



Bush Fire

Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand
March 2016

Presbyterian Women off to the United Nations

The eleven delegation members come from a range of church and civil society women's networks, an amazing group of skilled women who care passionately about the empowerment of women and gender equality. Again this year, all from the South Island. Expressions of interest were received from the North Island but no final applications were received. Each member of the delegation is self-funded which is a big personal commitment.

Our UN Convener, the Rev Carol Grant (nandcg@clear.net.nz) has also been invited to be a member of the panel at the Parallel Event –

Breaking Cycles of Poverty through Education: Models from Presbyterian Churches

Education for women and girls reduces poverty, improves health, and improves the distribution of income. The Millennium Development Goals have helped many communities in the Global South to bring previously uneducated children into the classroom. The Sustainable Development Goals challenge the world to do even more in the area of education. Presbyterian Churches have helped hundreds of thousands of girls learn to read and write and hundreds of thousands of women to deepen their education. In hundreds of communities, Presbyterians were the first to open up opportunities for formal education for girls. Panel members will reflect on ways Presbyterians continue this tradition and engage in ministries of education today.

Remember Carol in your prayers, as she leads her ten-member delegation and presents at the Parallel Event. Safe travels (12 March, returning 24 March) and we look forward to updates in the next edition of BushFire.

MISSIONS - Convener Sally Russell (sallyrussell@xtra.co.nz) is working with Methodist Women on potential projects to support in 2016 / 2017 that meet the requirements of PWANZ's Special Consultative Status at United Nations, with a focus on girls and women. More news in the May edition of BushFire on this and our New Zealand mission projects.

Transition Team Update – meeting held on 22 February:

Funding – membership affiliation fees have been received from 28 groups (70 groups in 2014/2015) from a possible 273 Presbyterian parishes. A reminder has been sent out with the 2016 remittance form requesting a \$50 donation from each parish to provide administration income for PWANZ into 2016.

Budget for 2016 – affiliation fees contributed to date are \$2311 (\$9711 for year end 2015). In the current low interest environment PWANZ is likely to earn less than \$5,000 from term deposits, so we require tight control of expenses which are already \$14,000 to 31 January 2016.

Advisory Group Convener Heather Tait (hvtate@vodafone.co.nz) reported that there are no applications for the role of Transition Team Coordinator.

It is moved by the Transition Team that the National Business Meeting to be held in Wellington on September (24th) is organised by the Advisory Group and that the drafted Terms of Reference update be approved at this meeting.

Are the women in our church losing their collective voice?

Many women are leaders in their parish, serve on church courts and national committees. Where are their voices? Every woman leads such a busy life fulfilling the demands of work, family and the wider community. In the past APW hoped younger women would join their groups which met in the afternoon during the week. This proved impossible for women who worked full time, or who had caring responsibilities for family members or grandchildren. Formal meetings no longer appealed. Technology has changed the way people communicate with each other. The roles women fulfilled and balancing these roles also changed. Younger women – professionals with huge student loans to pay off, young children to juggle childcare for, commitments to their wider community / whanau, required time to be wife / daughter / sister / friend as well.

The wider church needs to hear the voices of faithful women and girls as we contribute from our unique perspective to policies, decisions and regulations that affect our lives as Presbyterian Christians. The church needs to hear our voices when decisions are being made, the government needs to hear women's voices with a faith based perspective, and our voices need to be heard at the United Nations through our UN Special Consultative Status. This dialogue is valued and contributes to global policy making.

PWANZ relies on the collection of affiliation / membership fees to support the administration of our organisation. We cannot do this work without your encouragement, help and support. We are generous in giving to mission (which is our focus) both domestically and globally. This money is collected by PWANZ and passed on to those well deserving programmes.

Support PWANZ with your membership fee, as a member of a group or as an individual. We welcome your comments, email: pwanz2016@gmail.com