

# **WATAC INC REPORT TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

## **JUNE 2010 TO 2011**

### **22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2011, NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE**

The 2010 WATAC AGM was held in the Waratah Room in NSW Parliament House on 1<sup>st</sup> June following our wonderful luncheon with keynote speaker Professor Larissa Behrendt. Her talk, 'Some Reflections from My Journey' was inspiring, informative and above all challenging. It was a great gift to WATAC to share this moment of life with Larissa and especially so for the indigenous students present as well as the other students at the luncheon who enthusiastically joined in the question-time dialogue.

The AGM attracted our largest ever number of participants due no doubt to the presence of Dr Paul Collins as our speaker. Paul is a member of Catholics for Ministry, an active group of Catholics committed to justice and change within the Catholic Church; he is also a media expert who is a regular commentator on Catholic matters and author of several significant books on Catholic Church history and modern Church issues, Paul was the author of the booklet 'And Also with You' which many WATAC-ers have read, and discussed.

Paul's talk enabled lively inter-active dialogue with the women and men at the AGM and all present endorsed the WATAC and Catholics for Ministry projects that we have so far undertaken together in the period 2009/2010 and beyond.

These first two projects included the mailing out to all Catholic parishes (1,300) of Paul's booklet on the new translation of the English Mass and in early 2011 the distribution of Peter Wilkinson's article '*Catholic Parish Ministry in Australia: Facing Disaster?*' There was widespread media reaction to Peter's article and WATAC was involved in this dialogue.

The first project regarding the new translation involved the collation of the responses of priests and laity and production of a lengthy summary which we then mailed out widely. The completed document was also sent to the Australian Catholic Bishops. WATAC assisted financially with the production of these booklets.

Representatives of WATAC and Catholics for Ministry were invited to attend a meeting of the Bishops' Committee for Church Ministry on 25<sup>th</sup> February to discuss Peter Wilkinson's paper on Parish Ministry and the various issues it addresses. It was a very meaningful meeting with good dialogue and commitment to action on the part of the Bishops who were present. Bishop Bill Morris was one of the four Bishops present at the meeting with WATAC and Catholics for Ministry representatives which is significant in light of more recent events, namely his dismissal by Rome in early May. WATAC undertook a formal campaign of support for Bishop Morris when this happened and many members wrote, e-mailed and phoned him. We also contacted the Bishops' Conference and the Nuncio in Canberra to express our disappointment and sense of injustice at the action itself and the process used to carry it out. Bishop Morris phoned to personally thank WATAC for our support of him.

The 'engine room' of WATAC is the WATAC Inc committee which has continued to faithfully serve WATAC since our last AGM. WATAC Inc Committee members meet every four to six weeks, and its members this year have been Lynette Allen, Jan Barnett, Janet Cain, Margaret Day, Chris Edwards, Kaye Hodge, Margaret Keyes, Alma Madden, Bernice Moore, Helen O'Brien and Judi Powe. Maureen Watterson is the treasurer of WATAC and Helen Coles is the Administration Officer.

The WATAC Newsletter continues to be produced four times a year and this is made possible through the combined efforts of Helen Coles, Margaret Knowlden and Bernice Moore with the generous support of WATAC-ers who write regular reports and occasional articles on particular issues. In 2010 there was an additional mini-newsletter to communicate to you the many responses WATAC received regarding the new English translation of the Mass. It also included the summary booklet 'And So the People Said ...' Alma Madden, Janet Cain and Kaye Hodge do the mail outs to complete the cycle of getting the Newsletter to subscribers. Without these wonderful women WATAC would be much diminished 'Thank You' all so much.

The WATAC website continues to be a vital communication element of our on-going life. After events such as Conferences and the Luncheon, photographs can be viewed on the website as well as giving people access to articles. People can email local group contacts direct from the site and download information and forms regarding up-coming events.

Each year WATAC organises two Inter-faith symposiums in NSW Parliament House for year 11 and 12 students – the theme is *Women, Religion and Peace* and we have three women from different faith traditions to speak to that theme – in recent times they have been, Tamkin Ansari (Muslim), Rabbi Jacki Ninio (Jewish) and Jan Barnett (Christian). We met on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010 and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011 for two significant events, made so by the three committed, passionate, religious women and the amazing, thoughtful young women and men who attend the sessions and are the shapers of our future society.

Rosemary Breen (Inverell) represented WATAC at the WOW (Women's Ordination Worldwide) Conference in Orsay, France on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2010. Her Report on the meeting was published in the December 2010 WATAC Newsletter. WOW is meeting again at the end of June 2011 and although WATAC is unable to have a representative there we have provided a detailed report to Patricia Fresen who has forwarded it to Colette Joyce on our behalf and it will be presented with other reports at the 2011 WOW Conference. WATAC is connected with WOW and is supportive of their aims and goals, we will continue to work with them.

The life of WATAC is most vitally lived out in its many local groups that meet regularly, usually monthly, to reflect, discuss and pray together. Decisions to take action on particular issues are often made at these gatherings and so the voice of WATAC is raised significantly both in and beyond our Church.

This year WATAC's Conference is to be held on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> September and its theme is '*Illumination in Darkness*'. We have invited Dr Patricia Fresen, who lives in Germany, to be our keynote speaker and our focus is on Ministry in the Catholic Church – since Patricia is an ordained priest and bishop this should be a vital event and significant moment in the life of WATAC.