

**Armidale Youth Futures: Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 19 October 2016, 7.30 pm at St Peter's Cathedral Parish Centre, Armidale**

1. The meeting began at 7.35 pm with welcome from David Wysel who was in the chair.

Attendance: Philip Ward (Secretary), David Wysel (Management Committee), Julie Tadman (MC), Jason Riley (MC), Rob Dewhurst (Vice President), Matt Mulready (SRE teacher), Merrilyn Pearson, Catherine Dodds, Suzanne Robertson, Gwenda Lewis, Keith Lewis, Barbara East, Linda Wysel, Margaret Teitzel, Kevin Tadman, Cory Dewhurst, Graham Farley, Andrew East, Chris Brennan, Graeme Truscott, Rob Ponsonby, Beth Mainwaring, Sharyn Holmes.

2. **Apologies:** Nicky Windeyer, Rob McClenaghan (Treasurer), Sue McClenaghan, Peter Holford, Graham East.

3. **Confirmation of Minutes of AGM, 11 November 2015:** Minutes of the 2015 AGM were approved by the members of the association.

Moved: Catherine Dodds; Seconded: Jason Riley.

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

5. 2016 Reports.

5.1 Matt Mulready (SRE teacher)

(Copy of report read to the meeting by Matt Mulready)

Having commenced teaching SRE in Armidale and Duval High Schools at the beginning of 2016 I have undertaken a steep learning curve getting to know school students and staff as well as teaching a new SRE curriculum. From the start of the year until now I have seen many students' attitude soften toward SRE, with many students asking deeper questions. I have been aware of God's provision in many situations this year. Our family have been made very welcome by the AYF community, through individuals, the AYF Committee and supporting churches.

SRE Classes and Seminars

Structure

Armidale High School and Duval High School continued in 2016 to provide access to students for purposes of Special Religious Education (SRE) as listed below;

Years 7–8	Fortnightly lessons; 55 minutes (AHS) and 60 minutes (DHS)
Years 9–10	2 seminars each term; 110 minutes (AHS) and 120 minutes (DHS), plus one shorter seminar each term; 55 minutes (AHS) and 60 minutes (DHS)

Seminars

SRE is offered to Year 9 and 10 students in a seminar format. In order to facilitate the double-period seminar format we require the help of a number of volunteers to lead small discussion groups. All SRE helpers have completed Working With Children Checks and have obtained authorisation from an authorised SRE provider. The SRE seminar discussion group leaders for 2016 have included:

Merrilyn Pearson	Armidale City Church
Maria Craven	St Mark's Anglican Church
Michael Hemans	St Mark's Anglican Church
Robert Baker	St Mark's Anglican Church
Sam Johnson	St Mark's Anglican Church
Ted & Helen Rollinson	St Mark's Anglican Church
Eliza Shaw	St Peter's Anglican Cathedral
Jonathan Peart	St Peter's Anglican Cathedral

The AYF committee and I would like to thank the committed team who have lead SRE discussion groups in God's service. We also thank those churches which have released staff to work with the SRE team. As we enter into Term 4, however, there is a need for more discussion group leaders as many of our helpers have either moved out of town or will be unavailable.

Curriculum

In 2016 all SRE classes and seminars have followed the *Think Faith* SRE curriculum produced by CEP (Christian Education Publications). This curriculum has been authorised by St Marks Anglican Church and cross-authorised by all AYF member churches. The Bible is the foundation of all lessons in *Think Faith*. *Think Faith* teaches the major events, concepts and doctrines of the Bible. *Think Faith* utilises contemporary educational theory and provides a platform for quality teaching and learning that encourages students to use higher order thinking in their lessons. A detailed coverage is available on the internet at <https://highschoolsre.net>.

Inter-School Christian Fellowship Groups

ISCF groups continued to meet at both schools for weekly meetings with the aim to provide Christian encouragement and develop Christian leadership skills amongst those young people who already are believers and to provide opportunity for seekers to learn about Christ and the Gospel. Each ISCF meeting includes an aspect of Bible teaching and discussion, fun and food. In 2016 the Bible teaching has included; the Gospel of Luke, Philippians, Bridge to Life gospel outline, the parable of the lost son, and Psalms.

I would like to thank Miss Amy Gow, maths teacher at Duval High School, for her continued dedication as an ISCF leader in 2016. She has also started a Bible study group for year 9 girls. This developed from the visit by Word of Life and the combined youth event they organized.

Questions/comments for Matt Mulready from the meeting were then invited.

