

President's report for AGM 2021

Dear Wonderful WIC members

What a year we have had! I started my tenure as President full of enthusiasm and excitement in October 2019

After my initial euphoria our lives were turned upside down as we started the new year of 2020. Fires, floods and hail-storms; then the Coronavirus.

WIC muddled through the year with good spirit as 5 of our Contact mornings were cancelled, as were our Circles. When we could have a contact morning, we were only allowed reduced numbers.

Newsletters and picnics kept us connected

The lights shone brightly as we returned to varying degrees of normality and we started our new WIC year with our Anniversary lunch in November 2020

A popular timing for a finale for WIC after what had been a terrible year for many.

We had some wonderful programs to entertain us.

A talk on the Wollombee Pines from the head horticulturist from the Arboretum. The Worldy Goods Choir brightened our day. Roland Pelman and soprano Anna Fraser from the Canberra Music festival gave us a soul-searching performance, Coralie Wood gave us her private insights into the Canberra visits of the rich and famous. Georgia gave us personal goals to set.

Our one and only Sally Barber gave us a wonderful history of WIC since its conception.

I had the Associates for lunch in my Garden early in the year. Thanks to Neeru, our Associate Secretary for her assistance. We were blessed with a glorious sunny day

Our thanks to Caecilia Legowo for hosting the orientation party for the Circle leaders. Again, a sunny evening, and thanks to Circle Coordinator Stephanie Millhouse for her organisation.

We have had some excellent Special events and our thanks to Lindy Ross for again arranging several events including visits to the Art Gallery, the sheep dog trials and Duntroon House

Marilyn Jessop took a group to the Historic fire Station after a cancelled trip last year to Batlow

More picnics to the Himalayan Cedars at the Arboretum, Black Mountain Peninsular, and The Members Rose Gardens at Old Parliament House.

These Picnics have proven very popular and I will continue with these next year. Just a way of friends gathering and sharing food and friendship.

Her Excellency Busadee Santipitaks arranged a wonderful visit to the Thai Embassy to celebrate the National Day of Thailand. We were served a delicious lunch and enjoyed many beautiful displays of Thai traditions; we also had a cooking demonstration

In late July we had the inaugural Gala dinner at Piallago Estate and 110 of us, including many husbands and partners, enjoyed a wonderful meal and music. The dance floor was jumping as everyone got their feet tapping to all genres of music.

My sincere thanks to Patricia Reeve for sourcing the venue and putting our music playlist together and being my energetic assistant. Popular demand ensures I will organise this special event again next year

Sadly early August brought us into Lockdown again and that was the end of our Contact mornings. Our Circles closed down and just a few continued on Zoom.

8 out of 20, of our Contact mornings, have been cancelled

During the year several members have lost their husbands and our sincere sympathy goes out to them and hope that they have gained solace from the continuing support and friendship of fellow WIC members.

There are many I must thank for their time and efforts

Bob Ross has continued quietly in the background keeping our Website up to date, and collating the fun video of the Circles activities. This will be shown at the November Anniversary lunch. We really appreciate all his time.

My thanks go to my stoic committee for all their support throughout the year. We had to use 'Zoom' for 2 of our committee meetings.

Our Vice president, Caecilia Legowo, has been a wonderful and willing support throughout, hosting most of the committee meeting in her residence. I would be remiss not to thank the residence staff who prepared sumptuous morning teas for the committee and new members coming for their Orientation morning.

Elena Armani as secretary, has been efficient and a delight to work with. A successful learning curve for Elena who has English as her third language after Russian and French!

A special thanks for her assistance today organising this (hopefully successful) inaugural 'ZOOM' AGM

Lindy Ingham, the treasurer has kept us all on a tight rope and has professionally balanced the books. The use of electronic banking has reduced a lot of cheque and cash handling, and we thank you all for following this request.

Lynn Chan our Member Liaison Officer has succeeded in collating all the necessary paperwork for guests, the nominees and then the new members. We have welcomed around 40 new members this year.

Stephanie Millhouse as Circles Coordinator has managed the Circle leaders efficiently and smoothly, keeping track of new Circles starting and checking every member attends at least one Circle as per WIC requirement.

