

# LET'S DEAL WITH IT.



## SHAKTI ANNUAL REPORT 2018 - 2019





During the reporting period our communities lost Xi Wang to domestic violence. We did not know her but we hope to ensure her lost life and that of many other women do not go in vain. (Our picture of the Vigil we held for her at Aotea Square on 6th February 2019).





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# CHRISTCHURCH TERROR ATTACKS

## – IN GRIEF, WE PREVAIL

Following the terror attacks, Shakti went to the forefront of providing support services to the families of the victims. We ensured the families of the victims had their immediate and long term needs catered to and that they were adequately resourced. The Shakti Christchurch caseworkers and counsellors provided 24/7 support for weeks and also collaborated with various government agencies and victims support groups to ensure the delivery of culturally appropriate services while continuing to provide Shakti's wrap-around holistic services to the victims.

On March 16th 2019 one day after the Christchurch terror attacks, Shakti in Auckland held a "Safe Space Night" at Corban Arts Centre in West Auckland. This night brought together the community to sing, pray and talk about the terror attacks. Several speakers came forward to speak about their own experiences of racism, discrimination, Islamophobia and xenophobia in New Zealand. The night was very emotional and raw; songs were sung and poems were read, and the solidarity expressed in the room among Pakeha, Maori, Pacifica and ethnic was extremely touching.

Within 48 hours of the massacre Shakti launched a poster campaign "We are Different, but We are One. Our Strength is in our Diversity. Celebrate Unity amidst Diversity. The poster campaign was widely circulated with communities, government agencies including police, community centres and city councils. The posters were also presented at the vigils and rallies held in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in which Shakti and other advocacy groups actively participated. Members of the public were also given the poster to share with their communities.

During the week following the terror attacks Shakti also launched a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram called "Lets Deal with It". This campaign aims was to encourage the public to share their stories of racism and discrimination along with sending a photo of their shoes. The reason for seeking photos of their shoes was to create a wider awareness among the general public about experiencing the feeling of walking in the shoes of someone facing racism and discrimination.

Shakti members attended several vigils and rallies across the country including the Christchurch March for Love. Shakti founding member Farida Sultana is pictured below, speaking at the vigil held at the Auckland Domain one week after the shooting.

In honour of those who lost their lives Shakti launched a Trans-Tasman Campaign to address racism, xenophobia and discrimination. The first initiative was a Trans-Tasman Conference held on June 14 in Auckland which brought together Senators from Australia with MPs and Ministers from New Zealand, Christchurch City Council Mayor Lianne Dalziel, major media personalities, activists and human rights defenders, besides approximately 300 members of the public.





# ABOUT SHAKTI

Shakti Community Council Inc., has its origins in The Shakti Asian Women's Support Group founded by Farida Sultana and 7 other ethnic, immigrant women in Auckland in 1995. The support group was set up by ethnic women for ethnic women to overcome the barriers that come with migration and the intergenerational bonds of cultural oppression. Besides enrolling themselves in Life Skills programmes and learning to become self-reliant, these women sought to challenge the cultural acceptance of Domestic Violence within their communities, promote greater gender equity and bring about social change.

Over the years, the Support Group has grown from the confines of one tiny room to a national umbrella organisation with several centres covering Central, West and South Auckland, North Island Central and South Island.

Shakti's services include a 24-hour domestic violence intervention service for women and other social services for immigrant families. Every year, Shakti caters to thousands of families in New Zealand, from several ethnic groups including Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Malay, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Burmese, Korean, Indian, Fiji Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Iranian, Iraqi and African. Shakti's forte has been in providing culturally-sensitive services, by ethnic people for ethnic people of Asian, African and Middle Eastern origins.

Shakti Community Council Inc. is approved by the Department of Child, Youth & Family (CYF) as a specialist national umbrella organisation and holds various government funding contracts. Some of the member organisations are individually CYF-approved as well. CYF approval ensures implementation of best-practice standards in social services.

## OUR VISION

To have a world where women and children are empowered to live a life of dignity free from fear and violence and are able to exercise their rights, choices and responsibilities

## OUR MISSION

We endeavour to facilitate and ensure safety and overall well-being of all women, young women and children through strategic intervention measures aimed at eliminating all forms of oppression and gender-based violence.

