

PWANZ UPDATE

35 people attended the second PWANZ Special General Meeting was held at St John's in the City, Wellington and via Zoom on Saturday 22 April.

Three motions were confirmed.

That Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand (PWANZ) be wound up as at 30 June 2023.

That this meeting confirms the establishment of a group to undertake the duties as Officers of PWANZ consisting of Sandra Waldrom, Lois Robertson, Katherine Sutherland, Mary Gibbs, Carolyn Goudswaard, Judith Dunlop and Ruth Steven and that their duties will include disbursement of funds currently held for allocation to mission projects and management of administrative and financial costs following the winding up of PWANZ, and that they will provide regular progress reports to members.

That an Officer of PWANZ write to the Assembly Executive Secretary and ask the Book of Order Advisory Committee to consider if the generic provision on balanced membership of Church Courts, Committees and other bodies need to be revised to ensure the voice of women continues to remain strong in all its meetings of the Church.

NEXT STEPS FOR WORKING GROUP

The actions to be taken fall into six broad categories.

1. Finances
2. Liaising with PCANZ
3. Other organisations
4. Charities Commission
5. Administration
6. Communication

The minutes of the April meeting are being circulated and these give more details of exactly what is included each category. They include tasks such as:

- preparing the books for the auditor
- liaising with the Book of Order Advisory Committee on changes needed
- meeting the legal and financial requirements of the Charities Commission
- sending documents to the Presbyterian Research Centre for archiving
- paying any bills as we work through the process
- keeping our members informed of progress.

Each member of the Working Group is responsible for one or more categories, with Mary being the overall Chair.

CELEBRATING OUR PWANZ PAST

Although some people have been asking for a national celebration to commemorate PWANZ, we do not feel it is appropriate or feasible to do this.

Rather, the Working Group is encouraging Parishes/Presbyteries to celebrate in their own way.

Rev Rose Luxford, Moderate designate, has agreed to provide a devotion that we can all use to help bring us together as one while we are still apart.

This will consist of a Bible reading, liturgy, and prayer.

Groups are also encouraged to provide time for people to share their reflections on PWANZ and what it has meant for them personally.

If you have an idea that you'd like to share on how we could celebrate PWANZ, please let Lois Robertson know and we can share these ideas in future editions of *BushFire*.

Lois can be contacted on lois.robertson@outlook.com

YOUR WORKING GROUP

Chair	Mary Gibbs
Finance	Ruth Steven Sandra Waldrom Katherine Sutherland
Communications	Lois Robertson
Mission	Judith Dunlop Carolyn Goudswaard

Mary Gibbs and Mavis Duncanson will be our two PWANZ delegates to attend the General Assembly 2023 and present our final reports.

PHOTOS FROM THE APRIL SGM

Top (left to right): Working Group members Katherine Sutherland, Sandra Waldrom, Carolyn Goudswaard, Mary Gibbs and Lois Robertson at the April SGM. Ruth Steven attended via Zoom.

Bottom left: Voting on a motion

Bottom right: Some of our Zoom attendees



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

I feel it is important to acknowledge the part played by the various women's groups in the life of our church and in the lives of many women who have been part of these organisations – almost as far back as the beginnings of the Presbyterian church in NZ.

As mentioned in the April *BushFire*, the **PWMU** was formed to support the women of the church at that time, who went to countries in Asia and the Pacific. These groups at home prayed, provided material goods, wrote letters, and provided hospitality when missionaries were home on furlough. They also set up **Busy Bees** in most parishes and these encouraged children to meet, make crafts, and learn about those working abroad.

Around this time there was also a **Girl's Auxiliary** for fellowship for girls up to the age of thirty. Then in the 1940s, women's views on society and in the church, began to change and another women's organisation grew up around these interests.

Later again the groups joined together to form the **Association of Presbyterian Women**. This new structure encouraged women to meet annually in four separate regional conferences plus a National Business Meeting every three years. These conferences were very popular and attracted large numbers of women. The triennial conferences sometimes had speakers from abroad as an added attraction. The work involved in organising these conferences helped women in parishes realise their leadership skills and was partially responsible for encouraging them to

become elders and to take part in Assembly and Presbytery as well as ministry and many other community organisations.

Throughout all those years a magazine or broadsheet has been produced. This began with *The Harvest Field* which morphed into the broadsheet *Gleanings* (after about 2000), and finally into the e-newsletter *BushFire*. These publications enabled every woman to follow the work and outreach of our church.

Sadly, the need for such an organisation is no longer necessary, and in many parishes, no longer wanted. Women have changed, the church has changed, and although accepting this has been a long and difficult process for PWANZ, we should rejoice in our history and celebrate all that we have stood for over the years.

It is my hope that there will be some form of acknowledgement and celebration of this history (both at Assembly and in the wider church community), and of all the women who have gone before us and been such a significant part of the life and history of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

Jan Veitch

*Ex-missionary who received APW care
Vice President APW 1983–1986
Member of the restructuring team 2000
Interim editor of Gleanings 2001–2002*

REFLECTION

The first National Executive of the proposed Association of Presbyterian Women was to be located in Christchurch so the task of nominating and electing members of the Executive became the responsibility of the women of all parishes in that Presbytery. As my husband was in his first parish in rural North Canterbury, I became part of that process, with Margaret Royds being elected the first President.

