

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

**Wednesday 23 November 2013, 7.30 pm at St Peter's Cathedral Parish Centre, Armidale**

1. The meeting began at 7.35 pm with prayer led by Rev Andrew Coburn; David Wysel was in the chair and welcomed all attending.

**Attendance:** Philip Ward (Secretary), David Wysel, Rob Dewhurst (Vice President), Barbara East, Andrew Coburn (President), Les Moreman (SRE teacher), Tara Moreman, Simon Reeve, Peter Galbraith, Diana Riley, Jason Riley, Polly Wong, Grant Ramsey, Margaret O'Connor, Peter Holford, Andrew East, Judith Antill, Beth Mainwaring, Cory Dewhurst, Merrilyn Pearson, Catherine Dodds.

2. **Apologies:** Keith Cleland, Robert Goss, Graham East, Linda Wysel, Stephen Williams, Margaret Teitzel, Peter Moffat, Rob McClenaghan (Treasurer), Pamela Roach.

3. **Confirmation of Minutes of AGM, 10 October 2012:** Minutes of the 2012 AGM were approved by the members of the association with some spelling corrections.

Moved: Barb East; Seconded: Andrew Coburn.

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

### **5. 2011 Reports.**

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

Les Moreman thanked those in attendance and noted that it was encouraging to have people supporting the ministry. He tabled a written report which he read to the meeting. In summary the report noted:

- Classes with years 7 & 8 have continued fortnightly in both schools. Attendance at AHS is about 90% (similar to 2012) and at DHS has increased to about 50%.
- Year 6 class at Ben Venue also taught with hopes that this will increase SRE at DHS in 2014.
- Seminars have continued for years 9 & 10, relying on external groups because they have been available and local volunteers have not been available. Term 1—SMBC group, Term 2—Young Life and their guest, American Hip Hop artist, Brady Goodwin, Term 3—Word of Life, Term 4—will be Focus on the Family. (This visit is made possible by a grant of \$1,000 from Armidale Dumaresq Council and the group will present a public parents' seminar on Sunday 3 November 2013. The seminars have been of a high standard and provided talking points for Les with senior students.
- Christmas & Easter assemblies held in each school with Andrew East (Church of Christ) speaking at Christmas and Darryl Parker (St Mark's chapel, UNE) speaking at Easter. Assemblies were very well received at AHS, with teachers attending and some student musical presentations. In December this year Christmas assemblies will be held with a drama performance from Presbyterian Youth NSW in partnership with St Paul's Presbyterian church in Armidale.
- Partnership with Young Life strengthened in 2013, helping in seminars and running pancake breakfasts at DHS.
- In term 3 established a network for youth ministries in Armidale. This was in part in response to a decline in youth work in some churches and an attempt to support what work is being undertaken. Les is keen to see AYF play a larger role in supporting pastoral care, evangelism and discipleship for school students by linking them to church groups.
- Junior leaders have been emerging in the schools and supported through AYF. In July Les ran an ISCF Leadership Conference at Lake Keepit with 3 students from DHS and 5 from AHS attending along with students from TAS and Tamworth schools. Helping Christian students to be visible in the schools is a good way to provide support for other students. Each week Les meets with 11 students from years 10 & 11 at DHS training them as ISCF leaders.
- ISCF continues well in each school.
- Switch-On Camp will again be run to provide follow up for SRE students (at least 30 students expected to attend).
- 2013 has been a challenging year. Thanks to Management Committee (MC).
- Excited about 2014 and the new opportunities it will bring.

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

*Margaret O'Connor* asked for more details on how students are referred from SRE to local churches. *Les Moreman* replied that the approach was to target and invest in senior students and peer leaders. Les and church youth workers can then work with these students to help connect and support younger students. A number of non-Christian students attended the Switched-On Camp and were able to connect with youth leaders. Further opportunities to follow up students with pastoral care needs through outside groups such as Christianity Explored and Alpha courses.

*Simon Reeve* asked if Les would continue to take Ben Venue year 6 scripture and which high school will the current year 6 students go to in 2014. *Les Moreman* commented that he has shared teaching the year 6 class with Merrilyn Pearson. It is hard to say but perhaps half the students will go to Duval and the rest to O'Connor and then Armidale high. His level of involvement will depend on his SRE timetable and level of work. He has had great success getting to know students which will hopefully lead to a greater number taking up SRE in high school. He hopes to visit all year 6 scripture classes before the end of the year to talk about SRE.

