

NATIONAL WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting 11, 12, 13 June 1980

Present: Beryl Beaurepaire  
Wendy McCarthy  
Quentin Bryce  
Joyce McConnell  
Judy Roberts  
Sue Broad  
Dee Boss-Walker  
Connie Bush  
Val Fisher  
Lena Gustin

Apologies: Jan Marsh  
Margaret Rosenthal

The meeting commenced on Wednesday 11 July  
at 9 a.m.

Wednesday 11 July  
Administrative Matters

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

Council members gave brief reports of their activities since the last meeting. Mrs Roberts and Mrs McConnell had attended the conference "Towards an Australian Family Policy" and Mrs McConnell's report of the conference was distributed to Council members. Mrs McConnell suggested that the Secretariat should make itself familiar with the cross impact analysis method used at that conference - the Delphi method. Mrs Roberts mentioned that the women from Adelaide who attended the Council's Conference in Brisbane for mothers who had given birth to disabled children, had formed a committee to continue communication and follow-up activities, and it seemed that the Premier may provide funding for this committee in the 1980/81 financial year. Mrs Broad mentioned that a similar thing has happened in Perth, Melbourne, and Brisbane.

Ms Boss-Walker handed in a report of her activities and mentioned, in particular, her attendance at a conference in Hobart on rape and the law, which she found to be a most positive experience. Mrs Roberts suggested that individual Council members' reports should be distributed to other Council members.

Mrs Bryce had addressed a meeting of Rotary at Bunleigh. She also mentioned the visit of Virginia Nordby to Queensland and a paper given by her on Women and Law Reform, as an excellent document. As a result, women law students in Brisbane have started their own group which will give emphasis to the need for anti-discrimination legislation.

Mrs Bryce mentioned that there had been a follow-up meeting in Brisbane since the "disabled" conference and that State funds may be available for a seminar in 1980/81. She also had an appointment with the editor of the Courier Mail to point out that that paper had reported inaccurately on the National Conference in Canberra and had not reported at all on the Brisbane Conference.

Mrs Beaurepaire reported that she had spoken at a YWCA Convention which had been extremely supportive of the Council and had expressed concern at the number of "anti-Council" petitions received by Parliament. The Convention determined to send supportive petitions to Parliament to counteract previous "anti" petitions.

Mrs Wiltshire gave details of staffing changes in the Secretariat, and gave a brief description of the problems faced by the Secretariat in processing claims for payment and dealing with financial matters generally. She suggested that the Secretariat should seek direct financial control and should perhaps have an extra staff member (part-time) to handle this move, as well as the processing and despatch of mail. Mrs Wiltshire indicated that she would be requesting from the Department a class 5 and clerical assistant grade I position, and suggested that the Council may wish to support such a request. Mrs Beaurepaire suggested that the Council could discuss sending a memo to Dr McMichael on these matters.

Mrs Beaurepaire further suggested that each member of the next Council may wish to keep a running diary of individual activities related to the Council.

Mrs Wiltshire reported that the Department of Finance had sought unsuccessfully to cut the Council's 1980/81 estimates by \$3,000, that there was as yet no decision from the Remuneration Tribunal on the Council's request that provision be made to pay Council members for the cost of child care.

Council members unanimously reported that the press clipping service provided by the Secretariat was very valuable.

It was decided to send a congratulatory telegram to the producers of the film "Pins & Needles" which had won a major award in New York.

Conference on Mothers Who have Given Birth  
to Disabled Children

Media coverage of the conference had been minimal because of the strike by reporters at the time. However there were long term benefits in terms of media coverage as the results of the Conference begin to filter through. Ms Taylor mentioned that the Office of Child Care may have funds available to support programs similar to those recommended by the Conference and that participants to the conference should be advised of the funding criteria required by the Office of Child Care.

Council members decided to report to Ms Taylor any State sources of funding that they may become aware of and any State activities resulting from the Conference. Ms Taylor stated that the Conference report and recommendations would be printed and sent to all participants and to the Minister with draft letters for him to send to his colleagues, advising them of the Conference recommendations. A formal "thank-you" note would be sent to workshop leaders. Mrs Beaurepaire thanked those Council members who had taken such an active part in the organisation of the Brisbane Conference particularly Quentin Bryce for her special contribution.

Publications

Mrs Wiltshire reported that the next issue of Response had been amended as per the Minister's comments and was being sent back to him, prior to the arranging for its printing. She further reported that the resolutions of the National Conference were now with the Minister after they had been thoroughly checked against the transcript and edited for consistency of format. After this, copies could be made available to those who had requested them. The Council would be required to send to the Minister its own priorities from the resolutions of the National Conference together with its views on the Conference.

