



AASW North Qld Branch AGM Minutes 18th October 2011

Attendance

Mackay - Clare Fenner, Bernie Stein, Mark Blattman, Roger Van Der Veen, Lyn Daly O'Keefe

Townsville – Susan Hunt, Russ Fraser, Amanda Kruger, Ross Murray, Marilyn Parsons, Abraham Francis, Amanda Nickson, Ros Thorpe, Louise Masters, Margaret Miln, Anne McCutcheon, Sharon McCallum, Colin Braiding, Giovanna Tama, Madge Scerina, Debbie Miles, Sue Gair, Lea Morris, Antoinette Woods

Cairns - Beth Tinnings, ShMaya Houtman, Jess Daulton

Teleconference attendees - Wendy Zerner

Proxy – Helen Giles

Apologies

Eve Radford, Cathy Crawford, Helen Giles, Karen Rowan, Eunice Donovan, Michelle Redman-MacLaren, Marci Gryffyn-Spicer

The Meeting was opened By Susan Hunt at 5.45pm in Townsville with successful links to Mackay and Cairns. 21 members were required to meet a Quorum, with 26 members present, a Quorum was reached.

Welcome

Susan Hunt, President welcomed members and guests to the AGM and invited everyone from Townsville and the video link hubs to introduce themselves.

Guest Speakers

A panel presentation was given by a number of members who have been involved with the Branch and Committee for an extended period of time.

- Amanda Nickson, James Cook University
- Rosamund Thorpe, James Cook University
- Russ Fraser, On Bundock Options for Well Being

Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting held on 1st September 2010.

Motion: That the minutes of the 2010 Annual General Meeting held on the 1st September 2010 be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Susan Hunt moved that the minutes were true and correct. Russ Fraser Seconded.

Moved unanimously.

President's Report

Upon reflection our Branch has had some ebbs and flows across the past year. Our 'flows' are documented in the Progress Report of the North Queensland Branch Strategic Plan 2009-2013. These include active participation in: the Atherton community consultation forum on mental health hosted by Hon. Minister Mark Butler; World Social Work Day and Legal Education Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events; the national CPD Committee; and, Branch and National Ethics Committees. We have also maintained partnerships with James Cook University (JCU), Queensland Health Institute of Mental Health and the General Hospital, promoted the AASW with JCU Social Work students, members and non members (and thereafter increased membership), established a local branch supervision register, organised a State-wide conference in collaboration with Queensland Branch (scheduled for 4-6th November 2011), and participated in national forums and policy papers. Our branch committee has worked hard.

Robyn Mason (our AASW Board representative) has been consistently practical, sensitive and helpful to the branch. Clare Fenner (Vice President) has supported me in the Branch President role and after three years on the committee is standing down this year. Clare will continue to grow the Branch Ethics Committee and Mackay hub. Marilyn Parsons has contributed many years to the Branch focusing this past year on CPD. Eleanor Gatto has continued to represent us well on the Tablelands and Abraham Francis is invaluable with his enthusiasm and commitment to Social Work and social action. Wendy Zerner is an experienced Social Worker based in Innisfail who stepped up this year to join the branch committee. Wendy brings a welcome fresh lens to branch matters and has provided well regarded support and advice. Stephanie Golden-Roser and Marci Gryffin-Spicer from Cairns stepped down from the committee earlier in the year and their contributions while on the Committee were productive and supportive. Our Branch Manager Antoinette Woods has been instrumental in organising the committee and ensuring our members are kept informed through Branch eNewsletter and eBulletins. Other Social Workers continue to strongly support our branch including Sue Gair our National Registration Committee representative, Deb Miles who is energetic on the Branch Conference planning committee, and Ros Thorpe, Frances Cheverton, Helen Pinkard, Emily McKeough and Pauline Lawrence who sit on the Branch Ethics Committee. Jan Carter recently travelled to Townsville to share her knowledge about the Australian College of Social Work and many other Social Workers have assisted us along the way. Ongoing support is offered by Slater and Gordon Lawyers who provide us with office space to conduct our business and Legal Education activities for our members in Townsville, Mackay and Cairns.

