

NATIONAL WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

- MEETING 1 AND 2 MAY 1980

Present: Beryl Beaurepaire  
Sue Broad  
Judy Roberts  
Margaret Rosenthal  
Quentin Bryce  
Joyce McConnell  
Wendy McCarthy  
Dee Boss-Walker  
Jan Marsh  
Lena Gustin } 2nd May only

Apologies: Connie Bush  
Val Fisher

\* Follow-up required.

The meeting commenced on Thursday, 1 May 1980 at 9.15a.m.

Thursday, 1 May 1980 - Administrative Matters

Council members expressed their hope that Mrs Bush will recover quickly.

Mrs Wiltshire, in reply to a query, mentioned that Pat Harper had been contacted by 'phone in relation to her correspondence to Council and that the substance of the detailed conversation is on file. [Council asked for more detailed minutes of Council meetings in future.

Mrs Wiltshire said there was no word yet from the Remuneration Tribunal regarding the request that child care be recognised as a legitimate cost to Council members.

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... Mrs Beaurepaire suggested a letter to the Prime Minister and the Treasurer following the results of Council's request to the Remuneration Tribunal, and that Council members might also wish to mention this aspect in their personal letters to the Minister for Home Affairs. Mrs Beaurepaire said the Minister has not yet announced the official delegation to attend the World Conference (paper on NGO Forum attached).

### Report on Council Members' Activities

Mrs Roberts thanked the Council members who had taken part in the Adelaide meetings which had been successful in providing accurate information to women in the community about the Council. Mrs Roberts was congratulated on her speech at a conference on Business in the 80's in Adelaide.

Ms McCarthy brought up the need for public meetings in N.S.W. country areas, and suggested a need also for a mechanism to decide how public meetings are to be given priority. Mrs Bryce and Mrs McConnell handed in reports on their individual activities as Council members. Mrs Broad and Ms Boss-Walker said they would send in reports of their activities; Mrs Bryce provided list of her speaking engagements and Mrs McConnell provided a report on her attendance at the Grey Power Conference. Ms McCarthy mentioned that, as a result of the Chinese delegation's visit to Australia, Rosemary Munday had now gone on a visit to China, and that such reciprocal visits were extremely beneficial.

The question of claiming for local calls and Council lunches was raised again. Mrs Beaurepaire suggested that Council members draw attention to these expenses in their personal letters to the Minister.

Ms McCarthy explained the background to her proposed appearance on a radio program called "Country Extra", to refute allegations about the Council and the National Conference. This would take place in Orange on the morning of 22 May. Ms McCarthy proposed a public meeting on the previous day. Other networks have shown interest in the radio program which would be broadcast on 28 May.

Mrs Beaurepaire suggested that more country visits might be appropriate at this time. Ms Rosenthal explained she had just undertaken a 10 day trip round the north of N.S.W., and had found distorted views being presented to the community, which she had been able to counteract.

### Pre-Budget Advice

Ms Taperell explained that a written record of the pre-budget consultations with women's groups may be made available to the Council for its comments.

### Conference - Mothers Who Have Given Birth to Disabled Children

Mrs Bryce explained the administrative arrangements for the Conference, and suggested that Council members be prepared to sit, listen and act as recorders of workshop and plenary sessions; also to meet women at the airport and introduce them to those who will be caring for their children.

Attendance at the Conference:-

Ms McCarthy suggested the Brisbane City Council would donate a bus free for the Conference. Mrs Bryce undertook to make enquiries. Ms Wiltshire suggested that a list of the various disabilities, in particular their effects on children, be drawn up. (Stephanie Siedlecky might be an appropriate person.)

Mrs Roberts, Mrs Broad, Ms Boss-Walker, Mrs McConnell, Ms McCarthy, Mrs Beaurepaire and Mrs Gustin indicated that they would attend the Conference.

National Conference - Rapporteurs Reports

The Secretariat described the substance of comments received from the delegates on the rapporteurs' reports.

Some discussion ensued on whether individual names should be recorded as dissenters in the final document.

Mrs Beaurepaire clarified the status of the document as a report to the Minister of the Conference. As well the Council could give its priorities in regard to resolutions of the Conference for a) Australian conditions b) for international conditions, to be used possibly as part of the brief for the Australian Delegation at the Copenhagen World Conference.

