



AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY UNIT

The Future of Australian Church Women.

The Future of Australian Church Women rests in the hands of the National Executive in rotation, and with the members of each State/Territory Unit. It behoves us to make every effort to have ACW more widely recognised throughout Australia.

ACW has come a long way since 1965, due largely to the overall adherence to the beautifully phrased but simple Aims and Objects. Aims 2.4 and 2.5 are especially significant, stressing as they do the importance of Ecumenism and Fellowship (i.e. interdenominational contact and the opportunity to pray together during Special Days services)

ACW is truly a wonderful example of the best of Ecumenism at the 'grass roots' level, and also provides a powerful support network for all members.

We are a voice for Christian Church women in the community and should be heard at all levels of society. ACW National Executive must be seen to be interested and active in the concerns of the Australian community. Likewise, at State/ Territory level, ACW must be seen to be active in the interests of the whole community. (An example from the ACT - Australian Church Women nominated Jean Thomson to be a member of the 4th Chief Ministers Womens Consultative Council - the only openly 'church' woman on the council, and she works alongside women from all parts of the community on interests and problems common to all)

ACW has positive interaction with other women's organisations, at State/ Territory; National and International levels - for example through membership of National Councils of Women, and Asian Church Womens' Conference.

Think also of the contribution ACW makes in administering the Winifred Kiek Trust throughout the three designated regions. Think of the enormous impact all those scholars have had on their communities over the years, and are still making!

ACW is the moving force in organising and administering the Fellowship of the Least Coin Collections in Australia and designation of recipients. Some needy causes in Australia have received funding over recent years. All women who take part in this special prayer fellowship on a regular basis are amazed at how much good their little 'least coins' can do.

ACW also funds special World Community Day projects. These donations are never an insignificant amount and of considerable assistance to the recipients.

Some women's organisations have monthly parallel meetings, both Day and Evening meetings. The evening meetings are patronised by working women, usually interested in special projects. Sometimes the meetings are only held until the project is completed. Another project is started & another group of women is formed. This may encourage younger women to be part of Australian Church Women.

The fact that ACW receives NO GOVERNMENT funding is a bonus in that the organisation is not beholden to any particular instrumentality. However, there may be a case for applying for funding for a particular project in the future.

The cost of a Conference is expensive, but the face to face contact is very important. The fellowship at a national level is much appreciated by those attending; something that cannot be achieved by Email or phone calls.



AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

(N.S.W. State Unit)

THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ADELAIDE 24-28 SEPTEMBER 2001

In looking at the future of ACW we need to consider the women who belong, and those we would encourage to join us and participate in ACW's unique and special projects and activities of our State and Territory Units.

We are all aware of the changing world we live in - it is different today. Younger women have different pressures to consider. They may have more consumer goods and freedoms which can come with their own restrictions. There is uncertainty of long-term employment and job satisfaction. Often two incomes are needed. More involvement with their children's education as well as upgrading their own. For the safety of their children they become the family taxi service. They have less time - so become selective of how they use their spare time. They prioritise - and perhaps ecumenical activities are well down the scale.

We need to look over the past and hold on to what is relevant, as well as being willing to consider new ideas or formats. We need to make the best use of personnel, of time and resources, as we seek to serve our Lord and Saviour through ACW.

In 1938 the Women's Committee of the Council of Churches in Australia was given autonomy and ACW was born. During succeeding years a wonderful ecumenical program has blossomed, with the development of special projects - WKS and FLC, giving meaning and energy to the organisation. Partnership with ACWC has also been a significant part of the program. Ecumenically, ACW is the major organisation for women of the churches in Australia.

The late Deaconess Mary Andrews enthused us with her manifesto for women of vision, vigour and vitality.

There must be continual progress to ensure the future of ACW. For this, people of vision, vigour and vitality are needed.

The projects are excellent - WKS, FLC and ACWC. The ecumenical focus is wonderful, providing people of the participating denominations the opportunity to worship and serve together.

Currently, ACW needs a new face. We need new women to be attracted to our program. We need to be working towards 'replacing' ourselves. We are wearing rose-coloured spectacles if we imagine we are going to attract young women. We are not a young women's type of program. However we need younger women than ourselves. There are always more women coming into the retired or early-retired age-group. To have a new face, we actually need some sort of marketing program, some good publicity, some good PR. Because of the increasingly sophisticated material of other organisations, our publications need to compare favourably with these higher standards.

