

**2011 AGM USQ Women's Network Inc**  
**President's Report**  
**Assoc Prof Lorelle Burton**

The USQ Women's Network is an incorporated body that strives to provide and encourage leadership, development and advancement of women in our local communities. It supports a culture in the University which values, acknowledges and promotes women's achievements and contributions within the tertiary education sector.

This would not be possible without the hardworking executive and general members who have contributed and supported Women's Network activities. Executive members are Lorelle Burton (President), Jill Lawrence (Secretary), Julie Harris and Jayln Rose (Joint Vice President, Fraser Coast campus), Sue Basu (Vice President, Springfield campus), Toni Brackin (Treasurer), Melissa Fielder (Marketing and Public Relations/Treasurer), Jane Farmer, Natalie Herbert, Linda De George-Walker, Katrina Bidgood, Yan Zhuge and Megan Axelsen. Executive was joined by Julie Harris and Jayln Rose from Fraser Coast campus, via video conference, and by Sue Basu and Yan Zhuge from Springfield campus, via telephone conference into Executive meetings. The President of the Women's Network (or nominee) is also a member of the University's Status of Women in Employment and Education (SWEE) Committee.

Also a special thanks to the webmaster Melissa Fielder (now Mrs Bradey) for all her ongoing work to keep the website up to date and notify members of upcoming activities. The website is located at <http://www.usq.edu.au/women>. Thank you also Jill Lawrence, the Secretary, for her tireless work in keeping the minutes, to Toni Brackin, the Treasurer, for keeping the accounts balanced and in order and to Melissa Bradey for stepping into this role while Toni was on ADOSP and more recently, maternity leave.

I thank all Executive committee members for their ongoing commitment and support of the Network and its activities.

In 2011 women at USQ celebrated a number of successes and the Women's Network Inc. facilitated or participated in a range of activities to raise the profile of women at USQ. Specifically, the key objective was to sustain earlier initiatives, including:

- Support equal opportunity and professional development opportunity initiatives for women across all three USQ campuses: Toowoomba, Fraser Coast, and Springfield. For example, the Network President and Secretary (Lorelle and Jill) again visited Springfield and Fraser Coast campuses to meet with staff and discuss key issues. A number of women were recruited to the Network at these campus meetings.
- Provide a voice and discussion forum for issues of concern to women, such as NAIDOC week and White Ribbon Day to prevent violence towards women.
- Sponsor public information talks, meetings and workshops on topical and emerging issues. For example, we had stimulating talks from various guest speakers throughout the year, including Mary Wagner (Wagners Toowoomba), Prof Janet Verbyla, Lorelle Burton, Donna Moodie, David and Mary Kearney (Landscape Architects), Prof Bill Lovegrove (VC), and Jen Courtman (Relationships Australia) here in Toowoomba; Jane Farmer and Rachael Millett (Human Resources), Aunty Vi, Aunty Shirley, and Liz Connor, Vivienne Roma (CAIK Student Relationship Officer), Prof Janet Verbyla, and Sara Ellis (Rural Health Worker from West Moreton Women's Health) at Springfield; and at Fraser Coast Campus, Tancie Thompson (Consultant to International Projects), Chrissie Young (Access and Equity for Indigenous Women), Prof Janet Verbyla, Meg, Court Liaison Officer (Yoorana Women's Domestic

Violence and Resource Service Inc.) and Hayley Skyring (Domestic & Family Violence Coordinator, Maryborough District, Queensland Police Service).

- Promote career development and support mentoring and networking opportunities for women – for example, the new *Aspire: Women and Leadership Mentor Program 2011* was launched in August 2011 and the Network again linked with the *Defining your career path* workshop at Springfield campus.
- Encourage personal development for women - for example, the *Fit and Well* program is advertised on the website.

