

GFS
AUSTRALIA
INC
ANNUAL
REPORT

2019/20
Brisbane
January 11th,
2020



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Attached:

- a. Auditor’s Report

AGENDA FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING GFS AUSTRALIA INC

SATURDAY, 11TH JANUARY

HELD AT ST FRANCIS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, MILTON QLD

1. Opening
2. Present
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (held at St Francis College, 19th January 2019)
5. Business arising from Previous Minutes
6. Reports
 - a. National President's report
 - b. Treasurer's Report
 - i. Budget for 2020
 - c. Diocesan Reports
 - i. Ballarat, Brisbane, Central Queensland, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth, South Australia, Sydney, Tasmania
 - d. Outreach Reports
 - i. PNG Training Visit
7. General Business
 - a.
8. Any Other Business
9. Closing

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - GFS AUSTRALIA INC.

*SATURDAY 19TH JANUARY 2019 HELD AT ST FRANCIS
THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, MILTON, BRISBANE*

Opening: Cheryl Selvage **with service led by Bishop Sonia**

Greetings from:

Thembeke Pama, World GFS President

We welcomed Marion Oulds who was representing MU and Australian Church Women, Queensland Unit.

Present

Bronwyn Barber, Marj Wellings, Di Bell, Kate Brewer, Josie Steytler, Sonia Roulston, Heather Turner, Jennifer Tutin, Lesley Gee, Lesley Briggs, Clare Reed, Christine Rooney, Margaret Humphries, Tania Brown, Carole Lovejoy, Wendy Veal, Leanne Kapetanovski, Julie Smith, Kevin Lumsden, Suzanne Claire, Anne Watkins, Cheryl Selvage, Jennifer Buckby, Debra Wadeson, Pam Guy, Jacqui Keily, Dianne Bocquee, Janet Story, Marilyn Oulds, Gail Orchard, Roslyn Lumsden, Cheryl Russell

Apologies

Were received from : Jane Beavan, Leonie Stitz, Barbara Phillips (Tasmania) , Elizabeth, Doug and Helen Petering(Melbourne) and Lorelle Keogh (Brisbane), Jan Doyle (SA), Sandra Clough(Bendigo), Val Gribble(Central Q), Lyn Vaak (Sydney), Nicole Baldwin(Newcastle), Rosemary Clark (Wangaratta), Mary Nichols (lone member),

We sadly regret Beryl Keogh was unable to attend as she had passed away on Thursday, 17th January and send our condolences and prayers to her family.

Minutes of Previous Meeting held at Kurri Kurri, 7th – 13th January, 2018 The minutes of this meeting were received and Wendy Veal moved, seconded by Marj Wellings - passed as a true and accurate record.

Business Arising from Previous Meeting:

Permission was sought from the meeting to move the discussions relating to the Open Spaces to the General business section. This was agreed.

Correspondence:

Regular emails to dioceses included -

Membership fees and information

Prayer support requests

Newsletters (4) during the year

Request for reports for AGM

Information regarding new AGM meeting and an invitation to join with the meeting

Greetings from Thembeke Pama

Inquiry regarding the availability of the Pat Franklin Fund from Betty Kesaka to use for World Council in 2020.

Lucy Haembo – condolences on the death of her husband (Lucy had been instrumental in PNG GFS development)

Lyn Vaak and Val Gribble – received cards and flowers from us for Lyn's move and Val's illness.

Reports

National President's Report

Cheryl spoke to her report noting that there have been some changes and also some hindrances.

We have made some changes (Skype, notes from the open spaces)and there have been some visits

to other dioceses (Tasmania, Perth) and to Newcastle for our Chaplain's ordination as Bishop in Newcastle along with the loss of some special members in our GFS Australia family. We value our belonging and friendship. A thanks was given to all executive members for their roles.

Treasurer's Report

Noeleen presented her report noting that there were some items from World council and monies held for this still appearing in the accounts, but we were mostly under budget on most items.

Diocesan Reports

Reports were received from Ballarat, Brisbane, Melbourne, Newcastle, North Queensland, Perth, Rockhampton, South Australia, Sydney, Tasmania and taken as read.

Outreach reports – Cheryl spoke briefly about the PNG Training Visit noting that an English newspaper had reported about the feeding program happening in Port Moresby. Gail Orchard spoke briefly about the Solomon Islands Training Visit noting the generous donations and continued support for Solomon's over a long period of time and the gaining of momentum now to progress GFS.

All reports were received = Moved by Lesley Briggs and seconded by Carole Lovejoy = Passed.

General Business

a. Midterm Conference

- i. It was decided to cancel the midterm conference to be held this year and replace it with an invitation to join the AGM (as now being held) and combine it with some time to socialise, a dinner and service of worship on Sunday morning. 31 participants were present for this new format and it was warmly received.
- ii. **Junior Delegate** –after discussion it was felt we needed to make changes to the length of the term of office. The applications will be sent out soon, with the usual time frame to operate. The successful applicant will now be commissioned at the beginning of 2020, (possibly at the AGM or if not possible in her own diocese) attend the World Council in South Africa and then submit a report for the Australian National Council meeting in 2021, with it desirable that they also attend the National council meeting. This was felt to be a positive move, more in line with what is achievable by someone of this age group (commitments) although it will mean less of an opportunity to have a role within the National Executive. AS we respond to changes in life, so moves like this should be made.

b. **Website** – After some difficulties during most of the year, the GFS Australia website is now back up and running. It does need to be updated and this is currently in hand. It is hoped to have a new tab entitled "Open Spaces" to include all new information from our discussions started in January 2018.

c. **World Council** – The dates are 9th – 19th July 2020, South Africa. We will notify people when further information is available, and it is hoped it will be soon. It was noted how world council is often a life changing event, particularly considering the opportunity to experience such a different culture and traditions.

d. **Open Spaces Report** (from Australian Council meeting in January 2018)

i. Vision and Purpose progress

The new vision and purpose were presented to the meeting following much discussion within the Executive. It was designed to offer a short, meaningful reflection of our organisation.

The following is the document as presented – (in black type) The blue type represents the Executive’s response to use this framework and apply it to the GFS Australia. It was then applied to GFS in South Australia using the report as found in the Annual reports.

Why? (purpose) GFS is a place of friendship and belonging where God’s love is shared.

How do we do this? (Mission)

Encourage growth in every diocese

Share – news, resources (program, badges etc) communication, newsletter and good news stories, prayer chains, people, finances (grants), vision (for GFS), our Christian faith, worship, pray

Serve – our members – by – sharing (as above)

Care – prayers, communicating our needs, care for worldwide level – visits, training, finances

Inspire – through the President’s theme – and the team, encouragement, taking risks and allowing new projects

What we do: (goals)

A ministry of serving and teaching safely (with Code of conduct, resources, marketing and promoting Gather Together

GFS national councils, AGM midterm World council - worship

Invites of National president to diocesan events/provincial

Social media and IT (emails etc)

Small print – GFS serves the Anglican and wider community locally, nationally and globally through our motto “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

As applied to South Australia:

How?

Encourage Growth – meeting with the Archbishop, networking with other groups

Share – meeting regularly, luncheons, effective working executive, GFS Australia membership, meeting with the Archbishop, finances

Serve – through the executive, financial, time and with 2 secretaries, within the diocese

Care – for former members with luncheon, in helping to re-establish children’s ministry within the Province

Inspire – to help re-establish the ministry, financial support, time with the Archbishop

What?

