

## **Armidale Youth Futures: Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**Wednesday 11 November 2015, 7.30 pm at St Peter's Cathedral Parish Centre, Armidale**

1. The meeting began at 7.35 pm with prayer led by Les Moreman; David Wysel was in the chair.

**Attendance:** Philip Ward (Secretary), David Wysel (Management Committee), Julie Tadman (MC), Rob Dewhurst (Vice President), Les Moreman (SRE teacher), Merrilyn Pearson, Catherine Dodds, Suzanne Robertson, Gwenda Lewis, Keith Lewis, Barbara East, Graham East, Linda Wysel, Margaret Teitzel, Julie Cook, Kevin Tadman, Cory Dewhurst. Angelo Cavaliere (Generate Ministries).

2. **Apologies:** Rob McClenaghan (Treasurer), Jason Riley (MC), Darrell Parker (MC), Sue McClenaghan, Sharyn Holmes, Margaret Gourlay, Andrew Coburn, Gill Seglenieks, Andrew East, Beth Wainwaring.

3. **Confirmation of Minutes of AGM, 22 October 2014:** Minutes of the 2014 AGM were approved by the members of the association.

Moved: David Wysel; Seconded: Suzanne Robertson.

4. **Business Arising from Minutes:** None.

### **5. 2014 Reports.**

#### **5.1 Les Moreman (SRE teacher)**

Les Moreman tabled a written report which he read to the meeting. 2015 has been a year of great stability for AYF with much to praise God for although across the state SRE has been under attack. In summary the report noted:

- *Teaching:* Classes for years 7 & 8 have continued at AHS at six per term per class. Participation has dropped to 60–70% which is consistent with rates of SRE in primary schools. Classes with years 7 & 8 have continued on a fortnightly basis at DHS. Participation at DHS remains steady at 40–50%.
- *Seminars in years 9 & 10:* The model used in 2014 has continued with 5 hours per term for each year group. God has provided new volunteer helpers. Some of the seminars have been presented by external Christian organisations: Presbyterian Youth NSW, Focus on the Family, Covenant Players, Jesus Racing and Word of Life.
- *ISCF:* Is continuing in both schools at lunch time meetings. DHS—group has grown again to around 10 students and the senior students remained until the end of their school year. The group has been ably assisted by a teacher, Amy Gow. AHS—senior students are leading with a growing number of younger students.
- *School Life:* Opportunities to be involved in school sport, excursions and school community events have continued in 2015.
- *The Future:* Excited for where God will lead AYF. It was clear to Les that it was time to move on from Armidale. He felt sure that the new teacher appointed would be a great asset. In his five years as the SRE teacher Les sought to firmly establish the teaching of SRE. This has been achieved and it is unlikely that either school will seek to close it down. The new task is 'to build on the establishment of SRE's place in our school and Christian community and work on the establishment of its function'. Les thanked the past and current members of the AYF Management Committee for their passion and vision and encouraged them to continue to labour in confidence.

Questions/comments for Les Moreman from the meeting were then invited.

*Merrilyn Pearson* asked if any students had made commitments. *Les Moreman* answered yes, a handful had done so.

*Suzanne Robertson* asked about the current political situation in relation to SRE. In answer it was noted that Angelo Cavaliere (SRE advisor with Generate for country NSW) would speak on this later in the meeting.

*Suzanne Robertson* asked what Les M would be doing after completing his time in Armidale. *Les Moreman* said that he and his family would be returning to Evans Head where he would be employed 3 days a week as an SRE teacher (years K–12) and 2 days a week as a ministry assistant and youth worker in the Presbyterian church.

*Julie Cook* (mother of students) thanked Les for his ministry in the schools.

David Wysel thanked Les on behalf of the MC.

### 5.2 Rob McClenaghan (Treasurer)

Rob McClenaghan was unable to be at the meeting but had prepared a financial report for the year ending 30 June 2015 which was presented by David Wysel.

