



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA INC.

Member Organisation of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO)

NGO in consultative (Roster) status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

After the first six months in office with a few hiccups, we are now getting organised for the Midterm Meeting. We are very sorry for the delay in getting the papers out for this due to us not checking the procedures manual regarding timelines. Thank you for your understanding in this situation.



I really enjoyed the Regional WUCWO Conference in Fiji, and sharing with so many like minded women from our very large region. Catherine McGrath and Jane Munro have both reported on this and Catherine has a report in this newsletter.

In the next few months I have been invited to attend conferences in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia which will enable me to meet with more members from each of those states.

Since returning from Fiji it has been rather busy in my own diocese, a retreat and five Vicariate meetings (I was only able to attend three of these) as well as having a State Council Meeting. In the midst of this two ladies whom I have worked very

closely with since I have been involved at Diocesan level Molly Huckel from the Riverland, she was our Diocesan International Secretary for a number of years as well as our newsletter editor, and Mollie Crettenden from the West Coast sadly passed away. Mollie Crettenden was our current Diocesan Secretary. Both will be very sadly missed. Mollie Crettenden had recently been made an Honorary Life Member of CWL in SA.

I have just returned from the New Zealand Conference which I attended with Margaret Quinn, Maureen Clark, Peg McEntee, Dale Mood and Moira ?? The New Zealanders were very pleased that we were able to attend and we were made to feel very welcome. ►

As the cathedral was very badly damaged in the earthquake the opening Mass was held in the Pro-Cathedral, this was celebrated by the Most Reverend Bishop Basil Meeting DD, Bishop Emeritus of Christchurch and also a number of priests and religious in attendance.

The conference started next morning where each of the Australians were presented with flowers. The Presidents of the six Dioceses addressed their reports in and how they implemented the theme of the past two years "Vital, Vibrant and Visible". Each Diocese was able to use their own interpretation of this theme. One diocese explained it as Vital (we are vital if we are prayerful, focussed on clear goals and involved), Vibrant (if we are vibrant, we are joyful and full of ideas for meeting our purposes) and Visible (if we are visible, people know what CWL stands for and does and want to join us).

The keynote speaker was Sr. Ann Gilroy RSJ who spoke on the environment in relation to the year of Mercy. "Where you grow from - your identity- we belong to a place. All life is created and environment has an influence on who we are".

CWL in Aotearoa New Zealand have supported the Sophie Elliot Foundation which raises



awareness of Domestic Violence. This foundation was formed by Leslie Elliot, her mother. Sophie was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in her mother's home and while her mother was downstairs. Leslie has written two books in collaboration with ex policeman and now Manager of the Foundation. Leslie has been raising awareness at schools and universities of the dangers of Domestic Violence.

At the Annual General Meeting held at the conference Kay Blackburn was reappointed as National President for the next two years. ►





On Friday afternoon we were taken on a bus trip around the areas of Christchurch which were most severely affected by the 2011 earthquake. To see such large areas which have had to be cleared because of them being in the red zone which has been declared unsafe to be rebuilt on. In the suburbs they will become parklands. In the city, buildings can be no higher than 7 stories. The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament was very badly damaged and at the moment it appears that they may repair the church, these major renovations are going to be very costly, but the cost of rebuilding will be very expensive as well.

On Friday night we enjoyed the Conference Dinner and on Saturday morning I was given the opportunity to speak to everyone at which I was able to issue an invitation for our Biennial Conference next year in Adelaide. It was a great experience and I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Christchurch.



Anne Marie

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"Wherever there are dreams, there is joy, Jesus is always present."

- Pope Francis



WUCWO ASIA SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE IN FIJI

Two hundred women from many Asia South Pacific countries – Japan, New Zealand, China, Vanuatu, Tonga, South Korea, Philippines, Fiji and Australia - attended the Regional WUCWO Conference held from 2nd to 6th May, in Suva, Fiji. Although it is a long way from Italy and the flight path is mind bogglingly complex, Maria Giovanna Ruggieri, President General of WUCWO, also attended.

Australia's Catherine McGrath is one of four Vice Presidents of WUCWO and as such is responsible for the Asia Pacific Region. Co-ordinating this Conference involved a lot of work, but Catherine rose to the occasion magnificently. Her husband, Jim, seemed to be everywhere at once – taking photographs and being helpful. One of the local men appreciated his good-humoured assistance so much he gave Jim a bright red floral shirt.

There are 34 Parishes in Fiji, and in spite of the fact that Cyclone Winston caused so much damage only a short time before the Conference

began, representatives from every Parish attended the Conference. Vanuatu was even more devastated by the cyclone, yet managed to send two representatives.

The rain that fell in the first two days was extraordinary. I was wishing we could re-direct some of it to our dry parched land.

The hotel most of us stayed at, across the road from the Conference Centre, was right on the beach. Out to sea were a variety of boats and two islands, one of which was mushroom shaped from constant sea erosion. I wondered what we should do if a tsunami warning was given. I saw a "Tsunami Assembly Area" sign a few kilometres away. Run for high ground I guess!