Serving and teaching - with luncheon, regular updates, ministry to families, teaching about GFS within diocese,

Gathering together – as an Executive, with Australian National Council and with other organisations (MU, NCW, ACW)

This process took around 15 minutes to highlight how easily it could be achieved for other dioceses.

It is hoped that each diocese will use this process and forward their documents to National executive. Members shared that it will help highlight what we are doing and hopefully doing well, it helps to get to the heart of the matter, and it isn’t too daunting a task. It offers a filter to view any projects – does it fit our purpose? Then it should be a valid part of GFS. It is hoped that this will then help to shape the governance issues that we are still to continue to address.

Any Other Business

1. **Life member badge** – Perth and Brisbane both use a life member badge and are willing to share with others GFS groups. It has GFS at the top and a bar with “life member” in bold print underneath

Badges – It was decided that we would use up all the current stock of badges and encourage use by selling badges at \$1 each. We hope to then design and use a new badge (with just GFS – blue and silver design rather than adding “Australia”) and this new badge we will make available for PNG and Melanesia GFS to use.

Stock in GFS Australia care – anything not needed (papers etc) will be sent to PNG or to Solomons.

A suggestion was made to display all old badges within a shadow frame as a way to preserve them.

2. **Orange day** – We will be establishing a roster for the year with each diocese to choose a month for an activity (but not April 25/Dec 25) and promote something related to raising awareness around domestic violence and violence against women. Please also report this through our newsletter to share with other dioceses.
3. **Safety in our organisation**
 - a. Declarations –as part of seeking justice, we will soon have on our forms in future, new questions for people to indicate if they have any matters to work through with their dioceses, if they are meeting diocesan standards, particularly if there are outstanding issues as yet unresolved within their diocese before attending any national gatherings.
 - b. Cheryl has sought clearance for this AGM event to have clergy attend and it has been granted.
 - c. Child safe, church safe program – we will look at it to adopt within our organisation. WE expect everyone to abide by their own diocesan standards, but wish to also instigate good practice for our organisation, and as such would like to adopt this program for GFS.
4. **Vice chairman** – we were able to pray for Lyn Vaak, our vice chairman, who is currently very unwell in hospital. A contingency is being prepared if she is unable to continue in her role.

Closing

By Bishop Sonia with prayers at 4.30 p.m.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2019

GFS AUSTRALIA INC

The invitation is now before you and me. God, the same God who invited Mary Elizabeth Townsend all those years ago, invites each of us to continue that walk together.

SEEK, LOVE, WALK WITH YOUR GOD

I am very happy to report that after careful consideration and deliberation to offer an extended National Meeting and AGM in January 2019, the executive felt this had been a success. Numbers were increased than in past AGM's and generally it was felt that more members had been able to engage and participate with the ongoing work of the executive. We are reminded that as such we were tasked with

1. *we will be clear about our vision and purpose*
2. *we will reimagine and reform our governance*
3. *We will develop strategies to share our vision and work with others.*

We encourage all Dioceses and members to work with the executive and each other in this time of change."

At the 2019 meeting we were able to share with those present and then via electronic means all members, the offering of a new Vision and Purpose. These were generally well received, and we agreed to provide further materials to expand this work at a diocesan level as well as promoting GFS in the local community.

To this end we have been able to produce some postcards displaying this new vision and purpose. Many dioceses have already taken up the opportunity to use them to promote GFS locally at events such as Diocesan Synods and church based celebratory events. We sincerely thank all diocese who undertook to present this new focus back at their Diocesan level and then followed up by sending in their feedback, to demonstrate how their Diocese were already at work fulfilling that vision and purpose.

Of course, part of that vision and purpose is to ensure safe places for ministry and we have found ourselves responding to the recommendations from the recent Royal Commission. Thank you to all those who assisted with our investigation into what was happening at Diocesan level. As a result of this, along with discussion with members of the Redress Scheme we advised you that we, as GFS Australia would be registering with the Redress Scheme. For those who have also begun this process you will know it is a long and complex process so you can expect to continue to be hearing from us asking for your continued help in collecting information before we can register.

Early in the year I was contacted by Helen Petering who advised that she had had a conversation with the Ministry Development Officer, of the Northern Territory Diocese, the Rev Kate Beer. This facilitated a flurry of communications between Helen, Rev'd Kate and the National Executive and it was decided we would offer support to Helen if she were able to be available for a scoping visit to the NT. We thank Jenny Buckby also for her assistance with information from previous GFS investigations and visits. All agreeing but that we would trust the process to those on the ground to advise process and timing. We thank Helen for her willingness to again offer her considerable experience, expertise and time to attend this trip. Unfortunately, it was not to come to fruition this year, but we are hopeful this is a case of not happening, but rather, not yet.

Last year I was able to report that unfortunately Lyn Vaak, our Vice President, had been diagnosed with chlorosis of the liver and would need to relocate to be close to family. She did manage this and went to live in the Newcastle Diocese where she was able also to be visited on occasions by our National Chaplain, Bp Sonia. I know this was encouraging for her. We sent many letters, cards and flowers and I was personally able to speak with Lyn not long before her death on June 1st. We were able to extend our condolences and blessings of comfort to both Lyn's family, both personal and GFS when I was privileged to attend her funeral in her home church of St Pauls in Emu Plains. The loss of Lyn has been keenly felt by each member of GFS but none more so than the Sydney members.

I would personally like to thank all Sydney members who both participated in the day of celebration of Lyn's life. Especially Tania Brown who expressed so very eloquently the thoughts and love for Lyn of so many at that time. I also thank those who took time out to speak with me of their concerns and hopes and dreams into the future. Finally, I would like to thank those responsible for assisting me with getting to and from the venue, Lyn Gaul and whoever that mystery man was?

I thank all those from Sydney for their persistence in these difficult times and our continued prayers remain with you all. We continue to offer our support to them as they strive to regroup.

We have continued to meet more regularly via "Zoom" and this seems generally to be working well. It has allowed us a much more regular time to share and discuss business as well as connect with each other offering 9 meetings this year alone. Thank you to Noeleen who organises the link for us. We have had a few interesting meetings with people sitting in cars outside shopping centres to others travelling in cars along far reaching coastal areas of Australia. We always begin with a weather report and are reminded of the great expanse that is our country. We intend to keep this form of meeting going and have often commented on how it has greatly lowered costs and increased regular business time. Something though that needs to be considered, in terms of governance and the opportunity to bring about change sooner than in the past.

I mentioned last annual report that whilst this form of meeting provides a number of advantages, we all agree it cannot replace face to face opportunities to meet, discuss and fellowship. Which has brought us to again encourage as many as possible to be at this now extended annual meeting and AGM.

I have heard rumbles throughout this year about no Mid-Term Conference being held. I believe we were responding to the many who had indicated that the very reason that this Conference had been set up; National Training, no longer existed to the same extent. Indeed, with more recent challenges within our National Church and State laws governing many of our rules of conduct and their dependence on Diocesan based regulations it is difficult to find common national ground.

The current organisation to two extended National AGM meetings, and then the National Council, along with the chance to attend the World Council provides a number of face to face opportunities. It maybe that into the future this triennial National Council may become another annual AGM if decisions are to be considered about changes in terms of office.

I am very happy to report that currently we have 24 Australian Members registered to attend World Council 2020 in South Africa. I believe this demonstrates the strength of our world ties and our ability to visage ourselves as a global organisation.

We certainly are being targeted as one, as I received an invitation from our World President to attend a UIA (Union of International Associations) International Conference in Thailand, in September, as a representative of GFS to join a committee to focus on "Why a civil society is important to the World?" Unfortunately, the lead time was very short and so in this case not possible, but in making our apology we have been assured that we would be welcome into the future.