Graeme Truscott asked how significant are Christian teachers in the school? *Matt Mulready* answered that it was very noticeable when Christian teachers are overtly Christian, e.g., ISCF or doing their teaching job very well. At DHS the Christian teachers have a regular prayer time. *Sharyn Holmes* noted that teacher Amy Gow took part in the Young Life study camp.

Graeme Truscott asked if there was a different curriculum for isolated schools. *Matt Mulready* answered that isolated schools in communities that cannot provide an SRE teacher now have access to video-based material prepared by Generate.

Barb East asked what percentage of students attended SRE. *Matt Mulready* said that in both schools about 50% of years 7 and 8 attended lessons. There are slightly more on the rolls but absences from school lower the actual attendances in class. Yr 9: (AHS) 5060%, (DHS) 50%; Yr 10: (AHS) 70%, (DHS) 40%.

Andrew East asked how have the students responded? *Matt Mulready* replied that there have not been a great number of commitments but the level of questioning has become deeper in the last few months. Students have moved from asking is the Bible true to issues of personal faith.

Barb East commented that it was great to hear about the Bible study group as a result of the combined youth events. Was it possible to promote this among students? *Matt Mulready* said that it could be promoted through the lesson worksheets and by seminar leaders.

Rob Dewhurst asked how are the seminars are working overall? Are they a reasonable educational mechanism? *Matt Mulready* answered that he was unsure at the start. It is hard work to keep students going for 2 hours. One hour seminars more frequently would be better as it would allow a greater rapport with students. *Barb East* asked if this was feasible. *Matt Mulready* noted that he had put forward a proposal including timetable solutions but the schools had rejected it.

Merrilyn Pearson commented on her positive experiences as a seminar leader.

Graeme Truscott asked what other means of building relationships exist in the schools. *Matt Mulready* noted his involvement in school sport and DHS year 7 Warrumbungles trip. *Lynda Wysel* asked if these opportunities could be expanded. *Matt Mulready* answered that AHS had a trip for years 7 & 8 which ran at the same time as the DHS trip and that also his first priority was to be present to take SRE lessons. *Graeme Truscott* asked if other adult could volunteer to assist on school trips. *Matt Mulready* thought they could if they met the criteria for volunteering.

David Wysel thanked Matt for his report.

5.2 Rob McClenaghan (Treasurer)

Rob McClenaghan was unable to be at the meeting but had prepared the financial report below for the year ending 30 June 2016 which was read by David Wysel.

As treasurer of AYF I would like to thank you for your generosity in supporting this very important ministry. I believe your money has been used wisely. I have no doubt that as a result of your giving God's kingdom will have continued to grow and prosper in both Armidale High and Duval. Only the Lord will know how this ministry has and will affect the lives of those it touches, but I would imagine those effects would be profound.

As you can see from the report for this financial year we have a deficit of \$7,413.39. We raised \$82,287.97 over the 12 month period which is \$4,035.27 more than the previous period. However our spending increased by \$17,573.79 to total \$90,301.36. Some of this cost is a one off expense—\$3,880 for removalist fees for Matt's transfer from Sydney to Armidale. However we do have ongoing budgeted Generate Ministry expenses of \$82,150, \$71,604.72 of which are related directly to Matt's wages. The remaining \$10,545.28 relate to Generate levies etc.

So as you can see we are just covering our Generate Ministry expenses, the remaining expenses are largely running costs, fund raising expenses etc. The balance sheet however remains in a healthy state, with some \$75,350.50 held in term and cash deposits.

It is vital that the Christian community of Armidale remain mindful of this ministry, both in prayer and in giving of their time and resources, especially as we look towards the possibility of combining Primary SRE with the high school ministries. Thanks again for your generosity.

Questions/comments relating to the Treasurer's report were then invited from the meeting.

Sharyn Holmes asked about the possible combining of Primary and High School SRE. *David Wysel* reported that this would be mentioned in the President's report.

Graeme Truscott asked what is Generate Ministries? *Rob Dewhurst* explained that Matt Mulready is technically employed by Generate which is a group formed by Presbyterian Youth, Baptist Union, Anglican Youthwork and Scripture Union to promote government-funded school chaplains and SRE teachers (180–200). It is the main organisation promoting SRE in NSW. There are advantages for AYF in the provision of insurance cover and managing the payment of Matt's salary. We also pay Generate up to \$7,000 per year as a donation to help it fund the expansion of SRE and Chaplaincy in NSW. God has blessed us and we want to help others provide SRE.

Graeme Truscott asked if the accounts were correct in showing no liabilities. *David Wysel* confirmed this was the case.