The Fijian women made their own 'national costumes' especially for the occasion. The pattern on the material was the same for each parish, but the design of each outfit was governed by individual taste. A very sensible arrangement! ►

Beautiful young women from a local Youth Group helped with the general running of the conference. They were so willing and friendly and their computer skills were appreciated! Many of the priests from the Pacific Regional Seminary of St Peter Chanel, which is part of the Archdiocese of Suva, said Mass for us. One priest, Fr Soane Ahohako, outlined the Theology of the Body course run for young couples. It was very impressive. Another priest, Fr Timoci Kolodisi, summed up the talks given by guest speakers and the general direction of the Conference in the final Mass. Fr Timoci's summary was so succinct and to the point. Much of the discussion at the Conference had centred on the family, the role of mothers and fathers and the dangers presented by outside influences – usually by big international organisations heavily promoting a 'right to abortion' and 'sexual orientation and gender identity' - seeking to undermine the integrity of marriage and the preciousness of human life. Fr Donal McIlraith, an Irishman who has worked in the Pacific Region for many years, entertained and inspired us. A man of great faith, his obvious love of the Lord was worth witnessing. You will have received the Outcome Statement from the Conference. You will be able to see that the Conference was worthwhile and possibly timely, given the concerted agenda to inflict philosophies, which have harmed our country, upon our sisters in Christ to our North. His Eminence, Robert Cardinal Sarah alludes to what was evident in Fiji, in his recent book, 'God or Nothing'.

Gender ideology has become the perverse condition for cooperation and development.... I have noticed the existence of international programs that impose abortion and the sterilization of women. These policies are all more hideous because most African populations are defenceless, at the mercy of fanatical Western ideologues. The poor are asking for a little aid, and some people are cruel enough to poison their minds. Africa and Asia absolutely must protect their cultures and their own values. International agencies in fact have no right to practice this new Malthusian, brutal colonialism. Out of ignorance or complicity, African and Asian governments would be guilty of allowing their people to be euthanized. Mankind would lose much if these continents were to fall into the huge, formless magma of a globalization, which is directed toward an inhumane ideal that is in fact a hideous, barbaric oligarchy. P159

It was disturbing to see large international organisations use the Fijian women and the Conference to promote their anti-life and anti-marriage agenda. It has been rightly called 'colonial imperialism.'



Jane Munro

National International Secretary



NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES REPORT

“Each of us is responsible for his or her neighbour: we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they live.
(Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2016)

CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND OVERWEIGHT

I’ve had the pleasure recently of working with Sonia di Mezza, our Research Officer, as she prepares a submission for the NSW Upper House Inquiry into Childhood Overweight and Obesity. Whilst malnutrition plagues so many nations, in others it is overweight and obesity that undermines both adults’ and children’s health and extracts an enormous financial cost from the community. As so often is the case, the disadvantaged are especially vulnerable to this non-communicable disease.

“In 2010, 22.8% of children (24% of boys and 21.5% of girls) were overweight or obese” (NSW Health)

“Children living in the areas of greatest relative disadvantage had more than double the rate of obesity (28%) of children living in areas with the lowest relative disadvantage (13%)” (ABS)

“In 2008, the economic impact in NSW of obesity alone was estimated by Access Economics to be \$19 billion”

“Obese children have a 25-50% per cent chance of being obese adults, however, this possibility can be as high as 78% for older obese adolescents” (NSW Health)

With obesity affecting twice the number of our most disadvantaged kids compared with the least disadvantaged, all our governments must look with renewed commitment to comprehensive and preventative strategies. This might include revisiting the recommendations of the 2009 National Preventive Health Taskforce Report, National Preventative Health Strategy and perhaps considering more effective “under one roof” health management approaches.

I wish Sonia and the CWL NSW all the very best with this important submission. I’m sure it will be a valuable document to assist the National and state CWL organisations in similar appeals for action.

CHILDREN IN OFFSHORE DETENTION



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“Governments have a responsibility to manage migration flows, but the Australian Government’s current approach is harsh and should change.”

Fr Maurizio Pettina CS 12 August 2016

As I write this newsletter, it’s the first day of the 45th Parliament and almost two months since the election. Our government may have been in a state of suspension for weeks but unfortunately the challenges faced by our many ‘voiceless’ people have not. ►

The Australian Catholic Bishops have issued two important statements during August for the guidance of Catholics, our community and our political leaders:

Fr Maurizio Pettena CS, Director, Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) calls for "immediate action to be taken by the Minister of Immigration, Peter Dutton, in order to reduce the human suffering of the refugees on Nauru".

His call follows the release of **The Nauru Files** documenting over 1000 allegations of cruelty including assault, sexual abuse, child abuse and self-harm – over 50% of the incidents concern children despite children making up only 18% of Nauru detainees. The files compound the existing concerns arising from the **Nauru Senate Inquiry** and the **Moss Inquiry**.

