

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Music

Update-1 Intro ([00:10](#)):

This is Update-1, the podcast of the National Press Club in Washington D C update one provides a forum for listeners to learn about national and international stories, focusing on journalism and communication issues, news and politics. Now, the latest edition of update one

Adan Konowe ([00:35](#)):

I'm Adam Kanowe and joining me today is NPC member and freelance reporter Victoria Gaither, now based in New Zealand, and with her as Heather Hutchings, chair of the Porirua Chamber of Commerce near the capital city of Wellington. Thank you both for joining me.

Victoria Gaither/Heather Hutchings ([00:48](#)):

Thank you. Thank you for having us.

Adam Konowe ([00:51](#)):

On Sunday, March 8th the world celebrates International Women's Day with the theme of hashtag each for equal promoting that an equal world is an enabled world. New Zealand women will be joining millions of other women around the world participating in events marking the day. And so Heather, I want to start with you. New Zealand has a rich history of women's rights notably as the first country in the world to allow women the right to vote something definitely to be proud of during this day, but also three female prime ministers, Jenny Shipley, Helen Clark, and now Jacinda Ardern. What makes New Zealand such a leader in this regard?

Heather Hutchings ([01:25](#)):

Absolutely. We're proud of this. Not saying we don't have a problem but find that we've got a get it done culture. And not just female prime ministers. We have a woman women leaders right across our society in business education and local government. We still have a way to go. There are a number of issues that still have an impact on woman -- get some pay board appointments, career choices. But it's things we continue to call for a Weymouth on and encourage our members and the business community to do the right thing.

Adam Konowe ([01:58](#)):

Yeah. And I want to talk a little bit about, about the business community there in some of the sort of larger issues that are affecting trade. But before we get there, it's fair to say that 2019 was a, was a difficult year for Kiwis, especially with the Christ Church mosque shooting and the ensuing discussion of, of gun control. How did that affect you and change your way of thinking? Plus, you know, how do you think new Zealanders as a whole responded?

Heather Hutchings ([02:22](#)):

Uh, you know, it's only just a few weeks away from the anniversary of that and it's safe to say we still have a long way to go. What was incredible was how the country came together to support the family. As a nation we didn't know what happened here isn't detectable. And that's a powerful thing. So for me personally, it made me really grateful for those government and nongovernment agencies, like our first

responders, our police, our doctors and nurses, our health workers, our support workers. This was an act of terrorism, but we didn't let that terror take root. On the gun control issue itself, tightening the current regulations was appropriate to do, and all but one member of our parliament voted for that legislation. Did the amnesty work? I don't believe it did. I believe that the guns are still in the hands of the wrong people. While the people who handed in their guns were people like our farmers, our hunting people, our sports people. These people have been alive.

Adam Konowe ([03:22](#)):

It's interesting to see how, uh, an amnesty like that worked given the topic of gun control in a lot of countries, the U S included. Um, but that wasn't the only crisis that New Zealand, uh, had to deal with in December. White Island off the North Island of New Zealand. Uh, the volcano there erupted and put that country into the spotlight. Again, dozens were killed and injured. Tell us your thoughts on, you know, tourists being allowed that close to an active volcano in the first place and how you think the aftermath of that could affect the tourism industry.

Heather Hutchings ([03:54](#)):

So, once again, this is another issue that's still ongoing. It was an absolute tragedy. There are people who are looking into this as we speak. I worked, which without government agency you are essentially responsible for ensuring employees get the staff on site each night as well as the coronavirus inquiries which are underway. So I wouldn't want to preempt the outcome of the outcome of that, except to say something that it's something the tourist industry is grappling with. The country went through a fairly extensive divide in our health and safety laws back in 2015 which will change across all industry, terrorism included. The inquiries will be important for us to look at. While mindful that there's always some impact, I think that the issues around the coronavirus again kept a much greater impact on our tourism business and we're starting to see that worldwide now.

Adan Konowe ([04:46](#)):

Yeah. So I'm curious about that. I mean the, there've been a number of events in the region. A lot of my work is in aviation and I've seen a number of events, uh, either, you know, curtailed or you know, canceled completely. What have you seen, you know, in what is still fairly early weeks for this outbreak.

Heather Hutchings ([05:04](#)):

People are starting to talk about it and they're looking at other business communities, looking at the impact that it will have on them. Now, we were speaking to a woman yesterday who are in the shoe business and of course his shoes are made in China. Now those factories are closed. So imagine what the impact that that's going to have on that industry. So we're aware of it, we're reconsidering it. Um, we're busy talking about it. It will have a major impact on our tourism. And of course tourism is big in New Zealand.

Adam Konowe ([05:33](#)):

Absolutely. So you have an event to celebrate international women's day coming up and uh, our very own Victoria Gaither there will be serving as MC. So how did you two meet and, uh, are you quite sure you know what you're getting yourself in for by having an American host, your event?

