

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Celebrating 122 years in 2024-5



NCWV NATIONAL
COUNCIL
OF WOMEN
VICTORIA

Acknowledgement

National Council of Women of Victoria (NCWV) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Victoria and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities.

NCWV pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

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Affiliated with:

National Council of Women of Australia Inc.
Ltd and thus to the International Council of
Women (ICW-CIF) which has consultative
status with the United Nations Economic
and Social Council.

Contents

Acknowledgement	2	<i>My Vote My Voice</i> 2024: Social Media – A Blessing or a Curse?	27
Introduction	4	REPORTS.....	29
NCWV Purposes	4	NCWV – Individual Members.....	30
President’s Report.....	5	Treasurer’s Report.....	31
National Council of Women Australia	11	Standing Committees Reports	38
Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest Award Program Report	13	Sustainable Development	40
NCWV Annual Luncheon 2024	14	General Wellbeing.....	43
64 th Annual Pioneer Women’s Ceremony.....	16	Communications	46
ICW-CIF General Assembly.....	20	Social Issues	52
May Forum 2025	22	NCWV Geelong Report	54
NCWV Monthly Newsletter.....	23	Archivist Report.....	56
Monthly Council Meetings 2024 - 5	24	Vales	57
		2024–25: About Us	59

Introduction

The National Council of Women of Victoria (NCWV) is a not-for-profit, umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian objectives, with twenty-five Organisational Members, and over fifty Individual Members, from across Greater Melbourne and Geelong, regional and rural Victoria. It brings together a number of the more significant member-based organisations for women and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with Observer Status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

Our aim is to work for the well-being of women and their families: their right to physical safety, to education at all levels, and to receive equal pay for equal work. It is agreed that violence in the home and public places is a crime, as is discrimination on the basis of gender, race, or marital status.

The Council partners with professionals, policy makers and the community, to become more informed on issues of the day and to act where appropriate, including making submissions to Government, to Parliamentary Committees and other inquiries and bodies.

NCWV 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.
- To act as a voice on issues and concerns of women and girls at a State level.
- To develop policies and responses on behalf of women and girls on a State-wide basis.
- To maintain and strengthen the Association's relationship with all members.
- To link with the women of 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.

Gracia Baylor AM firmly believed that women should have equal status to men. *"I've always believed in equality ... that women should have equal opportunity to share in the decision-making processes of the nation at any level, whether it be parliamentary, corporate, or at the local level."*

President's Report

NCWV President, Elida Brereton

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the 122nd Annual Report of the National Council of Women Victoria Inc (NCWV).

This Annual Report includes reports of events and meetings and hard work done by so many of our members – all volunteers – to enhance our knowledge about the challenges faced, and opportunities for, the wellbeing of women and girls, between **July 2024 and June 2025**.

It is encouraging to note the number of new Members in 2024-25: 12 Individual members – Dr Julie Stevens, Janet Rowe, Dr Yee Man Louie, Favour Ijiyera, Maggie Baron, Phoebe Swift, Dr Kate Duncan AM, Sarah Barnbrook, Irene Szoeki, Rhumbi Nyanhoto, Viv Nguyen AM, and Christine Rippon and one Organisation Member - the Australian Psychological Society. Welcome All!

Advocacy

We have advocated for women in some key aspects. NCWV must not lose the commitment of members or our focus on improving the situation of so many women and girls in our society.

Our Convenor of Standing Committees Robyn Byrne OAM and her Advisors advocated about issues including financial support for parents of 3-4 year olds trying to enrol in kinders and childcare, road safety around schools, women's pain and medical training to address the proper treatment of this, aged care improvements in terms of nutrition and wellbeing of the aged, and other issues as mentioned under Reports.

We welcome your suggestions regarding practices needing to be improved or changed.

Monthly Meetings

We are pleased that our **monthly Council Meetings** have again been conducted *in person and via ZOOM*, and where possible we have gathered in the City to share key events in our calendar.