Bishop Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv, Bishops Delegate for Migrants and Refugees

In anticipation of **Migrant and Refugee Sunday**, celebrated last Sunday, Bishop Long urges Australian authorities to close offshore detention centres and "end the suffering of the asylum seekers by way of a more humane solution". He adds:

"Any breach of their right to be treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity will stain our conscience and blight our future as a nation." [ACBC Media Release Link](#)

In addition to your local Federal member, who can we write to about this issue?

The Hon. Peter Dutton, MP

Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

The Hon. Shayne Neumann, MP

Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN DETENTION

In the wake of the ABC's exposure of brutal practices inflicted on children detained in the NT's Don Dale Youth Detention Centre over recent years, Amnesty International has this week released its Heads Held High report. It shines a light on the work still to be done, with a special focus on the Queensland criminal justice system.

"Indigenous children make up over half of the 10 to 17 year old youth detention population in Australia, despite comprising only 6% of the population"

"Indigenous children are 24 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous children"

"Queensland has the highest number of 10 and 11 year old children in detention in Australia, as well as being the only state to treat 17 year olds as adults"

"There are extremely high rates of children on remand (held in custody prior to conviction or release)"

[Click Here — Queensland Report By Amnesty International Link](#)

Amnesty acknowledges the promising developments in Indigenous youth justice intervention and prevention programs. However, it recommends significantly increased government support in this direction.

NEWS

Australia and Timor-Leste: Dispute in The Hague over maritime boundaries

Australia is before the Conciliation Commission in The Hague this week as an impoverished Timor-Leste seeks to reach a permanent settlement over the two nations' maritime boundaries under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

At stake are the Greater Sunrise oil and gas fields worth an estimated \$40 billion. Timor-Leste argues that the 2006 treaty between the two countries should be torn up. One of its arguments concerns Australia's use of devices to listen in to Timor-Leste's private cabinet deliberations over its proposed terms. ►



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41% of Timor-Leste's people live below the poverty line and less than half its households have electricity. Oil and gas profits under current arrangements with Timor-Leste will be depleted by 2025 if a median line boundary is not established.

Australian Catholic Bishops Social Justice Statement 2016/2017 'A Place at the Table:

Social justice in an ageing society'

A reminder about Social Justice Sunday on 25 September. This year, the Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement is titled: 'A Place at the Table: Social justice in an ageing society'. A notice for newsletters and parish bulletins is below:

"The Statement celebrates the value and dignity of older people in Australian life. It challenges us to recognise their significant contribution to society and emphasises that this contribution should not be valued in mere economic terms. The Statement calls for justice for those who are most vulnerable and warns about a view of older people as burdensome or dispensable.

For further details about the Social Justice Statement, visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au or call (02) 8306 3499."



God bless,

Helen Freidman

National Social Issues Convenor

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"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."

- Saint Teresa of Calcutta

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CWLA E-NEWSLETTER

If you would like a free subscription to the CWLA e-Newsletter please contact us at publicrelations@cwla.org.au

The CWLA e-newsletter is published quarterly.

WOMEN'S VOICE

Women's Voice is the Official Magazine of World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO). An annual subscription is \$22.00

League Members should contact their State International Secretaries if they would like to subscribe to Women's Voice.

FROM THE BIOETHICS CONVENOR

'Proclaim the message and, in season and out, and insist upon it!' 2 Tim 4:2

The arch-enemy of compassion is pity (Dr. Sr. Anne Ward)

Demands for the 'right to die' and the 'right to remove' a child's right to live are loud, noisy messages strutting the human rights stage. Former celebrities and numerous parliamentarians in Australian states have taken up the claim that killing and being killed is now a right. Our response to these 'pop' ideals and celebrity idealists needs to be strong, forthright and informed. While advocates expressing a passion for non-existent rights are usually assumed to be sincere and may be well-meaning, they need careful scrutiny. If we shy away from the task of challenging them, calling them out on mistakes, demanding statistics and holding them to account we are not assisting them to be persons of integrity. Nor are we upholding the basic human rights which these pop ideals trample over. Some criteria to assess these newly emerging mythical rights and their proponents might be:

1. Are they based on an evidenced love of humankind? What evidence?
2. Do they derive from a history of work and deep respect for all the rights of each human being?
3. Do those clamoring loudly for a 'right to die' have anything to say about a 'right to live'?
4. Do they listen to disabled persons closely and respect their views on this issue?
5. Do they champion the right to live of the disabled throughout their lives or do they fall silent here?
6. Have they actually helped persons for whom they claim these rights? Or do they merely run a distant 'pity' commentary?
7. Are proponents presenting sound and high quality research or resorting to anecdotes and selected interviews?
8. Are they constructing or enhancing celebrity status, self-aggrandizing?

9. Do proponents speak of human dignity in terms of physical circumstances, or do they understand that our dignity is inherent in who we are, not how we are?
10. Do they uphold that this dignity is never forfeited by being sick, nor removed by dying?
11. Do proponents speak of human spirituality?
12. Is their discussion of spirituality confined to memories and personal relationships?

The natural law present in us all asks these questions.

