

OVERSEAS AND NORTHERN OUTREACH NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2017

Dear Mothers' Union friends,

Welcome to 2017! I hope that you have enjoyed a break from your usual responsibilities during January and are now rarin' to go in this, our 125th anniversary year. I myself spent a wonderful two weeks in Myanmar in January. I was invited by Beverley Ovens (former O&NO coordinator for MU Australia) and Marilyn Bennett, President of MU in Yangon Diocese, to speak at three conferences for MU there. I taught from "Ephesians" and Beverley from "Joshua". Look for our report in the next Mia Mia!



I know that many of you have been waiting for news of our new Overseas Project, and I do thank you for your patience. I am therefore very pleased to be able to share what I have learned from my conversations with Mary Sumner House staff.

SOME NEWS ABOUT OUR PROJECT FOR 2017-18

As you may well be aware, Mothers' Union Australia has accepted the invitation from Mary Sumner House to support the development of Peace and Reconciliation training in several countries in Africa. At this early stage the emphasis is on **consultation and discussion**, with representatives from South Sudan, South Africa, D.R. Congo, Uganda and Rwanda planning to meet in February, in an attempt to find out what is already being done in the way of creating safe places for women and children, and how best to coordinate efforts.

Following this meeting **it is hoped to establish a forum** of representatives from these countries so that ideas can be shared and Community Development Coordinators can be assisted in the provision of practical support for women where conflict has caused so much hurt and disruption to life. Our role in this is to raise the necessary funds to enable the Forum to take place-at this stage the cost is estimated to be around \$65,000.00.

If the Forum does not take place our contribution will go towards the support of Community Development Coordinators in the countries involved, to enable them to continue the work they are already doing in this area. You can find a short article in the current *Families Worldwide* about how the CDCs in DR Congo are seeking to address the problem of rape in that country (page 38). This is one example of the kind of work Mothers' Union is seeking to support and extend. This is a wonderful opportunity to fulfil our 4th and 5th Objects, "To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children" and "to help those whose lives have met with adversity". I would encourage you to do all you can to promote this new Project



NQ Diocesan Gathering on Thursday 1s. Sept. 2016

"NORTHERN OUTREACH" and "TRAINING FUND FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN" GRANTS

This year we have \$38,000 available in our NO Fund and \$14,000 in the TFIW and we have received requests from our three northern dioceses for a number of excellent projects. It is always extremely difficult to have to choose which requests to fulfil, given our limited resources. Therefore I would like to be so bold as to suggest that we encourage all our members to make a **special effort** to increase the amount of money we have available, not just this year, but ongoing. If every member set aside just \$1 per week, (that is, about the cost of just one cup of coffee **a month**) over and above any special fund-raising efforts dioceses and branches might make, we could double the amount of money available. I assure you that it would be well spent and much appreciated by our brothers and sisters who live in isolated areas of our vast country—let's outdo ourselves in generosity as we give all our special Funds and the new Project our whole-hearted support.

(I have just learned that one region in NQ has pledged to do this-can the rest of us also take up the challenge?)

VISITS TO DIOCESES

Don't forget that I love visiting dioceses to share with you about our Overseas and Northern Outreach work. If cost is a difficulty, remember that you can ask MU Australia to help. Sometimes dioceses have joined together, or planned consecutive events, so costs can be shared. Remember also that I love hearing from you with news of anything you might be doing to promote and celebrate our connection with others through Mothers Union.

With love in Christ,

Christine