

# GRADUATE WOMEN OTAGO

## JULY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Call for Volunteers | Annual Winter Luncheon

### GWO Branch Meeting

**When:** Thursday, 28 July, 2022

**Where:** Benham Seminar Room,  
Zoology Department, 2nd Floor,  
340 Great King Street (south of  
Captain Cook)

OR by Zoom: <https://otago.zoom.us/j/91815207484?pwd=SnlSS3V2VUF6Vit6TINPaGdze mgxdz09> (password 351337)

**Time:** Arrive at 7.15pm for a cuppa before the 7.30pm start

**Speaker:** The Breast Room, founded in 2011 by breast-feeding counsellor **Denise Ives**, focuses on providing a safe and supportive space for breast-feeding mums to receive expert help and advice.

**Details:** Members may use the car park in the front of Zoology Building and the elevator inside, and will be welcomed by a member 'personing' the locked main entry door between approximately 7.15 - 7.35 pm

**Apologies:** If you are unable to attend a branch meeting, please send your apology to:  
[info@nzfgwotago.org.nz](mailto:info@nzfgwotago.org.nz)

### A message from GWO's President:

It was cheerful to get back to an in-person meeting this month, and I enjoyed coffee and chatting with people face-to-face. As we have experienced, life is different post-COVID and one thing that has emerged is the idea of "hybrid" format which we are promoting for the next meeting. We used this format in the final centenary event when we had a presenter join us via Zoom. In August, however, we look forward to a lunch meeting where joining us in-person will matter!

It has been a busy month for the national (GWNZ) and international Graduate Women (GWI) organisations. I have the doubtful privilege of being on all three, at least I am "up with the play." GWNZ is seeking a new president and GWI has extended the call for papers for the triennium conference — let me know if interested in either opportunity. GWI sent their condolences to GW Japan regarding the recent assassination of Japan's Former Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe — a shocking event.

GWNZ finally held their twice postponed Centenary event in June, which was run by the North Shore branch. I really enjoyed the Friday night speakers, and one personal highlight was meeting up with each other, dare I say IN PERSON. Members from the Wellington branch, Massey group, Independent members, and the North Shore branch who had attended our public event two years ago felt like "old buddies." It was good to have a lot of time allowed for these interpersonal catchups or do they say, "mixing and mingling."

We are thrilled to have some new members and just a reminder for all to pay the membership sub (I know I'm bad at remembering such things). We remain the largest branch, with our gowning operation as an asset as we continue to promote the value of education for girls and women. I look forward to seeing you either virtually or in person over the next few months.

- Shirley Gillett, President

## Join Us - Annual GWO Winter Lunch

- ★ **When:** Saturday 27 August, 2022
- ★ **Time:** 12:30pm - 2:00pm
- ★ **Where:** Ombrellos Kitchen and Bar, 10 Clarendon Street
- ★ **Speaker:** Melissa Bell
- ★ **Topic:** The challenges of being a young woman in a senior leadership position in a Dunedin School. The role that area and gender has played for you in a career in education.

*Please confirm your attendance to [info@nzfgwotago.org.nz](mailto:info@nzfgwotago.org.nz) by Saturday 20 August*



## Request for Volunteers for August Graduation

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Kia ora GW Otago members,

Once again, we need your help with academic dress for the graduations on August 20. I know that I don't need to remind members about how rewarding it is to help with academic dress at what is such a happy time for graduands and their families. These graduations will also be the first test of our new gown rooms in the central basement of the Clocktower Building! We've spent the last six weeks unpacking and arranging and are really pleased with the space that we have been given by the University – 3x as large as our old gown rooms.

We hope that our early evening times – on Thursday and Friday – would suit those who are working during the day, but still want to help. The longer opening sessions during that day on the Friday and Monday have been divided into two, so one of these times may be more convenient.

The following times are for the graduands. Helpers, please come 10 minutes earlier. Please note that collection times involve a lot of standing and moving around. If this is not for you, then return times have more opportunity for you to sit down.

