

WILPF Tāmaki Makaurau

Report of 2023 activities

Speakers at our meetings included:

- Veronika Kanem on the cultural significance of nokem in West Papua in the context of women's connection to their land and culture and also West Papuans struggle for independence and the military activities of the Indonesian government.
- A member of Student Justice for Palestine
- Nicole Wegner from the University of Auckland who spoke on 'Repackaging Militarism: How myths about peace can sustain global violence.'

All the talks provoked thoughtful discussion.

Branch members, Lorri Mackness, Maria Claire and Del Abcede maintained our links with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and networked with other women when they attended the Community's Annual Convention which had the theme: 'Voices for Peace'. They were joined by Betty Ofe Grant of NCW.

We have been supporting the rallies for Palestine organised by Palestinian Youth Aotearoa, Te Kūaka and Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa, both the central Auckland ones and others around the city. Branch members have been working with the Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa (PSNA) and we're really grateful to Janfrie Wakim for keeping us informed of activities and providing background reading. WILPF women have worked on the PSNA stall at the rallies – information table and sale of flags and t-shirts plus collecting donations. Members – including Del Abcede, Kathy Ross, Ruth Coombes, Jude Lowry, Irene Johnston, Anna Lee – have also attended the regular Friday pickets outside, for example, the US Consulate and TVNZ. Anna and Del also attend the weekly PSNA planning meetings on behalf of WILPF.

Members have also been attending planning meetings organised by other groups concerned by the new government's attitude towards the role of Te Tiriti in our country. Maria Claire and Del Abcede have been to a strategy hui organised by Te Ohu (www.teohu.community/) and Trish Cheng and Megan Hutching were at the first of an ongoing series of zui organised by Tāmaki Treaty Workers. Anna Lee attended the picket at David Seymour's electoral office on the day that the pay equity legislation was repealed. Members have also been encouraged to write to MPs on a range of topics, especially since the election of the new government.

In September, members were involved in heritage displays at Auckland Libraries on protest and dissent.

WILPF catered for the launch of *Women Triumphant: The story of the Auckland Women's Suffrage Memorial* at Ellen Melville Centre the end of November.

We held our annual commemoration of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. For the first time in many years, the Japanese Consul came to the event and spoke personally about his feelings about the bombings. We followed the usual programme of reading Hone Tuwhare's 'No Ordinary Sun', the story of Sadako and the thousand paper cranes and a letter written by Susumu Yoneda, a survivor who visited New Zealand in the 1950s. There was paper crane folding and then candle lighting to end the event.

As always, we thank all members for their input, activities, experience and enthusiasm for WILPF.

Anna Lee, Del Abcede, Nola Smith, Suzanne Loughlin, Megan Hutching