It was agreed by the Council that there should be a report to the Minister of the Conference; that this report take the format of the "Education" rapporteur's report; that dissent be recorded at the end of each Section with dissenters names; that the words "majority", minority, substantial" be used to describe resolutions passed; that child care resolutions be separate. Mrs Roberts was of the opinion that dissent should be recorded directly after each resolution, and that names of dissenters be put in the published report. The final report should note that the complete transcript of the Conference will be available from the Secretariat.

The Secretariat was requested to reply to WAA and WWW indicating these decisions and that names of dissenters would go to the Minister but would not appear in the published version of the Conference report.

The Council decided that in relation to other amendments put to the Conference but lost, the format adopted would be to explain in an editorial note that such amendments received significant consideration by the Conference but were lost, and asterisk these for inclusion at the end of that section.

It was decided that the covering letter to the Minister should outline the activities at State and regional levels as well as details of delegates etc. to the National Conference. The letter should indicate that delegates were requested to write in with any corrections to the rapporteurs' reports and that only 9 letters were received. Mention should also be made that as soon as the Minister has agreed to the report, the Council would like to arrange for it to be printed and made generally available.

It was agreed that the final published version should be a report of the Conference and not be titled, an Australian Plan of Action.

- \* The Secretariat was asked to prepare for the Council members' clearance a draft of the covering letter to the Minister. A final decision on Council's priorities in relation to the resolutions of the National Conference would be made at the June meeting.

Consultations with Permanent Heads

Mrs Beaurepaire described her visits with Ms Taperell to the Departments of Immigration, Education and Social Security, and Veterans' Affairs. They were well received but no undertakings were given.

- \* The Secretariat was to follow-up the matter of English class allowances, and the qualifying period for aged pensions for migrants.

Mrs Beaurepaire also mentioned that V.A.D's have obtained war service home loans.

Research by Meredith Edwards and Janet Donald

- \* The Secretariat is to write to Janet Donald, advising her of Ministerial approval for her research. Mrs Wiltshire advised that Ms Edwards' project was progressing well.

It was agreed that, in relation to Ms Edwards' request for an additional \$530 to train interviewers, the Council would write expressing its dismay that such an error was made with the original budget estimate but agreeing to the further sum being made available.

It was agreed that the Council would stipulate 6 months from the time of Council's receipt of the final research document, as the time within which Council must exercise its right to publication. Failing this, Ms Edwards would be free to publish.

WEL Letter to Council re: Brisbane Conference

It was decided that the Council should reply that the matter of abortion legislation in Qld is purely a State matter and one in which the Council therefore cannot become involved. The conference planned for Brisbane will go ahead in Brisbane, as arrangements have been finalised. The Council had decided at its first meeting to allow the matter of abortion to remain one for individual conscience. No funds were available under the Council's guidelines for the type of activity described by WEL.

Domestic Violence Sub-Committee

A brief report was given on the work of the sub-committee and a paper handed out which detailed the draft legislation the sub-committee had undertaken - to be known as the "Domestic Abuse Ordinance" (applying only to A.C.T.).

\* It was decided that a letter be sent to the Minister, explaining the background consultation undertaken and work of the sub-committee, and that Council would hope he would be able to ensure that an appropriate document be drafted by A.G's, drawing on the document put together by the sub-committee.

\* It was decided that Ms Taperell be asked to distribute the document at a meeting of the Women's Advisors, so that their comments might be obtained at that meeting, before presentation of the document to the Minister. It was further decided that acknowledgement of significant consultations undertaken and references used be made clear in the document.

The sub-committee was congratulated on its work and it was generally agreed that the method of sub-committees was an extremely efficient one for undertaking specific tasks.

Knox Community Relations Centre

Mrs Wiltshire gave an account of the meeting in Melbourne in April which she, Mrs Beaurepaire, Mrs McConnell and representatives of the Knox group attended. The earliest date for completion of the project now appears to be August/September, at a further proposed cost of \$5000.

Mrs Wiltshire expressed her concern at some aspects of the management of the project and the research methodology.

\* It was decided that a letter be written, asking for detailed information about the project and that the Knox group be given a stipulated time period in which to answer. It was also decided that Mrs Beaurepaire and Ms Marsh meet with the Knox representatives in Melbourne as soon as possible. (Meeting Friday, 9 May, 11.30a.m.)