ACW needs a new projection of energy; we need current office-bearers to be prepared to hand the torch on to others. We need people who are brave enough to do something differently from how it was done before. We need to be aware of negativity. We need younger women who will be committed to ACW.

We have to acknowledge the need to keep pace with the technological age and the active new senior society making its mark in so many activities, which we should not lag behind but keep an up-to-date image.

With this in mind we present an outline of discussions and action recently taken by the NSW Unit.

For some time the NSW Unit has held a State Conference every two years. One of the aims of this conference is to review the activities of the previous two years and to plan for the future. In May 2000 we did this review in a discussion entitled "ACW - Endangered Species or National Treasure." This discussion aimed to identify:

1. Things which were weakening (endangering) the life of ACW.
2. Things which we specialise in (treasures) to be strengthened and preserved.

In this discussion we were guided by such questions as:

- a) To change or not to change, i.e. do new things, stick to the things we are already doing, any combination?
- b) What is our territory, i.e. know our range, is it FLC, WKS, Fellowship Day and World Community Day alone or can/should we 'range' further afield?
- c) Are we breeding i.e. we keep things 'in the family' of traditional denominations but to what extent can/should we make connections with newer forms of Christian communities and ecumenical activity?
- d) Do we 'know our patch' i.e. how do we prioritise pastoral, social, doctrinal, ecumenical (and other) activities?
- e) Should ACW be exclusively for women?
- f) Are our 'housekeeping/domestic' arrangements satisfactory i.e. any changes needed to our meeting/function arrangements?

One of the helpful outcomes from this discussion was the decision to use a questionnaire enabling council members to offer feedback. Half the questions concerned our local NSW arrangements. Other more general questions about ACW could be helpful nationally. They were about the importance (the treasure!) of ACW.

Although this was a small sample, the responses from this survey would indicate that people find the following things the most important and helpful aspects of ACW to be encouraged and treasured:

1. The encouragement we offer one another.
2. Presenting a united voice on social issues.
3. Fellowship of the Least Coin.
4. Winifred Kiek Scholarship.
5. Uniting denominations in witness and service.

This process of evaluation may be helpful to other units and/or nationally. A full copy of questions and summary of feedback is attached. NSW Unit also has fuller reports and other resource sheets of ideas from earlier conferences, which could be shared as a contribution to a conversation about the future of ACW.

The NSW Unit is looking forward to this Seminar. We want to listen and come away with new visions for which to strive.

(Submitted by NSW Unit 9th July 2001 for consideration at the National Conference of Australian Church Women, Adelaide, 24-28 September 2001)

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN NSW - QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FEB 2001
(Eleven responses)

1. What do you find helpful about ACW Council meetings?

Friendship. Interaction. Fellowship(7). Unity. Ecumenical information especially about other denominations(9). Speakers. Trading table. Leadership. Channel for social lobbying. Spiritual refreshment.

2. Is there anything extra you would like included in council meetings?

More sharing by individual members about their Christian activity. Prayers for Pakistan and ACWC. A spiritual retreat. Occasional special speakers. List of Special Days venues with dates and times at least one month in advance. Sharing of denominational histories and background.

3. Is there anything you feel we should no longer include in our meeting program?

Don't allow reading time for minutes during the meeting. Continue listing the correspondence. Share the leading of devotions. Economise on the overlap of business between executive and council meetings.

4. Is there any other change in our meeting arrangements which would be helpful?

One (or 2) meetings per year with strictly limited business (i.e. pass minutes, give notices) then special speaker, questions and answers, prayer groups. Time limit for reports. Emphasise the value of lunch together. Total of 6 meetings per year, 4 for business, 2 with special speakers.

5. What do you think is the most important thing we do?

Uplift the gospel. Encourage one another(3). United voice on social issues(3). Fellowship Least Coin(2). Uniting denominations in witness and service(2). Winifred Kiek Scholarship(2). Representation on other organisations. Opening devotions.

6. Would you change anything about ACW special days or functions?

Offer more help to centres beyond Sydney. More contemporary music (for young people). Not too many leaders in services (making them disjointed).

