



FWEA Newsletter

**March
2009**

Federation of Workers' Educational Associations in Aotearoa New Zealand Inc
Te Whetereihana o nga Kaimahi Akoranga o Aotearoa www.wea.org.nz

Advancing, encouraging and providing adult and continuing education that promotes a just and equitable society in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi, The Treaty of Waitangi

Visit our redeveloped web site

www.wea.org.nz

for Federation news, events and publications,
with links to WEA and BDS sites

Thanks to Deb Radford, Auckland WEA for her work and guidance

FWEA Conference 2009

At Capital House, Wellington

**Friday April 3 Governance Group and staff meetings from 9 30 am;
everyone is welcome to the professional development sessions
with Pat Rosier from 2 pm**

**Saturday 4 April Conference sessions
Sunday April 5 AGM and conference, finish at 3 pm
Phone 04 939 1072 with any late registrations**

Personal reflections on FWEA over the last two years, Christine Herzog, retiring FWEA President

As my two years as FWEA president draw to a close, I've taken some time to think about the bigger picture, with the main question being the extent to which the FWEA is achieving its primary purpose of supporting the WEAs/BDS, that is, are we working together as effectively as we could, or even should, be. When I think about what we have achieved, I feel that we have done very well; when I think about the pending issues I'm not so sanguine.

But first, I would like to acknowledge again the work of my predecessors. On one level, I have always been aware of the tremendous amounts of time and energy that they committed to the job. I only agreed to accept the position because I believed that much less would be required than previously, and this has been the case; in several significant ways, recent years have been relatively easy. Nevertheless, I have recorded nearly 1500 hours of work associated with various aspects of the job over the last two years. I cannot even imagine what the hours were like before we kept records of them in the annual report, but I think we must make it a priority to reduce this substantially. *Continued on page 3*

Governance Group news

The FWEA Governance Group's most recent meeting was held in Wellington on 14 February, working from 8.30 am till 4.30 pm - its unusual to finish with some minutes to spare. We welcomed Jen Margaret from AWEA, as David Tutty is now studying in South Africa - thanks to David for representing Auckland WEA for the past two years and for his role on the BDS Working Group.

Issues to be taken back to WEAs and responses brought back to the next GG meeting on 3 April include Further opinions on speaking rights at an AGM

Responses to a BDS trust draft constitution

Comments on notes on participatory democracy

Any further ideas on FWEA governance models

Other issues addressed at this meeting included

Conference, planning; 3 April schedule for concurrent GG and staff meetings and professional development session; presidents' meeting on 4 April

2009 meeting schedule, inclusion of new president after AGM

BDS Working Group's recommendations accepted:

to hold a SGM before Dec 2009 to establish a BDS Trust & to amend the FWEA Constitution;

draft constitution tabled and to be discussed in WEAs;

to have a BDS strategic plan be in place by the first GG meeting after the Conference

2009 FWEA funding application form

Membership of CommVoices

How to gain more value and connection from IFWEA membership

Lynda Young, FWEA Manager

From page 2 I also want to acknowledge that both the Governance Group in general and myself in particular were only able to achieve what we have done because of the tremendous support we receive from Lynda. In the role of president, I became much more aware of how awkward her position is, of how well she manages it with a judicious combination of good humour and resilience, and of how much we depend on her initiative and hard work.

So what have been our achievements nationally? After several years of being preoccupied with our relationship with TEC, we have been able to return to consideration of our primary WEA purpose and our particular contribution to community education. I look forward to many productive conversations at this year's conference, building on last year's work in developing our shared understandings about education contributing to social justice. At a structural level, I believe that we have managed not only to address the challenges arising from the TEC's 'quality assurance' expectations but also to apply some of them in ways that contribute to our work – for example, the strategic and annual plans seem to be providing an effective framework for addressing our priorities. At a practical level, we now have a manual clarifying many aspects of how the Governance Group operates which should make it easier for us to work together effectively and to induct new members quickly. We are also beginning to make use of new sources of funding to support our work, particularly shared professional development.