Response

A draft of the second "Response" was discussed.

It was decided that the item on the Council's work program for 1980/81 should be much more general, not committing the next Council to actual activities, but rather to areas of further investigation. However, Council members felt it was important for some degree of continuity that the present Council at least provide some guidelines for future work and not allow the situation to arise where all activities cease at the end of the current term of office. It was also decided that the holding of conferences may not always be the most efficient way of investigating problem areas. There was some discussion about the proposed conference of Aboriginal women with suggestions that perhaps a series of State meetings could be held instead of a national conference. However, no final decision was taken.

\* It was agreed that "Response" should start with the mid-Decade activities, then the Chinese Delegation, Coming Events, Migrant Women Speak, Women and Technological Change and other items approved. The Secretariat is to check all items to be mentioned in "Coming Events".

Accommodation

Some Council members decided to try University House as accommodation during the next Council visit. Those members not wishing to stay at the Lakeside for the June meeting are to notify Angela Wilkinson.

Country Visits

Mrs Beurepaire mentioned that all Council members should inform the Secretariat in advance of trips which would require the filling in of a movement requisition and approval of expenditure. For the next two months i.e. May - June, Council members should work out priorities for country visits:

\* It was also suggested that each Council member ring in to the Secretariat, say, once a week, so that an information flow may be maintained.

Friday, 2 May 1980

Annual Report

It was agreed that there was a need for photos in the body of the report and on the title page. Council members were asked to give consideration to a suitable title.

It was agreed that there would be an introductory section, giving a brief summary of how the Council works, maps indicating places visited etc. Then the following:-

Chapter I

Overall review of Council's activities (partly retrospective) to include anti-discrimination legislation and defence service home loans. No further comment on areas where no action has eventuated, simply mention this fact.  
First Appendix to include how the Council established guidelines, membership).

Chapter II

National Conference, including all steps leading up to it (State Reports). References to all international speakers at the Conference to be included.

Chapter III

Mid-Point of U.N. Decade, description of events leading up to the World Conference in Copenhagen. Brief outline of significant decisions affecting women since 1975 and current status, attitudes. Comment on Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to be included, perhaps in a border, in different type. If possible, whole Convention to be included as an Appendix. Also Copenhagen agenda to be included as an appendix; reference to the Voluntary Fund and Australia's contribution of \$100,000 over 5 years. \*

Chapter IV

\* : Conference for Mothers Who Have Given Birth to Disabled Children  
- Mrs Bryce volunteered to draft the beginning of the Chapter - the remainder to be taken from Lindsay Connor's report of the Conference i.e. recommendations and follow-up.

Chapter VDomestic Violence

Precis of two reports of the sub-committee - reasons for having an act (ordinance) separate from the Family Law Act to be emphasised.

\* (Mrs Beaurepaire is to write to the Prime Minister indicating how important it is that the Copenhagen Delegation be led by the relevant Minister.)

Chapter VI

Migrant Women, statement that report widely distributed and read, description of follow-up action and Departmental actions/attitudes on recommendations. Priorities allocated by Council Sub Committee to be outlined, with the inclusion of Recommendation 32. The Implementation check list prepared for the Sub Committee should be included as an appendix.

- reference to English Class allowances and possible anomaly in aged pensions and deserted wives pension for migrants.

Chapter VII

Aboriginal Women - based on the report presented by Ms Sexton, of the Secretariat, to be centred on Council members' visits to the top end of N.T. and N.W. Australia.

Chapter VIII

The Family; Mrs Bryce offered to provide an introductory section. Considerable discussion took place on income splitting and family allowances. Progress reports on the Knox Survey and on Meredith Edwards' report to be included with explanations as to why the Council wished to examine the issues covered by these projects. Council members dissent to particular recommendations is to be recorded without supplying names. "Pros" and "cons" of family taxation, income splitting to be presented.

Chapter IX

Family Law Act; Statement to the effect that the Council is still receiving a large volume of correspondence on this subject, - a review of the recommendations of the Government review committee, if available. - mention to be made of difficulties with maintenance provisions, particularly recovery of maintenance (except in W.A.), tax payable on maintenance ordered but never received.