Amongst our WC group we are delighted to have our elected Junior Delegate, Miss Stephanie Stewart, whom will be commissioned at this National Event. We were also blest to be able to offer some support to a second junior member, Miss Emily Rushby, so we could encourage further participation at the younger end of the Council. We note at this time also the changed conditions for the junior delegate reflecting feedback that the previous term was difficult for young people to be involved in.

I was again able to travel to PNG along with Canon Val Gribble and Rev'd Sue Wilson to complete ongoing training in that area. We are always treated like royalty and this time we were overwhelmed by the crowd of hundreds of young women who greeted us on our arrival at GFS Haus in Popondetta. I hope you have all been able to read our extensive report about the whole of our trip including some of our cares and concerns for the future of GFS PNG. Although I am very happy to also report that we believe we have been able to encourage three members to attend the upcoming World Council.

We again also give thanks to those who continue to travel to the Solomon Islands and ensure ministry there is being supported. We all hope to meet up with their representative members at World Council also. We're also sure Helen Petering will be looking forward to hopefully meeting up with some of those she connected with during her time of travel.

Apart from all this travel we have been able to collect and produce 4 National Newsletters and also contribute to four World Newsletters also, many of which have exhibited the efforts of our various groups throughout the country as they support Orange Day for Domestic Violence Awareness. This was agreed to in support of a World Council Motion and is kept throughout all GFS countries in the world. I know many of you enjoyed receiving this years World Day of Prayer Service and sharing it within your diocese.

There has been of course the day to day running of National Matters, approval of spending and transfers of money related to National and World Travel and Projects.

We have all experienced a very full year with many ups and downs. We have grieved with our Sydney members at the loss of Lyn Vaak, and with our New Zealand, and Sri Lankan sisters in their very tragic community losses. This is of course on going as many critical natural crises continue across our vast nation. We continue to pray for all in drought, fire and of course upcoming cyclone season. Our strength lies in our close relationships, bearing one another's burdens. Thank you one and all for your continued prayer support

throughout 2019. I trust that we will continue to work together to be inspired to creatively respond to all God chooses to place before us.

My very special and sincere thanks go to each and every member who has supported us in prayer, in voice, in doing and in being throughout this past year. My most earnest thanks go to all members of the executive for their willingness to continue to serve each of you, by attending meetings, by participating and by making things happen in between. No one has worked harder than Julie Smith as secretary. She may have retired but we have kept her very busy. We congratulate her and Ian on their engagement and eagerly await celebrating their big day with them. Guess, we'd better give you a short break for a honeymoon!

May we continue to Seek Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with our God and in doing so Bear one another's Burdens, fulfilling the law of Christ.

Love and prayers,

Cheryl

Reverend Cheryl Selvage, GFS Australia President

TREASURER'S REPORT TO AGM 2020

Following is the Audited report for GFS Australia Inc. for the year ended 31 October 2019.

I continue to use Quickbooks as the software for GFS Australia accounts. This is an online system which is easily accessed and we are able to import our bank statements directly which makes life easier.

We continue to use the ANZ as our bank with the Diocese of Rockhampton for the World monies for greater interest earning. We will continue to keep an ANZ account for World monies as we are holding some project monies here in Australia for South Africa and it is easier to do overseas transactions through this account. Val Gribble, Cheryl Selvage and the Treasurer remain the signatories on these accounts.

We have also opened up 3 Term Deposit Accounts to try and earn some higher interest for the Kathleen Bright Parker Fund, General Investment Account and the Grants Account.

A few points to note on the financial statements/budget:

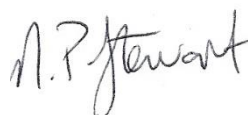
- Membership was down from last year – although not dramatically
- Interest of course is not fantastic but better than budgeted for
- No money was expended for MU meeting, telephone/internet, archives, Chairman/Chaplain expenses, Consumer Affairs Vic (we do no need to report to them anymore, just ACNC) or accommodation for Exec meetings as this was billeted last year.
- There was an expenditure of \$4,000+ for badges for GFS Australia and the Solomons and PNG as well as postcards which are part of the marketing we spoke of at the NC in Newcastle
- There was a donation of over \$19,000 to the Kathleen Bright Parker Fund from the estate of Pat Byron
- Overall we have come in well under budget
- The GFS World Accounts have been included in our audit as always and figures are included in the GFS Australia accounts.
- Insurance premiums have actually come in lower than last year despite a concern of major rises – this did seem to be only for those having properties.
- We have \$7,000 plus in the account of donations for the Sri Lanka World Project
- There have been a number of donations to PNG and World Accounts from GFS Diocese around Australia, thank you for your generosity

Many thanks go to Andy who does our Audit and for helping me out and correcting things that are in the wrong place!

Thanks also to Cheryl and the rest of the Executive for being supportive to me during the year.

With blessings

Noeleen Stewart
Treasurer, GFS Australia Inc.



DIOCESE OF BALLARAT

DIOCESAN CHAIRMAN WENDY VEAL

DIOCESAN SECRETARY NATHALIE STEVENS

DIOCESAN TREASURER HELEN FARNELL

GFS in the Ballarat Diocese turned 138 this year. The BISHOP is President of our Society and our CHAPLAIN is Fr. Chris Keast. Our Executive Committee of twelve deals with business and finances and organises our four Townsend days held each year. Financial members are also able to attend these meetings. The Annual meeting is held in February.

Our Townsend group of 50 includes 4 honorary male members who have supported GFS over many years. Our program this year-

APRIL- Mrs. Pauline Hammond spoke on her work with "Very Special Kid's". A stall held on this day raised funds for her organisation.

JULY- Fr. Chris Keast gave a very academic and interesting insight into "The Lord's Prayer".

SEPTEMBER- We visited the Royal Freemasons Home for a tour and afternoon tea with the Residents.

NOVEMBER- Our annual end of year "Theatre Luncheon" with film, luncheon, visit from Father Christmas, Christmas message from our Chaplain, seasonal music, exchange of gifts and a collection for Anglicare for those less fortunate.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER service was held on 29th.September in conjunction with Deanery Evensong at Holy Trinity Church. Fr. Chris preaching, members doing readings and intercessory prayers.

David Charles Turner was on the organ. A supper of soup, sandwiches, cakes and slices, provided by GFS and Holy Trinity was a joyful occasion.

NATIONAL AGM in January was attended by Wendy Veal and Heather Turner.

The STATE meeting was cancelled.

Cards were sent and posies delivered to unwell members and those in Residential care.

Many TOILETRIES delivered to WRISC and PELOW HOUSE.

FINANCIAL DONATIONS have been made to – GFS WORLD PROJECT- Educating girls in Sri Lanka, ACT FOR PEACE-Educating girls in Pakistan, PNG, RFDS, KORUS PLUS and ABM projects in VANUATU and KENYA.

Busy hands of members have provided many rugs, twiddle muffs, bed socks, beanies, children's warm clothes and other items. We have supported Church fairs, coffee parties, mannequin parades (provided 4 mannequins) and sister church functions. Provided prayerful support to those sick and in crisis.

We encourage and welcome new members.

In God's Grace.

Nathalie Stevens, Secretary

Wendy Veal, Chairman

DIOCESE OF BRISBANE

DIOCESAN CHAIRMAN LESLEY BRIGGS

DIOCESAN SECRETARY MARGARET HUMPHRIES

DIOCESAN TREASURER ROSLYN LUMSDEN

Highs:

Hosting the GFS National AGM in Brisbane in January.

