

**DEPARTMENT OF MU CARITAS AND
PROMOTION & DEVELOPMENT**

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NEWSLETTER NO.2 MAY 2010

Dear MU Friends

I apologise for the lateness of this letter. Life has been hectic but enjoyable not only with my MU work but with the other organisations to which I belong in order to gain a wider view of what is needed to be done to help families and those in need. It is also an opportunity to promote the work of the Mothers' Union.

As I have mentioned previously, if we are to work to our full potential within MU Australia we need to get out into the community and find out where we are needed and how we can help, be it by helping directly or challenging/supporting an issue.

We also need to explore what is being done in other organizations and by the Mothers' Union in other countries.

We must acknowledge sadly that not all families are healthy and for all families there are difficult times. MU through its Branches and Committees can help to formulate opinions and policies on all aspects of family life. Through its representation to and on local, national and international bodies The Mothers' Union views can be heard and so make a difference.

Through my representation on National Council of Women (Qld.) I have gained the following information which could impact on the lives of families in Australia.....

“Beef Importation....This could impact on the livelihood of families and cause the destruction of our own meat industry through diseases brought in”

“Families on the land....Little has been done to support many women who live and raise families in rural and remote areas. If these parents are to live and raise families on properties in regional and remote areas, then the implementation of support mechanisms that will encourage young people to stay on the land is absolutely vital.

It is encouraging to see that various groups are taking steps to bridge the gap of ‘city-country’ relations through farm visits and country stays and other initiatives.”

How could members of MU Australia become involved in the above?????

Regarding “Families on the land” I know Brisbane Diocese is endeavouring to reach out through their “Befriend a Family” scheme for those living “on the land”.

What are other Dioceses doing?

As a member of Early Childhood Australia I receive their e-newsletter and this contains interesting information on Early Childhood Education and other matters which could be of benefit to not only young mothers but to all those interested in the education of young children. Three of the interesting articles in the latest newsletter referred to (1) **Government Funding for EC services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and opportunities to support workers in the industry to upgrade their qualifications....(COULD THIS COME UNDER SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY???)**

(2) Celebrating National Families Week this year from 15-21 May. This coincided with the United Nations International Day of Families on the 15th May...IS THIS SOMETHING MU AUSTRALIA COULD BE INVOLVED IN NEXT YEAR AT A DIOCESAN AND/OR NATIONAL LEVEL?????????

(3) New children's program on National Indigenous Television. "NITV" has recently launched a new children's program, Waabiny Time, which aims to help children learn more about the Noongar language and culture. It is the first indigenous language program made for young children and uses stories, animation, songs, crafts and excursions to help children understand and feel comfortable participating in the Noongar culture."(Noongar people live in the area just south of Geraldton to Esperance in the south in Western Australia).

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET THIS e-newsletter YOU CAN LINK TO SUBSCRIBE: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/mail This could be interesting reading and maybe discussions for members with young children.

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER..... How many of you passed on to the Branches my extracts from the last "Families First"? I did get some positive feedback from the article by Rosemary on "Divorce". Did you count how many times members laughed at your last Executive or Branch meeting? I didn't have any feedback from this. I happened to be guest speaker at our Bribie Branch so couldn't count the times members laughed. However we did have a lot of funDid anyone "Count their Blessings" and so raise some money? This could still be done over the month between gatherings. If you don't know about it, please contact me for details.

Have you passed on to members and taken note yourselves, my points regarding asking someone to take on a position in MU Australia or any organisation for that matter? It is essential that the person is chosen for their vision and for what they can bring to the position. **I really would appreciate it if these points could be passed on to Branches and Groups as so often people are asked to take on a position because there is no one else or because it is known that the person will not make changes and so "rock the boat".**

WHO BELONGS TO MU AUSTRALIA? Many people might say only members of MU Branches. **They would be wrong!** MU Australia has many parts.....**Caritas Groups, Lone Members, IPC members, Diocesan members, Anna Groups** as well as **MU Branch members...**

Not all members meet at regular monthly gatherings. Some communicate via the internet.....meet fortnightly over coffee or even every couple of months. **Caritas Groups** are often flexible in this and other ways in order to meet the needs of their members and people in the community. **Lone members** participate by correspondence and sometimes get together. **Anna Groups** get together for prayers and fellowship and do what they can to help. **IPC members** are looked after by their local MU Branch and **Diocesan members** are usually those who cannot attend a Branch but are active in any way possible and receive all relevant MU Diocesan information.

All play an important role in keeping Mary Sumner's dream or vision alive in to-days world.