- Operating income for the year was \$78,552.70 with \$53,327.40 in gifts and donations for which the Christian community was thanked.
- After expenses the Annual Dinner raised \$10,226.00 and the Garage Sale raised \$6,427.50. Interest income was \$2,246.75.
- Main expenses were payments to Generate Ministries (for SRE teacher employment including on costs and essential insurances) and expenses associated with the Annual Dinner.
- Total expenses were \$72,727.57 which left a cash profit for the year of \$5,825.13.
- Net assets of the association as at 30 June 2015: \$84,384.89 held mainly in term deposits.
- Although AYF is not required by law to have the accounts audited Robert Locke (Chartered Accountant) has reviewed the accounts for the Association.

There were no questions asked concerning the Treasurer's report. David Wysel moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted. This motion was seconded by Cory Dewhurst and passed unanimously.

### 5.3 Rob Dewhurst (President)

Rob Dewhurst tabled a written report and made some comments. In summary the report noted:

- 2015 the most stable year we have seen in AYF for some years. Relations with the high schools have continued to improve. It has also been the first full year of seminars for years 8 & 9.
- State Government review of SRE was carried out during the year with the report expected to be released on 31 December.
- An issue during the year was a sustained attack on some aspects of the SRE curriculum by groups unsympathetic to SRE. This resulted in much media attention and an ill-considered reaction from the DEC which was later reversed. This was not an issue locally.
- The Management Committee remains stretched with six members and only one woman (Rob Dewhurst, Rob McClenaghan, David Wysel, Jason Riley, Philip Ward and Julie Tadman). The AMF representative is Rev Darrell Parker. The main roles of the MC are the oversight of the SRE teacher, what happens in the schools and fund raising responsibilities.
- Main fund-raising events are the Annual Dinner and the Garage Sale. Significant funds are raised at these events and without them our budget would not be met. Rob thanked all the people who helped with the events, in particular Rob Baker who donated art works which were auctioned at the dinner and Graham Truscott for his organisational skills with both the dinner and the garage sale.
- Rob thanked Les Moreman for his commitment to SRE over the last five years. Under his guidance SRE has moved from a fledgling ministry to one that is accepted in both schools.
- The SRE teacher to replace Les is Matt Mulready.
- Discussions are currently taking place with the Armidale Ministers' Fellowship (AMF) to see whether a more co-ordinated approach to the management of SRE from K-12 might be developed.

Rob Dewhurst moved the acceptance of his report. This motion was seconded by Lynda Wysel and passed unanimously.

Questions/comments for Rob Dewhurst from the meeting were then invited.

*Barb East* asked about the 'amalgamation' of SRE in primary and high schools. *Rob Dewhurst* said that he had been approached by the AMF to see if AYF can develop the co-ordination of SRE in order to help SRE flourish at the primary school level where students are dropping out. *Merrilyn Pearson* noted that when pupils leave SRE they take friends with them. Parents and politics have become bigger issues. *Julie Cook* mentioned the rise of Ethics classes. *Lynda Wysel* noted the ambiguity of enrolment forms for pupils entering high school. *Julie Tadman* (who works in a primary school office) said that the form had changed. *Angelo Cavaliere* explained that officially the form has again reverted to the old 'opt out' format where if a parent does not answer the optional question re SRE the school has to send a letter to the parent asking for their preference. Churches are able to add a letter to this explaining SRE. If no return note is sent back to the school by the parent then the child is included in SRE. Schools should be now using this form.

*Graham East* asked how the existing small AYF MC would be able to take on the task of helping to co-ordinate primary SRE. *Rob Dewhurst* noted that at this stage it was only a discussion. If the idea went ahead the existing MC would need to be expanded and the AMF would also need to be involved.

*Barb East* asked why the AMF has asked for help from AYF. *Rob Dewhurst* believed that the current primary SRE co-ordinating group is working well but the clergy are not able to devote sufficient time to this area of ministry.

*Lynda Wysel* noted that the actual SRE teaching in primary schools is going well. She believes that the SRE teachers should be involved in any discussions. *Rob Dewhurst* mentioned that there is also a financial issue and that the AMF would like to see all SRE under one umbrella organisation but no firm decisions had yet been made.

