



National Council of Women of Australia Newsletter February 2010

FROM THE PRESIDENT

After the excitement of the Triennial Conference it is now down to work and the minutes and proceedings of the conference have been completed by our new secretary Pat Dart and are ready to be distributed to members. The proceedings will be sent electronically to all Constituent Councils, co-ordinators and advisers. A very limited number of hard copies will be available.

The resolutions have been dealt with and sent to relevant ministers for their attention. The first newsletter was prepared by our new newsletter editor Jodie Thompson.

Last week Federal Office for Women advertised the call for tenders to run the new Alliances. National Council of Women will be tendering for the right to organise and auspice one of the six proposed Alliances. There is a very short lead time as the closing date is 18 December. It is expected that the announcement of the successful tenderers will be made at the end of March 2010.

I think that NCWA is well positioned to manage an Alliance – we did so successfully in 2000-2003 and the management team of myself, Leonie Christopherson and Hean Bee Wee is currently putting together the outline of a tender document which we will then have professionally written.

It is expected that there will be strong competition from a number of organisations, including the four existing Alliances.

There will also be tenders submitted for an Aboriginal women's group and one for CALD women.

NCWA's theme for the next year is the Protection of Children and I hope that all Councils will work on this common theme, and try to incorporate it into their work program.

We have yet to hear of the outcomes from the ICW General Assembly in Johannesburg, but the theme for the next three years is "Progress for Women is Progress for All" I am sure that we can combine this with our Australian theme on children. We had eleven members attend the General Assembly and we look forward to reports from those members.

Pat Burgess and her team in Queensland have taken on the responsibility of keeping the Blue Book up to date, so please make sure that any changes are notified to Pat so that she can include them in the monthly update. It is always a work in progress and due to ongoing changes needs constant attention. The information is vital so that advisers and co-ordinators can manage their various portfolios.

I look forward to working with you all during the next three years. I have a lot to learn and am happy to talk to anyone at any time about issues you may have.

Kind Regards

Margaret Findlater-Smith

TRIUMPHANT TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE IN ADELAIDE

24-27 September 2009

Leonie Christopherson

Eighty-four Delegates and Observers from all over Australia met in Adelaide to mark the end of Hean Bee Wee's Presidential term. With sixteen resolutions on the Agenda, the meeting was a perfect blend of vigorous debate, inspiring speakers and delightful social occasions.

Thanks to the combination of solid policy discussion, camaraderie and genuine good fellowship, we came away from South Australia, inspired, re-invigorated and determined to carry on the work of the National Council of Women for future generations. Congratulations to Hean Bee Wee and her organising committee and welcome to the new President, Margaret Findlater-Smith.

The Conference was opened the Governor-General of Australia, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce AC, who told us of all the outstanding women she had met during her recent visit to Africa. In particular of Dr Catherine Hamlin of Ethiopia, who with her husband has successfully operated on over 20,000 fistula sufferers. As a result, the conference unanimously agreed that NCWA should nominate Dr. Hamlin for an International Award.

Other informative speakers were Professor Jennifer McKay on the legal aspects of water management, Mr Ian Kowalick, the Independent Commissioner of the Murray Darling Basin Commission who spoke of the unwieldy bureaucracy involved in our water management in Australia (and advised what we could do about it), Leanne Liddle on sustaining wildlife and conservation of country by the indigenous community in remote north-western South Australia, and fun Garden Conservation Presenter Sophie Thomson, who converted us all to her regime of 'compost, compost compost'!

We enjoyed receptions at both Government House and the Adelaide Town Hall. The Naval, Military and Air Force Club was the elegant venue for the Conference dinner where we were musically entertained by Georgia Germain and given a fascinating update by Professors Judith Smart and Marian Quartly on the progress of the publication of NCWA's history from 1931 to 2006.

A fitting finale to our conference was a song sung in Swahili by Mwajemi Hussein who told of her fifteen years as a refugee and that as a result of NCWA's Core Leadership Training Project, how happy she was to be in Australia, employed, and able to support the seven children in her care.

Many years ago, Mwajemi's mother sang the following song to her as they first fled their village. It could well be an anthem for all women and was so beautiful, that at the conclusion, many NCWA members were in tears of happiness and hope. Now read on ...

ZAINA

(TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH)

1. Zaina, Zaina, Zaina
Education is very important Zaina
Hurry up to acquire education Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina
2. Zaina, please remember Zaina
Don't take "Education" for granted
Zaina
Try hard my friend Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina
3. Zaina if you are educated Zaina
You'll get a job and be able to
support us Zaina
An encourage other women Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina
4. Your skills are important Zaina
For the education of future
generations – children
Zaina go forward Zaina
5. It's never too late Zaina
Try again and again Zaina

- Don't give up Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina
6. Zaina I care about you Zaina
That's why I want you to progress
Zaina
So that you can help our
community Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina
 7. Our community Zaina
Needs your contribution Zaina
For its development Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina
 8. Ask for more training Zaina
Ask different organisation and
associations Zaina
They may help you Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina
 9. Don't close your eyes Zaina
Fight for your rights Zaina
Get up, stand up for your rights
Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina
 10. Finally I'd like to remind you Zaina
To know who you are Zaina
You are a "mother" of all the world
Zaina
Zaina go forward Zaina

**UNIFEM SEEKS FUNDING TO
PROVIDE SHELTER AND SERVICES
FOR WOMEN IN HAITI**

In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Haiti UNIFEM has issued a call for close to US\$2 million to provide urgently needed services for the protection of women and their families. In particular, UNIFEM seeks to rebuild women's shelters and expand the provision of emergency services for women.