We have had a few meetings of Individual Members under the leadership of Convenor Sheila Byard OAM and hope to increase the number in the coming year.

Mindful of the 2022 membership survey, the speakers who presented over the past 12 months reflect the interests and concerns of NCWV members and focus on a wide range of issues facing women and girls in Victoria.

Humanity

As a non-party political and non-sectarian organisation we have been restrained in commenting on the tragedies continuing in Ukraine and the atrocities of October 7th 2023 in Israel, and now in Gaza.

The members of NCWV hope and pray for peace, wisdom and justice at this traumatic time. The National Council of Women Victoria continue to endorse fully the statement for peace adopted at the 2023 International Council of Women (ICW-CIF) Conference in Manila, part of which is shown here:

We, the members of the International Council of Women, are deeply concerned about the suffering and the high costs

caused by armed conflicts and the violations of human rights of women and girls in the forms of gender and sexual violence, displacement other harm, injury and death arising from the increasing conflict and unrest around the world. We, therefore, call for the cessation of all armed conflicts and the re-establishment of peace and security in the world.

The ICW-CIF reaffirms its whole-hearted opposition to war as a means of settling international conflicts as well as its longstanding faith in the necessity for international collaboration through dialogue, mediation, and negotiation to arrive at peaceful solutions of the problems. We condemn the crimes committed against humanity and the dignity of the individual before, during and after war and look forward to the restoration of a just and durable peace.

*Manila, November 8th, 2023 **Martine Marandel ICW-CIF President.***

Gatherings

The highlights for 2024-5 include

2024 **My Vote My Voice** inter-school presentations held in Parliament House last August and organised so well by Vice-President Pam Hammond, where the topic for the students was “**Social media -- a blessing or a curse**”. It was a joy to see so many students from 12 secondary schools across Greater Melbourne, supported by teachers and family and friends, enjoying the freedoms of speaking in the glorious Upper House and listening to each other so well. It was also good to share this event with many NCWV members.

NCWV Geelong Branch President Nonie welcomed 105 people to the Annual Luncheon, held this year at The Pecten, Geelong’s newest entertainment centre,

on June 30th. There was strong support from NCWV Melbourne members, and members from Bendigo and areas outside of Greater Geelong. Speaker Emelia Young is an occupational therapist who specialises in supporting women with disabilities having a child, and maternal care. Many members and guests reflected on the terrifying barriers which many mums with disabilities must face on a daily basis, when, instead of being filled with joy and wonder in becoming new mothers, they feel the dread of failure. Emelia breaks down barriers and modifies equipment and she needs to be supported.

Women’s Federation of Anhui Province - with Dr Deborah Towns OAM and through Vice-President Guosheng Chen, I represented NCWV in a meeting with an official delegation of women from the **Women’s Federation of Anhui Province**, who are interested in how Melbourne municipalities play a role in enhancing women’s health. There are 30 million women and girls in this province.

Royal Children’s Hospital - on September 11th 2024 around 20 Individual Members visited the Royal Children’s Hospital. After a hospitable morning tea we were given a guided tour of this world-famous hospital.

On October 14th 2024, I was a guest of the **National Council of Jewish Women Australia (Victoria)** (one of our member organisations) where four Jewish women from a university student to a legendary Melbournian in her 90s shared the impact on their lives here in Melbourne of the October 7th 2023 atrocity caused by Hamas. I felt ashamed when hearing about the threats and attacks occurring in this City against these four women because they are members of the Jewish community.

Ukrainian Women's Association: on October 27th 2024, Vice-President Pam Hammond and I were the guests of the **Ukrainian Women's Association**, (one of our member organisations) at the celebration of their 75th year in Victoria, held at the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Essendon. We felt very much at home.

AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health: Vice-President Pam Hammond, Hean Bee Wee AM, June Anderson and I attended the **AGM** of the **AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health**, led by Prof Manjula O'Connor (keynote speaker at the NCWV 2024 AGM), and enjoyed this truly multicultural event.

