Dear ACWW Societies & Members in the South Pacific Islands 22nd March 2018

I returned from London last week following the Area President’s meeting & board meeting of ACWW. Prior to that I attended the committee meetings, at my own expense. It snowed for 5 days & was very cold. Minhi was with me & it was the first snow she had seen so she was VERY happy. I love the cold! Have returned to 37 degrees again & very hot strong winds Yuck! Dreadful bushfires in VIC & NSW & now floods in NSW.

The new office in London is lovely & bright and the staff are very happy there.

It was good sitting in on the committee meetings enabling me to see how the other 8 areas of the world deal with projects, finances & communications & marketing. The S.P. is the only Area that has it’s own bank account so we are unique.

I contacted Kiribati expressing sympathy from all members in the S.P. on the loss of lives in the ferry sinking disaster & Meere has returned thanks to us all for our thoughts & prayers. Meere is on the committee looking into the reason for the sinking.

I contacted Tonga twice via email regarding the Cyclone there and not hearing back, today I telephoned Monalisa Tukuafu to see how they are. She said the Cyclone hit the Eastern side of the main Island .

Only 1 house has been very badly damaged – however, the whole place is still flooded so they are not able to do too much until that water goes. New Zealand & Australian agencies have helped with school supplies and food (as everything was, and still is, soaked). They need water tanks though, so I said I would “put the word out”. Poly Tanks cost AUD $2,000 each.

I also contacted PNG, asking how we can help following the earth quake and have heard back from 3 societies in PNG. The quake was in the highlands & thousands of houses have disappeared down the sides of mountains & many, many people are missing. The Provinces affected were Southern Highlands, Hela, Enga & Western Province. There is nothing left of whole mountainsides where villages used to be.

**I am asking all other Societies, States & Territories & NZ to contribute.**  Large or small, it will all help.

The PNG people will be affected for years, recovery if ever, will take life-times.

I am going to PNG in late June to view the venue & accommodation etc for the 2020 S.P. Area conference in Port Moresby as well as meet with the societies in PNG so there will be more information after that.

On a good point - the exciting thing for all of us was the launch of the INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON RURAL WOMEN SURVEY in New York 15th March when the World President, Mrs Shanks AM, launched it at the United Nations. You will hear more about this as we want every rural woman in the world to get ALL their friends to distribute this information & ask **ALL women** to fill in the survey. This is the first time this has ever been investigated so it is a very important undertaking for ACWW & your help will be greatly appreciated.

**The website is [www.ifrw.org.uk](http://www.ifrw.org.uk) please go on line & do this….. NOW! It is very important that you Island women do this survey & ask all women to do it as well.**

The first of the information on the World Conference in Melbourne has gone out in the latest magazine & I do hope you are saving madly to attend. This conference is so close that you really have no reason not to attend. Please register early and book your accommodation so as not to miss out. Booking on line will be very easy & **all registrations & money** **must go to HO London**. Snail mail is OK if that is the only way you can do it. Registration forms will be in the next Country Woman or go on line to register.

While at HO London, Sydney gave me a list (7 pages long – *not good*) of members & branches in the S.P. Area who have not paid their dues for this year. Are you or your branch one of these? If so please send the money off quickly or you will be taken off the members roll and we don’t want that to happen do we.

7th April is World Health Day so stay healthy.

I am attaching some London snow photographs for you. If you are unable to download them don’t worry. The newsletter is the important thing.

***Gail Commens***

**South Pacific Area President**

**ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN of the WORLD**