

# Bush Fire

**Newsletter of the National Coordinating Group  
Presbyterian Women of Aotearoa New Zealand**

**Issue 1**

**April 2015**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this first edition of Bushfire: the newsletter of the National Coordinating Group of Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand. More news from around New Zealand can also be found in Gleanings.

## **During the Transition**

In May 2013 at the National Business Meeting, three new people were elected to join the existing members of the National Coordinating Group (NCG). The new members of NCG were Lafulafu Ekenasio (Convenor), Le'autuli Sauvao (Deputy Convenor), and Shona Bettany (Secretary). They joined Ngaire Pearce (Treasurer) Tali Leiua (Communications) Ola Leasi (Pacific Islands Rep), Pamela Tankersley (United Nations), Joan Roberts (Missions), Bev Quigley (Resources). Rae Simpson is the editor of Gleanings.

Carol Grant replaced Pamela Tankersley on NCG as United Nations Convenor in February 2014.

In June 2014, three people stepped down from NCG as their 4-year terms had finished. They were Ngaire Pearce (Treasurer) Tali Leiua (Communications) Ola Leasi (Pacific Islands Rep). In the last year, Ngaire has graciously continued filling the Treasurer's role, but has not attended NCG meetings. She finishes as Treasurer when she presents her report for the 2014/2015 Financial Year. The Communications & Pacific Islands positions have not been filled, as no nominations have been received.

Since June 2014, the NCG Group has comprised of Lafulafu Ekenasio, Le'autuli Sauvao, Shona Bettany, Carol Grant, Joan Roberts and Bev Quigley.

In this time of transition, NCG now meets four times per year, in Wellington, so that all members of NCG can be involved in the decision-making. The Policy & Administration Group (P&A / Executive) has been discontinued.

Shona Bettany, as our Secretary, carries the bulk of the administration work, prior to, during and following these meetings. This involves agendas, minutes, correspondence – inwards and outwards, statistics returns, collation of Group Contact details and the creation of a national contacts database, distributing Gleanings and other associated

information to all PW Groups and regions, Charities Registration, Mission material, Annual Report, liaison with groups and the national church, distribution of associated organisational material, updating the PW webpages, remittance forms, and study grants. Emails alone number approx. 2000 per year. Electronic communication has been implemented.

### Current Vacancies

Without your assistance, work cannot be done. At present, we do not have people to fill present and upcoming vacancies. Please prayerfully consider who you might nominate to fill the positions required for the possible new structure. We are currently working on job descriptions to assist with the appointment of appropriately skilled people. At present, a few are doing the work of many. Please keep us in your prayers.

### 2013-2014 Annual Report

Information for the 2013-2014 **Annual Report** is well overdue. Please send this to Shona Bettany immediately, if you haven't already sent it. Contributions must be 500 words maximum.

### National Business Meeting May 2013

As a reminder at the last National Business Meeting:

- ≡ A Consultative Workshop with younger women was held in February 2013
- ≡ Nola Stuart's paper was presented, discussed and agreed to in principle.
- ≡ The Nan Burgess bequest to be used for the transition time, funding our Secretary, as we look for a way forward for Presbyterian Women.
- ≡ Way Forward:- We could have our Secretary in an Executive Position, and the NCG as the Governance Board.

### Cycle of Meetings

2013 National Business Meeting.

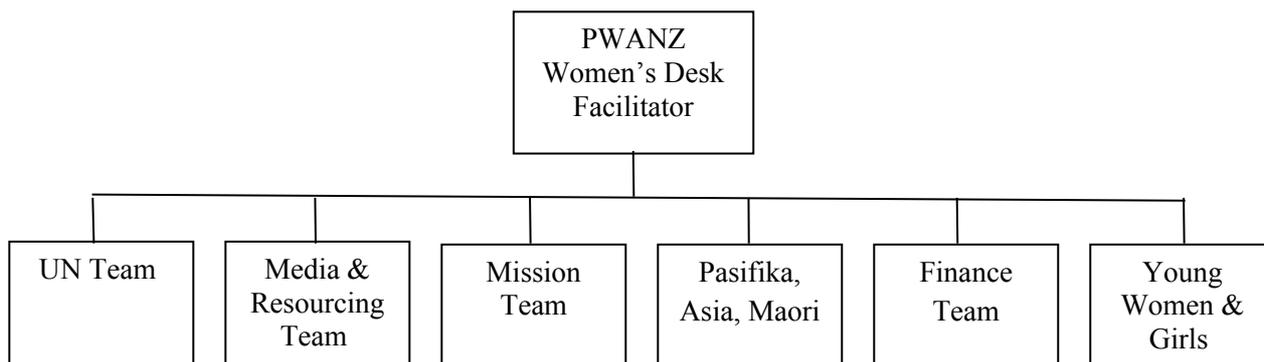
2014 No meeting. Regional Meetings celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of APW.

