



International Women's Day

8 March 2021



The Gisborne Herald
TE NUPEPA O TE TAIRAWHITI

2 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



WOMEN OF THE HERALD: The Gisborne Herald team features women across various departments — from the front office to advertising to editorial to collating and delivery.

Celebrating success of Te Tairawhiti women



Backing career and leadership pathways for our wāhine

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**Celebrating our people behind the numbers.
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Welcome to The Gisborne Herald's first ever feature for International Women's Day. International Women's Day has been celebrated around the world for well over 100 years years, with the first official celebration being held in 1911. Commemoration of International Women's Day today ranges from a public holiday in some countries, a day of protest in others and in some it is a day that celebrates womanhood. We thought it would be a great day to celebrate the achievements and successes of women from all walks of life in Te Tairawhiti! These women are from sectors ranging from sport to medical to law to non-profit. Most have a common thread to their stories, motivated by whanau, tangata whenua and their "why".

Inspiration is found in many places. May these women's stories inspire you. Feel free to email any feedback to cara.haines@gisborneherald.co.nz



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Features Team Leader

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Photos by Gisborne Herald photographers unless otherwise stated.

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Dream to reality

Women in Science: The Matai centre team are providing innovative technology and research to improve the health of brain, heart, body and social outcomes for New Zealanders. From left are Dr Samantha Holdsworth, Leigh Potter, Jeanette Lepper and Dr Eryn Kwon. Picture by Paul Rickard

The Mata Mātai Hura translated means “the investigative revealing eye”. The Gisborne research centre which carries that name is the brainchild of Dr Samantha Holdsworth. Samantha, a leading academic in human brain imaging in MRI technology, made breakthrough discoveries while she was a senior research scientist at Stanford University in the US. She called Leigh Potter, an experienced imaging technologist at Hauora Tairāwhiti, to share her vision. Leigh was asked if she would like to be involved in setting up a research centre based in Gisborne. Now chief operations officer at Mātai, Leigh recalls the conversation got her excited, but she also thought “she’s dreaming”.

The dream became reality when Samantha returned home to Gisborne and the real conversations began. It was about bringing the research “out of the ivory tower and into regional New Zealand”. Leigh’s expertise is in clinical operations, which ensures the research conducted at the Mātai centre is in line with clinical practices and capabilities. Jeanette Lepper was “door-knocking” for job opportunities when she met Samantha. Her expertise is in consulting and marketing and she played a vital role in setting up Mātai through gaining the initial funding required. Samantha recalls they were ready to drop the whole idea until Jeanette came along and funding from the Provincial Growth Fund was secured. Trust Tairāwhiti, the Williams family trusts,

the University of Auckland and the Dame Bronwen and Dr Peter Holdsworth Trust provided initial funding. In September 2020, after 2½ years of setting the foundations, Mātai was launched. The philosophy behind the Mātai centre is to provide innovative technology and research to improve the health of brain, heart, body and social outcomes for all New Zealanders. It’s about giving back to the community and lifting the bar on health and wellbeing. The primary research is looking at mild brain injury, such as concussion, however, a major prostate cancer study is on the cards. Alongside its core research, Mātai is also able to support various other projects, including Auckland Bioengineering Institute-led projects on ADHD and cerebral palsy. Mātai’s state-of-the-art 3-Tesla MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scanner has

attracted high-quality talent to the centre. Mātai has become a sought-after place to continue research, internship, elective placements and fellowships. Dr Eryn Kwon is one such research fellow. Eryn has a Bachelor in Engineering and Science and arrived at Mātai in April 2019. Her research work is predominantly in the mild brain injury model. She is completing a post-doctoral three-year fellowship. Two tertiary scholarships — one funded solely by Mātai, the other jointly by Pultron and Mātai — have just been awarded to two young Gisborne women entering the field of medical sciences or biomedical engineering. Not only are the innovative team at Mātai giving back to the community, they are providing opportunities for rangatahi/young people to step into the world of medical research.

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“Thank you to the wonderful women who have entrusted me to care for them. With love and gratitude”
Sally Wright