The Brisbane GFS AGM in March where our Guest Speaker was The Reverend Lin Chew, the Chaplain from Hummingbird House, a Hospice for children. We had chosen Hummingbird House as our 2019 Diocesan Project, so we were able to present Lin with a cheque for \$5000 at the AGM and hear about her work.

We removed the position of Activities Coordinator, as our Office Secretary, Margaret, arranges all of our activities for us. We extended the position of Promotions Officer to be Promotions/I.T. Officer, as most of the promoting of events is done online via our web site.

Our Southside Townsend Group is flourishing, and members meet bi-monthly on a rotation basis in the homes of its members. We collect books for Hummingbird House and bring them along to each meeting. This is a social group to enable past leaders to keep in touch and socialise together.

Lows:

The Townsend Headquarters Group is dwindling fast as members are either moving into Nursing Homes or going home to be with the Lord.

Joys:

The Grants Program is being used well. Grants of \$500 are given to parishes who apply that have an ongoing Children's/Youth Group, and Grants of up to \$1500 are available to run a "One Off" Event such as a Holiday Program, Camp, Community Outreach Event or a Christmas/Easter Event. We continue to support AYCF (Anglican Youth Children and Families) with Grants of \$2000 for each of their three Ichthus Camps for Children and Youth in the Diocese.

Our two Outreach Events, where past and present members get together, continue to be well supported and popular. In May we had a tour of QPAC (Queensland Performing Arts Centre) and found it very interesting to see what goes on Backstage and just how huge it is. In September we held the GFS World Day of Prayer Service at St James, Kelvin Grove followed by lunch at the Newmarket Hotel.

We continue to support the 'Home-away-from-Homelessness' Women's Hostel by collecting toiletries and cleaning products. Our 'Orange Day' saw us fill a number of orange laundry baskets with enough products to start a small shop! GFS members were invited to the Opening and Blessing of the new Amanda Flynn Play and Grow Centre and refurbished Young Women and Children Supported Accommodation Program at their facility in Toowong.

It is a joy that so many members are committed to attend our meetings and hold positions on the Diocesan Council and Executive. My sincere thanks go to all of these people for their dedicated and faithful commitment to GFS Brisbane.

Future Plans:

To finalise our new Constitution and have it ready to be ratified at our next AGM in March 2020. Our solicitor Paul Paxton-Hall has worked tirelessly, consulting with GFS, the Diocesan solicitor and the Diocesan General Manager's Office, to get this finalised and to make sure that our investments are protected with a Trust clause to ensure that our money will continue to be used for Children's/Youth Ministry well into the future when we are no longer around to do it ourselves.

It gives me pleasure to present to GFS Australia our report for 2019.
Lesley Briggs (GFS Brisbane Chairman)



Orange Day in Brisbane.. Members with guest speaker Felicity Lewis and members holding boxes of toiletries and cleaning items for the Anglicare, Home-away-from-Homelessness Project.



GFS Brisbane Diocesan Project recipient:
The Reverend Lin Chew,
Chaplain of Hummingbird House
(Children's Hospice) with Lesley Briggs
and Lesley Gee.



GFS Brisbane Outreach Group members
toured the Backstage of QPAC –
Queensland Performing Arts Centre in
May 2019. Here we are in the Artist's
Dressing/Makeup Room.

DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

CHAIRMAN: DEBRA WADESON

SECRETARY/TREASURER: LEANNE KAPETANOVSKI

Introduction

GFS Melbourne Inc. strives to steward its finances and resources responsibly. We aim to nurture, encourage, and support others in the love of Christ through their ministries with a focus on children, youth, and their families.

Annual Highlights

GFS Australia Inc. AGM: This year began with two Melbourne members attending this event which was held in Brisbane.

Parish Support Packages: Helen Petering, our Liaison Officer, provides guidance and support for the Parishes through monitoring progress in these new ministries.

Since the introduction of this initiative in 2015, 17 Parishes (listed below) are benefitting in a positive way.

Completed Packages:

City On A Hill, Geelong, Parish of Croydon Hills & Wonga Park, Merri Creek, St. Matthew's, Endeavour Hills, St. Timothy's, Bulleen, St. Stephen's, Warrandyte.

Current Packages:

Brimbank, St. Mary's, Sunbury, Parish of Box Hill, St. Martin's, Belgrave Heights, Mornington & Mt. Martha Parish, St. Augustine's, Moreland, Church of Epiphany, Hoppers Crossing, All Saints, Kooyong, St. Catharine's, Caulfield South, St. Luke's, Cockatoo, Christ Church, Hawthorn.

It is a privilege to witness the growth in ministry to children and their families through the valuable financial support GFS Melbourne Inc. gladly provides.

An excellent article on the progress of children's and family ministry in the Parish of St. Augustine's Moreland was published in the June edition of The Melbourne Anglican. This provided positive publicity as we invited applications for packages in 2020.

The Liaison Officer's Support Committee met in July and selected the following 3 applications.

- Redemption Church, Craigieburn
- St. Stephen's, Gardenvale
- St. Mark's, Yarraville

GFS Branch: GFS at St. Alfred's, Blackburn North, continues to flourish, and presents an exciting and scriptural programme which attracts not only girls from Parish families, but also from the local community. Thanks be to God.

Pat Franklin Foundation: The trustees of the PFF have been kept busy throughout 2019, processing many applications for 2020 World Council funding, as well as for other training events. The foundation's funds were boosted this year, with donations, which were gratefully received by the trustees.

Summary

It is our continued prayer that new and existing ministries will achieve growth and God's guidance in sharing the Good News of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Debra Wadeson Chairman, GFS Melbourne Inc.

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

CHAIRMAN: GAIL ORCHARD

As with other Diocese Newcastle is facing a change in direction of its membership. We have a group of GFS members and leaders who are no longer involved in active branch meetings and in fact no branches operating within the Diocese. These ladies operate as a Townsend group and aim to meet on a semi regular basis throughout the year. This group supports, prayerfully and financially the work of GFS worldwide along with local projects to assist.

The year here in Newcastle has been one of trying to organize activities and having to cancel them later due to lack of members being able to attend. We only managed to have two meetings this year despite our best efforts. We have had both Gail and Rosemary have knee replacements with other members being on the long-term list for hospital stay and then extended recuperation periods. Thankfully at last check most of the ladies are well at present. We also lost one of our supportive members when she and her husband relocated to a nursing home in Sydney close to family members. It was sad to see her go but we have heard from her since letting us know that they are settled in.

Our main fund raising for the year in the Diocese has for a long time been our luncheon at the Kurri Kurri TAFE. We had a pleasant day and a lot of our members came along to help us raise money for our local women's refuge. The money raised at this event was handed over after our luncheon by Rosemary and Trevor along with some toiletries also donated by the members.

We will see what happens in 2020 with the membership and where we go from this point in continuing to provide fellowship for these dedicated ladies. Our plan is to have Sonia, Nicole and myself to be present at the AGM in January, 2020.

Gail Orchard, Newcastle GFS Diocesan Chairman

DIOCESE OF PERTH

CHAIRMAN : REVEREND JOSIE STEYTLER

SECRETARY: ALEXANDER TAYLOR

TREASURER: NOELEEN STEWART

During 2019 GFS Inc Perth has continued to build friendships, support our local communities, and help people connect with and develop their relationship with God.