On some matters, the jury is still out. I'm still hopeful that our funding situation with TEC will have improved by 2011. I anticipate that having all WEAs/BDS sharing policies and procedures with each other will enable each of us to improve our practices with minimal stress or expense. I believe that we can complete changes to the Book Discussion Scheme by the end of 2010 that will support it to extend beyond its already notable achievements. Discussions about the BDS have revealed potential differences in understanding of how the governance aspect of the current FWEA structure should operate, under the new constitution adopted in 2007; workshops at the conference in April will reveal whether or not this is a significant problem.

Although issues about the BDS and the governance structure have caused me the most worry over the two years, I have been heartened by an article describing why it is so hard to undertake strategic change in organisations; it recommends, among other things, exploring conflict openly rather than suppressing it and separating the processes of inquiry (exploring ideas) and advocacy (selecting alternatives). This suggests that our consensus decision-making model will be appropriate for addressing needs for change in the future as well, but I am concerned about whether we have enough commitment to consensus to be able to overcome the traditional FWEA pattern of internal dissension. My other concerns are that we still spend too much time in Governance Group meetings on relatively minor matters and that the workload and commitment is not evenly spread.

Which leads to a significant question about the future for the FWEA: we are stable but not flourishing - is that enough or not? Maybe our conference in 2010 can provide clarity about what scale of activity is both desirable and realistic at the national level. Currently, FWEA doesn't have the voluntary capacity to do more than we are now, but because we're not doing much, compared, for example, to what we do within WEAs/BDS, we don't attract additional energy, passion, commitment and thus synergy at the national level. Do we aspire to be more like CLASS (the national organisation to support ACE coordinators in schools) which addresses the needs of its nearly 200 members with an annual budget of less than \$40,000 and no paid staff?

From my perspective we seem to be stuck in a mid position with insufficient energy to sustain the national level and unable to expand our WEA presence and activity. It's in our hands to make these vital choices and to enact our considered decisions. Kia kaha, kia mohio, kia marama.

Christine Herzog, FWEA President 2007 - 2009

News from the WEAs

Auckland WEA Save yourselves thousands of dollars

We've been feeling pretty pleased with ourselves at AWEA this year. We've mastered webforms on Drupal, the content management system software that we use to build websites. People can now order publications from us online. There is no need for us to introduce any third party software into our sites and pay extra for it. Drupal stores and accumulates the information and allows for it to be downloaded as a Microsoft Excel file. Each order arrives in our administrator's email inbox neatly organised and labelled — no more messy text files for users to fill out and return as email attachments. Now we can do all our course and conference enrolments online. And best of all, it didn't take long to learn. Little did we realise, just over a year ago when we first tentatively flapped our website development wings, that we would now be airborne.

You can learn to do it too. Many community groups are being asked to pay thousands of dollars for websites they could set up themselves. Our AWEA team (staff plus our Drupal super-guide Robert) can help you get started and taking your first steps. It can be as simple as spending a few hours setting up an environment to which you add content. You can rest there or move on to capturing information from users — comments, forms, images blogs and more. We can also support you to develop your project on a larger scale.

Whether you just want to be able to manage your own content or whether you have aspirations to grow into one of the most powerful social publishing tools on the planet (well, why not?), an open source social publishing web tool like Drupal will work for any kind of organisation. It's the product of a community of developers — free, accessible to everyone and always growing and improving. One of our most exciting realisations is that Drupal has the potential to be a vehicle for community organisations to develop their capability to work with their own networks. By giving it a go ourselves — with the support of a person who knew more than us and had that important quality, vision — we are now in a position to pass on the learning. We also have the capacity to host others on our server.

Waitakere City WEA

At Waitakere we have rebranded our organisation and we now have a striking new logo and publications style, as shown here.

We have had great success with a collaborative project with Sustainable Living and with local council sponsorship, offering a 6 week programme with site visits. The course is being delivered from the Ranui Community Centre, already well known for its handling of sustainability issues.

<http://www.sustainableliving.org.nz/> has courses and materials available, listed by locality.



Kapiti Coast WEA

Kapiti WEA has received a really good response to a new course they are offering on World Beliefs. The course will run for 3 Sundays in March, offering sessions on Buddhism, Christianity and Islamic Religion. The sessions will provide a basic overview of these religions in world history and their basic practices and beliefs. The talks are being presented by lecturers in Religious Studies from Victoria University.