NCWV End-of-year Annual Luncheon was held in November at the Batman's Hill on Collins Hotel, with around 74 members and friends in attendance. Our guest speaker was **Hazel Edwards OAM**, eminent Australian educator, author, speaker and Literacy Ambassador. She shared with us some of the challenges of writing, and also of promoting values in her books. [Report page 14]

The **64th Pioneer Women's Ceremony** was held on Sunday, February 2nd 2025 at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden in Kings Domain, Melbourne. This event, celebrated **Victorian Pioneer Women in Agriculture**.

This year it is 30 years only since 1994 that women in Australia were recognised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, under occupations in the Census, as farmers rather than simply "farmers' wives".

We appreciated that two parliamentarians joined us. **Michaela Settle MP**, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Regional Development, highlighted the critical role of the Victorian Rural Women's Network in

championing and empowering women into leadership and influential decision-making positions and **Emma Kealy MP**, Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Mental Health, acknowledged the valuable work of the NCWV in supporting women's advocacy and leadership. She paid tribute to women pioneers, past and present, sharing stories of 19th-century women who, despite raising large families, made significant contributions to their towns and regions in the mid-late 1800s.

Our Speakers were **Alana Johnson AM**, **Chair Victorian Women's Trust** and **Founder Australian Women in Agriculture (AWIA)** who set the scene and the tone of the event through recollections of her maternal line and the foundation of AWIA; **Councillor Liesbeth Long**, Primary Producer and Councillor with Central Goldfields Shire who shared her journey of resilience, adaptation, and a deep commitment to both her family and her community; and **Narelle Hanrahan**, Victorian Director, Australian Women in Agriculture, who shared her personal 20-year journey in agriculture, and highlighted the significant contributions of First Nations women.

I was delighted to be a guest at two member events to celebrate International Women's Day - **Australian Asian Businesswomen's Association** at Green Acres Golf Club and the **National Council of Jewish Women Australia (Victoria)** held outdoors in St Kilda.

In May I attended the **WCTU Drug Free Lifestyle** Lunch at which two excellent speakers addressed the impact of vaping on young people and another member shared terrific learning resources valuable for very young children. WCTU

is one of the founding member associations of NCWV from 1902.

NCWA

In my role as President, I have attended [virtually] monthly **NCWA Board meetings** and appreciate that NCWV can learn from the other State Councils, while at the same time sharing our wisdom with them!

I have represented NCWV at Board meetings of **NCWA** and had a meeting with outgoing President Chiou See Anderson and her successor from South Australia, Fiona Dorman, elected in November 2024 at the Triennial Conference in Adelaide.

NCWA has worked to engage the new Governor-General the Hon. Sam Mostyn AC as our National Patron.

In late November a group of seven NCWV Delegates: Pam Hammond, Sheila Byard OAM, Robyn Byrne OAM, Elisabeth Newman AM, Hean Bee Wee AM, Pam Robinson OAM and I, represented NCWV at the **NCWA Triennial Conference in Adelaide**, which included a Vice-regal reception hosted by the Governor of South Australia, Her Excellency Frances Adamson AC at Adelaide's beautiful Government House.

Our own **Hean Bee Wee AM**, a former President of NCWA, was made an Honorary Life Vice-President of NCWA, a major honour richly deserved.

The NCWV delegation was supportive of all national resolutions but disappointed by the rejection of two with which we were associated. [Report page 11]

NCWA proposed changes the NCWA Constitution. At the NCWV Council Meeting on March 6th 2025 NCWV Standing Committees Coordinator Robyn Byrne OAM, and NCWV Immediate Past

President Ronniet Milliken presented a comprehensive review of the proposals. At an NCWA Extra-ordinary General Meeting held on March 31st these proposed changes were deferred indefinitely; and are receiving further consideration by the NCWA Board.

