

Minutes of the 2004 WISENET AGM held on Saturday May 22nd 2004, 5.00 pm at the Fellows Room, University House, Balmain Crescent, Acton (ANU Campus).

PART A

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: Anna Robinson, Karen Edwards, Sally Stowe, Lyn Hinds, Sari Ruuska, Gina Newton, Haley Jones, Rosemary White – all from the ACT. Joining in by teleconference: Barbara Smith (Tas), Sue Barker (WA), Julie Christie (ACT), Juliet Lloyd-Smith (ACT (12) **Apologies:** Margaret Hartley, Diana Temple, Sue Brown Malini Devadas (proxy for Janet Salisbury and Hilary Cadman) (14) was at the meeting to take Minutes. Her time was kindly donated by Janet Salisbury of Biotext (<http://www.biotext.com>). The number of attendees satisfies the requirements for normal AGM business; but a quorum of 20 is required for changes to the Constitution.

2. Minutes of 2003 “Virtual” AGM

Barbara Smith moved to ACCEPT the minutes; SECOND Gina Newton.

3. Reports: (attached)

National Convenor (Anna Robinson) - ACCEPTED Lyn Hinds; SECOND Sari Ruuska.

Treasurer (Karen Edwards)

Discussion on reports: Treasurer reported a deficit because journal had to go out to all the WAIS II delegates as well as WISENET members. These journals to be sent only to financial members which should provide for financial adjustment. There was a discussion about how many hard copies of the journal to print. Agreed that the costs of printing a few or a lot were similar, and that many people won't read large amounts of text on-line, but that it is good to try and reduce the use of paper. Suggested a call for ideas from membership (eg newsletter style distribution to members and then the bulk on-line; or two journals a year and a few short digests for the rest of the year, or one big annual publication and then the rest online, or email newsletter etc). Treasurer is to look into reducing bank fees. ACCEPTED: Haley Jones; SECOND Anna Robinson.

Membership Secretary (Sally Stowe) advised a membership crisis, need a larger membership base. Need something to attract people. Aim at more national benefits. Need more online interaction, discussing issues on email, with a coordinator. Email group for members would reduce number of emails received. Members could then elect to be part of group. Essential emails would go to all paid-up members, but discussion group is a forum for contemporary issues, and could be promoted to non-members as a benefit. People would have to apply to subscribe, so is only open to members. It might be a way to make people keep their membership up-to-date. Sally Stowe offered to set up mail server or email group. Other issues raised:

?? Need to try and get people to pay early so we know how much money we have for the year.

?? \$20 for retired and students isn't covering the cost of the journal.

?? It isn't clear when subscriptions are due. By convention, WISENET operates on a calendar year (ie January to December).

Proposals: Leave memberships fees as they are, due 31st Jan, with an explicit statement of due date.

Advertise by email and a slip in the final journal of the year. Accept Sally's offer to set up an email discussion list. Sally will contact everyone as to how it works. ACCEPTED: Karen Edwards, SECOND: Lyn Hinds.

Journal Manager (Haley Jones). The topic of advertising in journals was raised. WISENET is limited by Constitution for 'income', so cannot advertise in journal. ACCEPTED: Sally Stowe, SECOND: Rosemary White.

Link group reports (attached)

All link group reports ACCEPTED: Haley Jones, SECOND Gina Newton.

3. Changes to Constitution. Changes to Aims and Objectives as agreed at 2003 AGM were confirmed. Objective (f) was considered to be too far-reaching and perhaps impractical. After much discussion, the final wording was agreed to be: **‘To promote research and technologies for the benefit of communities’**. It was also agreed for objective (c) to include the word ‘training’ in **‘education, training and employment’** because women need training to get back into the workforce. Training is a separate issue considered by government.

WISENET Aims and Objectives:

- (a) To build a supportive and active network of people interested in the objectives of WISENET and to liaise with other interested groups;
- (b) To increase women’s participation at all levels in the sciences where they are now underrepresented;
- (c) To provide comment and to examine the education, **training** and employment structures which currently restrict women’s opportunities in the sciences;
- (d) To gather and disseminate data on women in science – the sciences here including the physical, social and life sciences, mathematics, computing, medicine, engineering and associated technologies;
- (e) To explore linkages between the different disciplines and promote communication between scientists and the community on science related social and environmental issues;
- (f) To promote research and technologies for the benefit of communities;**
- (g) To explore programs for change in the sciences and support more democratic and participatory systems as an alternative to the traditional models;
- (h) To support appropriate action to achieve these objectives.

