



ACW e-NEWS

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Australian Church Women seeks to unite Christian women across denominational boundaries, to promote peace, understanding and unity through faith and love in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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News from the National Executive of Australian Church Women

President's Message:

Already the time has come for the 2013-2015 National Executive from NSW to embrace the last stages of their term of office. This will be our final edition of ACW NEWS. I hope you have enjoyed the e-NEWS format.

It has been a privilege to serve ACW as National President, supported as I have been by a splendid executive. I have been blessed as I've come to know many of you better as we have met or communicated.

Our theme for our term of office has been *Building in Harmony*, taking the verse from Romans 14:19 *So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.*



Many translations use the word *edify* instead of *build*. There is no precise translation from the Greek but the core meaning is *upbuilding* or mutual help and assistance in the spiritual life which Christians receive from their fellowship with each other.

We are one great temple *built* for the glory of God, and *harmonised* to do all that is possible to help each other find and fill their place in the church thus perfecting and adorning this temple of God.

It is the principle of *brotherly love*. If we love each other we will seek to edify each other: to build each other up in the faith.

We have sought to embrace all that is encompassed in this theme through our Special Days and we pray that they have been a source of spiritual enrichment for you.

warmly welcomed by the unit members and it was a delight to meet them and fellowship together and I thank them for their hospitality.

At the AGM I spoke on *From History's Page*, how the desire for ecumenical fellowship brought about the formation of Australian Church Women. I then had the privilege of installing the 2015 Executive and their new State President, Mrs Alyson Madsen.

In Remembrance

Shirley Brooks Tasmanian Unit



Shirley Brooks, a well known and well loved member of Australian Church Women passed away Sunday 15th March 2015. Her 'Promotion to Glory' service was conducted by The Salvation Army, of which she was a member, on Friday 20th March 2015.

Shirley joined the Launceston Branch of ACW in 1975. In her many roles in ACW Shirley encouraged Christian women to take a more effective place in the total life and mission of the Church and to help provide opportunities for Christian women to worship and serve together. Shirley truly fulfilled the aims of ACW both locally, nationally and when opportunity arrived internationally.

Shirley held the positions of Branch and State President on many occasions and in 1993 as National President led the last National Executive and National Conference that it was possible for Tasmania to host.

Since writing to you in January I have had the pleasure of visiting the Queensland Unit in February for their AGM. I was

Other positions held by Shirley in the State Unit were that of FLC Convener and Winifred Kiek Scholarship convener. On many occasions Shirley hosted International guests visiting at the time of our National Conferences.

Shirley was the recipient of a State Life Membership from the Tasmanian Unit as well as being honoured with a National Life Membership in 1997.

She will be missed!



**Myra Dixon
Victorian Unit**

(1914-2015)

Myra Dixon, a long-time member of Australian Church Women, passed away at the grand age of 101 on Friday 29th May 2015.

Myra, a National Council of Women representative to ACW, served as State President of the Victorian Unit in 1988-89, having previously been the Newsletter editor. She also served as National Treasurer on the 1981-1983 National Executive.

She is remembered by her unit for her quiet but very helpful presence. She was loved and respected throughout her long life by all who knew her. A truly fine woman who will be missed by many friends. God rest her precious soul.



**Reverend Elizabeth Alfred
Victorian Unit
(1914-2015)**

As Deaconess Elizabeth Alfred, Elizabeth served as National President on the 1981-1983 National Executive, formed by the Victorian Unit.

Elizabeth forged a career within the church, doing pastoral work and teaching as a deaconess, heading Deaconess House and becoming the first women's chaplain at Royal Women's Hospital.

In 1992, Elizabeth Alfred became the first woman ordained an Anglican priest in Victoria. She was 78, well beyond retirement age, but Archbishop Rayner had promised this significant pioneer that age would not prevent her ordination when it finally became possible.

Described by those who knew her as 'a grand old woman', 'one who had authority', 'a remarkable person who worked tirelessly with the Anglican Church and was an inspiration to so many', Elizabeth passed away on 2nd February 2015 at the age of 101. Her funeral service was held at St James Anglican Church, Langhorne Street, DANDENONG, VIC on Tuesday, 10th February 2015.

**Natalie McLeod
NSW Unit
(1938-2015)**



Natalie McLeod, the incumbent President of the NSW State Unit died suddenly and peacefully at home on 29th June 2015. Natalie was also serving as a co-opted member of National Executive.