Report on Aboriginal Women

An edited version of the report had been put together after suggestions given at the May Council meeting. It was hoped that the new Council would form a sub-committee to examine the subject in more details.

Project by Ms Meredith Edwards

Secretariat Staff reported on the progress made in this project. The survey was to commence in the next two weeks, and would take the form of a small pilot study which would, hopefully, indicate the areas where more investigation was required. Mrs Roberts reported that Mrs Wighton in South Australia had indicated that similar investigations

were planned there and that it was important, therefore, that the results of Ms Edward's survey be made available as soon as possible. Ms Edwards had supplied the Council with regular reports on progress to date, and would continue to do so until its completion.

#### The Knox Project

Mrs Beaurepaire and Mrs Wiltshire reported on the last meeting with Mrs Norbury and other members of the Women's Group. The group had apparently been unable to put in a submission for further funds to the Council by the required deadline as the accountant was absent. The results of the Interim Report sent by the Knox group were discussed, and it was agreed that the Council should request that the raw data and tabulations be returned to the Council. It was further agreed that Ms Jan March and Mrs Wiltshire should visit the group to obtain the raw data, after a suitable letter had been sent advising the group of the visit. It was suggested that a letter from Management Services indicating that the results were the property of the Council, could be useful. It would further be explained to the Knox group that the current Council was unable to extend its contract or approve additional funding, and that the original terms of the contract would have to apply. It was agreed that the results of the Interim Report should not be included in the Annual Report.

#### Education for Employment Project

Ms McCarthy advised that Ms Janet Donald was able to continue her work but that there would be a delay of some months before she could recommence the Council's project, perhaps early next year.

#### N.C.W. Survey on Voluntary Work

Mrs Wiltshire reported that a large number of completed survey forms had been received in the Secretariat, but that outside assistance would have to be sought for the analysis of the raw data. Ms McCarthy suggested Francis Lovejoy of N.S.W. University as a suitable source of such assistance, or perhaps someone at the A.N.U. or C.C.A.E. The Secretariat is to investigate the possibilities of having the material processed at the A.N.U. or C.C.A.E. as most members felt there were advantages in keeping the program on a localised basis.

#### Visit to Orange by Ms McCarthy

Ms McCarthy reported that her visit has been stressful but productive in the end. The C.W.A. had informed her that many women had come to the meeting simply to hear from her. An invitation had been extended to her to return to Orange with two other Council members to explain more fully the work of the Council.

The C.W.A. had written to the local papers refuting previous allegations relating to the Council, and it appeared that recent developments had begun to counter the previous misreporting of the N.S.W. and National Conferences. Ms McCarthy strongly recommended that her Orange visit be followed up by the next Council. The point was made that present Council would strongly recommend to their successors to undertake an active program of public speaking to women's organisations throughout the country.

Thursday 12 June 1980

Ms Taperell and Mrs Beaurepaire reported on their meeting with officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs the previous evening. It has been agreed that copies of Council's international priorities from the National Conference would be made available as background material to both members of the Government delegation and individuals attending the N.G.O. Forum. Copies of the Council's first Annual Report and the report, Migrant Women Speak, would also be made available to both groups from Australia.

Draft Letter to the Knox Group

Mrs Wiltshire read out a draft letter to the Knox Group, conveying Council's decisions (as listed above) and this was accepted by Council members.

Annual Report

After some discussion, it was agreed that where possible the same photographs of Council members would be used as had been included in the first Annual Report, but that Council members' curricula vitae would be updated.

Mrs Wiltshire gave a resume of the proposed contents of the first chapter. Points raised by Council members were as follows:-

- it should be stressed in the paras. dealing with the N.C.W. survey, that almost all women undertake voluntary work, whether they are engaged in paid employment or not.
- The descriptions of Council members speaking engagements should be reasonably detailed.
- The meeting with the N.S.W. Women's Advisory Council should be mentioned.
- financial and other assistance provided by the various States towards to mid-decade activities should be acknowledged.