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Whistle while she works

A defining moment in the life of international hockey umpire Amber Church comes from a childhood memory. Amber recalls reluctantly travelling from her Te Karaka home to Gisborne every winter weekend to watch her stick-wielding siblings run around the hockey field in the pouring rain and freezing temperatures. Amber, only six years old at the time, noticed how happy her siblings were covered in mud and having fun. She recalls thinking to herself: "If I have to be here, then I will play, too." This was the beginning of her hockey journey but it came with a condition in those early years — Amber refused to wear a hockey skirt. She played in shorts instead. Amber continued to play hockey through her primary, intermediate and high school years. She ranks the Lytton High School "Combo" team of male and female students as her "best hockey-playing memories". At 15 years old, Amber caught the eye of Craig Gribble of Hockey NZ, and she was invited to train as a tournament umpire. Amber achieved 81 percent in the final test. That same year Amber experienced her first taste of umpiring out of town when she travelled to Dunedin to officiate in the Hatch Cup under-13 boys' tournament. After leaving school, Amber headed to Palmerston North to study to be a teacher. She continued to play hockey and made the Central under-21 team. She returned home to complete her final

year of teacher training extramurally — a decision influenced by her burgeoning hockey umpiring career. Amber realised she "could go somewhere" with her umpiring. Hockey NZ provided a tiered pathway, which Amber progressed along "pretty well". In 2009, she umpired her first National Hockey League game in Christchurch. Craig Gribble was hugely influential in advancing her along the pathway towards international umpire status. Amber's first overseas tournament was the Oceania Cup in Fiji. It also involved running courses to help foster and develop local officials — "giving back" to the Pacific Island communities. Her first experience out of the Pacific was in 2010 when she was appointed to umpire at the Pan-American champs in Brazil. Her biggest international appointment came at the 2016 Rio Olympics. Both of these experiences

were "absolutely amazing", she says. Amber makes special mention of the support she has received throughout her journey — in particular an incredibly supportive family and partner; fellow international hockey umpire Jo Cummings, who she describes as a mentor, role model and friend; the late Kaye Griffin — principal of Te Hapara School,

where Amber taught; and Glen Udall — the principal of Gisborne Intermediate, where she currently teaches. "All hockey is good hockey," says Amber, "whether its national, international or umpiring a local game of six-year-olds. As an umpire you give 100 percent to that game."



International hockey umpire Amber Church's love of the game started as a child growing up in Te Karaka and playing in Gisborne. Picture by Tony Scragg

Still Standing Independent, Strong and Proud.

This is me, Tracy Bristowe... and this is my story.

Real Estate is a hard job in any market, but being an Independent Agent was something I really wanted to do. I wanted to bring a little personality to the industry. I didn't want to be constrained to generic real estate and just wanted to do it on my own. I am really proud that — after 10 years with the bigger franchise companies — I have now stood apart as a local boutique real estate agency for 8 years. **Wow, that is coming up 20 years in real estate.**

I never set out to be the biggest or #1. I set out to do an exceptional job for the sellers who chose to trust me, my experience and my negotiating skills. Of course, 16 years at a local law firm stood me in good stead with contract law; and that experience is invaluable to my business.

I had flirted with the idea of going it alone, and then it all started after a few corporate changes — I thought this is definitely NOT for me. So I carried on real estate during the day, studied at night, and completed the full Agent's qualification. Off I went out into the big wide real estate world on my own. Dave Raggett at Draggnett was amazing helping me kick off my brand, and we are still working together now.

I knew I wanted to be **PINK**, and I knew there would be 'naysayers' but I did it anyway... and look at me now #proud. From the Pink brand concept, to the full website content and everything I do with my brand, it is ALL ME!

I have an amazing P.A Lynne McKay who keeps the office on track, and of course I couldn't do this career without my wonderful husband Trevor, and my son Mercy. The hours can be gruelling, and the profession takes it toll mentally and emotionally; but I love a challenge and strive under pressure! I never wanted to be a follower, and be a one-size-fits-all agency, and I am proud to say I have stayed true to the ethos of my brand and the results continue to speak for themselves. I have no intention of getting bigger — **I just love my business just as it is.**

With International Women's Day it is a great day to show support for women in business who have backed themselves, SO if you are just thinking of doing it for yourself, done the research and have a strong business and concept plan — then don't say **"I should have, I could have" — just do it. You will never regret it.**



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JEAN MACHINE

Making a difference in lives of Tairawhiti women

Jean Johnston is a quietly-spoken, unassuming woman with poise . . . but a powerhouse of ambition and drive. She is researcher and recently-published author though these are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to what she has achieved.

Over many decades, Jean has made a difference in the lives of women in Tairawhiti.

Originally from Scotland, her parents were avid readers with a family background in politics and workers' rights.

Jean met husband-to-be and Gisborne guy while he was in Scotland as part of his OE.

They married in 1964 and on the same day vows were exchanged, they set off towards Tilbury in London to board a ship bound for John's home town. Jean had only seen a picture of Makorori Beach in a book and thought "that looks nice".

Within a few days of arriving in Gisborne she secured a job at the library located upstairs near the Albion Hotel in Gladstone Road.

Chief librarian Renee Stewart Mackay was also Scottish and became a mentor to Jean, helping her "build bridges" and adapt to her new life.