- ➔ **Any help, even for part sessions, would be much appreciated. Please email Jules on the Academic Dress email address: [academic.dress@otago.ac.nz](mailto:academic.dress@otago.ac.nz) or ring her on 021-075-2772.**

### **GRADUATIONS SATURDAY 20 AUGUST 2022**

#### **Collection from Academic Dress Rooms:**

- ◆ Thursday 18 August: 5.30pm – 7.00pm
- ◆ Friday 19 August: 11.00am – 12.30pm AND/OR 12.30pm – 2.00pm AND/OR 5.30pm – 7.00pm
- ◆ Saturday 20 August: 8.30am – 10am

#### **Returns to Academic Dress Rooms:**

- ◆ Sunday 21 August: 2.00pm – 4.00pm
- ◆ Monday 22 August: 10.00am – 12noon AND/OR 12noon – 2.00pm

*Convenors: Jules Gross and Walter Lawrence*

- Jules Gross, Academic Dress

## GWNZ Centenary Meeting report

Shirley Gillett and I attended the GWNZ Centenary Meeting hosted by GWNS on 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (twice postponed due to Covid-19). The theme for the meeting was "Looking Back - Looking Forward."

Celebrations began on the Friday evening with a public event. Tracy McIntosh (Professor of Indigenous Studies and Co-Head of the School of Māori and Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland) and Captain Lisa Hunn (Assistant Chief of Navy - Strategy and Engagement) gave inspirational keynote speeches. They reflected on "Looking Back - Looking Forward" with respect to their career journeys and work in advocating for women's rights. Members and guests then admired Branch memorabilia and poster displays, and an impressive '100'-shaped Centenary cake was cut by Rae Duff and Dorothy Meyer.



Saturday was a day for Members. We enjoyed a lovely breakfast by Lake Pupuke and returned to the Centenary Meeting venue for a series of workshops. The first workshop was 'Looking Back', where representatives from all Branches and the Independent Member Network presented Branch histories. GWO's presentation, which Sue Cathro, our longstanding stalwart of GWO greatly assisted in preparing, was well received. Members particularly enjoyed seeing familiar faces in the GWO photos shown in the background.

We then connected to Fiji via Zoom to hear from Lucy, a GW Fiji Pacific Scholarship awardee. Lucy is one of the few women in her university studying Electronics Engineering and hopes to inspire other Pacific females to earn degrees in traditionally male-dominated fields.

The final workshop, 'Looking Forward,' was the highlight of the day. In small groups we discussed ideas and visions for the future of the Branches. A common theme was attracting new Members and keeping them engaged. The Centenary Meeting ended with a 'Mix & Mingle' dinner at Takapuna Beach. It was wonderful to connect in person with other Members from around the country and I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend with Shirley.

~ Ioanna Katiforis, Young Members Co-Convenor

## The Breast Room, Dunedin

My husband Josh and I welcomed our first baby, Mackenzie Campbell, just in time for Christmas last year. Now 6 months old, I am absolutely loving her sparkly personality. As many of you know, having a newborn for the first time takes a lot of adjustment. I am not yet used to the total lack of sleep!

Both Mackenzie and I had complications in hospital and we had to stay for several days. The doctors and midwives were amazing during labour and recovery. However, the ongoing staffing crisis led to a traumatising stay in the post-natal ward. The staffing situation was so bad, they actually closed the ward.

On reopening, new mothers were, and still are, sent home immediately after birth. For me and many other new mothers, the most significant impact is on breastfeeding. Thankfully, The Breast Room have volunteers that provide this support in the community. Their workshops and peer mentoring are invaluable.

The entire experience of having a baby during a pandemic has been extremely challenging. While every support service I have engaged with has leaned back in some way, The Breast Room is **the only one** that leaned in. Thank you to Denise from The Breast Room for all your help.

*I encourage all our members to spread the word of their amazing service and help our Otago babies get the best start during Dunedin's darkest days of maternal healthcare.*

- Anna Cambell

- ★ Visit their website: <http://www.thebreastroom.org>
- ★ Follow them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheBreastRoom/>



## NCW Meeting — July 2022

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The July Branch meeting, held by Zoom, was very well attended, and we welcomed a new young member. We were advised the plot at the Gardens is now ready for the planting of the Kate Sheppard camellia and the Secretary will approach the DCC to establish a time when the Mayor is available for a presentation.

Discussions also took place on:

- The original planned date for holding the DCC Mayoral Candidates Forum which has had to be changed, as other groups are also holding meetings at the same time.
- The changed membership implications of the new NCWNZ Constitution, with respect to Organisational Representatives.
- NCWNZ's 125<sup>th</sup> celebration, unfortunately cancelled in 2021 due to Covid-19, which will be held on 13 September 2022 at Parliament in Wellington.
- The Branch By Laws will be updated and sent to members for consideration before seeking NCWNZ approval.
- Two Action Items - Improving arrangements for surrogacy and Electoral (Strengthening Democracy) Amendment Bill. The Secretary will send the members' responses to the Action Hub Convenors and Parliamentary Watch Committee.