2015 National Business Meeting will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at Newtown PIPC, Wellington. This date allows for financial reports to be fully audited.

### Proposed New Structure

NCG has worked together on this proposed new structure to be considered by members. This may change as the ideas are further developed and creative suggestions from members received.

**Presbyterian Passion, Vision and Enthusiasm**



NB: The Facilitator/Explorer/Administrator will be a paid position. The Convenors of each team will form the basis of a PW Governance Board. A job description for the Women's Desk Facilitator/Administrator will be circulated. Terms of Reference for each team is in the process of being developed. Please pray as this new structure is developed further and for the appropriate skilled people to feel called to part of this ministry to all women in the church. It is very important that your representative attends this year's National Business Meeting, so that all ideas can be considered carefully.

### **Finance**

1. To enable the proposed new structure, a realistic appraisal of funding, subscriptions/levies/affiliation fees, will need to be reviewed.
2. To assist with the management of our finances in the future, a financial software package will be purchased, i.e. MYOB or Xero.
3. Consideration could be given to inviting all PCANZ churches & Cooperative Ventures to support the ministry of women in the PCANZ, for an annual donation of \$50.

### **Special Project**

We take this opportunity to celebrate our partnership with the Methodist Women's Fellowship, as we work together on the annual Special Project. Thank you to all those who work so hard to raise money for these national and international projects. The work of Presbyterian Women and Methodist Women's Fellowship is recognised and celebrated by organisations and communities in New Zealand and overseas.

We encourage all PCANZ churches and Cooperative Ventures to have a 'Special Project Sunday' to raise the profile of these worthwhile and carefully chosen projects, and to enable more people and churches to contribute to these worthy causes.

If you have any suggestions for future Special Projects, i.e. 2016-2017, please contact Mission Convenor, Joan Roberts - 27a Tukapa Street, Westown, New Plymouth 4310; 06 757 4520; [syjob@xtra.co.nz](mailto:syjob@xtra.co.nz)

The criteria for the Special Project are:

1. The New Zealand project should involve a national body of an organisation which extends through out New Zealand.
2. It should be a programme that needs financial assistance to initiate and become reality within the organisation. It cannot go into General Funds and be used up in administration.
3. It must catch the imagination of our members so they can participate fully.
4. We must have full cooperation from the organisation and work with them in compiling the necessary information to make up our project packs.

NB Presbyterian Women of Aotearoa NZ support the work of Global Mission. The Special Project is not a Global Mission project. Some of the money raised by Presbyterian and Methodist women goes to a New Zealand project and some to an international project supporting the work of women and girls. In future it is hoped that women in ministry, both lay and ordained, will have their own page(s) in sPANZ to highlight projects and programmes of interest to the wider church community.

### **New Song**

Lafulafu has offered to facilitate for the writing of a new song celebrating the ministry of women in the past and into the future.

## **Mission Fund**

The Mission Fund is comprised of monies received from:

1. Sale of Used Stamps.
2. Mission Birthday Gift

\$26,407 was available to be allocated from the 2013-2014 year. This was comprised of the monies given:

From Mission Birthday Gift	\$16,965
From Sale of Used Stamps	\$5,994
For Turakina Maori Girls College	\$3,448

The PW Mission Fund money will be dispersed as follows:

1. Global Mission (for Women's Projects) \$10,000  
Rev Phil King, Global Mission Coordinator, will report on these projects to NCG.
2. Turakina Maori Girls College \$3,448
3. \$12959 kept in reserve for worthy mission projects needing funding during the year.

## **Mission Birthday Gift**

This is a valuable source of income. When it is your birthday, you give a gift (monetary) instead of receiving a gift. Anyone can do this, not just PW members. This money goes into our Mission Fund. Mission Birthday Gift envelopes are available from the Resources Convenor Bev Quigley - 11 Birch Street, Timaru 7910; 03 686 1207; [bquigley1@kinect.co.nz](mailto:bquigley1@kinect.co.nz)

Please ensure that the Mission Birthday Gift ministry is highlighted in your church. One way of doing this is to include information in your church bulletins/newsletters.