Having experienced being a foreigner in a new land, Jean likes to refer to an old Scottish saying, "we're all Jock Tamson's bairns", which means we are all equal and "no matter where you are, you can always make a connection with someone else".

Jean and John had a daughter and a son but despite being busy with family life, she kept herself active in the community. She was involved with the Parents Centre, worked at the new H.B. Williams Memorial Library, attended Gisborne Artists' Society classes (Jean was made a life member of the society in 2018) and sewing classes at Gisborne Girls' High School.

She was also a foundation member of the Gisborne Printmakers Group, which first convened in 1976. The group is to celebrate its 45th year with an exhibition at Tairawhiti Museum.

Jean studied extramurally through Massey University for a Bachelor of Arts in Education and did a postgraduate degree in women's studies.

This inspired her to become involved in the setting up of Gisborne Women's Refuge — a reflection of Jean's "roll up your sleeves" approach.

Jean worked at Tairawhiti Community College which became Tairawhiti Polytechnic (now EIT Tairawhiti), during the 1980s.

As an adult educator, she taught and coordinated many programmes — Women Across the Workforce, the Community Work Certificate and first-year Massey University courses.

As section head of the social sciences department, Jean was integral in some of these courses leading into the social work, nursing, and teaching degrees offered today.

Her association with the polytech/EIT Tairawhiti spanned 26 years up to her retirement in 2014.

Retirement did not slow her down.

It coincided with a project on 40 years of EIT tertiary education. Jean was invited to be co-researcher and author of the Tairawhiti component of the book *First To See The Light*.

More research projects and publications followed.

She wrote the book *Gisborne Highland Pipe Bands: 100 years of Civic Service and Ambitious Gisborne Women: The Organisations They Established And Their Impact on Tairawhiti 1875-1920*. *Ambitious Gisborne Women* was also an exhibition at Tairawhiti Museum.

Jean is also a trustee of the Tairawhiti Positive Ageing Trust, which advocates on behalf of the district's senior citizens.



Jean Johnston with her published work *Ambitious Gisborne Women The Organisations They Established And Their Impact on Tairawhiti 1875-1920*. The book was also an exhibition at Tairawhiti Museum. Picture by Liam Clayton

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For the people

Inspirational, open, down-to-earth and compassionate with a healthy amount of steely determination . . . that sums up Tiana Epati, an ambitious goal achiever, who is prepared to put in the hard work and has a genuine desire to help those who need it.

Tiana is passionate in her role as a lawyer and isn't afraid to challenge the status quo.

She was born in Australia and raised in Samoa before moving to Aotearoa at 10 years of age.

Her father, A'e'au Semi Epati, set up a law practice in South Auckland and took on many difficult cases to help those in need.

In 2002, he was sworn in as New Zealand's first Pasifika judge.

Similarly, Tiana has cut her own path to becoming a successful lawyer who is passionate about helping people.

In 2019 she was elected as the youngest president of the New Zealand Law Society and first of Pasifika descent.

Tiana graduated from university in 2000, with a double degree in law and arts.

She relied on pure determination and resilience to get her through.

After impressing while doing work experience at a crown solicitor's firm in Auckland, Tiana "seized the opportunity" to learn from some of the best.

Tiana remained there for four years before moving to Wellington to further her career including working at the Crown Law Office.

Tiana, husband Matanuku Mahuika their two children — Umuariki and Kuraunuhia — moved to Gisborne in 2011 to be closer to whanau and for a more balanced lifestyle.

She became the first woman partner in Gisborne law firm Rishworth, Wall and Mathieson, where she is a practising criminal defence lawyer.

Tiana speaks highly of the congeniality and support between lawyers in Gisborne.

In her demanding role of Law Society president, Tiana has set out to make a difference.

Health and wellbeing and access to justice are the top two issues identified in NZ law practices.

Tiana's main role is to ensure the purpose of the Law Society is upheld — 'to act as kaitiaki/guardian of the public, support the legal profession and be the independent voice on law reform'.

She is not afraid of hard work but knows the importance of a work/life balance for maintaining health and vitality — especially with a new addition to the family, 14-week-old Ngarangikahiwa.

Tiana runs regularly at the beach, cycles with her family and ensures she is active for 30 minutes a day.

"Pamper" sessions are also part of her self-care.

Tiana's truism is: "Never miss a hair appointment. It's all about honouring and valuing yourself. Once you start missing appointments, you start to slide."

Lawyer Tiana Epati with daughter Ngarangikahiwa. Balancing her work and home life is vital for the first New Zealand Law Society president of Pasifika descent. Picture by Paul Rickard



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HANDS-ON: SuperGrans Tairawhiti field co-ordinator Erina Torrey busy at the organisation’s food bank. Erina works in Gisborne during the week and drops off food items at various Coast communities when she returns home to Te Araroa each Friday. Picture by Rebecca Grunwell

‘I would need three staff to replace what Erina contributes’

SuperGrans Tairawhiti Trust is an organisation renowned for offering support services within Tairawhiti communities.