As Catholics we also have the deeper God-given checklist etched by his finger on stone and in our hearts. His Law is vitality and love. Clamour for the 'right to die' almost universally has nothing to say about the 'right to live'. In their persistence these calls talk over disabled persons testimony (eg the ABC's 'Q&A'), in their pride they brook no rebuttal and in their emotional pitch they have no ears for statistics or studies. Cries for death are as empty of true human respect and compassion as they are of authentic concepts of human spirituality. CWLA national bioethics newsletters have provided resources and references to dismantle these calls for mythical rights to kill the very young and the very sick. To write, speak and begin a conversation with appropriate information has been a critical role of CWLA membership. We have also looked at the 'gender dysphoria' diagnosis, formerly known as 'gender identity disorder' and presented the American College of Pediatricians statement that:

"urges educators and legislators to reject policies that condition children to accept as normal a life of surgical and chemical impersonation of the opposite sex. Facts - not ideology - determine reality". ►

In addition to newsletters I was invited to present our research on Gardasil® safety studies and Project Life to the national FLI Congress in Albury in January 2016.

In March 2016 I was selected (after abstract submission) to present my peer-reviewed published research into Gardasil® and ovarian safety to the World Congress of Controversies in Obstetrics, Gynecology and infertility, held this year in Australia (Melbourne).

In April 2016 I was an invited speaker to the 10th International Autoimmunity Congress in Leipzig Germany. My report was received without refutation. This is not a congress where GPs normally present, so I felt very honoured by the invitation. We must all remember that this work began with Helen Wyborn RN and midwife, and her great diligence while in the position of State Bioethics officer for NSW.

A letter was written to the MJA online magazine Insight, and was subsequently forwarded to the editor in chief, reminding him that the calibre of their medical journal is above sub-referring the reader to anonymously written, unreferenced blogs containing misinformation, foul language and slander. Some AMA publications have become weak in the area of academic rigor and this particular edition of Insight (April 2016) was only able to refer to anonymous invective after the Leipzig presentation. It is noted Insight was unable to refute any data presented, find fault with any references cited in multiple peer-

reviewed publications or produce any information to the contrary. My evidence that ovarian research is absent remains upheld.

In June 2016 I was invited to present Project Life to St Vincent de Paul in our region. (Project Life has expanded to the Clarence valley and the Lily Rose antenatal clinic celebrates its first birthday in August 2016).

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Pray for Us.



**(Dr) Deirdre Therese Little MBBS DRANZCOG
FACRRM grad cert Bioeth (LUC)**

CWLA Inc. national Bioethics Convenor



Let us imitate Mother Teresa who made works of mercy the guide of her life and the path towards holiness.

3rd September 2016

Pope Francis @Pontifex

NEW SOUTH WALES

In January CWLA-NSW Inc. once again sponsored a young woman for the National Council of Women NSW (NCW NSW) Celebrate Being Australian Award . This annual award is sponsored by the affiliated women's organisations. CWLA-NSW Inc. has been part of this sponsorship programme for a number of years. The award acknowledges young women of achievement in their late undergraduate or postgraduate year. This year our nominee was Madeleine Banister who is studying Bachelor Arts (Politics/History) at Newcastle University. Madeleine has a great passion for human rights. We wish Madeleine every success as she pursues her career. Madeleine will keep us updated on her progress.

In February I was accompanied by State Treasurer Sue Halliday to the Installation Mass of the National Executive 2016/17 in Adelaide. Also attending from NSW was Immediate Past National President Carolyn Metcalfe and Peg McEntee OAM and Sue Freestone, also the Incoming National Public Officer, Pat Liddiard. Fr. David Orr flew in to concelebrate the Installation Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. We wish the new National team our prayerful best wishes for their term of office.

State Development/Protocol Officer Peg McEntee OAM attended a Symposium 'Pornography and harms to children and young people "at NSW University in February. Peg has forwarded information received at the symposium to National Research Officer Sonia diMezza who is preparing a submission on the topic for the National Executive.

State Bioethics Officer Margo Nancarrow prepared a submission on behalf of CWLA-NSW Inc. to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs regarding the Surrogacy Inquiry. I commend the work undertaken by Margo on behalf of CWLA-NSW Inc.

The information sent to Diocesan Presidents and Members from Communications Officer Michelle Pedersen under "Relevant Articles" is always informative.

State Secretary Denise McCaffery represented CWLA-NSW Inc. at the Mother's Union Service of Dedication recently. I also had the opportunity to represent the National President, Anne Marie Clark at the Young Catholic Women's Interfaith Fellowship sponsored by CACW and the Office for Participation of Women.

State Secretary Denise McCaffery and State Treasurer Sue Halliday joined me at a High Tea hosted by Mary MacKillop International to highlight the ongoing work undertaken by MMI in East Timor. A lovely occasion to reacquaint with MMI, who are always so appreciative of the support from Catholic Women's League.

It was a great pleasure to join the Bathurst Diocese members at their One Day Conference along with State Executive members Peg McEntee and Michelle Pedersen and representatives from Broken Bay, Parramatta and Wollongong Dioceses and the Sydney Archdiocese. The hospitality of the Lismore members is renowned and once again it was a lovely occasion to share in our faith and friendship. Guest speaker Sr. Christina Aitken RSM spoke to the theme of the day "Mercy and Hope in a troubled world ". Bishop Michael McKenna officiated at the Mass at St. Patrick's Church, Lithgow and joined the members in meeting for part of the programme. All reports were presented with great detail and competency and I extend thanks to Diocesan President Pat Okon OAM for her invitation to join the wonderful members of Bathurst Diocese on this occasion.

