

## **Women's Studies Association Pae Akoranga Wahine Conference Survey 2016.**

The Women's Studies Association Pae Akoranga Wahine Conference Survey 2016 took place at the University of Auckland's Business School on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

Attendees of the conference were invited to participate in an on-line survey delivered by Survey Monkey to evaluate the success of the conference.

The following section presents the responses of 32 attendees responding to each survey question.

### **How did you hear or learn about this conference?**

The most common way that 12 (38%) of attendees learnt about the conference was through a friend. Four (13%) learnt about the conference through Conference Panui call for papers, three (9%) through the WSA/PAW Facebook page and three (9%) through the WSA/PAW newsletter. Ten (31%) attendees provided other sources of information (e.g. current members of the organising group or national committee, university mailing list and as a member of the WSA/PAW).

### **How satisfied were you with the pre-conference information?**

Twenty-seven (85%) attendees were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the pre-conference information. Only four (12%) people were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and one (3%) was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

### **Please specify the main reason for attending this conference.**

Eighteen (56%) people attended the conference as the content was relevant to their studies, interests or work. Eleven (41%) attended for the content, an update on feminist issues, networking or the speakers. A further three (9%) attended the conference to support a friend or because they were a current member of the WSA/PAW.

### **Did the conference fulfil your reason for attending?**

Twenty-eight (88%) people felt that the conference fulfilled their reason for attending. Only four felt that it did fulfil their reason for attending but not to the full extent.

### **How satisfied were you with the registration process?**

Twenty-six (81%) of attendees were very satisfied with the registration process, five (16%) were somewhat satisfied and only one (3%) person was somewhat dissatisfied.

### **How satisfied were you with the venue?**

Fifteen people (47%) were very satisfied with the venue and 16 (50%) somewhat satisfied. Only one (3%) person was somewhat dissatisfied with the venue.

### **How satisfied were you with the quality of the conference food?**

Nineteen (59%) people were very satisfied with the quality of the conference food and 12 (38%) were somewhat satisfied. Only one person (3%) was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

### **How relevant was the theme of the conference to issues faced by women?**

Twenty-six (81%) people felt that the theme of the conference was relevant to issues faced by women and four thought that the theme was somewhat relevant. Two people thought that the theme was neither relevant nor irrelevant.

### **How satisfied were you with the overall conference programme?**

Twenty-three (72%) people were very satisfied with the overall conference programme and the remaining nine (29%) were somewhat satisfied.

### **The overall conference programme was well organised.**

Twenty-four (75%) people strongly agreed that the overall programme was well organised, seven (22%) agreed, and one (3%) neither agreed nor disagreed that the overall programme was well organised.

### **The balance between the keynote speakers/panel discussions/papers was about right.**

Fifteen (47%) people strongly agreed and 17 (53%) agreed that the balance between the keynote speakers/panel discussions/papers was about right.

### **Did you find the conference to be a space for feminist debate?**

Of the 31 people responding 30 (97%) agreed that the conference was a space for feminist debate and one (3%) disagreed. Some comments indicated that the environment was relaxed, supportive and comfortable and the breaks offered the opportunity for discussion. However, other comments indicated a belief that there was little time for discussion or debate within the session times. One suggestion was made for debates to be included as part of the conference format.

*I had some great discussions with some of the other participants on a range of issues around social justice, sexuality, feminist activism, and climate change, among other things.*

*Yes; it was relaxed, comfortable and yet still offered robust scholarly discussion.*

*As a trans woman I felt I was not very accepted within the conference.*

*The environment felt supportive, but in fact there wasn't a lot of debate/ didn't seem to be that many divergent views.*

*Maybe some debates in the format? Or invitation for different views?*

*I didn't really notice much dialogue happening in conference sessions. Quite a few ran late, and did not allow for discussions/questions.*

*Only mildly so, there wasn't too much discussion except at lunch.*

*In some sessions, but others there was not enough time, but the unstructured lunch, morning and afternoon tea times were great.*

### **Did you experience the conference as an inclusive space?**

Thirty (94%) of people agreed that the conference was an inclusive space for them whilst two (6%) disagreed. A few additional comments indicated that the presence of feminists from a range of ethnicities was a positive aspect of the conference particularly the strong Māori kaupapa underpinning the conference. However some comments indicated their belief that it would be beneficial to include transgendered or trans feminist content.

