

# Australian Federation of University Women

*A Voice for Graduate Women*



## Newsletter

April 2009

### The Big Conference Issue

#### **AFUW Triennial Conference, November 26-29 2009**

With this mailout, you will receive Registration and Program details for the Triennial Conference. The AFUW-NSW members of the LAC have been working hard to ensure that this Conference will be enjoyable in its social events and intellectually stimulating on the Public Day, while your Executive has been working hard to make sure that the Business sessions will be – well, busy!

We believed it was time for a complete review of the By-Laws and Rules to clarify uncertain points and bring them into line with any current requirements of both IFUW rules and Australian incorporation and taxation legislation, especially in relation to enabling donations to the AFUW Fellowship Fund to be tax deductible. Preliminary changes to the By-Laws and the Education Trust Deed have been approved by STAs and Council respectively: it remains for Conference delegates to determine the result of the proposals to amend the Rules, which have already been circulated to and discussed by Council (at its Meeting on 21 March).

The Resolutions Convener will shortly be circulating these proposals, with their rationale, to all STAs for consultation, as it is too long a document to include in this Newsletter. All the proposals are important for the effective functioning of AFUW, but apart from the more technical ones I believe that members will find that the most substantive are those recommending changes to our name and membership rules, the handing over to a new Executive at the time of its election, and the position of Committee Conveners in relation to Council.

#### **What's in a Name: Considering A Name Change for AFUW**

Deborah Haydon has prepared the following rationale to assist members to understand the background to proposals for a name change and also what practical requirements might be entailed for all concerned:

In the beginning there were Graduate Associations: the Sydney University Women Graduates and the University of Queensland Women Graduates were founded in September 1920, while the Victorian Women Graduates came into existence in November of that year. An Adelaide University Women Graduates' Club had existed from 1914 and in Tasmania, the Graduate Branch of the Women's University Union was formed in 1918.

All these were represented at the conference in 1922 when, it may be assumed, the name Australian Federation of University Women (AFUW) was adopted to mirror the title of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), which had held its first conference in July. Only the Western Australian Association, formed in 1923, immediately assumed the title of University Women (initially as WAAUW).

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In her history of AFUW, *By Degrees*, Heather Nash notes that 'The question of nomenclature had actually been under consideration for some years with agreement on uniformity being delayed by the desire of members in some quarters to retain for historical reasons the titles held by state associations since their inception. In 1974 however, it was finally agreed that all states and branches would from then on be referred to with an identical form of the title – e.g. AFUW-Queensland (Mackay Branch).'

So, as it took us 54 years to get our federal, state/territory and branch names in order, why on earth, 25 years later should we be again considering a name change? Recently, a change of name for AFUW Inc was proposed to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Triennial Conference in 2003. That motion was lost by one vote (a two thirds majority being needed for the passing of a constitutional change). While no mention of the issue was made at the 2006 Conference, now in 2009, at the 34<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference the matter must again be debated.

In 2003, the main justification for the name change was two-fold - while our name remained the Australian Federation of University Women many potential members believed: (a) That we were part of the union movement and/or (b) That you must be employed by a university in order to be eligible for membership.

While these two issues are still very important, another more pressing issue must now be considered. At its 29<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference in Manchester in 2007, IFUW voted to extend its membership to **women graduates with a university degree or a diploma from an equivalent institution of higher learning**.

A working party has already recommended revising our membership criteria so that AFUW Inc can conform to this requirement and maintain our affiliation with IFUW. As being a university graduate is no longer the exclusive qualification for belonging to AFUW, it is considered appropriate that we again look carefully at whether our name accurately reflects our membership.

Each State and Territory Association (S/TA) or Branch will have different concerns but what a change of name will **NOT** do is change what we stand for:

*AFUW works to empower women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. Our members are committed to improving the status of women and girls, and to enabling women to effect positive change for a peaceful, sustainable future.*

For S/TAs there are two main questions to be considered:

1. **What are the names being proposed?** After discussions at the recent Council meeting the following list has been prepared to go, as legally required, to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) for approval and reservation in preparation for proposing a change of name to Conference: Australian Federation of Graduate Women (AFGW); Graduate Women Australia (GWA); Australian Graduate Women (AGW).
2. **How much work is involved in changing a name?** Initially, for the S/TAs, none. It's AFUW Inc that must supply the three names (in order of preference) to the Office of Fair Trading. AFUW Inc has also sought and received assurances that any of the names listed would be acceptable to IFUW.

Matters are somewhat complicated for AFUW Inc because we are currently in the process of applying for an Australian Registered Business Number (ARBN) – deemed necessary because AFUW Inc carries out business in more than one state. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), the governing body for companies with ARBNs, also has entity name change requirements to be completed.

Once the requirements of the OFT and ASIC have been met, a name change proposal will be put to the 34<sup>th</sup> Triennium Conference, in accordance with the requirements of AFUW Inc's Rules (previously known as the Constitution). Delegates will approve or reject the proposal in accordance with the instructions of their S/TA.

If a new name is approved, the following procedures will be needed:

- Organise new letterhead, logo and seal; Update the website
- Advise bank so that bank account and investment account details can be changed;
- Advise S/TA treasurers once new bank account names have been implemented;
- Advise Australian Tax Office of name change to ensure continuation of our Endorsement for Charity Tax Concessions (Tax Exempt Status).

**Eventually some work must be required of the STAs?** Yes, but it does not all need to be completed at the same time as that of the national body, or necessarily even very quickly – consider it a project.

The first task for every STA will be following your Rules' (Constitution's) requirements for matters that must be brought before an AGM. There will also be requirements for proposed name changes stipulated by the Government Department managing incorporated associations in your State or Territory.

