

Workshop

23 October 2020



We, a web of women, seek and support wisdom for the common good.

We acknowledge the ancestral wisdom of First Peoples and accept our responsibility as custodians of a precious world that must be nurtured as it nurtures us

We assert that qualities of the heart (such as compassion, love, empathy, forgiveness) are the basis for true strength. These human laws must be reactivated for us to survive.

Present: Barbara Baikie, Barbara O'Dwyer, Christine Larkin, Honey Nelson, Janet Salisbury, Johanna McBride, Kirsten Anker, Lyn Stephens, Lynne Audsley, Sally Blake, Sarah Stitt, Toni Hassan Rhian Williams (guest presenter)

Flow for the day

<p>Women's Climate Congress WORKSHOP CIRCLE OCT 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joining - gathering • grounding What do we want to get out of today? Reviewing - what have we done so far? Deep diving - How do we understand our vision to bring people together for united action? Planning - What will we do next? Who? What? When? Closing - What are we taking away? 	<table border="0"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Joining</td> <td>Gathering, Grounding What do we want to get out of today?</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reviewing</td> <td>What have we don't so far? Review of the organisational structure we have developed and activities so far</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deep diving</td> <td>How do we understand our vision to bring people together for united action (mediation)? Presentation by Rhiân Williams</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning</td> <td>What will we do next? Group discussions (selected topics of most relevance)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Closing</td> <td>What are we taking away?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Joining	Gathering, Grounding What do we want to get out of today?	Reviewing	What have we don't so far? Review of the organisational structure we have developed and activities so far	Deep diving	How do we understand our vision to bring people together for united action (mediation)? Presentation by Rhiân Williams	Planning	What will we do next? Group discussions (selected topics of most relevance)	Closing	What are we taking away?
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Joining

We began with an acknowledgement of country and a reading from our Congress values.

Checking in around the circle, many people spoke of the importance of using art, storytelling and dance to frame our narrative of connection with the Earth as we reach out to politicians and the public. In this we have much to learn from indigenous Australians. A number of people referred to the previous evening's conversation between Sally Blake and Robert Glasser which blended artistic and scientific thinking.

We also wish to target our efforts efficiently and effectively through careful analysis of the political environment.

People spoke about what they wanted to achieve during the meeting. Key aims coalesced around the following areas:

- Artistic expression
 - As a tool, to communicate with politician
 - Heart connection is important and makes us different to other groups. We need to develop a plan on how can we meld the artistic and strategic paths?
- Integrating the knowledge of First Nations people
- Mediation
 - This is a also key principle of the Congress that defines us as different to other groups. Need to develop a proposal for the sort of process we want to promote and a workplan to communicate and promote this idea. In particular, need direction on protocol to bring to Angus Taylor' office (and others).
 - Working out the levers by identifying weaknesses and trust and empathy
- Member's program
 - Plan to engage new members and create momentum.
- National conference
 - Start planning for conference in 2021.
- Fundraising
 - we need to have a financial plan
- Capacity
 - build capacity to achieve our plans and take pressure off a few people who carry many tasks (related to members program, and fundraising?).
- Create a public face for the Congress
 - (related to the members program, the arts, the mediation proposal, national conference etc).

It was also noted that we need to combine strategies: find points of connection and build relationships; acknowledge positive changes that are already happening; and be aware of the bigger landscape.

Reviewing

Janet spoke about the Congress organisational structure that we have envisaged. The spiral structure with a 'Hub' and interconnected activity circles is a way of imagining a different ways of organising to a typical business hierarchy.



While some circles have already been very active, especially Membership and Outreach, Integrating the Arts, and Advocacy and Relationships, we need to build capacity around administrative functions, Comms, Fundraising and Organisational Alliances. There are 2 types of function emerging: those that reach out into the community and those that support this work. Both are equally important.

First People's relationships

Honey Nelson spoke of her efforts in engaging with First Peoples. She has had a connection with the Tent Embassy for 40 years, and recently was invited to attend a session to learn about women's business. Honey stressed the need to allow the relationship of the Congress with First Australians to develop in its own time. However, she proposed that we consider holding a national ceremony of apology and mourning, for grassroots participation. Our history in Australia is built on the bones and bodies of First Australians, and there can be no movement forward unless we first do some healing.

Honey's paper on bringing together settler and Indigenous women can be found [here](#)

A possible contact in Canberra is [Tjanara Goreng Goreng](#).

Deep Dive — What does a mediation process look like?