**To change the Constitution requires a quorum of 20 so this resolution (agreed by 14 present) to be taken to a ‘virtual’ AGM.*

4. Proposal (Anna Robinson) that WISENET introduce a new position: ‘National Convenor Elect’.

This would allow progressive transfer of responsibilities to a new National Convenor over the period of one year. It would help overcome the difficulties of transferring administration to a new regional group as is required by the Constitution. Notice was given that the ACT Link Group is to complete its term as the National Link Group in 2005. Stated that NSW managed it for 10 years, then passed it on to ACT. It is supposed to rotate, but unless there are the numbers and people to take it on then it is not possible.

AGREED that the position is to be created with a one year timeframe (ie nomination in 2004 – formal acceptance at 2005 AGM). Discussion: Although it is possible for the convenor to be in one state with the administrative support in other states, it is not workable in practice. For example, need to sign cheques (2 people). Convenor, treasurer, membership have to be together. PROPOSED by Anna Robinson; SECOND Margaret Hartley and Diana Temple. **Call for nominations in virtual AGM.*

5. Political relationships. WISENET needs a policy and guidelines on interactions with politicians. Although we are political and a member of Women in Politics, we have no affiliation with any political party but there is no clear statement on this anywhere. Since we are apolitical, should we withdraw membership of Women in Politics? The following points were raised:

- ?? Should remain a member because it is important to address politics because if we want things changed for women we need support of present government. Should word something that says we are apolitical but not partisan.
- ?? If we are a member of WIP we have a commitment to their aims. What are their aims? Diana Temple sent some information that Anna will distribute.
- ?? WISENET needs a guideline or policy on whether it promotes women in politics.
- ?? Politicians should promote WISENET, not the other way around.
- ?? Depending on the content of an article, it is acceptable to have a politician on the front cover of the Journal. Up to groups to decide. Should stay flexible.
- ?? WISENET should use whoever we can, whenever we can to promote our activities and the interest of women in science. Political, church etc affiliation, should not matter.
- ?? Other societies have politicians to speak to lobby for science. In the US direct lobbying is encouraged. It is not a question of political party, it is a question of issues.

The group decided that WISENET should see the politicians as individuals, not as representatives of parties. The editorial group should make the final decision.

However, formal membership of WIP is a different issue. We need to know the aims of the organisaion, before we can comment. **Anna to include their aims in virtual AGM.*

6. Nomination of Hon Membership for Jean Weber. Jean created, maintained and edited the WISENET website for many years. We continue to be beneficiaries of her insightful, artistic and encompassing work. Nominated by Anna Robinson and supported by Diana Temple. The proposal was ACCEPTED by Gina Newton, SECOND: Rosemary White.

7. New Logo. At the time of sending the agenda for this meeting, a print copy of the logo was not available and the question was raised as to whether a new logo was desirable as it was important that the resolution is high quality. A file copy has now been found so it was AGREED by the meeting to maintain the present logo

Any other business

A question was raised about information distributed by Convenors. It was agreed that as WISENET is a network, if something is in the public domain it should be distributed. WISENET does not publish the material but it can be forwarded through emails. However, the role of link group Convenor is discretionary, there is no obligation to forward anything.

It was suggested that could use email distribution with disclaimer that it isn't personal opinion, it is information from the public domain. As WISENET is a network, it is hard for one person to determine what is sensitive for somebody else. We have an obligation to inform people. But email is a written document, so disclaimer is important. Sally Stowe to pass around some suggested wording for disclaimer. Can probably use existing disclaimers. People can comment and then Sally will put something together.

Insurance

Community care – Not-for-profit insurance group. Minimal cover is \$10 million. Cost is approximately \$800. WISENET accountant strongly recommends that we should have this cover. Eg If we are at a meeting and someone hurts themselves in a meeting then they can sue us. An added bonus is that if we are insured we can go for OSW grants and we have a good chance at getting them (\$50k)! **To be forwarded for comment at the virtual AGM.*

Website

There was a comment that the website is out of date. Anna Robinson advised that she is the website editor, but time is limited and any help given would be appreciated; Further, that information be sent in a text format as reformatting from emails is very time consuming; also requires contributions from others. AR advised that the National Library of Australia is archiving the WISENET website in the Pandora Archive which is a great achievement.

Link Group subsidies

WISENET's better financial state in 2004 means \$150 – 200 should be available to each link group for an activity or event. AGREED that Link Groups request funds as they needed them (eg for a specific function).

This year we should consolidate and next year aim for more members!

The meeting was closed at 6.40pm and proceedings to transfer to a 'vritual' AGM by email.