Suzanne Robertson asked if the garage sale income had increased. *Rob Dewhurst* noted that it had gone up by app. \$400 but it was a great deal of work. Clothing had been largely dropped as a sale category as it was very hard work for small returns. The sale is good to run not just for the money raised but as a way of promoting AYF and SRE to both the church and the wider community. *Sharyn Holmes* asked if more material was going to the tip after the sale. *Rob Dewhurst* confirmed this was the case as the Salvation Army were not taking as much of the excess as they used to. *Kevin Tadman* noted that there were a lot of damaged electrical goods. *Rob Dewhurst* agreed but also noted that this was still a good area for sales. He would like to introduce some new categories, perhaps garden sculpture. *Graeme Truscott* asked if there was any opportunity to promote the churches and AYF perhaps via leaflets at the sale. He noted that it was a great way of promoting unity across the churches. *Rob Dewhurst* agreed and also noted that all SRE fund-raising events needed to be examined for relevance and methods of operation.

5.3 Pastor Rob Ponsonby (AMF representative)

David Wysel welcomed Pastor Ponsonby to the meeting who said how encouraging it was to see the churches coming together to reach young people. As an AMF member he was interested to hear about the SRE ministry. The AMF was also very eager to assist in any way. David Wysel thanked Rob for his words.

5.4 Rob Dewhurst (President)

(Copy of report read to the meeting by Rob Dewhurst)

Overview

The most significant changes to SRE in the last 12 months has been the resignation of Les and the employment of Matt Mulready in the SRE teacher position. It has been an honour to welcome Matt into the

position. He has come with experience in SRE teaching and his moving into the role has been fairly seamless and without incident. Thank you Matt.

Apart from the change in teacher the period of time on which we are reporting, from July 2015–June 2016, contained very few surprises and the relationships with the schools has remained in good order. The relationship with Duval has continued to improve. I had by the most positive end of year meeting with Mr Stafford Cameron that I have had the privilege of attending. Armidale High School has however been a little more difficult due to Anne Matley being on long term leave and a number of interim principals having served in her position.

In the Schools

Matt has elaborated on this.

Politics

At a political level there has been a review of SRE conducted by the state government in 2015 with the report having been expected to be released on 31 December 2015. It still has not been released and I nor anyone I know has been able to find out any information on what is contained within that report. The premier did however make a positive statement with regard to SRE in the parliament recently, so the politics surrounding SRE of a few years ago seems to have died down for the moment.

Curriculum remains an issue, however. This year we have seen the introduction of the beta version of the ‘think Faith’ curriculum which has been developed by a number of protestant denominations in conjunction with Generate ministries. Matt Mulready was one of the contributing writers to this curriculum. So that has contributed to an easy introduction of the new curriculum in both schools. One of the great aspects of this curriculum is that it provides approved movie clips, video clips, youtube clips etc making the selection of these much easier for the teacher.

I attended the Generate conference at the end of June with Matt and came home extremely heartened by the leadership there and the direction they are moving. I was very impressed with James Flavin, the new General Manager of Generate Ministries, and his approach. I have therefore invited him to speak next year at our dinner on the 1st April.

Last year at the AGM we had the unexpected attendance of Angelo Cavaliere. Since that time Angelo has been off work on sick leave but has now begun working again with Generate Ministries to establish SRE boards in the least serviced area of the state which is western Sydney. Please pray for Angelo and the strategic work he is doing.

The Management Committee

The Management Committee remains stretched with 6 members: Jason Riley, David Wysel, Rob McClenaghan, Julie Tadman (our only lady), Phil Ward and myself. Darrell Parker was the AMF rep on the committee over the reporting year but since his move to Tamworth in September this position is now being filled by Rev Andrew Coburn from Armidale District Baptist Church. Andrew’s time is very stretched and his role will be one of oversight and reporting to the AMF only.

Our principle roles at the moment as a management committee are the oversight of Matt, what happens in the schools, championing for SRE in the schools and the fund raising responsibilities. Fund raising and running of events now takes up a large portion of the work of the management committee. The management committee continues to be low in numbers and the work load is supported by a few. Without the help of people from outside the committee itself the committee would not have been able to meet its responsibilities. It is always a risk to name names as you always forget someone but at this point I would like to thank the partners of all the committee members who put in an incredible amount of work and support to those on the M/C and also particularly Graham Truscott, Rob Baker and Gill Seglenieks, who has acted as a minute secretary for the Management Committee.

I would like at this point to thank all the people who helped with the events of the year without whom they just would not have happened. Without the fund raising events we would not come close to reaching our budgets for the year so these remain pivotal to the organization.

