



Social Responsibility Department

Welcome to **enews No 3** for 2009.

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Dear Friends,

Since my last enews it has been my privilege to attend the Anglicare Australia CEO's Forum in Canberra. It was a very fruitful and rewarding two days and I have taken some time in reflecting on the experience before sharing some of both my experiences and the reflection on these for the position of Social Responsibility Coordinator and for the department as a whole. I would like to share some of these with you.

CEOs from 19 member agencies throughout Australia attended the two days. The first morning was taken up with Strategic planning which included looking at the development so far of a National Awareness Raising Campaign. The work of Anglicare in welfare in Australia is immense but it continues to be a well kept secret. Hopefully we will begin to see a bit more about the work of Anglicare and its member agencies in the media in the not too distant future.

In the afternoon we did some network building which I found extremely useful discussing areas that included what it meant to be a CEO of an Anglicare agency, what are the challenges and rewards and how can we better support one another. We also looked how we could share intellectual property.

In the evening there was a dinner which I was unable to attend, and the guest speaker was the Productivity Commissioner, Mr. Robert Fitzgerald. From all reports the next day he was an excellent speaker and reminded the CEOs that in promoting ourselves is to be able to articulate what makes us unique. Things like having a faith perspective, in the current climate a positive rather than a negative. Secondly Anglicare Australia is a federation of agencies that have all been established in individual ways to meet local needs, rather than being an organization with a central structure to which all have to conform.

The second day we gathered in the Senate Committee Room of Parliament House, the room where the Senate Estimates Committee meets! Parliament was sitting and it was the week of the "Ozcar affair", so it was an interesting day to be there. During the day we met as a group with politicians from both sides of parliament as well as Family First Senator Steve Fielding and Greens senator, Rachel Siewart. Those who spent time with us included Kevin Rudd and Malcolm Turnbull, Tony Abbott, Wayne Swann, Jenny Macklin and Tanya Plibersek.

During the first hour of Question Time in both houses Mike Mrdak, Commonwealth Coordinator-General in the Prime Minister's Department spoke to us about his role and how the states and the Commonwealth are rolling out new initiatives and how the non-government sector can be involved. After this I, along with several of the CEOs spent some time in the visitors gallery of the House of Representatives watching our elected members deal in their various ways with the last part of Question time – this included Joe Hockey being suspended for a period!

The two days were organized by Kasy Chambers, the Executive Director of Anglicare Australia, who is the daughter of an MU member in Wales. The experience and expertise she has brought to her role has greatly increased the profile of Anglicare amongst politicians and public servants. Anglicare is fortunate to have her. As an example of what we were able to achieve, Kasy worked with Julia Gillard to allow us to have the Senate Committee Room. Julia also arranged for all of us to have open passes inside Parliament House so that we were able to wander freely in the secure area unaccompanied.

Reflections

1. This is the second CEOs forum I have attended and the role of Anglicare Australia has changed markedly in the three years since I first attended. Three years ago it seemed that it was a gathering of people running welfare agencies and I wondered why MU SR was a member agency. The biggest change is now AA sees a large part of its role as one of advocacy, and Kasy Chambers has certainly worked hard to promote this. There is a place for MU SR and we need it be heard. I felt comfortable and more than able to articulate a position for MU in the forum.

2. It is now very clear to me that advocacy has become a professional domain, with people trained to do this. This means that MU members as volunteers must rethink how we “do” Social Responsibility and what the role of the department should be. More in the next enews.

3. It is important that MU at all levels maintains its links at all levels, nationally, and at diocesan and branch level with Anglicare affiliates in our areas to understand their role and to be of assistance where possible.

OTHER BUSINESS

Relationships DVD This has been a long enews on one topic, but briefly, the rollout of the Relationships DVD has had a temporary pause as I have somehow “lost” the file in my computer! I am attempting to find another copy, but failing that, I will replace what I had already completed.

Straight Talking I am in the process of updating the list of web addresses in the back of the toolkit. The updated list will be available shortly on the MU website. If you have any addresses that you think could be included please let me know by the end of August.

Thank you. I am delighted by the number of emails I am now receiving about resources, projects and other SR information. Thank you for all you do.

A book you may find useful Maggie Hamilton, author of *What's Happening to Our Girls? Too Much, Too Soon, How Our Kids are Overstimulated, Oversold and Oversexed* has struck out at big business and marketers who are creating extensive baby lines and product placement in the pursuit of 'cradle to grave' brand loyalty, leading to "...a new fragility and self-loathing," Ms Rita Princi, consulting psychologist, echoed Ms Hamilton's concerns: "Research shows that girls as young as six years desire a thinner body and have awareness of dieting. In particular, watching sexy music videos and looking at magazines, especially if younger girls have access to their mothers' or older sisters' magazines, have lower self-esteem and poorer body image" Ms Hamilton and Ms Princi will be speaking at two seminars being conducted by Kids Free 2B Kids (KF2BK) and the Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM) in Melbourne on 3 and 4 August. For more details go to the ACCM website www.youngmedia.org.au

Anglicare E-News

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And finally.....

Bill and I have greeted another granddaughter, Zara Elisabeth Crossman, born in Canberra at the beginning of July, she has been lovingly received by her older sister Sophie. I am finding grandparenting an astonishing experience and am reminded that Mary Sumner was a grandmother before she realized her dream and MU was born. God expands our hearts to fit in a new type of love when we become grandparents and the dream of creating a better world for them to grow up in is as important today as it ever was.

May God bless you in all that you do.

Libbie Crossman