



Tōpūtanga Tapuhi  
Kaitiaki o Aotearoa

NEW ZEALAND NURSES  
ORGANISATION

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## NZNO WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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Feb 2026



Kia ora members,

As we begin the new year, we wish you happiness, health, and success—both professionally and personally. May 2026 bring you new opportunities, rewarding experiences, and memorable moments.

We're delighted to announce that registrations are now open for our 2026 conference, taking place at the James Cook Hotel in Wellington from May 14th to 16th.

The organising committee has been working tirelessly to create an inspiring event, featuring exciting speakers and a diverse range of subjects that promise something for everyone.

We warmly invite you to join us—whether you're looking to connect, learn, or simply be inspired. See all details below about how to register and a call for abstracts.

We look forward to seeing you in Wellington!

### WHC COMMITTEE

Jill Lamb Chair

Sarah Marshall Secretary

Jackie Gartell Treasurer &  
2026 Conference Organiser

Sandy Hamilton Membership  
& Newsletter

Committee members

- Nadine Riwai
- Georgina Barber
- Josie Lambert
- Vanessa May – seconded

Juila Anderson – NZNO  
Professional Nursing Advisor

# NZNO Women's Health College Annual Conference

James Cook Hotel, Wellington  
14 – 16 May 2026

*Many Journeys, One Purpose: Honouring All Voices in Health*

*Ngā Huarahi Maha, Kotahi Te Whāinga: He Whakanui i Ngā Reo Katoa i te Ao Hauora*

**REGISTER NOW**

Scan the QR Code to view  
the website and to register



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Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa  
NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION



## Call for Abstracts

The 2026 NZNO Women's Health College Conference organising committee invites abstracts to be considered for oral and poster presentations for the upcoming conference taking place at James Cook Hotel in Wellington.

**Many Journeys, One Purpose: Honouring All Voices in Health**

**Kotahi te whāinga mō ngā huarahi maha, kia whakahōnoretia e ngā reo katoa i te ao hauora**

### NZNO Women's Health College Conference 2026

Many Journeys, One Purpose: Honouring All Voices in Health  
Kotahi te whāinga mō ngā huarahi maha, kia whakahōnoretia e ngā reo katoa i te ao hauora

James Cook Hotel, Wellington | 14-16 May

### Call for Abstracts: NZNO Women's Health College Free Paper Award

The Women's Health College (WHC), NZNO, Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki O Aotearoa acknowledges the extensive knowledge possessed by health professionals working across women's health in New Zealand, Aotearoa. We invite our colleagues to submit an abstract paper for presentation at our annual conference, which will be held from 14-16 May in Wellington. This event offers a fantastic opportunity to share nursing wisdom, discuss the latest research & treatments and educate colleagues on the broad spectrum of women's health services today.

There are two prizes available to win:

- \$500 to be awarded to the nurse who presents the best paper on women's health issues
- \$250 to be awarded to a nurse who is presents the best paper on women's health issues as a first time presenter (please advise if this is your first time presenting). **Kindly sponsored by Istar.**

All abstracts must be submitted in the following format

- Title Presentation title
- Authors All authors are listed and presenter's name/s are underlined
- Organisation Presenter's organisations are listed, and
- Contact details Presenter's postal & e-mail addresses and phone number are provided.

\*Please confirm whether or not you're happy for your contact details to be included in the conference booklet.

The body of abstract can be formatted in two styles

1. Research abstract Aim, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.
2. Opinion piece Objective, Discussion, and Conclusions.

The abstract should be limited to 250 words, formatted in MS Word, rich text format, using 10 pt Times New Roman font and single-spaced. Please submit all abstracts electronically by email to Britta van Uden, [britta@mtanz.org.nz](mailto:britta@mtanz.org.nz) **Abstracts must be submitted electronically.**

All accepted papers will have their abstract and author profile published in the conference booklet. Authors will be notified of the review committee's decision by 29 March 2026.

All presenters are required to register for the conference. Each presenter will have 10 minutes for their presentation, and 5 minutes for questions. Presentations must be in PowerPoint format and are required to be submitted prior to the conference.