Financially we had a loss for the first time in about 5 years. This is going to be an increasing challenge for the years ahead as the cost of running the ministry increases and the monies donated, monies raised from the dinner and garage sale have remain fairly static over the last four years. The dinner raised very similar figures to last year and the garage sale a few hundred dollars more. The dinner and garage sale take a large amount of time and effort so a larger dependence on giving will need to be the way forward. So an emphasis will need to be made on communicating the importance of the SRE ministry to the spreading of the gospel amongst our young people to the Christian community. We will need increased financial support from individuals in the years ahead. I continue to believe we would not have SRE in the high schools except for the prayer support we have been given over the years, especially from Prayer for Armidale.

Prayer breakfasts have not been well attended although remain a vital part of the programme, I would particularly like to thank everyone who attended one of these because prayer is integral to this type of ministry.

The future

As a M/C we will be spending time looking at this over the next month or so. There is a move to bring both primary and secondary SRE in Armidale under one organization. How that would work and what it would look like exactly needs to be thrashed out. The AMF are in favour of such a development and there has been talking amongst the various parties about how it might work.

The new Armidale Regional Council has some Community Development Grants which are currently being considered (applications closed last month) and AYF placed an application with them for a grant to combine primary and secondary SRE into one body. The grant application included monies to employ a person for about 2.5 days per week to oversee the changes. We have heard nothing as yet about that. I do think there is a good argument to see it all under one umbrella. I cited this last year as a possible development and it is slowly gaining momentum.

I expect the program in the high schools to remain unchanged for the next 12months.

Personal Note

On a personal level if I am re-elected as chair of AYF for the coming year this will be my last year. I will plan to remain on the committee after that time as long as there is someone (apart from clergy) who is willing to be chair of the management committee. I feel I have been in the role for long enough and new ideas and inspiration are needed to take SRE forward in Armidale.

I would like to thank everyone for attending tonight, for their prayers, thoughts, donations and many other contributions to AYF over the preceding year. I pray God blesses each and every one of you.

David Wysel thanked Rob for his report.

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

Margaret Teitzel asked for clarification on the possibility of primary and high school SRE being organised under one structure. *Rob Dewhurst* responded by saying that the AMF are very keen on the idea. *Janene Lewers* who is part of the primary SRE team would like to see a part-time position established to administer primary SRE. It can be confusing for churches with two groups. The transition from primary SRE to high school SRE is becoming a problem. One organisational structure might help.

Margaret Teitzel asked if *Matt Mulready* would be teaching year 6 classes. *Matt Mulready* explained that he would not but he would be visiting each year 6 class to introduce himself and high school SRE. *Rob Dewhurst* noted that the enrolment process for high school has been changed a number of times in the last year or so from an opt out to an opt in system and back. *Margaret Teitzel* wondered if ICCOREIS has had any input on enrolment forms. *Rob Dewhurst* answered yes. The Teachers' Federation is totally opposed to

SRE and the staff at DEC are opposed also. The changes to the enrolment forms came out of the DEC. It created such a fuss that the changes were reversed but it does not appear to have been returned entirely to the previous system. Matt Mulready noted that advocacy with the DEC is another aspect of Generate's activities.

6. Questions/General Business

Kevin Tadman commented that the future for SRE looks difficult. Can we encourage local churches to cover any potential financial shortfall? *Chris Brennan* noted there are many calls on church funds which are limited. Visits by the SRE teacher to local churches make a difference. *David Wysel* noted that all churches are contributing and AYF thanks them all. *Graeme Truscott* noted that AYF events are well organised and people support them. *Sharyn Holmes* asked about the level of deputation. *Matt Mulready* said that he has been invited to all churches and has made 7 or 8 visits so far. *Catherine Dodds* suggested a 'Christian Education Week' as a way of raising awareness and funds. *Lynda Wysel* noted that Generate has declared October is SRE month' and a time to concentrate on prayer support and raise awareness across the churches.

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 Graeme Truscott and seconded by Jason Riley. This being the only nomination Rob Dewhurst was elected.

Secretary: Philip Ward was nominated by Rob Dewhurst and seconded by Lynda Wysel. This being the only nomination Philip Ward was elected.

Treasurer: Rob McClenaghan was nominated by David Wysel and seconded by Graeme Truscott. This being the only nomination Rob McClenaghan was elected.

David Wysel thanked all who attended and for their prayers and continued support of SRE and Matt and his role and ministry in the schools. Meeting closed at 8.50 pm with prayers led by Pastor Rob Ponsonby. The meeting was followed by supper.