Hutt City WEA

- Very popular courses this term are
- Cupcake creations—the new culinary craze [along with other mouth-watering cooking courses]
- Iris folding—creativity with paper folding for application over many projects
- Raising healthy children in a toxic world—in response to a growing community awareness of allergies, environmental toxins, and raising immunity through natural health methods.
- A new office staff member will join Shar Brooks this month in the Hutt WEA office, welcome!

Wellington WEA

- A 2009 planning day on 8 March focused members on a way forward
- AGM at end of March will set up the next committee
- Economics series of 11 lunchtime central city discussions in the WEA tradition, Economic crisis, the community response? Runs from March through to June.
- Talanoa: Talking Together

Funding from the FWEA made it possible for the Wellington WEA to initiate and develop an action research project in collaboration with members of Wellington's small Tokelauan community under the project title "Talanoa: Talking Together".

The project plan called for a series of meetings with members and supporters of Tugaki O Tokelau, a Wellington Access Radio programme that is part of a Tokelauan community initiative to promote community and preserve Tokelauan as a living language, to identify ways the community's educational needs around language maintenance might be facilitated by adult and community education supported by the Wellington WEA. This was to be accompanied by a practical skill sharing exercise to increase learners' confidence and teaching skills.

The outcome of these community meetings was a more ambitious and on-going educational project than originally proposed. "Momoko a Hina" (which can be loosely translated as Women's Dreams), a fortnightly radio show was launched in December 2008. Momoko a Hina is broadcast every Monday night at 7pm on Wellington Access Radio 783AM and focuses on the needs and aspirations of Tokelauan women.

Concurrently in a skill sharing exercise, bilingual workshop sessions facilitated by Victoria Quade, Wellington WEA member and experienced community broadcaster and Nive Ahelemo, who is also an experienced community broadcaster and member of the Tokelauan community, are used to extend the skills of women from the Tokelauan community who present the show as radio producers. The workshops mix theoretical knowledge with the practical experience and have an evolving curriculum to identify priorities and interests. Each session has a "homework" exercise discussed the following session. Feedback from the participants and the community has been positive.

Canterbury WEA

Enrolment numbers indicate a huge interest in these courses in our Term One programme

- Rita Angus—a guide to the touring art exhibition by a University of Canterbury art historian; course will be repeated to cope with demand. CWEA is conveniently located across the street from the Christchurch Art Gallery.
- Ukulele for beginners, very hands on! Run by Kerry McCammon, who has found the ukulele to be the ideal instrument to facilitate all kinds of group singing and celebration. Bruce Springsteen and the decay of American capitalism: a study of the connections between music and social, economic and political trends over the last 30 years.

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Southland Education

- A new programme of sustainable living workshops will be repeated to cater for the demand generated. The course centres around composting and worm farming, gardening, preserving and the use of recycled materials
- A bike maintenance session has also been very successful, introducing basic maintenance and repair skills to a growing number of local cyclists. SE expects to repeat this programme, incorporating more hands on work.

Book Discussion Scheme

- Reader's (reviewing) copies are now being made available at no charge by three major publishers, covering new titles by New Zealand and international authors; this represents both a saving of funds and an acknowledgement of the role of the BDS in book reading across the country.
- Look out for the BDS in a TVNZ 6 new series, The Good Word, Sundays at 8.30 pm and on www.tvnzondemand.co.nz the following day.

Parliamentary Breakfasts: What are they and are they worth it?

Why would you want to get up early so you can listen to other people talk at 7.30am while having breakfast in the grand hall of the old Parliament Buildings before rushing off at 8.30am to start your day? Well because there are usually very interesting speakers and it is an opportunity to network with people you might not otherwise meet.

Parliamentary Breakfasts are jointly hosted by a member of Parliament and various community or business organisations. As well as the host MP they are usually attended by MPs across party lines and guests invited by the co-hosting group. The most recent breakfast I attended on behalf of the FWEA was hosted by current Minister for Revenue Peter Dunne and ComVoices (a coalition of tangata whenua, national community and voluntary organisations) who were represented by Dave Henderson of ANGOA who also represented DPA NZ. The theme was "Building a strong future; Government and NGOs working in partnership".