Janet spoke of the idea of mediation that she had introduced in her [paper](#). This idea has been becoming clearer over the time Congress members have been meeting with parliamentarians, and we have been invited to submit a a proposal to send to Angus Taylor's office.

[Rhian Williams](#), a professional mediator, spoke about her experience in bringing together communities and mediating difficult disputes. Her paper '*Sustaining dialogue: the key to sustainable problem solving and planning*' <LINK> was circulated before the workshop.

Rhian told us about the importance of establishing a mediation process that all the parties trust, and of appointing a mediator who is expert in the process. Rhian suggested that for this high-profile mediation, a high-profile figure would be best.

Rhian also emphasised that our approach to Angus Taylor should focus on the ideas and values we share in common. We should frame our request in positive, future-focussed language and acknowledge the work the government has already done.

An important issue for us to consider is who should be at the table and how they can be selected. Rhian described the process of selection used in a complex mediation she conducted in South Australia around Native Title. Even though the process took a long time, there were clear benefits in terms of keeping parties at the table until a solution was found and also in durability of the solution.

A more detailed account of Rhian's presentation is attached.

Planning

After lunch we reviewed the aims from the morning session and identified 5 key areas for further small group development.

- Fundraising: hosted by Sarah Stitt
- Integrating the Arts: hosted by Sally Blake
- Membership and Outreach: hosted by Lyn Stephens
- Mediation proposal: hosted by Janet Salisbury
- National Conference: hosted by Barbara Baikie

We also spent some time considering how we can increase our 'capacity' to fulfil the many tasks involved in building our movement, particularly in relation to admin and comms functions where we are pretty

light on at the moment . We decided this is closely related to fundraising (in particular) as this would allow us to purchase more help (eg in the form of more sophisticated software, or human assistance). _

Harvests from each of the above, along with discussion by the whole circle are attached below.

Closing

We closed the afternoon with a check out around the question 'What are you taking away'. Responses ranged from 'vindicated' (that the work to date has been worthwhile), to extremely inspired, to 'numb'. Overall, there was a strong sense that the day had consolidated previous work and provided a new sense of direction. There's much to do though!

Topic: Membership

Host Lyn Stephens

Participants: Lynne Audsley, Chris Larkin

SUMMARY

- * The reality of subgroups and adherence to vision and principles - consistent application
- * Upskilling and networking of members to foster non partisan, non adversarial processes
- * How to engage with Facebook group members- using a variety of formats
- * Having clear processes and role descriptions of admin roles so that these can be undertaken by members both short and long term, and to make for smooth transitions between
- * Having structures for members meetings - clear timing, issues of hosting, minutes, etc
- * Discovering and nurturing helpful skills of members

INSIGHTS

The importance of personal connection in nurturing members' participation and engagement

The importance of having processes and structures for the day to day running of the WCC, to free key members to fully engage in the "Core Work" of WCC.

NEXT STEPS

Set up and document processes, including timelines and role descriptions.

Research ways of nurturing members' participation and engagement

WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION

It's important to harness members' enthusiasm, but it is a challenge to remain unified and true to our vision and at the same time be open to diverse, local involvement.

- Keep WCC's core objective of non-partisanship
- Document processes, so that new members can adopt them in their areas.
- Members' benefits include newsletter, Zoom get-togethers and personal interaction.
- It's important to nurture and grow skills amongst members.
- Next steps: regular monthly meetings and newsletter, regular webinars.

TOPIC: National Conference

Host Barbara Baikie

Participant Barbara O'Dwyer

DISCUSSION

Timing : 2 day conference in October (daylight saving)

Location: Canberra possibly in ANU Great Hall, or Parliament house with dinner possibly outside by lakeside (BBQ?)

In-person and live streaming?

Seek funding Rio Tinto/ANU/BHP

Include visual/musicians/artists/poets/dancers – Chorus of Women to compose a piece

Participants allocated to tables to ensure a mix

Welcome to Country

Keynote speakers including Janet

Facilitated by MC

Focus on positive aspects -way forward what to do/how to do it

Breaks after every two speakers with time to review and discuss the previous speakers

Workshops - live demonstration of mediation/ how to have difficult conversations. then in small groups to practice

Communications balancing head and heart

Awards could be given (at dinner?) – environment/community/poster competition

Q+A session with questions sent in before

Book stalls (including publications by speakers)

Not a talk fest – need outcomes and resolutions

Engage young women with workshop

Produce conference outcomes print/digital

INSIGHTS

Need money!