Fieldwork

Noeleen continues to offer a wonderful ministry for children in the diocese to attend Holiday Clubs in the city and rural areas. It is always uplifting to hear how the children respond and are touched by the Christian stories and activities that Noeleen has put together. Noeleen has also been producing some wonderful posts to GFS history in Perth on Facebook. If you haven't seen them yet do yourself a favour and have a look.

Blessed To Be A Blessing

On 14th September we held our second 'Blessed to be a Blessing' dinner/dance at the Duxton Hotel; members of GFS were joined with people from St Bart's, Collective Hope, and the Good Sammy's. It is our way to thank some of those unsung heroes who give of themselves day-in-day-out, as well as offer others the opportunity to enjoy a special evening, that we know from last year, will stay in their memory.

Gain and Retain

GFS received a grant from Hancock Creative and started a 12-month social-media education program in December 2018. This intensive and interactive program involves monthly one-on-one sessions with mentors, quarterly training days and monthly webinars. It is teaching us how to tell our story and engage with those who may never have heard of GFS. The program has produced some incredible results over its four-year history.

Governance

Over the last 12 months we have –

- Undertaken training in cyber security and financial reporting.
- Had a new valuation undertaken for the Adelaide Terrace property.
- Produced a 5-year Business Plan, which members have been able to discuss, give input to, and formally accept.
- Held a General Meeting for members to discuss and vote on the future of Townsend Lodge. Members voted unanimously to sell the building. Selling the property was first discussed in 2006.
- Had the Certificate of Title on the Adelaide Terrace property transferred into the name of GFS.
- Discovered our WHY and what we believe.
- Begun having regular Planning meetings for our new centre and endeavours.

Townsend Lodge

In March 2019 we have been operating the Lodge for 2 years. We will continue running the Lodge until the end of March 2020. The past year has seen an improvement in occupancy and income. The building is beautifully clean (passed the recent City of Perth inspection) and running smoothly. However, the building is old and requires more and more maintenance. We know we will not be able to compete with the new student accommodation (2,500 beds) that are coming onboard in Perth over the next couple of years, they will offer air conditioning and ensuite. We have already had some Student Accommodation agencies say they will not use our premise in 2020. A decision was made by the

members at a General Meeting to sell the property. We accepted an offer on the property, this is due to settle on 31st January 2020. We are now in the process of looking for a new building to become our new centre hub.

iCapisce Pty Ltd

Over the last 12 months a sum of more than \$115,000 has been invested to enhance the platform's user interface and splash screens. A specialist UI/UX expert made significant simplifications to core screens and navigation processes. It is now even easier to add topics, classes, study groups and users. Three videos have been produced explaining how the learning method iCapisce uses is based on Cognitive Load Theory (these can be viewed either on YouTube or the iCapisce website). The website is live and can be viewed here - <http://demo.icapisce.com> The improvements made over the last 12 months have made the platform significantly more attractive to a commercialisation investor/buyer. The Directors are now actively seeking an appropriate investor to commercialise the platform.

GFS Perth is in a transition stage as we move into new areas of ministry. It is an exciting and challenging time. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of GFS Perth to thank all those who have undertaken any ministry within GFS over the past year. We are part of an amazing organization that spans our globe. GFS has always sought to meet the current needs within the community whilst creating spaces where friendships can flourish, lasting connections be made, and everyone is accepted for who they are in a loving Christian environment. It's a pretty awesome combination that's stood the test of time.

The Reverend Josie Steytler Chairman, GFS Inc Perth

DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON, CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

CO-ORDINATOR/SECRETARY: CANON VAL GRIBBLE

GFS in this Diocese is, like others no doubt, is being challenged by an ageing membership and the difficulty in finding leadership for positions. Many of our adult members are also either in care or frail and unable to come to GFS events.

The only GFS children's group in the diocese was at All Saints but this became a Kids Club in 2019. It was planned that this group would still come under the banner of GFS but that link has not been successful with no commitment to the agreement made between the parish and GFS, and this group no longer sits under the GFS banner. We are most grateful that Pam Guy and Jacqui Keily still intend to assist with this group.

We were saddened at the resignation of our chaplain of many years, The Revd Narelle Kidson, and thank her for her dedication to GFS. Narelle has also resigned as a member of GFS Australia.

The Townsend group is not led by a GFS member and does not report to our diocesan structure. That leaves a dedicated group of adult members. On the Bishop's advice at our Annual meeting we will continue as a formal GFS group as long as we feel able. However there is no one willing to take over the leadership of the group and this will be discussed again at our 2020 annual meeting.



Orange ladies

We held our usual successful Afternoon Tea in May using the Orange theme. We were able to gift \$670 to Anglicare for use to assist in domestic violence situations.

Sadly, our planned Fellowship weekend was cancelled due to small numbers.

We held the World Day of Prayer service and Adult Luncheon at our home. A number of MU members attended to support us. GFS has a

non voting seat on the MU Diocesan Council in this diocese and we work well together. MU recently held their annual meeting and had no nominations for either President or Secretary so we are very much in the same mode.

Despite the challenges we intend to continue to work as an adult group, to prayerfully and financially support our many projects, both worldwide and national.

(Canon) Val Gribble
GFS Coordinator, Anglican Church CQ.

DIOCESE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CHAIRMAN: MRS JANICE DOYLE

TREASURER: MISS CHRISTINE BARBER

SECRETARY: MISS KAREN FAGAN

MINUTE SECRETARY: MRS KERYN ALLEN

I am pleased to present the 2019 Annual Report for the Girls' Friendly Society (South Australia) Inc.

The Executive Committee for 2019 was:-

Chairman – Mrs Janice Doyle

Secretary - Miss Karen Fagen

Treasurer – Miss Christine Barber

Minute Secretary – Mrs Keryn Allen

Co-opted – Mrs June Hillier

The GFS Executive met regularly and continual looked for ways GFS can assist ways to work with children and families in the Province of South Australia. We continue to support children and family ministries financially when requested.

Two very successful luncheons were held where former leaders met together.

The GFS Australian EXecutive are developing ideas for each diocese to adopt in their 'GFS in Australia – Where to from Here?' program.

GFS in South Australia continues to be part of the Australian and Worldwide organisation.

Networking

Miss C Barber liaises with MU and the Australian Church Women South Australia on behalf of GFS.

GFS continues to be affiliated with the National Council of Women and the Australian Church Women.

The Future

We look forward to 2020 when we celebrate 140 years of GFS in South Australia.

'Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ'

Janice Doyle, Chairman

DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

CHAIRMAN - VACANT
SECRETARY - TANIA BROWN
TREASURER - VACANT

VICE CHAIRMAN - LEONIE ARMOUR
ACTING TREASURER - CHERYL BUCHANAN

Highlights -AGM - Annual report and the budget were presented and accepted. There was no one nominated for either of the positions of Chairman or Treasurer. It was moved that the meeting continues to place its confidence in the Board of Management to continue directing the organisation until someone is found to fill each of these roles. The meeting was updated with some of the recommendations from the Child Sexual Abuse Royal Commission and the creation of the National Redress Scheme and how GFS Sydney is planning to address these issues. The new Strategic plan for 2019-2021 was presented and accepted. At the end of the meeting Lyn Vaak was presented with Life Membership of GFS Sydney for exceptional service on all levels of GFS. A Re-Dedication Service was held to offer ourselves to the work of Jesus Christ for the coming year.

Bi-monthly prayer meetings – These meetings have been held regularly and attended through the year by a group of dedicated Townsend members and board members. Main highlight would have been the Orange day in June.