7. Would you change anything about ACW projects?

a) Fellowship of the Least Coin. More encouragement and emphasis. More notice and guidelines for grant applications. Less time between Circle of Prayer publications.

b) Winifred Kiek Scholarship. More reports from scholars ongoing service. More updates from current scholar. More effective circulation of guidelines. More and better photos of scholar.

8. Would you change anything about our involvement with Asian Church Womens Conference?

More information and understanding of our involvement requested. Closer involvement important. Shared council meetings: 2 each from 4 different countries to join council. If calendars difficult to sell can the money be supplied in another way?

9. Any other comments or questions?

ACW is valuable in giving Christian women a voice in a complex society. Lunch together is good. Calendars are a difficulty. Revise the overall number of meetings and gatherings. How do we attract younger members?

Australian Church Women, Queensland Unit.

Report on the Future of A.C.W.

The aims of A.C.W. are as relevant today as they have been in the past. The Mission Statement supports this.

Aims

- To unite Christian women in their allegiance to God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit
- To promote co-operation, understanding and reconciliation between men and women in the Church, family and society.
- To help Christian women to take a more effective place in the total life and mission of the Church.
- To provide opportunities and encouragement for Christian women of different denominations to worship, study and serve together.
- To encourage fellowship, service and understanding nationally and internationally.
- Australian Church Women seeks to unite women across denominational boundaries, to promote peace, understanding and unity through faith and love in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Despite the changes that surround us, there are some things that remain constant and central to our beliefs.

Declining membership is a grave cause for concern. Comment –

- Because of the high percentage of the 'Over 50's' in the population, there should be a group of women from which A.C.W. can draw representatives. However, this is not the case. At present, representatives from affiliated churches are mostly confined to existing women's groups. Other women in the member churches may be interested in becoming available as representatives.
- It is essential for the continuation of A.C.W. that younger women be encouraged to become members. For this to occur restructuring may have to be considered.
- The formation of more branches of the State Units could be a course to pursue. Queensland would be interested in discovering –
 - i - The role of branches in other States;
 - ii - How the branches are formed.

Communication

Some comments –

A large part of the work of the State Unit is to promote F.L.C. and Winifred Kiek Scholarships. This needs wider coverage within member churches to promote interest.

- In Queensland, attendance at Community Day and Fellowship Day services is declining, although we do have some suburban and rural services - 15 at last count.
- The formation of a web site has been voiced at times. This needs careful administration and legal advice on the ramifications of such a venture.
- The function of the national Publicity officer, as accepted for two years at the last National Conference, needs to be utilised.
- It is acknowledged that there is difficulty in speaking on social issues. Each Church representative must act in accordance with the views of their Church. Thus time must be taken to compile a statement which takes the varying viewpoints into account.
- The National Social Justice Convenor is an appropriate person to communicate with the various States on social justice matters to ascertain the views of the States and then to formulate an appropriate public and nation-wide comment on behalf of A.C.W..

**AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN (SA UNIT)
NATIONAL CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER, 2001
'VISION FOR THE FUTURE'**

A total of 22 responses were received; some representing groups, some individual comments were made. Some groups had met together to discuss the topic while others, ie. Brighton Branch asked each denominational representative to make comments, and these have been summarised. Sincere thanks to those people who gave prayerful thought and took the time to consider and discuss these important issues.

GENERAL SUMMARISATION —

- Most people felt it was important for ACW to continue to give people the opportunity for fellowship, growth, unity and service. ACW does make a difference!
- The key to strengthening the organisation was to develop some way of PROMOTING the group, more enthusiasm on behalf of the women in their own churches and Interchurch Councils (where appropriate) and the appointment of a imaginative, energetic PROMOTIONS OFFICER to get the word out into the community. Many opportunities are being lost.
- Executive members need to go into Branch meetings and Church groups to spread the word.
- The suggestion of taking Unit meetings out into the suburbs (where the people are) could be considered (however transport may be a problem).
- Take advantage of having many non-members attending Community Concern Morning Teas and promote our special features more fully (time factor here) - FLC, WKS, J150, Commemorative Books etc.
- Another important factor is the need to revamp the Unit meetings to make them more inviting - speakers, discussions, little or no business unless urgent, and printed reports. Limit meetings to 2 hours.

