

Women's Affairs portfolio 'dream come true'



A snapshot

A 'dream come true' is how new Minister of Women's Affairs, Hon Steve Chadwick, described receiving the portfolio in October's Cabinet reshuffle.

Speaking to guests and staff at a Ministry of Women's Affairs function held to welcome her to the role, Steve Chadwick said she was 'thrilled', and that the Women's Affairs portfolio was a good fit with the work she would be doing as Associate Minister of Health.

Steve Chadwick has been Member of Parliament for Rotorua since 1999. She was responsible for the NZ Smokefree Environment Amendment Act (2003) and has chaired select committees.

She is actively involved with groups working towards eliminating family violence, increasing debate and information about global population issues, and encouraging development in the Pacific.

'I am passionate about making our country a safe place to live and grow. I have seen first hand how the empowerment of women can create positive outcomes for entire communities.'

A midwife for 30 years, Steve Chadwick helped set up the first women's refuge in Rotorua with a group from the Women's Electoral Lobby. She was also instrumental in starting up the first local family planning clinic.

'I saw so many young women having babies who didn't have enough support, access to contraception or any real choice or control over their lives. Young women deserve to be respected, protected and fulfilled.'

'We still have a lot of work to do in the areas of sexual abuse and family violence. We must acknowledge that women are central to family and community life.'

Steve Chadwick says her top priorities for women's issues also include increasing paid parental leave, pay and employment equity, and improving women's health. As Associate Minister of Health, she says high on the list are breastfeeding, sexually transmitted infections among young people, and teenage pregnancy rates.

'Now I am in a position to influence greater change.'

Minister of Women's Affairs and Conservation; Associate Minister of Health; MP for Rotorua

MEMBER OF:	New Zealand Parliamentarians Group on Population and Development (chair); ASEAN Ambassador's Liaison role for Labour Caucus
SPONSORED:	New Zealand Smokefree Environment Amendment Act, December 2003
IN PARLIAMENT:	MP for Rotorua since 1999
MARRIED TO:	John Te Manihera Chadwick, lawyer
FAMILY:	Three children and three grandchildren
CAREER:	Registered nurse; registered midwife; health services manager
COMMUNITY:	Founding member, New Zealand Women's Health Managers Group Member, establishment committee for first Women's Refuge in Rotorua
ENJOYS:	Gardening; cycling; reading; art; music; family.

Ministry of Women's Affairs Chief Executive, Shenagh Gleisner (L) and Minister of Women's Affairs, Steve Chadwick (R).



A new focus on the issues

» **Many things come together at this time of the year to get us thinking about reviewing and refocusing our efforts. In our personal lives, the holiday break provides a space for reflection and recharging our batteries. At work, this is the time the Ministry starts its strategic planning, looking outwards to the wider environment and thinking about the budget process.**

This year, there is even more impetus for a fresh look at our priorities and programmes.

We are very pleased to welcome our new Minister to the Women's Affairs portfolio, the Hon Steve Chadwick. We will work to understand and respond to the priorities

of a new Minister. It prompts us to review our assumptions about our priorities and how we approach our work, as well as whether our work programme represents the best possible mix of work to make the lives of women better.

We also have a new policy manager, Sarah Turner, and she too brings a fresh approach and challenge, building on all the tremendous work that has gone before and bringing her very wide understanding of the public sector.

Then there are two important new factors that will influence our decisions. First, there are the recommendations of the United Nations committee in response to New Zealand's sixth report on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The recommendations will provide a focus for NGOs and government alike as we consider which ones require renewed effort.

Second, we have just completed a far-reaching set of regional meetings where women from diverse communities have given us feedback on the Action Plan. We are still finalising our analysis of this, but the overriding impression is that

most of the work we do is spot-on and progressing well. There also seem to be some new issues emerging in the social, economic and environmental areas. We will be talking to our new Minister about these in the near future, and deciding which ones need more exploration.

This has been a very exciting year, full of new challenges and learning for us all. Early in 2007 we had an international focus with the CEDAW process and other events while in the second half we have had more of a domestic focus. Looking ahead I see our Nominations Service reaching out again to find those very experienced women to serve on government boards and committees. There will also be a continued emphasis on our essential policy areas and new engagements with communities – especially gathering the views of young women and of men.

