

# A rich autumn feast of research and scholarship to start our 2019 volume: Editorial

E ngā tini aituā, e hingahinga mai nei i runga i te whenua o Ōtautahi. Haere, haere, haere atu rā.

Ki ngā whānau pani, e noho ana i te korowai pōuri, ka nui te aroha, ka nui te aroha, ka nui te aroha.

Ki a mātou te hunga ora  
He whakaaetanga te utu.  
He manawanui te īnoi.  
He aroha te patu.  
He hohou i te rongo te pou roa.

We farewell those who have tragically fallen in Christchurch and bid you a deep heartfelt farewell.

To those who lost loved ones and are in a place of darkness and mourning, we extend our deepest compassion and love.

We who remain declare  
Acceptance of others will be our revenge and retribution.  
Tolerance will be our creed.  
Love will be our weapons.  
Peace will be our legacy.

Anaru Eketone, Shayne Walker and Poia Rewi

This first issue of 2019 begins with a set of articles and a classic book review to finish our special section of articles on the theme of women in social work, practice, research and policy. In the last issue, Viv Cree wrote to remind us

...why feminism remains a vital force today. It is here that feminists are engaging on a daily basis with the consequences of the history of colonisation; here racism and sexism go hand-in-hand and here too we can see the emergence of intersectional, anti-racist and decolonising practices that are, we argue, indicative of good social work. (2018, p. 6)

The notion that emergent practices addressing intersecting and overlapping oppressions of class, racism, colonisation, genders, disabilities, and sexualities is part of good social work is developed further in this issue, via reporting feminist research and exploring feminist theory for practice. In the editorial for the last issue (ANZSW 30(3)) Beddoe wrote that, despite social work being a profession to which “women disproportionately contribute”, with the concerns of women “often at the heart of practice”—there has been a relative scarcity of feminist writing in the Aotearoa New Zealand social work literature (Beddoe, 2018, p. 1). This issue, adding to the contributions published last

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year, comes some way to remedying the gap with three research articles, a commentary and a classic book review to round off the special issues. Women's experiences of post-earthquake life, domestic violence, and being welfare recipients as women of colour are all explored by researchers who have employed qualitative research methods.

In "You look a little bit dark for my liking': Māori and Pasifika women's experiences of welfare receipt in Aotearoa New Zealand", Gray and Crichton-Hill examined Māori and Pasifika women's experiences of accessing the welfare system in Aotearoa New Zealand. Using focus groups with women on the sole parent support benefit, their findings showed that the stigma attached to being women on the benefit was intensified for Māori and Pasifika women, whose negative treatment in welfare offices participants attributed to their ethnicity. This resulted in some women avoiding contact with the welfare system and, in some cases, the denial of access to benefits they were entitled to. The implications are important, as equitable access to financial supports should not be damaged by the institutional contexts they are delivered in. Changing these dynamics is required for a just income-protection system.

In "Women's place-making through craft in post-earthquake Christchurch", Jane Maidment, Raewyn Tudor, Ada Campbell and Karen Whittaker report findings about the emergent role of crafting from a qualitative study conducted after the 2010–2011 earthquakes in Christchurch and surrounding districts. The article focuses on the importance of the notion of *place* expressed by participants through their craftwork, the symbolism of craft, and the healing experience of craft groups as places for women. Social workers can gain greater understanding of how creative activities can help ameliorate the impact of natural disasters. The authors encourage social work practitioners to explore place-based wellbeing during their work with service users, following disasters and to include aspects of creativity.

In another qualitative study, "Women's experiences of intimate partner violence in rural Taranaki, Aotearoa New Zealand" Lesley Pitt, Jane Maidment and Yvonne Crichton-Hill draw on findings from a doctoral study in which 23 women and five men were interviewed. Patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity were contributors to the intimate partner violence experienced by some study participants. The geographic isolation of women in a rural location was exploited as an aspect of control in intimate partner violence among the women who had difficulty accessing services. The authors emphasise that social workers need to be aware of the impact of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity as features of intimate partner violence. In addition, social workers need to carefully consider the factors which impact on rural women including the geographical and social isolation that can be exploited in coercive control.