1. ARE WE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

- 1.1 All seemed to believe we have and are making a difference - but more publicity needed.
- 1.2.
 - * By providing the opportunity for inter-denominational sharing
 - * the dissemination of information re women's issues - available seminars etc.
 - * Promoting awareness (encouraging participation) in social justice issues
 - * Supporting community groups eg. Community Concern Morning Teas
 - * A variety of guest speakers at Unit meetings - informative - spiritually challenging - inspirational.Up to individual members to 'make a difference' in the wider community.
- 1.3.1 Loving, friendly relations between the various churches (Branch comment). Important we acknowledge and accept our differences and affirm and rejoice in our common love, belief and faith in Jesus Christ. We serve, worship study and share our common goals together as one in unity. ACW provides a means by which we can do this and we can bring our non-Christian friends to the Community Concern Morning Teas.

Examples of making a difference —

J150 TRUST - disadvantaged women assisted.

WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP - women given opportunities to become better equipped for service.

PRAYER - women praying together in devotions and services makes a difference

WORLD COMMUNITY DAY OFFERINGS - assist specific projects in Australia

ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE - sending representatives to contribute and share in their joys and concerns and often take actions and become office bearers.

SOCIAL JUSTICE - awareness and action on particular issues of concern like Land mines and code of practice for Home workers (Fair Wear Campaign).

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN - participating in prayer, for peace and reconciliation worldwide and contribution to least coin that promote and donate to projects of goodwill.

COMMUNITY CONCERN - raises awareness in community of organisations who care for others and their needs and financially assist same.

- 1.4. Any effort for the Kingdom of God makes a difference, however small! However if looking for results it would seem the 'difference' is minimal.
 - 1.5. Do make a difference - able to hear about Christian women in other countries, and the work women are doing in our communities to be united in one Lord in worship.
 - 1.6. Keep doing what we are doing.
 - 1.7. In SA ACW have always made a good contribution to Ecumenism. "We came together in goodwill and the vision to see that by working together we could become stronger, building relationships with each other across denominations.
 - 1.8. ACW has a distinctive ministry through special ministries mentioned in 1.3.
2. **WHAT DO YOU SEE IS THE FUTURE FOR ACW?**
- 2.1. Not healthy without new members and active participation of churches in nominating delegates and executive members.
 - 2.2. Difficult to inspire younger women to accept responsibility roles in their churches as well as ecumenically, for many reasons. Unless there is change, decline will happen. "If no ACW what alternative"? Some areas have strong Inter-church Councils and Chaplaincy Support Groups to bring people together - this is not so everywhere.
 - 2.3. A slow death unless something remarkable happens - not the fault of members but the lack of commitment that many people have.
 - 2.4. To support one another where He places us, to hold our sisters in the Lord in prayer and action.
 - 2.5. Future will be stronger if we can come closer to all women (and men when invited) in areas where membership exists - by going to these communities with a Unit Meeting once a year (people will feel closer to the Committees, Convenors, Office Bearers etc.) Officers speak to members at a suitable venue so potential new members get to know about the past, present and future expectations. Vital speaker and fellowship important. Executive and Business meetings could be held in the city. Important voting could be carried out by post.

The practice of visiting other churches by some members during the year could be re-instituted, thus sharing our faith in a real sense. Invitations to affiliated bodies and community groups to attend our Unit meetings, not just the AGM.

Many more Christian Women's groups meeting now than in the past - so extend invitations and encourage them to visit us, with membership in mind.

- 2.6. ACW be invited to bring (take) speakers on topics of interest to the community and talk about our work - become recognised in churches.
- 2.7. Representatives to visit groups to enthuse them in the wider work - personal encouragement.
- 2.8. Try to include more denominations.

3. **WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

- 3.1. Very good (but overstretched) executive members. Need to recruit additional suitable people and identify possible future members/executive members.
- 3.2. A FAITHFUL group (though aging) continuing the patterns and projects set in the past.
- 3.3. Struggling but in some areas very healthy. Members are enthusiastic, committed and dedicated to the cause. This gives hope.
- 3.4. Waiting to see what God wants us to do as ACW.
- 3.5. Our eyes are being opened to look at what has gone before, what we are doing now to capture the Vision for the future.
- 3.6. Disappointing that we are not more widely known; need to give attention to publicity. Move outside our present structure for meetings; perhaps take them to our branches to encourage membership. More likely to be able to fill vacant positions.
- 3.7. Holding our own - good speakers - shorter meetings.
- 3.8. Ladies from the local churches support the Special Days - Fellowship and Community Days - so involved in their local churches they can't do much more (they are not involved and do not understand the workings of ACW).
- 3.9. We are most seen as worthwhile when we work together to meet community needs. Emphasise our special functions.