When trust manager Linda Coulston was approached about featuring as a celebrated woman in these pages, she graciously declined and instead suggested SuperGrans field co-ordinator Erina Torrey.

Erina epitomises the support and respect for each other among the SuperGrans team.

Erina was born in Waiouru, where her parents were involved with the army.

She was subsequently brought up around an army depot in Rotorua.

Self-discipline and practical skills were instilled from a young age, and she applies these to all aspects of her life.

Erina describes herself as “a jack of all trades” and has myriad of life experiences that illustrate her genuine compassion for helping others.

Erina and husband moved to the East Coast 28 years ago and settled into the coastal settlement of Te Araroa. They have raised six of their own children and opened their home to whangai children over the years.

Erina has fully immersed herself in East Coast community life and has played vital roles in supporting those in need.

She was instrumental in establishing 10 mara kai (food gardens) in the Hicks Bay/Te Araroa area for “families struggling to provide nutritious food”.

Erina was also gainfully employed in a variety of roles and over the years upskilled

by studying extramurally through Auckland University and attending six-weekly noho.

She has a Bachelor of Health Sciences and a Bachelor of Environmental Sciences.

Erina has been involved with SuperGrans for the past six years and is the “Coast connection” for the organisation.

She stays in Gisborne during the week for work purposes, then travels home each Friday night — dropping surplus food bank items along the way in Tolaga Bay, Tokomaru Bay, Te Araroa and Hicks Bay.

Erina brought her own “framework” to SuperGrans and it is displayed on the wall of her office space. It reads Takepu (principles), Ahurutanga (safe space), Kaitiakitanga (guardianship), Koha (sharing knowledge) and Mauri Ora (pursuit of wellbeing).

She applies this framework to all areas of her life — work, home, family.

Erina encourages and challenges the clients she walks beside to take ownership of their issues and “turn a negative into a positive because there is always a positive”

She has the utmost respect of manager Linda.

“I would need three staff to replace what Erina contributes. She is resourceful, resilient, compassionate, strong, yet all heart.

“She has supported hundreds upon hundreds of whanau in this community and deserves acknowledgement not only for what she has done, but how she does it.”

The last line belongs to Erina: “You are the author of your story, so make it a brilliant one.”



HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The Gisborne Herald
TE NUPEPA O TE TAIRAWHITI

BPW

Enabling,
Inspiring,
empowering
women



JUST AND EQUAL STATUS FOR WOMEN: That is the global vision of Business and Professional Women. BPW Gisborne committee members (from left) are Anna-Maree Colvin, branch president Catherine Crisp, Sherrill Markie-Brookes, Fiona Evans and Brenda Kinder. Absent is Sam Leahy. Picture by Liam Clayton

Business and Professional Women (BPW) is a not-for-profit organisation with clubs in countries around the world, including 14 in New Zealand.

The vision of the New Zealand Federation of BPW is to “achieve a just and equal status for women in all levels and areas of society, where decisions are taken in true partnership with men, based on mutual respect, for a more balanced and peaceful world”.

BPW NZ has lobbied the government on women’s issues such as paid parental leave, quality flexible work, violence against women and equal pay for work of equal value.

BPW NZ was the initiator and pivotal in the success of Women’s Empowerment Principles, (WEPs), which are designed to strengthen policies and support the creation of pathways to achieve gender equality.

The Gisborne branch of BPW was founded in 1957 and has always attracted a healthy membership.

Members describe BPW as “a group of diverse women who meet once a month to enable, inspire and empower women of all ages”.

BPW is for women seeking mentoring, support, leadership skills, advocacy, friendship

and fun.

It is also a place for women to be involved in making a difference in community and societal platforms.

A sub-group of BPW, Young BPW, is available for women aged 18 to 35.

BPW memberships are for women from all walks of life — regardless of education, employment status or age — who would like to benefit from personal development and networking.

BPW NZ’s national conference is hosted by a different branch each year.

The three-day conference connects BPW

groups from around the country.

Members debate new policy and resolutions, take part in workshops, listen to inspirational and informative guest speakers and enjoy celebratory dinners and general comradeship.

BPW Gisborne meetings take place on the first Tuesday of every month at The Shark Bar at Gisborne Tapatouri Sports Fishing Club, and feature dinner and a guest speaker.

Catherine Crisp is BPW Gisborne’s president.

She can be contacted at gisbornebpw@hotmail.com for any questions regarding BPW and membership.

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