

*Kia ora everyone. We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter. We are always on the lookout for content to share with our members and we are interested in what's happening around the motu — so please get in touch if you have something to contribute. We love hearing from you!*

*women@nzno.org.nz*

## Update from the College

Our annual Women's Health College (WHC) Conference was held in Wellington in May, bringing members together for an engaging and successful event. We were honoured to have Labour MP and former Health Minister Dr Ayesha Verrall open the conference and generously spend time answering questions from attendees.

The programme featured a wide range of informative and thought-provoking topics, and member feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with speakers, the venue, and catering all receiving high praise.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making the conference such a success.

The committee are now looking forward to our face-to-face planning meeting in November as we begin preparations for next year's conference and continue to strengthen connections across our WH community.

***If you have any issues you would like to raise, please let us know, we represent you all and want to ensure your voices, perspectives, and priorities are reflected in our planning and advocacy work.***

## Farewell to members

This year, our Committee has farewelled four remarkable and long-serving members whose contributions have helped shape and strengthen the WHC over many years.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to **Jill Lamb**, our endlessly inspiring Chairperson; **Sandy Hamilton, Julia Anderson**, our trusted Professional Nursing Advisor; and **Jackie Gartell**, our meticulous Treasurer.

Their dedication, leadership, expertise, and unwavering commitment have left a lasting legacy within the College. We are immensely grateful for the time, energy, and passion they have given, and we wish them all the very best for the future.

**Thank you, Jill, Sandy, Julia, and Jackie. Your contributions have made a real difference, and you will be greatly missed. 🍷**

*Ngā mihi from us all, for your hard work and dedication!*

### WHC Committee Members

Sarah Marshall- Chair  
Josie Lambert - Secretary  
Lucia Newell - Treasurer  
Claire Patterson  
Georgia Killen  
Vanessa May  
Nadine Riwai  
Georgina Barber  
Vicki Janse - Professional  
Nursing Advisor



Tōpūtanga Tapuhi  
Kaitiaki o Aotearoa  
NEW ZEALAND NURSES  
ORGANISATION

## Welcome to new committee members



Kia ora, I'm Lucia.

I'm a Gynaecology Nurse from Christchurch, with a passion for all things WH. I have recently returned to Gynae from some time in the community and feel happy to be home. I love supporting people through all stages of their journey and feel privileged to work in such a rewarding specialty. When I am not at work I enjoy travelling, reading, going to the gym, and making the most of time with friends and family. I also have a naughty black cat called Samson who keeps me on my toes.

I'm super excited and grateful to join the WHC Committee and look forward to connecting with you all.



My name is Claire Paterson.

I finished my Bachelor of Nursing in 2002, moved to the UK and spent my first year working as a renal nurse, before moving into agency nursing. I always knew I had an interest in WH, and when I got the opportunity to spend some time working in a pregnancy and termination services ward, it cemented my desire to direct my career to working in that area.

I returned to NZ in 2005 and was lucky enough to line up a nursing job with Family Planning NZ (now Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa). This would be the start of 18 years working in various roles throughout the organisation, and developing useful skills to deliver safe and effective sexual and reproductive health. I have spent the last 3 years working in primary health, still with a strong interest in WH, and am now able to use those skills (particularly LARC insertions), within a primary care setting.

Outside of work, I live with my husband Chris, and four fabulous daughters who keep me incredibly busy.



**Kia ora koutou, ko Georgia Killen tōku ingoa.**

I currently live in Ōtepoti, Dunedin, and have called it home for the past seven years. Prior to this, I grew up in Wellington, where I completed my Bachelor of Nursing before moving to Manchester, England, where I lived for 10 years. During that time, I also completed a Bachelor of Midwifery (Honours). Throughout my career, I have worked almost exclusively in WH in a variety of roles and settings. Supporting and advocating for women has always been a passion of mine. I am also mum to an almost five-year-old daughter, who arrived as a wonderful surprise when I was 42. She is truly the apple of our eyes. She is very much my mini-me and embraces life with endless enthusiasm, curiosity, and joy.

When I am not working as a Practice Nurse or Cervical Screening Specialist Nurse, you will likely find me enjoying a cheeky spicy margarita with friends. Like many nurses, I appreciate a good laugh, great food, and the strong sense of sisterhood and camaraderie that nursing provides.

I am honoured to represent our members and actively contribute to the college committee. Together, we can make a meaningful difference and ensure our collective voice is heard. I believe that by working together, we can advocate effectively for our profession and the people we serve.



**Kia ora**

I am excited to be in the role of PNA at NZNO and to support the college to do their amazing mahi!

A little bit about me: I grew up in Vancouver, Canada and most of my nursing career has been in full-scope public health nursing and leadership in urban, rural, and remote communities around Vancouver and on Vancouver Island. In Aotearoa, I have worked in the Well Child/ Tamariki Ora and immunisation spaces.

I have a keen interest in diversity, health equity, inclusion and working with those who experience vulnerabilities.

I live in the Western Bay of Plenty and work out of the Tauranga-Moana office.

## Women's Health College Opposes Definitions of Woman and Man Amendment Bill

The WHC submitted opposition to the Legislation (Definitions of Woman and Man) Amendment Bill.

See our full submission below:

"We are the Women's Health College (WHC) of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) — a national body representing nurses, nurse practitioners, and midwives working across WH, primary care, cervical screening, sexual and reproductive health, community services, and hospital-based gynaecology. Our members work daily at the frontline of WH care across general practice, kaupapa Māori services, outreach programmes, hospital settings, and specialist pathways.

