

Association of Presbyterian Women (APW)

Terms of Reference

- To unite in prayer, study, fellowship and service.
- To make a Christian witness in home, church and community.
- To support the work of partner churches in worldwide mission and evangelism.

Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly acknowledges the commitment made by the New Zealand Government in 2002 to give 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) as Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). _____
2. That the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand support the Point Seven Campaign calling for all political parties to support New Zealand's international commitment to give 0.7 percent of Gross National Income as Overseas Development Aid by 2015. _____

Report

The Association of Presbyterian Women (APW) continues to support and empower women to be the face of the church in the local and global community.

Since the early 1900s this organisation has been committed to family and social justice issues whether it be the support of neighbours and friends, a response to emergencies as they arise, or support of special projects both in New Zealand and overseas. Since 1998 the Special Consultative Status of APW at the United Nations has extended this work on the global scene through the United Nations Economic & Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women. In 2008 APW became a member of Ecumenical Women in New York, an international coalition of church denominations and ecumenical organisations which have status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations. Grounded in faith and commitment to global justice, Ecumenical Women trains and empowers an expanding network to advocate for gender equality at the United Nations and in members communities. For centuries, women have been transcending the boundaries of denominationalism to act together to seek and defend basic rights, especially women's rights. Ecumenical Women works hard to continue the

tradition of advocating for both a liberative gospel and a society where women are free to make choices over their health, their lives, their jobs and their status in society.

Ecumenical Women website: www.ecumenicalwomen.org

APW is a member of Pacific Women's Watch (NZ), an organisation established five years ago to be a link to the Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW), the umbrella Watch which monitors, reviews and reports on the status of women in the Asia-Pacific Region. Over 60 percent of the world's women live in the Asia-Pacific Region. In June 2010, at the APWW Annual General Meeting in Thailand, APW was nominated as a general member of APWW. This membership will provide APW with opportunities to share information, support and advocate for women in the Asia-Pacific region.

Throughout New Zealand, APW members are represented on the National Council of Women (NCW), an umbrella organisation of women's groups which works to improve the quality of life for women, children and society. NCW provides a woman's perspective based on the views of a diverse membership and, over many years of input, this has become a respected viewpoint by Government and other decision makers.

APW continues to distribute the HIV/AIDS brochure first produced in 2005 and revised in 2008. This brochure has been widely distributed throughout New Zealand and globally through Ecumenical Women in New York. In New Zealand it has been received by Girls' and Boys' Brigade groups nationally, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, other denominational groups and University and School Chaplains. In coming months it will be distributed to YWCAs throughout New Zealand and the Pacific.

Each year Special Projects both in New Zealand and overseas are generously supported by APW members together with the Methodist and Uniting Churches. In excess of \$100,000 has been raised Special Projects over the past two years and in addition to this, \$60,989.00 was raised through APW and churches throughout New Zealand for the Turakina Boarding Scholarship Appeal. This initiative has not only brought in thousands of dollars but it has been a successful awareness - raising exercise. Throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, Presbyterians have been reminded of their responsibility to one of the earliest missions of the national church i.e. to provide opportunity, support and encouragement for the education of young Maori women at Turakina Maori Girls' College, a Presbyterian school. The need today is as real as it was in past years.

The APW Study Grants offer financial assistance to women undertaking training in various areas of church ministry. These grants are offered each year with applications submitted by September 30.

The APW National Business Meeting was held in Wellington on 29 May 2010 and two recommendations were agreed to.

1. That APW include a Pacific Island Representative on the National Co-ordinating Group,
2. That the APW Mission Statement be "*Serving God Locally and Globally with Love*"

Both these recommendations were accepted by the members present and indicate another step in the development of APW for today's church and community.

This report clearly indicates the breadth of activity and involvement that Presbyterian Women in New Zealand are part of. Traditionally, APW has worked in local and regional groups and this is still applicable for many members. However, today there are other options for women to contribute to the work of Presbyterian Women in New Zealand and these need to be explored and developed to provide opportunities for a wider group of women to participate in areas of interest. Access to APW information on the Presbyterian Church's website is now much improved and the broad range of areas of APW involvement are regularly updated. The bimonthly newssheet "Gleanings" is available online and can be emailed to all interested readers. Women throughout the country are encouraged to contact any of the APW Convenors with comments or suggestions on topics of justice and peace, advocating for women and families, spiritual journeys, ways of encouraging thoughtful and committed action in God's world.

With its background of substantial action and projects to improve lives overseas and within New Zealand, APW makes the following recommendation to the General Assembly 2010.

1. That the General Assembly acknowledges the commitment made by the New Zealand Government in 2002 to give 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) as Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).

In 2002, the world's governments signed up to a target of giving 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) as Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). This target was agreed to be the minimum amount of ODA needed to lift millions out of poverty and meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Luxemburg have exceeded the 0.7 percent target and most other OECD states have set a timetable for reaching it. By contrast, New Zealand agreed to the 0.7 percent target but never set a timetable for reaching it. This is despite the fact that the vast majority of New Zealanders support New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance and two out of three support the government meeting the 0.7 percent target.

2. That the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand support the Point Seven Campaign calling for all political parties to support New Zealand's international commitment to give 0.7 percent of Gross National Income as Overseas Development Aid by 2015.

According to International Reports, NZ Aid is very effective (OECD 2005 Review and review by Dr Marilyn Waring 2005). New Zealand's ODA is effective because New Zealand aid is normally untied and free to make decision based on partners' needs and contractors' merits. NZ Aid promotes and protects human rights and the OECD review described NZ Aid's achievements as "impressive".

The financial and food crises mean that more and better aid is needed now for the world's poorest people. New Zealand needs to play its part and honour our commitment to meet the internationally agreed target of giving 0.7 percent of GNI as ODA by 2015.

The government has committed to giving 0.35 percent by 2010 but more needs to be done.

Mary McIntyre

National Convener, Association of Presbyterian Women