

Australian Federation of University Women

A Voice for Graduate Women



Newsletter

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June 2008

An Invitation to the AGM, 29 August

I have no Council Meeting to report on in this Newsletter, as the mid-year meeting has been deferred to coincide with the AGM in August. This arrangement will complete the adjustment needed because of the change to the date of our financial year, in that we will be able to receive the audited accounts for both 2006–07 and 2007–08 at this AGM, thanks to the efficiency of our hardworking Treasurer, Deborah Haydon. Notice of the AGM is given on the final page. Please come along and join us afterwards for Dinner.

And Another Invitation: The Annual Higher Education Summit

The 3rd Annual University Governance and Regulations Forum will be held at the Marriott Hotel, Brisbane on the 29th and 30th of September. AFUW Inc and AFUW-NSW offered the use of our logos as endorsement to the 2nd Summit, which Ivy Edwards attended and very much enjoyed. On this occasion, AFUW Inc, AFUW-NSW and AFUW-Q will all be endorsing the event, which includes among its three female keynote speakers Professor Denise Bradley, Chair of the current Higher Education Review and the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific. This is a good opportunity to enhance AFUW's visibility at no expense to the organization (indeed with two free passes) and we will also have the opportunity to display promotional material. I do encourage members, especially those in Brisbane, to investigate the Conference website at www.informa.com.au/ibcoz/marlinredirect//universitygovernance

If you decide to attend be sure to cite your AFUW Membership as there is a 15% discount on the registration fee for AFUW members.

President's Activities

Education and Training Working Group

Members of this group have spent time and energy developing documentation (evidence and policy suggestions) on a selection of the matters raised in our March meeting (see the March Newsletter), in preparation for a campaign of advocacy, which Security 4 Women has kindly agreed to co-ordinate. AFUW has taken up the theme of eliminating student poverty across the board, from early childhood education to tertiary studies. The document I prepared with Dalma Jacobs has been circulated to Council members, but I'll be happy to send a copy to any interested member.

Maternity Leave Submission

Our submission on paid maternity Leave was among the first to be posted on the Productivity Commission's site and it's now also available for all members on the AFUW website. I appeared before the Commissioners at their Melbourne hearings in May, and thought that they gave me a very fair and receptive hearing. I also attended a Breakfast in Canberra at which the ACTU submission was launched before an array of politicians and representatives of women's organizations. As you may know, the ACTU scheme, which has support from sectors of business, argues that every woman should receive 14 weeks payment at the rate of the minimum wage on the birth of a child, thus making the scheme universal and a replacement for the baby bonus. There was a sense of optimism at the event, but now we can only wait for the Productivity Commission to bring down its Report and for the Government to react.

Advocacy

Maternity Leave and Postdoctoral Fellows. One of our actions in this reporting period followed up a message from a Postdoctoral Fellow who believed that there was no provision for the tenure of such fellowships to be extended to compensate for a period of maternity leave and that the taking of maternity leave incurred a disadvantage in applying for further grants because these were often assessed on the amount of research completed in a given period. Both the ARC and the NHMRC have responded that they do make provision for extending tenure and for recognising that maternity leave involves an inactive period of research. The response to this from the original complainant revealed that the catch seems to be that these provisions come under the heading of 'exceptional' circumstances and have to be specially applied for, which creates anxiety in the highly competitive area of research grants. We are continuing to make a case that these women should be given specific assurances at the time maternity leave is granted with regard to both extension of tenure and exemption of the period of leave from time counted as against active research.

Asylum Seekers. I wrote to congratulate Senator Evans on the Government's announcement of the abolition of temporary protection visas, which have imposed extremely harsh conditions on asylum seekers and took the opportunity to urge him to deal with the cases of long-term detainees. Progress is certainly being made here, but it has involved some distressing cases of deportation that have revealed inadequacies in the capacity of the current UN Convention on Refugees to cover all cases of those seeking refuge. We will continue to monitor the situation of asylum seekers in line with AFUW policies.

Ratifying UN Convention on the Rights of Those with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. The Government, which has already signed both Conventions, is currently considering ratifying the former Convention and the Optional Protocol to the latter. We are urging them to do so in both cases.

Advocacy in conjunction with other NGOs. The Secretariats offer the opportunity of joining together in advocacy and we've recently done so by being one of the co-sponsors of the **Call for a National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health** recently launched in Canberra and by currently co-signing a letter from women's NGOs urging the Government to sign (at long last) the **Optional Protocol to CEDAW**

A Website Record of Advocacy

In the previous triennium, past-President Rosemary Everett began the task of recording our advocacy interventions on the website and I'm pleased to say that the task has been continued and – largely thanks to a lot of uploading effort from webmistress Jennifer Phillips – we now have a record of AFUW advocacy from 2000. Jennifer is planning to archive the earlier material, so before this is done, you have an opportunity to see it complete in one visit to the Advocacy page. Do check it out: I think we can be justly proud of our efforts.

What's in a Symbol?

The logo of the lamp that presides over all AFUW activity, including advocacy, is derived from the logo designed by members of the Norwegian Federation for the Third IFUW Conference in Oslo in 1924 and adopted by delegates as the permanent badge of IFUW. Leigh Bradford Ratteree, IFUW Secretary General, tells us that the original showed an antique lamp representing the light of learning on a blue background broken with the letters IFUW. Around the central disc was an interlinked chain symbolizing the bonds of friendship linking IFUW members throughout the world. Eventually the lamp came to be known as the lamp of friendship. It was later, possibly at the 1983 Conference in Gröningen, modernized and the chain was dropped.