Month	Activities	Guest speaker/action officer
<b>March</b>		
8	<b>International Women's Day Breakfast "Celebrating 100 Years"</b> .	Guest speaker: A/Prof Lorelle Burton (T), Tancie Thompson (FC).
10	<b>International Women's Day Lunch</b> (T): <i>Women who have inspired me – sharing stories of inspiration</i> (S): <i>International Women's Day and Define your career path workshop</i>	Guest speaker (T): Mary Wagner (Chair: Lorelle Burton) Guest speakers (S): Jane Farmer and Rachael Millett (Chair: Sue Basu) Guest speaker (FC): Chrissie Young. (Chairs: Julie Harris and Jayln Rose)
<b>July</b>		
1	<b>Naidoc Week</b> celebrations (T): <i>Gumbi-Gumbi Garden</i> and <i>Unsung Heroes</i> themed lunch	Guest speakers (T): Donna Moody and David and Mary Kearney (Landscape architects; (Chair: Lorelle Burton)
5	NAIDOC Art Exhibition (Springfield Library)	Guest speakers (S): Aunty Vi, Aunty Shirley, and Liz Connor; Vivienne Roma (Chair: Sue Basu)
6	(S): Guest artists sharing their experiences	
<b>August</b>		
	<b>Aspire: Women and Leadership Mentor Program 2011</b> was launched	Human Resources
	<b>USQ Open Day</b> – brochures promoting WN activities were available via the Go West stand.	

<b>September</b>		
22	<b>“Careering Ahead at USQ”</b> . Site visit to Fraser Coast Campus to meet with Fraser Coast Network members.	Guest speaker: Professor Janet Verbyla (Acting DVC, Global Learning); A/Profs Lorelle Burton and Jill Lawrence (President and Secretary).
<b>October</b>		
13	<b>“Careering Ahead at USQ”</b> . Site visit to Springfield Campus to meet with Springfield Network members.	Guest speaker: Professor Janet Verbyla (Acting DVC, Global Learning); A/Profs Lorelle Burton and Jill Lawrence (President and Secretary).
<b>November</b>		
25	<b>White Ribbon Day</b> : <i>“preventing violence against women”</i>	<p>Guest speakers in Toowoomba: Jen Courtman (Relationships Australia) in Toowoomba and the Vice Chancellor, Prof Bill Lovegrove (CEO challenge).</p> <p>In Springfield, Sara Ellis (Rural Health Worker from West Moreton Women’s Health).</p> <p>At Fraser Coast campus, Meg, Court Liaison Officer (Yoorana Women's Domestic Violence and Resource Service Inc.) and Sgt Hayley Skyring, Domestic &amp; Family Violence Coordinator, Maryborough District, Qld Police Service.</p>
<b>December</b>		
2	<b>AGM</b> : Election of 2012 Executive Committee and end of year celebrations and reflections (T, S, FC)	Prof Ronel Erwee (Chair of elections) Executive and Women of USQ

### **2011 International Women’s Day “Celebrating 100 years of International Women’s Day”**

International Women's Day (IWD) was first declared in 1910 with the first IWD event held in 1911. In 2011 we celebrate 100 years of International Women's Day.

All three campuses celebrated International Women’s Day in March 2011 with luncheons kindly sponsored by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Bill Lovegrove. Breakfasts at each campus were kindly

sponsored by the NTEU. In Toowoomba, A/Prof Lorelle Burton was guest speaker at the breakfast in Toowoomba and Mary Wagner was guest speaker at the luncheon. In total, approximately 100 women attended the luncheons and/or breakfasts across the three campuses and left feeling inspired.

### **White Ribbon Day, 25 November 2011**

The White Ribbon organisation works to prevent violence towards women and believes in the capacity of individuals to change. This year a special link has been forged between USQ and domestic violence prevention with Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bill Lovegrove, participating in Australia's CEO Challenge (<http://ceochallengeaustralia.org/>), a recognised charity which works with corporate Australia and the violence prevention sector to create and sustain a world free from family violence.

In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, with a white ribbon as its iconic symbol. White Ribbon began in Australia in 2003 as part of UNIFEM (now UN Women). It formally became a Foundation in 2007. White Ribbon is Australia's only national male-led violence prevention campaign. The White Ribbon Campaign is now the largest global male-led movement to stop men's violence against women. Go to <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/> for more information.

