



Report on the Inner Wheel Australia Conference Perth 5-9 October 2011

After a cold start, Perth turned on some warm sunny weather and was a picture of springtime flowers, especially the natives in Kings Park which we took time to visit.

The Opening Ceremony was well attended and we were graced with the presence of "HRH Queen Elizabeth II", making a grand entrance while the piper played. The Gloucester Park Harness Racing venue was a beautiful center for all conference dinners, as well as the opening ceremony and banner parade.

Home hosting for dinner on the Thursday night was a great time for fellowship. On Friday we had an excursion to the Perth Show where we all purchased hats to wear to the Racing theme dinner on the Friday night!

Friday night's friendship dinner was a great night: we all dressed in our hats and colours for an evening at the races and engaged in lots of cheering and betting on the harness races, with some modest wins for our \$1 each way bets! Table decorations of racing helmets and goggles created the right atmosphere and we had a great night of fun. At the end of the night IWA sponsored a race and President Val draped the rug over the winning horse and presented its connections with their prize.

The Business session on Saturday was held in the Town Hall. Past President Pam Watkins gave an excellent report of her year in the chair, including thanks to Leeton for their excellently organised National Conference 2010. She received an outstanding ovation.

Statistics from the National Treasurer's report:

- \$250 given to charter a new club
- IWA membership 3,715 members, down 90
- \$24,000 raised for the NZ earthquake that went to Inner Wheel NZ
- \$41,000 to flood appeal Queensland and Victoria
- Cord Blood account \$360,000
- Gift from NZ Inner Wheel for Queensland flood appeal was \$8,930

Guest speaker for Cord Blood, Gail Lazzaro, spoke about the new cord blood bank recently opened in Perth and then introduced a family whose son had benefited from a cord blood stem cell transplant. The father and mother spoke of their journey with their son's illness from birth and the search for a cure and treatment. By the age of 15 the son was showing signs of leukemia and they were searching for a match for cord blood transplant. The son also spoke of his life up to 15 when he received the stem cell transplant and of his subsequent recovery. He is now 18 and leading a normal life for a teenager. The cord blood he received came from a French baby who is now 3 years old. Everyone in the audience was moved by this emotional address.

Saturday night saw us 'dressed to the nines' for the Gala Dinner. Seating was allocated which made it a smooth transition to a table. A female singing group with the sweetest of voices entertained us and the food and fellowship was good. The conference programme concluded with a Sunday breakfast.

The Inner Wheel Australia Conference 2012 will be in Launceston, Tasmania, and 2013 in Caloundra, Queensland.

Dorothy Booth
President
Inner Wheel New Zealand



IWNZ President Dorothy Booth addresses the IW Australia Conference in Perth, October 2011



Pam Watkins, IWA Immediate Past President, and Val Gibson, IWA President, at the IW Australia-sponsored Harness Race.