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ATTACHMENT A: REPORTS:

National Convenor's Report, AGM 2004 2003 was as ever, a good year for WISENET with lots of both intra- and inter- networking. Some changes: our enormous thanks to outgoing Treasurer, Karen Edwards, Committee member Margaret Hartley and Link Group Convenors, Narelle Molloy (WA), Diana Temple (SYD) Jo O'Neil (VIC), Gail Kelly (ACT) and a big welcome to new Treasurer Julie Christie (changing hats), and new Convenors Susan Barker (WA), Gillian Lay (SA), Diane Webster (VIC), Meloni Muir (SYD), Juliet Lloyd-Smith/Julie Christie (ACT) and Barbara Smith (TAS). May I also take this opportunity to sincerely thank ongoing Convenors, Wendy Russell (Wollongong) and Sarah Ashmore (Qld.). There is no real way of expressing our gratitude. Please just know that WISENET couldn't manage without every single little bit of goodwill that so many of you provide and I would like to extend our grateful thanks to each and every one of you. I hope you will find some enrichment from your given time – the rewards are often not always obvious but WISENET is so highly respected and valued. It is important that each of us has credit in having made it so. Some highlights for 2003 were:

- ?? Our response for FASTS to Senator Natasha Stott Despoja's question on the effects of the Higher Education Bill on women in science. Toss Gascoigne commended WISENET for this document and suggested we progress it through the Higher Education Supplement.
- ?? Increased profiling through – attendance at post-budget breakfast meetings (Julie Christie), FASTS Council/Board Meetings (Anna Robinson) including a meeting with Thomas Barlow (Brendan Nelson's Adviser), Occasional Paper launches such as Clean Air Society (Hilary Cadman of Biotext), Jeff Sapier's visit to WISENET ACT and the subsequent interactions with New Scientist that this is bringing (eg Gender debate: Are we really Venus and Mars), invitations as stakeholders to CSIRO briefings,
- ?? Launching of the Honouring Women's Program. *(I am pleased to advise that on behalf of WISENET, I nominated Jenny Graves for the PM's Prize for Science for 2004. The accolades that accompanied the nomination were outstanding. I am so looking forward to doing more of this type of thing.)*
- ?? WEBSITE still drawing much attention and credit. For example, we have been contacted by school children regarding projects on women scientists, Monash Engineering Department on advice to attract women engineers, various agencies on stats of women in science (something that is lacking), copies of articles from Journals.
- ?? The excellent WAIS II J62 covering the Conference Proceedings.

We have also simplified the subscription payments. Here's hoping that the Link Groups will benefit from some returned income for some activities in 2004. It is already proving a great year. Don't forget with WISENET that if you want something done, you only have to offer to do it. My thanks to you all, cheers, Anna Robinson.

Journal Report

Since the last journal report, in 2003, we had another two excellent journals for WISENET. Journal 63 was put together by the Victorian group with a theme of Celebrating Diversity in Science. Journal 64 was put together by the Tasmanian group, headed by Barbara Smith, with an Antarctic theme. Both journals were, as usual, full of really interesting stories of really interesting and inspiring women. I would like to sincerely thank all of the editors who put so much effort into their respective journals. I believe the results were fabulous and a great reflection on WISENET as a whole.

I would like to welcome Sue Henderson who has taken on the role of doing the layouts for the journals. Sue is an IT specialist in the John Curtin School of Medical Research at the ANU. Sue has done the layouts for J64 (and J65 in 2004). She has done a great job and the change-over from Andrew Netherwood has been practically seamless.

Further to layout and editing issues editing "rules" for editing teams seem to have been reasonably successful. These were devised with the view to minimizing the number of times the journal drafts go back and forth between the editing team and the layout person. With a little further streamlining, we can hopefully improve the process even further. I look forward to the next few issues which, I know, will bring further inspiring stories of fabulous women. **Haley Jones**

Membership Report

There were **160** Wisenet memberships at the end of 2003, comprising:

Complimentary 10; Organisations 7; Individual (full sub + Hon) 125; retired 10; students 8

By Link Group: (inc comp. and institutions):

ACT 38; NSW (Syd + Woll) 56; SA/NT 5; QLD 10; TAS 11; VIC 30; WA 6; OS 4

Sally Stowe

LINK GROUPS – only the following three reports were received.

(a) **Tasmanian Link Group** Dr. Barbara Smith - Convenor

Overview

There are currently 12 WISENET members in Tasmania, however I maintain an email recipient list of 60 people from my initial canvassing. I pass on any interesting information to these people and keep them informed of any WISENET activities. I keep the information more relevant to paid up members to the current membership. While I encourage people to join WISENET I think it is more important to maintain information-flow with non-members so that the goals of WISENET can be achieved. There seems to be a general interest from people in having WISENET activities in Hobart, however it is difficult to encourage people to join WISENET or to participate in meetings and dinners. Personally I have benefited significantly from being the convenor, but sadly it's pretty much a one-person show. I will endeavour to change this by organising more meetings this year, and will try to stimulate more active participation from members.

