

***National ALGWA President’s Board Report***

*For Annual General Meeting April 2017*

This is my second annual report as President to the National Board, since becoming President in March 2015. Writing this report has made me appreciate how busy our National organization has been.

***National Rural Women’s Coalition May 9 & 10***

I attended a strategic planning session of the NRWC along with NRWC Director and ALGWA Treasurer Alwyn Friedersdorff. The facilitated session was held in Canberra, and had representatives from all the member organisations. We were able to highlight issues affecting our rural members. The particular focus was economic security. We were able to add standing for elected office or supporting those standing as a focus.

Louise McSorley, head of the Office of Women also spoke. She was very impressive. Two days later she moved from the Office of Women and has now returned to the Employment area.

***Breakfast June 2016***

The Lord Mayor of Darwin Cr Katrina Fong Lim was our guest speaker at the annual Australian Local Government Women’s Association breakfast at the National General Assembly in Canberra.

She is the Chair of the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors and the President of the ALGWA Northern Territory branch. She told the audience about her background and how she became the Lord Mayor of Darwin and some of the hurdles her family faced on the way, including discrimination against her grandmother and how other relatives were called ‘aliens’.

ALGWA NT and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGAT) have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding. After her presentation Mayor Lim signed the MOU together with Mayor Damien Ryan, President of LGAT.

Retiring President of the Local Government Association of Queensland Margaret de Witt was also acknowledged and presented with a small gift at the breakfast. Mrs. De Witt did not stand at the recent Queensland Council elections. She stepped down after 19 years at Brisbane City Council – the longest serving female councillor on the largest Council in Australia. She was also the first woman President of LGAQ in its 120 year history. Margaret is a great role model and has been a great supporter of women and ALGWA. She will be missed and we wish her well in her life after local government.

***Queensland conference***

In July I attended the Qld State ALGWA conference. It was a pleasure to meet so many women. It was an exceptionally well run conference and I came away with lots of ideas. I thank Rebecca for inviting me and running such an informative and interesting conference. Unfortunately I could not attend the whole conference as I had previously booked an overseas trip.

Also in July, the Board held a strategic planning session, hosted by Melbourne City Council in the deputy lord mayor’s office, kindly loaned to us by member Susan Riley. An updated strategic plan was agreed upon. This year we have again recognised the financial limitations smaller Branches have to operate under, and agreed to fund domain names and the design of new web pages for both the Tasmanian and Northern Territory branches, based on the National web page. Both Victoria and Qld have already used the same format, which creates a corporate look for the organisation.

***National Gender Equity Council***

This has been progressing during the course of the year.

You may remember that in November 2015 I attended The Australian Gender Equity Federation two day workshop in Brisbane. This was organised by the University of Queensland Business School with Helen Conway, former Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. The workshop was told that there are over 200 women’s organisations in Australia and ALGWA was one of the 30 invited to the workshop to see there was any appetite to establish a national Gender Council.

It was decided that there was the need and the desire for a Gender Council. A small working group was established to suggest principals.

We met again in June 2017 to discuss the working group’s proposals. The working group had recommended that the emphasis was to be the workplace. Fortunately, after discussion that workplace emphasis was removed.

The composition will be a nine person Board, a Foundation and also advisory forum in each State and Territory. The Board positions will be rotated among the member organizations and all the organizations will have people on the advisory forums depending upon capacity.

There was a lot of discussion on how to fund the Council. The Foundation would be the vehicle, once tax deductibility was established, as the member organisations do not have the capacity to fund the Council, even seed funding.

It was agreed that the Working Group would re-convene and have responsibility for forming the legal documentation, communicating with the founding bodies and other groups which have expressed an interest. They will also look towards finding a CEO. A priority would also be exploring funding options and how the Council would be launched.

The ALGWA Board resolved at its December meeting that we would become members. I attended the meeting of the National Gender Equality Council in Brisbane in December 2016. The meeting resolved to register the Australian Gender Equality Council Limited as a public company limited by guarantee and this has now been done. They are in the process of preparing an application for Deductible Gift Recipient status. They are still waiting on membership documents from some of delegates and hope these will come in shortly prior to submission of DGR paperwork (ALGWA has supplied information).

During the day-long meeting we discussed the constitution, strategic planning, CEO and fund-raising. In summary it was agreed that we should look for a young CEO with the potential to become a strong profile in the gender space. I gave the example of Amy Mullins of The Women’s Leadership Institute.

Both Kate Jenkins, Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Libby Lyons, Director, Workplace Gender Equality Agency have given written support. It was agreed that

the Council needs seed funding and that it wanted more national women’s groups to join. Again, it was agreed that there would be no member fees. A couple of things which were said and agreed – it is time such an organization exists. Secondly this is a “cause” not a charity.

I was also invited to join the interim Board and I agreed as I believe it adds weight to our organization to be involved in the Council. Hopefully it will not be too much work!

This is a very exciting project and it is very pleasing to see ALGWA at the forefront of what will be a national organization.

***ALGA***

ALGA no longer allows any organization to have observer status – including the ALGWA. During the year I have had a lot of discussion with ALGA and the President about our future relationship.

