

# GFS AUSTRALIA INC ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020/2021

JAN 9<sup>TH</sup> 2021



**SEEK**

justice



*Micah 6:8*

**LOVE**

mercy



**WALK**

humbly  
with  
your  
God

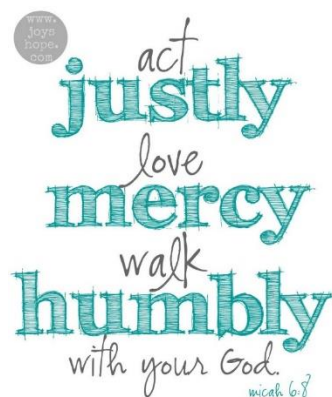


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## Agenda for Annual General Meeting of GFS Australia Inc. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021

1. Welcome
2. Opening prayers
3. Present / Apologies
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (11<sup>th</sup> January 2020)
5. Reports
  - a. President
  - b. Treasurer
  - c. Budget
  - d. Diocesan reports
  - e. Outreach reports
6. General business
  - a. National Redress Scheme
  - b. World Council and related matters
7. Any other business
8. Elections of Executive Members
9. Closing



# Annual General Meeting of GFS Australia Inc Held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 at St Francis Theological College, Brisbane

**Opening:** by Reverend Canon Cheryl Selvage

**Greetings from:**

Greetings were received from Jan McNamara, Reverend Sue Wilson, Kathy Truesdale, Tania Brown, Lauren Kitwood, Karen Fagan, Jill Breyzinski (USA), GFS in Ireland, Nathalie Stevens and June and Michael Hillier. Helen Allen (NZ) sent her love and prayers particularly as the bushfires continue to be of concern.

**Present:**

Leonie Armour, Bronwyn Barber, Di Bell, Kate Brewer, Rt Reverend Sonia Roulston, Heather Turner, Jennifer Tutin, Lesley Gee, Lesley Briggs, Clare Reed, Christine Rooney, Margaret Humphries, Wendy Veal, Leanne Kapetanovski, Julie Smith, Kevin Lumsden, Suzanne Claire, Anne Watkins, Reverend Cheryl Selvage, Jennifer Buckby, Debra Wadeson, Pam Guy, Jacqui Keily, Reverend Janet Story, Doug Story, Gail Orchard, Roslyn Lumsden, Cheryl Russell, Janice Doyle, Roslyn Tildsley, Noeleen Stewart, Stephanie Stewart, Kevin Bell, Elizabeth Petering, Helen Petering, Reverend Nicole Baldwin, Val Gribble, Reverend Josie Steytler (via Zoom),

**Apologies:** Were received from Jan McNamara and Reverend Sue Wilson, Carole Lovejoy, Mary Nichols, Jennie Young

**Minutes of Previous Meeting held at St Francis College on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

It was noted that Lyn Vaak, who held the position of Vice President, sadly passed away on 2nd June 2019 after an illness. We extend our sympathy and deepest condolences to her family and especially to her GFS family of friends, particularly in Sydney. Lyn made a significant contribution to GFS in Sydney, from running her branch at Emu Plains for many years to recently stepping up to be leading it as Chairman when one was needed in 2012. Reverend Cheryl was able to attend the funeral and was warmly welcomed and was indeed fortunate to see just how much it meant to the GFS members.

The minutes of the previous meeting were passed as an accurate record of the meeting  
Moved Gail Orchard, Seconded Lesley Briggs. **Carried.**

**Business arising from Previous Minutes of meeting 19/1/2019**

- 1. Badges:** It was noted that new badges were to be made available. At the end of the meeting these were distributed to members and to take back for their respective dioceses.

The new badge is oval shaped with a rim of aqua and the GFS logo in blue in the centre of the oval on a white background. Badges have been distributed to both Solomon Islands and PNG (noting that it no longer says "GFS Australia) This is our gift to these countries.

**Reports:**

**President's report**

Cheryl presented her report and mentioned

- Lyn Vaak's passing has left a big gap in GFS in Sydney and in our wider GFS family and we continue to keep them in our prayers as they move forward.
  - GFS scoping visit to Northern Territory – hope to build on some previous work done by Jennifer Buckby with Helen Petering liaising with Reverend Kate Beer to start the project, it was unfortunately delayed in 2019 but is hoped to start in 2020.
  - Such an advantage to have Zoom program to use to meet regularly with Executive and move ideas and discussions forward.
  - No midterm conference was held after consultation during Open Spaces being replaced by our extended AGM gatherings.
  - Junior Delegate – after having two applicants, we wanted to also encourage Emily Rushby to come to World council and have contributed to her fees with GFS Melbourne also supporting her. Stephanie Stewart is our Junior Delegate to go to World Council.
  - Overseas connections – Rwanda – Helen visited in January, PNG visit in October and ongoing connections with GFS Melanesia.
  - 4 newsletters produced, various orange day activities held throughout the dioceses, World Day of Prayer celebrated in many different forms.
  - Prayerfully support all members of GFS, and give special thanks to Executive members
- Cheryl's report was passed with acclamation.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Noeleen Stewart spoke to her report highlighting

- Now have 3 term deposits, of a 6-month term to try to improve interest rates
- Change of signatories after Lyn's death
- Kathleen Bright Parker fund received approx. \$19,000 from Pat Byron's estate
- We have been generous in our donations to world project, world travel funds

A budget for the remaining year was presented.

The audited copy of the accounts was also presented.

Moved by Noeleen Stewart, seconded by Helen Petering – with thanks to Noeleen for good management and 9 years of service to this role as Treasurer. Accepted.

### **Diocesan Reports**

Reports were received from Ballarat, Brisbane, Melbourne, Newcastle, North Queensland, Rockhampton, Perth, South Australia, Sydney, Tasmania and taken as read. Each diocese had an opportunity to further highlight something from their year.