APW, the new women's organisation within the Presbyterian Church, was officially inaugurated when General Assembly met in Christchurch in November 1964 and, having been present on that auspicious occasion, I think I can rightly claim to have been present at the birth of APW.

National Executive was supported by four sub-committees called Departments, located in different Presbyteries for differing lengths of time to avoid the Executive and all Departments changing at the same time in future.

When Ashburton Presbytery was asked to take over the Programme & Literature Department in 1968 for the next three years, we were living there. I was invited to be part of the team, and served as Secretary, as well as writing programmes and educational material as required.

It was a busy life. Once the children were all in bed, out came the typewriter and it was APW time, but I found I could do a lot of thinking as I fed nappies through the wringer each morning, so what I needed to type in the evening was already composed in

my head. Our Department wrote programmes for APW meetings, provided Book Reviews, wrote a monthly article for *Harvest Field*, provided information on drugs, mental health, and planned the programme for the 1971 APW Conference in Timaru.

The second National Executive, located in Waikato, decided it would be simpler to have everything change at the same time, so our three-year term became 4½ years.

I continued to be involved in Presbyterian as family commitments allowed. Later, when it was our Parish's turn to form the Presbyterian Executive, I served as Secretary.

We moved to Stratford in January 1976 and I became part of Taranaki Presbytery, also serving as Presbyterian Secretary for a time. I convened the committee which planned and ran a very successful APW Conference in New Plymouth in 1981.

There followed a 12-year 'hiatus' when we lived in New South Wales while my husband served as a minister in the Uniting Church of Australia, but I never lost touch with APW as I continued to subscribe to *Harvest Field*.

On our return to New Zealand in 1995 my husband became minister of a rural Manawatu parish, so I added yet another Presbytery to my dossier, and the following year became President for just a two-year term.

My husband retired in August 1998, and we moved to our retirement home in Waikanae on the Kapiti Coast, in the Wellington Presbytery area.

Later that year I was just beginning to enjoy retirement when my world turned upside down. Manawatu Presbyterial had been asked to form the next National Executive to take over from March 2000, and wanted me to be President! After careful and prayerful consideration and with my husband's full support I felt called to accept the responsibility.

Over the next year women were recruited to fill all the Executive positions, and in March 2000, in Nelson, I became National President, succeeding Jean Anderson.

I knew it would be a demanding task, but the rewards were many. During my three years I was able to visit all 23 Presbyterials/Union Districts, meeting many inspirational women, all faithfully serving God through serving others.

In 2001 and 2002 I attended Regional Conferences in both North and South Islands, and in 2003 the National Conference in Feilding. I also attended, as a guest, a number of Methodist and Anglican Women's gatherings.

I presented the APW Report at General Assembly in 2000 and 2002, and because National Executive had been agitating for more women to be appointed to Assembly Committees I was privileged to be included in the Nominating Committee at both.

On behalf of the Executive, I wrote many letters to Cabinet Ministers, mainly Justice and Foreign Affairs, supporting action taken or urging further action against injustices to women. I also wrote letters to the leaders of other countries as we became aware of women's needs from information supplied by New York-based organisation, Equality Now!

During this time my participation in Wellington Presbyterial was limited by the fact that I was often away, but afterwards I continued to be involved until it ceased to exist a few years ago.

I should also mention that I actively participated in APW groups in all of our parishes, in one instance being elected President of a group before we had even moved there!

As you can see, APW and its successor, PWANZ, has been a big part of my life for almost 60 years, and while I feel a tinge of sadness at its passing, as I'm sure many other women do too, I look back with satisfaction and pride on all that the women of the Presbyterian Church have achieved over the years, and on the part I have been privileged to play.

Marion Brash

WHO ARE THESE WOMEN?



Providers of tea or coffee,
Who do the baking, wash the dishes,
Clean the kitchen, vacuum and tidy after you –
Must be APW!

APW? Agreeable Provisioning Wonders!



Who are these women?
Making, creating to raise some money,
Selling plants, cakes, sewing,
Touching pockets to fund deep needs – true!
Must be APW!

APW? Amazingly Proficient Workers!



Who are these women?
Talking missions, going off to be inspired at Conference,
Returning all fired up with great ideas,
Changing themselves and taking a good long look at you.
Must be APW!

APW? Alarmingly Persistent Winners!



These women – learning how to encourage others,
Balance books, run a meeting, write Minutes or a programme,
Review a book, seek God, see Christ in others,
Pray and ponder, share, be concerned, committed,
These things women learn through being part of APW.

APW? All People Welcome!

Source Unknown

CORRECTION

The April edition of *BushFire* stated that Mrs Almond Royds was the first President of APW. In fact, it was Mrs **Margaret** Royds.