In late June 2025 NCWA sent a contingent to the **General Assembly of the International Council of Women (CIF-ICW)**, held in Marrakesh, Morocco. NCWV was pleased to be represented by Prof Cassandra Szoeki, NCWV Health Advisor, with Elisabeth Newman AM Hean Bee Wee AM also delegates, to hear about the outcomes of the discussions about the seven resolutions presented from around the world, which we had approved at a Council Meeting.

Honours

During 2024-2025 some of our Members and Delegates have received **awards** (as known to NCWV at the time of publication):

Dr Manjula O'Connor, Founder of AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health on the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, recognised for her services to migrant women and became the Victorian Senior of the Year. **Dr Rosalie Cooper** was awarded the OAM, for "service to medicine through a range of roles". Dr Cooper was a GP between 1992–2007, served in several roles within the Victorian Medical Women's Society, as well as in the Australian Federation of Medical Women. She had key roles with Red Nose Australia (SIDS and Kids Victoria) and was a Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Mothers' and Children's Health. We congratulate Rosalie and Manjula, and ask for the names of any other award not known about at this time.

Vales

Sadly, we have lost some members since my last report:

Judith Ryles OAM, a longstanding and loyal member, died in August 2024,

Birute Don, our Habitat Advisor, died in February 2025. Birute was an active and committed member right to the end.

Gracia Baylor AM, former President of NCWV and NCWA, died in May 2025 at a great age and she had been a strong, loyal and reliable contributor still active in 2025.

Retirees

We have also lost some longtime and loyal members, due to retirement from NCWV, in particular **Malvina Malinek OAM** to whom we paid a tribute at the November 2024 Annual Luncheon.

We thank them and all retirees from NCWV for giving of themselves as volunteers to the work of NCWV.

Rosemary Cameron, the Executive Officer of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, has been of enormous assistance to the NCWV Committee over her 8 years including the Janet Galley OAM papers and allowing us to use RHSV for events .

New Honorary Secretaries

Last September the NCWV Committee was delighted to meet new member **Dr Julie Stevens**, Senior Lecturer in Health and Biomedical Sciences at RMIT University. Not only is Julie a member but she agreed (and was voted in) to become the Hon. Secretary, majoring in our Council meetings and business. We were then pleased to welcome another new member **Phoebe Swift**, a civil engineer and Infrastructure Portfolio

Manager, who has become joint Hon. Secretary, and Public Officer, working mostly with the NCWV Committee/Executive. Both Phoebe and Julie share major tasks. I thank them both for their fresh insights and technical knowledge, support, hard work and competence.

We have also welcomed quite a few new members and this is heartening at a time when many younger people do not join volunteer organisations.

Thankyou

Last year we made Pam Hammond an Honorary Life Member. We are grateful that she has continued her outstanding leadership of our **Pioneer Women's Ceremony** and **My Vote My Voice** events, and particularly for her excellent and hard work as Editor producing our **Newsletter** every month.

I thank all Individual Members and Delegates who have been involved in the work done, and who have contributed to the events and activities included in the Report, for your commitment and your gift of time and talents to NCWV.

Finally, I want to thank all who hold key roles in NCWV, including Vice-Presidents **Pam Hammond** and **Guosheng Chen** for their faithful work and wisdom; our Convenor of Standing Committees **Robyn Byrne OAM**, and all of her faithful Advisors, covering so many of the aspects affecting women and girls, Hon. Treasurer **Emma Fu** who has been supported well by **Hean Bee Wee AM**; Immediate Past President **Ronniel Milliken** who has been outstanding in supporting me and the Executive, especially with her diligence in reading and directing all the numerous emails coming to NCWV, setting up Zoom meetings, keeping us grounded with her

great knowledge of NCWV rules and practices, **Sheila Byard OAM** as continuing Convenor of Individual Members and a source of much corporate memory on the Committee, and **Carol Robertson** (Note-taker) and **Beverley Kannegiesser** (Book-keeper) of the Individual Members. Hon. Secretaries Dr. **Julie Stevens** and **Phoebe Swift who has also taken on the role of Public Officer** and all of the Committee, including **Robyn Byrne OAM, June Anderson , and Dr Deborah Towns OAM.**

Thanks also to NCWV Geelong Individual Members and Delegates for the stimulating speakers and great hospitality at the 2024 and 2025 Luncheons.