Beyond this point, assuming an S/TA name change has been approved at the AGM, tasks will vary according to the needs and the complexity of the organisation within the STA.

- (a) Set out the tasks, determine the steps needed to complete each task;
- (b) Give each task a priority – this will usually be associated with the requirements for day-to-day operations;
- (c) Assign a person to complete the task (some will be assigned automatically because of the person's role within the S/TA: e.g. the treasurer will deal with the bank and investment related matters, the Secretary with notifications, but there may be an opportunity to appoint "assistants");
- (d) Use this as an opportunity to "spring clean" – do you really need that bank account, are the signatories still all members? Are they still easily accessible or is it time to make changes?
- (e) Finally, there must be a checking process that ensures every task has been completed and the necessary outcomes produced.

### **Advocacy and Action Celebration**

One of the new features of this AFUW Conference will be a session during the Public Day that celebrates the work of members of STAs in furthering AFUW's objectives. In proposing this emphasis on member's involvement, Council seems to have anticipated the thinking of the IFUW Board as to the way it wants IFUW Conferences to work (see next page).

### **Call for Resolutions for the Conference**

Now is the time for STA and members of Council and its Standing Committees to be thinking how they want to respond to the following Call for Resolutions issued by Rosemary Everett, Convener, of the Standing Committee on Resolutions:

*STAs, AFUW Council and Standing Committees are eligible to submit amendments to the Rules and policy resolutions to Conference.*

*I encourage all STAs to plan a meeting to decide what policy resolutions and amendments to the Rules (Constitution) they wish to pursue. This can be by repealing or amending existing Rules or drafting new policy resolutions. If an STA wishes to change an existing Rule or policy resolution, then that should be indicated: this can be achieved by including a statement of intent with the text of the resolution. It is important that the wording REALLY reflects what members wish to say. So, if you have an idea, talk with your Branch President and State President about meetings for this activity in your area. Also, if you would like some help with the wording, I can be contacted on [reverett@netspace.net.au](mailto:reverett@netspace.net.au) and my phone number is 02 6290 0294.*

*All drafts to amend the AFUW Rules must be with the Secretary by 27 July 2009, that is, four months prior to the commencement of the business sessions of the Conference.*

*All drafts to amend, repeal or establish new policy resolutions must be with the Secretary by 27 September 2009, two months prior to the commencement of the business sessions of the Conference.*

*The Secretary will forward all papers received to the Convener of the Resolutions Standing Committee who in turn will collate all resolutions, check wording, grammar etc and forward to STAs and standing committees for them to examine how they feel about them.*

*It is not possible to submit an amendment to the Rules after the due date, but STAs and standing committees are welcome to negotiate with movers of policy resolutions on possible rewording and then advise the convener of the Resolutions Standing Committee.*

## **IFUW Triennial Conference, Mexico, August 2010**

The IFUW Board has approved a major procedural change which will make the input of members much more important in determining the IFUW Programme for Action (PfA) for the 2010-2013 triennium. Instead of the Programme being presented as a *fait accompli* at Conference, Conference itself will be the culmination of a process whereby the PfA will be shaped by the input that members have provided on policy issues through email discussions and advocacy reports and through the material presented at Conference in the Seminar and Workshop sessions as well as in Policy Resolutions. This will create a new role at Conference for members, as there will be a need for a new kind of rapporteur at these sessions, someone who can identify and consolidate suggestions for both policy development, advocacy and action.

A statement from the Board on this decision should be issued very soon on the IFUW Networks and Dalma Jacobs as CIR will ensure (as always) that the material is passed on to the STAs.

Meanwhile would members please note that the Call for proposals for Seminar Papers at Conference has now been issued and is available on the IFUW website. (If any members have difficulty accessing this, please contact me on [jstr0036@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jstr0036@bigpond.net.au). As Co-ordinator of the Seminars, I can provide copies). The Call for Workshop proposals will follow later.

Meanwhile the Status of Women Committee at the meeting that I attended in February in Geneva decided to hold two more email discussions leading up to Conference: one on Women and Wealth, which I will moderate, and one on Reproductive Rights. Look for the announcement of these and do participate: AFUW members haven't been big contributors to date.

## **Newsflashes**

**New date for *Graduate Women*:** Council has accepted the recommendation of the Working Party on Communications that publication of *Graduate Women* should be adjusted to fit better with the changed financial year. Expect the next issue in July. This has made the preparation of material something of an urgent issue for your editor. If any STA has completed its 2009 scholarship awards, could you please forward to me as soon as possible an item on one of your recipients (with photograph if possible), so that we can continue the policy of using *Graduate Women* to publicise our scholarship programs. I would also very much appreciate obituary notices of members who have died recently.

## **Advocacy can produce results**

Advocating sometimes feels rather like banging one's head on a brick wall, so it was a pleasure to be able to write to congratulate the Government on Australia's accession to the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, on the lifting of the AusAid restrictions on funding for family planning programs in developing countries and on signing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. We're still asking for support for a dedicated UN Women's Agency, and it remains to be seen whether the financial crisis will dislodge Paid Parental Leave from the Budget, despite the positive recommendations of the Productivity Commission. Meanwhile, have you visited the Advocacy page on the AFUW website recently? Jennifer Phillips, AFUW web-mistress, does a great job keeping this up to date.

## **Congratulations**

To Erica Jolly who received the 2009 Irene Bell Award for Community Spirit and Work at the recent International Women's Day function in Adelaide. More on this will follow in *Graduate Women*.

To Patricia Geidans (River Branch, AFUW-NSW) who was awarded an OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) in the Australia Day Honours List for Services to education and the community particularly through the Society for the Study of Early Christianity.

If anyone knows of other members who received such an award, please let me know.

My best wishes to all members and I look forward to seeing you in Sydney in November.

Jennifer Strauss  
AFUW President