If you wish to donate, kindly do so through our website.  
Visit our website: <http://shaktiinternational.org>



# WHAT WE DO

1. Shakti Asian Women's Centre Inc. Established in Auckland, this organisation provides a 24-hour multi-lingual national crisis call service (0800 SHAKTI) for ethnic women in domestic violence, drop in centres for women, outreach, case work, advocacy, counselling, legal referral, interpreting, life skills programmes, domestic violence intervention and awareness training for communities and lobbying for change. We have drop-in service centres in the North Shore, Manukau, Onehunga and Henderson so as to be able to be closer to the doorstep of women who need our services most.

2. Shakti Asian Women's Safehouse Inc. This organisation has two culturally specialist Refuges in Auckland that offer culturally appropriate refuge for ethnic women and their children, which are safe and confidential and offer emergency residential services, self-empowerment programmes, therapy, counselling, legal support, health referral, food support, advocacy in housing and immigration, ACC advocacy, life skills education and initiatives to promote self-reliance.

3. Shakti Legal Advocacy & Family Social Services Inc. Based in South Auckland, this organisation offers settlement and social services for immigrant families in Greater Auckland region. Casework and family support services include family violence awareness, prevention and intervention, child abuse prevention, couple counselling, family conferencing and comprehensive support for immigrant youth through a dedicated Youth Unit. The Centre also hosts a Legal Unit.

4. Shakti Education Training & Advisory Company (SETAC) Ltd. An NZQA-approved training and educational arm of Shakti, this entity operates on a recyclable profit model wherein profits, if any, will be recycled back into non-profit activities that will result in wider benefits for our client groups. The main purpose is to develop and deliver sustainable programmes including educational and training programmes for the migrant and refugee communities with the aim of enabling wider integration and self-reliance. The organisation runs an NZQA Level 1 Certificate in Community Engagement & Employment Skills Programme for women survivors of violence and is currently in various stages of delivering its Sustinnoworx Programme. In 2018 the first Op Shop aimed at reducing landfill and upcycling clothes and other household goods was established. A second will open in August 2019.

5. Shakti Ethnic Women's Support Group (Central Region) Inc. This organisation hosts a safe culturally appropriate Refuge, provides domestic violence intervention support, crisis response, English language classes, road safety programmes and other life skills programmes for ethnic women and their children in North Island central. A drop-in service centre for women is also offered in Tauranga. Services cover Bay of Plenty, Rotorua and Waikato regions.

# WHAT WE DO

6. Shakti Ethnic Women's Support Group, Christchurch Inc. Established to cover South Island, this organisation hosts a culturally appropriate Refuge, provides domestic violence intervention support, crisis response, community-based support, English language classes, road safety programmes and other life skills programmes for ethnic women and their children in Christchurch and South Island. A drop-in service centre for women is also offered in Christchurch and Dunedin

7. Shakti Ethnic Women's Support Group Wellington Inc. Initially set up as a policy and advocacy office, this centre, driven by demand, has diversified into providing home-based as well as emergency and casework related services to victims of violence in the region including a culturally appropriate Refuge in the Hutt region.

Besides these services Shakti also has a Counselling service in Auckland, Christchurch, Tauranga and Wellington. One of the services offered is a Ministry of Justice Protected Persons' Safety Programme for women victims and their children

Outside of New Zealand, Shakti delivers services in Australia through Shakti Migrant & Refugee Support Group Melbourne Inc. and Shakti Migrant & Refugee Women's Support Group New South Wales Inc. Internationally, we have Project Women Against Violence through Shakti International services.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Shila Nair, Shakti counsellor and Senior Advisor has been conferred Membership of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in the Queen's 2019 Birthday Honours. Shila has been involved with Shakti for over 17 years has been a strong advocate of ending violence against women and children and promoting gender equity. We were also pleased that Shila was appointed to the Te Uepu Haipai i te Ora (Safe & Effective Justice Advisory Group) by Justice Minister Andrew Little towards Criminal Justice Reform in New Zealand.



Rupal Mehta (right), Vice Chairwomen of Shakti Tauranga Ethnic Women's Support Group received the 2018 local Kiwibank Local Hero Awards. Rupal was honoured for dedicating over 14 years of volunteering service with Shakti towards ending domestic and family violence within ethnic communities.



Dr Shanti Selvakumar (left) one of Shakti's long term supporters was presented with the Kiwi Bank Local Hero Award for her inspiring support to Shakti for 24 years and volunteering her medical services to women subjected domestic violence as well as promoting social harmony.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This is my first time to express my thoughts on the year that has past. It has been an eventful year like every year with many triumphs and difficulties. Throughout New Zealand, Shakti centres have continued to render their services to migrant and refugee women of colour. Tragedy hit New Zealand with the devastating Christchurch terror attacks on the Muslim community this year. Shakti had been at the forefront in not only providing support for the affected families but also in participating vigil and organising a successful Trans-Tasman conference to promote racial equity and bring together activists from Aotearoa and Australia.

