

EDITORIAL — KŌRERO TĪMATANGA

Working on the New Zealand Women’s Law Journal — Te Aho Kawe Kaupapa Ture a ngā Wāhine is, in many ways, a privilege. As an editor you have the particular privilege of reading bravely shared submissions, working with a diverse editorial team, learning from the expertise of peer reviewers, guiding authors through preparing articles for publication, and persistently pushing forward vital conversations for not only our profession but our society as a whole.

The disruptions, challenges and hurdles of a global pandemic have prompted deep societal reflection on many aspects of our lives that we may have previously taken for granted — enjoying the company of our colleagues, gathering for celebration or mourning, connecting with friends, reuniting with family, and being able to return home. For the editorial team at the Journal, the year 2020 has highlighted how much we rely on our community of inspiring wāhine to navigate these choppy waters, and that the privilege of working on the Journal rests so heavily on the kind and generous āwhina of that community.

Āwhina — to assist, to help, to support — implies support offered in a spirit of generosity and through collective effort. The concept of āwhina has been a central part of Aotearoa New Zealand’s response to COVID-19, where New Zealanders have shouldered new burdens and confronted new challenges as a team, with kindness and empathy. Āwhina is also a central part of the Journal’s philosophy. Our publication process is the product of many heads around the (often virtual) table, helping a piece to be the best it can be: many hands, passionate about the kaupapa of the Journal, make incredible work.

A core part of the Journal’s kaupapa is to serve and uplift our community of women here in Aotearoa New Zealand. With the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women,¹ and exacerbation of inequalities particularly for

¹ See Annick Masselot and Maria Hayes “Exposing Gender Inequalities: Impacts of Covid-19 on Aotearoa | New Zealand Employment” (2020) 45(2) New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations 57 and “COVID-19 and women” (28 April 2020) Manatū Wāhine Ministry for Women <www.women.govt.nz>.

wāhine Māori and Pasifika women, this kaupapa will continue to be essential. Women make up the majority of our essential support workers — including in health care workers, and social support — and are on the front line of Aotearoa New Zealand’s response to COVID-19. While New Zealand has suffered comparatively minimal health impacts due to coronavirus, we know that the rate of job losses disproportionately affected women, and that women face extra domestic burdens being at the centre of whānau. We know that lockdowns have trapped women at home with their abusers, or women in rainbow communities in unsafe environments. We know that disabled women will face reduced or limited access to disrupted health services. We know that migrant women struggle to access essential information. Our work is done in the hope that these inequities will be addressed.

The impacts of the pandemic were felt far and wide, and the Journal was no different. COVID-19 threw the editorial team additional and complex challenges. This required us to develop new ways of working, share responsibility and work together as one, supporting each other through the life circumstances that would threaten to tip the balance on top of everything else.

Putting together this edition in the midst of an unpredictable year (or rather, year and a half) has also emphasised the many layers of collective effort that sit behind the final product. We thank all of our staff for their patience, support and enthusiastic dedication in a very challenging time for everyone, and the authors in their writing in support of the ongoing conversations that must be sparked and maintained. While we wish we had to speak only once before we were heard, this is not always the case. Every continued voice makes the chorus harder to ignore. It has been an honour to contribute to that chorus.

To all of the authors, editors, peer reviewers, trustees, supporters, and other members of the Journal’s community — ngā mihi nui ki a koutou i te āwhina.

None of this would be possible without all of you.

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Editorial Team
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