Meetings:

August 15th 2003 – guest speaker Dr. Barbara Baird (sociologist)

Topic: The place of women in science professions with reference to women in non-traditional occupations, and gender politics in the Australian workforce

This meeting was attended by about 10 people and everyone found it very interesting to discuss the statistics on women in science positions within the University of Tasmania. It still doesn't look good!

November 14th 2003 guest speaker Hon. Paula Wriedt, State Minister for Education and Women Tasmania

Topic: The importance of encouraging women to study science, and balancing children with your career (her own first hand experience!)

This meeting was attended by about 15 people who all appreciated the Minister's time to talk frankly about education, science, and family issues.

The representatives from Women Tasmania asked at this meeting if anyone was interested in volunteering for a school mentoring scheme with two high schools in Hobart. Two people at the meeting agreed to participate, including myself.

National Science Week

Saturday 16th August 2003 – I had a WISENET ‘stand’ on the opening day of NSW, with a large WISENET banner provided by the Australian Antarctic Division. The stand was noticed by many! Unfortunately I had no helpers from the email list.

Journal 64

I edited the November issue of the WISENET journal, and chose to provide profiles on several current Antarctic women scientists, with a few words also from our Chief Scientist, Professor Michael Stoddart, and a topical article from the current Mawson Station Leader, Joan Russell. I believe J64 was very well received.

Mentoring

Through our connections with Women Tasmania, two people from the WISENET meetings have become involved in their school mentoring scheme. This program encourages professional women to mentor a year 10 female student from one of two high schools. There are 4 workshops throughout the year where all mentors and mentorees meet to discuss the objectives and progress. In the meantime the participants are encouraged to meet socially and the mentoree is expected to visit the mentor’s workplace.

Coming Meetings

June 22nd 2004 – Combined WISENET and Antarctic Mid-Winter Festival talk

Speaker- Dr. Barbara Smith

Topic – Ice Coring in Antarctica Last Summer

Other related activities/news

March 13th 2004 Women Tasmania Awards – Take 2 Science Team

At the Tasmanian Media Awards on Saturday 13 March the volunteer Take Two Science team from Edge Radio (run from the University of Tasmania) was awarded the Women Tasmania Award for Reporting on Women through their interview with Dr. Barbara Smith of WISENET on May 19th 2003. They competed for this award against all local media.

Web links

I have set up a web page on the Australian Antarctic Division’s site for Women in Antarctic Science which has links to WISENET J64, and the WISENET homepage.

Networking success:

An example of WISENET in action towards the end of last year: one member asked me if I knew of anyone who might be interested in taking her as a volunteer for a few weeks over the summer school break when her science job was not in demand. I used the email list to ask for interest, and quickly found someone who wanted her services. This was a wonderful demonstration of how the network WORKS, and how by not restricting information to members only we can achieve more.

(b) **Western Australia Link Group** – Sue Barker, Convenor

WISENET WA Link Group activities were limited to email networking for 2003. Aside from Journal 65 preparation by 3 members, in 2004 the correspondence also has been virtually unidirectional. However, some social activities have been suggested to enhance the contact between our diverse members. For example, a link with Women in Mining has been proposed. I hope for a rosier report this time next year.

(c) **ACT Link Group** – Juliet Lloyd-Smith and Julie Christie

The ACT WISENET Link group continued its active program of meetings and lunches in 2003.

In the latter half of the year, Jeff Sapier, National Marketing Director for New Scientist was a guest speaker at a Vivaldi’s luncheon providing valuable information on the differences between men and women in relation to how they read popular science. For more information, see: http://www.wisenet-australia.org/State_Link_Groups/ACT/ACT-LunchReport-031009.htm.

The Link Group's proximity to Parliament and the FASTS office leaves us well positioned to participate in activities at Parliament and the Australian Academy of Science. Throughout the year ACT group members continued to contribute to and participate in a wide variety of for a under the WISENET banner, including:

- ?? the ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Women
- ?? Science Meets Parliament
- ?? FASTS meetings

ACT members also contributed to Senate enquiry submissions on the potential effect of the Higher Education Bill on women in science.

PART B – “*Virtual AGM*”

Affirmative votes to change the Constitution were received by email from the following members: Diane Webster, Diana Donohue, Diana Temple, Alex Reisner, Pam Reisner, Sue Brown, Jan Tennant (7). As this meets the quorum requirements for at least 20 financial members to make Constitutional amendments, changes to the aims and objectives are now AGREED.

Part B of the meeting was accordingly closed at midnight, June 25, 2004.