



Twelfth Meeting

FreeSchools World Literacy Australia

DATE commencing: Friday 6th June 2008 TIME: 9 am
DATE completion: Sunday 8th June 2008 TIME: 9 pm

INTERNET VENUE: FreeSchools Literacy Australia email network
fswl-australia@googlegroups.com

Minutes of the Meeting

1. Rollcall of members and others present and apologies.

There were 10 participants in attendance
Robert Coenraads (President)
Ben Bowler (Vice President)
Ian Esmore (Public Officer)
Delphine Swadling (Secretary)
Merindi Swadling (Treasurer)
Donna Cervantes (Committee Member)
Yvonne Hirt (Committee Member)
Chelsea Mclean
Sue Tennant
Saskia Raevouri

2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Eleventh meeting were sent to each member of the committee and were accepted by the committee
Moved by Donna Cervantes and Seconded by Merindi Swadling

3. Reports from the Committee.

The Committee received the President's Report

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dear Committee Members,

Please find the Agenda for our June 2008, 12th FSWL Committee Meeting which opens today, on this wet and rainy Friday 6th June at 9:00 am.

It is now a year; nearly to the day, when we had our first and formational FSWL meeting No.1, and before that we were together as a Steering Committee, and I thank you all again heartily for your dedicated support and valuable comments. It is not a quick process, and all charities have to build through this process to grow into the great organizations that they are today.

I welcome you all to our 12th meeting of FSWL Australia. Could you all acknowledge yourselves as PRESENT for this meeting if you are able to take part.

Thanks again to all of the committee for taking the time to participate this weekend.

Kind regards,

Dr. Robert Coenraads (President)

4. Progress in Thailand.

Ben: I've been quietly following everything and slowly surely the Australian chapter is coming into being, which is great. Jildou and I will be in Fang, Thailand for the rest of '08 so if there is anything we can do from here we are only too happy to help. We will do a round trip soon to say hello to the teachers. Thanks to everyone for all their efforts and good to hear Ian you are fully on the mend.

Ian: trust your wedding cemented in many blessings. It is great you are both still keeping the interest and able to visit in the area and we'll see what the future unfolds. My stepdaughter was married in Laos whilst volunteering for a year over there. They both have such good memories of the experience.

5. Progress in India

6. General Business.

The following discussion took place during the meeting and is recorded here:

Letter of Thanks and Tax Receipt

Robert: Thank you Ian, Ben, Donna, Dephine and Merindi for being present. I have been working on a letter (see appendix) that we could send out to all FSWL donors. It is a combined letter of acknowledgement of donation and official tax receipt (similar to the letter used by the Uniting Church for its Lent Event donors. People need to be acknowledged for their good works and may as well be at the same time that they are mailed their official tax receipt - have a look at the letter and see what you think. In order to do this effectively we need to keep very good records of who is donating, which is not as easy as it sounds. I have just received the latest FSWL bank statement and note further donations of:

05 May \$100

27 May \$ 77

with no indication of who actually made them!

Yvonne: Hi Robert et al, Sorry I missed the meeting - have been working some strange hours lately and studying as well. I have been avoiding the computer as much as possible - hence me missing the last meeting. The 2 donations on 5th & 27th May for \$77 and \$100 are from me Robert. Hope to make it to the next meeting on time.

Robert: Close enough is good enough to be part of our meeting! Thanks for 'owning up' to those last two donations which are going to be greatly appreciated by the most needy

FreeSchoolers. These amounts just made it into the last donation draft I prepared for Sister Crescence for a total of \$850 or 32,733.5 Rupees.

Ian: Reply re letter of thank you. Need to remove line near end of page with reference to "Tax Deductability" For the time being.

Robert: Thanks for that comment. At present Merindi is preparing a standard accounting system for our incoming donations and outgoings to India. I am hoping that a part of this will be the semi-automated mail out of letters of thanks and receipts. There is presently a bit of a backlog of these letters and we could hold off on mail out of these until such time as FSWL has achieved charitable status. The technical question that does need to be asked of the ATO is: Can the donations made by individuals in previous years be carried forward, receipted by FSWL and claimed by them in the financial year in which FSWL achieves its charitable status. I have even claimed deductions myself for my personal donations to Sister Crescence in previous years as I reasoned that I was making donations to a program run by members of the Catholic Church.

Ian: QUESTION ATO below, "Can the donations made by individuals in previous years be carried forward, receipted by FSWL and claimed by them in the financial year in which FSWL achieves its charitable status."