Shakti's work on forced and under-aged marriage was finally recognised after many years of advocacy and an amendment bill to prevent it was passed in parliament.

Quite a few of our women were recognised for their services to the community. Shila Nair was honoured with the New Zealand Order of Merit, Rupal Mehta and Shati Selvakumar were awarded the local hero medals.

I want to also acknowledge the educational arm of Shakti, SETAC's effort to develop an ethnic strategy framework to prevent family violence among our communities.

While we appreciate the amazing support and appreciation we receive, I also want to acknowledge our ongoing struggle to receive adequate funding especially for our Wellington refuge.

Despite the hardships, Shakti staff and volunteers are dedicated and passionate about empowering migrant and refugee women of colour and kids. Hence, we will strive to continue fighting for what we believe in.

Thank you.



# UPDATE FROM NATIONAL OFFICE

Our National office is currently thriving with immense energy with the intake of new staff members to carry forward Shakti's commitment to end all forms of violence within New Zealand communities.

This year we introduced the position of 'Service Delivery Manager' to ensure appropriate and competent service delivery by all member organisations. Senior Social Worker Margie Agaled has assumed that role and we believe that overall responsibility for our organisations' service delivery will be in very capable hands. She will work closely with all Shakti organisations and be an active team member of our National Office.

We continue to advocate for sustainable funding, particularly with government departments and towards the recognition of Shakti's work in a broader context of keeping New Zealand violence free. Our persistent advocacy in regards to changing legislation on Forced and Underage Marriage as well as Dowry Abuse has yielded positive results with due changes in the Marriage Act and the new Family Violence Act 2018. We would like to thank the MPs and Undersecretary Jan Logie for listening and doing what is needed to keep vulnerable women, children and young immigrant women safe.

This year, Shakti member organisation Setac Ltd signed a MoU with the Department of Corrections and Ranui-based eco-village Earth Song to implement our Sustinnoworx project. Prisoners from Paremoremo Prison worked on refitting two 20 ft. containers into workshop and an Op Shop space. Sustinnoworx 4R Project (Reduce, Recycle, Reinvent and Re-use) is an initiative of SETAC aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and enable vulnerable women including victims of violence to learn new skills and upcycling and find pathways to self-reliance.

We have also had a good year in terms of organisational audits. Our finance team implemented Xero accounting practice and in the coming year we intend to move to online banking. We would like to acknowledge our National Office team for their dedication and hard work as well as the staff, volunteers and management committees of all Shakti member organisations.

# CEDAW – 2018

Shakti members joined the Pacific Women's Watch NZ group to present a Shadow report to the Committee for the Elimination & Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) convention held at the United Nations in Geneva in July 2018. Shakti was able to present an Oral Statement this year along with Pacific Women's Watch and the National Council of Women. Our advocacy was at its height and was evidenced through their recommendations to the New Zealand government. We are hopeful that the government will consider and implement the recommendations aimed at eliminating violence against women and promoting gender equity.





# TRANS-TASMAN CONFERENCE

Following the Christchurch terror attacks on March 15, 2019, Shakti took the lead in hosting a Trans-Tasman Conference at the Mt Eden War Memorial on June 14th 2019. Partners to this initiative were the Auckland Peace Action Trust, Khadija Leadership Foundation and a few other activist agencies.

The aim of this conference was to create a safe platform and enable a dialogue between people of New Zealand and Australia on the issue of racism. The objectives were multi-fold: To be able to collaborate with communities within New Zealand and across the Tasman, and develop the key messages to drive a long-term campaign; To reduce racism, discrimination, micro-aggression and radicalization so that we can prevent such tragedies from reoccurring and learn to rise above what has already been experienced; To reduce Prejudice and Discrimination projected through various Media platforms; Identify and deal with all forms Xenophobia and Racism.

