

**AGWS – Farewell Address November 2020**  
Dr Walter W J Uhlenbruch AO Hon Life President

Thank you, Dagmar, for giving me the opportunity to say a few words at the closure of this important meeting today, a meeting which marks the end of an organisation that I have been closely affiliated with since 1974, a mere 46 years.

But first, I must share a little secret with you. You may recall that when I wrote to you last month, I prefaced my letter with a quote from Herodotus. This was not my original choice, I had intended to use a quote from Friedrich Schiller's "Fiesco's conspiracy at Genoa", which says "the Moor has done his duty, the Moor can go", but the ladies in our committee considered this as politically incorrect – I have no such reservations.

The simple truth of the matter is that our beloved AGWS has run its course. Over the past 66 years it has tried to serve the German community in Melbourne to the best of its ability and, on reflection, I think it has served it well.

We have provided assistance regarding family problems, accommodation, practical and financial assistance, information and referrals, immigration matters, legal assistance, accidents and illness, and support for the lonely and desolate. And importantly, together with the TSA, we built the first German nursing home for the aged, Tabulam, now the TTHA.

All this has been possible because there have always been generous and dedicated people who have supported us in so many ways. During those 66 years we had only fifteen Presidents, 11 of them ladies and 4 men – no glass ceiling for women in the AGWS! On your behalf, I pay tribute to Mesdames Hauer, Gillitzer, Bower, Kulse, Hannan, Ihle, Filip, Mohr, Goetz and Logan (Dagmar, what would we have done without you!) as well as Messrs. Baumeister, Haak and Dr Mohr.

The number of other office bearers is too large to mention here but I want to pay tribute to some outstanding volunteers, including Ms Auguste Coco, the grand old lady of the AGWS who ran the office with an iron fist from 1967 to 1985, Ms Nelima Dietze, our Social Secretary from 1977 to 1990, Ms Ingrid Rösch, our Administrative Secretary from 1977 to 1986, Ms Vivian Neale and Ms Eva Roten, our Social Workers for eleven and twenty years respectively.

Those of you who have attended our annual gala dinners will recall that I have, on many occasions, said that the best thing that could ever happen to the AGWS was that we were no longer needed.

With your vote tonight you have agreed that the time has come for the AGWS to close its doors but you have also done so in the knowledge that very similar services will continue to be provided to our members and clients by both the TTHA/TSA and the MLH and I acknowledge their valuable assistance with deep gratitude.

You might want to ask how I feel. Of course, I am deeply saddened but I am also convinced that the AGWS will always be remembered as an organisation that has done a tremendous amount of good over nigh on seven decades. A little poem by Jessica Blade would sum this up quite well:

Your Name

I wrote your name in the sand,  
but the waves washed it away.

I wrote your name in the sky,  
but the wind blew it away.

So I wrote your name in my heart,  
and that's where it will stay, always,

Thank you.