The WHC opposes the Legislation (definitions of Woman and Man) Amendment Bill. New Zealand First MP Jenny Marcroft claims this bill will provide clarity and protect women's rights. Our assessment of the proposed law change is that it will further marginalise and exclude transgender and non-binary people, violate Te Tiriti O Waitangi, and create restrictions or unnecessary barriers to access. This bill will not protect the wellbeing of wāhine and it is not what WH needs.

As nurses and midwives, we have the responsibility to provide equitable, culturally responsive, and evidence-informed care. We care for people of all gender identities and their whānau and understand that there is no biological binary, as this bill attempts to reduce people to. Evidence tells us that primary and secondary sex characteristics, chromosomes, and endocrinology do not equal gender identity nor expression.

This bill stands in direct violation of Te Tiriti O Waitangi guidance to protect takatāpui and takatāpuitanga as taonga. The binary this legislation seeks to enforce is a colonial construct that does not fit within te ao Māori.

Wāhine across the motu are facing worsening access barriers to gynaecology, primary care, and cervical screening. System-wide action is needed to reduce wait times for gynaecology and colposcopy services, strengthen access to WH services in primary care, and to reinforce cervical screening programmes. This is where we believe investment and resources are needed, not in a law change that attempts to erase diverse identities.

The Abortion Legislation Act 2020 outlines how a woman can access a termination of pregnancy. The Definitions Bill defines a woman as "*an adult human biological female*." The Age of Majority Act 1970 outlines that "adult" if not further defined refers to someone who is 20 years or older. We are concerned that if this bill is to pass, women under 20, transgender, and intersex people will be unable to access abortion services.

The WHC believes this legislation will cause harm to transgender, non-binary, intersex, and takatāpui individuals and communities. Our commitment is to equitable outcomes for all wāhine in Aotearoa and the integrity of the pathways that support their wellbeing. This bill stands in opposition to that kaupapa."

## Nadine Riwai presents at the World Indigenous Cancer Conference



Women's Health College committee member, Nadine Riwai (Charge Nurse Manager - Enhanced Hauora Access Team, Waikato Hospital) recently attended and presented at the World Indigenous Cancer Conference 2026, an international gathering of Indigenous researchers, clinicians, and leaders focused on improving cancer outcomes for Indigenous communities.

Nadine has worked and nursed across practice, community, regional, and national roles, bringing a depth of experience to her equity and system-improvement work. Her background includes senior roles within the National Cervical Screening Programme, including contributing to the implementation of HPV self-testing in Aotearoa

New Zealand. Nadine continues to be involved in national cervical cancer elimination strategy work alongside leaders such as Bev Lawton and others. Nadine is also a member of the Smear Your Mea Trust, in honour of the late Talei Morrison, and a member of the NZNO WHC.

She is currently in her second year undertaking a PhD with Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland, focused on the design of cancer screening systems and equity for Māori, supported by the Cancer Society & Hei Ahuru Mowai Māori Researcher PhD Scholarship and the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga PhD Scholarship. Nadine is also a recipient of the New Horizons Hine Kahukura Award, recognising emerging women leaders. Her research centres on system-level accountability and the need to move beyond individualised approaches, towards pathways that actively support whānau engagement.

At the World Indigenous Cancer Conference 2026, Nadine delivered two presentations. The first, alongside fellow PhD researcher Chae Simpson, shared their journeys into research, grounded in whānau, lived experience, and a shared commitment to equity in cancer care and screening.

The second presentation focused on her doctoral research, examining how cancer screening systems in Aotearoa are designed, where people are lost across pathways, and what accountability should look like to support whānau engagement better.

During the conference, Nadine was awarded the Professor Jacquie Kidd Whānau voice Presenter Award, recognising her ability to centre whānau perspectives and bring lived experience into research and system discussions. The conference highlighted strong connections across Indigenous communities globally, with shared insights into the importance of relational approaches, accountability, and system transformation in improving health outcomes. For Nadine, this reinforced that while contexts may differ, the direction forward is: systems must be designed to hold and support people, not to expect people to navigate and fit systems that were never built for them.



## Some photos from our conference!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Women's Health College Conference 2027 - Save the Date!



**NZNO Women's Health College  
Annual Conference**

13-15 May 2027

**ŌTAUTAHIRISING**

Advancing Health,  
Equity and Wellbeing

*Mā tini, mā mano, e kōkiri — mauri tū, mauri ora.*

**SAVE THE DATE**

PROUDLY PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH :

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 Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa  
NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION

 WOMEN'S  
HEALTH COLLEGE  
2027

## Join Our Women's Health College Facebook Community! ☀️



We'd love to welcome you to our WHC NZNO Facebook group, which now has **212 members** and continues to grow. Connecting through our Facebook community is a great way to stay informed, share ideas, celebrate achievements, and network with colleagues across Aotearoa.

### To join:

1. Search "**Women's Health College NZNO**" on Facebook or click "Ctrl" on your keyboard and the above Facebook icon simultaneously.
2. Complete the membership questions and
3. Submit your request to join.

To keep our community safe and relevant, **membership is restricted to WHC members only.**

### New member or using a different name on Facebook?

If your Facebook name doesn't match your membership details, please keep an eye on your Messenger inbox. We may send you a message to help verify your membership and get you approved as quickly as possible.

**We look forward to seeing you online! 💖**

**NZNO Women's Health College | [www.nzno.org.nz](http://www.nzno.org.nz) |**  
**Contact us: [women@nzno.org.nz](mailto:women@nzno.org.nz)**