



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2011

Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I report to you on the past year of the Women's Planning Network.

It has been my second year as president, and we have continued to offer networking events and functions that I think have been beneficial to our members, and given people an opportunity to both develop professionally as well as network within the industry.

I consider the Network's key achievements for 2010/2011 to be:

1. Having more than 100 attendees at our International Women's Day breakfast at Parliament House in March;
2. Running a concurrent event at the PIA National Congress in Tasmania for IWD;
3. Holding other successful events over the year;
4. Awarding the Rising Star scholarship to a worthy winner (and receiving a record number of entries); and
5. Expanding our links with other organisations.

One of the pleasing things about this year is that we have seen a lot of new faces, as well as the regular ones at our events, which is great to see. The more people that find our functions of benefit, the more we can run during the year. We find that running about 6 events a year is about right, but we are always open to new ideas for events.

Our events calendar for the past year has included:

- **October** – Our Planning Week breakfast, held at the Pavilion Café in the Fitzroy Gardens, with Kathy Alexander, City of Melbourne CEO speaking about her role, her achievements in her career, and some of the community planning initiatives that the City of Melbourne are undertaking.
- **December** - Christmas cocktails at BearBrass on Southbank, on a lovely warm evening.
- **March** - International Women's Day breakfast, held at Parliament House, with the new Minister for Planning the Honourable Matthew Guy. We had a record number of attendees, and the Minister certainly was made aware of who we are and what WPN can offer him in his role.
- **March** – IWD breakfast at the PIA National Congress in Hobart.
- **May/June** - An urban design walk, viewing VicUrban's new home at Docklands, and the environmentally sustainable initiatives that it offers in a refurbished heritage building.
- **August** – and here we are at the winter dinner.

We have also been working away in the background on a few new initiatives, including a potential new research project, which we are looking to assist funding of in conjunction with the Commonwealth Association of Planners. And we have been in discussions with the VLGA (Victorian Local Government Association) and WPILGC (Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition) regarding running some joint events in the coming year, given the lead up to local government elections in 2012 and the VLGA's project 'Think Women for Local Government 2012'. Given planning issues are often the reason Councillors nominate for local government in the first place, the VLGA are keen to talk to us and use our knowledge and networks to assist women in running for local government. Another important matter we have been progressing is a new mentoring program with the Victorian Young Planners and PIA, which is about to kick off.

The Committee

The 2010/2011 committee comprised of:

- Caroline Snaidr as Treasurer;
- Clare Mouat, Gilda Di Vincenzo, Picha Djohan, Anna Wallace and Christie Bassett as committee members;
- and myself as President. The position of Vice President was vacant.

The committee of course had plenty to do, and have all contributed greatly to the running of the network. From making calls, reading and reviewing essays, writing articles, running events and checking the books, every single one has contributed to the Network this year.

Luckily for the committee, we had a fabulous Executive Assistant in Micaela Driberg until earlier this year. Unfortunately for us, Micaela has moved on to new and exciting things with her own consulting business and role as Deputy Mayor of the City of Monash. Chloe Blackman at PIA has filled the role since Micaela left in May, but we are excited to welcome Sofie Anselmi to the role of our Executive Officer as of 5 September. We are sure Sofie will bring a new enthusiasm to the role that will be great for the new committee and our members.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the committee for their special contributions over the past 12 months and for their support for me. Each member of the committee makes their own special contribution, and I'd like to briefly mention them:

- **Caroline**, who has stepped into the role of Treasurer with ease, and always has a good idea to bring to the table at meetings.
- **Picha**, who always provides good practical advice to the committee, and always has a good idea for where to hold functions.
- **Gilda**, who continues to add her creative skills to our website, and also for her long standing commitment to the committee.
- **Clare**, for her involvement with the Rising Star Scholarship, as well as her advice when it comes to research matters.
- **Christie**, who brings us the perspective of a student/graduate to our event planning.
- **Anna**, who has helped with our links in to DPCD, but who unfortunately had to resign from the committee due to other commitments.

Thanks again to the committee for the time and effort they put in. It is a pleasure to catch up with them all once a month to discuss WPN, as well as what we've all been busy doing!

Administration

As previously mentioned, Micaela Driberg resigned from PIA and we are pleased to have Sofie Anselmi joining to replace her in the coming month. Sofie's engagement is part of our ongoing administrative support arrangement with PIA, and we thank PIA for providing replacement administration support with Chloe Blackman, as well as the rest of the PIA staff during this time of changeover.

Communications

Vantage

As always, we are relying on people's contributions to get Vantage up and going every few months, so we welcome your inputs to Vantage to continue to make it a useful and interesting publication. We have published 3 editions in the past year, the most recent being distributed in August 2011. We continue to issue Vantage as an online/emailed publication rather than a printed one.

