



ANNUAL REPORT

2017

Jessie Street National Women's Library serves to:

- *Highlight the contribution of Australian women to this country's development*
- *Highlight awareness of women's issues*
- *Ensure that documents relating to Australian women's lives and activities are collected and made accessible*
- *Support the fields of women's history and women's studies*

To keep women's words, women's works, alive and powerful

Ursula Le Guin

CHAIR

The Board governed and guided the work of our team of volunteers within the framework of the Library's Business Plan, 2015-2020, its annual budget for 2016 and the general and specific performance criteria which are conditions of its lease with the City of Sydney under the accommodation subsidy grants program. The Library's lease was renewed for five years from 1 July 2016. It received an A rating for its Annual Review for 2015. We are hopeful that this rating will also be awarded in 2017 for 2016!

The City of Sydney staff at the Ultimo Community Centre continued to be courteous and helpful with all our requests for assistance and we were grateful for their efforts on our behalf.

With the assistance of Beth Eldridge, we sought to address one of our key Business Plan objectives: *increasing volunteer numbers and diversity and improving volunteer induction and training*. An updated Volunteer Manual was commenced, but work on this was placed in abeyance as we focused on volunteer recruitment through advertising on the Volunteering NSW website with position descriptions for librarians and library assistants. This was a time consuming task and with the re-carpeting resulted in no further progress on the manual. The public relations plan and associated volunteer roles and functions chart produced by Beth will form the substance of the manual. Work will recommence in 2017.

We advanced our objective to forge partnerships and raise the public profile of the Library, signing an MOU with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) UNSW on 4 July. This partnership has enabled the Library to augment its collection of material on domestic and family violence.

In the spirit of collaboration with other women's organisations, we co-hosted a tribute to Joan Kirner AC with EMILY's List on 7 April. Joan's portrait had been on display in the Library from the beginning of 2016 and we were pleased to hold the event in honour of an inspiring political leader, a tireless advocate for public education and a life-long promoter of equal political representation in our parliaments.

The volunteer librarians and archivists continued with their exacting professional work in future proofing the Library as well as maintaining its high standing among libraries focused on unique specialist collections. They have expanded the use of KOHA functionalities; adopted a policy to protect rare items and continued to upload their original cataloguing to the Australian National Bibliographic Database. Their work continued to be challenging, but very rewarding as they maintained the currency of their professional knowledge and skills and saw an increase in usage of library materials. Their work is essential to maintaining and improving access nationally and internationally to the Library's collection.

Our Lunch Hour Talks continued to attract an average of 40 attendees a month. We commenced a review of the talks, led by Michele Ginswick, in order to refresh the event and attract new members to the organising committee and volunteer supporters. The City of Sydney provided us with a subsidised venue and we were grateful for its continued support. The new venue for 2017 at the Customs House Library will assist the committee to look at innovative approaches to promoting the Talks.

The year was one of achievements and progress, but also one tinged with sadness as we lost Margot Simington from the Newsletter team and Belinda McKay, Jessie's daughter and staunch Library supporter. Dimity Fletcher, long-time feminist activist, artist and one time coordinator of the Centre for Non-Sexist Resources in the NSW Department of Education passed away. Her mother, Dora Armytage, editor of *Womenspeak*, left many private papers with Dimity and her daughters have donated these to our Archives.

Robyn Kemmis, Deputy Mayor of the City of Sydney died suddenly. She was a consistent presence for the Library on Council, a supporter and wise adviser. Heather Radi, historian and academic, was also lost to the great cause of women's equality. She was deeply involved in the Library's early days and documented Jessie Street's work on the many causes which fulfilled her feminist and activist life.

We honoured the contribution of all these distinguished women.

The efforts of our volunteers, all of them listed in the report, were supported through improved communication and some training, but the Board recognised that there is much more to do in retaining volunteers and attracting others to join our teams.

My work as Board Chair, for the fifth year in a second term, was enriched by the company and counsel of fellow Board members. They are a formidable and dedicated group of women. They are thanked as are the many others who have sustained the Library throughout the year. This Annual Report represents the work of a generous group, members and donors to the cause who contribute selflessly of their time and expertise.

My thanks to all for their work in 2016.

Jozefa Sobski

Chair

The passing of Jill Roe AO, one of our distinguished and prominent patrons in January 2017 was received with deep sadness and sense of loss.