I discussed this with my accountant and he understands that donations can only be claimed if they are dated after the status of tax exemption is obtained.

Robert: Thank you Ian. So just to clarify the accountant's comments; is that donation date the:

1. Actual date that FreeSchools receives the donations in its bank account, or
2. The date on the top of our Thank You Letter and Receipt, when Merindi organizes our mail out?

Ian: No 2 answer. Donations can be kept in a cash account and date would be as is on receipt when that is forwarded to donor.

Robert: Excellent! That is just what we have been doing.

Philippines FreeSchool/Rotary/FSWL Charitable Status

Donna: I have found a Thai lady here that can rewrite my letter to my sponsored students into Thai and some souvenirs I want to send to them...can I have the address please to send it direct.

Also I attend a church here in Nambucca that supports a Church training Centre in the Philippines...it would be ideal for a School...they want help with people to teach teachers to train the kids in some life/employment skills...reasonable remote area...and no Education as such there...any way we can help with the development of a free school in the Philippines. I am sorry that I have not been able to contribute much since I started this job...I actually work for the most unchristian person around...I have been to now been working 13-16 hours due to no other staff here...I have just said no and put on another person so I can get the afternoon evening shift....and he can take it or I will leave...just zombie making stuff....so the one man band meant I had no time for anything else..slave stuff...so I was thinking of some Free School set up maybe...go and set up one there...holiday timejust an idea.

Ian: To the FSWL committee, I am writing this to say thank you Robert and others for keeping up the good work. The past 5 months were required to rehabilitate and keep my family connections plus work afloat and home in tact. Without that base in order it became difficult to give energy to my other volunteer outreach.

The news from Sue re the breakthrough of future assistance from Anu Amos is fantastic. From reviewing the past emails and storybook summary it helps to bring the vision into focus. Whilst on one level it seems a struggle much has been undertaken and achieved in these very early days.

A brief note on updating the Australian Tax Office registration process towards charitable status. All paperwork was compiled just before Christmas 07 and then everything was placed on hold. Please accept my apology for that as conveyed above I went through a period whereby all periphery volunteer activity stopped. Following this meeting I will pick up the registration process from where it was. As I conveyed in a phone conversation to Robert last Friday, it has taken the steering committee 1 year and a further year to the present date of consolidation. In the eyes of the ATO this is evidence of sincerity of purpose and I believe will assist in evaluation of our status for creditable taxation exemption. Whilst it seems a long slow process we are perceived as very new in this endeavour. In fact we are novice in this FSWL Australian branch of the global FSWL.

I would like to comment on some of the past items in previous 9, 10 and 11 meeting emails. These minutes as posted by Robert have been a great asset and summarise very well the issues and dialogue. Good job.

Debugging the information flow and records, matching of donors and students is essential for credibility of the projects. Activities require to be kept up to a good professional standard and withstand transparency. More so than most volunteer groups because most volunteer groups are not aiming for tax deductibility status. For that reason if we try and go too fast without proper back up and debugging the committee may not be able to recruit the necessary help when it is most needed.

Another point that comes to mind is the Urantia involvement. Much of the inspiration and commitment connections have been through the UAI movement. How does this relate for future involvement. I have always understood that the FSWL was underpinned by independent personal networking of people who wished to contribute in some way. It does not have to be this way and could in the longer term be an outworking of world service for Urantia book readers and friends. My thoughts are that in order to make a real difference it needs to appeal to the ordinary person whilst having no perceptions of an underlying religious or spiritual group behind the scene. If the previous comment is relevant then we could have some sort of protocol for communications between committee. That does not mean we need to vet everything said and some observations are relevant in the context of the discussion.

There is likely to be some point in the future whereby we may try and get a celeb to assist the promotion of FSWL or have a major sponsor representative on the committee.

A note on the Rotary connection: I have withheld giving a presentation to the Daylesford Club about FreeSchools until recently. Our club has introduced a numeracy literacy project to all primary schools in the shire of Hepburn. We are in the second year and clubs in our region of central Victoria have picked up as well. In fact we had a special commendation from the District Governor for this unique project. The longer term hope, that was presented to the club is for promoting Act Local, Think Global by undertaking the support of FSWL on a broader scale. During the presentation I asked the club to consider the potential of helping establish a FreeSchool in "Smokey Town" Manilla, Philippines.

Smokey Town is the squatter community which sprawls around the tip site. Predominately this is made up of refugees from rural village areas, numbering some 150,000 and rising.