Recently, CWLA-NSW Public Officer Irene O'Grady met with State Executive members Peg McEntee OAM and Patricia Banister to discuss the review of the State Constitution. A report on this process will be discussed further. ►

QUEENSLAND

The WUCWO Asia Pacific Conference was held in Fiji and State International Secretary Patricia Bannister forwarded all information in relation to the event. I know you join with me as we continue to keep the people of Fiji in our prayers following the devastation inflicted by Cyclone Winston. Our prayers were with CWLA WUCWO Board member Australia and WUCWO Asia Pacific Vice President Catherine McGrath, as she prepared for the conference. State Protocol/ Development Officer Peg McEntee OAM also attended the conference.

The CWLA-NSW Inc. State Council Meeting was held on the weekend of 16th /17th April. All Executive and portfolio position reports were presented

Diocesan Delegates will be in attendance and reports on the activities of the members of CWLA NSW Inc. will be presented

I would like to acknowledge all the lovely messages of congratulations I received following the Australia Day Honours when it was announced that I received the Member of the Order of Australia.

I am deeply humbled by this award and I share it with the wonderful women of Catholic Women's League who walk this journey with me.

Blessings



Moya Potts

AM President CWLA-NSW Inc.

"Pray as though everything depended on God.
Work as though everything depended on you."

- St. Augustine

In February, the State Council met in the CWL rooms in Brisbane for the State AGM and Council Meeting. The delegates are Maureen Perry and Pat Strathdee from Townsville Diocese, Angie Camileri and Coline Eastment from Rockhampton Diocese, and Sandy O'Donohue and Heather McIntyre from the Brisbane Archdiocese. Our Chaplain Father Peter Luton was unable to be present, but sent us this message. "Dear Ladies. Don't overlook the fact that you women, through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. So, in the name of Jesus, I'm asking you to exercise that priesthood in your contact with people, thereby presenting Jesus to them in the real world. Don't underestimate your abilities to be evangelisers for all those with whom you come in contact. I'm not talking about "bible bashing" here. I'm talking about being another Jesus – Jesus the High Priest."

Isn't that empowering? We resolved to take heed of his message, to convey it to our members, and especially in this Year of Mercy, to try to do even more in our interaction with others, to show that we are bearers of God's love and mercy in our communities.

At the meeting, the Diocesan Presidents gave comprehensive reports of the many works of mercy carried out by their members. Many of our members, especially in the country areas, are also members of other organisations such as St Vincent de Paul, Red Cross, Meals on Wheels and Rosie's Outreach on the Streets. Very busy retirements indeed! Our membership may slip a little this year, especially as so many of our loyal and loved members have gone to their eternal rest. Many branches are now celebrating fifty and sixty years of CWL and we are all grateful for those many years of devoted service.

All branches are reporting that they have planned another very busy year, and I wish I was able to visit all of them to take part in their many varied activities. The members really cherish that CWL gives them the opportunity to continue to grow spiritually, to help their parishes and communities in myriad ways, and to form lasting, loving friendships. ►

Plans for our Biennial Conference, September 6th to 8th, are well in hand and we encourage all of our members to make a big effort to attend. We are planning to have representatives of many Catholic organisations to give presentations. We wish all Member Organisations a fruitful year as we celebrate God's loving mercy.

For the Honour and Glory of God.

Veronica Box.

President CWLQLD (Inc.)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

“Let us be renewed by God’s mercy”

A big welcome to a new year in the life of Catholic Women's League Western Australia.

We started the year with an almost identical line-up to 2015 except that Margaret Ker has joined the fold as Social Issues Convenor, Joan Smurthwaite has taken up her new role as delegate, Fran Mulcahy as another delegate and Karyn Kammann is ex-officio in her undertaking to co-ordinate our Membership Committee.

We were privileged, once again, to have our Chaplain, Fr Laurence Murphy SDS celebrate Mass for us before beginning our proceedings in State Council – as always a very fitting introduction to our day of deliberations and a wonderful sign of our solidarity to Church and Catholic Women's League.

The theme chosen for CWLWA 2016, in this Jubilee Year of Mercy, is “Let us be renewed by God's Mercy”. I am hopeful that all members are participating and being challenged in their Parishes and families to recognise the blessing of God's mercy in our lives; to be strengthened in our resolve to extend mercy to everyone; to continue to work to make our parish community a wellspring of joy, serenity and peace and that we recognise that mercy is the bridge that connects

God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

Following our State Council meetings “The President's Piece” is circulated to branches by their respective delegates and serves to keep everyone informed of the many tasks undertaken through our discussions at State Council meetings and which gives all members the opportunity to know of many activities in advance.

Applications for the CWLWA Notre Dame scholarship closed on 15 February and CWLWA executive members have given input into their preference for this year's award - we await the final decision from the selection panel with the process due to conclude shortly.