Ballarat – productive time of knitting many different items

Brisbane – photos of events and concern about dwindling numbers of Townsend in one group

Melbourne – changes to lease of Edith Head Hall, great support of their Ministry worker

Newcastle – year that has had a lot of illness impacting meetings and events

North Queensland – used Vision postcard in diocesan event, to install a stained-glass window

Perth – have sold Townsend Lodge, recommended Hancock Creative 'change the world' project

Rockhampton – sadly no children's groups now, keep going with the Townsend group for now

South Aust – big reunion boost to many (145 years), planning further gatherings

Sydney – redress scheme time consuming, 140 years this year, missing Lyn Vaak's involvement

Tas – keen group of Townsends, concern for future of GFS with aging group

It was an encouragement to all to share reports, rather than feel the isolation of each diocese.

All reports were accepted.

## **Outreach Report**

### **PNG**

- Cheryl and Val spoke about the representatives for World council – Girika and also her son going to WC, (he is part of feeding program in Port Moresby), always welcomed, part of PNG now
- So much more that could be done – limited by time and resources but not willingness

Mentioned that Executive should review our giving, making GFS Australia a priority if possible, noting the end of GFS Brisbane to give generously to PNG project. Reminder that Grants are available for Australian diocese to use (none taken up for many years now). A discussion followed about our generosity and what support dioceses actually needed and could do to make a difference to their dwindling and aging groups. Report was accepted.

### **General Business**

1. Special Meeting
  - a. A special meeting will be called, most likely in May, to vote on the changes to our Rules and the adoption of updated rules. There will be further information shared with members as it is available.
2. National Redress Scheme
  - a. GFS Australia is going to join the ARNRSL and needs each diocese to contribute information in a timely way when it is requested. June 2020 is our deadline to join the redress scheme.

### **Any Other Business**

1. World Council
  - a. Reminder about International day – gifts required for giving away and for sale, dioceses may like to contribute
  - b. 28 people from Australia to attend, 210 in total to take part in world council to be held in Johannesburg South Africa in July 2020.
  - c. Australia is taking a motion regarding our giving to the many different funds and our regrettable inability to continue at this level of giving. Val Gribble has prepared a paper for discussion (see World Newsletter January 2020 for further details)
2. Website
  - a. To make this successful we need to have input from everyone to keep it up to date (includes changes to personnel in diocese for contact and for news and information to be put on the website.
  - b. Noeleen is working on bringing it up to date and relevant.
3. ChildSafe Programme
  - a. We will be joining this program “ChildSafe” paying for 5 sites and up to 80 people to access the training.
  - b. It offers online training in considering safe practices for children and vulnerable people with accreditation.
  - c. If a diocese has a different requirement for training, we suggest that is used. If unsure, anyone else is able to access this. More information as it becomes available.
4. Fees

- a. A question was raised by Wendy about the fees for the coming year and we were assured there were no changes to the fees for this year.
- 5. Badges
  - a. The new badges were distributed to members present and to dioceses.
- 6. Suzanne Claire's appointment to the National Executive
  - a. Suzanne Claire was duly appointed to membership of the National Executive of GFS Australia Inc. as a member until the next Annual Meeting in January 2021. Suzanne was warmly welcomed to this role.

Meeting closed at 4 pm.

Followed by a service of Holy Communion led by the Chaplain, Right Reverend Sonia Roulston including the commissioning of the Junior Delegate, Miss Stephanie Stewart and prayer for Mrs Suzanne Claire to her new position on the national Executive.



## GFS National President's Report for AGM January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

It is my pleasure to offer this annual report for GFS Australia. Need I say what a year it has been. As we met in Brisbane in January last year in person, travelling from all over the furthest points of Australia how could any of us have imagined what the year would bring. We were far too busy sorting out our GFS issues of rules to allow us a way forward and how many of us would be in South Africa in July for World Council.

Oh! how quickly it all changed. Little time had passed and planning barely begun on reworking our GFS National Rules and bylaws before COVID 19 and lockdown had become household words and our lives had changed forever. The GFS National committee was incredibly pleased we had moved to a mainly digital meeting form as borders closed and hard lockdowns began. This was one of our undertakings when we began as your national committee three years ago. We did not know just how well that would serve us and set us up to continue all business as best as could be with this very new interruption to life all around the world.

We continued to move forward with drafting new Rules and Bylaws to allow greater flexibility to terms of office and address issues that became apparent when we sadly lost Lyn Vaak as our Vice President earlier in this term.

Just before borders were tightly locked down, we in Brisbane were delighted to be able to attend and support my very wonderful secretary's (Julie Smith) wedding to Ian Somerville. What a joy to behold, in a time, as the world was sinking into illness, to have our very own Bp Sonia and myself invited to actively participate in this union. Our celebration was Tassie's disappointment as Julie and Ian made it back but not in time for their Wedding Blessing there, but now thankfully married and safely together as husband and wife.

We also found our national committee working on having GFS nationally registered for the Redress Scheme. Another action we had no real idea of when we began office in January 2018. During this year, after mammoth amounts of work by many of our branch members researching and listing past branches and GFS associations, we were able to submit our application to the scheme and have had this received, pending a letter of financial support. We have notified you as members about this, and hope that we may be able to move this forward at the AGM in January in 2021.

The year rolled on and many borders remained shut and not only did it become evident that World Council would be cancelled, but that we also may need to consider alternatives for our own National Council due in January 2021. So, whilst we beavered away at getting the Rules and Bylaws into place we began planning for our first ever World gathering via Zoom. For those who managed to stay the hours, it was an amazing gathering with plenty of participation around the world and Thembeke and her team are to be congratulated for organising and running such an event. No doubt it will go down in history.

Buoyed by the success of this international gathering by Zoom we began planning our own Special General Meeting in October to vote on our proposed Rules and Bylaws to take us forward into the new decade. Over 60 GFS members registered for the meeting and participated in the vote to



receive these new Rules and Bylaws. All are to be congratulated for their willingness to be involved, and for some even to go where they had never gone before. We completed the gathering by sharing our first ever National World Day of Prayer Service online, led by our chaplain, Bp Sonia.