Morning teas were held at each of the three campuses with guest speakers. At each of the morning teas our guest speakers were presented with 'white ribbon care packs' for women at the shelters. These packs were organised by WN members at the three campuses and many thanks to all women for their generous donations and to the busy working bees who helped to put the care packs together.

In Toowoomba, Jen Courtman, Toowoomba Region Manager for Relationships Australia QLD was our guest speaker. Jen is the Toowoomba Region Manager for Relationships Australia Qld and is responsible for the Relationships Australia Qld venue and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Service, a shelter providing safe, secure accommodation for women and children escaping their violent partners in Toowoomba and another in Warwick. She has worked at state, regional and local levels over the past 19 years in the area of domestic and family violence and has spoken to in excess of 72,000 people about their domestically violent situations. She is invited regularly to be a guest speaker and has presented locally and nationally on topics including the effects of domestic violence on women and children.

At Springfield, Sara Ellis, Rural Health Worker from West Moreton Women's Health was guest speaker.

At Fraser Coast, Meg, Court Liaison Officer (Yoorana Women's Domestic Violence and Resource Service Inc.) followed by Sgt Hayley Skyring, Domestic & Family Violence Coordinator, Maryborough District, Queensland Police Service were guest speakers. Many thanks to Katrina, FC Corporate Communications Officer & WN member, for organising a media release.

All three campuses heard inspirational talks by our guest speakers. They each spoke of the special significance of the white ribbon and shared their stories of working in the field. Some key connections and partnerships with our local communities were initiated as a result of this dialogue. All participants thoroughly enjoyed the popular (and delicious) purple and green iced cup cakes, each topped with a white ribbon. The WN appreciates the Vice Chancellor funding these morning teas across each campus.

## **Serving on SWEE and USQ Women's Network committees**

I am delighted to report that the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar, Mr Bernard Lillis, fully supports the need for USQ and Faculty senior management to provide women the opportunity to actively contribute by serving on, or participating in, key social justice or equity projects or committees. Bernard has agreed to forward a letter of support to all Supervisors of professional staff, reinforcing the need to allow women in their sections the support and opportunity to fully participate in relevant SWEE and/or USQ Women's Network executive committee meetings and functions. The time commitment would be minimal but the impact on their professional and personal development and engagement with the University community would be substantial.

Thank you to Prof Ronel Erwee (Chair of SWEE) for supporting me and the Executive in achieving this outcome. And many thanks to Ronel for again agreeing to adjudicate the election of the Women's Network Executive for 2012.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thank you again to all members of the Executive and to all women who have contributed to the USQ Women's Network activities in 2011.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of our former Executive members, Toni Chardon (Treasurer), Linda De George-Walker, Megan Axelsen, and Natalie Herbert. We wish Toni, Linda, Megan, and Natalie all the very best in the future. I would also like to personally thank members of the current Executive who will be standing down at the end of this year – Julie Harris (Fraser Coast), Sue Basu (Springfield), and Jill Lawrence (Toowoomba). Please know your input to the Network is highly valued and will be greatly missed by the incoming Executive. And many thanks to those members who will continue to serve on the Executive in 2012 – your experience will be immense and I salute your ongoing commitment to Women of USQ.

I would also like to formally acknowledge the invaluable support of our retiring Vice Chancellor, Professor Bill Lovegrove, who has provided unwavering support of women's issues in his leadership of USQ, including funding our various Women's Network activities these past two years. In particular, I thank you wholeheartedly for your efforts to campaign against family violence this past year. I know the initiatives you developed to stop violence against women will have long-term impact beyond this year's campaign. I wish you all the very best in your retirement and thank you sincerely for your exceptional leadership of USQ.

In closing, I look forward to another active and positive year for USQ women in 2012, under the energised leadership of a new President and Women's Network Executive. I wish you well and thank you for the privilege of leading you these past two years.