AFUW Members Succeed in the 2008 IFUW Fellowships

Warmest congratulations to the two AFUW members who gained awards in the strongly-contested 2008 IFUW Fellowship round.

Alma Pekmezovic has been awarded the Ida Smedley MacLean Fellowship to undertake a year as Guest Researcher at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Germany as part of the study in Comparative Corporate Governance, the topic of her thesis for a PhD degree at La Trobe University in Victoria. Since arriving with her parents as refugees from Bosnia in 1998, she has achieved an outstanding academic career that includes a combined Arts and Law degree from the University of Melbourne, a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice and Certificate of Enrolment as a Legal Practitioner from the Australian National University, and a Masters degree in Global Business Law at La Trobe University, where she holds a position as Associate Lecturer in Law. She has published papers in the *International Company and Commercial Law Review* and has a chapter in the forthcoming *Handbook of Transnational Economic Organizations*. I have invited Alma to write about the significance of her project and the value of her research in Germany for the 2008 issue of *Graduate Women*.

Arwen Cross graduated with First Class Honours in Biochemistry from the University of Sydney, where she is currently working towards her PhD. Unfortunately she was obliged to withdraw her application for a Fellowship when unable to carry out her proposed project of attending the University of Berkeley. However, the quality of her research has earned her a Recognition Award from IFUW which will support her in her current research, of which she says: *As an undergraduate I was taught that the genetic information encoded in DNA must be transcribed into RNA and translated into protein for a cell to function. This process is tightly regulated, because a malfunction in gene regulation can lead to disease states such as cancer. For this reason, understanding gene regulation is important for the treatment of disease as well as our understanding of basic biology. As a PhD student at the University of Sydney I have been working on proteins complexes that are involved in gene regulation, and which can contribute to breast cancer when regulatory mechanisms fail.*

The Australian Universities Grant. Congratulations also and a very warm welcome to **Dalma Demeter**, an Independent IFUW member from Hungary and winner of the Australian Universities Grant, a special award funded from the profits of the 2004 Perth Conference. Her PhD topic at La Trobe University is 'Cohabitation & Conflict between different sources of norms governing international commercial arbitration'.

Triennial Conference

I hope you all have 26–29 November 2009 marked in your diary for the Triennial Conference. Planning is well under way and Ivy Edwards and her team on the Local Arrangements Committee are to be congratulated for having already obtained sponsorship funds from Macquarie University, the University of Western Sydney and the University of Newcastle.

The theme of the Conference, Women Building Sustainable Futures, refers of course to the IFUW Program for Action, and we look forward very much to welcoming IFUW President, Louise Croot as our guest at the Conference. However, I'd like to remind members that attending Conference is also a way of contributing to the sustainability of AFUW's future: please plan to be there.

Details of Registration, accommodation and the program will be posted on the AFUW website as soon as possible.

Vales

We very much value all AFUW members, regardless of whether their time with us has been long or short, but sadly there comes a time when we have to say farewell. I would be grateful if membership secretaries would let me know of the death of any members, so that we make a public acknowledgement of their service. This year, before the March Newsletter, AFUW-NSW lost Beverley Pavey and AFUW-Q lost Joan (Chris) Christensen. Since the March Newsletter I have had reports of the following deaths:

AFUW-ACT: Veronica Howell; AFUW-NSW: Betty Shwabsky, Elizabeth Hancock, and Isabel McKinney Harrison, who played a major part in the foundation of Dunmore Lang College at Macquarie University, while Victoria has bidden farewell to one of its most devoted AGM attendees, Philippa McCall. All these past members will be much missed.

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Federation of University Women Inc. will be held 5pm on Friday 29 August 2008 Y Hotel Hyde Park, 5-11 Wentworth Ave Sydney

The AGM will be preceded by the AGM of the Education Trust at 4 pm and followed by **Dinner** at the Hellenic Club 251 Elizabeth St, at 7:00. The cost of the Greek Banquet, including wine, will be \$40. Bookings for the Dinner **MUST** be made by Monday 25 August. Please return the enclosed RSVP slip with payment.

Tricia Blombery, Hon Sec.

Enquiries: **AFUWOZ@bigpond.net.au**

AGENDA FOR AGM

1. Opening and Welcome
2. Attendance and Apologies
Apologies: Christine Hosking, Wendy McCallum
3. Recognition of Observers
4. Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2007
5. Matters Arising from the Minutes
6. President's report
7. Treasurer's Report – acceptance of audited accounts for 2006-7 and 2007-8
8. Budget for 2008-2009 financial year
9. Appointment of an Auditor for the 2008-2009 financial year
10. Report of the AFUW Education Trust AGM
11. Closure

RSVP Slip: To be returned with payment by 25 August 2008 to the AFUW Secretary, Tricia Blombery, PO Box 224 Enmore NSW 2042

Or email and pay direct to AFUW Inc, CBA Mt Eliza BSB 063550 Ac 1024 0086. Complete payment description with your surname and "AGM dinner"

Name:.....

Contact:.....

Please tick the appropriate responses:

I will attend the AGM

I will not attend the AGM. Please record my apologies.

I will attend the Dinner

Specify any special dietary requirements.....

I will bring guest/s to the Dinner

Name of guest/s

.....
.....

Payment by cheque to **AFUW Inc.** Amount enclosed \$.....

Payment direct to account \$..... Confirmation of payment attached