*David Wysel* thanked Les on behalf of the MC. He said Les was finding increasing opportunities to work in the schools and that the MC had every confidence in him and his work. The meeting responded with applause.

### **5.2 David Wysel (Past-treasurer)**

David Wysel tabled the financial results for the year ending 30 June 2013 and gave a brief report.

- Noted that we now have to report to both the NSW Dept. of Fair Trading as well as the ACNC.
- Total current assets were \$68,104.93 (including 3 term deposits of \$31,555.58). A projector valued at \$1,621.00 was the only fixed asset. There were no liabilities and total assets were \$69,725.93.
- Main income was gifts and donations, garage sale and fund-raising dinner for a total of \$87,321.62.
- Main expense was GenR8 ministries (through which AYF employs Les). This was \$51,821.09 made up of salary, on costs and fees. Other expenses were training and courses for Les (\$1,929.74) and conferences for Les (\$1920.98) and expenses related to the fund-raising dinner.

*Simon Reeve* asked what the expense entry labelled Special donation—IWB was for (\$4,900)? *David Wysel* explained why and how the Interactive White Board was purchased. It was provided to AHS to assist in teaching and to allow Les to have a home room for all SRE classes.

- It was noted that the monthly income figures fluctuate markedly so there is not an even cash flow.
- The treasurer noted that the Association had sufficient resources on hand to continue the ministry in the short term.

Questions/comments for David Wysel from the meeting were then invited.

*Andrew East* asked if income from garage sale had gone up or not? *David Wysel* answered that this year it was about \$600 down on the previous year but the income from the annual dinner was up slightly.

David Wysel moved the acceptance of his report. Andrew East seconded it and it was passed unanimously.

### **5.3 Rev Andrew Coburn (President & Armidale Ministers' Fellowship Representative)**

Andrew Coburn tabled a written report. In summary the report noted:

- Read 1 Cor 9:22 where Paul says that he has 'become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some'. Les's work in the schools is undertaken in this understanding; that he 'connects' with the students and staff as he presents the Gospel and makes it relevant. We rejoice that the Education Act 1990 allows this access.
- AYF continues to encounter opposition and resistance in the schools such that the Education Act and the DEC's Implementation Procedures are not being followed. Andrew asked for continued prayer and noted the lunchtime prayer on Wednesday at the Baptist church.
- The DEC released a new Religious Education Policy and Implementation Procedures on 1 June which clarified and supported the state provisions for SRE in schools. In particular it defined the minimum time to be allowed for each student each week (not less than 30 minutes and not more than 1 hour).
- The MC has continued to actively negotiate with the schools to see the new policy implemented. This has been difficult and unsuccessful to date. The MC is now approaching officers of the DEC and in conjunction with ICCOREIS and GenR8 will take our claims to the ministerial level if necessary. Our aim is to have weekly lessons in grades 7—10 in each school. Currently we have only fortnightly classes in years 7 & 8 and a seminar each term for years 9 & 10. This falls very

short of the DEC policy. We thank Les for his perseverance in the midst of an unsettled environment. Andrew asked for pray for the MC in the negotiations.

- Andrew thanked the MC for working as a team and in particular for their work and support during his and his wife's recent severe illnesses.
- We thank God for the way in which Les is raising the profile of the message of Jesus in the two high schools. In classes, chatting with students in the playground and through ISCF Les is spreading the Gospel. He is held in high regard at both schools.
- Finally Andrew reminded the meeting that AYF is the combined ministry of all the churches in Armidale caring for the future of youth in the city. He thanked all involved not merely for supporting AYF but for being AYF.

Questions/comments for Andrew Coburn from the meeting were then invited.

*Andrew East* asked (1) what explanation do the schools give for not complying with the DEC policy?

*Andrew Coburn* answered that they simply resist the need to fulfil it by repeating that they are fulfilling it.

We need to make them accept that they are not. (2) Is Adam Marshall sympathetic? Andrew commented that at this stage AYF is seeking to inform him of the challenges we face. (3) Is Armidale a 'battle front'?

Yes, very much so. *Barb East* noted that other groups similar to AYF are also pushing hard, eg, Kyogle where the Minister, Adrian Piccoli, has intervened to enforce SRE. We hope to ride the shock waves without the need for ministerial intervention in Armidale.