Invitations for me to attend various functions have been received and at this early stage in the year I attended the NCW International Women's Day luncheon in Perth on Wednesday 9 March and will join the Knights of the Southern Cross at their Founders Breakfast at Redemptoris Mater Seminary on Saturday 19 March.

Margaret Ker our State Social Issues Convenor has begun the year with a flourish. We particularly appreciate the positive response to material which was distributed to members on Bakhita Day, the Gardasil vaccine and more recently on ethically produced Easter eggs. These issues which Margaret brings to our attention are usually fairly simple to be engaged in and gives us the opportunity to be mindful of the many social issues which confront us.

Most branches have held their first meeting for 2016 and I have received reports of issues faced by some in filling executive positions. Whilst we encourage members to be actively involved, circumstances of age and lack of numbers can present difficulties. One branch has advised that the load of President is being shared by a couple of members, another that members are to take turns organising and running meetings and activities. There is clearly a need for branches to be creative and to try and find an alternative way around the situation and to work within the circumstances of the time!

Our CWLWA State AGM Teleconference will take place on Tuesday 26 April and will include the ratification of the audited Financial books of Account and the voting on nominations for positions on State Council for 2017. ►

We have found the teleconference to be a simple and effective way to have all branches and members engaged and we look forward to a 100% attendance as in 2016.

We are all part of a wonderful body of women worldwide. Let's be proud and hold our heads high and continue to share the good news by our works of love and mercy. "Let us be Renewed by God's Mercy" " and let us become agents of his mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish" (Pope Francis)

In Charity, Work and Loyalty



Maria Parkinson
State President CWLWA (Inc.)

VICTORIA & WAGGA WAGGA

Hello Members and Friends,

2016 is a very significant year for Catholic Women's League Vic Wagga. It was in 1916 that Catholic Women's Social Guild, was established in Victoria. On October 1st in that year more than 2,000 women gathered in Cathedral Hall Brunswick, where they were inspired by Father William Lockington SJ, to work to ensure that Catholic values were evident in society's laws.

Mary Glowrey, a young medical doctor practising in Melbourne, was the first president of the Guild, later called League, in 1916. Mary Glowrey sailed to India in 1920, and served the medical and spiritual needs of the people as the first nun doctor missionary. Dr. Sr. Mary Glowrey, Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart [MJ].

Her cause for sainthood is in progress in India, and in 2013 she was raised to Servant of God.

In the early years women in the Guild (League) served on various committees, such as State Royal Commission on children's welfare. Some women served as probation officers in the Children's Court, while others promoted better work conditions for women.

Our motto taken from the Book of Proverbs, has inspired members down through the ages,

"She has put out her hand to strong things"

On October 2nd members and friends are all invited to gather together and celebrate our 100 years, and honour the legacy of our founding members and all who have continued the mission of the League down through the years. The day will commence with the celebration of Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral followed by lunch in Cathedral Hall. Our centenary committee has organised souvenirs for the occasion.

At present in CWL Vic Wagga there are 55 branches, 1,038 members and 17 on-line members.

Our diocesan committees do find it difficult sometimes to fill positions. Certainly we all recognise that volunteers are 'scarcer than hen's teeth' in many organisations.

Our 2016 Diocesan conferences have all been events for which the respective committees can be proud of their efforts. These days are always an opportunity to renew friendships and meet new friends.

Diocesan spiritual directors never fail to give encouragement to members.

Our AGM will be on 17th August in Melbourne

The Special Works committees continue to work diligently in their areas. For example the Horizon magazine is proof of commitment by that committee, with each month readers being presented with varied and worthwhile articles. The 'historian and researcher' on the committee has provided many articles where aspects of our faith knowledge are expanded.

The Mary Glowrey House committee is involved with the operation of our accommodation house, and also organises volunteers so that our caretaker is able to take breaks. ►

The Missions and Welfare committee supports students in some Catholic schools in the area, with provision of uniforms and books. These students are often members of refugee families. The Social Questions committee endeavours to make members aware of current social issues and possible action - sometimes letter writing, or e-mails, or signing petitions, or contacting politicians.

SSCA, Safe Schools Coalition Australia, is a program proposed for students, but it is dangerous for our students because there are so many links to pornography and measures to undermine the goodness of families. Contacting members with such information is done via e-mail

May I thank members everywhere for their commitment to promote the Catholic Women's League.



Anita Toner
President Victoria & Wagga
Wagga

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

This is my first article for the National Newsletter as the new President of South Australia CWL. As a new retiree from paid work, I am adjusting to not remembering what week it is in schools, how public holidays are something to look forward to and enjoying each day like it was a weekend!