- the assistance of the media in relation to the mid-decade activities should be specified. e.g. Radio 2UE - 15 hours of talk back on N.S.W. Mid-Decade and ethnic radio on which Ms McCarthy spoke once a week.
- in dealing with anti-discrimination legislation, the need for the introduction of Commonwealth legislation should be stressed and the Council's disappointment that the proposed A.C.T. Anti-Discrimination Ordinance will not cover Commonwealth areas of employment should be stated.
- reference to the fact that Apex air fares had been extended to all the year; highlights of some recommendations of the Isolated Children's and Parents Association; highlights of Government action on Community Access 80 should be included.
- reference to the fact that the Council is still receiving a lot of correspondence on the issues of custody and maintenance (a woman being taxed on maintenance even if she is not in receipt of it); reference to W.A. system of maintenance retrieval, and mention of the fact that Council awaits the Committee's report with interest, should be included.
- acknowledgement of the importance of the initial research program of the Institute of Family Studies.
- difficulty experienced by women in obtaining legal aid should be emphasised.
- the fact that there have been no improvements in access to superannuation and insurance schemes, and that this remains an area of concern to Council as it affects a large number of women, should be emphasised.
- the need for establishment of informal structures in education should be outlined.
- reference to National Child Care Conference should be made.
- mention of the national seminar on family planning held in Canberra should be included, and that the Government has provided \$10,000 for a program directed towards rural and isolated women. Four non-government organisations (including N.C.W. and C.W.A.)

in co-operation with State and Commonwealth Health Departments would develop and present the program.

Chapter on Aboriginal Women

The following changes were discussed and agreed upon:-

- Page 3, last para - leave in present form.
- Page 4 - Mrs Roberts would like this expanded.
- Page 4, last line - include "sexually transmitted diseases".
- Page 6, top of page - stress need for more Aboriginal health aides; agreed that this should be added to page 5 2nd last para.
- Page 10 - stress that Aboriginal mothers' concern for their children is a common concern of mothers everywhere. Commence with, - "Generally women were concerned for the future of their children (as are all mothers".)
- Page 12 - seek extension of the scheme to teach home management, diet, budgeting etc. and stress that such courses should be led by Aboriginal women.
- Page 14, 1st para. - add comment
- Page 15, 2nd para. - add "some" before teachers, add and the surrounding community".
- Page 20 last para. } - redraft, not clear in present form.
- Page 21, 1st line } -
- Page 22, 2nd para. - rephrase last sentence.

The report to the Minister should include the fact that Mrs Bush had been one of the Council members who visited Aboriginal communities, and should make reference to the fact that the Aboriginal women visited did not make Council members feel that they were intruding.

Chapter on Social Security Anomalies

Ms Taperell made the point that the chapter heading would need to be changed as not all the circumstances described could properly be called anomalous. The chapter would more appropriately be called "Pensions and Benefits".

The following changes were discussed and agreed upon:-

- . add footnote concerning the poverty line.
- . define the level of allowable earned income in each case.
- . emphasise that women are most affected by poverty.
- . include reference to availability of information services to women e.g. Shopfront services etc.

Council members discussed whether pensions and benefits should be based on the needs of the individual. Mrs Beaurepaire, Mrs Bryce and Mrs McConnell stated their belief that pensions and benefits should be based on the needs of the individual. Ms McCarthy and Mrs Bryce pointed out, however, that there was a contradiction to the Council supporting this principle and also supporting an increase in the dependent spouse rebate. Mrs Beaurepaire agreed that there appeared to be a contradiction but, nevertheless, felt that the Council could support such an increase (in the dependant spouse rebate) as an interim relief measure for single income families, but that the Council should stress that it would prefer there to be an increase in family allowances, which constitutes direct payment to the woman. It was agreed that this should be stressed in the chapter on Women at Home. Mrs Fisher, Mrs McConnell, Ms McCarthy and Mrs Bryce indicated they felt that treatment of women as individuals in relation to the receipt of pensions and benefits, was fundamental to the achievement of equal status for women.

No disagreement was indicated or recorded to this principle being adopted in the chapter on pensions and benefits.

- Page 5 - rationalisation of Supporting Parents' Benefit to be included.
- Page 6 - include a statement concerning the need for benefits to cater for special circumstances, that this need has been brought to the Council's attention. Indicate that, although this would present a complex and difficult administrative problem, it is nevertheless a challenge which should be met.



### Chapter on Domestic Violence

Ms McCarthy reported that she had received informal feedback from N.S.W. Women's Advisory Council that they had found the Council's legal document on domestic violence to be most interesting. Similar feedback from Tasmania had been favourable. It was suggested that the States could use the Council's document as a possible model, but it was nevertheless acknowledged that the drafting of suitable legislation is extremely difficult. Mrs Roberts indicated that, in South Australia, there was a desire to draft such legislation.

It was agreed that the Council's draft legislation should be included in the annual report, and that the document should be forwarded to the Minister, requesting his opinion on the need for separate Commonwealth legislation. The Minister should be asked to send the document to the Attorney-General, with a view to a possible joint Cabinet submission. It was agreed to delete para. 3, page 3 of the documents.

### Chapter on Family Policy

Ms McCarthy was unhappy with the title for the chapter "Towards a National Family Policy". It was agreed to call the chapter "Family Policy".