**The closing date for abstract (paper) submissions is 20 March 2026.**



## NZNO Women's Health College Conference 2026

Many Journeys, One Purpose: Honouring All Voices in Health  
Kotahi te whāinga mō ngā huarahi maha, kia whakahōnoretia e ngā reo katoa i te ao hauora

James Cook Hotel, Wellington | 14-16 May

### Guidelines for Poster Presentations

The Women's Health College (WHC), NZNO, Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki O Aotearoa acknowledges the extensive knowledge possessed by health professionals working across women's health in New Zealand, Aotearoa. We invite our colleagues to submit an abstract for a poster presentation at our annual conference, which will be held from 14-16 May in Wellington. This event offers a fantastic opportunity to share nursing wisdom, discuss the latest research and treatments and educate colleagues on the broad spectrum of women's health services today.

A \$250 prize will be awarded to the nurse who presents the best poster on women's health issues.

All abstracts must be submitted in the following format

- Title Presentation title
- Authors All authors are listed and presenters name/s are underlined
- Organisation Presenter/s organisations are listed, and
- Contact details Presenter/s postal & e-mail addresses and phone number are provided.  
*\*Please confirm whether or not you are happy for your contact details to be included in the conference booklet.*

The body of the abstract can be formatted as follows

1. Research abstract Aim, methods, results, and conclusions.
2. Opinion piece Objective, discussion, conclusions and criteria.
  - The abstract should be in MS Word or rich text format, limited to 250 words, formatted in 10 pt Tahoma, and single spaced.
  - All abstracts must be submitted electronically to Britta van Uden at [britta@mtanz.org.nz](mailto:britta@mtanz.org.nz), as only electronic submissions will be accepted.
  - The maximum dimensions for posters are 100 cm x 150 cm.
  - All accepted posters will have their abstract and author profile published in the conference booklet.
  - Authors will be notified of the review committee's decision by 29 March 2026.
  - All presenters must be registered for the conference.

**The closing date for abstract (poster) submissions is 20 March 2026.**

You will not be expected to present your poster to conference delegates. Instead, you will be allocated a time to discuss the background of your poster and answer any questions.

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## MEET OUR SECONDED NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER

Vanessa is the Associate Director of Nursing at Well Women and Family Trust, with extensive experience across public, community, and tertiary care in sexual and reproductive health.

She provides clinical leadership, mentoring, and education to nurses, supporting equitable, wāhine-centred, and culturally responsive care, particularly for Māori and Pacific communities.

A passionate advocate for women's health, Vanessa is a certified Train the Trainer facilitator, co-facilitator of the NZQA-approved Cervical Screening Micro-Credential Course and actively supports cervical screening providers across Aotearoa.

She is an authorised vaccinator, LARC practitioner, and regularly contributes to professional forums and conferences to advance practice and knowledge in women's health

Vanessa serves on the Executive Boards of the NZNO Women's Health College, the New Zealand Sexual Health Society (NZSHS), and the New Zealand College for Sexual and Reproductive Health (NZCSRH), supporting national leadership and advocacy for women's health.



# Wāhine reclaim traditional tikanga and practices around menopause

Written in TE AO Māori NEWS • By [Riria Dalton-Reedy](#)

A group of wāhine are reclaiming traditional Māori knowledge and practices around menopause. They say menopause is not the end, it's the beginning of a new phase of life and responsibility.

“Ko te ruahinetanga i mōhio ke au, me timata mai i te whare, nē? Tō tātau whare o ngā wāhine. E toru ngā whare, ara o te whare puhi, ko te whare tangata me te whare noa,” says tohunga Awhitia Mihaere.

For Priscilla Te Hau of Ngāti Whakaue, she says there is a big difference between menopause and ruahinetanga.

“Menopause I see as managing symptoms, whereas ruahinetanga is a lifestyle. It's our roles and responsibilities as sacred knowledge holders. It's not the ending, it's a new beginning.”

According to Women's Health Action, the average age for menopause in Aotearoa is 51.5 years, with most wāhine experiencing it between ages 42 and 56.

## He wānanga, he whakarauora i ngā kōrero tuku iho

Recently, Priscilla began researching and sharing her own experience with ruahinetanga, noting there was a lack of cultural support for wāhine Māori experiencing menopause.