History Day - On the 18th July, a GFS History Day was held at Dawn Ferguson's home. Between all the attendees there was over 100 years of GFS institutional memory. The GFS motto song was the first topic of discussion. The current tune has been used since the 1960's. During this discussion, the contributions of Gaye McDonald were noted. Several of those present told anecdotes of her musical talent and dedication to GFS. Among other items of memorabilia was a 1970's GFS Australia poster, with photographs taken at Sydney Town Hall. The consensus was that the girls pictured were from the Castle Hill branch. Several attendees brought badges. Another topic of discussion was the uniform. The white frocks and blue veils of the 1940's were replaced after the war. The post war uniform was initially designed to emulate a military uniform. During this meeting we were able to put names to many of the photographs in the GFS historical records. The History day was a resounding success. At the end of the day we all visited Dawn's fairy garden.



We all wore orange for our Orange day.

Four Women's ministry events were held

1. **Warragamba Dam Outing** - 13 members visited the Warragamba Dam Visitors Centre where we learnt the history of this remarkable structure and we were able to see through the large glass viewing window, a bird's eye view of this amazing achievement. Following our visit to the Dam we gathered together for lunch at the Warragamba Workers Club.

2. **Darling Harbour Outing** - After meeting and enjoying morning tea together the group wandered around the harbour side taking in the massive changes to the area and the skyline of the city. The food court provided a range of food choices that meet the needs of those seeking smaller and lighter options. We each found delightful lunch meals and were not disappointed.

3. **World Day of Prayer Service and lunch** - Our World Day of Prayer Service in October which incorporated the World Day of Prayer Service put together by GFS Rwanda. It was held at Beverly Hills Anglican Church and during morning tea we sorted through items suitable for the 'Share the Dignity' charity and placed them in handbags donated by our members. Afterwards enjoyed a delicious lunch and catch up with friends.

4. **Christmas Celebration Lunch** - We will end the year on the 14th December with our annual Christmas Celebration Lunch. It will be a great time of fun, fellowship and food.

2019 Sydney Girls' Camp - From 1st to 3rd October, we held the Sydney Girls Camp with 26 girls and 9 adults attending and 3 other adults coming to help day only. The study theme for the camp was "Light in A Dark World." We explored how we live in a dark world but can come into the light with Jesus as our friend. Camp had all the features of a GREAT camp; fun, games, activities, singing, dancing and of course food! Activities included outdoor games time, orienteering, bushwalking, bush cooking and craft. One evening was spent dancing to Bush dance music and the other was a Star Gazing extravaganza. We were fortunate that the clouds cleared, and the moon and stars were clearly visible. Our time at camp was concluded with an outdoor Church Service in the open-air Chapel. Many girls and leaders assisted with this service as we thanked God for his blessings on us and throughout the camp. We all enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship and learning.

St John's Camden 50th Anniversary Celebrations - GFS Camden put on a fantastic celebration as they marked 50 years of faithful service to girls and young women in their area. The event was attended by past and current GFS Camden leaders and members, parishioners from St Johns Anglican Camden, many members of GFS Sydney and Sonia Roulston from the GFS Australia National Executive. The day started with a celebration service, led by Sonia, the chaplain for GFS Australia. The service was a time of thanksgiving as we celebrated God's faithfulness through Camden GFS. We enjoyed a time of reflection from past and current leaders and attendees, and of course the GFS prayer, motto and hymn. A highlight from the service involved the current senior leadership team receiving filigree badges for their service to GFS, combined they have volunteered over 100 years serving their local branch. We then enjoyed a meal together before enjoying more entertainment, reminiscing over photos, old uniforms and memories. The GFS Camden branch put in lots of effort as they performed, served and shared with us all. God is faithful, and we are thankful for the work of GFS Camden over the last 50 years.



Concerns

- A new GFS Sydney Chairman
- The position of treasurer is still vacant
- Ageing and declining membership
- Closing of Beecroft GFS Branch after over 50 years of operation
- Dealing with the legal information required as a participating member of the Anglican representative National Redress Scheme Limited
- Lyn Vaak passed away in June 2019
- Tania Brown's accident- breaking left ankle and leg and badly spraining right ankle- is looking at a long recovery 6-9 months.

Some plans ahead

- **Our Strategic Plan** for 2019-2021 was passed at our AGM. Now we need to implement the various objectives with in it.
- Planning our celebration in 2020 of **140 years of GFS** in Sydney NSW.

Deidree Noss on behalf of Board of Management, Sydney GFS

DIOCESE OF TASMANIA

DIOCESAN CHAIRMAN: JULIE SMITH

DIOCESAN SECRETARY/ TREASURER: BARBARA PHILLIPS

Highs

Our fellowship and continuing faithfulness of our members is our reason for celebration. The leadership of Betty Dean as she continues in a group that began 35 years ago is a real example of faithfulness. The Townsend group celebrated the 35th year with a luncheon for members. A bookmark celebrating this milestone was given to every participant.

The Townsend group continues to meet 6 times a year. The first meeting in February was a time to meet with everyone and share news together. The annual meeting in April is our next gathering, supporting the business side of our group. In June we heard from a youth worker in a local parish whom we were hoping to support. Our August meeting celebrated our 35 years. In October we held our World Day of Prayer service and had our focus on Orange Day when we were able to collect toiletries to go towards the “Share the Dignity” project helping women in need through circumstances such as homelessness or leaving home due to domestic violence. In November we were also able to gather for a short service of thanksgiving for Julie’s 20 years as Chairman in Tasmania. Our final gathering in November was at a restaurant where we also were able to raise \$100 which was given to assist those affected by the fires in NSW/Qld.

Lows

The main concern for our year has been the National Redress Scheme and our participation within this. We sought out advice and eventually decided upon joining, with some very strict conditions set by the Diocese, under their listing with the Anglican National Redress Scheme Limited. The main restriction has been in our ability to be generous in our giving towards many different projects – within Tasmania and within GFS. This is a huge loss to us and questions our very core of being good stewards. We are hopeful of no claims coming forward and being able to resume our giving program in the fulness of time.

Our aging group is of concern as we welcome just a few new members over the years and all our members are now eligible for a Seniors Card! Looking to our future has been a concern but without a viable solution or plan in place.

Plans

We have our 6 dates set for 2020 and some ideas for activities (thinking ahead to World Council).

We need to reconsider our financial arrangements and consider who and how to best give support in the coming year.

Our members in the north of the state have few opportunities to meet together and we are planning a visit to them at some stage in 2020.

Julie Smith Chairman GFS Tasmania

REPORT ON VISIT TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA GFS AUSTRALIA TEAM OCTOBER 2019

This report is prepared by the usual three members of GFS Australia who form the training team for Papua New Guinea. The Revd Canon Cheryl Selvage, The Revd Sue Wilson and Canon Val Gribble. I will comment mainly on the management of the visit as that is my major responsibility. I will also offer some of my comments on experiences.

The visit was from Friday October 4 to Sunday October 13. We followed the same timing as last year, one training day in Port Moresby, Travel to Popondetta on Sunday 5, return to Port Moresby on Thursday 10 with two further training days in Port Moresby.

As usual Corporate Transport provided our travel within Port Moresby free of charge and as always looked after us very well. This is a major gift to GFS as contracting secure transport is a high expense and if we had to pay for this ourselves our trips would be quite different. Cheryl and Sue stayed at Mapang Missionary Home and I stayed with my son and his family while we were in Port Moresby. We stay at GFS Haus, of course, in Popondetta.

