

## AFGW Post AGM and Council e-News November 2016



On 5th November we held the AFGW AGM in Melbourne followed by a very pleasant dinner and then, on Sunday, the 4th Council Meeting of this Triennium.

I thank Jenny Strauss for all the hard work she put into organising the venue and the dinner and all the members of GWV for their help, participation and willingness to act as proxies.

However the overwhelming message from the 2016 AGM is that the new format is not working as we had hoped. From the start we had known that Mary Crawford would be away in the USA covering the election and we all look forward to hearing from her about the excitement and reactions to this world event. How lucky we are to have the opportunity of a member on the spot! However, we had hoped for a much bigger attendance. Unfortunately apart from the executive there was no one able to attend from Sydney or Brisbane. Vivienne Cowlshaw-Shortell (Gold Coast) and Catherine Evans and Jocelyn Eskdale (Canberra) represented GWQ and AFGW NSW respectively, all of the proxies being provided by Victoria. Sickness then prevented the attendance of some of these volunteers. It seems but yesterday that Council members were troubled that proxies from another state could not adequately express the view of a State Association! We have sought proxies from each STA for Council since last year without success. It has been proposed that we look into costs and possibilities of a video conferencing AGM for 2017 hoping to get a full turnout of genuine delegates and for it to be easier and less expensive for observers to attend. As you all know there were important issues on which we were voting.

I realise the **rise in dues** was an unpopular motion but it did pass unanimously. With that valuable instrument, the retrospectoscope, it is easy to say that both GWI and AFGW should have been implementing regular rises in capitation fees since 2004, at least in line with CPI rises but it didn't happen as no-one was brave enough in a time of falling membership. It had now become essential for survival.

The other important change was the introduction of two new classes of membership. **Independent Membership** for those resident in a State or Territory without an Association and **Invited Membership** for those without a degree but with a demonstrated interest and involvement in the aims and mission of AFGW. We hope the Independent Membership will enable members of GWSA to continue their membership and former members of AFGW NT and AFUW Tasmania to return to the fold. Personally I think there is a strong case for North Queensland to be considered a separate State in this, at least until there are enough members to form a Branch of GWQ, but I stress this is only a 'Captain's Call' and with much less power than that of Prime Ministers!

AFGW has belonged to two of the National Women's Alliances, economic Security4Women Inc (eS4W) and Equality Rights Alliance (ERA), since their earlier incarnation as Security4Women and Womenspeak. KPMG completed a review of the Alliances in March 2016, which was released just before the Council Meeting, and the newly elected Government had agreed to finance the Alliances for a further three years. eS4W is reviewing its constitution and governance and Council is monitoring the changes when considering the place of the two Alliances in our organisation. 'Tricia Blombery resigned as eS4W representative in consideration of all her extra duties as GWI Honorary Treasurer. Catherine Evans (Canberra Branch) and Vivienne Cowlshaw - Shortell (Gold Coast Branch) attended the eS4W AGM with Dalma Jacobs and Council will consider the representation and AFGW's ongoing membership in the Alliances in the coming months. Correspondence on the latter can be made available through your STA President.

Sadly among the Vales at the AGM there were two past AFUW Presidents, Dorothy Betty (1994-1997) Life Member AFGWNSW and Daphne Elliott (1997-2000) Member Emerita AFGW 2016. Both served the organisation loyally over a very long period, Dorothy from graduation in 1954 and

Daphne from 1947 and both made many important contributions. Mary Kane (Life Member AFGW NSW) was another who had served loyally as AFGW Treasurer and Registrar and also on the IFUW Finance Committee. We shall all miss them all.

While this was Madeleine's last Council Meeting as Past President she will be continuing as Status of Women Convener. We thank her warmly for all she did as President and are pleased she will still be involved in Council. From 1 December Kerry Ferguson will be on Council as President of GWV, and we welcomed her as an observer at the AGM and congratulated her on her election.

Jenny Strauss was appointed as Federal Fellowships Officer and recommended that there again be two Barbara Hale Fellowships in 2017 worth \$8,000 and one Georgina Sweet at \$7,000. Nominations from all States for people to serve as assessors for these awards are welcome.

The 2016 awardees were:

### **Barbara Hale Fellowships**

**Jessica Webb** of the Menzies Institute of Medical Research in Darwin whose project is entitled "*Characterisation of antibiotic resistance mechanisms in Burkholderia pseudomallei*"

**Emily Fitzpatrick** a paediatric registrar working in Western Sydney. She is completing a PhD working with remote Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley, developing local research capacity.

**AFGW Fellowship: Jessica Kingsford.** Jess is studying for a PhD at Sydney University. Her subject is the emergence of moral identity. Jess's research holds much promise for the future of moral education in schools, and she has been involved with the development of the Ethics Course in NSW Primary Schools aligning itself as it does with developments in the United States research and education sectors. Before embarking on a career as a research psychologist, Jess enjoyed a successful career as a theatre director in Melbourne and London.

Full stories and photographs are on the AFGW website [afgw.org.au/](http://afgw.org.au/)

It is the benefit from all our scholarships and prizes that so justifies our continuation. I recognise the loss of Gowning in so many areas has necessitated a rethink on the funding of these awards and congratulate all those involved who have found ways to continuing to help so many students.

**Jocelyn Eskdale** accepted nomination as Resolutions Convenor in place of Jenny Strauss.

As always, **the minutes of these two meetings** will be available through your local President, who is of course a VP of Council and they will be on the members section of the website when electronically approved.

Planned **Council dates for next year are 4 March 2017 and 22 July 2017**, whether face to face or by teleconference yet to be organised. The AGM will be earlier than this year, probably 9 or 16 September. While I should love to have it as part of a celebration of 125 years of Associations of Graduate Women in NSW in 2017, financial considerations may mean a video meeting.

I thank you all for accepting the dues rise and enabling a future for GWI and thus an international component to our organisation.

My warmest wishes to you all for Christmas and the holiday season. I do hope to catch up with more of you in 2017.

Jane Baker  
President AFGW