



MOWatch Australia Ltd Annual General Meeting – 29 August 2015 President's Report

2013 - 2014 was full of challenges as we sought our members' approval to apply to become registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee. To do this we had to create a new Constitution for our organisation, which we named MOWatch Australia Ltd. We updated our rules as required, but kept the original objects of our organisation. We are now registered with ASIC (the Australian Securities & Investments Commission). This gives our board and membership coverage and protection throughout Australia. This change was accepted unanimously by our membership.

Our Constitution is available to be read on our updated website: www.mowatch.org.au

During 2014 -2015 our main aim has been to keep ourselves informed about what is going on in the Australian Anglican Church, and to make our presence known when we attended events around the nation. We deeply mourned the death of our very dear member and much-loved and honoured Bishop, Barbara Darling in February this year. At the beginning of February two of us attended a conference at the Priscilla and Aquila Centre at Moore College. Each year a daylong conference occurs on the first Monday in February. Next year it will be on *The Christian and Submission*. The lead speaker will be the new Head of Moore College.

We have attended the *Anglicans Together* Annual Dinners, and in March we attended a day seminar organised by Soundings and Sydney MOW at All Saints Hunter's Hill at which the Revd. Dr Keith Mascord was the speaker.

In March the board had a meeting before the installation of Bishop Kay Goldsworthy as diocesan Bishop of Gippsland. It was a very well attended occasion followed by a delightful lunch in the gardens opposite the Cathedral. We presented +Kay with a card, gift and flowers.

On June 19th we attended the commissioning of Bishop Genieve Blackwell as assistant bishop in the Melbourne diocese. We were also represented at the consecration of Kate Wilmot in Perth on August 6th. We welcomed Genieve and Kate to their new positions with cards and flowers.

There was another board meeting in July to coincide with a significant conference *Grounding the Sacred* which was held at the Australian Catholic University on their Strathfield Campus. A number of our board members attended the conference. During our board meeting we began the planning for a MOWatch conference to be held in Melbourne in the spring of 2016.

The MOWatch Google Group seems to be working well to keep our members informed about women and gender issues in the Australian church and around the world the on-line group also provides an opportunity for members to dialogue with each other. We welcome your posts – anyone already on line in the group can contribute.

It is especially pleasing to see the consecrations of the new women bishops in the UK after the first woman bishop, Libby Lane was consecrated in February of this year. We have been in correspondence with the Revd. Terrie Robinson, the Director for Women in Church and Society at the Anglican Communion Office in London. At her request we submitted a document on the position of women in Australia in preparation for an international meeting she was attending early this year.

Our board members remain much the same as in 2013. We farewelled our secretary Revd. Connie Gerrity after acknowledging her valuable contribution to MOWatch. We were fortunate to be able to appoint Angela Peverell to the position of Secretary. Angela brings to the board advanced skills in IT and Digital Media, so we will all benefit from her fresh ideas and keen organisational skills. Angela has also raised our profile using Facebook. With this new expertise we continue to remind you that we always welcome suggestions from you, our members, about what we should be doing next.

We greatly valued Dr Muriel Porter's book, *A New Exile? The future of Anglicanism* which was published this year. After reading Muriel's timely analysis, and listening closely to Archbishop Glenn Davies' talk given to the Anglican Church League in March this year, we are very mindful of the tensions and possible changes in church diocesan structures which may occur. We assure you that we remain on watch and committed to prayer and action until women can be ordained in every diocese in the Anglican Church of Australia.

The good news is that there are now two diocesan women bishops, +Sarah Macneil in Grafton and +Kay Goldsworthy in Gippsland, and three assistant women bishops, +Genieve Blackwell in Melbourne, +Alison Taylor in Brisbane, and +Kate Wilmot in Perth. At the present time 19 of the 23 dioceses in Australia ordain women to the diaconate and to the priesthood.

The disappointing news is that Sydney, Armidale and North West Australia ordain women to the diaconate, but not to the priesthood. The Murray does not ordain women to the diaconate or the priesthood.

On behalf of the MOWatch Board I thank Sydney MOW for extending the invitation for MOWatch Australia Ltd to have our AGM on the same day as they had planned to have their AGM. The board also thanks all our members for all you have done to give women with a sense of call to the ordained ministry the possibility of being accepted for ministry in their own diocese. A great deal has been done – but, as ever, the future is unknown. We believe that there is still a role for us to play to ensure that the gains that women have made towards equality of opportunity in the ministry and life of our church remain and grow into an even greater blessing and grace for the Australian Anglican Church as a whole.

So we have no choice but to remain on watch, 'praying, living the sacraments, hearing and proclaiming God's Word, ministering to all in need, and refusing to abandon the generous inclusivity that has been the hallmark of the best of historic Anglicanism.' *A New Exile? p.68.*

Jeannette McHugh

President

MOWatch Australia Ltd.

The Movement for the Ordination of Women – on Watch

August 2015