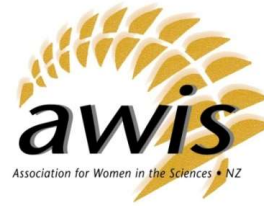


# **AWIS Convenor's Report, 20 July 2019**

## **Emma Timewell, National Convenor**



### **Our regions**

AWIS had 87 members at the end of the 2018/19 year, broken down into regions:

- Wellington 16
- Waikato 9
- Rotorua 2
- Nelson 4
- Manawatu 5
- Dunedin 14
- Christchurch 14
- Auckland 23

Five of our regions have been active with events this year – Auckland, Wellington, Tasman, Christchurch and Dunedin. We have a new Convenor for Manawatu, so expect to see some action in that region from now on.

The five active regions took part in the AWIS National Quiz, held to raise funds for our Women in STEM scholarship. Fifty seven teams competed in the same quiz across the nation, with raffles and silent auctions as well as a simultaneous Trade Me auction. Through this event we raised \$18,000, which will help fund the scholarship into 2021. Thanks to everyone who helped organise, bid on an auction and attended the quiz – it was a phenomenal effort by everyone and a real success for our team.

### **Our scholarships**

The AWIS Women in STEM scholarship was awarded for the first time, administered by the New Horizons for Women Trust. Three women benefited from the scholarship – based in Auckland, the Waikato and Wellington – which aims to support women studying STEM for undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications with study or living costs. The Award is aimed at women studying a field where women are currently under-represented and whose social identity is under-represented in their field.

The Gatehouse Travel Award was awarded twice this year – to Isabelle Roberts to attend the Foundation for International Space Education and to Sithmi Sathruwani to attend the UN Pacific Project.

### **Our story**

This year, we've focused on refreshing our strategy, so we can ensure AWIS is aligned with activities that best benefit our members. Through this process, we have refined how AWIS can support our members and are developing a strategy on how we think this can best be managed. As a volunteer organisation, we're aware of the limited resources we have, and want to make sure everything we do really makes a difference to those women working in science.

Based on feedback from our members and others, our future strategy will have a focus on supporting and advocating for women working in the sciences. This will include those practicing, teaching or supporting science and those studying science at tertiary level, but not those studying at primary or secondary school. We feel that there are a number of organisations working to encourage school students into science, and that this is an area where our resources are not best placed. That doesn't mean school students aren't welcome

at our events – it just means we won't be concentrating on creating opportunities specifically for them at the moment. It also means we will be doing a stocktake on some of our activities – most notably the Dell Award and the Gatehouse Travel Award – to realign them to our new strategic direction.

For the next few years, we will be centring our activities around three main themes – addressing bias (both conscious and unconscious), career development and work-life balance. We'll be looking at how we can best support members in getting support or training opportunities that will allow them to develop their careers, as well as ensuring women in the sciences have a voice on important policy and wider issues.

We ask that you bear with us as we put some of the parts in place that will help us move towards a more focused, powerful and effective organisation. It's not going to be easy, but we're committed to building AWIS so we can be better support for all women in the sciences in New Zealand.

To reflect this change in our strategy and our thinking, we will also have a new logo. Over the next year, we'll update our website and all our marketing collateral with this new identity, reflecting the change strategy for our organisation and the excitement the Executive feels as we enter a new stage.

## **Thanks**

Thanks to all the Executive for their help and support, and particular thanks to Rachel Teen, Stacey Sims and Lucy Egan for their time on the Executive as they step down to pursue other activities.

## Events:

- Nationwide
  - October 2018: AWIS National Quiz
- Auckland
  - April 2018: Postgraduate networking and panel discussion
  - May 2018: Auckland Writers Festival outing
  - March 2019: MOTAT Science Street Fair
- Christchurch
  - September 2018: Networking dinner
  - December 2018: Christmas catch-up
- Dunedin
  - July 2018: 2 Minute Talks at the International Science Festival
  - March 2019: Networking evening with Jilly Evans