4. **WITHOUT ACW HOW FAR WOULD ECUMENISM BE IN SA?**

- 4.1. Not aware of other bodies apart from SACC, so not much formal expression in SA. Ecumenism sometimes healthy in rural areas.
- 4.2. Difficult to assess - over last 50+ years certainly a major contributor.
- 4.3. Many other expressions of ecumenical work in SA; many are struggling too. Anything we do to unite the churches is a good thing. We have made our mark in the past; we need to strive to continue to do so.
- 4.4. ACW instrumental in bringing women from different denominations together to serve him in the world and local communities.
- 4.5. We are contributing.

- 4.6. Our involvement with Interchurch Council through some of our members should be encouraged, so they get to know what ACW is about - ecumenical ties bring us together. An ACW speaker at one of their meetings would be very appropriate.
 - 4.7. ACW could create awareness of needs in local Inter Church Councils. The question of whether ACW should become a sub-committee of SA Council of Churches was discussed - enabling someone to play a bigger part. It was felt women's voices could be heard better through ACW, especially by women in those churches where men still control affairs. The link with Asian women is also important.
5. **HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE NEW MEMBERS?**
- 5.1. Members talking about activities and inviting others to come firstly to observe then hopefully to become involved. Denominations need to be pro-active in identifying prospective members and providing delegates. To recruit some young members- perhaps if at least two could be found who were friends (not necessarily from the same denomination) they could support and encourage each other to attend and be involved - hopefully for a long period of time.
 - 5.2. Some (Branch reps.) said 'wish we knew'; others 'being enthusiastic ourselves, believing in the value and worth of what we do. Tell others and offer transport if you can'.
 - 5.3. A concentrated effort needs to be done. Unfortunately this is costly - our literature needs to be attractive and up to date. Perhaps certain areas or churches need to be targeted?
 - 5.4. Talking to our church ladies groups; informing our churches of the activities of ACW by speaking and writing to their Fellowship Groups.
 - 5.5. Each group may have to look after their own responsibilities eg. advertising Morning Teas etc., and so relieve having a Promotions Officer.
 - 5.6. Disappointing that we are not more widely known, so we need to give attention to publicity. Our newsletter needs to be the 'voice' of our organisation and publicise our activities, speakers etc. We could advertise more through our local churches and associated women's interest groups.
 - 5.7. Advertise in church and local papers.
 - 5.8. Representatives need to visit groups to enthuse them in the wider work - they need the personal encouragement.
6. **HOW CAN WE PROMOTE ACW?**
- 6.1. Within denominational publications and church newsletters. Members taking the opportunity to speak to church women's groups, and promotion (as already happens) at Community Concern Morning Teas.
 - 6.2. Liaison Officers keep informing your own Branch or denomination. Where there is a local Interchurch Council seek opportunity to speak about our activities and encourage them to advertise our services in their churches. Local papers where possible. Suggest to groups holding services how to go about advertising. Offer to visit churches, branches and denominations to talk about our functions; use public notice boards in Shopping Centres or Library. At Community Concern Morning Teas when people are gathered use the opportunity to promote all of ACW activities briefly, or chose a different one each year to promote and share about.
 - 6.3. Literature - target area churches - one to one.

- 6.4. Through our meetings and activities as above.
- 6.5. Individual membership or contact the various metropolitan churches (parishes) for more membership (some parishes have these members but not all).
- 6.6 Promoting ACW is a BIG job and a Promotions Officer may find it somewhat daunting. Perhaps a Promotion Team - one member of executive, one member from each district - or say 4 people to get the information and events into the suburbs.
- 6.7. Need to move outside our present structure for meetings and perhaps take them to our branches to encourage membership there. We are more likely to be able to fill vacant positions on committees from women involved in the work in Branches when they feel more a part of the Unit and its activities.
- 6.8. Advertise in church and local papers.
- 6.9. ACW could improve its promotion of the various activities - a Publicity Officer with flair would help. (The increase in mental problems means a great need, which could be given greater emphasis. (Marjory Black House). New ways of responding could be explored.
- 6.10. Fortunate to have Morning Teas for contact with the general public - these could be also a greater vehicle for communicating information about ACW, WKS, FLC, J150. Invite your friends. We could have a rep at each occasion to specifically talk about their function within the ACW SA Unit, then the wider church and communities get to know us and what we do.