*Merrilyn Pearson* asked if AYF would be involved in finding actual SRE teachers. *Rob Dewhurst* thought this would not be the case. Although there were no firm plans the management of the teaching would not be handled directly by AYF MC. It was envisaged that it would exercise an oversight role. He thanked the meeting for its thoughts and discussion.

## **6. Questions/General Business**

*Graham East* asked about the proposed review of the AYF Constitution. *Rob Dewhurst* said that although the MC was still aiming to do so the amount of more pressing matters for its attention meant it had not yet happened.

*Catherine Dodds* asked about more regular prayer meetings for the work of SRE. *Rob Dewhurst* agreed that he would like to see more prayer but the previous lunch time meeting had not been a very successful arrangement. He noted that in the future prayer for primary SRE might also be included if the two ministry areas were more centrally administered.

## **7. Elections of Management Committee members**

David Wysel noted that the meeting was only required to elect three positions: President, Secretary, and Treasurer. He conducted the elections. He noted that all the existing office holders were willing to stand again. He also noted that other positions can be appointed by the MC as required.

*President:* Rob Dewhurst was nominated by Lynda Wysel and seconded by Merrilyn Pearson. This being the only nomination Rob Dewhurst was elected.

*Secretary:* Philip Ward was nominated by Graham East and seconded by Cory Dewhurst. This being the only nomination Philip Ward was elected.

*Treasurer:* Rob McClenaghan was nominated by Cory Dewhurst and seconded by Catherine Dodds. This being the only nomination Rob McClenaghan was elected.

## **8. The meeting was addressed by Angelo Cavaliere (Generate SRE worker)**

- Angelo explained his work is to assist local Christian communities to catch a vision for SRE and employ a teacher (even small towns such as Bogabilla and Wilcannia). This is for high school SRE only. Some local teachers teach primary SRE. There are four primary schools offering SRE on the high school model.
- Only 50 schools without SRE in country NSW.
- In Vic militant atheists from the group Fairness in Religions in School have attacked SRI in that state and especially the provider Access Ministries and pressured the government to shut down SRE in that state's public schools.
- This fight is now coming to NSW. The group has met with the DEC. They raised issues such as a testimony about cancer and lessons on gender saying they were beyond the scope of SRE. They also misrepresented Patricia Weerakoon on the issue of teen sex and the DEC banned her material without a proper enquiry. This was made public before Christian SRE providers were informed. In the end the DEC reversed its position and assured the Sydney Anglican bishop that this kind of unilateral action would not happen again. The whole incident damaged the SRE cause.
- The SRE review saw 17,000 responses which were mainly positive. Not a lot will change. The review will probably report that SRE is working well.
- Asked for prayer that SRE providers would be bold and seek wisdom rather than be in fear.

- The anti-SRE groups are picking on smaller issues to discredit the whole system. However they are unable to stop SRE giving the gospel message although they may impede Christian teaching on aspects of life and culture, eg, issues of gender and morality.
- Local SRE boards need to be careful with use of printed material that ‘loaded terms’ are not used.
- Safe Schools programme is an ongoing issue. Only 3% of bullying is related to same sex issues but a powerful lobby group is pushing an agenda for changes to dress codes, use of toilets etc. Go to Australian Christian Lobby website for information. The Federal Government is funding the Safe Schools programme through state Education departments. There are elements of the NSW curriculum that Christians would not be happy about. Parents have a right to comment and complain.
- There have been changes to ISCF: students have to have parental permission to be involved, the school principal has to give approval for a group to operate, no outside people can help run it (it has to be either the SRE teacher or a school teacher).
- Sinner’s prayer is not allowed to be prayed on school grounds. Where a student wants to make a commitment of some kind they should be directed to parents if they are Christian and if not, directed to churches or church youth groups.
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Rob Dewhurst thanked Angelo Cavaliere for his input.

David Wysel thanked all who attended and for their prayers and continued support of SRE. Meeting closed at 9.00 pm with prayers led by Rob Dewhurst. The meeting was followed by supper.