TREASURER

The Library again had a very successful year in 2016. The continued support of the Council of the City of Sydney is critical to the Library's success. Through its Accommodation Grants Program, the Council provided a significant rent subsidy for the premises occupied by the Library in the Ultimo Community Centre as well as for the venue at Town Hall House hired by the Library for Lunch Hour Talks. The rental subsidy was nearly \$62,000 in 2016 and the venue hire subsidy was in excess of \$1,600. The ongoing financial support of the Council is acknowledged with gratitude.

Overall Income in 2016 was over \$61,000 in excess of budget. This was largely due to the receipt of two bequests totalling \$59,998. Membership revenue increased in 2016 and was nearly \$1,600 more than budgeted. Three new Life Members joined in 2016 resulting in revenue of \$2,000 in excess of budget predictions. Donations to support the day to day operations of the Library totalled more than \$6,700 and the Library's Capital Investment Fund donations totalled \$61,193. The balance of the Capital Investment Fund at the end of 2016 was \$325,664.72, moving ever closer to the target of \$500,000.

The major fundraising event for the Library is the Annual Luncheon held at NSW Parliament House in September. The profit from this event in 2016 was \$14,098.99, a reduction on the 2016 profit, but still a very positive result. The regular Lunch Hour Talks held at Town Hall House achieved a profit of over \$2,915, a slight increase on 2015. The Library acknowledges the support of members and volunteers, who organise, work at and attend these events to ensure they continue to be successful ventures for the Library.

41 new members joined the Library in 2016 and Membership revenue was \$3,570 in excess of budget and \$4,684 in excess of 2015 revenue. In the November Newsletter, members were issued a reminder to renew their membership for 2017. This resulted in 60 membership renewals for 2017 being received during November and December 2016.

Overall, expenditure during 2016 was around \$8,000 under budget. Lower costs for the Annual Luncheon contributed \$2,600 to this reduction along with KOHA expenses being \$1,645 below budget. There were no capital purchases made in 2016.

In 2016 the Board approved of the transfer of \$100,000 from the Library's Westpac Bonus Account into a Term Deposit for six months with an interest rate of 2.60% maturing on 3 May 2017. The Library finished 2016 with a cash position of \$159,530.97 plus \$325,664.72 in the Capital Investment Fund, a total of \$485,195.69.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank Jann Skinner for her continued role as Honorary Auditor and for providing assistance and support to me throughout the year.

Jean Burns

SECRETARY

Membership of the Library reached 366 at the end of 2016, an increase on the previous year as a result of promotion strategies implemented through social media as well as following up lapsed members.

There were no constitutional amendments made at the 2016 AGM.

There were 9 Board Meetings in 2016. The attendance record was:

Chair	Jozefa Sobski	8
Vice Chair	Suzanne Marks	3
Secretary	Michele Ginswick (to AGM 2016)	2
	Jan Burnswoods (from AGM 2016 to her resignation July 2016)	5
Treasurer	Jean Burns (also Acting Secretary from July 2016)	6
Member	Michele Ginswick	7
	Diane Hague (corresponding member)	9
	Robyn Harriott	8
	Barbara Henery	5
	Sherril Hilario (from AGM 2016)	6
	Beverley Kingston	4
	Beverley Sodbinow	6

All quarterly surveys and the Annual Self-Assessment required by the City of Sydney's Accommodation Grants program were completed.

Returns required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) and NSW Fair Trading were also completed.

Jean Burns

LIBRARY

Training

Our library management system, KOHA, is running smoothly and the librarians and archivists are confident using it. The National Library of Australia launched Resource Description and Access, RDA, the descriptive cataloguing standard in 2012. This standard takes into account the proliferation of items created in digital form and clusters different editions, translations or formats of a work. RDA is also an important building block in the creation of better catalogues and resource discovery systems. The decision when to implement RDA was left to individual libraries. By 2016 it was time to turn our attention to professional development to enable our librarians to update their cataloguing skills to the new RDA standards, so as to continue seamless accessibility for our collection through on-line cataloguing.

In September, six cataloguers undertook training provided by Sydney TAFE, Ultimo, with whom the Library has a strong association. We were most fortunate for the costs to be subsidized through a Training Services NSW initiative. The training took place over two 3.5 hour sessions, a week apart. Those who attended are sharing their knowledge and skills with the cataloguers and archivists unable to attend. To follow up, the Library has subscribed to RDA Toolkit, an online resource. The Library remains proud of its commitment to a high standard of cataloguing which is a key focus for our librarians.