The call for funding is made through the system-wide flash appeal for US\$562 million that was issued by the United Nations on 15 January 2010. In order to meet the urgent need for the protection of women and their communities, UNIFEM is also calling upon its National Committees and supporters worldwide to strengthen

these fund-raising efforts and boost UNIFEM programming in Haiti.

As part of the overall UN effort in the country, the UNIFEM team in Haiti will work alongside NGO partners to strengthen services to victims of gender-based violence and their families in women's centres and temporary shelters in Port au Prince and Jacmel.

The money raised will go towards a range of efforts from emergency community-based violence prevention programmes to repairing damage of existing centres and providing humanitarian aid like emergency supplies, staff and counselling services in communities most affected.

UNIFEM will also focus on coordination efforts to ensure that emergency and early recovery assessment and assistance incorporate a gender perspective to adequately address the differentiated needs of women, men and children.

UNIFEM's work on the ground shows that too often natural disasters result in greater household and institutional instability and to increasing women's vulnerability to violence, abuse and sexual exploitation.

"UNIFEM is committed along with its partners and the UN system to working to ensure that attention is given to addressing these differential impacts and in particular for ensuring the personal security of women and girls" UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi said.

Source: www.unifem.org

**MINISTERS MEET TO TACKLE
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Attorney-General Robert McClelland and Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek met on January 28, 2010 with their state and territory colleagues to further progress national efforts to reduce violence against women and their children.

Governments are in the final stages of developing a National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children in 2010.

The ministers substantially agreed the goals, strategies and outcomes of the National Plan that lay the foundations for the next twelve years of action.

Ministers also made significant progress on the First 3 Year Action Plan with concrete national action in key areas covering the prevention of violence, the provision of services, and the protection of women and their children.

Source: Joint media release of Tanya Plibersek, MP and Robert McClelland MP

BILL AGAINST HARASSMENT OF WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE SIGNED IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari has signed legislation against harassment of women at workplaces.

The Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Bill 2009' makes the offence punishable with imprisonment, which may extend to three years, or a fine of up to 500,000 rupees or both.

"Our government, in line with the vision of Benazir Bhutto, is taking steps to ensure that women of this country are not only emancipated from exploitation of all forms, but are also empowered in the true sense," Zardari said after approving the amendments to both the Pakistan Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code.

Zardari stressed on the need for providing financial security and creating more opportunities for women in the country.

The bill has already been passed by the National Assembly .

However, leaders belonging to parties such as the Jamaat-e Islam (JI) and

the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) had objected to the bill in the lower house, saying that it was a violation of the fundamental norms of Islam and the constitution.

They said that such a law would promote "vulgarity among women", and proposed sending the bill to the Council of Islamic Ideology for further review.

Source: www.oneindia.in

NAPCAN URGES THE NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

The National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) notes the concerns raised in the Northern Territory Coroner's report issued 19 January 2010 which highlighted problems in the Northern Territory child protection system.

NAPCAN urges the Northern Territory government to make a significant investment in community based family support services in order to address child abuse and neglect before it occurs.

Olya Booyar, NAPCAN President, said, 'The priority must be on primary prevention and early intervention activities. The report shows that the Northern Territory Government is struggling to deal with the issue of child abuse and neglect. It would be better to tackle the problem before it occurs, by investing in community-based early childhood programs to ensure that families get help early.'

'The fact is, prevention measures involve large scale investment in services such as postnatal home visits for a baby's first two years of life, providing at-home information and support to parents regarding infants' needs as well as preschool for all four year olds.'

Source: www.napcan.org.au

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN LIGHT ON THE BRAIN FOOD

An overwhelming majority of children do not eat enough fish, placing them at risk of heart disease, asthma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and retarded brain development, new research says.

Her paper, *Long Chain Omega-3 Intakes of Australian Children*, which is being submitted for publication in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, found that three-year-olds consumed an average of only 47 milligrams of long-chain omega-3s, while four-to-eight year-olds had just 55 milligrams.

Both figures are less than one-tenth of the National Heart Foundation's recommended guidelines of 500 milligrams.

The National Heart Foundation of Australia recommends everyone consume about 500 milligrams a day, or two to three serves of oily fish a week, fish oil capsules or liquid and food and drinks enriched with marine n-3 PUFA.

Source: Sydney Morning Herald

NURSING MUMS GET MORE SUPPORT IN 'BREAST IS BEST' PUSH

Mothers will be encouraged to feed their babies only breast milk for the first six months as part of an ambitious new national breastfeeding policy.

The goal would require a huge rise from present norms under which only 14 per cent of mothers fully breastfeed their babies to six months. Nearly half of mothers have abandoned reliance on breastfeeding only after three months.

Federal and state health ministers yesterday endorsed the strategy which calls for more community acceptance of breastfeeding in public, more support and training for mothers before

and after delivery and increased access to parental leave.

"But considering over a quarter of Australians think that breastfeeding in public is unacceptable, we know there is a long way to go," Dr James, a course co-ordinator in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery at RMIT University, said. She said particularly worrying was that many women in the 18-25 age group, tomorrow's mothers, disapproved of breastfeeding in public.

The Health Minister, Nicola Roxon, said Australia did not have high levels of breastfeeding compared to many other countries.

Source: Sydney Morning Herald

AUSTRALIAN HEALTH LITERACY FOUND LACKING

A study by Australian doctors has found that many people do not understand basic health information.

Professor Robert Adams from the University of Adelaide surveyed nearly 3,000 people and found that 45 per cent were at risk of having limited or inadequate health literacy.

Professor Adams says a person with low health literacy can have trouble understanding everything from nutrition labels on food to managing their own health problems.

Professor Adams says the best way to improve health literacy is to make the health system more accessible.

"We'd also like to encourage people to ask questions and to realise that asking questions is a good thing and that encouraging people to do so will make the healthcare system safer and better."

Source: ABC News

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