## **Used Stamp money**

Money received from the sale of used stamps also goes into the Mission Fund. Thank you to all those who save stamps, prepare them for sale and do the hard work to further the work of mission.

## **Emergency Aid**

The money in this fund, is donated specifically for this purpose (see Remittance Form).

## **Pacific Vision : Vanuatu**

NCG has contributed \$6,000 from the Mission Fund & \$2,000 from the Emergency Aid Fund to the Moderator's Appeal, which "will assist the PCV in their vision of mission and service to the people of Vanuatu. Rather than an emergency aid fund, money raised for **Pacific Vision: Vanuatu** will go toward supporting projects and initiatives that empower the long-term, sustainable development of the Vanuatu people. This will be vital for the development of the church post-cyclone."

## **Study Grants**

Three Study Grants were awarded last year to:

1. Adair Oosterbroek for Bachelor of Theology or Applied Theology at Carey College
2. Brianna Oosterbroek for Headspace Gap Year Programme
3. Ropeta Mene-Tulia for Diploma of Ministry, at Vision College, Christchurch

## **Bridgebuilders**

We are delighted to continue building and strengthening a mutual relationship with Bridgebuilders, which evolved from the Association of Presbyterian Women. More information can be obtained from the Bridgebuilders website – [www.bridgebuilders.org.nz](http://www.bridgebuilders.org.nz)

## **United Nations**

PWANZ has the privilege of being one of the few organisations in New Zealand to have Special Consultative Status at the United Nations. As a faith-based organisation, our opinion is valued nationally by the New Zealand government as a voice from civil society, and internationally in the global arena as a wise and reasoned voice which can contribute to ongoing debates. We have been contributing as an organisation to the work of the United Nations for over twenty years. As this work continues, Presbyterian Women of Aotearoa New Zealand can be proud of the contribution we make to empowering women and girls, promoting gender equity, and speaking out against violence and injustice.

In March 2015 a delegation of twelve women and girls attended the 59<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 59) in New York. Already members of the delegation have speaking engagements with church and community groups which will highlight this work even further. Without the active support of PWANZ nationally this involvement would cease. The strength of our contribution is that we are a faith-based national organisation with a united voice. Watch out for further comments in Bush Telegraph, SPANZ and Gleanings. If you are interested in this work, please contact Carol Grant, 35 Sutcliffe Street, St Clair, Dunedin 9012; 03 425 8865; [nandcg@clear.net.nz](mailto:nandcg@clear.net.nz)

## **2014 Statistic Forms**

A significant number of groups still have not returned their 2014 Statistic forms. Please attend to this promptly.

## **Mega-Presbyteries**

Given that the majority of decisions are made by a small executive committee, please ensure that in the interest of modelling gender equity, women have equal representation in the decision-making processes.

- ◊ Can you promote a Women's Cluster within your Presbytery to further the ministry of lay and ordained women in your area?
- ◊ Who represents the women in your Presbytery on the executive, decision-making committees?
- ◊ How is funding for Women's Ministry included in the Presbytery budget?

## **Disability, Spirituality and Faith Network Books**

The New Zealand component of the 2012-2013 Special Project was for the purpose of publishing a book on how churches can be more accessible for people with disabilities. This excellent publication is in the process of being distributed. Please show these books to your minister, parish council/session and use them to assess how your church can be more friendly to people with disabilities.

## **Ordination Anniversaries**

2015 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ordination of the first women elders in the PCANZ.

## **Here are some milestones to celebrate.**

In a note from Andrew at the Presbyterian Research Centre(Archives), he writes . . .  
"I attach the history of the first women elders from Wadestown.

They were first off the line in a practical Presbyterian way. Margaret Reid Martin was ordained 13 May 1965. General Assembly approved women's ordination to ministry in 1961 and the changes to the Book of Order regulations in 1962. The first woman moderator was Mrs Joan Anderson in 1979. Working through the Year Books I would identify the first ordained woman into a parish to be M. Wynne Dellow, then M. Wynne Smith, ordained into Iona Church, Christchurch, 21 March 1968. According to the Ministers Register online at the Archives website, she went from there to Mangakino (1974), St Stephen's Timaru (1976) and Chalmers Timaru (1983), and Minister Emerita (1989)"

## WOMEN ELDERS

When Mr J G W Aitken, Mayor of Wellington and a 'thorough' Presbyterian, laid the foundation stone for our Church on 24 May 1900, he said that "New Zealand was praised for giving women the franchise, and rightly so, but in the Presbyterian Church, from its very earliest days, the women had the franchise, and equal rights with the men." A murmur of protest might have been forgiven from the hard-working women of the congregation. It was to be another 55 years before the congregation of St. James made history as the first Presbyterian Church in New Zealand to elect women to the eldership.