7. IS THERE A WAY TO ENTHUSE EXISTING MEMBERS?

- 7.1. Continue to provide good quality speakers and encourage active participation.
- 7.2. Enthusiasm is catching, so be enthusiastic yourself. Talk about ACW to your friends. Make reports brief, positive and encouraging.
- 7.3. Members need to feel valued and appreciated, and kept informed of the work, results and difficulties of ACW. When people see results for their efforts they continue to be enthusiastic about their roles.
- 7.4. Help them see it is a calling from God.
- 7.5. If Morning Teas are too much - maybe stop them and have shared lunches (with \$1 donation) after meetings.
- 7.6. Unit meetings should be of no more than a 2 hour duration and this to include a short prayer service, a hymn and time for sharing and fellowship. Most business is duplicated from the Business Meeting and need only be minuted. Good speakers, interesting, and with a message to the community.
- 7.7. Suggest as a pilot plan we focus on a Unit meeting in the Northern and Southern areas. Most groups only meet in areas about twice a year and little information is passed on to them to get them really interested in ACW.
- 7.8. Need to consider how we use time in meetings. More small group work on topics of interest and debates on decision making brings stimulation, and women feel more involved in meeting together. Can we widen our vision and work to include more people to encourage their interest in what we seek to do for Christ and his Church?

- 7.9. Keep meetings brisk and brief.
- 7.10. Conduct of meeting can be assisted by regular review of what happens in meetings. By careful planning, less intrusive time can be given to 'business' and more to speakers. Also the use of small group techniques can help people participate better.
- 7.11. The separation of Business and Unit meetings was designed to deal with business matters and reports. Unit meetings for speakers, discussion and important information matters only. All members receive minutes. Perhaps brief reports be given only at the Business meetings, unless matters of importance ie. promoting a Film Morning and ticket sales etc.
- 7.12. Can we challenge the State body of each member organisation to see the importance of examining the stated aims of each member organisation, consider where they overlap and where they differ. The former would far outweigh the latter.

8. **WHAT RELEVANCE HAS ECUMENISM IN SA?**

- 8.1. Social Work committees of different denominations now co-operate in their work. Consequently more attention is paid by media and authorities. Joint projects ie. Fair Wear Campaign a good example of this approach. Perhaps State Committees could recommend to member groups they plan joint activities and invite other church groups to join with them throughout the year, not just for 'Birthday' meetings.
- 8.2. Support the Catholic 'Sophia' group which supports aboriginal women in particular. Perhaps invite a speaker from the group in 2002.
- 8.3. Perception is that there is more awareness but not a lot of action.
- 8.4. Branch members thought it has great value, even vital. Promotes unity of thought and purpose as Jesus prayer 'that we become one', therefore relevant. Important in today's world to be seen to be willing to work together, serve and worship as believers in Christ. Sharing common facilities in multiple denomination school and Theological Colleges. Chaplain co-operation in workplace, prison, school and hospitals. Cooperation in Mission work translation work and many others.
- 8.5. To keep in touch with each other and to continue to promote unity. By doing this we are a much stronger body able to confront the issues the church faces today.
- 8.6. God is helping us to break down denomination barriers.
- 8.7. ACW has a very significant role to play in helping to promote our 'ONENESS' in Christ as he calls us to be. On behalf of all those women who gave their time and dedication to that cause we need to find the way forward to work in new and encouraging ways to be confident about our vision for the future and for the AIMS which we uphold.
- 8.8. It is coming, steadily if slowly.
- 8.9. Some link of liaison with the Social Justice committees of SACC and denominations could lead to effective support for people in need.

**AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN UNIT**

Churches of Christ
Women's Ministries

Mrs Coralie Wright
Hon. Secretary
ACW/SA Unit
28 Eliza Street
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May 29th 2001

RESPONSE TO 'VISION FOR THE FUTURE' QUESTIONNAIRE

In South Australia, Australian Church Women have always made a good contribution to Ecumenism, especially amongst women. Our early history shows that we came together in good will and with the vision to see that by working together we could become stronger, build relationships with each other across the denominations.