We have now indicated our disappointment as a National group at not being able to support the notion of a World Council, face to face being held in South Africa in 2021. We have grave concerns for the wellbeing and safety of all our worldwide members should any face-to-face meeting be attempted at this stage. After surveying our national members, we have indicated our preference for a digital alternative, to attend to any necessary business. There will be a World Council meeting of leaders to be held by Thembeke on the 16<sup>th</sup> January when decisions will be made. Interestingly, this timing along with our own AGM, has again placed us in tune with the unprecedented.

Circumstances, which will again, I believe, require us as a National Team, to ensure safe passage for our Junior Delegate. We have a plan, as always.

When I began this three-year appointment as GFS National President I had no idea how many firsts we would experience. It is my understanding that this is the first time in the history of GFS Australia that we have; had an ordained member as a National President; a GFS National Chaplain who would become a Bishop during that time; we have held a digital, National World Day of Prayer Service, a World Gathering, a GFS General Meeting and AGM, and who knows just how many more.

When we departed from our last National AGM in Kurri Kurri this was the directive from that meeting:

*This council requests the incoming Executive to continue to develop and implement the goals arising from the Open Space forum led by Archdeacon David Battrick and to consult with Dioceses at appropriate times about this work.*

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."*

#### **Carried unanimously**

I believe we have worked to this request, if you review our reports from the past two years, we can see we were able to establish some clear new statements around our Vision and Purpose, as well as offering a number of ways to promote this. Then we have spent probably more time than we planned on working to reimagine and reform our governance, however all necessary and what would be expected I believe from within and without. We hope and trust we have changed several rules and bylaws, at your direction, to make it easier and more flexible to bring new life to GFS. We hope and pray the new National Committee will be able to take us forward as we continue to share that new vision and work with others.

This report of course could never be complete without my sincere thanks to so many of you. In particular, my wonderful National Committee who have also walked this time with me, through everything it has given us. For the Gift of a truly precious secretary, Julie who even tried to change her identity during this period, Thank You is not enough. To Sonia who likewise even more quickly tried to change her title and in so doing raised GFS to new heights, talk about promotion! To Noeleen, as she hopes to take a break from "counting the money" thanks for all the times you were

there simply to answer my quite simple questions. To Leanne whose wisdom and quiet thoughts often caused us all to think again and who also is taking a long-awaited break from GFS National, my humble thanks. To my close friend Val, whom I do not think was game to not come on even this journey with me, since she has seen what I can do whilst heading off into the wilds, my love and prayers. To remembering fondly our short journey with Lyn Vaak who so boldly stepped up and was prepared to become Vice president never knowing what lay ahead. To Suzanne who was also prepared to step into a void for us to begin an even deeper journey with national GFS.

Thank you also to those who applied to be our Junior Delegate, to Stephanie who managed to offer her youthful wisdom on so many occasions, reminding us all we need to listen as our youth speak.

To my home group of Brisbane Diocese GFS who have been so supportive and encouraging through many of the unexpected and tough times encountered. There is nothing like having a GFS family. Then to all of you whom complete that family, as I relinquish this great and humble privilege; if I have troubled or wronged any of you during my service, I ask your forgiveness. If I have added to your joy and hope somehow along the way I give thanks to God for allowing me to serve.

Finally, we are called to walk humbly with our God. We as GFS have been walking this journey for such a long time and I believe God will continue to bless us and our service if we continue to breath, pray, offer our decisions to God, to seek Justice, To Love Mercy and thus walk humbly with our God.

*Cheryl Selvage*

**GFS Australia President**

## Treasurer's Report

The Audited report for GFS Australia Inc. for the year ended 31 October 2020 is attached.  
(see Attachment A)

This is the last report from me as Treasurer of GFS Australia Inc. It has been quite a journey for the past 9 years but an enjoyable one all the same.

We continue to use the ANZ as our bank and have now taken all the funds from the Diocese of Rockhampton for the World monies. We continue to keep an ANZ account for World monies as we are holding some project monies and some other funds here in Australia for World Council.

We are still unsure of the status of South Africa World Council and are awaiting the outcome of a meeting to see what we will do with this money and also the deposits and fees paid for WC SA.

Val Gribble, Cheryl Selvage and myself remain the signatories on these accounts and this of course will change with Cheryl leaving executive but not a big change which will be good for a smoother handover hopefully.

The 3 Term Deposit Accounts opened to try and earn some higher interest for the Kathleen Bright Parker Fund, General Investment Account and the Grants Account are doing ok considering as not many places are earning high interest at all at the moment.

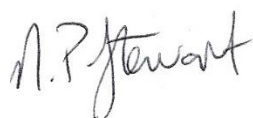
A few points to note on the financial statements/budget:

- Interest of course was way down from last year – almost \$1000
- Membership was down again from last year – although only \$348
- 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.
- Insurance premiums have increased slightly but that was to be expected.
- 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 has done our audit for the past 8 years, he is a wonderful support to us and very supportive of NFP's.

Thanks also to Cheryl and the rest of the Executive for being supportive to me during the year and all those who have supported me during my 9 years as treasurer.

With blessings



Noeleen Stewart  
Treasurer, GFS Australia Inc.

# DIOCESE OF BALLARAT

**Chairman:** Mrs Wendy Veal

**Secretary:** Mrs Nathalie Stevens

**Treasurer:** Mrs Helen Farnell.

We commenced the year with our AGM in February.

Executive Council Members nominated-

Chairman- Mrs. Wendy Veal	Vice Chairmen Mrs. Rita Lakey Mrs. Heather Block
Secretary- Mrs. Nathalie Stevens	Assistant- Mrs. Val Tregenza
Treasurer- Mrs. Helen Farnell	Assistant- Mrs. Jeanette Wheeler
Promotions- Mrs. Heather Turner	Historian- Mrs. Wendel Davis
Committee- Mrs. Ros Coley, Mrs. Joy Oliver, Mrs. Christina Berry, Mrs. Leonie Swan, Mrs. Carole Ratcliff. Mrs. Marian Delmenico	
Chaplain- Fr. Chris Keast.	President- Bishop Garry Weatherill.

