

VICTORIA OFFICE DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2010

A special year in its own way but the amount of work achieved during the year was somewhat restricted by the illness mid year of both Ellen and Jan.

However, we acknowledge and thank -

- **Jan Inns** our valued office secretary who struggled on valiantly when really quite ill for several weeks mid year.
- **MTAS** and **The Dalgarno Institute** who support our work.
- **EIG-ANSVAR** who provided the prize money for the Kahootz design Competition
- Other organizations and personnel who acknowledge our work in subtle ways and refer to us occasionally such as being asked to join National organizations for a postcard campaign
- The media who referred to us or printed letters etc - New Life, Leader newspapers, The Age, ABC Radio,
- **National Council of Women**, our congenial tenants.
- **PWMU and the Presbyterian Trust** occasional tenants during 2009 during renovations to their offices.

We, of course, remain a non-profit organization which depends on the goodwill and generosity of volunteers to make any program or project happen and we would particularly thank **Jenny Godden** who for much of the last year has given one day each week to assist in the office and **Joan Morris** who willingly helped with the WRS mailing, **Barbara Munro** for filing and **Glennyce Fordham** for expertise regarding our premises.

We praise God for

- all our members in various stages of health and fitness who continue to act with prayers, letter writing, phone calls and delivering WRS to aged members, doctors' surgeries, churches, libraries and knitting caps and pull-ons for the Mission to Seafarers.
- the contribution of members of our Executive who are loyal and committed and regular at monthly meetings in spite of some battling with increasing frailty or illness. *Thank you .*
- activity and various submissions to governments particularly regarding Alcopops, Binge Drinking, Drink Driving, Chaplaincy, Marriage and matters raised by the Emails through the "E-Issues Group" led by Mrs Anne Bergen. *(see separate report)*
- for the efforts of our Drug Education Team who spoke to about 2000 students during the year. It was pleasing to note that Drug Ed now has two teams and we thank Mrs Rhona Theodore and Mr Roger Bergen for being willing helpers. Mrs Jenny Godden to be involved during the coming year. Leaflets are constantly being updated through our office.
- contacts with the Salvation Army which may help our work to develop.
- the contact with schools through our Kahootz Competition and sharing the excitement of Balmoral Community College who received the EIG-Ansvar Award of \$500.
- the life and work of Tasmania WCTU over a long period of years and honouring their decision requesting to join with Victoria after closing their State Union.

The National Health and Medical Research Council Alcohol Guidelines, released last March, gave us hope that there would be a general community movement to change the very culture of our drinking society. However, to this date, lawmakers etc largely seem to disregard the questions raised and while laws have been implemented to add higher costs to Licences, added restrictions and more police on the streets, this is not a culture change which is desperately needed.

Some experts advocate lifting the drinking age, others say the driving age, but many seem to take the attitude that it is the young who are to blame. *Make laws to change them but leave my drinking alone* seems to be the attitude. The example each one of us sets does not come into the thinking of citizens at large. Drinking problems are not confined to the young. Business women who enjoy/have to have glasses of wine each evening and retired folk who are becoming more and more at risk, particularly in retirement village settings, while private hospitals have alcohol on the optional menus, these are all part of the problem.

Have you noticed the pages of alcohol advertisements in the press? Makes it extremely hard for some to ignore and buy non-alcoholic when the supplies of appropriate celebratory non-alcoholic are becoming harder to obtain.

"P" plate drivers should have a BAC reading of zero but there seems to be a bravado that "nothing will happen to me" or "I won't be caught" but this group is very vulnerable and have a percentage of road trauma victims.

There has been some good news during 2009 -

1. We welcomed Tasmania and hope to strengthen our ties with their one Union and Circle members.
2. The establishment of the Dalgarno Institute which is open to becoming the stronghold of total abstinence. Jan Shattock and Ellen Chandler are Board members representing WCTU.
3. Our organization joined the ranks of "Fair Trade" committed to using Chocolate, Tea and Coffee with the Fair Trade symbol and once again we supported Cancer research with a "Biggest Morning Tea".
4. 14 members and associates joined in the National Convention of some 40 persons and at the elections Mrs Jan Shattock was elected as Director of Youth, Miss Jan Inns re-elected Treasurer, Mrs Anne Bergen re-elected General Secretary and Mrs Ellen Chandler re-elected National President. National has undergone a name change - now called WCTU AUSTRALIA LIMITED

This coming year brings other rights and responsibilities to this organization with only one Victorian Union now meeting regularly- when health etc. permits and one in Tasmania. Two Unions meeting on a half yearly basis with events open to the community. In itself this is good news because some Circle members are now very active. We cannot hold back the floodgates of time but we must take care of and plan for the future. The situation is at least similar in other States and the National Office has been strengthened to, hopefully, operate and fill some gaps seeking find new ways of working.

Regarding our Premises - Last Convention we brought to the meeting the issues looming of major maintenance in the Body Corporate and the increasing levies to that body which were eating into our investments and the Executive was authorised to take "whatever steps were necessary (including the possible sale of our premises) and advise the members of Convention by mail for endorsement". Initially, the issue became positive to divide the premises and lease out one half, redesigning the existing office section. However, with costs such as \$16,000 to install a separate electricity meter, flooding several times, plus the long range plan of the Body Corporate to upgrade the building, this now seems an impossible dream and member Glenyce Fordham with Real Estate training, was asked to report. Her Report is here tabled and we will discuss under General Business.

EVERY MEMBER MATTERS - we are needing to depend on the work and witness of individuals more than ever before. Doing what we can when we can and appropriate to our skills, our experience and our physical capacity. Praying for the WCTU, working at home, on the phone. If computer literate, becoming involved in the internet, participating in E-Issues, registering on Facebook, increasing the profile of our website by logging on regularly. One other way with mobile phones - send positive text messages regularly - maybe just a message "thinking of you", or referring them to a movie, an article or a book that could be of interest. Do what we can when we can -

Coming over the sand dunes early one morning, a young man could be seen silhouetted against the rising sun. Was he performing some unusual dance, sun worship or an exercise program? He commenced his routine bowing down, one arm extended then he raised that arm and quickly, as he stood up, made a sort of fast bowler action out to sea. This was repeated over and over until, as I approached, I saw he was actually picking up something from the sand. What was it I wondered? Closer and closer. Then I could see that there were piles of starfish stranded on the beach- left there no doubt by the high tide. This teenager was picking them up one at a time and throwing them out to sea. "What are you doing" I asked? "Why I am saving star fish" "You are working hard but there are thousands may be even millions of starfish here". "Yes, but if I even save ONE Starfish I have done something worthwhile" (Anon)



Yes, WCTU members - "evil flourishes when good people do nothing"

Keep up the good work for God, Home and Humanity and to God be the Glory and the Praise.

Ellen Chandler