- Correen Rodger



## International Happenings

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There are two significant pieces of Graduate Women international news.

- \* First, a reflection/report following the GWI proposed vote for new resolutions. In the report, President Terri Oudraad outlined the rationale for the suggestions as an outcome of the meetings run by Geeta Desai for the organisational development (OD) group. This group, which consisted of representatives of most of the NFAs, had monthly meetings in their region and was a kind of “think tank” which reflected, analysed, and problem-solved aspects of the current and past GWI and looked to the future. Possible new directions such as an expanded board will result from the proposed motions.

- ➔ Please see the attached PDF at the end of the newsletter for this reflection/report

- \* Second, for the future. This November is the GWI triennium conference and business meeting. The conference is usually hosted by a member country and in-person however, sadly (my personal opinion), in 2022, it is virtual. I am lucky enough to have attended four such conferences, all in amazing places. The business sessions in person are quite riveting. Members present papers and workshops for the conference. The workshops are run by the NFAs and there is only one per country. The call for these went out some time ago and we have several from GWO members, plus a joint submission with NZ and Sierra Leone. This is exciting. The registration is now open, see the link below. Also we, GWNZ, are seconding a resolution put in by GWUSA. Registration is now open, see the link below.

- ➔ <https://graduate-women-international.idloom.events/ga2022>

- ➔ Please see the attached PDF for additional information on the GWI triennium conference, including registration links

- Shirley Gillett

## June GWO Branch Meeting - Speaker Report

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*Lena Mukdad, Arabic Interpreter at Dunedin Hospital, Cultural and Language Assistant for Syrian Refugees*

Our speaker in April was Lena Mukdad who began her presentation by asking the members if they knew the Arabic word for 'thank you' - which is 'shukran' - and said she would check it with us at the end, and she did!

Lena first arrived in New Zealand in 1997 with her husband and two children, moving to Dunedin in 2003 where she had her third child. Originally from Iraq (now a country of 41 million), Lena has a degree in industrial chemistry. With Arabic as her first language, Lena was Catholic educated, speaking English from age 6. Her primary schooling was mixed gender and her secondary schooling was girls only. In her Catholic school, the Muslim and Christian students were separated for Religious Education, but for the rest of their school day, they were taught together. Tertiary study was delivered in English.

Lena initially worked in Dunedin as an English Language Assistant for Syrian refugees who were enrolled in English language classes with a private provider of English. Currently, she is an interpreter with the Southern District Health Board for Arabic speakers attending medical and dental appointments. She told us the role often evolves into that of a support person for patients, this being especially the case for mothers birthing here, where their husbands are not normally present at the delivery.

Lena outlined some of the cultural challenges for Muslim families living here; for example, when it is Ramadan and families are fasting. This is particularly difficult for children in school at lunch time. At the end of Ramadan, the cultural expectation is that each member of a family makes a \$20 donation to a local charity. She talked of the cultural concept of time in Syria, being 'they are on their way.' To overcome this, when students are late for a university lecture in Syria, they are not permitted to enter. She commented that often her interpreting role was also a cultural education one, explaining to her clients aspects of New Zealand culture to her clients.

There are many different accents of Arabic in Syria which can make interpreting a challenge. Members were fascinated to learn that from growing up in Iraq, Lena learned to understand Egyptian Arabic well from watching Egyptian movies throughout her adolescence. Her own children are bilingual in Arabic and English having been brought up speaking only Arabic in their home and English at school. They eat a mixture of New Zealand and Arabic foods at home.