Due to Covid-19 World Council and State Council meetings were cancelled as well as all of our Executive Council and Townsend Meetings for the year.

Reports were sent to members in April, June and August to keep them updated with what was happening behind the scenes.

A report was sent to GFS National re the Redress Scheme

Report prepared for Synod.

Our World Day of Prayer service- taken from the service arranged by South Sudan. Rita Lakey and Heather Turner assisted Fr. Chris for the service in St. John's Church. Intercessions were read by members on video in garden settings. A video copy sent to National Executive.

Wendy Veal and Heather Turner were our voting representatives at the National Zoom meeting and voted for the changes that were made to our Rules and Regulations.

Behind the scenes our knitters were very busy. Many items were sent to the Mallacoota fire area 26 warm handmade rugs, 5 children's quilts, 40 cotton bags. (Copy of Letter from them attached.) Prem baby blankets sent to Monash children's hospital, Ballarat Base and St. John's hospitals. Boxes of warm beanies to Seafarer's Mission, handmade cotton shopping bags(100's) made and distributed. Nursing homes and relief agencies were given many warm clothes for children, rugs, Twiddle muffs etc. Support was given to Berry Street Domestic Violence Department with many items. Toiletry collection distributed.

We donated \$1000 to the Bishop's Anglicare Appeal and \$500 for Korus Connect.

20 Bibles were purchase for Women Prisoners.

Unfortunately, our end of year Christmas Theatre luncheon was cancelled.

Members will instead receive a visit with a Christmas card, small gift, a report on the year's activities and a note from our Chaplain. Nursing home visits will be made with cards and posies.

We were saddened by the death of member Mrs. Edith Yates. (who could forget the 200 Koalas that she knitted for the World Council). Edith had been a supporter for over forty years. May she rest in Peace.

With God's Grace may we have a more normal year in 2021.  
Love and Blessings,

**Nathalie Stevens Secretary**

**Wendy Veal Chairman**



*A COVID-19 blessing*

*I had these dolls given to me last year, by someone from GFS. I was asked to dress them for Anglicare. I didn't have time to do it then.*

*But with this year being so different, I have been able to do them. Please put the photo up to be seen, as they were very well received, and so many who receive them, will be very happy as well.*

*By Alice Skelton-Tolliday*

# DIOCESE OF BRISBANE

**President:** Mrs Lesley Briggs

**Secretary:** Mrs Margaret Humphries

**Treasurer:** Mrs Roslyn Lumsden

## Highs:

- Hosting the GFS National Council & AGM in Brisbane from 10 – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- Learning new ways to meet together using Zoom due to Covid restrictions.
- Being able to join the GFS National Meeting via Zoom to pass the new By-laws and join with others from around Australia in a World Day of Prayer Service led by our GFS National Chaplain the Rev'd Sonia.
- To gather together in December for our last meeting of the year where we adopted our new Constitution, and to be able to have a Christmas break-up meal together and learn who our GFS Buddy was in 2020.

## Lows:

- Covid-19 hitting in March and so we had to cancel our AGM.
- Not being able to have either of our Outreach Group events, which included our World Day of Prayer Service, due to Covid restrictions.
- Having to conduct our April meeting via email.
- Having the GFS World Council postponed until 2021 due to Covid-19 and travel restrictions.

## Joys:

- Finalising our new Constitution and having it adopted by our members.
- The Grants Program still being used by parishes. Grants of up to \$500 are given to parishes 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 or a Christmas/Easter Event, but because of Covid not many one-off grants could be used this year.
- Continuing to support Ministry for Education Commission (MEC) with Grants of \$2000 for each of their four Ichthus Camps for Children and Youth in the Diocese that are run each year.
- We also continue to pay the wages for one day per week for a Chaplain to the Children's Hospital, and have a Diocesan Project, which for 2020 was the Angel Tree which supplies a Christmas present to children of prisoners in jail.

It gives me pleasure to present to GFS Australia our report for 2020.

Lesley Briggs (Chairman)

## DIOCESE OF CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

*Coordinator: Canon Val Gribble*

*Secretary: Canon Val Gribble*

*Treasurer: Mrs Helen Limkin*

Sadly there is really little to report from Rockhampton.

We were not able to hold any of our usual activities during the year which was probably the case for most dioceses. It was a joy to have a small number attend a luncheon, the special national meeting and the World Day of Prayer Service in October. Certainly ZOOM has become a major part of our lives in relation to communication.

Through our isolation, I have endeavoured to keep members up to date with what is happening around the world and nationally but of course not all use email. We have tried to make contact with our life members, many of whom are now in care or have moved away from the Diocese.

We have had no Bishop for the whole of the year but have elected (by ZOOM) The Very Revd Peter Grice, Dean of Geraldton Cathedral. He is to be ordained a Bishop in Brisbane in late February. I am not aware that he knows very much about GFS.

We have no GFS children's groups in the diocese. Our adult membership has decreased through illness and moving away from the diocese.

We did meet together for a Christmas luncheon in December and like many others were so happy to have that opportunity again. We have made a commitment to keep our adult group together and to hope to hold some of our activities next year.

**Canon Val Gribble**

**Coordinator and Secretary.**

# DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

**Chairman:** Mrs. Debra Wadeson

**Secretary:** Mrs. Leanne Kapetanovski

**Treasurer:** Mrs. Leanne Kapetanovski

**Our Motto:** Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

## **Introduction**

We anticipated the year of 2020 to be one with a gathering in July of GFS International members and friends in South Africa for our triennial World Council. Alas, like so many other events this year, the pandemic over-ruled.

However, we neither slumbered nor slept, and God's work continues through remarkable resources and commitment.

**GFS Australia Inc. AGM:** Members of Melbourne Executive attended this event held in Brisbane early January 2020. In retrospect we were blessed to be able to travel interstate just before travel restrictions were imposed.

