

Australian Federation of Graduate Women

A Voice for Graduate Women



Newsletter

November 2010

It seems so long since the AGM at Sancta last November and a busy year has passed for AFGW and I hope we all have achievements, both personal and as an organization, to remember as the holiday season approaches again. My warmest wishes to you all and to your families and friends for Christmas and the New Year. May we all be renewed with energy for all that waits to be done in 2011!

Education Trust

In August the first AFGW Fellowship award was announced with Tanya Josev as the winner. She has degrees in both Arts and Law, and in both she achieved outstanding results; she was also an editor of the *Melbourne University Law Review*. Following her graduation she worked for two years as the associate for Justice Alan Goldberg, a highly respected member of the Federal Court of Australia, and also acquired experience of academic research in a research centre of the Law School. She has arranged to work on Schlesinger papers in the New York Public Library, and has arranged interviews with members of the American Constitutions Society, which has been closely involved in the American debate on judicial activism. She has also secured admission to New York University in its Global Fellows Doctoral Researcher Program, where she would work with Professor Barry Friedman. He has offered her strong support. While we prefer to make these awards in person by the local STA Tanya was heading to New York within days of the award being announced so we hope AFUW-Vic will be able to catch up with her on her return.

This is the first year that the AFGW Fellowship award has been made from our own funds after support from GWQ through its Fellowship Fund for the last three awards (2006-2008). We thank them profusely for their very generous support over this period and hope in the next 18 months before the award is due to be made again to have increased our funds, particularly when we achieve Donor Gift Recipient Status from the ATO.

Thanks must go too to AFGW ACT for their role in administering the Beryl Henderson Award for a final year. Recently Angela Carberry was named as the successful applicant for the 2010 Beryl Henderson Award and she will be presented with this in early December.

While invariably impressed by the high standard and outstanding records of our awardees, I think everyone involved in the assessment is disheartened by the simple errors in many applications and the occasional expectation that the assessors will do all the work as applicants are too busy! Is it too much to expect that doctoral students can read information on a website? Marion Jones' frustrations as Fellowships Officer are reflected in a summary of reasons for rejection and failure of applications which will appear on the AFGW website with the new tighter guidelines for the 2011 Georgina Sweet and Beryl Henderson Awards. It has also been agreed that the Beryl Henderson award from 2011 will be awarded in alternate years as funding is no longer enough for an annual award.

Jenny Strauss has searched the archives of AFUW to produce a list of AFU(G)W and Georgina Sweet Fellowship holders since the inauguration of the awards. While there are a few gaps that we hope may be filled by members, the list is now on the website and Jenny must be thanked for this magnificent achievement

AGM AFGW Inc

On 29 November 2010 our AGM was held at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts in Pitt Street Sydney - a change of venue for administrative reasons. In the years where the AGM has not been part of a triennial conference there has been a recurring anxiety over whether we would have a quorum, and the timing of this meeting may need to be incorporated into a part of the Spring Council meeting to ensure Council members can attend together with a reasonable number of local members.

The most important business matter apart from the presentation of reports, including one from the Education Trust, and the financial reports, was the endorsement of extra clauses into the constitution (previously Rules). This was to conform with NSW Department of Fair Trading requirements, under which AFGW Inc is incorporated. These changes, together with the inclusion of changes resulting from resolutions passed at Conference in 2009, which were ratified at the Council meeting in March, are included in the Constitution that is posted on the website. The whole will be presented for endorsement at the Triennial Conference in Brisbane in 2012.

The meeting was followed by a small celebration of Jenny Strauss' appointment as the first Australian member of the IFUW Board for 57 years and the appointment of Michelle Imison, Marion Jones, 'Tricia Blombery and Anita Earle to IFUW Committees.

Council Meeting 30 October 2010

Catherine Davies (NSW) and Mary Crawford (Queensland) were welcomed as newly elected State Presidents and therefore Vice Presidents of AFGW. Mikele Barrett Woodbridge (SA) was welcomed to her first face to face meeting of the 35th Council with acknowledgement that this was for her a return to Council.

IFUW Resolutions

Consideration of the request, from IFUW, that we select from the resolutions passed in Mexico those that we would work on in the Triennium, it was decided that we had already been involved through the Alliances in contributions on the Work-Life Balance issues. This useful work will continue, particularly in the section on the provision of affordable, available, high quality childcare and out of school hours care. Advocacy on Paid Parental Leave, Defining and Measuring the Care Economy in Australia, Sharing Family Responsibilities and the Gender Pay/Wealth Gap - all relevant to Work-Life Balance - is continuing.