Amidst the support and strengths are the challenges we face as a branch moving forward. Current and future challenges relate to: branch committee member turnover; a lack of Social Workers joining the branch and branch committee; the difficulties of meeting local, regional and national expectations and need; working and sustaining a branch in a voluntary capacity - when we are already busy Social Workers with paid employment and family commitments. These challenges are not unique to our branch. A review of the AASW website indicates that this year there were no nominations for branch committee membership for any of the small branches including Northern Territory, Hunter and the ACT. Hunter Branch is currently considering merging with New South Wales Branch. Interestingly, even large branch committees better resourced report similar challenges to ours. Building branch committee membership may not therefore be the only solution moving forward. Our branch and our association may need to review our structure and how we operate in the 21st Century. Moving forward our branch will be consulting with members about how we might function and operate differently in future. Last year, I spoke about the 'tyranny of distance' and our need to reach out to Social Workers across North Queensland. We have talked previously about operating at a local 'Branch hub' level where Branch activities occur at local level and where Social Workers can meet face to face to network and support each other. In the near future we will seek to find out from our members whether the hub idea, which is already operating in various ways in Mackay, Townsville, Innisfail and Atherton, is worth strengthening and growing in 2012. We look forward to your support in this consultation process.

Susan Hunt
North Queensland Branch President

Financials

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT AASW NORTH QUEENSLAND as at 30th June 2011

The final financial report may be adjusted for end of financial year adjustments.

The bank balance as at 30th June was approximately \$24,275.00.

The Actual to Budget comparison for the year shows a Branch loss of \$11,975.

Some of the over expenses include the office move and set up from Mackay to Townsville and an over expenditure for CPD events.

The Branch Committee has set a budget for 2011 /2012 and this has been ratified by National Office. It is committed to staying on budget whilst maintaining the optimal service to North Queensland members.

Directors Report

Robyn was unable to connect via teleconference to present her report. The report was tabled.

It has been my pleasure to have the Board liaison role for the North Queensland Branch for the past two years. I have been impressed with the passion and commitment displayed by Committee members in many diverse areas of the AASW. We are a member organization and depend on the good will, enthusiasm and expertise of our members. This Branch demonstrates the value of collaboration, good planning, getting runs on the board and, importantly for a regional area, understanding of the local context. This is, of course, what social workers are best at.

We have experienced what seems like a tumultuous year in the AASW – perhaps all years are like that. There has been debate about important matters affecting the future of the profession and the Association, and I think that is a healthy sign. The Branch and the Association generally have many achievements to celebrate, including a world class Code of Ethics, significant contribution to many contemporary debates – through advocacy, submissions, consultations – and review of major AASW responsibilities such as the education standards. For me, the foundation of the Australian College of Social Work has been the most significant event this year. I am confident that, over time, the College will help us achieve a higher profile, be clearer about our purpose, raise the status of the profession and enable us to address many of the complex social issues that seem too hard for politicians and policy makers to tackle.

Our structure of national Board and State or local Branches is due for review. I know that there have been problems across the country recruiting members to serve on committees. This reflects a broader challenge in our community where it is increasingly difficult for organizations to find volunteers willing to do the hard governance slog. It is timely to have a discussion about how to get the work of the Association done without burning out our volunteers. Political parties, unions, service clubs, the CWA, among others, have faced this problem and we can learn from them.

I am of the view that regional social work groups like the Goulburn Valley group in Victoria may be a good way to go for some regional areas or smaller states. We will need to look again at how the Constitution can better support these structures. I know that Susan Hunt and her team are already thinking about possible futures for members in North Queensland. I am sure that they will develop a locally appropriate solution – as social workers always do.

No matter what the election outcome, I will not be your Board liaison person from November. I want to thank you all for your work, your hospitality, your friendship and your professional commitment to the work you do. Special thanks is due to Susan and the Committee members and Antoinette for keeping me in the loop despite my various absences and preoccupations. I wish you all well.

Robyn Mason, National Director

Election of Members of Branch Management Committee

Committee members standing down in 2011 – Clare Fenner, Vice President.

Nomination received from Linda Ford for the role of Vice President. Other nominations received for Committee members - Wendy Zerner, Amanda Kruger, Louise Masters – Student Representative, Margaret Miln.

Susan proposed that all nominations be ratified.

Moved unanimously.

Director:	To be confirmed
President:	Susan Hunt
Vice President:	Linda Ford
Committee:	Marilyn Parsons
	Eleanor Gatto
	Abraham Francis
	Wendy Zerner
	Amanda Kruger
	Louise Masters – Student Representative
	Margaret Miln

Welcome to our new committee members and congratulations to our existing committee members continuing in their roles.

Thank you and acknowledgement to Clare Fenner as her valuable role and contribution as Vice President.

Next AGM

Date of next AGM – To be advised.

Meeting Close

Meeting closed at 6.43pm.