As ALGWA National President I was invited to make a presentation at the June 2016 ALGA Board meeting about our activities. I detailed the history of ALGWA, some of our activities and that we wanted a stronger relationship with ALGA. I said that we were upset that the observer status was removed, but think that this is rather demeaning and that in 2016 we should have a more meaningful relationship. My presentation was positively received.

I subsequently met with ALGA President Mayor Troy Pickard in July to work out what that relationship would look like. We agreed on a list of suggestions and to make a funding application to the Office of Women. This has subsequently been agreed by the ALGA Board and went to the ALGA Strategic Planning session in February 2017. A report will go to ALGA Board meeting in March. Any project needs to be submitted in early 2017 to be considered for funding in 2017-18

Among the actions agreed are:

* A link on the ALGA website to ALGWA (completed)
* Applying a gender lens to ALGA policy positions (Ongoing)
* Seeking input from ALGWA on relevant issues which are to be considered by the ALGA Board (ongoing)
* Commitment to a balanced speaker list for conferences (Ongoing)
* Ensuring that the room booking for the ALGWA breakfast at the NGA benefits from ALGA’s overall purchasing rate (this already happens)

The ALGA Board also agreed to develop a list of female local government candidates to be proposed for inclusion in the Commonwealth BoardLinks database.

We talked of a joint initiative to promote gender equality through a 5050 program, drawing on our previous program. The State Associations are going to have input into the proposal. They are looking at gender equity plans, gender equality award, tool plates, and accreditation in a National Gender Equality program. The second part would be a Male Champion of change in local government. It would also promote case studies and showcase the work of local government in gender equality.

The Local Government Association CEOs also agreed that it will be a topic to see what they can do to support ALGWA and women in local government.

***5050 Program***

After many months and many requests, we finally received the documentation from LGAQ of the 5050 program they ran on our behalf, and it is currently being stored at the home of Helen Harris. In March this year another box of material was received, apparently being overlooked the first time, and is currently being examined.

We experienced a great deal of difficulty in arranging the changeover of the 5050 website and the domain name to our control; this again took many months and repeated requests, and I would like to thank Rebecca Hersant for aiding us in both endeavours. Helen is now the contact for any queries about the program. We have a previous motion that we continue with the program ourselves, but without funding this is difficult. The people who designed and run our own website are maintaining the 5050 website for us, so far without charge. Hopefully the proposed arrangements with ALGA will facilitate more action in this regard.

***Local Government figures***

In January as President I wrote an article in *LG Focus*. In the article I highlighted how our data again supported the evidence that having women at the table made a difference in appointing women to senior leadership positions. Those States with a higher number of female councillors in turn have a higher number of female Mayors and female CEOs.

Figures are different across the country. Nationally, 32.2% of councillors are women (up by over 1% on the previous year following elections in both Queensland and Victoria which saw an increase in the number of women elected – congratulations Queensland and Victoria.

In Victoria 38.1 %( up from 34%); NT 34%; Qld 32.5% (up from 29%); Western Australia 31.6%; Tasmania 31%; South Australia 29% and NSW 27%.

In Victoria 40% of Mayors are women, 34% in the Northern Territory compared to 19% in NSW. More than a quarter of the CEOs /GMs in the Northern Territory are women and 16.45% in Victoria compared to **7%** in NSW. 20% of Queensland CEOs are women.

From LG Pro in Victoria we know that women make up 39.12% of level 3 officers and 34.22% level 2 (16.45% level 1 or CEO)

***1800Respect***

This is a federally funded national organisation to reduced violence against women and children. I was asked to be one of 16 influencers. I agreed and represented local government. The influencers included Rosie Batty, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Victorian Police Commissioner, Australian of the Year. The organisation launched an on-line tool kit and at the last minute I was asked to go on a panel talking about the work local government does in family violence. Given I had only 30 minutes’ notice; I was only able to give Victorian examples.

***National Rural Women’s Coalition***

Congratulations to our Treasurer and Tasmanian representative Alwyn Friedersdorff on being elected President of the National Rural Women’s Coalition at its November AGM.

***Breakfast June 2017***

I am pleased to report that Virginia Haussegger AM will be our speaker at the June networking breakfast. The former ABC 7.30 presenter is now Adjunct Professor at Canberra University. She is the Director of *50/50 by 2030 Foundation,* a new gender equality initiative at the University of Canberra.

Finally I would like to thank our hard working Board for their help and support. In particular I would like to thank Helen Harris OAM for the countless hours she spends as the Hon. Secretary of our organization.

**The ALGWA Board is**:

President: Cr Coral Ross (Victoria)

Vice-President: Cr Betty Gill (SA)

Treasurer Cr Alwyn Friedersdorff (Tas)

Hon Sec Cr Helen Harris

Rebecca Hersant (Qld)

Vicki Scott (NSW)

Cr Janet Davidson (WA)

Lord Mayor Katrina Fong Lim (NT)

**Cr Coral Ross**

***National President***

***Australian Local Government Women’s Association***

April 2017