A graduate of the Conservatorium of Music, Natalie's life was filled with music; teaching and leading choirs, in schools, privately and in the church. Natalie's devotion and commitment to the church was evidenced by 30 years teaching Scripture Class in schools and 23 years on the Executive of Mothers' Union Sydney Diocese where she gave inspiring leadership in the prayer and hospital visiting departments and was MU Sydney President from 2001-2006.

While Natalie was known to many in ACW because of her involvement in Women's Ministries her association with ACW began just four years prior to her being nominated President Elect in 2013. Natalie was installed as NSW State President in May 2014 and led the Unit with a graceful, Godly presence which has blessed us all. We will remember Natalie because of her personal interest in each one of us, her love of a laugh, her gentle compassion and her encouraging nature.



**25th National
Conference**

**7-11 September
2015**

The Salvation
Army Collaroy
Centre

Collaroy Beach
NSW

**Please pray for
the Conference.**

A Word from Our Vice Presidents

50 years of Australian Church Women will be celebrated at the National Conference, 7-11 September.

A wide and varied programme has been prepared and our special Guest is Winifred Keik Fellowship recipient Devika Ukwatte. Bible studies will be led by Dr Sylvia Collinson and the Ecumenical Guest Speaker is Rev Mary Pearson, Uniting Church Mental Health Chaplain. Highlights will include a concert featuring State Units, sight seeing tour, Formal Dinner as well as Business sessions. An open day will be held on Thursday 10th September, with interesting speakers, and display of memorabilia, book stall and Fair Trade table.

The induction of incoming National Executive from Victoria will be held on Friday 11th.

Denise Secomb: First Vice President ACW National Committee 2013 - 2015.

It has been my privilege to look after the Australian Church Women National Life Members Membership Roll. As I typed through each Life Member's profile I was inspired by the lives of each woman - their achievements within ACW, in their churches and their community. A few spent years on the mission field or in isolated areas. The founding members set up the ACW Constitution and ACW procedures and practices.

I am looking forward to attending my first ACW Conference at Collaroy and am enjoying planning the Prayer Room.

Joy Inglis: Second Vice President ACW National Committee 2013 - 2015.

A Word from Our Convenors

Special Days — Pamela Freeman

In 2015, Cana Communities is the selected recipient for the Special Days [Australia] grant collected at World Community Day. Cana is a not-for-profit organization without Government funding, the programs being run by volunteers, who are trained to recognize the unique and mysterious value and beauty in each individual. Ecumenical assistance comes from the Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Churches

Cana Enterprises consists of:-

- Three shelters each support 10 persons per

night who would otherwise be sleeping rough.

- Cana Farm provides farm activities and educational opportunities for those who find learning difficult, in partnership with TAFE Western Sydney, with produce sold so that Cana Farm can be self-supporting.
- A post release program for people returning to society from prison.

It was suggested that Nagle House (Redfern, Sydney) which has been operating since 2012 would be a most suitable recipient for our grant. Here transitional accommodation is provided for women in a supportive and safe environment who come from a variety of backgrounds including refugees, domestic violence, and homelessness.



Social Justice—Shirley Mitchell

For prayer and whatever action you are led to take

Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island peoples.

Australia needs to acknowledge that the land was not empty when Portuguese, French and British came to our shores - the Aboriginal peoples were here before colonisation.

Rights to water - access.

Our stewardship of creation requires us to raise our voices regarding access to water throughout Australia. If our land is healthy, our crops and sheep/cattle are healthy, and we are healthy. Keeping our rivers flowing is vital to the survival of our land, eg. the Murray Darling Basin.

FLC—Lillian Hodges

National Executive was very happy when two grant applications submitted to ICFLC were accepted and grants received.



Tasmania submitted a project called "Messy Church", located in Launceston. The group reaches out to children in poor communities, to bring them into a program which teaches self

World Community Day
October

Building for Peace and Reconciliation



Check you local service and celebrate together!

respect with a positive outlook and love they have missed due to circumstances. Some of the activities are crafts, games, Christian teaching. An evening meal is provided.

The group is making a difference in the lives of those who attend. The momentum in attendance and attitude has escalated much to the joy of those who make it happen.



“Mums Cottage” in New South Wales is a place where mothers companion mothers. The varied programs have improved the quality of life for many young mums and their children.

The staff tries to rebuild the confidence and self worth of the mothers and in so doing, provide a safe, appealing atmosphere where the mums can feel accepted, valued and respected. Workshops are conducted which helps the mums to set future goals and directions for life.