We worshipped at St John's Cathedral in Port Moresby on both Sundays as we feel so welcome there and we used their hall for our training on the first Saturday. We know the Dean so well. Fr Peter Moi was the Principal of Newton Theological College in Popondetta where some of our training was conducted in his time there.

This was an expensive visit. Domestic airfares within PNG are increasing rapidly. Food prices are increasing. We were able to meet the weight allowance (30 kg for Cheryl and Sue and 42 kg for me) but still had to leave items behind. But we had to pay excess for our travel to Popondetta where we are only allowed 16 kg. As I took up two sewing machines and we all had sewing materials etc., for Port Moresby we were able to leave a lot at my son's unit.

Friends and parishes are so generous. The cost of the two sewing machines was from a small gift that is given to me each month by a parishioner. Sue and Cheryl were also given money and many of the requirements for our sewing program and crafts.

GFS Haus continues to be a major problem. The Haus was flooded earlier this year during a huge storm. This means many of the new tiles are lifting or cracking. The fridge we purchased only a year ago is not cooling properly and I have emailed the company and asked for some action (no response to date) The stove we purchased at the same time has not been used as there were no funds to purchase the gas cylinders and to pay for the gas used. To use the toilet, we had to turn on the water tap each time we used it as the pipes are leaking badly. We just do not have the funds (and it is time that the members took some responsibility) to maintain GFS Haus.

There has actually been a drought in Popondetta. Hard for us to imagine but we understand it did create water problems. Many people came to GFS Haus to use water and it is culturally difficult to refuse. Therefore, there was a rather large water account and the officer from the Water Board was coming to cut off the water as soon as we left. GFS paid

half the account with assistance with the other half from a team member. We always leave money for our use of electricity and water and we pay for the food that is cooked for us. Because of the very large group of people at this year's World Day of Prayer celebrations in Popondetta we also provided money when their food supplies ran out. (Some had walked one night and two days from mountain parishes – carrying their food supplies, cooking utensils and often their children to the gathering).

We are very grateful to the band of members who look after us, cook for us, do our washing, etc. The President of GFS, Vivian Jiriga is working so hard to increase membership and has travelled with a MU representative to most parishes to talk about GFS. And by travelling we usually mean walking!

Our executives' decision to gift some of the new Australian membership badges to both PNG and Melanesia was met with sincere thanks. They are aware that once the allocated number is used, they will be required to pay for further badges.

I am leaving Cheryl and Sue to report on the actual training, but I am sure they will say that we need to be firmer with the planning we make (usually following requests from executives in Port Moresby and Popondetta). This time the program was heavily shortened in Port Moresby and the growth in Popondetta purposely not told to us so we would be surprised when a couple of hundred young girls appeared from the back of GFS Haus and came forward in singing and dancing. It was a wonderful experience, but I guess our planning minds were quickly thinking we haven't planned for this number!

So, there has been growth, gradual growth in Port Moresby, huge growth in Popondetta. The World Day of Prayer in Popondetta was a big affair and very moving.

Girika Sanata, the Coordinator of GFS in Port Moresby diocese, came to Popondetta with us. She will be the Senior Delegate for PNG to World Council next year. This was an opportunity for her to see GFS at work in Popondetta diocese. We did have to overcome some misunderstanding and dissatisfaction with the fact that the Senior Delegate would not be from Popondetta but Cheryl, Sue and I had managed an expression of interest process and Girika was the standout applicant.

I, personally, found the visit a little more exhausting this year and the body doesn't move so quickly now! I am happy to remain organising the visits but perhaps my physical visits are coming to an end. I know I say that often, but it is time to consider the future. My visits now include talks in Popondetta and Port Moresby on behalf of Rockhampton diocese as our diocese supports both areas and it is useful for me to report back to our Bishop in Council. No doubt PNG support will be on our agenda at our Annual meeting in January.

On behalf of GFS Australia thank you once again to Cheryl and Sue. Amidst their very busy life they put so much into the planning of the training sessions and gathering the material. We feel we work well as a team. We are always uplifted by our experiences, by the faith of the people we meet and worship with. We always come home wondering about our affluent lifestyle.

We hear the words "God is Good" so often in PNG and indeed He is. **VAL GRIBBLE**

PNG REPORT 2019

We began with our usual anticipation of what this trip would bring. Cheryl and Sue had met and had their usual planning day, with a program which no doubt would be changed many times over. Little did we know! PNG is still, "The Land of the Unexpected"!

All went well for our arrival and we marvelled at how much this has changed over the years with us now applying for visas on arrival and electronic scanning gear to completely change the luggage situation. We were met by our now reliable Corporate Transport driver.

We piled ourselves and our luggage into the small bus and headed for town to organise supplies for training on Friday. This complete Sue and Cheryl were delivered to Mapang Missionary Haus and Val was dropped at her Son Phil's apartment. We settled for the evening and unpacked, repacked ready for day one training and reflected as we realised changes at the Haus also.

Saturday arrived and after our very Aussie breakfast of Vegemite and toast shared with new found friends from many nations we loaded up again and headed out to pick up Val and head to St John's Cathedral parish where we were welcomed by our provincial coordinator Girika Sanata and her team. As time passed the group formed and soon, we were able to begin our program. We ended up with some 30 of us participating. Many for the first time.

The day took in getting to know you, working on the training program and developing session plans. All seemed to take great care and enjoyed the craft, fitting to the theme of "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." We certainly had made sure all were included in God's care by the end of the day and happy that the day had shown many fruits of the past training.

Home we returned to another evening of catching up with the World visitors, Russia, America, NZ, and of course us Aussies. Then packing to head out to Popondetta when luggage must drop from 30kg to 16kg for our little flight with much texting. We arose

only to weigh bags that had somehow gained weight overnight. So, another reshuffling and hoping our national company have little to bring. We pay excess at the airport!

We are heartily welcomed at the tiny airport by our PNG family. Young ones in traditional dress presenting us with flower leis. We are so blest to have these relationships.

Little do we realise what awaits us. On arrival at the GFS Haus, what a scene to behold. Literally hundreds of young girls, women and men singing and dancing. What a home coming. Tambourines and guitars, singers and dancers, flowers and fanfare. I'm sure we have never and probably will not have again the overwhelming joy of such a welcome. The president had obviously worked hard and gathered many for this event.

Monday brought training in the Cathedral after our rock hopping river crossing. There were hundreds attending. Many from far flung places having travelled days over mountains, water and land to be with us. Of course, this means so many languages. Mostly not English. So, teaching in PNG is always a think on your feet situation. Prayer and song bridge many gaps.

It was not long before the massive group, already well warmed up by the many musicians in the group, were singing energetically. We moved from this to communication as a wide game experience. I am always greatly encouraged by the enthusiastic participation and smile at the entertainment we provide for the community who stop to watch a bunch of adults screaming

around a field. Once back inside all were divided into deanery groups ready for working on programs. This was work to further the use of the 3 year Sunday School program we had worked on for the World Project. This time we concentrated on "How we Learn," using our senses, eyes, ears, mouth and body/ movement. This seemed again to assist our varied language challenges. Moving into deanery/ parish groups we were able to see small groups working together to create new program ideas related to a theme. There was time for show and tell and many new songs were shared and learnt. The day ended with creating a GFS timeline for each parish, again as a group exercise.

