

Editorial

We are pleased to introduce the first issue of the *Women's Studies Journal* for 2017. However, this issue is also somewhat bittersweet, as it is the first we have put together without Rachel Simon-Kumar as part of the editorial collective, and we have certainly missed her presence. Rachel continues to be actively involved in the Women's Studies Association/Pae Akoranga Wāhine (WSA/PAW) and has been integral in putting together the extended abstracts from the recent WSA/PAW conference that we feature in this issue – more on that below. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Rachel for all she has done for the journal since the three of us became the 'editorial collective' in 2013.

As always, the political machine continues to roll on in ways that fundamentally affect women. We are heartened by the Terranova settlement on behalf of care and support workers and the significant impact this will have on the lives of over 50,000 workers in the sector, the vast majority of whom are women. While the latest National Government budget incorporates funding for this settlement, it is notably lacking in moves to address other inequalities. There are only minimal increases in incomes for beneficiaries, a group in which women are again over-represented, and funding to the education sector includes no provision for increasing the low wages paid to school support workers – who are, unsurprisingly, predominantly women. Initiatives for the funding of contraceptive services for low-income women and family violence initiatives through Whānau Ora are positive steps toward addressing key issues that affect many women, but the targeting of both these initiatives is somewhat worrisome. Already, concerns have been raised about the potential for such programmes to function as forms of social control over particular women's lives and choices. In this issue, we pick up on another recent policy debate of direct relevance to women and include a commentary from Labour MP Sue Moroney on her ultimately unsuccessful push to increase paid parental leave to 26 weeks.

The full articles in this issue represent, as always, the breadth of feminist scholarship in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Carisa Showden problematises the discursive framing of human trafficking evident in local public policy debates and addresses how and why this framing differs dramatically from that which informed earlier debates around prostitution law reform. This is a particularly timely piece in that it foreshadows the next issue of the WSJ – a special issue on sex work in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In a thought-provoking paper, George Parker draws on women's embodied experiences to consider whether discourses and practices in maternity care that problematise fat pregnant women's bodies might simultaneously increase the social stigmatisation experienced by these women, potentially leading to negative health outcomes. We are also extremely pleased to present important research from Moeata Keil and Vivienne Elizabeth regarding the attitudes of Pacific mothers in Aotearoa/New Zealand towards child support. The ways in which ethnicity affects the experiences of sole parents in Aotearoa/New Zealand warrants greater attention, and we hope to see further work in this area. These full papers are complemented by a research report from Josephine Varghese, a PhD candidate at the University of Canterbury, who draws on her ethnographic fieldwork to offer fascinating insight into the beliefs and beauty practices of young migrant women living in Chennai, India.

Also of note in this issue is the inclusion of a range of materials originating from recent feminist-oriented conferences. The publication of extended abstracts from the 2016 WSA/PAW conference, held in Auckland, gives those who were unable to attend great insight into the diverse range of papers that were presented. We are also pleased to include a selection of four papers from the 2016 Conference of the University of Canterbury Feminist Society. These papers demonstrate the fantastic work being done by young feminists in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and we commend Kara Kennedy not only for organising the conference but also for putting together these papers for the benefit of our readership. This issue also sees the publication of Michael Flood's timely piece on the 'turn to men' in gender politics, which emerged from his initial presentation of this material as the keynote speaker in the Gender and Sexuality stream at the 2015 Conference of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand. This piece raises some important questions about the relationship between men and feminism, and we hope it will provoke discussion.

Two significant books are reviewed in this issue. Joanne Drayton's biography of Anne Perry is reviewed by Nadia Gush, providing yet another chapter in the ongoing story of Perry, perhaps better known as Juliet Hulme. And, of course, we are delighted to have Angela Wanhalla review Margot Roth's anthology, a book produced with the integral involvement of various WSA/PAW members and that we hope heralds many future publications from the association.

As always, thanks to the reviewers we cannot name and to our fabulous production team – Liz Rawlings for organising the book reviews, Jenny Rankine for undertaking the layout, Anna Thomson for her copy-editing services, and Ruth Renner for making sure it all reaches the website and, thus, our readers. By the time you read the special edition of the WSJ later this year, we will have been through the impending general election. We are sure all our readers will wait with interest – and no doubt some degree of nervousness – to see what the eventual result means for women in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Whatever the outcome, we hope the WSJ will continue to provide an important forum for discussion and debate of current gender issues, policy, and practice, and we encourage you to submit relevant work on subjects that are likely to be of interest to our readers.

Johanna Schmidt and Carolyn Michelle, co-editors