Thank you for your interest and support in 2007. I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a successful 2008 in every way.

Shenagh Gleisner › Chief Executive



Policies that make a difference

The new manager of the policy team at the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Sarah Turner, says because of our small size it is very important that 'we tackle the areas where we can make the greatest difference'.

Sarah started her job with MWA in October after 17 years at the Ministry of Health, ten of those in management positions. As a small policy agency with no operational arm, Sarah says MWA needs to 'pick the issues where we can work with other agencies and make the biggest impact'.

'I liken it to steering a super tanker where you are sitting in the control room and you tweak one little lever and it can make a significant difference.'

Sarah is leading a team of 18, with the support of a new deputy policy manager. She says MWA has a reputation as being 'one of the best policy shops in town' and she will ensure that continues.

Continued on page 3 »

» 'Policies that make a difference' CONTINUED »

'We will maintain our high quality of advice, making sure that we deliver for our Minister, and making sure that we deliver on the issues that really matter.'

Sarah grew up in Auckland and is married with two children, aged six and eight. She has an honours degree in English and loves anything to do with words including reading, word games, language and writing. She also enjoys good food and wine.

» New role at MWA

Senior Policy Analyst Andrea Evans took up the newly created role of Deputy Policy Manager at MWA on 3 December.

Andrea has been at MWA for three years, most recently working in the areas of family violence and sexual and reproductive health.

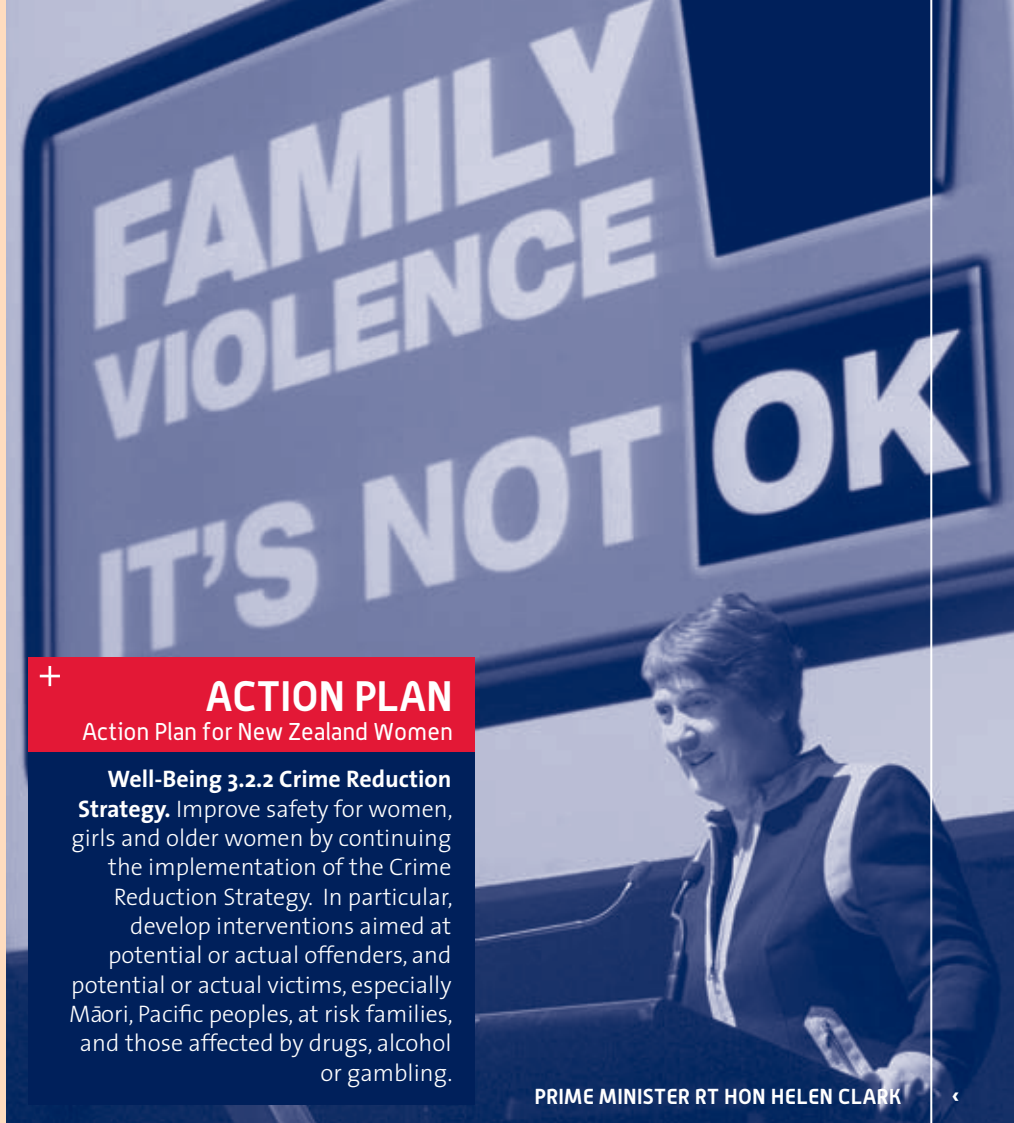
Andrea is married, with two young children. Her iwi affiliations are Ngāti Wai, Ngā Puhī, Ngāti Hine and Ngāti Whātua.