Poster Collection

The digitisation of the poster collection on the Library's catalogue is substantially complete, and excellent progress continues on the full cataloguing of the posters. Visiting academics and a researcher for a proposed documentary on the early years of the second wave of feminism have all affirmed that the digitisation of the poster collection facilitates their research. The librarians also found it invaluable when they were seeking relevant material for the NSW History Week exhibition.

The Library was pleased to receive a request from Arts: Search to include the poster directory in its upcoming international directory of online poster collections. The NSW Women's Health 2016 Summit exhibited a selection of corflute-backed posters for the second time. They were able to make their selection remotely by accessing the catalogue. As a result of the digitisation of the posters, the Hunter Women's Centre was able to identify a poster that it had donated to the Library some years ago and borrowed it for its 40th anniversary celebration.

Acquisitions

The Library appreciates the donation of books and other materials from members and publishers during the year. There were also important bequests of collections of feminist literature and women's writing from Dr Heather Radi and Dr Robin Porter.

Many posters, government reports, ephemera, books and serials were received from the Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN), a network of researchers from the University of New South Wales, following a federal government decision to restructure and amalgamate state responses to domestic violence. The new Commonwealth funded body, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) did not plan to maintain a large library and GVRN had

to downsize its collection. Librarians visited GVRN's Library several times & selected materials according to our collection development guidelines. The Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ANROWS and GVRN, guaranteeing their access to the materials.

The visit of Linda Mayer and her daughter Dylan during 2016 was notable as their focus was a bequest in 1988 from Linda's sister, feminist Eva Maria. Her books went to Women's Liberation House, and then became the core collection of the new Jessie Street National Women's Library in 1989. As a result of this visit, the catalogue records have been enhanced to include a brief description of Eva Maria's contribution to feminism, the bequest and images of the covers of the books.

History Week 2016:

As a member of the History Council of NSW, the Library was pleased to participate in History Week 2016. As the theme was Neighbours, we were able to work with City of Sydney Library's Ultimo branch, neighbours in the wonderfully diverse and vibrant Ultimo Community Centre of which we are glad to be part.

The Library's participation in History Week presented an opportunity for a number of volunteers to contribute. We created displays in the Library itself as well as using Ultimo Library's display cases, incorporating a range of resources, showcasing the diversity of our collections and their breadth and depth: books, badges, posters, newspapers, journals, newsletters, stories from the Tapestry project, DVDs and a banner from the 1972 International Women's Day march with the iconic 'the personal is political'. The displays illustrated women's participation, activism and contribution in all areas of society: stories of Aboriginal women fighting and campaigning for social justice and human rights; those of pioneer, rural and country women; women's writing groups; and Sydney's villages. It included a group of books mentioned in Delia Falconer's article, 'A city of one's own: women's Sydney' on the Dictionary of Sydney website. There were stories of Chinese women in Australia, women in sport, including histories of women's netball and cricket associations and women who were leaders in industrial action and workers' rights campaigns, including a display highlighting Jessie Street and Faith Bandler, tirelessly working to effect change.

A selection of displays was photographed and posted to Facebook each day during the week with background information. The History Council was impressed and included the Library on its homepage with a link to a summary of our displays.

Barbara Henery and Lynne Moreton

ARCHIVES

The Archives team had a rewarding and interesting year in 2016. It was a year in which much progress was made in the processing of material which has been sitting in our compactus shelves waiting for attention for quite some time. The team gained much satisfaction as a number of collections were processed and loaded into the KOHA system which makes the collection available to the general public through the Library's catalogue. The primary aim of the Archives team is to make the material we hold accessible. What is the use of holding the wonderful material donated to the Library if no one gets to see it or use it for their primary source research? We are very excited that we can finally see some results.

The six collections received during 2016 have been interesting and multifarious. They document the varied lives of ordinary but extraordinary Australian women. Collections include poetry, plays, diaries, notebooks and publications. Some are comprised of posters, leaflets and flyers related to International Women's Day, Abortion Rights, and Reclaim the Night 1978-2006. Another particularly fascinating collection is a series of letters donated by the son of a Catholic woman, written to her family during a pilgrimage from Sydney to Rome in 1950. We were delighted to receive 16 additional badges for our flourishing badge collection. The badges reflect feminist themes and those of issues such as the Vietnam War protests, Asylum Seeker protests and the Indigenous Treaty campaign in 1988. Of particular interest is the material donated by the grand-daughters of Dora Armitage. It contains letters from Jessie Street, other letters, feminist literature and papers relating to the Australian Communist Party.

