

Newsletter

January 2021

Quote: "At any time a woman must be capable of independence" Dame Margaret Georgina Guilfoyle

From President, Ronniel Milliken



Welcome to the new year 2021 which promises to call on our reserves as we continue to advocate for the welfare of women and girls in all aspects of their lives.

At the initial meeting of the new Committee on 17 December, we reflected on Australia again being the 'Lucky Country' when we consider ourselves compared to humanity around the world dealing with the pandemic. We are benefitting from the respect of our leadership for those involved in medicine, nursing, and medical science for recommended methods to control the spread of COVID-19, approval process for COVID-19 vaccination; and having the wherewithal to produce and distribute the necessary equipment and vaccines around Australia and engaging with Pacific neighbours. Accordingly, this year we will celebrate the role of pioneer women in medical research at the NCWV Pioneer Women's Ceremony on Monday 18 January.

Our Committee will continue to benefit from the involvement of Elisabeth Newman AM, immediate past president. The transition of roles to the new executive continues during January. We are still searching for an Honorary Secretary to join the team – so do think about women in your network who might regard this role as an opportunity to contribute and grow.

In 2020 as we continued to pursue our Purpose, we learnt new skills in communicating across our network using zoom teleconferencing to participate in Council and Committee meetings. Teleconferencing will continue to be an option in 2021 to ensure maximum participation of members and guests in uncertain times.

We look forward to 'seeing' you by teleconference at the first Council meeting for the year on 4 February.

Robyn Nolan, President of NCWA, has notified NCWV she was delighted to announce that Chiou See Anderson is the NCWA President-elect and she is very much looking forward to Chiou See joining the NCWA Executive in 2021.

Congratulations

We were delighted to hear that our Young NCWV group in Year 12 have been highly successful in achieving their VCE. Lucy Skelton from Melbourne Girls' College, Richmond, earned an ATAR of 95.10, including top 3% in several of her subjects. She also received an Environment Education Victoria Award after being nominated by her school. Congratulations to all Year 12 students who have successfully achieved their VCE after such a difficult year. We look forward to hearing about their plans for study, work or other options.

60th Annual Australia Day Pioneer Women's Ceremony, Mon. January 18th 2021, 10:00–11:30 am

Women's Peace Garden, Epsom Road, Kensington, between Westbourne Road and Coopers Lane, a beautiful garden created by women in the International Year of Peace in 1986. This will celebrate Victorian Pioneer Women, conducted by the National Council of Women of Victoria to acknowledge past and present women pioneers. This year, the focus will be on Pioneer Women in Medical Research. **Guest Speaker: Prof Susan Sawyer, Director of the RCH Centre for Adolescent Health, inductee on Victorian Women's Honour Roll, a highly respected researcher and speaker.**

This is a COVID safe event, with distancing and sanitising being included. There will be a colour party by Girl Guides Victoria and the singing of the National Anthem with the flag-raising. Please notify NCWV of your attendance on info@ncwvic.org.au



National Council of Women of Victoria Inc. Regd. No.

PO Box 18186 Collins Street East, MELBOURNE, 8003; PH 03 9637 1111
Registered office: Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 239 A'Beckett St, Melbourne.
Patron in Chief: Her Excellency the Honorable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria
Patron: The Right Honorable the Lord Mayor of Melbourne Sally Capp

The 117th AGM was held on the 3rd December

The following Committee members were elected:

President: Ronniet Milliken

Vice-President: Elida Brereton

Treasurer: Sheridan Ingram

Standing Committee Coord. Dr Deborah Towns OAM

Individual Members Convenor: Beverley Kannegiesser

Regional Branch Representative: Alexandra Jeffrey

Ordinary Members: June Anderson; Pam Hammond;

Hean Bee Wee AM

Co-opted Committee member: Elisabeth Newman AM

Guest Speaker: The Rt Hon. The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sally Capp, the first woman elected as Lord Mayor of Melbourne and now the first woman to serve two terms in this role. Sally was also the first woman to hold the post of Agent-General for Victoria to the UK, Europe and Israel. She has also served as CEO for the Committee for Melbourne. She is Patron of many charities and organisations, including NCWV. Sally thanked Elisabeth for approaching her several years ago, and congratulated Elisabeth on the work she has done to maintain activities during such a difficult year and for being awarded the AM. She also congratulated all delegates and members for their ongoing work and encouraging women to take on roles, such as local government. She was delighted that Kylie Spears, CEO of ALGWA, has been elected mayor of Maroondah City Council. At the 2020 Council elections, 34 women became mayors, 30 were elected deputy mayors, with 45% of councillors elected are women, the highest level ever.