Andrea says ›

She is looking forward to working with the Policy Manager and policy team in her new role which is focused on developing junior staff and ensuring that 'we maintain the high quality policy advice we are known for'.



» ANDREA EVANS



+ ACTION PLAN

Action Plan for New Zealand Women

Well-Being 3.2.2 Crime Reduction Strategy. Improve safety for women, girls and older women by continuing the implementation of the Crime Reduction Strategy. In particular, develop interventions aimed at potential or actual offenders, and potential or actual victims, especially Māori, Pacific peoples, at risk families, and those affected by drugs, alcohol or gambling.

PRIME MINISTER RT HON HELEN CLARK

Campaign has simple message

» **A campaign launched in September has a simple message – Family violence is not ok.**

The four-year campaign is led by the Families Commission and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and flows from the work of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. Ministry of Women's Affairs Chief Executive, Shenagh Gleisner, is deputy-chair of the Taskforce. The campaign aims to provide the tools, the information, and the encouragement for all New Zealanders to contribute to ending family violence. These include:

- a series of television advertisements promoting the 'It's not ok' message
- an 0800 Family Violence Information Line
- a campaign website
- a community action toolkit.

Guest speaker at the launch, Prime Minister Rt Hon Helen Clark, said

everyone had a collective responsibility to work towards ending family violence in New Zealand.

'None of us should ignore signs of family violence. We all have a responsibility to speak out against it. We must make it clear that it is not ok to hit your spouse or partner; it's not ok to verbally or physically abuse your children or an older family member; and it's not ok to take the life of anyone, let alone someone you are meant to care for.'

The Prime Minister also said that too often 'a veil of silence' lay over the existence of domestic violence.

'Those who commit violence should not be protected by friends, family, or neighbours. That is not loyalty. It is harbouring criminality. It is wrong. And doing so guarantees that violence persists.'

The campaign website is at www.areyouok.org.nz

40 years young

» **The National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW) has been advising the government on women's right to work, and women's rights at work, for 40 years.**

NACEW celebrated its birthday on Women's Suffrage Day (19 September) and NACEW Chair Pauline Winter said, 'it's fascinating to look back on how much things have changed'.

'A woman who was 35 in 1967 and perhaps looking to return to the workforce after bringing up her children is now 75. Her daughter, now possibly in her 40s, has likely spent more time in the paid workforce than her mother did and less time at home. And her daughter, maybe in her early 20s, is likely to have her first child in her early 30s, after more than ten years in the workforce. She's probably got a tertiary qualification, and her career will probably include periods of full-time and part-time work.'

Pauline Winter said it was still a concern that, despite the growth in women's employment rates, most occupations remain segregated by gender, with half of women workers clustered into three of the ten occupational groups – clerks, service and sales workers, and professionals.

'However, it's heartening that work traditionally done by women is having a greater value assigned to it – the recent wage rises won by nurses and teachers is a sign of this.'

NACEW's role is to:

- advise the Minister of Labour on matters referred by him/her concerning the employment of women
- express views and make recommendations as appropriate to the Minister of Labour on matters relating to the employment of women
- make representations or submissions as appropriate to public bodies such as Commissions of Inquiry, subject to the approval of the Minister
- promote the dissemination overseas of information on the employment of women in New Zealand.