Information sharing /awareness

Focus on positive aspects

Engage in mediation

NEXT STEPS

Establishing small conference planning circle

Developing Conference outline

Develop outline to apply for funding

Book venue

Invite speakers/politicians ?CEO BIG hART

WHOLE CRCLC DISCUSSION

- Should it be in a sitting week to attract politicians (or will accommodation be too expensive for others?).
- Group felt we should not actually invite polities to speak but good if they can drop in and out to observe.
- Janet stressed that we need to keep the central objective of the congress to develop a manifesto/resolutions to present to government.

TOPIC: FUNDRAISING

Host: Sarah

Participants: Sarah joined forces with The Arts group! Sally, Johanna, Jenny and Toni

DISCUSSION

Founding members to be invited to make a contribution

Value of time/people hours and people = value or greater of money raised.

Grants – Jenny prepared to assist

Community development – such as open garden (Jenny's), garden party at Barb B's with A Chorus of Women & tree planting.

Christmas calendar – writings, photos, such as letters to future generations, why they became a part of the Congress

INSIGHTS

The need to weight the energy put in to fundraising efforts against the likely output.

Art and fundraising can work together, however, not to rely entirely on art.

NEXT STEPS

Follow up with idea of founding members' contribution. Sally to ask Josh for wording which he used.

WHOLE CIRCLE DISCUSSION '

- Strong agreement with invitation to early joiners to subscribe. Identify first 150 members as 'foundational members'. Subsequently invite all new members to donate.

TOPIC: THE ARTS

Host: Sally

Participants: Johanna, Christine, Toni, Jenny, Sarah

DISCUSSION

Continue the small integrating the arts group of 5

Find ways to engage with other members who express interest in the arts. What possibilities are there?

The talk between Sally Blake and Robert Glasser (ACT event) was something new and interesting.

Continue with these types of discussions.

Thinking about the mediation work the WCC wants to engage in with politicians. Maybe we could organise a talk between a mediator and an artist.

Would it be possible to organise talks between famous artists and scientists in this Zoom age?

How to use artist's images and videos etc on WCC social media?

Toni suggested a poetry competition, letters from older people in an family to the younger members writing about what they wish for their future

WHOLE CIRCLE DISCUSSION

- Harvest the energy of new members through an invitation to write poetry, stories or letters to the future, take photos for a calendar.
- Seek out ambassadors who can integrate the arts into the Congress's work – perhaps Jackie French?
- Find a way to express the mediation process and the Congress work more generally through art.

TOPIC: MEDIATION PROCESS

Host: Janet

Participants: Helen, Kirsten, Toni

DISCUSSION:

Need to create a general proposal for broad distribution to express vision of the Congress. Then can create versions for specific purposes, such as for Angus Taylor. However, invitation from Angus Taylor office is on the table now so can use that as a way into thinking about this.

Framing:

- Address 'Why?', 'What?' 'How?'
- Need to tap into vision of the Congress to get our audience emotionally engaged. 'Imagine if ...', What is in it for them?
- Work from Rhian's triangle of needs.

Who might be at the table?

- People directly impacted by changes in climate (eg farmers, emergency services)
- People with job vulnerability
- Scientists, experts in various areas
- Fossil fuel industries
- Renewables industries
- First Nations
- Environmental movement (peak bodies)
- Health experts
- Community (various)

Need to find out what has been tried elsewhere. What has worked (desktop lit review). Also review information on cost-benefit of such processes.

INSIGHTS:

Risk: If we create a general proposal and Labor (say) gets enthusiastic about it; then government might back off. Our primary target for commitment to such a process needs to be the government. Government needs to commit to the process and fund it. However, can continue to build nonpartisan support.

We will know we are on the right track when the scientists are smiling!

Create and use visuals to present information. Also, artistic expression to connect head and heart.

NEXT STEPS:

Conduct a desktop review of mediation processes across the world. Ask David Purnell to help? And Rhian?)

Also, research a cost-benefit analysis for a mediation process on climate action.

Continue building support for the process amongst potential parties, e.g. scientists, government

Prepare outline of proposal, including visuals.

Work with artists to develop artistic expression of the vision.