Back to GFS Haus to cool down and get ready for dinner. This is always a shared experience, although this time tended to be less traditional. Getting ready for World Day of Prayer the next day was on the agenda and then tired bodies attempted sleep as the many hundreds outside under tarps sang and prayed through the night. We were woken again to singing, well did that ever stop? Rise and shine to cold showers and toast, yes yet another toaster bought and coffee. Much movement around the Haus as all was readied for heading over to the Cathedral for the actual service. Our World Day of Prayer Service including the admission of new members to GFS Popondetta and commissioning of our Senior Delegate to World Council, Girika Sonata. This did create some concern for the Popondetta GFS members.

After the service we all processed out and over to the community hut where we waited for further proceedings. This included more introductions from the many groups present, clergy, clergy wives, GFS Chaplain, MU, Sisters and the Bishop's wife, along with the hundreds of GFS members, younger girls and women. What a wonderful time we had feasting on many traditional dishes as beautifully sung in, along with fresh fruit and coconut milk to drink! No event would be complete without many welcomes and speeches, in this case to be followed by various regional groups dancing in gifts for the four honoured guests. Honoured and blessed we did feel. Truly another amazing day of fellowship, joy and love in GFS together as one worldwide family.

On Wednesday morning, as several of the various groups had had to leave and head back to school and home, the smaller group met within GFS Haus. We revisited timelines and noted how GFS has a long history in some places and only very short in others. Another opportunity for members to become presenters. It was also interesting to be able to name significant milestones and acknowledge people during these presentations. We then began work on another area of the programs, prayer. With the use of the five-finger model all present were able to learn the simple formula to create prayers for all ages, places and situations. Of course, none of this would be possible without plenty of singing which Sue so generously provides at the drop of a hat. The early part of the afternoon was set aside for a follow up Open spaces meeting with the executive present and leaders of each group. The agenda was set by those present including a review of last year's goals set after the open spaces' consultation. After a fairly slow start the meeting became more vocal but there is always the concern that many are choosing to remain silent. Minutes including a list of attendees will be made available separately.

After finishing this meeting, a little later than planned we headed downtown for a quick look around at the changing face of Popondetta township. There is much building development which seems to be stemming mainly from Chinese investment, new supermarkets and even guest rooms are appearing. We wonder how it will all be sustainable. We even made it to the newly developed craft markets. A hot walk home and thankfully the power was back on, so showers, more water and eventually dinner before an evening of creating gifts for World Council. Those present as always

made a wonderful job of creating the quickest billums you have ever seen along with colourful woven butterflies. These will be taken by Girika to World Council in South Africa where she will represent PNG GFS. More singing and dancing outside until the wee hours.

Thursday was to be a day of farewells. There were plenty as various groups began the trek home to far flung points beyond. We also welcomed Father Isaiah back to the house, as he called in to reconnect. There were many guests and friends who visited during our time of stay as word spread, The Bishop, various clergy, Diocesan personnel and old friends of GFS. All were warmly welcomed and fed and watered. GFS Haus provides such an important place for this all to happen, not to mention still being our home away from home. The Haus itself has ongoing maintenance issues. Many of which I know will be covered in Val's Report. So, as we often do, we contemplate what will become of the Haus. This combined with issues around who takes responsibility for, and ownership of, the building continues to cause some consternation.

After a beautiful, lest we say, exotic lunch of fresh fruits and coffee we readied ourselves for our farewells too. All too soon we were headed for the airport in the transport. On our arrival, Val announced she had just received a text from Air Nugni to say the flight had been cancelled until the next morning. Not Happy Jan! Val is our super organised administration support, what would we do without her! So it was back to town to sort out the whole debacle with Air Niugini and then on to the shop to purchase food for dinner and a few little extras to make the night a treat. Back again to the Haus to the surprise of our hosts! What wonderful, hosts they are too, no problems, beds remade, and we were off to showers, toast and cheese (now there's a treat) for dinner and more coffee and Oh and the Chocolate biscuit. Friday dawned and we were up and at it for a 4:30 start to make sure we are at the airport to ensure a seat on the plane. Others had similar thoughts apparently arriving from 4am! We managed a quick piece of toast, thank goodness for that toaster! There we were all goodbyes said again and loaded into the bus. Very expensive business this transport back and forth.

Finally, the doors were opened, and we all filed in to have our bags checked and tagged. Then again, another long wait for the flight to appear. It did fortunately on time, and we were off for the short trip to Port Moresby. Our faithful Corporate Transport were there to collect up, a quick whip around to Val's sons place where all our gear was stored and back off to ATS, Christ The King, where another humbling welcome awaited us by students, staff and GFS Members. Beautiful floral leis and songs of welcome not to mention the speeches. The Melanesian Brothers have a wonderful house and complex here. They kindly allowed us to use their space and electricity for our training.

That said another surprise, the group for training included grade 6 & 7 school children, their teachers, the principal and the GFS members to be commissioned Saturday. So, some forty plus people to learn how to use 2 regular and 2 small battery operated machines, in about 2 hours. Just as well we can all think on our feet. Broken into three groups and Val and Sue left to fiddle with the smaller machines, and we managed to get all to see and have a turn before we were called to lunch kindly prepared for us by the Brothers. A quick chance to finish off last minute stitching and it was again time to leave. Time was too short for such a large group and especially for younger students. I commented that what really needed to happen was a week-long teaching in much smaller groups so the foundations would be well learnt and not lost. Maybe one day I might be able to return to do just that. For now, we have to hope we have enough 'Mother's' with enough knowledge to share to get the project of making school uniforms and clothes to be able to make some money to support the feeding program begun last year. A Nobel idea.

So back we finally came for a hot shower, wash hair and a quiet sit down before checking in for dinner and getting sorted for another wonderful commissioning day tomorrow. A good night's rest and we are off again.

Our last day and we head out again to the now familiar ATS area. This time to climb the rather treacherous road/ track to the CTK school. Having made it in good time we find ourselves outside waiting with many of the day's commissioning members. When the coordinator and President arrive, we move into the Chapel where the commissioning will be held.

Certificates and list of those to be commission are produced and Cheryl hastily writes them up. Others gathered warm up with some hymn sharing. Music is the common language. 15 Candidates and members from both PNG and Australia joined to share the service and soon all had solemnly agreed to uphold all their responsibilities in membership to GFS. Each stood proudly after having received a certificate and the brand-new badge.

A few more speeches of welcome for good measure and it was photo time again. Again, we took time to hear reports from various members of the CTK group including those from Collins and Baxter regarding the development of the feeding program. Quite a remarkable undertaking for such young men. They seem to be aware of the need for both training and fundraising if this program is to succeed. There are plans for further corporate dinners and walk-a-thons. We made the track down the hill to the beautiful Brothers House again to take refreshment. Before this could happen, there was of course more giving of thanks and gifts. Sincerely referred to as some hugs and tears. We were again presented with the most humbling gifts of local items. Great thanks given all around and finally we partake of the assembled refreshment. Fruit for us please.

Time has come to say our final farewells, so many more handshakes and hugs. Our transport has arrived, and we bid all one last wave goodbye promising to see them next time. Safely returned to our respective accommodation to sort out final payments, make last purchases and repack bags yet again. No worries with weight this time. One last meal shared with international friends and we pack one last time for the return trip. Corporate Travel serve us again and we make the airport for the long wait. No problems with flights and we are restored to our homeland and families again.

We have all reflected that PNG is changing and whilst GFS membership is growing, we are now not so sure what this membership means to all its members. Sounds familiar. So we return to ponder anew our place in that emerging situation. From the PNG Membership there is no doubt in their minds that they cherish the connection with Australia and continue to ask for training. GFS Australia will need to consider if it has the resources to support this into the future.

Reverend Cheryl Selvage, Reverend Sue Wilson