ACWC—Helen Raymond



Helen has written urging us to prayerfully consider contributing to the fundraising campaign for Nepal being organised by ACWC.

National Executive encourages all Units to take up an offering or set aside funds that can be brought to conference. These will be combined with donations made at conference and remitted to ACWC as requested.

Helen says — “I hope that Australia can be part of this request as our sisters in Nepal are doing what they can, under very difficult circumstances, to help their people.”



WKS Trustees—Cynthia Gifford

On June 30th Denise Champion one of our scholars from S.A. in 2012 was Ordained as a Deacon in the Uniting Church. She is the first Aboriginal woman to be ordained in any

Christian Denomination in S.A. She is now Rev Denise Champion.

She is an Adnyamathanha Flinders Ranges Woman. We obviously only contributed a very small part of her long journey but she is one of us and I for one feel very proud.

Prominent Indigenous elder Lowitja O'Donoghue, joined with hundreds to witness this landmark celebration of Denise Champion.

Although she admits her faith has been challenged many times, Deacon Champion said she wanted to now try to restore faith and safety in her community as well as carrying on the work of reconciliation.



WKS—Nancy McLaren

News from Yane (NT)



“I am doing well and really enjoying my study at ACD (Australian College of Divinity). This semester I undertook a unit called Reflecting on Best Practice in Ministry. There is lots of reading involved for this subject but they are quite insightful as we read and compared ministry practices found in scriptures, tradition, historical and contemporary context.

Next semester I will begin with the research unit. ACD is still searching for a second supervisor for me as we are required to have 2 supervisors for undertaking research. I am looking forward to begin my research studies.

I would appreciate prayer for wisdom and strength as I attempt to balance family, ministry and study. Please also pray for the availability of a second supervisor also for me and my family. It is lovely to know that my family and I are being supported through your prayers.”

Prayer Points

- Journeying mercies for all delegates as they travel to conference
- National Executive as they complete preparations for conference.
- Incoming National Executive as they take office.
- A safe and easy passage for our WKS Fellow Devika Ukwatte as she travels to conference.

From Caryn Rogers: *"My studies are progressing well. Just yesterday I was able to spend the day working on tightening up the overview of my thesis. One of my most significant challenges has been, and will continue to be, containing my thesis to a body of work within which I will be able to make an original contribution to the current academic domain. It is my hope that this contribution to the academic domain will be within both secular and Christian university settings."*



I most wanted to study at a secular university because it offered me an opportunity that a Bible College would not - the chance to create a case for a modern, thoughtful faith that could interact and not be threatened by differing voices and conflict. I am greatly enjoying this opportunity and look forward to finishing the first three chapters of my thesis by the end of the year."

 National Secretary—Isabel Hewitt

Reflections on My Visit to Taizé

The visit to Taizé in 2015 was to help celebrate 75 years of the Community which coincides with 100 years since its founder, Brother Roger's birth, and ten years since his death. On August 16 celebrations will be at their peak bringing together many leaders from churches and ecumenical bodies from around the world.

As a lead up to these events the Brothers have been visiting the different continents. One of the highlights in Australia was their visit to the Flinders Ranges in SA where Denise Champion (see report page 4)) hosted them most capably.

A special art installation is being set up with an emphasis on 'up-cycling', reminding that even what is discarded can be used by God. While the group from the NSW Ecumenical Council was there we shared worship three times a day with the Brothers and 1500 others, mainly



young people. We offered a workshop on Ecumenical Activity in NSW and attracted a good number. Adults over thirty gathered for Bible study with one of the Brothers (he spoke English and French and a participant translated to German), then broke into discussion groups according to language. My group brought together Irish, English, Swedish and Australians.



While most of the older people attending slept in fixed accommodation, many were in tents, and except for the church which can be opened to accommodate 5,000, most meetings are held under marquees. Food is basic, but adequate - definitely no frills - and tasks of serving, cleaning up and washing up are shared around. A bowl for drinking, a coupe for food, a tray and a spoon were issued to each person, and the food issued as the line passed.



As a special time of reflection this was a wonderful opportunity to share in praise and prayer with people from many backgrounds.

Did I say it was hot? The whole week temperatures were in the high thirties - hard enough for us, but very difficult for most.

So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up. Romans 14:19 NLT

A Word of Thanks

The members of the NSW National Executive 2013-2015 would like to say 'thank you' to Australian Church Women for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. We consider it to have been a privilege and we acknowledge with appreciation the support we have received.

We commend to you the Incoming National Executive and pray God's blessing upon them as they assume their responsibilities.