WHOLE CIRCLE DISCUSSION

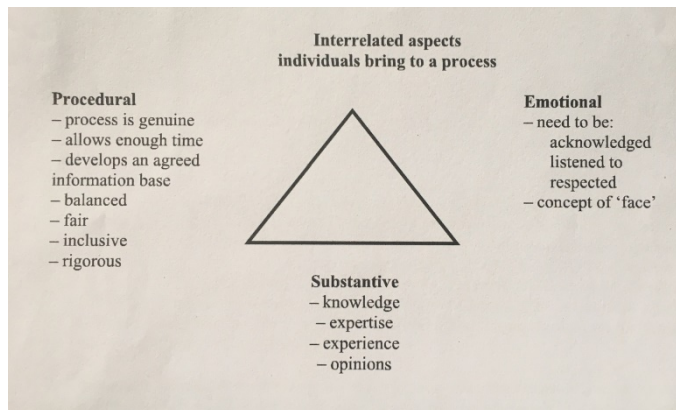
- Emotional engagement is key (arts).
- Chris Larkin mentioned the 'Common's Library' is a good resource.
- Northern Rivers 'Lock the Gate' initiative may also be a good example (contact Amanda Tattersal)
- Need strong link with rural and regional groups and then via relationship building with their MPs to influence government.

Mediation discussion with Rhiân Williams

See also Rhiân's paper *Sustaining dialogue: the key to sustainable problem solving and planning* <LINK>.

Rhiân Williams, a professional mediator, spoke about her experience in bringing together communities and mediating difficult disputes, including in relation to government policies and environmental issues. Among other things she said:

- The process of mediation engages citizens in conversation with each other and others they invite to the table. It carries the potential to connect people in communities, across racial, social, intellectual and other divides. It implies meaningful participation, not merely consultation.
- Disputing parties bring to the table a triangle of needs that must all be addressed: substantive needs, emotional needs and procedural needs. At this stage of developing a process, it is important to focus on the procedural needs.



Triangle of needs diagram from *Sustaining dialogue: the key to sustainable problem solving and planning*, by Rhiân Williams, 2005

- It's essential that all parties see the process as fair. This involves, amongst other things, scrupulous transparency and a mediator who is expert in the process (though not necessarily the subject-matter). The parties themselves may agree on other details of the process (protocols), for instance, that they won't go separately to the media or that strict confidentiality rules will apply. Time spent negotiating these details is repaid in fewer disagreements and stronger compliance, because the parties trust in the process.
- Conservative governments have established alternative dispute resolution (ADR) centres in ACT and Queensland. It is consistent with conservative theory that a conflict is the property of the parties to the conflict and should be dealt with by the parties themselves without interference from government via the courts. Conservative governments here and overseas also have a strong history in conservation (eg establishing national parks).
- A dispute resolution process remains even after a dispute is settled. Thus, in South Australia, a process established to resolve issues relating to Native Title is now used in the community to discuss disputes around fracking.

She further said that in approaching Angus Taylor, we must first focus on the things that can unite us:

- The lineage of conservative governments: in the UK, climate action has been Conservative policy since Margaret Thatcher.
- There is no longer a dispute over climate science: even business and industry are on board.
- The community concern over the recent fires, floods and droughts across the country.
- Fire chiefs are calling for action.
- Government has said it "doesn't pick favourites": the market decides which technologies will prosper.

- Outsourcing of government responsibility through privatisation has been a disaster in aged care. There is a role for government to regulate operators.
- The COVID response has shown the benefit of a nonpartisan response and on following the recommendations of scientists.
- Focus on the good things the government has done (eg during COVID).
- Draw on key relationships, such as rural women, for support.

In relation to who should be at the table, she noted the following method of selecting who is at the table:

- A Board of Management selects stakeholders who in turn give recommendations for further stakeholders. Each stakeholder group also consults with its constituent members. Although this process takes time, the relationships formed lead to better, more complex and more durable solutions.

In conclusion, she noted that while there is agreement in general about the climate emergency, there are different views over how to proceed. The following points might be useful to draw upon in approaching Angus Taylor:

- Frame objectives in a neutral language.
- Approach with flexibility: be prepared for a decision different from the one you were expecting.
- A mediation can preclude lengthy court challenges and other delays to an unpopular policy.
- The table will be bigger than he is imagining at the moment: there needs to be a wide variety of stakeholders sitting around it.
- Having all parties at the table together avoids a simplistic and duplicative definition of problems which also encourages polarisation.
- The process is initially complex when lots of people are at the table, but gets better as participants become accustomed to the process.
- A widely-constituted group of stakeholders can change a government: when multipartisan groups are at the table, they can't be wedged against each other.
- Economic evaluations have demonstrated an economic benefit to a mediated solution.
- Emphasise that we aren't criticising government policy but suggesting something that takes that policy further.
- The mediator must be someone with gravitas who understands how to build a good process and who is scrupulously neutral – perhaps Michael Barnes, Marg O'Donnell.