**Parish Support Packages:** Our Liaison Officer, Helen Petering, continues to provide valuable support and encouragement for Parish Children's Ministry Workers (CMWs) funded by GFS/KidsPlus+. She also provides the Bishops of the Melbourne Diocese with information about the Support Packages and is grateful for their interest and encouragement.

Helen met with the Dean of the Ridley Centre for Children's and Youth Ministry to promote the work of GFS/KidsPlus+ and as a result of this meeting, GFS Melbourne was invited to sponsor the Ridley Children's & Youth Ministry Online Training Day held on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June.

Since the introduction of Parish Support Packages in 2015, the sum of \$435,550 has benefitted 20 Parishes within Melbourne Diocese in the employment of CMWs. The source of this valuable funding is from the income received through the lease of our hostel, Edith Head Hall, North Melbourne.

**Edith Head Hall:** The Tenant, Unison Housing Ltd., has notified us that they will not exercise their option to extend for a further three years; as a result, the current tenancy will conclude on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021. We are currently negotiating with the MATC (Melbourne Anglican Trust Corporation), concerning the ownership and future use of this property. Until this matter is resolved GFS Melbourne has ceased to offer further Parish Support Packages for Children's Ministry Workers.

**GFS Branch:** St. Alfred's Blackburn North like many other branches around Australia has been active in keeping in touch with members as described in an article published in the current GFS Australia Newsletter. The leaders of this branch have truly reflected through their innovative approach, the essence of our Motto. Thanks be to God.

**Strategic Planning Day:** As a focus on future growth and development we engaged the expertise of the Revd. Sandy Jones to guide the Executive through a day of strategic



planning. We realize the need to value the past, and purposefully embrace the future, with God's help.

**Pat Franklin Foundation:** As the Pandemic has affected the work of GFS, in the same way the PFF funds have been frozen, temporarily. We anticipate a return to pursuing our responsibility of advancing God's Kingdom, in the near future.

**Vale:** We have been saddened to hear of the deaths of Revd. John Stockdale, dearly loved husband of Jeanne (dec) on August 29<sup>th</sup> 2020 and Betty Newlands (Loved Mother of Deb Wadeson) on October 28<sup>th</sup> 2020. John was an active member of GFS Melbourne, both supporting Jeanne and also as a member of the board managing the GFS hostel, (Edith Head Hall) for many years. Betty joined the GFS Branch at St. Silas North Balwyn, as a teenager in the 1940s. She faithfully served GFS in leadership roles and became a Life Member of GFS Melbourne in 2006. Each faithfully lived our GFS motto – "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Gal. 6:2.

### **Summary**

We commit our work to the Lord, sure that it will succeed through faith, prayer, and commitment.

### **Debra Wadeson**

Chairman, GFS Melbourne Inc.

## **DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE**

**President:** Mrs Gail Orchard

**Secretary:**

**Treasurer:** Mr Trevor Motum

As many Diocese undoubtedly did, we met in March with our Annual Meeting and drew up a plan for activities throughout the year. Unfortunately, COVID- 19 happened, and we only had one further activity for the year.

As a result, we have had a year when it has been difficult to maintain contact with members, but the internet has been a means of doing so. We also had Evelyn Turner spend quite a lot of time in and out of hospital this year – she is now home but unable to go out because she is still recovering. Also, many of our friends in GFS throughout Australia will remember Joan Nicholson. Unfortunately, Joan has now gone into a Nursing Home and is finding it rather difficult adjusting to this fact. Due to COVID -19 we have not been able to visit with her but hopefully in the new year some of us will make a visit.

We were able to join with the rest of GFS Australia for the Skype meeting of GFS thanks to the hospitality of Bishop Sonia who invited us into her home. It was lovely to be able to catch up with friends both physically and via the Internet.

We were able to catch up with our members on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November when we went to Kurri Kurri TAFE campus for our Mission Luncheon. A group of approximately 15 people enjoyed a lovely lunch, very much appreciating that we could actually physically share some time with friends. We were able to raise some funds to further add to the World Project as well.

Hopefully 2021 will be a better year for everyone but we are thankful that we have managed to be safe and healthy. We look forward to having an opportunity to catch up with friends in the New Year.

**Gail Orchard**

# DIOCESE OF NORTH QUEENSLAND

**President:** Miss Jennifer Buckby

**Secretary:** Mrs Anne Watkins

**Treasurer:** Mrs Jeanette Nolan

## HIGHLIGHTS

- We were able to continue with our quarterly Newsletter which has been very well received across the Diocese and in other Dioceses as well. It is beautifully produced by Clare Reed and has excellent contributions from both of our Chaplains, Rev. Dr. Sharon Hayston and Rev. Janet Story.
- Our bi-annual Prayer Leaflet continued to be produced by Anne Watkins and this is a valuable resource to assist in our prayer life.
- Our new Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Keith Joseph, is very supportive of all we do so that is certainly a bonus for us.
- Branches began across the Diocese in February and then of course, it all came to a stop. Some resumed later in the year but certainly not all.
- Our excellent relationship with AMUA.

## CONCERNS

- The cancellation of our planned workshop with the author of the Lost Sheep series. (Andrew McDonough) We were so looking forward to him coming up in May. Not sure if it will go ahead in 2021 either.
- Still working on the incorporation of GFS Nth. Qld. trading as Kidzlink Nth. Qld.
- That all children's ministries will be able to re-start in 2021.

## PLANS

- It is my intention to ring all Ministry Units across the Diocese during the Christmas/ New Year break to touch base regarding their plans for 2021 and how we can assist with these.
- Continuation of the incorporation process and the installation of the stained-glass window in the Cathedral.
- To reconnect with our Townsend members.

## PRAYER POINTS

- For our children's ministries to be able to re-commence in 2021.
- For all leaders as they begin to plan once again.
- For membership of GFS Australia Inc to increase in our Diocese.