Sadly, the end of year thank-you party to our fantastic Circle leaders had to be cancelled due to our Lockdown

Jeannie Chong the Publications Coordinator has efficiently edited the Bulletin, sorting Photos, names and news; she produced a colourful front page, liaising with Jean Davitt. Jeannie also collects all the changes for the membership book to pass to Jean to tabulate for printing.

Neeru Johar has been our Public Officer, following the legal regulations and kept an eye on our esteemed Associate members. Sadly, we were unable to have a second function for them due to Covid Constraints.

Sara Robinson was our Program Coordinator bringing spark and humour into all events. She has returned to Ireland this month . She was

responsible for many of the Bulletin front pages and entertained us with her light-hearted approach.

Daniela Roggendorff was our Hostess Coordinator, but, in spite of the usual requirements of this role not being required (with our catering format changed due to Covid restriction) she was a willing and enthusiastic committee member. Daniela left for her homeland – Germany - in July

Gini Cotton stepped into the breach without a hitch. Great to have a mid season volunteer coming on board.

Ana Guterres was our General Committee member, always willing to assist wherever needed, with great enthusiasm. She been away from her husband for the whole year due to Covid travel restrictions has looked after her 2 sons alone. She leaves us in December for a happy Family reunion. She will join her husband on a posting in Brunei for 3 years. We look forward to her return after that posting.

I must thank my ex officio members

Cathrine Doherty as New Members' Hostess has managed the new members orientation and doubled up greeting guests as our Guest Hostess.

Ghada Gleeson was caught in Egypt all year, prolonging a supposed short visit. Ghada has managed the guest lists from afar and we appreciate her efforts from a distance. She must have got many emails at strange times.

Judy Scorpeci was our photographer from 2015 until February this year. Our thanks for your stalwart efforts for so many years in putting our best faces forward.

Ana Guterres filled in until Indu Sealy kindly took over the lens in April.

My thanks to all, and one final thank you to my patient and very supportive husband David whom has guided me through some tricky IT manoeuvres.

At the AGM it is usual to present these wonderful volunteers with a small gift to acknowledge their tireless efforts and contribution to the Women's International Club

This will happen at our earliest opportunity when we can gather together.

There are so many members who have assisted in other ways - whether on the sign in boards, or other one off jobs: thankyou to you all!

I would be remiss in not mentioning our amazing Jean Davitt.

Jean now lives in Kiama but continues to publish our Bulletin and send out anything requiring a full membership mail out. She keeps the data base up to date and collates the final set up for our Membership book. She is always so willing to assist or correct my many mistakes!

I must also thank the staff at the Hellenic Club, with all of whom it has been a pleasure to work. They have kept me informed and done their best to accommodate in all aspects in these difficult Covid years

Finally, I would like say what an Honour it has been to serve on the WIC Committee

When Lindy Ross asked me to take on the role as Membership Liaison Officer, I couldn't even spell it, let alone did I realise what it involved.

2 years in that role and I think I became reasonably competent.

I then took on the engaging role of Circle Coordinator, and enjoyed many visits as a guest to many Circles.

2 years ago Lindy approached me again asking if I would take on the role as President!

What an honour. I thank Lindy now for her support and all her encouragement. I also thank Anna Prosser and former Presidents for their readiness to offer advice and help with my frequent queries.

I have been touched and flattered by the many emails sent to me over time thanking me, or with words of support for my attempts to manage the many changes I had to make during this Covid era. I also appreciate the kind comments suggesting that I stay on for another year, having missed 8 of the 20 contact mornings that I should have presided over.

Democracy prevails! know you will all enjoy the new ideas and enthusiasm of your incoming President

I think now I shall fall from being Rooster to a feather duster!

Being on the Committee is the best Circle to join.

The time has flown and I look back on the last 5 years with great appreciation of the wonderful club to which we belong .

I look forward to many more years with WIC

May I wish the New President and Committee all the very best of luck and enjoyment in their roles serving The Womens' International Club Canberra

Thank you

Lorraine Nicholls