“In April last year, I resigned from my mahi and decided to dedicate my time, full time to researching what it meant for Māori. I couldn't find any literature on menopause, and that's when the seed was planted to host the ruahine menopause empowerment symposium.”

She is the founder of Te Ohomauri Innovations. She says the symposium took place in Rotorua last December and it created space to reframe menopause through a Māori lens.

“From that symposium the idea was to build a framework that would support wahine going through ruahinetanga.”



PHOTOS FROM THE  
RUAHINETANGA SYMPOSIUM  
ROTORUA

“Our tupuna lived completely different lives. They ate differently. We lived differently. We were connected. I learned that it’s an ascension, where your wairua and wisdom are at their peak.”

Awhitia Mihaere (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) was one of the experts at last year’s symposium, alongside Dr Ngahuia Murphy and Dr Sally Rye. Born in Tokoroa and raised by her kuia, Mihaere is known as a tohunga ruahine and rongoā Māori practitioner.

She says what is now known as western science has been instilled by Māori for generations

“[My kuia] would ferment tuna, everything. Koirā tā mātau tino kai. Ehara ēnei kai e kite au i ēnei rā. Kua ngaro ēnā o ngā kai. E ai ki ngā Pākehā, ko western science tēra, ko te probiotics tēnā kei roto i a tātau.”

Guided by her pakeke, Mihaere says every milestone in womanhood was celebrated.

“Nā o [mātau ]tīpuna [i] mahi tohi i runga i a mātau.” she adds.

“Kia whakatau, kia whakanoa i a tātau i runga i te mōhio, koinā te wā e timata e koe te whakawhiti mai i tēnei whare ki tēnei whare.”

Mihaere says there are different kōrero from different iwi. The kōrero passed down to her includes a different kupu and meanings for ruahinetanga.

“Te kupu Māori nei, ko horowai. Ka horowai te wai i roto i a koe.”

“Ko te tino ahi kei roto i tō tinana. Ka puāwai te tīmatanga o te ahi, ka horowai tō tinana.”

### **Ngā tautika-kore i te rāngai Hauora**

Dr Tania Huria (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri), a long-time hauora Māori advocate and a kaimahi for [Menopause Wellbeing](#), says she experienced early menopause in her 30s, and now champions more inclusive, equitable health care.

“Advocating for the decolonising of our health spaces, so our clinicians are educated that actually there are other ways of viewing this transition, and that the ways of viewing and experiencing menopause for wāhine Māori look different,” Dr Huria says.

“It’s always been there, but due to colonisation and the way our health system is configured, they haven’t been front and centre and may not have appeared in spaces where people seek support.”

She also points to systemic inequities in care. According to the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER), Māori women are nearly 50% more likely than average to report feeling less physically able to do their work during menopause and are more likely to reduce their hours or take extra leave.

“Our health system needs to recognise that women’s health has for decades been underfunded, and targeted investment is required if we are to reach whānau ora.”

Priscilla hopes the knowledge will eventually become common for future generations.

“I envision that in five years’ time, we won’t need to host these wānanga. It will be embedded in our next generations. They’ll understand and know what to do, what to expect.”

“Ruahinetanga is a time to reset, to reflect, to cleanse and to prepare for the next stage of life. For me, it’s a responsibility that I have for the next generation.”

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## *Meet our wonderful, supportive, hardworking PNA*

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Tēnā koutou katoa, ko te tihi o te maunga, ko Waimakariri toku awa, no kapukariki, Waimakariri ahau, Ko Julia Anderson toku ingoa.

I work as a Professional Nurse Adviser (PNA) with Toputanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa, NZNO. My nursing experience has been in medical, aged care, public health, communicable diseases and professional nursing practice. I have worked across a variety of practice setting and spent time working in England and Australia.

My current nursing role offers professional nursing support and advice to NZNO members by guiding the activities and functions of NZNO College and Section committee work, ensuring professional nursing practice is at the fore-front of their mahi, working alongside individual nurses and nursing groups, advocating, and advising on professional practice/nursing issues and concerns and workplace challenges. I regularly contribute to and write submissions that relate to nursing and health in general.