More women are contributing to the life of Melbourne and she believes that more will take on leadership roles. There needs to be more information and stories about the women who have contributed to Melbourne and those who are doing so today. Sally was initially not aware of many of these trail blazers. Winsome McCaughey and Leckie Ord, previous Lord Mayors and Patrons of NCWV, campaigned publicly and paved the way for others through their example. They had an enduring impact on Victorian public life coming out of the '80s recession. The liveability tag has a lot to do with them. Their careers were often catalysts for reform and greater respect for women's intellect and achievements. They have been supporting Sally in her role as Lord Mayor. She acknowledged Barbara Abley, AM, who was the first female Mayor of the City of Geelong in 2002 and Gracia Baylor, AM, who was one of the first two women elected to the Victorian Legislative Council in 1979, after she had been Healesville Shire Council President in 1977, the first female Victorian Shire President. The work NCWV does encourages women to put up their hand for positions.

The life of women has changed and needs to be recorded. The more stories are told, legends and role models are created, and more women will be inspired to become involved. Sally has initiated a 'Truth Telling' program at the Town Hall to encourage story telling. In 1901, legislation was passed to enable women to vote and stand for election, this was a world first. One of Sally's heroes is Vida Goldstein who led this campaign in Victoria, standing as an independent at five State elections before being successful. Sadly, her story was not told in schools.

When Sally is asked to share her journey, she speaks of her many career changes, surprises, stumbles and opportunities along the way, learning from mistakes. This has built resilience and the ability to maintain high levels of enthusiasm, which Winston Churchill speaks of. We need women heroes, with human stories, to inspire others to take on leadership roles. Organisations and industries need more women in leadership roles to grow. Sally has a passion for Melbourne, which is why she stood for election initially and again in the 150th Anniversary of the Town Hall. She has a sense of connection with the highly diverse Melbourne community and who we want to be into the future. Even though 2020 has been such an extreme year, emotionally, socially and physically, there have been silver linings, one being the 'Community Champions' Awards, sharing inspiring stories of those who have shown thoughtfulness and compassion to others with determination and resolve to give back, to celebrate them and inspire others. Melbourne revitalising and recovery projects include: Urban Blooms; Rate Freeze; Creative Laneways; events in person and online with all budgets maintained; 'seats on streets' for outdoor dining; with all businesses having COVID safe plans; improved cycling lanes; extra cleaning services; Sidney Myer Music Bowl Summer program; NGV Triennial and more.



Vida's story tells us what we can do. She spoke at many gatherings about women's issues, family violence, rights, equal opportunity, even travelling to USA and meeting President Roosevelt who wanted to see what an enfranchised woman looked like! Sally aims to have women's achievements valued and recorded in tangible ways.

Sally thanked NCWV for their ongoing advocacy for women.

Vale



Dame Margaret Guilfoyle AC DBE (1926-2020)

Dame Margaret passed away at 94 in Melbourne on November 11th, leaving behind a great legacy and impact on our political landscape and country at large. She succeeded Dame Ivy Wedgewood in the Senate and was replaced by Dr Kaye Patterson. This was a legacy of Australian Women's National League. As a member of Malcolm Fraser's cabinet from 1975 to 1984, Ms Guilfoyle was caretaker Minister for Education, then Minister for Social Security. She was the first woman to run an Australian government department, first woman in federal cabinet with ministerial portfolio and the first woman to hold a major economic portfolio, making her the highest-ranking woman in the Australian government until 2010. Dame Margaret was a vocal advocate for all women. She understood that equal participation in leadership is necessary to ensure the fulfilment of aspirations for a civilised society. She passionately argued for the provision of maternity leave for all women, not just Commonwealth employees. She ensured the delivery of social services for women, formed, and as head of the Office of Child Care she presided over the major expansion of government support for preschool, child care and afterschool care, that parents benefit from today. Dame Margaret mentored many and paved the way for other women in politics; she once said "I was the first but it is very important that I was not the last".



Susan Maree Ryan AO FAICD (1942-2020) was an Australian politician and public servant. She was a member of the Australian Labor Party and the first woman from the ALP to serve in cabinet holding ministerial office in the Hawke Government as Minister assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Education and Special Minister of State. She was the first woman to hold the portfolio relating to women's affairs. Senator Ryan was involved in the creation of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Affirmative Action Act 1986. She served as a senator for the Australian Capital Territory from 1975 to 1987. After leaving politics she served as the Age Discrimination Commissioner from 2011 to 2016, within the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Other News

With all the disruptions to our 'normal' lives, there are concerns about people's well-being. Helplines are available for those who need support:

[1800RESPECT 1800 737 732](#). Confidential counselling and support 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

[Black Dog Institute](#) Information on symptoms, treatment, prevention of depression; bipolar disorder.