CARITAS.....Are you aware that “Caritas” or as it was known “Young Wives” was commenced by Mary Sumner in 1917?

Since my last Newsletter I have sent to all Australian Caritas Groups a letter and list of questions I would like answered. By the responses I hope to have a clearer view on how Caritas groups operate and where they see themselves in relation to being part of MU Australia. I had intended to send this out in March, but unfortunately I only sent it in May and although I have received some responses I am still waiting for others.

Web Site.....I have sent to the Webmaster information on all Caritas Groups in Australia. The webmaster is hoping to get this on the MU Australia web site. I am hoping in time Caritas Groups may be able to share ideas and information through this site.

With relation to Diocesan Web pages I have noticed that even where there are Caritas Groups in the Diocese they are not always mentioned. Is this an oversight?

New Groups....New Caritas Groups have commenced in Frankston (Melbourne Diocese), Coorparoo (Brisbane Diocese) and an email Group is in its infancy in the Riverina Diocese.

Caritas groups are made up of all ages. All are welcome be they male or female, those of another faith and those with no faith calling. Groups offer friendship and so much more.

PROMOTION MATERIAL.....Within the next month I hope to have published some new Promotion Material..... (.Posters and information cards and brochures for MU Branches and Caritas Groups.) You will be advised as soon as they are available. Have you seen the 2 new cards in Publication...(1) Prayers in Time of Illness and (2)a blank card featuring Christ Church, Cullenswood, Tasmania. They are worth buying.

INFORMATION FROM THE UK....I have taken this information from a brochure received from the Mothers’ Union in the UK (via Marilyn Oulds) I am including some of the information as I thought it worth sharing.....”**Grass-routes to Justice** (advancing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action) This is an international agreement which sets ambitious goals for furthering gender equality, development and peace.

Mothers’ Union’s recommendations to Governments.....

- Eliminate all forms of institutional discrimination against women and counteract discriminatory attitudes in society through education, addressing the media’s sexualised and violent representation of women and girls and strengthening commitment to all human rights.
- Invest in healthcare and health education, including training of health workers, for all throughout the life-course and recognise that women are affected by the health of the whole family.
- Ensure girls’ and women’s equal access to and participation in education and training across the life-course, including those with caring responsibilities, those in poverty and those in rural areas.
- Prohibit discrimination and harassment in the workplace, including eliminating the gender pay gap and denial of land rights, and ensure that family friendly work practices are available for both women and men
- Ensure women’s fair and equal access to political participation, including free voting and genuine political leadership at all levels and relating to all political areas.

The key to advancing the status of women is to build and support strong and mutually respectful relationships between men and women, boys and girls. These relationships need to be based on the values of dignity, justice, peace, reconciliation and the equal value of all. Mothers' Union works to further these values and the goals of the Beijing Declaration."

There is much more in the brochure, explaining how the Mothers' Union is involved. If anyone is interested I can send it to them. Suffice to say that through the various programs which are run by the MU workers (and to which we in Australia contribute money) we are helping to bring about a better outcome for families. This is not just necessary in the countries overseas, but in our own communities and in the whole of Australia and our Region. **As members of MU we must all do our utmost to help those in need. We must show a united front and speak out about injustice as well as giving practical help wherever and whenever possible.**

Although some people may see us as groups of women gathering together for a meeting, a cup of tea and listening to a "speaker and saying some prayers, we know we are more than that. We still gather together in friendship but we are also out in the communities giving practical help to people in need and offering friendship and caring. As members of the Mothers' Union we have a special bond, for no matter where in the world we travel we always find a warm welcome from other MU members. When I travelled around the world last year I wore my MU World badge or necklace continually and on many occasions I was welcomed by a fellow member in the community.

As I end this rather lengthy Newsletter I would like to remind you that although **WE** know what we do, we must communicate this to the wider community so as other people looking for some way in which they can help to make this a better world for families and children will want to join with us.

Look at the opportunities you have to communicate Mothers' Union and act on them.....* Speaking Engagements to other organisations * Events * Local Broadcasts (Radio & TV) *Local Printed Media * Your Website * Community Websites * Social Media. If you as DP's (who are supposed to speak on behalf of MU to the Media) don't feel comfortable with this, delegate someone who has the correct facts about MU and is happy to do so, or get advice from a media person.

Some points to remember.....* Be prepared * Ask what the goal is with the interview and what is your AIM * Know your subject –and have 2 or 3 key points and be able to support these with facts * Have an example of what MU are doing (In your community/Australia or overseas) and know the facts.

With thanks and prayers for all you do for our great organisation.

Marjorie

Australian MU Caritas and Promotion & Development Co-ordinator