Bridget McKern, who has been a volunteer with the Library for over seventeen years, has decided to retire. Bridget has been an important team member and has made a valuable contribution during this period and will be very sadly missed. However on a brighter note we have a new volunteer, Vallie Rigg, formerly education officer, casual lecturer in Museum Studies and curator of the Australian History Museum at Macquarie University. We are thrilled to have her join our team. Her experience and expertise add an extra dimension to the skills of our volunteers. Vallie has been working on the reorganisation of the storage of archival material and on the Louisa Lawson House papers.

Jan Burnswoods has at last finished the daunting task of gathering together and sorting the Library's own records from 1989 to 2015. She has moved onto finalising the administrative history and series descriptions of the collection in fourteen boxes, in preparation for addition to the catalogue. The history of the Library is contained in these records and the importance of this collection cannot be overvalued.

Christine Smith plays a key role in the IT of the Archives. It is through her expertise and knowledge of the new Library system that much of the information held by the archives has been digitised and made accessible through the catalogue.

The Archives were visited in 2016 by film makers; a PhD student from Adelaide; students researching the history of domestic violence in Australia; the family of Eva Maria, (whose books comprised the first donation of material to the Library); and relatives of Marie Tulip and Josie Conway to look at papers held by the Archives. We showed one researcher the papers dealing with Beryl Women's

Refuge in Canberra, which led to our contact with the Refuge and acquisition of the book marking its 40th anniversary in 2015. The Archives team hosted a visit of students from Charles Sturt University in October, the first time we have done so, although their visits to the Library now occur twice a year.

Beverley Sodbinow

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

With the assistance of the IT Committee members, Howard Houliston, Christine Lees and Christine Smith, another year has been completed with the IT system in general running smoothly.

Howard introduced Roslyn Blake to the Library as a backup for referral while he was overseas during the year. His trip coincided with the laying of the new carpet which necessitated dismantling and re-establishing the computer system. With detailed diagrams to assist, Ros oversaw the project with the help of volunteers who pitched in. Thanks to all concerned, the system was re-established with the minimum of disruption.

Our internet provider upgraded technology and the new equipment was installed. We have upgraded our software when needed and under guidance await future software releases before upgrading. Apart from problem solving for us, Howard explains his reasons for certain recommendations and changes. This helps our understanding of the systems in place and any proposals.

Security is a concern to the Library and Howard's advice in this area is valued. The City of Sydney is also most helpful and we have discussed our needs with their Internet Security Manager. With the assistance of these experts we are reassured regarding the security of our system.

In Library plans and budgets we have kept hardware upgrades in mind and we plan to continue upgrading progressively with a minimum of expenditure and disruption.

As for any volunteer organisation, the IT Committee is mindful that equipment is kept in good working order and consumables in ready supply. The system has been kept up proficiently and economically by the Committee members and volunteers. Thank you to everyone involved in keeping our IT system running smoothly.

Robyn Harriott

ADMINISTRATION

Front desk activity in email, telephone and in person enquiries increased over 2016. Lunch Hour Talks and Annual Luncheon bookings increased both by email and telephone.

Several donations of posters, books, diaries and journals were accepted and numerous other offerings were made.

There was a growing number of groups and visitors e.g. TAFE, UTS, YWCA, Ambarvale High School. Charles Sturt University library and archives students are now coming to the Library twice a year, using the Library as a model niche research library for their university studies.

Many visitors were researching in various areas during 2016 - indigenous feminism and status of Aboriginal women, Book Club titles unavailable elsewhere, children's services, violence against women, specialist libraries, research for assignments and for two documentaries.

Queries were received on opening hours, library operations, inter-library and distance lending and specific books, posters and journal articles.

Some email and many more telephone enquiries regarding new membership were answered. Existing members requested information relating to expiry of membership, updated credit card details and changes of email or address. This shows that many people are anxious to keep up their contact with the Library which is encouraging.

Christine Lees and Lorna Paviour

ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Again in 2016 the Library's main fundraising event was held at Parliament House in Sydney, on Monday 19 September. The guest speaker was Tanya Hosch, a proud Torres Strait Islander woman, who moved from her role as Joint Campaign Director and the public face of the RECOGNISE movement to a new position of AFL's General Manager of Inclusion and Social Policy during the year. At the same time she remained very much part of RECOGNISE as an Ambassador for the movement.