[Carers Australia](#) 1800 242 636 Short-term counselling and emotional and psychological support services for carers and their families in each state and territory.

[Embrace Multicultural Mental Health](#) national platform for Australian mental health services and multicultural communities to access resources, services and information in a culturally accessible format.

Partners in Wellbeing Helpline 1300 375 330 for Victorian businesses is available seven days a week from 9am to 10pm on weekdays and 9am to 5pm on weekends and offers free and confidential one-on-one access to wellbeing and mental health support; also provides business owners under stress with free access to financial counsellors.

[Kids Helpline](#) 1800 55 1800 anytime any reason, FREE from mobile, any public phone or landline

Beyond Blue for suicide prevention. 1300 22 4636 24hr/7 days/week

[MensLine Australia](#) 1300 78 99 78. telephone and online support, information and referral service, helping men to deal with relationship problems in a practical and effective way.

WIRE 1300 134 130. Free support, referral and information for Victorian women, nonbinary, gender-diverse people, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

[Lifeline](#) 13 11 14 for 24/7 support for people facing mental health crises

UAW Vic: Cath Morrison, Secretary, Union of Australian Women sent this message:

"The UAW is winding down its activities and has closed Ross House Office. We asked the Victorian Women's Trust to establish a UAW Sub Fund within the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust. This Sub Fund will be committed to supporting leadership training for Aboriginal girls and the Trust has agreed to do this on our behalf.

Donations of any amount, no matter how small, will be most gratefully received.

Donate online www.bit.ly/UAWSubFund; by phone (03) 9642 0422; or send donation to:

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S TRUST Level 9, 313 La Trobe St. It is good to see our UAW name live on in this way."

UAW has a proud history to look back on and this final initiative, facilitated with the VWT, is a brilliant way to perpetuate that history. UAW joined the League of Women Voters and WEL as a member of the International Alliance of Women. In recent years all three bodies have been actively involved in the Equality Rights Alliance.

Order of Australia Last year's award recipients celebrate Australia's diversity. In addition to being Australian, recipients identified with an ancestral heritage from more than 30 different countries. The number of women receiving an award in the Order of Australia lists has increased from 37.4% in 2019 to 42% in 2020, with Victoria reaching 50%. It's important that our honours system reflects the extraordinary contributions of people right across Australia. Let's further celebrate Australia's diversity - help build on the diversity of our honours recipients. If you know someone who is an extraordinary contributor to Australia, please nominate them.

Anyone can nominate any Australian for an award in the Order of Australia. If you know someone worthy, nominate them now at www.gg.gov.au.

Please contact us if there are any issues for you or for your Organisation that we may be able to assist you with, support or advocate on your behalf.

Our Purposes: *to provide a non-party political, non-sectarian, not-for-profit, umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives, empowering women and girls and raising awareness of gender equality; act as a voice on issues and concerns of women and girls at a State level; develop policies and responses on behalf of women and girls on a State-wide basis; maintain and strengthen the Association's relationship with all members; link with women in Australia and the International Council of Women through the National Council of Women of Australia and contribute to the implementation of their plans of action and policies.*

Our motto: *The Preamble to the original ICW Constitution said "We, women of all Nations, in the conviction that the good of humanity will be best advanced by greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, and that an organised movement will serve to promote the highest good of the family and of the Nation, do hereby band ourselves together in a federation of women of all races, nations and creeds, to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."*

NCWV Dates for 2021 – venue or online to be confirmed

- January 2021** **Monday 18th** Australia Day Pioneer Women's Ceremony,
Women's Peace Garden Kensington, 10:15am - 11:30am
- February** **Thursday 4th** Individual Members Meeting
Council Meeting, 12:15pm – 2:15pm
- Monday 8th** Standing Committee Meeting, 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- Thursday 18th** Committee Meeting, 10am – 12:00pm
- March:** **Thursday 4th:** Council Meeting, **5:15-7:15pm. NOTE late time**
- Thursday 18th:** Committee Meeting, RHSV ground floor meeting room, 10:00am-12:00pm
- April:** **Thursday 1st:** Individual Members 10:15am,
Council Meeting
- Monday 12th:** Standing Committee Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm
- Thursday 22nd:** Committee Meeting, RHSV ground floor meeting room, 10:00am-12:00pm
- May** **Thursday 6th** **May Forum:** 10:00am, Room 4.1 Ross House
Council Meeting, 12:15am, Room 4.1 Ross House
- Thursday 20th** Committee Meeting, RHSV ground floor meeting room, 10:00am-12:00pm