Heather Hutchings ([05:51](#)):

Uh, I'm a business consultant for my own business and Victoria was speaking at conference that was being run for the team of one of my clients and right away I knew that I had to get to know this woman and so I invited her to speak at our International Woman's Day event. So I believe Victoria will bring a really different perspective and a different understanding to 2020 hashtagit'sverycool. Victoria's childhood, her education, her work, her outlook on how she sees the world will be different to some of the participants at that international women's day luncheon., I think Victoria will be inspiring. I think she will challenge us to think differently and I'm really excited to have Victoria at International Women's Day events.

Speaker 4 (06:35):

Sounds good. Well that's a good bridge Victoria, to turn to you. You've worked as a broadcast journalist, not just here in the United States but now in New Zealand for International Connection Media. You've been there for about five years. You've come across some remarkable women. Tell us about this real New Zealand photo exhibition you're currently working on.

Victoria Gaither (06:52):

Adam, it's great to be with you and hi to everybody back home in Washington DC and also at the National Press Club. While you see, when Heather had talked to me about being an MC for the International Women's Day, I thought, you know, it would be a great opportunity for me to do a photo expositions and call it Real New Zealand Women because being in the country I have come across some amazing women in New Zealand, whether it's government and communities and also in businesses. And I thought, you know, would be a great idea just to show the world real New Zealand women. So we're not talking about women that are glammed up. We're talking about everyday women doing everyday job handling their businesses in their communities. So I just decided to do that, to tie that into International Women's Day. And um, I wasn't sure the response that I was going to get once I've put it together. But so far I tell you what, I have not put my camera down. The amount of photos that I've been able to take of everyday women in New Zealand, Adam, it has been absolutely phenomenal.

Adan Konowe (07:56):

And it, has that been the most surprising part or is there something else?

Victoria Gaither (08:00):

Actually, um, I was surprised that women didn't say no to me. Um, and if I could just sort of indulge myself a little bit and can do some comparison with American women, uh, including myself. If you came to me and said, "Hey Victoria, I'm doing this exhibition. Let me take your photo." I would say, "Can we do it on this day? I've got to fix my hair. I've got to put some makeup on. I've got to book the studio time." Um, I need to look the way that I want to look. But what surprisingly about New Zealand women, I had no women who came at me in that fashion, the way they looked on that day and that job that they were doing was how they want it to be seen, how they wanted to be, uh, represented as a real New Zealand women's. So that surprised me a bit. And I think that some of the cultural differences that you'll see between American women as well as New Zealand women.

Adan Konowe (08:53):

Yeah. And when you think about that, we've talked about obviously the impact that women have had in New Zealand from a, from a political perspective, both from having the right to vote as well, the serving in parliament and of course being prime minister without leading the question. I mean you must feel a

little bit like New Zealand women have, you know, a voice and are listened to perhaps in a way that is somewhat different from elsewhere in your travels.

Victoria Gaither ([09:16](#)):

Yeah, I think so. And that, that was one of the first things that I noticed about New Zealand women when I came to the country that first of all they're curious about every single thing. Second of all, they listen and third of all, they do make sure that their voice is heard. So whether that, that voice is heard at night when I'm listening to talk back radio, whether that's, you know, in a meeting, whether that's in just every single day conversation. I think also what makes New Zealand different and the women is that it's the size of the country. So the size of the country allows them, I think for their voice to be heard more as opposed to back home in America where you've got 330 million voices and then having to compete all the time. In a country of close to 5 million people, you less likely I think has to compete in terms of being heard. So that was one thing that's quite unique to New Zealand and that women have no problem here in this country. Uh, having a voice and also having their voice heard by the appropriate people.

Adan Konowe ([10:17](#)):

And do you think the issues are the same between the U S and New Zealand for them or is that different as well?

Victoria Gaither ([10:23](#)):

I do. I think, I think your, your basic of bread and butter issues as we call them back home in the States is the same here in New Zealand. Families are concerned about how they're going to eat. Mom and dad are concerned about keeping a roof over the kid's house, living wages, uh, health care. So I think all of those things that we tackle back home in America, you know, New Zealand is, is no exception in tackling those same problems. I think one of the major problems that New Zealanders have to face and they will make a decision on a September, Saturday the 19th when they go to the ballots for election day. Um, of course if they're going to keep Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, or if they're going to turn to national and elect Simon Bridges. But I think no matter what party is in power, um, they have to deal with living wages and they have to deal with Brent. Um, and they have to deal with, you know, foreigners coming into the country buying up properties where everyday New Zealanders just can't simply afford it. Your mom and dad who's, you know, making an earnest living and going to work, you know, they can't afford to live in Austin and they can't afford \$1,000 a week for rent. So I think no matter what government is going to be empowered, they've got to address those, those basic things that everyday Kiwis are dealing with every single day.