Tanya spoke of her four year struggle to achieve recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian constitution, by removing racial discrimination from the document. She commented wryly that she hoped that she may have been counted a friend of Jessie Street who faced similar frustrations as Jessie worked to achieve her goals. Tanya painted a vivid picture of Jessie Street's role as an activist and feminist and her tireless fight against inequality, especially for women and children. Tanya referred to Jessie Street's participation in the 1945 conference to found the United Nations and Jessie's pivotal role in the fight to count indigenous people in the census.

There have been questions emerging from the RECOGNISE movement. Tanya was quick to allay fears of the creation of "two classes" as a result of the constitutional change. She also answered the often expressed question 'why now?' indicating that Australia cannot wait any longer for such recognition. Further reform can follow.

Speaking to us after being only a few weeks into her new role as AFL's General Manager of Inclusion and Social Policy, Tanya saw herself faced with a steep learning curve, but believes that this was an unmissable opportunity to address inequality in this sporting code.

In 2016, as ever, without the tireless efforts of the volunteers on the Annual Luncheon Committee, there is no way such an event can be brought to fruition and I thank them for their efforts in carrying out not just a successful fundraiser but bringing together over 260 people of such diverse ages, backgrounds and employment. The guest list included Library members, patrons, supporters, public and private schools, State Members of Parliament, the NSW Teachers Federation (a member organisation), Women's Action and Information Group (WAIG) and the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL).

Michele Ginswick

LUNCH HOUR TALKS

This year we were again fortunate to secure a broad range of speakers who revealed their passionate enterprise in the writing of stories, the examination of historical events, the production of a DVD, a collection of photographs and the creation of a community theatre presentation. We are most grateful to the City of Sydney's Reduced Rate Grant which allowed continued use of a most central venue in Town Hall House and to the staff who assisted each month, particularly Rosa Villanti, the Customer Services Officer and the Maintenance Team whose room set up and patient response to any difficulties was much appreciated. The Lunch Hour Talks are made possible only through the efforts of the dedicated Lunch Hour Talks Team of volunteers and their wholehearted commitment to ensuring everything goes smoothly, that all are welcomed and enjoy the talk and the lunch. I thank them all most sincerely. The speakers in 2016 were:

18 February: Dr Jane Innes, Sheilagh Kelly, Robyn Hutchinson, members of WRN -

'Exploring Perspectives' regarding the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution

In 2015 the Women's Reconciliation Network hosted a Public Forum in the Ashfield Town Hall and this event was filmed and screened simultaneously on YouTube. From this footage the 26 minute DVD "Exploring Perspectives" was crafted and Jane led the team of three to achieve the excellent compilation of this DVD as an educative tool. Using parts of the DVD to illustrate her talk, Jane explained the importance of this constitutional change.

17 March: Cecile Yazbek - *Voices on the Wind*

Through the eyes of Eva, a young Australian teacher of Lebanese South African heritage, Cecile explored the stories of her Lebanese ancestors who left Lebanon to live in Queenstown at the southernmost tip of Africa in 1908. Eva tells the story of her great-great-grandparents, Edmond and Lily Khalil and how, with a secret love of their language and homeland and sharing no history with any other group in South Africa, these Lebanese immigrants coalesced into an extended family. Eva, the young Australian, unfolds the old story juxtaposing her observations of the contemporary South Africa that she visits with snippets of Australian ways and thinking.

21 April: Anne McLeod - *The Summit of Her Ambition: the spirited life of Marie Byles*

Marie Byles was at the forefront of social change as the first female solicitor in NSW and legal adviser to feminist activist Jessie Street. A passionate conservationist, she helped save vast tracts of land for national parks. Having travelled the world in search of mountains to conquer, she turned to Buddhism and wrote books that influenced a generation in the 1960s. Anne gave a presentation of Marie Byles' photographs which illustrated her remarkable life.

19 May: Gay Hendriksen - *Conviction - the 1827 fight for rights at the Parramatta Female Factory*

A little known but critical part of Australia's history is the convict female factory phenomenon which was experienced by over 9,000 convict women. The Parramatta Female Factory, the first purpose built female factory, was the site of a little known but important event in Australia's history. In 1827 over 100 women rebelled against poor living and working conditions. This talk explored the women's lives in the factory and this event which was discussed, debated and disputed at the time and

labelled as either an action of desperation or a fractious riot. Gay posited that this debate is back on the table again and should be reinserted into our histories.