Its goals are:

- better work-life balance, and shared care of children and elders by men and women
- quality flexible work across all industries and occupations
- pay equity and pathways that reduce gender segregation in occupations
- learning and training opportunities throughout life.

MWA officials attend NACEW meetings in a supporting role.

More information about NACEW is available at www.nacew.govt.nz

From Wellington's
Evening Post,
February 21, 1967

From the situations vacant section:

Intermediate Male Clerk - Armstrong & Springhall Ltd

We require a Male Clerk to commence immediately. Duties are primarily processing accounts for payment. The successful applicant will be in sole charge of this position. Good wages, superannuation fund operating....

Dental Laboratory seeks Young lady

A young lady is required for special process work concerned with the preparation of dental casts in our laboratory....

Attractive office positions are always available for girls at...

Secretarial Placement Centre

As the oldest established agency in Wellington, we have commercial offices as clients, and they rely on us to select suitable staff to fill their vacancies. If you are choosing your first position or seeking a new one, our lady interviewers would be pleased to help you....

Assistant Manager – Groceries (Woolworths' Lower Hutt Supermarket)

We seek a man with grocery experience to assist the manager of our Grocery Department. Pay and future prospects are excellent. In good times and in bad, Woolworths have progressed and expanded. Career opportunities have steadily increased....

Junior Typist – Modern Plastics (NZ) Ltd

We have a vacancy for a bright and intelligent girl in our office. Duties will include typing, clerical and general office duties. Previous experience not essential. Good salary and conditions....

Female Clerks – Unilever New Zealand

We require several temporary lady clerks in our invoice department....

Northland Boys

Boys required for temporary and permanent "Evening Post" rounds. Apply to Agent at bus shelter by Fire Station, 4.30pm each afternoon....

Venetian Blind Fitter

We require the services of a man for measuring and fitting venetian blinds.It calls for a man with pleasant personality, smart appearance and a good level of education. This position offers the right man good wages and opportunity for advancement.



» Celebrating NACEW's birthday are L to R: Nicky Lynch, Kate Williamson (MWA advisors to NACEW), Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs Chief Executive Dr Colin Tukuitonga, Karanina Sumeo (Tertiary Education Commission representative on NACEW)

Strong improvements in our social wellbeing

» **Women in New Zealand are generally healthier and increasingly better educated than men, but they lag behind men in employment – both in terms of labour participation and income. However, improvements for men in health and improvements for women in paid work mean these gaps are narrowing.**

Men face a higher risk of injury or death than women and there are still considerably more men than women in Parliament.

There are large differences between Māori and non-Māori in the probability of living a long and healthy life, especially for women. In 2000-2002, female life expectancy at birth was 81.9 years for non-Māori and 73.2 years for Māori.

These are examples of social trends for New Zealanders which are monitored and measured in the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) annual Social Report, the 2007 edition of which was released in October.

The report uses a set of statistical indicators to monitor trends across ten 'domains', or areas of people's lives which, together, provide a picture of well-being and quality of life in New Zealand; how this has changed over time; and how different groups in the population are faring. The report also shows how we compare to other countries.

The Social Report 2007 shows social outcomes have improved strongly since the mid-1990s. Suicide, road casualties, unemployment, population with low incomes, participation in tertiary education, and the educational attainment of the adult population (tertiary) have all improved markedly. Only the obesity, income inequality, and voter turnout indicators have deteriorated over this period.

The report can be viewed at www.msd.govt.nz

Elderly New Zealanders live longer and are healthier

» **A picture of the quality of lives of older New Zealanders was captured in the report *Positive Ageing Indicators 2007*, released by MSD in October.**

The report, which finds that most older New Zealanders are living longer and have healthier lives than their predecessors, is the first step towards establishing a regular reporting programme to assess the overall well-being of older people in New Zealand. It includes information on the areas of income, health, housing, transport, employment, and access to facilities and services, as well as attitudes to ageing and older people.

A summary of differences between older women and older men tells us that:

- older women have a higher life expectancy than older men and are more likely to live in residential care
- older single women are significantly more likely than older couples to be living in some degree of hardship
- the employment rate for older women more than doubled over the last 20 years in contrast with a two percent increase for older men
- women aged 75 years and over are much less likely than men of the same age to hold a driver licence
- older women are less likely than older men to be regularly physically active.