You have all ensured that despite the lingering bad effects on meetings of the Covid lockdown, and the conflicting work/ study/ family demands for many of us, NCWV continues to be relevant as a major umbrella organisation of women's associations.

We look forward to seeing you face-to-face in future meetings and celebrations. You are welcome to invite guests to join us for meetings and membership. Let us **all** help to make NCWV more vibrant and relevant -- and we can do this!

NCWV acknowledges the support received including:

Guest Speakers during the year – taking the time to share their deep knowledge.

Donors – including anonymous donors large and small.

Regarding My Vote My Voice 2024:

- Presiding Officers and Staff of the Parliament of Victoria
- The Hon Shaun Leane MLC, President, Legislative Council
- Maree Edwards MP, Speaker Legislative Assembly
- Parliamentary Services AV staff, Hansard, and Mary Dee Morgan, Events Coordinator
- Victorian Electoral Commission Community Education Engagement Team
- The Bessie Rischbieth Memorial Trust
- League of Women Voters of Victoria

Regarding Pioneer Women's Celebration

- Photographer, Rod Hammond, and the Hammond family for their support
- City of Melbourne
- Complete Function Hire
- Jaz Lee VirtuaLEE
- Readings Books
- Westpac Banking
- June Anderson Founder of AABWA

National Council of Women Australia

NCWA Triennial Conference, Adelaide,
Nov 21-22, 2024

Outcome of 8 Resolutions at the Triennial Conference:

Resolution 1: Deepfake Prevention (passed)

To urge the Federal Government to foster a technological landscape that is ethical, transparent, and equitable for women ensuring that technological advancements contribute positively to society minimising a lack of perspectives of women and girls during the design and implementation stages.

Resolution 2: Ethical AI Guidelines (passed)

To urge the Federal Government to develop and adopt ethical gender responsive AI guidelines with a gender lens. It is critical to integrate gender-responsive standards that ensure the impacts on women and girls are considered at every stage of AI design, development and deployment.

Resolution 3: Gender Equity in Technology (passed)

To urge the Federal Government to foster a technological landscape that is ethical, transparent, and equitable for women ensuring that technological advancements contribute positively to society minimising a lack of perspectives of women and girls during the design and implementation stages.

Resolution 4: Implementation of Inquiry Recommendations to Reduce Excess Sugar Consumption and Ultra-processed foods to improve Women's Health (not passed)

The National Council of Women of Australia (NCWA) urges the Federal Government to act on recommendations made in the Federal Government Inquiry into The State of Diabetes Mellitus in Australia (2024) to reduce sugar intake, and thus improve health outcomes, through tax review, strengthening labelling laws, educational programs, regulation and increasing independent research funding.

Resolution 5: Introducing a Seniors Dental Benefit Scheme as soon as possible (passed)

That NCWT requests NCWA to call on the Federal Government to improve oral and dental health outcomes for older people in Australia by introducing a Seniors Dental Benefit Scheme as recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, and that a timeline for this be developed as soon as possible.

Resolution 6: Repairing Australia's Landscapes (not passed)

The National Council of Women Australia cares about the present and future food and water supplies for Australian families, and proposes that we endorse and support action for the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists "Blueprint to Repair Australia's Landscapes", by requesting Environment ministers implement such actions.

Resolution 7: Continuing Education on Women's pain, sex specific reporting on clinical trials and funding of research projects (not passed)

That NCWV requests NCWA to call on the Federal Government to improve health outcomes for women, especially in relation to pain, by (a) Mandating sex specific results for all clinical trials conducted in Australia; (b) Requiring funded projects to address gaps in our current knowledge, using internationally recognised PROSPERO systematic review and meta-analysis; (c) Enabling monitoring of training outcomes for health professionals in sex-specific medicine based on this research.