I enjoy the diversity of my work activities in support of nurses and nursing and have worked in nursing for over 40 years advocating for the visibility of nursing and strengthening nursing practise and systems in the delivery of safe, quality care. I recognise the importance of ensuring the nursing voice is heard across the health sector and its' vital contributions to health policy and service design.

I enjoy travelling, reading, movies, gardening, swimming, and walking. I am a mum of two spectacular adult children and have two precious grandsons. My friends and family are important to me. Spending time and doing things together is always a treat.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou



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## *LEA'S STORY: BEING RECONGNISED AS A NP IN AOTEAROA*

Kia ora, it's a pleasure to be here with you.

My name is Lea, and I'm grateful for the chance to share a bit of my story and my journey toward becoming a recognized Nurse Practitioner in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

A little about me - I've spent over 30 years in nursing, much of that in critical care. Over that time, I've seen the full human experience: moments of deep beauty, connection, moments of frustration, heartbreak, and loss. I've worked in big trauma emergency departments, rural medical centers, and as a clinical educator in university settings. Nursing has given me laughter, tears, exhaustion, exhilaration, and a depth of knowledge that only this profession can offer.

That ongoing pull to grow and learn led me to become a Family Nurse Practitioner. And if I'm honest, nothing truly prepares you for what it takes. More than two years of intense coursework, 800+ clinical hours, all while working full-time. It's demanding, consuming, and at times overwhelming. But earning my Master of Nursing Science and passing my national boards is something I'm incredibly proud of.

At the heart of my career is a simple belief: walking alongside people in their healthcare journey, creating space for healing, and supporting them in regaining their strength is a privilege. To honor that calling fully, both personally and professionally, I knew I needed a new place to grow. And throughout that search, New Zealand kept calling to me.

My NZ registration as an RN took just over a year. The path to Nurse Practitioner registration wasn't as I expected in the slightest. The current pathway really seems designed for nurses in their practicum year, not for those already practicing as Nurse Practitioners. There's very little clear guidance about timelines or expectations. Nearly one year to the date of my arrival in NZ, I successfully passed my NP panel and received full licensure as a New Zealand New Practitioner.

One thing I've learned over the years is this: we are shaped by those who mentor us, and by our willingness to mentor others in return. By chance and grace, I've met several Northland Nurse Practitioners who have become incredible sources of support, guidance, and encouragement in my journey. Their generosity and passion for our profession reflect the kind of nursing community I've always hoped to be part of. Their wisdom has helped light the way through what has often felt like a heavy and uncertain process.

Thank you for allowing me to share my journey.

Your colleague, Lea Davidson, MSN, FNP-BC, NZNP

# COLPOSCOPY STUDY DAY

←—————→  
Following on from our 2023 Nursing Study Day,  
we hope you can join us in 2026

**Thursday 12 March 2026**  
**8.30am – 4.30pm (approx)**  
**Hutt Hospital, 638 High St**  
**Lower Hutt**

 Connect with fellow lead colposcopy  
nurses.

 Updates on current colposcopy  
practices and guidelines in New  
Zealand.

 Hear from a range of speakers on  
relevant topics.



Register using the link or  
QR code.

[forms.office.com/r/iekhfzb2jf](https://forms.office.com/r/iekhfzb2jf)

*For attendees outside of Health NZ, the  
registration fee is \$195 and will be invoiced*

Please feel free to pass this on to any colleagues  
who may also be interested

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Moore  
[katie.moore@huttvalleydhb.org.nz](mailto:katie.moore@huttvalleydhb.org.nz)



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## JOIN US

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This QR Code will take you to our Women's Health College page to join us if you are not already part of the college, or if you want to view our page.



### FACEBOOK PAGE

We would love you to join us on our Facebook page. We now have 184 members

If you would like to join, search Women's Health College NZNO on Facebook, answer the questions prompts and apply to join.

To protect our group, we are only letting WHC members join.

NOTE: If you are a new member or go under a different name on Facebook, please look out for my messenger message so I can help get you accepted

Thanks Sandy Hamilton



**WOMEN'S HEALTH**