Positive Ageing Indicators 2007 can be seen at www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/social-research/older-people/positive-ageing-indicators.html

Global gender gap

New Zealand has moved up in the latest *World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index* to fifth place.

Released in November, the Global Gender Gap Index measures the gap between men and women in four areas: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; political empowerment; and health.

Minister of Women's Affairs Steve Chadwick said the jump from seventh place was good news but we could do better.

'New Zealand's score of 0.7649 (out of 1) puts us at fifth in the world – behind Sweden (0.8146), Norway (0.8059), Finland (0.8044), and Iceland (0.7836). This is good news indeed.

'It is clear that policies such as paid parental leave, free early childhood education for three- and four-year olds, Working for Families, and pay and employment equity, as well as workplace initiatives that support work-life balance, are contributing to the equality and advancement of women. This, in turn, improves the social, political, and economic outlook for all of New Zealand.

'We should remember, however, that while we are doing better than other countries, we are still only three-quarters of the way there (0.7649 when 1 equals equality). We can do better, especially in areas like sexual violence and other forms of violence where women are overwhelmingly the victims.

'And there is still work to do to close the pay gap – which sits stubbornly at around 12 percent – and in encouraging women into leadership positions, for example, on to private sector boards.'

The World Economic Forum is an independent international organisation committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

Incorporated as a foundation in 1971, and based in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Economic Forum is impartial and not-for-profit and is tied to no political, partisan or national interests. The World Economic Forum is under the supervision of the Swiss Federal Government.

+

ACTION PLAN

Action Plan for New Zealand Women

Economic Sustainability:

- 1.1 Improve women's participation in employment, earnings, and quality of employment
- 1.2 Improve women's economic well-being
- 1.3 Increase the success of women, particularly Māori women, in enterprise
- 1.4 Increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making in the economic sector.

WOMEN ON THE MOVE

INMATES WORKED HARD FOR White Ribbon Day

» Inmates at Wellington Prison made 400,000 white ribbons for distribution to mark this year's International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women – White Ribbon Day.

Wearing a white ribbon on 25 November, which was a Sunday this year, signals that the person will not commit, condone or remain silent about men's violence towards women.

For the third year in a row, Wellington Prison inmates made up the ribbons, printed the cards, and attached the ribbons to the cards before distributing them to community organisations around the country. Approximately 40 men cut through 50 kilometres of white ribbon and, said one inmate, for him the process led to some positive change.

'I used to just stay in my cell and didn't talk to anyone. But being in the room working on the ribbons with the other guys gets us talking.'

Another inmate said the experience had affected the men's attitudes.

'Once we got the cards and started putting on the ribbons we read what the card says and I think some of us have started thinking about what we're in here for and it's not all a big joke anymore.'

Prison manager Dunn Kaiwai said the project had provided the men with a feeling that they are part of the solution, not just the problem.

'They feel part of the campaign and they are making a positive contribution. They have built up a sense of pride in what they are doing.'

White Ribbon Day was started by a men's movement in Canada in 1991 and has been officially adopted by the United

Nations as its International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

New Zealand has a high rate of men's violence towards women. In 2004 there were just over 3,100 convictions recorded against men for assaults on women and a 2001 national victims of crime study showed that close to one in five women experienced sexual assault or sexual interference at some point in their lives. Last year police recorded 63,000 incidents involving family violence.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is represented on an inter-agency committee which annually organises events to mark White Ribbon Day. This year activities in Wellington included concerts, a masked ball, a motorbike run, picnics, and volunteers handing out ribbons at the railway station. Other events were held around the country.

For more information go to www.whiteribbon.org.nz



ACTION PLAN

Action Plan for New Zealand Women

Well-Being 3.2.2 Crime Reduction Strategy. Improve safety for women, girls and older women by continuing the implementation of the Crime Reduction Strategy. In particular, develop interventions aimed at potential or actual offenders, and potential or actual victims, especially Māori, Pacific peoples, at risk families, and those affected by drugs, alcohol or gambling.

Claire Hague has been appointed Deputy Chief Executive of the Eastern Institute of Technology in Hawke's Bay.

