



The Bluestocking Institute

for Global Peace and Justice

Annual Report 2014-2015

Purpose

The Bluestocking Institute fosters dialogue on issues of global importance including peace building, sustainable development and social movements. Its purpose is to inform and inspire people to become active and engaged citizens in their local communities and beyond. We work in four main areas: globalisation, social inclusion, knowledge and power, and peace and conflict. The Institute provides public education through workshops, discussion groups, publications and its website.

Report from the Management Committee

Over the past financial year (1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015), we've been focused on community education and engagement with contemporary debates. We've done this through a quarterly bookclub held in Perth, a writing circle activity and World Press Photo Exhibition tour. We look forward to continuing the work of the Bluestocking Institute in the coming year.

- Sky Croeser, Shae Garwood, Michelle Hackett, Kelly Gerard, Lucy Roberts, Karen O'Sullivan, Kate Riddell, Liza Beinart, and Christalla Yakinthou.

Activities

Book and film club

The Bluestocking Institute's Bookclub meets on a quarterly basis. This year it has covered themes of compassion for the 'other' ("Political Emotions: Why Love Matters to Justice"), and female leadership, with the autobiographies of Julia Gillard ("My Story"), Leymah Gbowee ("Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer and Sex Changed a Nation at War"), Kirsty Sword Gusmao ("A Woman of Independence: A Story of Love and the Birth of a New Nation") and Emma Goldman ("Living My Life").

Each meeting produces a book review which is published on the Bluestocking Institute website and Facebook page. Members who have attended the meetings have reported it is a useful and interesting forum.

Writing Circle

In late 2014, the Bluestocking Institute conducted its first 'Writing Circle' event. Prior to the event, each participant was invited to share via email a piece of writing. The participants then met to discuss feedback and ideas on each other's contributions. The theme was 'Beyond the Circle', inspired by our review of Martha Nussbaum's *Political Emotions*, which prompted the question of why individuals are motivated to feel compassion beyond their immediate social circle.

The shared pieces of writing were a collection of fiction and non-fiction, often reflecting our life experiences, including poems, articles and stories. The activity was deemed successful in promoting creativity and awareness of our own experiences with social issues.

Photo Exhibition

The Bluestocking Institute organised a private tour of the World Press Photo Exhibition in Perth. The Exhibition was hosted by the Western Australian Museum and the tour was conducted by the curator of World Press on 4 July 2015. We were also extremely lucky to have a personal audience with Raphaela Rosella - the young indigenous Australian photographer whose captivating photograph 'Laurinda' won the portrait section of the competition - and Brenda Keneally - the acclaimed New York photojournalist who has spent a lifetime working with youth and families on the margins.

The tour was acclaimed by attendees for its fascinating insights into photojournalism and the social justice issues which it highlights. Money raised from the tour (\$330) was donated to the YMCA Belmont in Perth towards their youth arts program.

Looking ahead

We're in the process of developing our schedule of events and projects for this year. Possible projects include digital literacy workshops for young women with a politically-focused Wikipedia edit-athon and encouraging constructive engagement on-line. We're also considering running a writing competition for high school students exploring themes of justice and social change.

Also planned for the 2015 NTEU Bluestocking Week - celebrating women in academia - we will send out daily tweets exploring the history of Australian women in academia, ongoing challenges that women face within academia, and the experiences of marginalised women.

We will also continue the quarterly Book and Film Club held in Perth and on-line.

Membership

From inception until 30 June 2015, 63 members had signed up through the Bluestocking website and other forums, and 112 people had joined the Bluestocking Institute's Facebook group.

Governance

The management committee is responsible for the governance of the Institute. For the financial year, the committee board consisted of Kelly Gerard (Chair), Sky Croeser (Vice Chair), Shae Garwood (Treasurer), Michelle (Secretary), Lucy Roberts, Karen O'Sullivan, Liza Beinart, Kate Riddell and Christalla Yakinthou.

Treasurer's Report

The balance of the account as of 30 June 2015 was \$667