Numeracy for girls. Concern was expressed about deficiencies in prerequisites for teacher training and training for successful maths education at primary level. Madeleine Laming and Marion Jones are producing a brief on this as a basis for STAs to write letters to State Ministers of Education.

On Cluster Munitions, Climate Change and Peacekeeping: letters had already been sent to the relevant Ministers.

Dalma Jacobs was congratulated on her appointment to represent eS4W on the new ABS Gender Statistics Advisory Group, one of only 2 NGO representatives on this largely academic body.

Concern was expressed about low total membership in the Northern Territory with continuing levels of < 20 not legally comprising an STA with a suggestion that it may be more appropriate for NT to become an active constituent Branch of South Australia.

Brisbane Triennial Meeting 2012. Colleen Forester is Convener of the LAC Committee; the committee has been chosen but a treasurer is still to be nominated.

Jenny Strauss retired from Council after > 12 years with two terms as President, two as past President, two as Vice President (President in Victoria) and several as Convener for Education and Convener for Status of Women, service on IFUW Status of Women committee, convener of seminars at two IFUW Conferences and continuing as our representative on ERA. She leaves a huge gap and we look forward to her continuing input keeping us updated on IFUW affairs and ERA activities and her advice and experience continuing just an email away.

The UN meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) February - March 2011

The Commission on the Status of Women is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. It is the principal global policy-making body. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

The Commission was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946 with the aim to prepare recommendations and reports to the Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. The Commission also makes recommendations to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights.

Theme for 2011

Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.

IFUW has plans for involvement at a major level and Daphne Elliott has made a significant contribution in a paper sent to the working group. This is available on the IFUW website. <http://www.ifuw.org/docs/science-technology-discussion-delliott.pdf>

IFUW also had an online discussion on Gender, Science and Technology moderated by IFUW Board member Jennifer Strauss that was completed during September with a detailed report to be found here:

<http://www.ifuw.org/docs/science-technology-discussion-summary.pdf>.

Australia has a delegation, too, and as this theme is so related to our core purpose that Jenny Strauss has been persuaded to apply for a position as NGO representative in the

Australian delegation. At short notice before she left for Geneva Jenny prepared an outline of what she considered the major issues in Australia.

CSW Issues Input from Australian Federation of Graduate Women:

Poverty as an impediment to accessing and benefiting from the **full** range of educational opportunities: at all levels, from pre-school to tertiary education;

Failure to support bilingual education for primary school Indigenous students in areas of high density Indigenous population despite considerable evidence that it will ultimately lead to better performance in all areas, including English language skills;

Disparities in resources in private and public sector schools;

Poor educational facilities and inadequate programs for students with disabilities;

Lack of gender considerations in equity policies and the curricula in the VET system;

Lack of improvement in gender equity for women in science, engineering and technology, as outlined in the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies report released last year;

Slowness of improvement in percentages of women at senior levels in universities;

Low participation of women in senior research grants from ARC (still around 25%, success rate lower). How is it that if more women than men graduate with a PhD (2308 to 2190 in 2008) so few women are in the top echelons of research?

Poor support for women undertaking Masters degrees by Coursework as compared to men, who are much more likely to be employer-sponsored. This is an important area for upgrading professional skills.

Membership Issues

We are not alone either within IFUW or in Australian NGOs in facing a decline in membership. I have said before that this has to be an important focus for the triennium and with this in mind the executive had planned a session on membership with a professional facilitator as part of the 26 February Council Meeting. This expense was not approved by Council but it was agreed that the morning session of the Council Meeting be devoted to this issue. All States have been asked to complete a questionnaire about recruitment of new members for Margaret Giles (WA) and she will be presenting the results and the three 'younger' members who went to the Workshop in Mexico on 'Sustainable Multigenerational Inclusiveness for National Federations and Associations (NFAs)'. Michelle Imison, Kathy Mumford and Kathryn Seymour will attend and be our 'internal' facilitators. However, there is no magic bullet and whatever conclusions we reach will involve continuing effort and hard work by every member of AFGW in every State and Branch to have any chance of effecting change.

With very best wishes to everyone for 2011.

Jane Baker