In the document, *The Face of Mercy*, announcing the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis wrote, "The Holy Door is a door of mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons and instils love." There are three Doors of Mercy in South Australia, the eastern side of the Cathedral in Adelaide, St

Aloysius Church in Sevenhill and St Joseph's Church in Penola. If the opportunity arises during this year, walking through one of these Doors will give each of us a resolve to continue God's work in showing compassion, love, friendship and mercy to all with whom we come in contact with in our everyday lives. How can we as members of SA CWL bring the Year of Mercy to life? There are many remarkable events and occasions that I am beginning to hear about from our branch members throughout SA. As I learn more about these activities, I will share this news with you. In February, Mass was celebrated for the Installation of the National Executive CWL and the Year of Consecrated Life was closed in Adelaide. The Installation mass was well represented by Archdiocese and Port Pirie Diocese CWL members. I look forward to hearing and seeing the National Conference in Adelaide in September 2017 take shape.

At our State Executive meeting at the end of May, I proposed after consultation with some of my Executive members that collectively as a state we revisit the 6 resolutions that were passed at last year's National Conference. I believe potentially that if SA CWL could choose one of these issues to develop a strategic plan for 2016/2017 we can make a difference for a group of women, children, young adults and families. Each branch has been asked to choose one of these issues and send their response to the State Exec by September 2016. The members of the state Executive will then collectively make a decision to plan our action for one of these issues at least for the next 12 months. As I write this report, we have received 4 responses from our branch members, I know the rest are on their way!

Go well and may we all bring joy and peace to those in need.



Cecilia Quigley
State President

TASMANIA

A Jewish Rabbi, a devoted Muslim, a Latter Day Saint presenting to a roomful of practising Catholics. Dr Shimon Cowen, Usman Rana and Michael Stokes were three of the many key-notes speakers at the Dawson Centre Colloquium held in Hobart last month, the theme was - The nature of men and women: Complementary but different.

If this was representative of how the rest of the world interacted - respecting and listening attentively to what each speaker had to say on this particular aspect of their religion - we would all be co-existing together amicably, peacefully and in spiritual harmony. The value of having Usman Rana speak was immeasurable when you consider the misinformation and sensationalism of the Islamic faith presented by social and main stream media. With a touch of humour, Usman outlined and read passages from the Qur'an pertaining to women and their treatment in the Islamic faith in the 21st century; women are encouraged to obtain a qualification, participate in the workforce, and contribute to the managing of the family's finances.

It was valuable to hear contributions from the audience and other key note speakers during the presentations. These animated conversations between the speakers and audience continued throughout the breaks. I can confidently say the audience gained immensely from the speakers and their presentations encouraged ongoing lively discussions.

Palliative care survey coordinator Rosie Beardsley, on behalf of Professor Colleen Cartwright, approached the League with a request to fill out a survey to express their views on palliative care services in Tasmania. The Department of Health and Human Services is developing a Palliative Care Charter to enable them to improve and address the social, spiritual, emotional and physical needs of patients. You may be interested to read two

recently published papers: Bereavement care in Tasmania: current status and future directions for palliative care and The Victorian Parliament's Legal and Social Issues Committee - Inquiry into end of life choices final report. Both papers are available on the Internet. It is important to add our voice to the discussion surrounding palliative care.

Thank you to all the ladies who volunteered their time to assist in the Federal Election campaign. Personally I was disappointed not to see Amanda-Sue Markham win a seat, a caring and committed Christian with strong moral values she would have been an asset to the Parliament. Hopefully she will build on her campaign experience and repeat the opportunity to stand for Parliament in three years.

I attended Emily's Voice fundraising dinner in Launceston in support of their latest media campaign. The campaign aims to highlight the importance of supporting women who are facing an unexpected pregnancy. Their latest advertisements aim to "help Australians fall in love with the unborn." If you missed them on television you can view them on their website - [Not Born Yet](http://www.notbornyet.com) - www.notbornyet.com

I believe as Catholics, we have a responsibility to raising awareness of the lack of knowledge around the practice of abortion and this will partly be achieved by the League erecting a memorial to the unborn. The Memorial Project is moving along, we have met with Archbishop Porteous and he has given us his endorsement and offered his support.

Two branches have recently closed in Tasmania - Devonport and Ulverstone. The Executive hope to see the few ladies left continue to participate and contribute to the League.

Sandra Harvey
Tasmania

FROM THE WUCWO BOARD MEMBER AUSTRALIA

A very successful World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) Asia Pacific Region Conference was held at Novotel Conference Centre Lami, Suva, Fiji, from 1-6 May, 2016.

Two hundred participants representing countries from Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, Tonga, Vanuatu and representatives of the thirty four parishes of Fiji. Fiji was the host country. WUCWO President General, Maria Giovanna Ruggieri, from Italy attended with an itinerary that would frighten most people. She was most generous with her time as she endeavoured to speak with all attendees, even if just a few words. She was also able to fulfil a wish to have a swim in the Pacific Ocean.

The Conference began with Mass being celebrated at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Suva. Imagine our surprise and delight when we saw the banner strung across the street welcoming all WUCWO delegates to the city of Suva, sponsored by the City of Suva, that is: the banner. Each day Mass was celebrated by priests from Religious Orders and Diocesan priests, each of whom contributed their thoughts on the theme and topics of the Conference.

