreshed in 2026 to continue our collective work.

Meri Kirihimete me te Tau Hou.

Ngaa mihi nui

Suzanne on behalf of the WILPF Board

2026 Section AGM

The 2026 AGM will be held online on

Sunday, 8 March, 2-4 p.m.

More information will be sent in February.

Breath of Peace

To mark the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, documentary maker Kathleen Gallagher showed her 2004 documentary *Breath of Peace* which tells the story of eight New Zealand peace activists, among them three WILPF women, Mary Woodward, Pauline Tangiora and Kate Dewes.

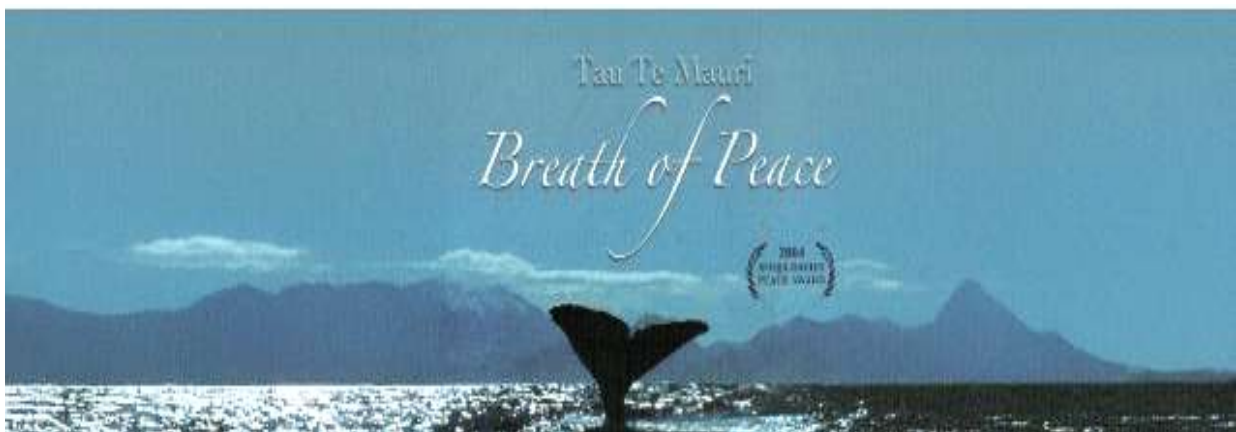
The narratives were interwoven with shots of whales and dolphins and white herons /kotuku, accompanied by taonga puoro /flutes played by Richard Nunns and waiata, sung by Aroha Yates-Smith.

In the film, Mary shared her experience of being an active CND member in Christchurch in the 1970s getting press releases into the *Christchurch Press* to help from public opinion on anti-nuclear issues. Pauline's narrative included the story of how she became a member of WILPF. She had been in the United States in the late 1970s and found herself amongst a group of women activists. One of them explained to her about WILPF and put the money down on the table for her to join. She was impressed with such direct action and the women and has been active in WILPF ever since. Kate's story involved her work with the World Court Project, lobbying at the UN in New York. The International Court of Justice ruled in 1996 that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was illegal.

Other women were Bunny McDiarmid from Greenpeace who sailed on the 'Rainbow Warrior' in 1985 to help evacuate people from Rongelap in the Marshall Islands, because of the danger of radiation from US nuclear testing. Also, Moana Cole, part of the Ploughshares group poured blood on a B52 bomber on an air force base in New York in the early 1990s. She spent 12 months in a US jail.

It's a documentary worth watching again to be reminded of New Zealand women and men who have shown bravery and astonishing persistence in working for a peaceful world.

Celine Kearney, who attended to speak on behalf of WILPF which supported the showing in Auckland.



Branch news:

WILPF members around the motu took part in commemorations to mark the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 (see Celine's report, above).

Tāmaki Makaurau

At the event organised by WILPF Tāmaki Makaurau, we had on display one of the Hiroshima Panels created by Iri and Toshi Maruki.