Please accept my apology for being late into this weekend discussion. I have a new satellite connection at home and have found out the email setup had to be debugged and then when this was finally OK'd the current address was not registered with the FSWL google group account.

Robert: Thank you, Ian, for your input and welcome back. With regard to the connection of FSWL to the Urantia movement, I have always considered that the FSWL movement has been the result of various key individual's desire to have some kind of "practical" physical form of outreach in the real world, which has, undoubtedly, been prompted by the "theory" presented in the Urantia Book. Careful study of the Bible (as well as other religious scripture), however, will also lead one to the desire to perform practical works in the real world, as manifested by Sister Crescence's involvement. You are right, though, in order to have general appeal, the organization needs to have "no perceptions of an underlying religious or spiritual group behind the scene" , neither Urantia, nor Catholic, and these just need to be considered as the background areas where various individuals have hailed from. I think as the FSWL organization grows and more individuals from different backgrounds start to become involved, such as Anu Amos and Rotary, then the network of organizations involved will widen, until no such "behind the scene" perceptions could possibly remain.

With regard to the establishment of a FreeSchool at Smokey Town in the Philippines, this could be good - representing a real advance for the children trapped in a life in that squalid environment. It is also in line with what Donna was proposing. One of the most important aspects to its successful long-term implementation will be the presence of a willing and effective "Sister Crescence" figure or organization there on the ground in the Philippines to make it happen. They would need to be key in finding the appropriate school building and the hiring of teaching staff to enable the after-hours FreeSchools lessons to take place.

Donna: I will send you the details of the training centre that is already in the Philippines...already run by a two Pastors... but in a remote area where there is no schools at all in the area...They just need the support to pay train teachers...I was thinking of going over with a friend of mine, Phil, later this year...to see what the situation is...and teach some teachers how to teach some life skills there.

Saskia: First of all, thanks for all you Aussies are doing for FSWL! Regarding your concerns about a Urantia/UAI connection, some of us are very much involved with FreeSchools and read the Urantia Book, but are not members of the UAI. Most of those who donated as a result of my email campaign last year are Urantia Book readers, with only a handful UAI members. They are a mix of independent readers, Teaching Mission and Fellowship. Several of the donors don't read the Urantia Book at all, such as my cousin in Amsterdam who gave me all her cash on hand when I described the project to her. While FSWL may have been started by some UAI members, it has reached out beyond those borders to include the broader Urantia Book readership and beyond. Our contributor base is made up simply of good-hearted people and there is no need to mention the Urantia Book or any particular Urantia organization, such as the UAI, in connection with FreeSchools. That would be like building a barrier to the outside world, not to mention the rest of the Urantia Book community. I would keep the Urantia Book connection our unspoken secret. When we stayed with the Sacred Heart sisters in Bihar we never talked about the Urantia Book or Catholicism, but we had some meaningful conversations with the nuns about, "What does it really mean to do God's will in this life?" And we are all agreed that helping to raise up the downtrodden is something God wants us to do -- no matter what book we read.

Ian: thanks Saskia your comments reflect current thinking. I just wanted to say something out loud to keep communications open.

Sue: I think Saskia "said" it all. I just wanted to add that since my visit in March and discussions with Sr. Crescence and Rev. Amos, I now position "FreeSchools World Literacy as a secular charity, offering a secular education with no religious discrimination or proselytizing. We do work with religious partners (Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist) but stress that they too share our commitment to a secular education with no religious agenda." In our new website we will feature why secular education is necessary in Asia. In multicultural societies, secular education ensures respect for the individual and religious differences. Our kind of secularism sanctions common civic values, while respecting all religions as a private source of personal motivation.

FSWL Australian Website

Robert: Ian, I have prepared the FSWL Newsletter for 2008 as a PDF File. How much trouble would it be for you to put this newsletter up on our Australian Website? (I also have the original word doc). It would provide the necessary detail and confidence for browsers coming across our website to consider making a donation.

FSWL Publicity

Chelsea: s Hope all is well. As I was watching Channel 9's 60 Minutes on Sunday night, I realised it would be well worth me contacting reporter Jonathan Harley now to see if he could be interested in doing a story on Free Schools. Jonathan has lived in India and surrounding countries as a journalist reporting for the ABC for many years, and now for 60 minutes. Given his interest in the area, he could be a good contact for us, so I would like to email him with information about the organisation, given your blessing.