Eileen Joy presents a very useful commentary and picks up the theme of intersectionality noted in Cree (2018). Intersectionality is a little explored topic in social work and this invited commentary article seeks to address that gap with a particular focus on Aotearoa New Zealand. Joy begins with an examination of the origins of the intersectionality concept. Definitions are explored followed by a discussion of intersectionality in the context of mana wahine, the author's own experiences, and recent developments in intersectionality in Aotearoa New Zealand. Finally, Joy explores the importance of intersectionality in social work, aided by examples drawn from reflective practice and child protection in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Jude Douglas's *Viewpoint* article, "Working with gender in transformative education and supervision: Unpacking the invisible handbag", employs a great metaphor for transformative teaching and learning in an education programme for professional social work education. As a feminist educator, Douglas was keen to explore how she

recognised, monitored and managed her own internalised gender biases when working with women students and supervisees. She describes how thoughtful questioning, tools such as reflection cycles, reflective learning logs, question sets, storytelling, and provision of carefully chosen resources can establish a professional dialogue which can be creative and challenging.

Finally, Breanna Strumm presents, as the classic book review for this issue, the influential work by bell hooks: *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. “bell hooks is a teacher, the feminist pedagogue, the film critic, the activist and most of all, the black feminist”.

In the general section of this issue, Joanna Appleby, Matthew Shepherd, and Barbara Staniforth lead off with “Speaking the same language: Navigating information-sharing in the youth justice sphere”, a qualitative study which explored professionals’ experiences of cross-sector information-sharing about the mental health needs of young people in youth justice residences in Aotearoa New Zealand. Eight focus groups were conducted across Aotearoa New Zealand, half with case leaders from each of the four Oranga Tamariki (Ministry for Children) youth justice residences. The other half were with youth forensic service clinicians who provide mental health services in each youth justice residence. Overall themes in the findings included the impact of relationships on information-sharing, and the importance of including residential care team staff within information-sharing practices. Appleby et al. propose a model of information-sharing to improve practice in this context and ensure that young people receive appropriate mental health input in residential settings, and that residence staff are supported to provide them the best care.

In their article, “Reviewing the benefits and challenges of overseas practice: Reflections upon coming home”, Beddoe and Bartley examine the experiences of social workers who have returned home

to practise in Aotearoa after experiencing life as practitioners in other countries.

As the authors note, there is a wealth of research about social workers practising transnationally, and an awareness of the unique needs of these social workers—for example, their need for support and time to make the significant transition to new sociocultural and political landscapes, to develop relevant understanding of historical contexts and current practice realities. Career movement between countries requires significant cultural, personal and financial upheaval; however, this study highlights the reality that this can be no different for those returning home. It is reported in this article that social workers who have practised overseas speak positively of their experiences, and of the personal pleasures of coming home; however, they also express degrees of disappointment in standards of practice in Aotearoa. Some respondents used their overseas experience to strengthen their practice and contribute to the social work community in Aotearoa. The authors call for our professional organisation to more adequately support the transition required of all social workers upon arriving in Aotearoa, whether they are new to this country—or coming home.

The concept of vicarious futurity—defined as the level of hope we feel about the future of others—is explored by Hastie and Stevens in the context of parents who raise children with autism (ASD). This article features a small piece of innovative research with parents and their adolescent children exploring how parents perceived the strengths of their children, and how this then influenced the hopes they held for their futures. Links are made between this positive outlook and the well-being and resilience of parents, and findings highlight a place for increased social support for the strengths of people with ASD. It is suggested that parents need confidence their children will feel valued by society and enjoy quality relationships as adults and this is done by capturing and advancing the talents and strengths of people with ASD.

In “Grandparents battle to be key stakeholders in protecting grandchildren”, Gair and Zuchowski report on an Australian qualitative study which examined the role of the grandparent relationships in supporting the needs of children subject to child protection intervention. Findings affirm the desire of grandparents to nurture grandchildren involved with the child protection system and identify the institutional barriers which negatively impact upon this relationship. The need to recognise the protective function of kinship networks, particularly for Indigenous children, and to break down obstacles to accessing this support is urged for practice in Australia and beyond.

## References

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