

Wendy's Writings

November 2025

HOPE25

*Forward into the future:
with hope and love*

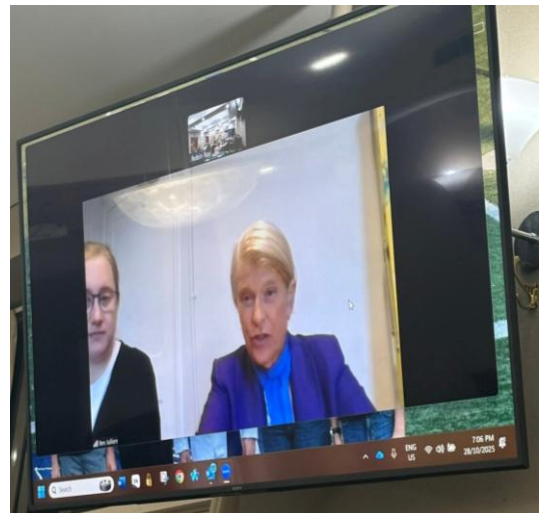


"One more step along the road we go..." (My husband's personal theme song)

Dear members and friends

I had hoped to write to you all sooner, with Isobelle Shortreed and I having been home from the Australian Council meeting for a week. However, my plans needed to be put on hold as Ian had another stroke (smaller this time) on the night he collected us from the airport. He is home from hospital and doing well but we are very much still in recovery mode.

During the Council meeting, Isobelle spoke to our diocesan report, highlighting our new caravan, our new banner, and our engagement with the Standing Together workshops. As well as hearing from all the diocesan presidents, or their representatives, all members of Australian Executive spoke to their reports. We were able to hear an opening night address from our Worldwide President Kathleen Snow, and to hear on the second night from the CEO of Mothers Union, Bev Julian and our Zone C MSH Coordinator Jeanette Lawrence, whom a number of us met in May last year. They are pictured here on a Zoom link to us.



Joining us in person at Australian Council was Dorothy Siep from Papua New Guinea, our Zone C trustee, and the Provincial President of Melanesia Sandra Rollands and the Provincial President of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, Norma Evans.

L – R: Norma, Sandra, Dorothy

Plans for the 150th anniversary celebrations were discussed. On an international level, there will be a service of thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral, London on 10th June, with tickets available through the Mary Sumner House website. The Global Gathering in Durban South Africa will take place from 30th Sept – 2/3 October. It is expected that some 2000 people may take part. Costs are still being finalised but it is expected that the conference fee will be around \$217, with delegates needing to book their own travel and accommodation. Some elements of the gathering may be life-streamed for those not able to be present.

With June 2026 being the actual month of the 150th anniversary, it is proposed that we will, on a national level, have some resources that we are encouraged to use in our parishes for Sunday worship to highlight the work of Mothers Union. The tentative plan to attempt an Australian wide connected lunch was put aside after discussion at Australian Council.



There were several opportunities for Isobelle and I to be a part of focus group discussions on what MU in Australia might look like moving forward into the future and how we might spread the word about MU and encourage engagement and participation.

Left is a photo of us observing a slide about who we, as MU, are ministering to in the 2020's, based on a report by Hugh Mackay. This formed a part of Dr Robin Ray's address to us during the meeting.

Our final conference discussion focussed on a national theme for 2026. While maintaining the framework of being inwardly nurturing to be outwardly focussed, keeping GOD and our AMUA Objectives as central to all that we do, we will adopt a new theme. Here are the possibilities:

1. Encouraging families through faith in action
2. Prayer and action, stronger together
3. Lighting the way for generations to come
4. Inviting, encouraging, building connections
5. Our mission, God's work, our country

If you have an opinion on which of these should be our national theme for 2026, please share your thoughts with me by 20th November.

During Australian Council, nominations for the 2026-28 Australian Executive were confirmed. Dr Robin Ray was declared elected as our Australian President for a second term and I have been elected into the role of Vice-President: Family & Domestic Violence. I am particularly keen to be involved with this portfolio and over the next few months, while I complete my term as Australian Overseas and Northern Outreach Coordinator, I will also be turning my mind as to what might be achieved in my new role.

This photo below is of the commissioning of the new executive.



The week before Australian Council was our own diocesan Country Rally and AGM. It was a delight to see so many members gathered together in Mandurah for this event. Rather than share my Presidential Address with you here, as has been my past practice in my November newsletters, I will provide this to Priscilla to be printed in the next edition of The Mustard Tree, along with details of the new Diocesan Leadership Team. Isobelle will also share her vision behind the 2026 Diocesan Theme and Song.

As our branches move toward their final gatherings for 2025 and start planning for their 2026 Program, I share with you some wording from the service for the formation of a new branch, as found in our AMUA Prayer and Worship Book:

Do you as members of this Parish, desire a branch of Mothers Union in this place?

This simple question, asked by the Parish Priest, clearly places Mothers Union as a part of the fabric of parish life. Everything we do as members, as a part of our local branch, is a reflection on and of the parish and of the wider church. It is therefore very important that in our program planning and execution we have conversations with our parish priest and / or parish leadership team to ensure that they are comfortable with the plans being made by our branch. This becomes particularly relevant if we are seeking to inviting guest speakers into the parish to speak to members or going on an excursion, but is equally important when we are planning other activities.

As an integral part of branchy meetings, it is also important that conversations around worship service planning is also discussed with the parish priest, whether you are planning to have a prayer service or a Eucharist. It is also right and appropriate that parish clergy be involved in the branch worship, whether this is on a monthly basis or from time to time or for specific events, such as the branch AGM and / or beginning of year / end of year services. If your priest is not able to be present then they would rightly be involved with the branch leadership in determining whom might be appropriate to lead worship.

Every blessing

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