Adan Konowe ([11:44](#)):

Yeah. So let's talk about that just a little bit more. I mean the prime minister is certainly an increasingly global figure from our perspective between the Christ Church shooting the White Island eruption. But obviously she doesn't serve the world. She serves New Zealand. So what do you think new Zealanders think of her?

Victoria Gaither ([12:01](#)):

I think it's actually double sided on that. I'm just going to turn my piece of paper over so I can give you some actual factual information. So this morning I was listening to the am show and the am show is that it's an am show that is on television and radio and they did their own news poll and again this is information that just came out and it said that 63% of people feel that Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is

performing well and that she's doing a great job. 26.1% say that Simon Bridges who is of the national party that he is actually doing a great job. But the key point that's really interesting in that for Simon Bridges is that uh, his, his whole, his numbers are up 2.2% so that's good for him because you know, last year he had a really, really tough year.

Victoria Gaither ([12:51](#)):

I think you know, his um, he was sort of a down in the dumps in terms of you know, what people thought about him. So for him to get a 2.2 jump from this poll that I heard today, that's actually something I think that would make him very happy. I think Simon verges is a fighter. I think he's done a lot within this year to try to improve his ratings and also what New Zealand just think of himself. I'll go just into our, Durham is at 53% and clearly she is still the favorites. I think she's going to have to work at it. I don't think it's going to be something that's going to be given to her. She's going to have to work at it. She's going to have to fight. And um, and obviously, you know, with his ratings picking up a little bit, I think clearly, you know, the labor party here in New Zealand, uh, if they're smart enough they'll be able to figure that out.

Victoria Gaither ([13:41](#)):

The new Zealanders are gonna have to figure out, you know, if they're happy with the status quo and how things are going right now, um, or if they want change. I can tell you just sort of speaking to everyday people on the street, I've spoken to three people who said, listen, uh, voted for prime minister Jacinda Ardern last election, not going to happen this selection. But then I've talked to people who said, um, you know, she's doing a great job, not only domestic but on the international stage for us and I'm going to vote for her again. But I would just say putting a period on this whole thing, she is going to have to work at it. It's not going to be something that I think that's going to be a given to her. And that makes me think, um, Adam of elections back home with Hillary Clinton when, you know, everyone just assumed that Hillary Clinton was a sure win and that she was going to win and it didn't happen. So I think in Ardern's case it's not as sure when she's going to have to work at it.

Adan Konowe ([14:36](#)):

Well, it's certainly not unusual in a number of Dem democracies where as election day gets closer, you know, the polls Titan and things, you know, become a bit closer than they, they seem to be farther out. How would I want to turn back to you for a couple of comments before we go. You know, first of all, as chair of a New Zealand chamber of commerce trade is obviously very important to you and your members. And I'm just curious with everything that's been going on over the last year or so, Brexit, Asia Pacific trade, other developments, we talked a little bit about Corona virus and the impact that it can have on global supply chains. Where do you and your members stand on on some of these issues and what really is of most concern going forward?

Heather Hutchings ([15:16](#)):

Well, I think for us going forward, the Coronavirus is one of our biggest concern. The Brexit thing is not a concern for us. We will still be why about our report. We will be talking to Britain, but we'll also be talking to the EU as far as our markets are concerned. So going forward as far as business is concerned, they will be the Coronavirus and a tourism and the info impact on our businesses. The election is also another issue. And being a business person, I've been in business now for a number of years and if you go back to every election year, the public closes their wallets up. They don't spend and so it's a concern of who's going to get into the government, who's going to be running our country. And so the public just

shut down, they close their wallets, they wait and see. And that's the year we were in at the moment, so financially for New Zealand businesses it's going to be a bit of a struggle for some of us.

Adan Konowe ([16:09](#)):

Yeah. And going back to the, the topic of, of International Women's Day and the thing that brought you in Victoria together, what's your message going to be for, uh, you know, for women and others at the event that you're holding?

Heather Hutchings ([16:22](#)):

Yeah, so there's a minger the out there, that's often said, funnily enough, I used this to my granddaughter. They have the day. It's the phrase "You've got that". It's more than just saying lean in. I think it states you can, you will. So I go own it. Grab it. And as a woman in business and have community, even in our family, we must keep reminding ourselves of that.

Adan Konowe ([16:45](#)):

Wonderful.

Victoria Gaither ([16:46](#)):

Good.

Adan Konowe ([16:47](#)):

Thank you so much. Thank you so much to both Heather Hutchings, a chair of the Perra Chamber of Commerce in New Zealand and Victoria Gaither, a National Press Club member now living and working as a freelance reporter in New Zealand for update one. I'm Adam Konowe,

Speaker 1 ([17:01](#)):

[Music].

Update-1 Outro ([17:12](#)):

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