**Jennifer Buckby, President**

# DIOCESE OF PERTH

**Chairman:** Reverend Josie Steytler

**Secretary:** Ms Alison Gilchrist

**Treasurer:** Ms Lesley Hill

2020 has been an interesting and challenging year for GFS in Perth, as I'm sure it has been for many other branches around Australia. None of us would have anticipated what lay ahead at the start of the year.

**Townsend Lodge-** the year began with settlement going through on Townsend Lodge on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. We continued to operate the Lodge until the end of March, which was probably a good time to cease because travel restrictions for overseas and interstate people impacted bookings greatly, reducing our income significantly. There was a lovely synergy between the beginning and ending of our ministry at Townsend Lodge. It began as a place where women from the country or overseas would find a warm friendly welcome, a 'home away from home' as they settled into city life. It ended with a young woman from Japan arriving in our country to begin her studies at a time when she was required to quarantine for 14 days. We were able to offer her a friendly sanctuary as she settled into life in Perth. Before we handed over the keys and stepped out of Townsend Lodge for the last time on 30<sup>th</sup> June; we held a service of thanksgiving, led by our Chaplain Rae, for 77 years of unbroken ministry to all who came to live at Townsend Lodge over the years. In our prayers we offered thanks to the various members on the Committee who managed the Lodge. For the laughter that had echoed down the halls, for the wisdom that had been shared, for the love, comfort and encouragement that had been given. It was a fitting way to end an era for GFS in Perth.

**Ministry** - our outreach ministry was a bit 'hit and miss' this year due to circumstances. We held a few meetings of the Women's Group in person before we could not meet face-to-face. We tried holding meetings via Zoom, but they were not overly successful. So, we made the decision to begin again in January 2021. We held two successful Holiday Clubs for children in Guildford and Wongan Hills in the October school holidays. Facebook postings continued and some newsletters were sent to members during the year. We are very much looking forward to getting into our new centre in 2021. We just need to find the right place; this has not been an easy task. We look forward to being able to broaden the ministry we offer.

**Governance** - we are in the process of updating all of our policies, procedures and practices to bring them into line with all we will need in place when we start the new centre.

**Conclusion** - GFS Perth is in a transition stage. Transitions and change are never easy. As we move forward may we hold onto the assurance that God is always calling us to follow him into the future, inviting us to new ventures, new challenges, new ways to care, new ways to touch the hearts of all. When we are fearful of the unknown, he gives us courage. When we worry, we are not up to the task, he reminds us he would not call us if he did not believe in us. When we get tired, or feel disappointed with the way things are going, he reminds us he can bring change and hope out of all situations.

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. You are a true blessing to GFS. And I will finish with a prayer from *the little red book* – "Lord, strengthen those who are members of this society to keep their pledge undertaken in your name, to bear one another's burdens, and to take their part in the service and prayer of your holy church. Breathe your holy and loving spirit into all its members, that they being strong in spirit and rich in understanding, may be fruitful before you evermore in all godliness and honour, to the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

**The Reverend Josie Steytler Chairman, GFS Inc Perth**

## DIOCESE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*Chairman: Mrs Janice Doyle*

*Secretary: Miss Karen Fagan*

*Treasurer: Miss Chris Barber*

GFS in South Australia is sad to report we experienced a very quiet year due to the Government and Church restrictions due to Covid 19 virus. We are very grateful to the SA Government for the way they are managing the State and we have only had four deaths to date.

Our small team only meet three times and were unable to hold our usual luncheons.

We had a wonderful GFS Reunion in November 2019 to commence the celebration of the 140<sup>th</sup> year of GFS in Australia and South Australia. We were unable to hold any further celebrations because of the uncertainty of the virus. We plan to hold another reunion in 2021.

Our Chairman was able to attend the GFS Australia AGM meeting and the discussions to the changes to the constitution which was valuable when discussing the changes with our members.

We did enjoy the Zoom meeting with members of GFS Australia and the World Day of Payer Service which luckily happened in between lockdowns in South Australia. We found the Service very meaningful and would recommend we continue to hold a GFS World Day of Prayer by Zoom each year.

On a sad note, we have been advised a claim under the National Redress Scheme has been made by a resident of the GFS Lodge. The GFS Lodge in Adelaide closed in 1975.

Please continue to pray for us as we think about the future of GFS in South Australia.

**Janice Doyle**

GFS SA Chairman

# DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

**Chairman:** Vacant

**Vice Chairman:** Ms Leonie Armour

**Secretary:** Mrs Tania Brown

**Treasurer:** Ms Elizabeth Fitzpatrick

## Highlights

**GFS Australia AGM 10 - 12th January 2020** - Roslyn Tildsley and Leonie Armour had the privilege of representing GFS Sydney and attending the G.F.S. Australia Annual General Meeting held in Brisbane on the 10<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> January. Altogether it was a very encouraging weekend.

**AGM** - The GFS Sydney AGM was held on Saturday the 7th March and it was good to see so many members attend. Unfortunately, no one come forward for the positions of Chairman and Treasurer, so the positions remained vacant. The Board continued to jointly handle the Chairman role and Cheryl Buchanan continued as acting treasurer. We had two positions up for election for ordinary board members and both Margaret Andrew and Mava Hunn were elected to the board as ordinary members for the next three years. Deidree Noss went through the current strategic plan and what we have achieved this last year. Deidree also informed us that on 27th February the Minister for Families and Social Services declared GFS Sydney Incorporated as a participating institution in the National Redress Scheme (NRS) and a member of the Anglican Participating Group in accordance with the Scheme legislation. A special thank you bouquet was presented to Tania Brown who was attending this meeting following her accident and an extended period in hospital and rehabilitation but in all this time kept abreast of GFS activities through her use of technology .Finally Rev Tony Galea led us in a service of re-dedication followed by an appetising lunch.