It was further agreed to re-order the chapter along the following lines:-

- relationship with the family is a fundamental issue that women around Australia have raised with the Council, through direct means, and in written submissions.
- the issues relate to a wide range of Department responsibilities.
- Council's submission to taskforce organisers of the conference "Towards a National Family Policy".
- General comments as per quotes in the first section of the draft chapter.
- Overseas material.
- Institute of Family Studies and Family Impact Statements.

Some discussion took place on the sub-section of the chapter dealing with the Knox Survey. It was agreed that at this early stage of analysis, it would be unwise to include specific reference to the results of the survey, but that a brief description of the purpose and outline of the survey should be included.

Most Council members felt there was a need to mention child care in relation to the needs of women in the home e.g. when visiting doctors, hospitals, shopping centres, that is, where women are the consumers of services. Reference should also be made to the issue of child care expenses as a tax deduction in the chapter on Employment.

It was generally agreed that, at this stage, it may be wise to support the provision of child care for those families where both parents must work. Dissent would be recorded where appropriate in this chapter.

Letter to the Minister Accompanying Resolutions  
of the National Conference

There was some discussion as to what the letter to the Minister should contain. It was agreed that the draft letter should be expanded to provide complete details of the State and regional meetings preceding the National Conference.

It was agreed that the Council would present the Minister separately with its own priorities from the National Conference, suitably re-worded where necessary. (see later section on Rapporteur's Report in the Minutes).

Mrs Beaurepaire felt that those women in lower socio-economic groups were underrepresented at the Conference. Mrs. McConnell felt that perhaps young and elderly women were underrepresented.

It was generally agreed however, that the National Conference was a representative gathering and that Mrs Kath Edwards' letter to the Council expressed well the Council's own sentiments about the Conference.

Mrs Broad initiated discussion on child care by stating that she could not agree with the resolutions for child care. It was agreed that attention must be paid to the wording of the resolutions.

Friday 13

Chapter on Employment

Ms Marsh's comments on the draft chapters were read out in her absence. She had commented that the draft appeared too academic and that it needed to be shortened. She also suggested that it was not possible to recommend that the ILO Convention be implemented here as Australia had different standards to overseas countries, for example in the area of equal pay. Further points related to the need to tighten the section on equal pay as there is a difference between equal pay and equal remuneration (because of over award payments, benefits etc.) and that there should be a reference to sexual harassment. Ms Marsh also supported the payment of maternity leave, at least for the compulsory period.

The following changes were discussed and agreed upon:-

- Page 1, second para. - leave in present form.
- Page 2, second para. - the sentence relating to the nature of household work should be expanded to indicate that households are no longer self-sufficient.
- Page 12 - the paragraphs relating to technological change should become a separate chapter, focusing on the Council's submission to the Technological Change Inquiry.
- Page 17 - 22 - Judy Roberts and Sue Broad recorded their dissent on section of the chapter dealing with parental leave and child care.
- Page 18, first para. - the last two sentences, should be deleted, and replaced with a sentence indicating that although the concept of paid maternity leave is now being discussed in the community, the Council has yet to form a view.
- Page 19, last para. - the reference to the N.S.W. Public Service Board should remain.
- Page 20, 3rd para. - it was agreed to delete the first sentence.
- Page 22 - a paragraph should be included on the need for child care to be tax deductible.
- a paragraph should be included on sexual harassment.
- a sentence relating to dissent ("not all sections of this chapter have the unanimous agreement of Council members") should be placed at the end of the chapter.

Rapporteurs' Reports

The meeting discussed the format and content of the Council's comment to the Minister on the rapporteurs' reports from the National mid-Decade Conference. It was agreed that the preambles should be included, and that the covering note to the Minister should refer to the responsibility of Governments, trade unions, employers and individuals in ensuring equality of opportunity.

The meeting appointed a sub-committee of Beryl Beaurepaire and Joyce McConnell to finalise the submission to the Minister as a document giving Council priorities based on the National Mid-Decade Conference and previous Decade Consultations in the States and Territories.

The following changes to the priority resolutions were agreed upon:-

- . those resolutions agreed to by Council should be drawn together and tightened.

### Health

- Page 2, second last para. - insert "some" before Aborigines and delete bracketed comments.
- Page 3, last para. - change "enable this to happen" to "facilitate improvements as a matter of urgency".
- Resolution 1, last sentence- insert "their own" before "medical".
- Resolution 2 -6 - agreed.
- Resolution 7 - this should be reworded to indicate that current financial assistance is not used effectively.
- Resolution 8 - 9 - agreed.
- Resolution 10 - the reference to mobile clinics should be deleted, and replaced with need for increase in number of existing medical visits.

The meeting closed at 4.30 p.m.