Iri and Toshi were eyewitnesses to the aftermath of the atomic bombing of

Hiroshima, and they began collaborating on their signature work, the Hiroshima Panels,

in the late 1940s, during a time when information on the atomic bombings was still tightly restricted by the censorship enforced by U.S.-led occupation forces. The Marukis spent many years, during the occupation and the following decades, traveling and exhibiting their works in a variety of temporary exhibitions (with venues including civic centres, temples, and school gymnasiums) before establishing their own gallery to house the Hiroshima Panels.

This particular panel (IX Yaizu) was chosen by us to highlight the link between the 1945 bombs and the testing of atomic and

nuclear weapons in the Pacific, and the ongoing effects on Pacific peoples.



In 1954, a hydrogen bomb exploded on Bikini atoll. The crew of the Daigo Fukuryu Maru, a fishing boat from the port of Yaizu, was showered with the ashes of death. Six months later, Kuboyama Aikichi died. Three times the Japanese have fallen victim to nuclear weapons.

[Afterword, May 1983]

Not only the Japanese, but Micronesians near Bikini atoll were dusted with the deadly fallout from the hydrogen bomb. The entire island was polluted. Those who fled later returned to their native Bikini, only to develop cancer and leukemia from the residual radiation. Many suffer still. Yaizu and Bikini—a shared fate.

You can see all the panels [here](#).

On 9 November the annual Rose Festival was held at the Parnell Rose Gardens in central Auckland. The Tāmaki branch was responsible for a peace craft stall where people could paint a small banner on the theme of ‘peace’.

This stall could not run without Kathy Ross but the WILPF sisters turned out in support to help and to talk to people about WILPF and our activities. From the very opening there was a constant flow of eager artists, from toddlers up to adults, creating a great family atmosphere.



Photo: Tamsin Kingston

Kathy reports: Lorri was extremely helpful, she got me down there in her mobility van,

with all my stuff, to help with set up and both her and her PA Holla, worked hard to set up, which was such a relief and help to have them to kick off the event. Tamsin, Nola and Del were also there, Another on the WILPF helpers list was Anna, who came later and helped with the later children (yes, they just kept coming), and the final clean up, as well as loading up all my stuff up into her vehicle and dropped me back home.



Photo: Tamsin Kingston

It was an amazing turn out of WILPF sisters, without which the stall could not have operated at all. Everyone worked so hard to make it a cheerful and productive family space that brought communities together. Thank you so much all of you, it was a great

team effort, and the camaraderie between us was palpable and unparalleled.

It was an added bonus having the Stitch Project next door, who topped us up with nibbles and made visible the Palestinian Community.

Te Wai Pounamu:

Members continue to attend rallies in support of Palestine.



Photo courtesy Prue Stringer

WILPF International news

WILPF Congress 2026

The 2026 Congress will be an online event, hosted by WILPF Cameroon in July. The team is producing Congress newsletters which will be circulated to members as they arrive.

End of year message from International President and Secretary General

Dear WILPF members around the world, 2025 has been a year of change for WILPF. Our new IS Secretary General Amrita Kapur, started work with us in February. Amrita was able to meet WILPF members when she attended and spoke at the UN Commission on the Status of Women last March, and most recently met with European members at their regional meeting in Vienna.

As European governments move their funding away from peace work to defence, WILPF, like many other human rights NGOs, has been greatly affected, with significant cuts to funding for the operations of the International Secretariat (IS). The International Board (IB) has been working with the IS on the budget, but the impacts are severe. Most unfortunately, this has meant that several staff will lose their jobs or have reduced hours in 2026.

As a member-based organisation, WILPF is looking to Sections, Groups, and our International members to move from local to global and support the work of the organisation at the international level. Our International Programme (IP) is currently being reviewed and the new IP will be taken to Congress in July for approval.

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your dedication to WILPF and our mission. Your support means the world to us. We also want to thank our IB members, Section/Group and committee members, international staff, partners, and supporters for your tireless efforts.

