

Dear Members

Finally a newsletter flowing the July one - just in time for Christmas.

Unfortunately my trip to PNG in August had to be postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. However, it did go ahead - more later.

On 2nd October I flew to England and toured for two weeks with my best friend and her husband. The third week I was at ACWW HO for our first Board meeting together "at the office". This went well and it was a lovely time to meet up with the new Area Presidents and Chairman of Committees.

On 5th November, immediately following my CWA branch Melbourne Cup day at my home, Peter drove me to Wagga Wagga to catch a plane to Sydney to fly out at 6am next morning to PNG. Mrs Ruth Shanks accompanied me and we had a most successful visit.

We flew to Port Moresby where we were met by PNGCWA members, Mrs Rachel Gware, Boroka CWA and Gemo Johns Baroka CWA and CWA Cottage Staff who met with us until we had to board the plane to fly on to Mt Hagen where we were welcomed by Alice, Cathy & Paul from Mubalu Women of Hope. They took us to our hotel where we all had dinner together including two members of a new Cat 1 Society, El-Bethel 24 Hour Prayer Network, 1 member from a new Cat 2 Society and 2 new individual members. These all paid their membership to me on the night.

Next morning we went shopping meeting up with members from Mubalu Women of Hope – 4 sewing machines, 5 rolls of material and ordered and paid for 1 water tank. Voice for Change - 4 sewing machines and school books and supplies. I also purchased books for the PNG CWA Preschool in Mt Hagen and books for a small primary school in the Baiyer District.

We then had lunch with those women and visited the Pre School and presented their books and a few toy Kookaburras that I took over with me.

Next day we were driven to the Baiyer District, Western Highlands Province to monitor Project 1045, funded by ACWW London "Education for Life" being carried out by the Mubalu Women of Hope Federation. We inspected the room where the teaching has been carried out, saw the books that are used to teach the men and women and inspected the pupil's written work. We then inspected the sewing area and saw the lovely Mary dresses, quilted cot covers, pillow cases and billums made from materials that have been posted to them from various CWA Societies.

We were then escorted down "the red carpet" to take our position together with dignitaries from Government, mental health etc. also Mr John Simango, Australian Government and the District Administrator. All had been invited to say "thank you" to ACWW, meet us and view what the pupils have learned so far from this project funding. Everyone spoke highly of Alice and the teachers who have enabled these people who could not read or write, or some not even understand pigeon English, to now read and write their name and read some simple books. They sang their national anthem for us for the first time because before they couldn't read the words to do that. Among the pupils were eight men and women who are disabled – physically and mentally, including a blind man. Some of these gave testimonies saying how they now feel part of society as before they were shunned by everyone. The students sang and spoke of how wonderful it now is to be able to read and write and they look forward to learning more.

The whole village turned out for this Special Day including the small primary school who I presented the books to as well as school uniforms from a little school about 20Klm from me. They also gave me the money to purchase the books for this school. Food was served at the end. A very moving day.

The next day we went to Jiwaka where we meet with Gertrude and her members, Jiwaka CWA and Janet and another member from Change 4 Life. We had a meeting regarding the 2020 conference at Kingku Lodge – in the pouring rain!

On that day I paid for seeds for Jiwaka CWA and a water tank for Change 4 Life.

Back in Port Moresby we met with Ms Weanna Edeneand, VP and Iagiva Degini, President who are re-forming the CWA Inc. Sogeri Branch first established in 1951 – 1960's. Established by Mrs Unwin, a Queenslander.

The next day we visited the CWA Cottage which is being slowly "done up" after years of neglect. Twenty-nine members from twelve branches and two cottage staff (who are also members) were there to meet us and talk about ACWW and the upcoming 2020 conference next June.

There are more members talking of joining as individual members and perhaps another society is also interested in joining. As I said, a very enjoyable and successful visit.

On the 21st November I flew to Wellington NZ for the Rural Women New Zealand's Summit and AGM. The Summit had speakers on Business Risk Management; Social Media; Carbon Emissions and the Environment. The afternoon was split into three sessions:- Climate Change & Water; Education and Health. That evening the RWNZ Business Awards were held in Parliament House. There were 7 categories with the winner of each vying for the supreme award that was announced on that night. Seven very different and capable young women. RWNZ started this ten years ago and it is growing every year. The following day had the opening of their AGM and then the AGM following lunch. Again in beautiful Parliament House.

**There have been events and experiences that have been hurtful and stressful.
There have been events and experiences that have given cause for gratitude and celebration.**

**We ask the Lord to grant us faith and courage to deal with what is past, to live fully in the present, and to go forward to meet the future,
We would be better people; we would build a better world. Stir in us the skills and determination to reach these goals.**

Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things..... I am tempted to think.....There are no little things

Bruce Barton

I would like to wish each and every one of you a happy, holy and safe Christmas and every good wish for whatever you strive for in 2020

**Gail Commens
Associated Country Women of the World
South Pacific Area President**