



AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

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1. 9. 97

To All State/Territory Units of ACW

From National President Evonne Sullivan

Time does not permit a formal report on the 1997 Australian Women's Round Table held at Parliament House Canberra on 27/28 August.

I enclose copies of the list of participants, the agenda, and the names of the 10 member delegation who met with the Prime Minister on Thursday 28 August.

Senator The Hon. Jocelyn Newman warmly welcomed participants and expressed gratitude to those organisations who had responded to her request for priority issues. She stressed that issues of concern need to be taken to those most concerned. Ms Pru Goward, Director of Office of the Status of Women [OSW] was present throughout the two day consultation.

A number of delegates commented favourably on representation by church based organisations (see Participants List).

The most enjoyable formal dinner on Wednesday was enhanced by the presence of several women Parliamentarians. I was seated next to Andrea West, who represents the Queensland electorate of Bowman - in which Incoming National President Aileen Mortensen resides. Naturally I mentioned that fact to Andrea!

At lunch on Thursday, Senator Newman introduced a number of Personal Assistants to the various Members of Parliament.

Agenda items were well presented and most informative, the information session on the forthcoming National Domestic Violence Summit (late 1997) being most interesting.

I was most impressed with the presentation by Eileen Cummings of the Northern Territory Office of Women's Policy. An Arnhem Land aborigine, Eileen reported on 18 months hard work developing the Aboriginal Family Violence Strategy which rests on a partnership among Aboriginal people, Government agencies, and community based organisations. Eileen interviewed indigenous women in remote communities throughout the Territory (and some men as well!) She said that family violence is part and parcel of Aboriginal culture and that "Grandmother's Law" - counselling by senior women, is invaluable in family violence situations.

It is my hope that it will be possible for each State/Territory Unit to receive a copy of the official record of the Round Table Consultation.

Thank you, one and all, for allowing me the privilege to represent Australian Church Women at what I considered to be an important and successful event.

Evonne Sullivan

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