16 June: Maggie Young - *Isabella Mary Kelly: her story and the story of a play based on her life*

In 1838 Isabella Mary Kelly, a single woman and a free settler from Dublin, dared to run a cattle station in the Manning Valley in NSW. Her success led to great hardship, she was falsely accused of stealing her own cattle and sentenced to imprisonment in the notorious Darlinghurst Gaol in Sydney in 1860. The talk told the story of the creation of *Isabella the Play* based on Maurie Garland's book, *The Trials of Isabella Kelly*. The play, staged by local actors, was first performed in the Manning Valley and, in April 2016, in the Cell Block Theatre - the very Darlinghurst Gaol where she was unjustly imprisoned! These performances showed that Community Theatre is a powerful medium to raise awareness of the issues concerning women and especially one who was ahead of her time.

21 July: Joan Morgan McCarthy and Maureen Smith - *The Myths of Ageing*

Joan and Maureen are co-authors of two books: *Sixty Strong & Sexy: Women share their secrets* and *Glimpses into the lives of positively ageing women*. They talked about why and how they wrote these books and their aim to debunk the myths of ageing using a reading and a short, entertaining parody on the subject. Joan has also written 2 other books: *Peace & Harmony: re-envisioning Sexuality Education* and her most recent book: *The Cronos Chrysalis*. She spoke briefly about the motivation behind the writing of these two books.

18 August: Robyn Arrowsmith - *Memories and Experiences of Australian WWII War Brides in America*

Fifteen thousand young Australian women married US servicemen during the social upheaval of the 1940s. They left families and friends to join their husbands in America, a land they knew little about. This talk covered their experiences and memories of wartime courtships, weddings and sailing to the USA. It highlighted how they overcame grief, chronic homesickness and adjusted to cultural change while settling into a new role of wife and mother. Now in their late 80s and early 90s, they have been officially acknowledged for their contribution as ambassadors for good relations between the two nations.

20 October: Suzanne Leal - *The Teacher's Secret: fact, fiction, secrets and the law*

Set in a small coastal community, Suzanne Leal's best selling new novel, *The Teacher's Secret*, is about a teacher with something to hide and a new principal determined to uncover the truth. It is also the story of a young mother struggling to accept the end of her marriage and of a family forced to start afresh after fleeing their homeland. Suzanne spoke of the way in which a novel is woven out of the threads of the writer's real life and experiences.

17 November: Charlotte Wood - *Messages from Another Realm*

Charlotte spoke about the writing process for *The Natural Way of Things*, and why a departure from realism was necessary for her to tell the story which sprang from the bones of the real Hay Institution for Girls. Drawing on her own experience and her interviews with other Australian authors compiled in *The Writer's Room: Conversations about writing*, she discussed the ways that her subconscious, strange images and symbols - and what the acting teacher Uta Hagen has called one's 'inner objects' - drove the creation of *The Natural Way of Things*.

In 2017 changes are planned for the Lunch Hour Talks as Town Hall House renovations have caused a need for a new venue. We have been fortunate to be able to obtain the meeting room at the Customs House Library, where five talks will be held throughout the year.

Michele Ginswick

EQUALITY RIGHTS ALLIANCE

The Library is a member organisation of the Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) which is in turn one of the five organisations that make up the National Women's Alliances. The other organisations are Economic Security4Women, Australian Women Against Violence Alliance, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance and the National Rural Women's Coalition.

The ERA's mission is to bring together women's organisations and individuals from across Australia to share information, identify issues that affect them and identify solutions, and to engage actively with the Australian Government on policy issues as part of a better, more informed and representative dialogue between women and government.

Sherri Hilario attended an International Forum held by the National Women's Alliances at the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in October 2016. The Forum consisted of presentations and discussions on a range of topics.

Under the aegis of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there were updates on domestic and international implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF is the UN central platform for follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDGs. There are 17 goals underpinned by 169 targets with 230 indicators, of which 53 are gender specific. The need for quality, disaggregated, gender data was highlighted. There also appears to be little political will to move the SDGs forward, with continued fragmentation and failure to engage with civil society.