The Hon Peter Dunne spoke briefly of the value of the Community Sector, noting the importance of the role it plays within New Zealand society, and on the recent tax legislation changes that the Government had introduced, specifically the removal of the cap on charitable giving (2008). But the best bit was the guest speaker, Professor Gerard Quinn, Member, Irish Human Rights Commission and Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Professor Quinn spoke about his work looking at the development of The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He talked about the principles underlying the Convention and how it was being used to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities internationally. His focus was the importance of participation in policy formation and implementation. Making the New Zealand connection he stressed how authentic contributions from Robyn Hunt, Huhana Hickey, Wendi Wicks of DPA NZ and others shaped the convention into a more meaningful policy document.

Quinn noted that there is growing recognition in policy making circles that "... unless processes are changed there will be little effective outcomes". He added the democratic system can right itself but only "when the full panoply of voices are at the table".

Going to Parliamentary Breakfasts are part of making sure that we get to the table. Thanks to ComVoices for the opportunity. The next ComVoices Parliamentary Breakfast for 2009 is being organised for late March, and if not me I hope someone will be there waving the WEA flag.

Victoria Quade, Wellington WEA

For more information see: <http://communitycentral.org.nz/projects/comvoices/event/parliamentary-breakfast>

Community news

Consultation open on community engagement discussion document

The Building Better Government Engagement (BBGE) project reference group's report, 'It's More Than Talk', is now available on the Office for the Community & Voluntary Sector (OCVS) website. 'It's More Than Talk' includes options for building better community engagement skills, knowledge and values in the public service. *CommunityNet Feb 2009*

www.community.net.nz/communitycentre/news/national/communityengagement.htm

It's More Than Talk discussion paper available

The *Building Better Government Engagement* (BBGE) project reference group's report, *It's More Than Talk*, is now available on the OCVS website. It includes options for building better community engagement skills, knowledge and values

in the public service. The BBGE reference group is keen to supplement the report's content with input from communities and public servants, so now you can have your say on how government agencies can improve citizens' and community organisations' involvement in decision-making on issues that affect them. Consultation on *It's More Than Talk* is open until **31 March 2009**. Visit www.ocvs.govt.nz to download the discussion document and for feedback directions. *OCVS Enews February 2009*



Unprecedented news from NZFWO on the aftermath of the Job summit

There were rather strong messages in late February from both the Federation and ComVoices following on from our *Managing the Economic Downturn Together* workshop that week, and then considerable comment from our sector in the lead-up to and during the day of the Job Summit.

Well, this had a MAJOR impact! We were delighted to get a letter from Social Development Minister, Paula Bennett, in early March—as did other umbrella organisations in the sector—inviting us to participate in an unprecedented dialogue with Government and acknowledging our willingness to have input to the Government's response to the economic crisis. The Minister also acknowledged the sector has huge role to play in mitigating the effects on families and communities.

We will be working to ensure that there will be gains for our sector because of our involvement—so hold on to your hats and register for ComVoices daily media alerts (on www.communitycentral.org.nz/comvoices) if you haven't already done so, because we will more than likely use it to feed out some key messages and reports.

Wendi Wicks from Disabled Persons' Assembly (DPA), who attended this recent controversial event, now has a written a memo on the event with her own thoughts and views. It is not available for general release, but if you would like a copy or to talk to Wendi further about her experiences, then you can contact her as follows: 04 801 9100 or 027 363 2007 ; wendi@dpa.org.nz .

Also, you can visit the Summit website at <http://beehive.govt.nz/feature/summit> to view proceedings as well as the schedule for the round of regional forums that will take place from mid-March, starting in Whangarei. There is also information there detailing local contacts for each regional event.

From Federation news and views 9.3.2009



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May/June 2009 FWEA NEWSLETTER

Please send your material by 10 May to admin@wea.org.nz

FWEA MEETINGS 2009

Governance Group	3 April, 9.30 am to 1 pm, Capital House
Staff meeting	3 April, 9.30 am to 1 pm, Capital House
Professional development	3 April, 2 to 5.30 pm, Capital House
Conference	4 and 5 April, Capital House, Wellington
Presidents' meeting	4 April during lunch time
AGM 2009	5 April, 9.30 am