*Merrilyn Pearson* asked if resistance was coming from parents. *Andrew C* replied that it was at all levels in the schools but in fact many parents would not have an opinion.

*Margaret O'Connor* asked if the policy is a mandatory requirement. *Andrew C* replied that it was as part of the NSW Education Act 1990.

*Margaret O'Connor* asked what percentage of the mandated time allowance is being made available in Armidale? *Les M* answered that it was about 1/3 of the minimum time for years 7 & 8 and about one sixth for years 9 & 10 (even less when loss of time due to excursions etc was taken into account).

*Margaret O'Connor* asked how typical the Armidale experience was. *Andrew C* replied that AYF is doing it very tough, other employing committees in other towns are able to look at issues such as curriculum development while we are hitting our heads against the wall of opposition and resistance.

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

David Wysel noted that the meeting was only required to elect four positions: President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer. He conducted the elections.

*President:* Rob Dewhurst was nominated by David Wysel and seconded by Philip Ward. Rob Dewhurst was unwilling to accept nomination and in the absence of other nominations this position was not filled.

*Vice-president:* In the absence of nominations this position was not filled.

*Secretary:* Philip Ward was nominated by Robert Dewhurst and seconded by Andrew Coburn. This being the only nomination Philip Ward was elected.

*Treasurer:* Rob McClenaghan was nominated by David Wysel and seconded by Barb East. (Rob McClenaghan was not present but had earlier indicated a willingness to stand for this position.) This being the only nomination Rob McClenaghan was elected.

## **7. Questions/General Business**

7.1 *Andrew East* asked if AYF is successful in gaining more teaching hours how will it respond? *Andrew C* replied that we would move to employ another worker. This would be a step of faith as although we have a small surplus at the moment we would need to increase our income.

7.2 *Merrilyn Pearson* asked about the lack of a President and Vice-president. *Andrew C* noted that this would be addressed by the MC and that the MC worked very much as a team and the work would continue but that these positions would need to be filled.

7.3 *Andrew East* asked who was on the MC. Andrew Coburn, Rob Dewhurst, Barb East, David Wysel, Rob McClenaghan, Philip Ward, Peter Holford, Jason Riley. *Andrew C* noted that there are 9 broad categories of activities undertaken by the MC including fund-raising, IT, negotiations with schools, prayer, church liaison. There are many opportunities to serve: be a church representative, work under a team leader, be a MC member. *Rob D* noted that for example Di Riley had led a team to organise the annual fund-raising

dinner for which he thanked her. *Barb East* commented that some tasks required short periods of concentrated work rather than a long ongoing commitment.

7.4 *Simon Reeve* asked if the work increased did the MC have plans for increase in revenue? *Barb East* replied that the MC was very stretched at the moment but that we would hope and plan to do so. *David Wysel* noted that the MC has already begun to examine the implications of an increase in the ministry. *Andrew Coburn* noted that although AYF does the work the churches are the base of the ministry. He believed that resources will be provided as needed as the Christians of Armidale 'gave legs' to what the churches are doing in ministry. *Philip Ward* reiterated that the difficulties AYF is encountering are spiritual and that prayer is the answer to overcoming them.

7.5 *Margaret O'Connor* asked if primary school scripture was part of AYF. No, it is organised by the churches under a different programme.

7.6 *Margaret O'Connor* asked if there has been any increase in SRE over the years. *Rob Dewhurst* replied that from 2000—2007 there was no SRE, from 2007—11 years 7 & 8 once a fortnight, from 2012 seminars have also been held for 2 hours once a term for years 9 & 10.

7.7 *Andrew East* asked how SRE came to be allowed in schools. *Rob Dewhurst* gave a short answer that it came about as a result of Anglican schools agreeing to become state-run. They only did so with the provision of access to the students for regular religious instruction.

7.8 *Catherine Dodds* asked how many SRE teachers were employed across the state. *Barb East* answered that about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of public high schools now had SRE teachers employed.

David Wysel thanked all who attended and for their prayers and continued support. He also asked Simon Reeve to convey to Stephen Williams our thanks for the use of the Parish Centre. Meeting closed at 8.55 pm with prayers led by Rob Dewhurst. The meeting was followed by supper.