Website

Gilda, as usual, has made sure our website contains all the information our members need. Micaela and Chloe had also been ensuring it stays updated, and we are pleased to say it is fairly current and well maintained.

We also entered the social networking sphere this year, with our Facebook page. Our aim is to keep this up to date with event information and items of interest for our members. If you haven't become a fan yet, please do so!

PIA's Planning News

PIA, as always has assisted the Network with publication in Planning News – with an article from me about WPN published in this past year.

Conferences

Micaela Drieberg attended the PIA National Congress in Tasmania in March, and as mentioned earlier, we hosted an International Women's Day breakfast during the congress. It was great to have an event at the congress, and it certainly put the word out to planners across the country that WPN exists in Victoria. We thank Roz Hansen for speaking at that event to inform the attendees about our history and what we offer our members.

Mentoring Program

In conjunction with the Victorian Young Planners and PIA, a revamped mentoring program is about to launch, with expressions of interest being called for mentors and mentees. We are excited that this is restarting, and it is great to be able to run this program in conjunction with the Young Planners who are really enthusiastic about it. We encourage all of our members – whether potential mentors or mentees – to become involved in this program. It is particularly important that some of our members offer themselves as mentors to young planners – it is a great way to give a little back to your profession and ensure that we develop and nurture the planners of the future.

Research Project

We are in the process of finalising details of a research project which we intend to assist funding of in conjunction with the Commonwealth Association of Planners. We hope that this will be finalised in the coming months so that the research will be completed in this financial year. The research will be centred around developing a tool to assess how gender issues are assessed in the planning process.

We are always open to new ideas about potential research projects – the scope of these is generally only limited by the people power we have available to get projects up and running.

Linkages with other organisations

Our linkages with other organisations, such as PIA and VPELA have been strengthened over the past 12 months. We have strengthened in particular our links with the Victorian Young Planners, as well as the VLGA and WPILGC.

Membership

DPCD remains an honorary member of the Network, given their ongoing funding of our organisation through the yearly grant we receive.

The Corporate Membership category is the main provider of the Network's member base – with 9 corporate members registered this year. We have 19 individual members. There are still a number of members yet to renew for 2011-12, so we hope to see the number of members increase again once these renewals are followed up in the coming month.

As you will appreciate, WPN's corporate members, which include Councils and a range of consultancies, provides the Network with exposure to a broad audience of planners and social and built form professionals, as well as councillors and other staff. It is the role of each of the representatives from our corporate members to ensure that all of the women working in the organisation that would be interested in attending our events, participating in our programs and generally contributing to WPN, are aware of the Network.

We will continue in our efforts to maintain and expand the membership base in the upcoming year.

The WPN Annual Award

The annual WPN award was not awarded last year and remains in hiatus.

The Rising Star Scholarship

The awarding of the fourth Rising Star scholarship occurred in March of this year at our International Women's Day Breakfast. This scholarship provides \$5,500 towards the annual HECS fees for an undergraduate student studying a planning or related course and was sponsored by Hansen Partnership.

Eight submissions were received from students (the most entries to date) and the winning essay, by Elanna Nolan from the University of Melbourne, was titled 'Going to Town: Gender, Youth and the City'.

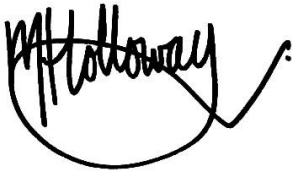
The Scholarship committee, comprising myself, Roz Hansen, Carolyn Whitzman (from Melbourne University), Clare Mouat (committee member and from the University of Melbourne) and Nicole Cook (RMIT) enjoyed reviewing the scholarship entries. The interest in the scholarship has improved with the broadening of the entrance criteria, and while we had some high quality entries this year, we were disappointed with the overall standard, and are keen to provide some further guidance to entrants to guide them in what our expectations are for the award in coming years.

Hansen Partnership have sponsored the award for the past 5 years, and we have now sought a new sponsor to continue the scholarship. We sincerely thank Hansen Partnership for their sponsorship and involvement in the award for the past 5 years, and are looking forward to SJB Planning sponsoring the coming year's award.

Conclusions

2010/2011 has been a steady year for WPN, and one that has continued to provide interesting events for our members to enjoy. It has been a rewarding year as president, although I have been somewhat absent from the role given the birth of my first child in April. I have learnt firsthand some of the issues we discuss in relation to work/family balance, and I'm sure will learn more about that as the years go on!

WPN provides a great opportunity for us all to become involved in our profession outside of the office. It is a supportive environment, and one that provides you with another perspective on how you contribute to our community and profession. So become involved and make your contribution to ensuring the Network delivers the kind of events and professional development, research and networking opportunities that you want to see. Being part of the committee is a very rewarding experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melinda Holloway', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Melinda Holloway