There were about 300 attendees at this conference. The conference guests included representatives from New Zealand and Australian parliament, city councils, law enforcement agencies, media, government, not profit organisations and general public including highly motivated activists. This included Australian Senator, Dr. Mehreen Faruqi and Victorian Green Party leader & MLC Dr. Samantha Ratnam

During the conference five parallel panel discussions were held. The themes of the panel discussions were:

1. My Human Rights
2. Migrant and Refugee women's leadership in promoting Integration & Racial Equity in Australia/ New Zealand
3. The need for a Trans-Tasman collaboration for Racial Equity
4. The role of Media in promoting Racial Harmony
5. Extremism and Radicalisation: The impact on communities and countries

Former Shakti chairperson Amokura Panoho opened the Conference. The keynote speaker of the conference was Lianne Dalziel the Mayor of Christchurch. Lianne emphasised the importance of holding a trans-Tasman event and working across borders. Lianne touched upon an important issue and stated, that she had "been invisible to racism until the terror attacks....that a man will never experience misogyny the same way Pakeha will never experience racism".

Australian Senator Dr. Mehreen Faruqi spoke about discrimination that takes place in Australia against indigenous Australians. She highlighted the importance of calling out racism and speaking of it as we experience it and added that it was important to listen and open our hearts and minds of those who have faced this abuse.

# TRANS-TASMAN CONFERENCE

Victorian Green Party Leader and MLC Dr. Samantha Ratnam called to prevent the rising tide of racism in New Zealand and Australia and asked for everyone to commit to insisting that our voices are heard and to be vigilant.

Minister for Ethnic Communities Jenny Salesa thanked the conference partners, staff and volunteers of Shakti for bringing together the Conference. She also acknowledged all the dignitaries and the leadership Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern had shown the nation, since the Christchurch attacks. She said Muslim communities have raised several concerns regarding their safety and that various Government groups were currently working towards ensuring safety and ongoing support. The Government has committed to make sure all communities feel safe and are respected, she added.


Undersecretary for Family and Sexual Violence, Jan Logie acknowledged Shakti for their work and their important role in society. She said it was important to recognise the role of women's organisations in the community. Struggles of women cannot be separated from struggles of white supremacy, she said.

New Zealand MP Marama Davidson said that it's only people who have lived similar experiences who could understand that "they are us" is full of holes. She spoke about Maori being colonised in their own land and being made to feel like refugees on their own land.

EEO Commissioner Saunoamaali'i Karanina Sumeo said that while we have laws that counter racial discriminations and the Treaty, we also have the reality. The challenges are on how we make these two come together in a way that it makes sense. "Our aspiration is not in line with our reality," she said.







During My Human Rights panel, Golriz Ghahraman spoke of the right to live and to be free without being silenced and marginalised, and having our representation noticed. Camille Nakhid touched upon how as a society we prefer not to talk about, colonisation, white supremacy, and that we have to talk about it. She stated what happened in Christchurch started with colonisation and we have a way of ignoring indigenous people. This panel discussed that sharing power means sharing decisions; that we should be on the decision making table and the system should make space for different ethnicities. The system needs to change so that people are able to stand without feeling threatened.

During the panel on Migrant and Refugee women's leadership in promoting integration and racial equity in Australia and New Zealand, MP Parmjeet Parmar stated that while there is leadership amongst our women in the not for profit sector, this needs to be taken to the next level. Rafiqah Sulaiman highlighted that women of colour struggles are very different to Pakeha women and heterosexual women's struggles are different to a queer women's experience. She stated that is important for all women to work together to bring harmonious aspects to society and that women from all backgrounds should represent issues that are not represented.

During the panel on the need for a Trans-Tasman collaboration for racial equity, Farida Sultana touched upon how immigrants are often undocumented in the media unless they have done something wrong. She emphasised that all we need is people to support and to stand beside one another and allow us to take charge of our next generation. Valerie Morse from Auckland Peace Action, pointed out that the conversations about Christchurch tragedy will remain incomplete unless we address the issues around the discourse of White Supremacy and military invasion. She also warned about the growing trend of fake news being spread about migrants and urged the intelligence agencies to be more vigilant when making such assessments.

In the role of the media in promoting racial harmony panel, Chloe Hubbard of Stuff New Zealand stated that she will not have the same experiences as an ethnic women and that is an important consideration to be aware of. Journalist-Author Nicky Hager stated we need to be cautious about the hate speech issue as we do not want the people in power to paint themselves as the victims. He insisted that the news media unfairly gets to decide whose point of view gets heard. Katie Bradford of TV1 advised the importance of listening to people and learning from the past. Melissa Chan- Green of TV3 stated that the slogan "They are us", which was introduced after the terror attacks is ignorant on behalf of people who have never been subjected to racism. She pointed out that the right approach to dealing with hate speech is not ignoring it and to investigate these stories.