Like many organisations with a long history, we are feeling the changes that have been made in our society and the changing role of women today. We have perhaps not have been willing to make changes to our structure and have reached a stage of complacency. We need to consider what we are doing at the present time and be willing to make changes to encourage more enthusiasm within our membership and to stimulate more interest and action from women in our congregations.

If women are working well, Ecumenically, within their own denominations, all the more reason why they can help to strengthen ACW by helping to promote it in their congregations. (ACW could be invited to bring speakers on topics of interest to the community and talk about our work and in that way become recognised in churches.)

It is disappointing that we are not more widely known, so we need to give attention to publicity. Our newsletter needs to be the 'voice' of our organisation and publicise our activities, speakers etc. We could advertise more through our local churches and associated women's interest groups.

We need to move outside our presents structure for meetings and perhaps take them to our branches to encourage membership there. We are more likely to be able to fill vacant positions on committees from women involved in the work in branches when they feel more a part of the Unit and its activities.

We need to consider how we use our time in meetings. More small group work on topics of interest and debates on decision making brings stimulation and women feel more involved in meeting together. Can we widen our vision and work to include more people to encourage their interest in what we seek to do for Christ and his Church.

ACW has a very significant role to play in helping to promote our 'ONENESS' in Christ as he calls us to be. On behalf of all those women who gave their time and dedication to that cause we need to find the way forward to work in new and encouraging ways to be confident about our vision for the future and for the AIMS which we uphold.

THE FUTURE OF A.C.W.

Victorian Unit.

In November 2000, the Victorian Unit spent a Council meeting in small group discussion, about the future of A.C.W.

Acknowledging that Lyn Green submitted a paper to the National Conference in Canberra in September 1997, and many of the same ideas about the need for wider publicity, more efficient communication, and the importance of addressing issues, were included in her paper, we were prompted to raise these same questions again..

Suggestions:-

- That National Conference might be held less frequently (because of cost issues) perhaps each 3 or 4 years.
- Teleconferences could be arranged between State executives in between.
- E-mail could be a means of communication between States.
- We need to be more practically involved in the community, encouraging ecumenical activities in our own areas.
- Younger women respond to challenges and issues and we need to support and affirm them in their service.
- Publicity through speaking to groups, especially about F.L.C. and W.K.S.
- Encourage visits to local and country groups.
- Relate to our own denominational groups and let them know what we do.
- Investigate the possibility of closer links with the Australian Council of Churches Women's desk.

In spite of suggestions for change we do not underestimate the value of our existing fellowship, or the rich benefits of our ecumenical sharing in outreach through F.L.C., W.K.S., and our relationship with Asian Church Women.



AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN

Western Australian Unit

Suggestions for Future Directions for Australian Church Women

Our suggestions for future directions for Australian Church Women are based on...

1. Making ACW, its aims, objectives, projects, etc better known to Christian women and making know ways in which Christian women can be involved in ACW.
2. Finding out what Christian women expect of ACW, discovering from them ways in which we can more effectively promote links between women of difference denominations and meet their needs within the parameters of ACW aims.

Some suggestions are:

- : Wide distribution of the well prepared leaflets explaining ACW, and information kits.
- : A person in each region to be the local contact person for ACW disseminating information both to State Units and to local Christian women.
- : Visits to isolated groups making ACW known and providing support and encouragement, eg: a Safari – take a car load of women, with experience in singing, craft, speaker, dogsbody town to town.
- : Perhaps a video on the work of ACW could be made and distributed. (It is understood that Lyn Green made a video for ACWC. If this was available perhaps this could be used.)
- : Conduct a survey of Christian women to ascertain
 - What they know about ACW.
 - What they would like ACW to do.
 - Ways in which ACW could better serve their needs and promote links between Christian women.
- : Sponsor links between women of different denominations at grass roots levels according to needs, eg:
 - coffee mornings for young or lonely women, particularly in isolated setting, eg: outer suburbs.
 - Coffee clubs global – pay for self and a friend.
 - Forums – eg: guest speaker and dinner, (guest speaker could address areas of interest or Social Justice issues ACW involved in.
 - Coffee and cake evening with demonstration or entertainment.
- : Develop a Web Site on ACW.