- Barbara Benson

## Graduate Women Otago Branch Meeting Minutes - Thursday 23 June 2022

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Bentham Seminar Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Zoology Department, University of Otago, Great King Street Dunedin. Commencing 7.30pm

### MINUTES

1. **Welcome:** The President, Dr Shirley Gillett in the chair, welcomed members.
2. **Speaker:** Lena Mukdad, Arabic Interpreter at Dunedin Hospital, Cultural and Language Assistant for Syrian Refugee
3. **Apologies:** Sue Cathro, Olivia Harrison, Jane Malthus, Victoria McEniery, Elizabeth Purdie, Correen Rogers and Pat Sivertsen. Acceptance of the apologies: Moved from the Chair; Dr. Shirley Gillett. **All Agreed**
4. **Agenda:** Acceptance of the Agenda: Moved from the Chair; Dr. Shirley Gillett. **All Agreed**
5. **Minutes of the meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021:** (Published in May 2022 in Newsletter)
  - Corrections – none. Motion: That the Minutes are true and correct. Moved from the Chair: Dr Shirley Gillett
6. **Matters arising:**
  - All of the remits at the Special General Meeting of GWNZ were passed. It was noted that each branch will set its own subscription rate for undergraduate members.
  - The President read the list of apologies from the final centenary event – the Unveiling of the Presidents' Board held recently at the University Staff Club. This list will be appended to these Minutes in the records.
  - The President was asked where the Presidents' Board is to be installed. She informed the Branch the choices are either somewhere in the Registry of the University of Otago or in the new Gown Rooms. The University will advise us where a space may be available. The decision may go to the Artwork Collections Committee.
7. **Correspondence:**
  - *Inwards:* Queries of an administrative nature about academic dress hire.
  - *Outwards:* Responses to the above queries.
    - The Chair moved the acceptance of the correspondence.
6. **Matters Arising from the Correspondence:** None
7. **Business Reports:** No reports this month
8. **Conveners Reports:** No reports this month
9. **National Council of Women:**
  - There was a report in the June Newsletter. The local branch is planning a meeting with the Mayoral candidate in the forthcoming local body elections.

### General Business:

- The President informed the Branch that Rhonda Schlaadt had resigned from the Branch Committee and retired from Academic Dress.

- The Gown Rooms shift has taken place. Jules Gross and Barbara Benson outlined to the members the main features of changes that will accompany this. The gowns will be stored on mobile racks, and there are specialist rooms for Masters, PhD and Doctoral gowns, hood and caps. There is a separate office area and storage for fabrics, boxes, and suitcases (used for schools hiring). It was noted that we are back in the same location we were 38 years ago but with much more space. We acknowledge the support we get from the University in providing us with rooms and power, and in providing Crown movers to shift our stock and hardware from the basement of Geology.
- Centenary Meeting of GWNZ; Postponed last year due to Covid, this was held on the North Shore 17-18 June 2022. Shirley Gillett and Ioanna Katiforis represented the Branch, with the Branch is supporting Ioanna to attend, as one of our young members. Ioanna spoke about the Otago Branch using the material in the speech written by Sue Cathro for our final centenary event, and the PowerPoint of photos compiled by Charlotte Davis. Shirley paid tribute to Lorelle George, President of the North Shore Branch, for the preparation that had gone into the Centenary Meeting. Shirley made specific reference to two speakers at the event held on the Friday night, to which the public had been invited. One spoke on women's literacy in New Zealand prisons, and one by a woman officer who has a senior position in the New Zealand Navy (see Ionna's report above).
- GWI is calling for workshops for the 24<sup>th</sup> Triennial Assembly to be held virtually this November. Shirley informed the meeting that GWI recognises that the time difference for sessions will be an issue for us.
- The Branch sends good wishes to Sue Cathro who is in Dunedin Hospital.
- The Winter Lunch will be held at Ombrellos on a weekend in July or August and there will be details published in the July Newsletter.

**Next Branch Meeting is Thursday 28 July 2022 at this venue. Details will be in the July Newsletter**

**Meeting closed at 9.12pm**

## August Newsletter Deadline

The next committee meeting is **Thursday, August 4th**

The closing date for newsletter items is **Sunday, August 7th**

~ Angela Spontelli Gisselman, Newsletter Editor

[Angela.Gisselman@Tufts.edu](mailto:Angela.Gisselman@Tufts.edu)

## Contact Us

### Otago Branch

**Email** [info@nzfgwotago.org.nz](mailto:info@nzfgwotago.org.nz)

**Website** <http://www.gwotago.co.nz/>

**Address** PO Box 6334, Dunedin North, Dunedin 9059

### Graduate Women New Zealand

**Website** [www.gwnz.org.nz/](http://www.gwnz.org.nz/)

**Address** PO Box 2006, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

### Graduate Women International

**Website** <http://www.graduatewomen.org/>

**Phone** +41 22 731 2380