NCWA calls on the Federal Government to implement an Immediate change in healthcare service delivery through the training of health professionals in sex-specific medicine.

- *Mandate sex specific reporting of results for all clinical trials conducted in Australia*
- *Evaluate change in practice after mandatory continuing education is completed.*
- *Only fund research projects which have proven through internationally PROSPERO registered systematic review and meta-analysis that there are gaps in our current knowledge which are required to be filled to improve health outcomes".*
- *Professional Education.*

Biased inaccurate beliefs around women presenting with pain are resulting in poor health service delivery persistent illness and the development of chronic disease and even death.

Resolution 8: Women's Economic Sustainability must start in the Early Years (passed with amendments)

NCWA requests that the Government provide funding for schools to take a transformative role in challenging gender stereotypes, beginning in the early years, and directly support girls to maintain participation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) across all levels of schooling.

Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest Award Program Report

Convenor, Elisabeth Newman AM

As advertised from time to time in the NCWV newsletter and at Council meetings, the Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest, is open to all NCWV paid up members whether an Individual Member or a Delegate, to apply for an award. Grants to attend NCWA meetings are also offered.

In August 2024, Emma Fu was successful in applying for an award, initially for one year, to assist her gain experience as a treasurer of an NGO and to learn more about NCWV. Emma came to the attention of NCWV in 2016 when she received a Civics and Citizenship award at *My Vote My Voice*, and soon after became involved with the Standing Committees and was appointed the Economics Adviser, a position she still holds. Emma graduated from Melbourne University with a major in Economics and Finance. While establishing her career Emma has held a number of positions involving holistic well-being, health as well as technology innovation.



Emma, centre

Pam Robinson AM was given a grant to attend the NCWA Triennial meeting in Adelaide in November 2024. She found attending the meeting a very valuable experience. The grant to Emma Fu was reversed due to illness and her inability to attend.

Late last year Gracia Baylor AM, Hean Bee Wee AM and I met to discuss minor adjustments to the composition of the Committee of Management for the Bequest and changes to the bank signatories. Leonie Christopherson AM was involved by phone.

The Committee of Management is to consist of no more than five: The Convener, currently myself; Finance Officer, a new position to oversee the finances, to be Hean Bee Wee; up to 2 other members; one of whom is Alex Jeffrey Immediate Past President NCWV Geelong; NCWV President to be ex-officio member. The signatories to the Sylvia Gelman AM MBE bank accounts are to be the Convener and the Finance Officer of the Bequest Committee of Management and Treasurer of NCWV.

Both Gracia Baylor AM and Leonie Christopherson AM indicated they wished to retire from the Management Committee. Leonie with health issues resigned/retired from the Committee at the beginning of the year and Gracia was to retire later in the year. Sadly, as you will be aware, she died at the end of May 2025.

Leonie and Gracia were valuable foundation members of the Committee, and will be missed.

NCWV Annual Luncheon 2024

As National Council of Women Victoria has long been interested in children's education and books that encourage respect for girls and other cultures, we were delighted to have **Hazel Edwards OAM, Australian Educator, Author, Speaker and Literacy Ambassador** as our guest speaker at the 2024 Annual Luncheon.



Animated Hazel Edwards

Her best-known publication is the children's picture book classic ***There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake*** (1980), now a series of picture books, classroom play scripts, a musical stage production and a short movie.

Hazel is a prolific author with over 200 books across numerous genre. Her memoir ***'Not Just a Piece of Cake'*** (2013) takes the reader behind the books, sharing the diverse workstyle of a long-term author, as did her talk:

Writing for Young People is harder than writing for adults. Deceptively simple but with subtext. And don't assume the age of the reader or audience is the IQ of the writer! I write for all genres, ages and mediums and getting picture book text right is the hardest. It is fifty years since I first published and I am still learning. 'Vintage' not old.