There was an update on the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) taking place at the UN Headquarters in New York in March 2017. The priority theme is women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. Mainly centred on preparations for the Australian government delegation and development of a submission to government on priorities for CSW61, there was a lot of cross over with SDGs and discussion about the role of CSW vis a vis the SDGs, particularly impacts on NGOs and resourcing.

Again, the need to keep and defend *human rights* language was stressed.

There was an update on human rights treaty reporting and Special Rapporteur visits. Also, there was discussion of the ongoing harassment of the AHRC and the need for restoration of adequate funding, transparency in appointments and prompt enquiries.

The Women, Peace & Security Agenda update mainly concerned gender based violence in Iraq, Syria and Bougainville, differentiating between state-based and individual violence against women.

More information on the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be found at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

More information on the UN 2030 Agenda for Women can be found at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw61-2017>

More information about ERA can be found at www.equalityrightsalliance.com.au

Diane Hague

NEWSLETTER

During 2016, the Newsletter Committee met to co-ordinate the role of the Newsletter with other communications and to streamline the production of the Newsletter itself.

Four issues were produced as usual in February, May, July (each of eight pages) and November (a 12 page issue including reporting of the Annual Luncheon.) There were 450 copies printed of each issue, posted to members and supporters, various libraries and other organisations. In addition, a growing number of people are receiving electronic copies. We received positive feedback about the Newsletter's 2016 new look, which included a more spacious layout.

The sudden death of Margot Simington in March 2016 was a sad loss to our Newsletter team. Margot contributed her extensive editorial and writing skills for ten years to the Newsletter, firstly with Shirley Jones and then with Kris Clarke.

In July, Katharine Stevenson, our graphic designer, after many years of excellent service, advised that she was unable to continue in this role. In September, Jessica Stewart, who has qualifications in editing and publishing, was invited to join the Newsletter team, progressing magnificently in mastering the InDesign programme. A graphic designer would still be a useful addition to the team.

The Newsletter was again packed with informative and stimulating reading, including a report on each of the Lunch Hour Talks. There were also book reviews, articles on important library acquisitions and tributes honouring members who have passed on. To ensure consistency in internal writing style and quality layout, Kris Clarke prepared a set of guidelines for writers and editors to which the committee unanimously agreed.

The Newsletter Committee acknowledges and appreciates the work of our 2016 volunteers. These included Co-editors Margot Simington and Kris Clarke, Jessica Stewart, Katharine Stevenson, proof reader Jan Burnswoods and committee member Barbara Henery. We also appreciate the help that Board members and volunteers provided to facilitate the Newsletter's production and distribution.

Suzanne Marks

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Both the Library's website and Facebook page promote the Library's mission and events. We have found our sites particularly important in reaching out to women who have never heard of the Library, and particularly to younger women.

The Facebook page is used to showcase the Library's collections; promote Australian women authors and leaders and highlight events in Australian and international history that are important milestones for women. Both Facebook and the website promote events such as the monthly Lunch Hour Talks, Annual General Meeting and the Library's Annual Luncheon. In 2016 a selection of the Library's displays for History Week was posted to Facebook each day during the week. By the end of the year, the Facebook page had 850 friends.

This year the Library's social media presence has benefited from the skills of new volunteers. The Library's YouTube site has been reinvigorated, with the uploading of five new videos, comprising two Lunch Hour Talks and interviews with volunteers and a library user. To date, posts on the Library's new Instagram account have focussed on volunteers working in the Library, together with some reposting from the Library's Facebook page and from other Instagram accounts, including the State Library of Victoria's excellent post about Margaret (Lilardia) Tucker. Early indications suggest that this approach has been received favourably. The first educational resource, about Jessie Street, was initiated by a Teacher Librarian working in the Library on a student placement and now appears on the Library's website. Further topics are currently being explored.

Diane Hague and Lynne Morton

BOARD 2016

Chair: Jozefa Sobski

Vice Chair: Suzanne Marks

Secretary:

- Michele Ginswick (to AGM 2016)
- Jan Burnswoods (from AGM 2016 to her resignation July 2016)
- Jean Burns (Acting Secretary from July 2016)

Treasurer: Jean Burns

Members:

Michele Ginswick (from AGM 2016)
Diane Hague (corresponding member)
Robyn Harriott
Barbara Henery
Sherri Hilario (from AGM 2016)
Beverley Kingston
Beverley Sodbinow

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