

THE WOMEN'S NETWORK OF WHANGANUI PRESENTS

# La Fiesta!

NZ'S COOLEST LITTLE FESTIVAL SHOWCASING WOMEN  
IN OUR AWESOME WHANGANUI TOWN.  
CELEBRATING ITS TENTH BIRTHDAY IN 2019

La Fiesta is the brainchild of Women's Network Manager, Carla Donson. Having met hundreds of ordinary Whanganui women doing truly inspiring things, she wanted to share them with the rest of the world. Knowing that most of us are inspired by folk that we know, and showing people of all ages that anything is possible. Carla also wanted more people to celebrate International Women's Day, and it's at the heart of La Fiesta activities.

It's the true essence of community that shapes the festival programme each year, with Carla's guiding hand as the Festival Coordinator. From what we can tell, La Fiesta is unique in Aotearoa New Zealand. There is no other festival like it. People travel from around the country to attend, and it has attracted visitors from Australia, Canada, England, and Germany.

Events and activities in each festival programme cover everything from arts and culture, music and performance, sports and recreation, education and wellbeing, to the truly inspiring, downright fun and social.

## SUCCESS STORIES

- Women build confidence, social connections, and community.
- Women have used the festival to trial a start-up, run a programme, or develop a new service. Many of these have gone on to become established activities, businesses and programmes.
- Several families moved to Whanganui because of La Fiesta. Whanau love the idea that we have a festival celebrating women, showcasing that Whanganui has a unique heart.
- Women have utilised the festival to write and launch books, and it even featured in a documentary last year.
- Our commitment to commemorating One Billion Rising on the opening day of the festival has seen us be first-in-the-world in this global event to rise up against violence toward women and girls.
- YWCA Australia was so impressed with La Fiesta that we mentored them for a year and they now run the unique in Australia "Lismore Women's Festival" based entirely on our model.

## CELEBRATING WOMEN AROUND AOTEAROA

La Fiesta runs over 3-4 weeks every February and March. It has attracted around 20,000 participants in its first 9 years, and hundreds of presenters.

As well as showcasing local women, the festival has featured award-winning comedian Michele A'Court, and award-winning musicians like Amiria Grenell, Anna Coddington, and Jess Chambers. As well as a host of other amazing talent like Lisa Tomlins and Vanessa Stacey, Taranaki bands Glass Boat, Juliet McLean & the Navigators, and Wellington duo Broken Lexicon. Not to mention authors like Auckland-based Katherine Dewar and Debbie McCauley from Tauranga.

Expressions of interest are open from August–November each year. All you need to do to get involved is to have a great idea and our team will help bring it to life.

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Making positive change for women  
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