Louise Croot from Dunedin has been elected President of the International Federation of University Women, an international body with members in more than 120 countries.

Massey University Director of Sport **Sarah Leberman** has won a Fulbright Scholarship to the United States.

Positively Wellington Tourism has appointed **Sarah Meikle** as General Manager Marketing.

Ailsa Duffy QC has been appointed a Judge of the High Court, sitting in Auckland.

The new director of the Auckland War Memorial Museum is **Dr Vanda Vitali**.

After 109 years, Otago Settlers Association has its first woman president, **Dr Dorothy Page**.

Merino Grower Investments Limited has appointed **Sara Lunam** as a director of The New Zealand Merino Company.

Women's fashion designer **Annah Stretton** has been awarded the Zonta Woman of the Biennium Award.

The New Zealand Institute of Economic Research presented **Dr Caroline Saunders** with the NZIER Economics Award 2007.

Mary Wareham has been appointed to the New Zealand Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC). **Deborah Morris-Travers** was reappointed to the Committee.

Helen Kelly was elected as President of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, the first woman to hold the position.

Auckland barrister and solicitor, **Allison Anne Sinclair**, has been appointed a District Court Judge.

Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman won the EnergySmart Outstanding Contribution to Sustainable Energy Award.

Susie Staley has been reappointed for a two-year term as the chair of Maritime New Zealand and **Adrienne Young Cooper** has been reappointed as a member for a second term of three years.

Susan Hughes QC has been reappointed as a member of the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand for a three-year term.

Dr Janet Stephenson has been reappointed as a member of the Land Transport New Zealand Board.

WOMEN ON BOARDS

CANDIS CRAVEN › GOVERNANCE ROLES

Member, Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand
Trustee, ASB Community Trust, and Chair, Investment Committee
Chair, New Zealand Contemporary Arts Trust
Managing Director, Independent Management Associates, Niger Holdings Ltd

Auckland-based Candis Craven has run her own organisational development business for more than 14 years. She has carried out competency reviews of medical practitioners for the Medical Council of New Zealand and the Nursing Council of NZ, and full management audits of Hong Kong, Korean, Vietnamese, Fijian and Thai organisations. She has chaired accreditation and approval panels for bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in the tertiary sector for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and ITPQ.

Candis had a 20-year involvement with the New Zealand Family Planning Association, and was on the board of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) for many years. Candis was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2001 for Services to Health and Education.

MWA: You have a lot of board experience Candis, did you set out to do that?

No not initially, but latterly yes. I have a very strong interest in the governance role. What I really enjoy about it is the opportunity to reflect on the big picture. That is not something you get in the day-to-day operations of being a CEO. I have a strong commitment to make a difference to the lives of people while being financially prudent.

MWA: What would you say to a woman who would like to be on a board?

Lots of preparation. Develop a strong set of skills and qualifications in your first discipline and have very strong networks in that area. Do a second complementary qualification – this is very important. People who are seeking candidates for boards look for good qualifications. Financial or legal ones are a very good string to your bow.

I see women on boards who feel not heard. At a personal level, people need to find ways of expressing themselves that allow them to be heard. A lot of women unwittingly undercut the important things they have to say because of their voice projection or their personal presentation.

MWA: What did your management audits of Hong Kong, Korean, Vietnamese, Fijian and Thai organisations involve?

These were organisational development-focused audits I carried out with the IPPF, the federated body of the all the world's Family Planning Associations (FPAs). There are 160 around the world, many of which are in receipt of donor government funds. As one of the governors of IPPF, I undertook full audits of FPAs in those countries to make sure the funds were being used appropriately.

In Hong Kong there were heaps of immigration issues, with many women coming in from mainland China leading to capacity problems in the FPA. In North Korea it was so basic it was hard to get your hands on a paper clip or a rubber band.

Vietnam at the time was moving out of being a centralised communist state into being the more open economy it is now. As an ex-communist country, the whole idea of a non-government organisation was a completely new concept. We assisted them to become aware that international best practice was to move away from nepotism – why wouldn't you hire your brother? – to the processes of good governance, which we take for granted.