To our youth members, we see you, we appreciate you, and we encourage you to continue to get involved and lead the way. Your energy, passion, and fresh perspectives are invaluable to our organisation. Let's work together to drive positive change and build a more peaceful and just world.

As we bid farewell to a challenging year, we wish you peaceful holidays and a happy New Year filled with hope, joy and renewal. May 2026 bring us greater peace, justice and opportunities for all,

and may we emerge stronger and more united in our pursuit of a better world.

Together, we can make a difference.

Thank you for being part of the WILPF community.

Sylvie Ndongmo and Amrita Kapur on behalf of WILPF's International Board

WILPF at COP30

The summit delivered one of the strongest rights-based outcomes in COP history with the adoption of the Just Transition mechanism. However, the talks once again failed to respond with the urgency required by a world on the brink of climate tipping points. The so-called '[Belém Political Package](#)' makes no direct mention of the need for a just, equitable, and fully financed transition away from fossil fuels.

Meanwhile, global military spending soared to an unprecedented \$2.7 trillion in 2024, yet the top spenders refused to commit adequate finance for adaptation, mitigation, or the just transition. Despite President Lula's warning at the opening ceremony that spending twice as much in weapons as in climate action fuels a climate apocalypse, the COP process continues to ignore the environmental and social costs of militarism.

As in previous years, WILPF was on the ground participating in COP in Belém. The annual climate talks are a critical opportunity to raise awareness of the climate impacts of militarism, to elevate the demands of those impacted by the intersecting dangers of militarism, conflict, and the climate crisis— and to demand action from governments.

[Here](#), we're providing a recap of some of the outcomes of COP30, how WILPF

got involved and our delegate's reflections on this year's climate conference.

Earth Charter 25+ conference, The Hague

I write with deep appreciation to acknowledge your support for my attendance at the Earth Charter 25+ conference in The Hague, under the theme "*Turning Conscience into Action.*"

As one of the original founders of the Earth Charter in 2000, my presence offered a sense of continuity and connection to the Charter's roots. Yet what made this gathering particularly meaningful was witnessing the rich dialogue and learning that took place between the generations—elders who carry long-standing wisdom and young people who carry the energy and vision for our collective future.

Two sessions especially highlighted the importance of this intergenerational exchange.

The first, "Future Generations and Intergenerational Justice," underscored how today's decisions must honour the needs of tomorrow's children. Neshan Gunasekera of Sri Lanka, representing the World Future Council and the Earth Trusteeship Initiative, offered a compelling reminder that each generation's freedom is bound by its responsibility to those who follow.

The second, "Planetary Consciousness, Ethics of Care and Education," brought forward voices like that of Mindahi Bastida from The Earth Elders, Mexico. He spoke powerfully of ethical education rooted in ancestral knowledge and planetary care—emphasising how traditional wisdom can guide us in building a sustainable future. Throughout the three days—across three venues, with 340 participants from 35 countries—interactions between young leaders and elder knowledge-keepers

created a dynamic learning environment. As the post-conference newsletter reflected: “It was very intense, we learned so much and generated new energy and new ideas.” Shortly after the event, the Earth Charter International Council released a [powerful statement](#) reaffirming the Charter’s relevance and calling on all of us—young and old—to act with renewed *hope, wisdom, and unity*. I have included a copy of that statement with this report. As it declares, “*It is time to choose life.*”

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Women of WILPF Aotearoa, Kate Dewes, Diane Shand, the World Future Council, Earth Charter International and my whānau for making my participation possible. Your support enabled not just a personal journey, but a shared moment of intergenerational learning that I will carry forward in the work yet to come.

Ngā mihi nui,
Pauline Tangiora



Photo: Mirjam Lems Fotografie

WILPF Aotearoa

President

Suzanne Loughlin

Vice presidents

Pauline Tangiora and Celine Kearney

Treasurer

Barry Lee

Section Co-ordinators

Megan Hutching

Edwina Hughes

www.wilpf.nz

wilpfaotearoa@gmail.com

See us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/wilpfaotearoa.nz

WILPF International, Geneva

www.wilpf.org