Sister Margaret Hewson  
(J Hewson)



Mrs Lena Mitchell  
(L. Mitchell)

The first recorded vote on the issue of women elders was rejected 6-2 by our Session in 1944. The matter had been raised by the Timaru Presbytery at that year's Assembly on the basis of St. Paul's teaching that in the Christian Fellowship there is no distinction between male and female. A year later the St. James congregation had the opportunity to express an opinion in a dominion-wide vote on the issue. Of the 84 voting papers returned, 58 were in favour (men 13, women 45), and 26 against (men 9, women 17). An optimistic woman voter suggested 'that the percentage of women be not more than half.

62

It was during the ministry of the Rev. Lloyd Geering that Session decided to beat the gun. The women of the congregation out-numbered the men by around three to one, and yet the Session, made up solely of men, was running the parish. In 1951, then, three women associates were invited to join the Session. Their inability to vote was no impediment - decisions were made on a consensus basis anyway. The women made a vigorous and valuable contribution, and Mr Geering 'really felt that the Session changed character at that point'. When the 1955 Assembly made it possible for women to be ordained as elders, it was



Miss Hetty Walker  
(H Walker)



Miss Jenny Hall  
(A Stewart)

merely a formality to elect the women on the first Sunday after Assembly, and to ordain them on the first possible Sunday. Four women were ordained at a service on 4 December, 1955, all of whom had been attending meetings of Session for several years as Associate Members: Miss Jenny Hall, headmistress at Wellington Technical College, Sister Margaret Hewson, City Deaconess, Miss Hetty Walker, and Mrs Lena Mitchell, who is still a serving elder of St. James Session. Sister Margaret Hewson represented St. James on the Wellington Presbytery, and was the first woman to be appointed Presbytery elder. From then on women have continued to play a full part as ruling elders in St. James.

63

## Brave Girl

Steph Redhead (previous PYM Youth Director) is the person behind Brave Girl. Brave Girl is about helping women find courage for the journey. It exists to inspire, equip and encourage women as the step up to their challenge - whatever that may be. Her website is [www.bravegirl.co.nz](http://www.bravegirl.co.nz). Check it out & sign up to receive her blogs.

## Regions and Groups

Terminology about our structure is constantly changing in the church. And so is the way we meet. Not every region now has a Presbyterial. We now have Regions, and Regional Contacts. Churches have a PW 'branch'. Some have more than one PW Group. Some churches have mixed gender groups. Some churches have both PW & MWF groups/fellowships. Others churches have both PW & non-PW women's groups. And some Regions do not have a Presbyterial, but do have Regional Women's Gatherings, which include both PW & non-PW women's groups. This is a sign of the times and very exciting.

### **Constitution / Terms of Reference**

This document is 'lying on the table' until after the next National Business Meeting. At which time we can redraft the Terms of Reference to reflect the proposed change of structure.

### **Braided River of Faith**

We still have copies of Braided River of Faith : volume 4, for sale. Cost is \$10 per book, plus postage & packaging. If you would like a copy, please contact Shona Bettany, P O Box 239, Levin 5540; 06 367 2067; [revsbettany@xtra.co.nz](mailto:revsbettany@xtra.co.nz)

### **Charities Registration**

At GA14, it was decided that all parishes should have their own Charities Registration number instead of using the PCANZ number. Parishes are required to be charities registered by 30 June 2015. This means that PWANZ will be getting their own charities registration number also. In order to avoid income tax, PW groups and regions will also be required to use a charities registration number. Rather than using the PWANZ charities number, all PW groups will need to consolidate their accounts with their parish. At the time of writing this communication we're not exactly sure what to do with PW regional accounts. More information will follow shortly. If you have any questions please contact Shona Bettany, 06 3672067, [revsbettany@xtra.co.nz](mailto:revsbettany@xtra.co.nz).

### **Conclusion**

We hope that you have enjoyed catching up on all the latest news in this first edition of *Bushfire*, the NCG newsletter.

### **Shona Bettany & Carol Grant**

On behalf of the National Coordinating Group.