**Prayer meetings** – Our first prayer meeting for 2020 took place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February prior to the scheduled Board Meeting. Unfortunately, only Board Members were able to attend. Getting people together for prayer meetings has always been difficult and we have tried holding them at different locations, but numbers are generally small. But, as we all know, things changed dramatically between February and April when we held our first online prayer meeting, using Zoom. We were all rather new to the concept, let alone the practice, of holding online meetings and it took several practices between Margaret Andrew and Lynne Gall to even feel confident enough to proceed. We let all our Sydney members on email know and in the end 12 people indicated they would like to join us.

It was lovely to see those who had access to webcams and even more special to hear 2 members who had dialled in on their landline phones. A lot was learned about managing such a meeting, such as using the breakout room facility so those joining the meeting can chat while the host is welcoming others. It was a little unnerving to have everybody silent for the first five minutes – aren't we so disciplined? Our April meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> (Easter Monday) because we knew nobody would be away on holidays. At that stage GFS had not purchased a business licence with Zoom so our meeting was truncated right on 40 minutes as we said Amen to the GFS Prayer. Since then we have been able to purchase a license as part of the Anglican Church licence



for the diocese and will not be restricted by time. Because of these extraordinary times we decided to hold monthly prayer meetings while we have to be online. We hope this will strengthen our prayer network.

**GFS Sydney Branches/Groups** – Our School ages groups currently in Sydney are Berowra GFS, St John’s Camden GFS, Engadine GFS, St Clair Anglican Kids club and Oakhurst Christ 4 Kids. And our playgroups are St Clair Junior Jivers, Westmead Playtime, Oakhurst Playtime. Quakers Hill Playtime. Praise and thanks to all the leaders of these groups who have all had a difficult year in having to start, then close then for most restart again. Who still sent activities and kept in touch with families while they were closed. And then when able to restart, had to do so with COVID-19 restrictions, social distancing, hand sanitiser, changes to how food was served etc. But still managed to show up each week with smiles on their faces and to deliver the Good news about Jesus in a safe and fun way.

**Lyn Vaak awarded OAM** - On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020, the Governor General announced the Queen’s Birthday Honours List. Among the 933 recipients was Lyn Vaak who received a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community particularly to women and young girls. May Lyn’s memory and her ministry inspire all leaders to continue sharing Christ’s love with the girls in GFS.

**New Treasurer** - Our prayers have been answered. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick has been appointed the GFS Sydney Treasurer until the 2021 AGM. Elizabeth came to be involved with GFS a little later than others. She was a helper at St John’s Beecroft branch of GFS. Elizabeth has enjoyed a career in childcare, operating childcare centres and before and after school care centres. Elizabeth is married with two small children (2-year-old and an 8-month-old). We sincerely thank Cheryl Buchanan who has faithfully served in this position for eight and a half years and will continue to help Elizabeth when needed.

**GFS World International Day of Prayer Zoom service** – What an amazing time of rejoicing and celebrating in this time of trials. How special it was to join with so many other GFS members from around the world. We saw firsthand the enthusiasm of some of our younger members. Thanks to our World President, Thembeke Pama and her extraordinary team. Six GFS Sydney members watched via zoom.

**GFS Australia Zoom meeting and World Day of Prayer and service** - Twelve GFS Sydney members joined into this Zoom meeting and service. We praise God that we could join in, in this way. Many thanks to Sonia Roulston for co-ordinating the service.

**A GFS Sydney Project** - We have thought for some time to have a GFS Sydney project. We thought we should have a project closer to home that will encourage girls and women to share and live their faith. So, the idea is to build a “Street Library” (a box to protect books from the weather) and place it securely, out of the way of foot traffic at a suitable site on the church grounds. The street library will be filled with books suitable for children and adults. Some books will be Christian based. The box will have GFS Sydney logo and name on it. It is hoped that in time this idea could be expanded to include GFS Sydney Street Libraries at other churches.

**GFS Sydney 140th anniversary** – We had planned to attend a lunchtime communion service at St Andrew’s Cathedral, followed by lunch somewhere nearby afterwards in May. Unfortunately, these plans were postponed due to the Covid-19 crisis.

**2020 Sydney Girls’ Camp** – Due to all the restrictions, we decided it was not possible to hold the Sydney Girls Camp this year. We have in the meantime been reviewing the ten child safe standards and planning ways to ensure future camps address issues raised by these new standards.

**GFS Sydney Newsletter and Prayer Guide** – We have continued to produce 4 newsletters and 4 prayer guides this year. We had been wondering if we would have enough articles and news to produce four newsletters, with not much happening and not being able to meet. But thanks to our

members who sent things in or motivated us to keep producing and sending the newsletters and Prayer guide as they were finding them uplifting and encouraging. And thanks to all the other dioceses who receive our newsletter for your encouraging words about our Newsletter.

### ***Concerns***

- A new GFS Sydney Chairman – we pray that God will raise someone up to take on this position.
- At our next AGM all but 2 Board positions will need to be elected. This includes the position of Vice Chairman and Secretary. Tania Brown will have been our Secretary for 3 terms (9 years) and must stand down from that position (as per our constitution). We pray members will step up and take on these important roles.
- Our membership has been declining and our members are ageing – we pray that a new generation of members are encouraged to join GFS and share their love of Christ.
- We hope we can implement processes to ensure we comply with the new ten child safe standards
- Tania Brown is still recovering from her accident last year. We pray for continued healing for Tania and other members that are unwell.

### ***Some plans ahead***

- We can meet again face to face especially for our AGM in March.
- Our GFS branches, groups and playgroups can meet again and continue to meet in 2021
- The GFS Sydney's Teddy Bear's Picnic for Playgroups can go ahead in May 2021
- The Sydney Girls Camp goes ahead in 2021
- The GFS Sydney Street Library is accepted by the Beecroft Church and is successful.

### **GFS Sydney**



# DIOCESE OF TASMANIA

**Chairman:** Mrs Julie Somerville

**Secretary:** Mrs Barbara Phillips

**Treasurer:** Mrs Barbara Phillips

## **Highlights:**

In January one member of GFS Tasmania was able to be present at the National AGM in Brisbane with much to share and discuss. It was an opportunity to renew friendships and meet with new members. Our forward planning hinges on a new set of rules and bylaws with some changes to allow greater flexibility in serving at a national level.