Could you please double check information in the attached media release I could send Jonathan, along with the 2008 newsletter you produced. In particular, could you please update me on the details below (highlighted in blue in the attached doc):

- There are over 3,000 students learning at 45 FreeSchools World Literacy-funded centres in India and Thailand
- The Australian FreeSchools organisation is in the process of becoming a registered charitable organisation

Robert: Thanks for your thoughts about contacting Jonathan Harley. He might be most interested in us on both a personal and professional level, considering the amount of time he has spent in India. Great work Chelsea! We are in the process of becoming registered thanks to the help of Ian Esmore, and I think that number of schools and students estimate is fine for the last count, although Saskia will probably give an updated report following her coming Indian trip.

Chelsea: Thank you for your email reply. Yes, my trip was really good thanks. I will contact Jonathan from 60 minutes and send him all the information. I also found this interview transcript from an ABC Radio story on how not-for-profit organisations can use the Internet for social networking and raising money. When you have some time it may be worth a look:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/mediareport/stories/2008/2269688.htm#transcript>

Chelsea: Hope you enjoyed your time in the field. Below is a response from 60 Minutes producer Jonathan Harley to say he is interested in the story and will keep it on file for any future opportunities.

Jonathan's wife Sarah MacDonald is author of the book Holy Cow!

From: Harley, Jonathan [mailto:JHarley@nine.com.au]

Sent: Monday, 30 June 2008 11:31 AM

To: Chelsea McLean

Subject: RE: Free Indian schools

Dear Chelsea,

Thanks so much for getting in touch and bringing this to my attention. It looks fantastic.

I don't see a direct opportunity for 60 Minutes at the moment but will certainly keep it on file. You never know when the stars will line up. I will also bring it to Sarah's attention.

Many thanks and all the best,

JH

Jonathan Harley

Producer, 60 Minutes

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Sue: Great letter Chelsea and great response from Jonathan Harley! Good for you. It would be fantastic to have someone tell the story of FreeSchools in India (Bihar, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh). Having talked to Sr. Crescence last week and having discovered that she is opening 3 more centres, I am quite amazed that we are now supporting a grand total of 70 FreeSchools. Next year's budget is \$150,000, so we need any and all publicity that we can get. Thank you for putting in the plug for FreeSchools. Warmest regards, Sue
Please give that little boy of yours a hug for me!

7. Set date and time for COM meeting. Close meeting

Meetings of the Committee of FSWL Australia will be held on the first Friday of each month. The next official meeting will be from Friday 4th to Sunday 6th of July 2008.

The Committee is thanked for its involvement

END OF MINUTES

APPENDIX 1 LETTER OF THANKS AND TAX RECEIPT FOR DONATION

FSWL Letterhead

Our mission is to break the cycle of ignorance and poverty through free education

Dr. Robert Coenraads, President
FreeSchools World Literacy
8 Trigalana Place
Frenchs Forest NSW 2086, Australia
Ph: 61-2-9451 8496
Email: coenraads01@optusnet.com.au

Date Field

Name Field 1 Name Field 2

Address Field

Suburb Field, State Field, Postcode Field.

Dear Name Field 1,

Thank you for kind donation, which will be used to provide education in the FreeSchools system for some of the world's poorest and most needy children.

Funds raised by FreeSchools and sent to India are most carefully used, with all of the donations reaching the school communities in their entirety. The FreeSchools program supports over 3,000 students leaning at 45 FreeSchool World Literacy funded centres in India and Thailand, and with your help, it will continue to grow. More detailed information is found in our Annual Newsletter (enclosed) and on our website at www.freeschools.org.au.

Thank you again for your support, and we hope that you will feel the sense of reward and pleasure for the vital work that you are enabling FreeSchools World Literacy to achieve.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Robert Coenraads
President
FreeSchools World Literacy

Your contribution will help such students to:

- *Complete their school education*
- *Obtain a career far more fitting to their ability*
- *Better support their poor family*
- *Take a place in their local community and complete the cycle*

FreeSchools World Literacy
8Trigalana Place Frenchs Forest NSW 2086
Telephone: 02 9451 8496
Email: coenraads01@optusnet.com.au

OFFICIAL RECEIPT

Received with thanks by FreeSchools World Literacy for their educational programs in the world's poorest nations

Donations of \$2 or over are **tax deductible**

ABN: A0050403N

Date:.....

Receipt No:.....

Name:.....

Amount: \$.....

The FSWL Committee - Australian Contact Details

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