~ | CANDIS CRAVEN

FOR MORE INFORMATION

about the Nominations Service, check out the Ministry of Women's Affairs website: www.mwa.govt.nz/women-on-boards

+ ACTION PLAN
 Action Plan for New Zealand Women

Economic Sustainability 1.4.1:
 Improve women's participation in leadership and decision-making roles by monitoring women's representation and participation at senior levels in business and the education sector, and by providing nominations to government boards.

Thailand is highly developed in the area of contraception. In Fiji, because of the political instability, the rural women just get poorer and have less and less access to services.

MWA: What do you do on the ASB Community Trust?

We are a sister organisation to 12 other community trusts around New Zealand, but we are the biggest with investments of \$1.1 billion. Out of that we provide grants of between \$40 million and \$50 million a year to not-for-profit organisations in Northland and Auckland that aim to enrich their communities, for example through reducing poverty and disadvantage, protecting the environment, or preserving their heritage.

MWA: What do you do to relax?

My partner is a writer and we have at least two months off each year. We go to Italy or France for a month to six weeks every winter and we enjoy spending Christmas with family on Waiheke Island.

in brief

» International Volunteer Day, December 5

Statistics New Zealand figures released earlier this year show that 90 percent of non-profit organisations in New Zealand are run entirely by unpaid volunteers. 'Counting Non-profit Institutions in New Zealand: 2005' found there were 97,000 non-profit organisations in New Zealand, of which only 10 percent employed paid staff. International Volunteer Day is celebrated throughout the world on December 5. Volunteer Awareness Week is held every year during the third week of June.

More information is available at www.volunteeringnz.org.nz

» MWA website

We are updating our website. Some recent changes have been the addition of pages to keep visitors informed on progress of our Sexual Violence Research Project (www.mwa.govt.nz/our-work/svrproject) and additions to our information on funding and scholarships page (www.mwa.govt.nz/links.html#funding).

» Kiwis saving with KiwiSaver

Enrolment figures in the retirement savings scheme, KiwiSaver, exceeded 260,000 at the beginning of November. The scheme was launched on 1 July this year.

Stubborn pay gap

The *New Zealand Income Survey* released in October shows that, although New Zealanders' average weekly income rose by 9.4 percent in the 2007 June quarter compared with last year, the gender pay gap persists at around 12 percent. Average weekly income from all sources increased 10.4 percent to \$832 for men and 7.8 percent to \$510 for women. The average weekly income from wages and salaries increased by 8 percent from \$405 to \$438, with men up \$47 (\$552) and women up \$19 (\$330).

Women mayors

Following the local government elections in October, New Zealand has 13 female mayors (down from 14) and 60 male mayors. The women mayors elected to head district or city councils were: Adrienne Staples (South Wairarapa); Barbara Arnott (Napier); Frana Cardno (Southland); Janie Annear (Timaru); Jenny Brash (Porirua); Jenny Rowan (Kapiti); Kerry Prendergast (Wellington); Maureen Pugh (Westland); Maureen Reynolds (Taranaki); Penny Webster (Rodney); Philippa Barriball (Thames-Coromandel); Sue Morris (Ruapehu); and Trish Giddens (Hawkes Bay).

Study will follow 7,600 children

A new longitudinal study, led by the University of Auckland, will follow the lives of 7,600 children born in the Auckland and Waikato regions to identify opportunities to improve New Zealand children's lives. The study will look at parenting behaviours, health and environmental factors, child development, education, nutrition, and social interactions. It will be the first New Zealand longitudinal study to start before the children are born, with mothers being recruited in late pregnancy, and will follow the children through to adulthood. The study is being funded by the Ministries of Social Development, Health, and Justice; the Families Commission; the New Zealand Police; and the University. It will cover Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian, and Pākehā children and their families.

Babies and Bosses

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has released a synthesis report *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life*. Babies and Bosses is an OECD series that reviewed policies in OECD countries to support parents in their choices of work and childcare options and recommends a range of measures to improve results. The country report on New Zealand was released in 2004. This latest report is a synthesis of the individual country reports, and highlights main issues and cross-country differences. The report can be viewed at www.oecd.org

Flexible working hours law

A new law gives employees with caring responsibilities the right to seek to vary their hours or place of work, and imposes a legal duty on employers to try to accommodate any such request. The Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Act was sponsored by Green Party MP, Sue Kedgley.