The Southern Townsend had their first meeting in February at Barbara's home, and it was a good roll up of people to meet on the day. Little did we realise how lucky we were to have this opportunity to share our news and pray for each other. We shared our treasures – some special memorabilia with a story attached to it.

Leonie has continued to keep us in touch with our newsletter, a special edition at Easter going out during COVID times just to keep up with the news and hopefully keep us in touch and inspired during the lockdowns.

Julie represented GFS Tas at the worldwide World Day of Prayer Zoom gathering at the end of September. Three members were able to join via computer to be part of the National Special meeting and world day of prayer service held in October and so contribute to the decision making of the new rules and bylaws. The Zoom facility was by now more familiar to members and allowed some to be part of something they would not have travelled to join.

The final event for the year was to meet as one group at lunch in November at a local restaurant (as we are still not allowed to meet in our Church parish centre). This was greatly appreciated after the disappointment of not meeting throughout the year. Donations given on the day amounted to \$150 and this given to a local charity group supporting disabled children.

Tegan Gillie continues to work in the Southern Beaches parish establishing a thriving KidsPlus+ group after some initial seed funding from GFS Tasmania. We are continuing to pray for this group to flourish.

## **Plans:**

Our plans for 2021 hinge on our ability to safely meet together with the majority of our membership in the over 70 age group. We have planned some time together with our first get together in February. It will be hoped to have our Annual meeting in 2021.

## **Prayers:**

Betty Dean was at her final meeting as leader in November, deciding to relinquish her role after a stellar effort in establishing and leading this group. We pray for the new leader taking over and leading this group, with hopes for a growth in numbers. We pray for all those suffering ill health, and some have moved into nursing homes during the year. Our finances continue to be limited and so we need to reassess our giving and spending. It is hoped to review this at the Annual meeting in April. We pray for our planned get togethers to happen this year! **Julie Somerville, Chairman**

## Report on PNG

It has been a great disappointment that we could not visit PNG during 2020 but we have endeavoured to keep in contact and support members as much as we could. COVID-19 has had a disastrous effect on PNG as with many developing countries. Although the death toll is not high there are inadequate facilities for testing. It was the decision of the government that they would cease their lockdown (for economic reasons) and manage as best they could. It is interesting that there have been no cases reported in Oro Province (Popondetta) During the lockdown Vivian, the President of GFS in Popondota diocese stayed at GFS Haus with little support and we were able to send a small amount of money to cover water, electricity and food during the period as all members returned to their villages and were not available for support. There was no financial aid available such as we have experienced in our country.

The triennial meeting for Popondota was held in October and Vivian (Jirega) has been returned for a second term as President.

Girika (Sanata) in Port Moresby was to be the Senior delegate to World Council. Collins, her son, was also funded to attend and to present a small world project proposal (\$US5000) for the Feeding Program. The project proposal will now be considered mid-2021. The Feeding Program ceased during the pandemic and has not restarted as there are no funds available. We would ponder on how youth and children who are homeless and without support are surviving in Port Moresby. Collins and the male members of GFS were working well in preparing meals (with the help of the female members – it is too dangerous for them to go to the places where the food is distributed) and then going into the city. They also take clothing and spend time talking to youth and children about the Gospel.

We would recommend this project to members in Australia as they desperately need funds. Collins regularly reports and is working on a way to assist with a Christmas celebration in the squatter area where they live.

Collins has been in contact with us reflecting on the need for training for his group and has even attempted writing such a document. Cheryl has been back in contact with him with an offer to review this and offer any assistance that we can from this distance until such time as we can safely return to face to face training.

There has been a huge upheaval within the Anglican Church of PNG with the resignation due to ill health and then sudden death of the Primate – Archbishop Alan Migi. He was also acting as Bishop of the New Guinea Islands and of Port Moresby (where there continues to be major governance problems) So currently there are only three Bishops (of the usual six) in PNG. There has also been much political upheaval over the last month with attempts to remove yet another Prime Minister of PNG. That now appears to have been settled and PM Marape continues in his office.

I would encourage all members to continue to pray for and to financially support the work that GFS does in PNG. We have recently been asked to provide articles on our work for the PNG Anglican National Newsletter and the quarterly newsletter published by the PNG Support group in the UK. This has been very encouraging. We need to continue our work, whether we can return to PNG or not.

As always on behalf of the members of GFS and indeed the Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea we say “Tenkyu Tru” – Thank you.

**The Revd Canon Cheryl Selvage**

**The Revd Sue Wilson**

**Canon Val Gribble**

**(The GFS Australia PNG team)**

## Report on GFS Melanesia

This year was one that had little movement around our globe and as such we have not been able to either visit or have members from the Melanesian GFS visit to other parts of the GFS family.

We had intended to have Mrs Betty Kesaka and Townsend member, Elsie Eloi travel via Brisbane with hosting by Brisbane members and then travel with them on to Johannesburg to the World Council. These plans were all scuttled by COVID and the cancellation of the World Council.

Seeing members in person would have been ideal for really catching up and to pass on our badges. However, we have been able to give the badges, designed by Australia to the GFS members in Melanesia, sent via a shipment of goods still sent off regularly by Bev from Grafton.

Plans for the new constitution for GFS in Melanesia were to be going ahead in this year, after being in mid planning during our visit. But this too has been delayed due to COVID. There are hopes for the future when it can resume.

Despite the COVID restrictions, GFS in Melanesia has been continuing. There were cooking classes for some in the diocese of Guadalcanal and most excitedly, some new branches opening late in the year on the island of Malaita, with the assistance of MU. There were a total of 214 new members welcomed to GFS.

Our condolences go to Betty Kesaka on the passing of her mother and husband during this year.

**Julie Somerville**

**Gail Orchard**

**(Melanesian Team)**