Chapter XAnomalies in Social Security Benefits and Pensions:

the point to be made that obtaining information on Social Security benefits is generally considered to be extremely difficult. Outline of the setting up of women's advisory bodies, shopfront information services, stating that where this has happened, these services have been extremely important, and recommending that such services should be further assisted or expanded.

Discussion took place on the briefing notes outlining anomalies pointed out to the Council through correspondence, and which points Council could support. The following was decided:-

- Page 1: 1 - agreed.  
2 - Mrs Broad dissented.  
3 and 4 - agreed.  
5,6,7 - agreed.  
8 - explain more fully.  
9, 10 - agreed.
- Page 2: 1 - age limit now 16 - Secretariat to check.  
LINK 1, 6 and 7.  
3 - explain more fully what type of domiciliary care is meant.
- Page 3: 1 - add insulin and syringes.  
2 - agreed.  
3 - agreed.  
4 not supported.  
5-9 - agreed  
10 explain more fully.

Chapter XIEmployment and Unemployment

Discussion took place of Margaret Power's draft outline. Council agreed that sweeping statements and generalisations should be avoided. The issues of child care and maternity leave were discussed. Mrs Broad and Mrs Roberts wished their dissent recorded to the universal introduction of these provisions. It was decided to include also the OECD Communique in toto (an appendix) and support for the recommendations of the declaration/communique (dissent Mrs Roberts and Mrs Broad) should be included in the main body of the report.

Chapter XII

\* Part-time Work, examination of issues, attitudes of various groups. Ms Marsh to supply material to the Secretariat, so that gaps in available information may be identified and acted upon.

A sub Committee of Jan Marsh, Dee Boss-Walker and Margaet Rosenthal was formed to meet in Melbourne (prior to the Council's full meeting in June) to finalise the draft chapter.

Aboriginal Report

Ms Sexton gave an introduction to the report, stressing that it was not a result of indepth consultation and that it was not possible to draw cultural parallels and thus compare the draft with the Migrant Report. Ms Taperell outlined the background to the proposed taskforce referred to in the report, and suggested that the report make reference to the need for consultation with Aboriginal women rather than mention the taskforce in detail.

It was agreed that the report should take the form of a more straight-forward account of the Council's visits to Aboriginal communities, and of what was seen and done. This would be a confidential report to the Minister for Home Affairs, asking him to refer it to his colleague, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for his consideration. The conclusion to the report should state that Council hopes that the future Council will continue investigations and consultation with Aboriginal women, as a matter of high priority. Points from the report would be included in the Annual Report. Ms Sexton is to redraft for the June meeting. A summary will be presented in the Annual Report. A final version of the report, to be presented to the Minister and thence to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, will be sent to Council members for clearance.

Report of Migrant Sub Committee

It was decided that the Minister for Home Affairs should be asked to write to the Minister for Immigration, requesting that Department to use the report "Migrant Women Speak" as a basis for requesting more money for recommendations in the Galbally Report, and that the report be used as the basis for an omnibus Cabinet Submission.

Council's Priorities for the Annual Report from Resolutions of the National Conference

The following was agreed, with further discussion in June.

- . Preamble to all four sections to be given priority
- . Health  
5, 6, 8 (Int) 11, 13 (int.) (Int = International)  
16 and child care resolutions, 14.
- . Education  
1 (Int), 5 (elaborates on 1)  
8,9,10,13 16 (all International), 14.
- . Employment  
1, 3 (+ 4 Machinery), 5 (Int.).  
4 (some support, some dissent), 7,  
8 (Int), 9, 12.
- . Machinery  
1 (Int), 3,6,7, 12 (Int.), 16,17,18,19,25 (Int.).

Council members were requested to inform the Secretariat of any other priorities, if any, in the Employment and Machinery Sections.

Mrs Beaurepaire and Mrs McConnell would meet with Foreign Affairs, in response to that Department's request for Council's priorities in relation to international perspectives which could be considered in preparing Australia's briefing to the World Conference.

It was agreed (after some members had left to catch planes) that all Council members should provide the Secretariat with their preference for the way in which dissent is to be recorded in the Annual Report, as it will not be possible to present "Pro" and "Con") arguments in each case where dissent occurs.

- . Option A: A general paragraph in the preface to the Report stating that not all Council members were in agreement on every issue.
- . Option B. Individual dissent (numbers, not names) recorded beside each relevant recommendation.