Topics discussed followed on from the Resolutions passed at the General Assembly held in Portugal, Fatima 2014. Presentations focussed mainly on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children, Addiction Prevention, Family with an excellent session on the Theology of the Body. Access to Clean water and sanitation is another priority of WUCWO worldwide. President General asked us to remember the words of Pope Francis' in 'Laudate Si' Care for our Common Home, and not to waste our resources.

Workshops took place after these presentations and so many interesting reports were the result from which the Final Statement of the Conference was drafted.

We were concerned for the welfare of the Fijian women who had been so tragically affected by Tropical Cyclone Winston. These women who

do not possess many material possessions have the most generous and caring hearts. They are also a very resilient group and my sincere thanks is extended to all of them who were able to attend or contributed in any way to make this Conference such a success. At this point, I would like to mention one of the four Police/ Security Guards at the Conference. Sergeant Usa, who took particular care of us, was on leave from his work as a Lami Police Officer, his mother is a member of CWL and she was sick so he told me he would do what he could to make the conference a success for her as she could not attend.

I have forwarded the Final Statement from the Conference and do hope it will soon be on the Web site so everyone will have access and be able to read the Statement.

We, in WUCWO, are preparing for the Board Meeting to be held in Bari, Italy in October, 2016. It is hoped that the women of the Middle East will be able to meet with us for two days, there. This is a continuation of the General Assembly held in Jerusalem, 2010 and the Conference held in Amman, Jordan in 2013. It is hoped they will be able to afford to attend this venue as the Board Members from Africa who were unable to attend the Jordan Conference because of Visa difficulties.

I thank you all for your prayerful support of me as WUCWO Board Member Australia and Vice President Asia Pacific Region and for all in WUCWO.

May Our Lady Queen of Peace guide us in all we do.



Catherine V McGrath

WUCWO V/P Asia Pacific Region

WUCWO Board Member Australia

ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE OUTCOME STATEMENT

May 1st-6th, 2016 : Venue: Novotel Lami

Two hundred representatives from the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations Asia Pacific Region met in conference this week in Lami, Fiji, under the theme of "In Hope and Mercy We Meet in God's Love". Delegates of the conference travelled from as far as Italy, Japan, Korea, Vanuatu, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Philippines and China. Fiji delegates represented all 34 Parishes across the country.

Pope Saint John Paul II stated that the family is a 'community of love, founded on marriage. Within the family each member is accepted, respected and honoured precisely because he or she is a person. The role of the family in building the culture of life is decisive and irreplaceable. As the domestic church, the family is summoned to proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life. It is above all in raising children that the family fulfils this mission. The family celebrates the Gospel of life through daily prayer.' (Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan, The Gospel of Life, pages 92-94).

As such, the family must be encouraged, respected and supported. This Conference presented strong, informative sessions on the Theology of the Body, its connections to Natural Family Planning and an insight into the profound understanding of the equality and complementarity of husband and wife.

Women delegates actively participated and shared their ideas on the Action and Strategies that needs to be addressed in order, to tackle the burning issues of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children. Raising awareness to enlighten the family and community about this issue came out very strongly, as most of the delegates believe that the more we talk about these issues, the more the community and especially our families will be enlightened to take action. The participation of so many young women was very encouraging and appreciated. Their valuable contributions augur well for the future of the organisation.

The complexity and insidious nature of documents produced by some international organisations, who take advantage of the vulnerability of people, their lack of understanding and their failure to thoroughly investigate documents and sources of funding, is a grave concern. Devious and unethical methods are sometimes employed to coerce people into the acceptance of philosophies they do not endorse.

Responding to the words of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* Care for our Common Home, our President General Maria Giovanna Ruggieri exhorted us to care for our environment and not to waste precious resources. Prayer was emphasized as our source of strength, inspiration and understanding. The beauty and harmony of God's creation and His plans for our lives were acknowledged and praised.

Key Points from the Topics

- WUCWO of the Asia Pacific region is concerned that;
- There is a lack of involvement of fathers in some families.
- Rights and responsibilities are co-dependent and cannot infringe upon others rights.
- Women's rights are equal to men's rights.
- Marriage and family are cornerstones of our society.
- Children need the protection of family life and parents are obliged to supervise their activities.
- Taboo subjects, like discussions on sex, will need to be explored to protect children from greater harm. Families will need appropriate assistance and advice, on this.

In keeping with the theme of our Conference, "In Hope and Mercy, we meet in God's Love" and in view of the avenues our discussions explored, the words of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, in *Amoris Laetitia* (290), recapitulate the general trend of our discussions.

"The family is thus an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, namely solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures, beginning in the territory in which the family lives, through the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of Mercy" (310). All this is an expression of our profound Christian belief in the love of Jesus Christ, who even now lives in our midst and enables us to face together the storms of life at every stage. In all families the Good News needs to resound, in good times and in bad, as a source of light along the way. All of us should be able to say, thanks to the experience of our life in the family: "We come to believe in the love that God has for us" (1 Jn 4:16). Only on the basis of this experience will the Church's pastoral care for families enable them to be both domestic churches and a leaven of evangelization in society.

We applaud the Organizing Committee for their choice of excellent speakers who presented on the key topics.