*The most multi-cultural women's studies conference I've ever been to. And felt that participants were respectful of different cultures.*

*It was great to see the presence of feminists across the generations! Really good to see a strong Maori kaupapa underpinning the conference. Would be excellent to see more feminists of colour involved in future conferences.*

*Would like to see more explicit trans feminist content - struck me that this is a tender space, but one in which it's necessary that feminists tread. Disappointed at the lack of trans content, but that will not improve until trans feminists feel explicitly welcome.*

### **What were the parts of the conference that you considered particularly cutting edge?**

A wide range of views were presented. Several comments indicated that the Soapbox session and the opportunity for young students and graduate students to contribute was welcomed. Several also commented that they particularly liked the presentations and panel based on issues around new directions in justice.

*The young emergent feminist scholars, and secondary school teenagers; their vitality, wit, enthusiasm and sense of inquiry were uplifting.*

*Really liked soapbox and the obvious effort that had gone into encouraging and supporting young women to speak in that and other sessions.*

*The feminist justice and incarceration presentations.*

### **Were there sufficient opportunities to network?**

Twenty-nine (91%) comments indicated that there were sufficient opportunities to network, only three (9%) disagreed.

*Great tea breaks, good spaces to sit and talk.*

*Good to have extended lunch breaks to allow for networking.*

### **What were your favourite parts of the programme?**

Comments indicated that there were a range of activities that people enjoyed including the speakers, panels and Soapbox. The relaxed and inclusive atmosphere were also highly valued.

*I enjoyed all the keynote sessions and the global women's session*

*The justice panel was spectacular - really three keynotes in one. Both the opening and the closing speakers were wonderful. Complex, intersectional conversations of feminism.*

*Soapbox and New Directions in Justice panel.*

*The spirit of the conference - it was inclusive, relaxed, and fun.*

*Singing waiata were highlights engendered a great atmosphere.*

### **What would you like to see improved for next time?**

The majority of comments indicated that the environment in which the conference was held was a little challenging for some. In particular, the lack of signage directing people to rooms and the distance between rooms was indicated to make navigating around the building and arriving in time for the beginning of presentations somewhat difficult for some attendees. Other comments included suggestions for: increased focus on sexuality, increased content to appeal to younger feminists, inclusion of non-academic and activist groups and issues around physical and mental health. Suggestions were also made for more explicit information to be provided about the content of presentations including abstracts.

*Closer arrangement of rooms, or if not possible, more signage for directions.*

*More inclusive and diverse material particularly those that appeal to the younger and up and coming feminists.*

*Inclusion of feminist perspectives re women and health and women and mental health.*

*I think it's very important for the conference to encourage the attendance and participation of non-academics and activists.*

*I would like details of what each paper was about before registration. The titles often conveyed nothing about content and I wanted to encourage some of my students to attend half day sessions where there was a paper of relevance, but it was hard to distinguish what was going to happen. Abstracts before registration would make a big difference.*

### **Would you attend future WSA/PAW conferences?**

All respondents agreed that they would attend future WSA/PAW conferences.

### **Have you any other comments about the conference that you would like to share?**

A few comments indicated that they would like to have access to the content of presentations via the WAS/PAW webpage or via email and a forum by which attendees can further discuss information presented at the conference.

*Thank you - I loved it.*

*Well done everyone.*

*Not sure that all papers were appropriate for the Journal, but perhaps the Association could attach some to its web page?*

*Now looking forward to reading some of the papers I was unable to attend.*

*I felt so stimulated by the content, but I was too slow at turning into comments, questions - maybe an online presence for a while after where people can chat further about presentations, issues?*

**Are you a current member of the WSA/PAW?**

Twenty-six (81%) respondents indicated that they were members and six (19%) were not. The benefits of being a member included such factors as the opportunity to interact and be in contact with other feminists, networking and the WSA journal. The following comments indicate why respondents choose to be a member.

*Contact with other feminists, especially the younger generations.*

*Promotion of feminist herstory and scholarship.*

*Involvement in an interesting women's organisation.*

**Would you consider joining the WSA/PAW as a result of attending the conference?**

Thirteen (81%) of respondents agreed that they would consider joining the WSA/PAW as a result of attending the conference, three (19%) would not.

**Would you recommend the WSA/PAW to friends to join?**

Of the 31 people that responded, 30 (97%) would recommend the WSA/PAW to their friends and one (3%) would not.