Why Write a YA Novel Called 'Wasted?' I care about certain political and social issues. But I don't march in protests. I write Young Adult fiction instead. Plotting a story, involving characters and humour from varied viewpoints, is NOT propaganda (which presents one viewpoint only). Literature takes you into the minds and motives of diverse characters via their thoughts and actions. You may not agree with some characters but at least you can work out where they're coming from in terms of their ideas. Strategically placed ideas matter. Sometimes, ideas in books have a longer life than even the author. Especially if it's a book you've read at a significant phase in your life when you're looking for answers. Many 13– 19-year-olds can make a difference and are passionate about social issues but unsure if they can make a difference. A book or film can have a more lasting impact than a one-word chant. Different approaches to solving the problem can be portrayed through varied and fun characters.

'Wasted?' explores a mid-ocean Garbage Patch state where asylum seekers recycle bio fuel from waste, led by 16-year-old Head of State known as The GG.

<https://hazeledwards.com/book/wasted/>

Another sampler is for gifted students 'Kaleidoscope of Ideas' used by Tournament of Minds.

<https://hazeledwards.com/book/kaleidoscope-of-ideas/>

Hazel uses the letters of AUTHOR to cover the diverse aspects of her writerly life:

A. Authorpreneurship; Audience; A.I. which has no soul; Age groups and different media.

U. Understanding. Especially cultural appropriateness, participant observations. 'Complete Your Book in a Year' mentoring for quiet heroes from migrant families.

T. Titles; Themes: coping successfully with being different; Idea; Idea risk taking by author.

H. Humour. Subtext. Heroes; family history/mentoring; Hazelnuts

O. Original. 'F2m, The Boy Within' - first trans YA novel co-written by trans author; Other mediums: 'Go! Go! Gecko' my family gift story, translated into other languages, audio and 2D; Nanjing dual-language picture book exchanges.

R. Research facts for 'Antarctica' and 'Wasted?'. Rich life as an author in terms of experiences, not necessarily money.

At the lunch, we acknowledged three long-term very active members who are retiring: Nina Richwol, Jessie Handoll and Malvina Malinek OAM, who was the only one present. Sheila Byard OAM paid a tribute to Malvina who was presented with a plant and card to commemorate the occasion.



Jenni Russell, Sheila Byard, Malvina, Elida

Malvina responded that she was very pleasantly surprised and quite

embarrassed by the special mention and her contribution to NCWV, but very much appreciated it. She gave credit to Jennie Russell OAM as her President earlier who was ready to take up every suggestion she made. The first one was the *Respect Women* pamphlet in response to the problem faced by newcomers, who were culturally ignorant about the status of women in their new country. Malvina said,

Today, I think it needs to be retaught to the youngsters if we are to have a civil and cohesive multicultural society.

I would like to see a future where everyone can respect each other whether in parliaments, organisations, and each other personally, young and old, able or disabled.

We also acknowledged the generous contribution of RMIT, enabled by Dr Jing Qi, for printing the *My Vote My Voice* student certificates.



Guosheng, Ronniet Milliken, Elida, Robyn Byrne, Pam, Dr Qi



Fiona Patten, members and guests at luncheon

64th Annual Pioneer Women's Ceremony



Robyn, Emma, June, Hean Bee, Guosheng, Elida, Liesbeth, Pam R, Michaela, Alana, Narelle, Pam H, Ronniet, Deborah

The 64th Pioneer Women's Ceremony: Sunday, February 2, 2025, 11:30am–2:00pm was held at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden in Kings Domain, Melbourne, celebrating Victorian Pioneer Women in Agriculture. In 2025 it is 30 years since women in Australia were legally considered farmers under the law and recognised in the Census as farmers rather than simply "farmers' wives".



We were delighted that two parliamentarians gave short addresses at the start of the event. **Michaela Settle MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Regional Development**, highlighted the \$20 billion agricultural sector and the critical role of the Victorian Rural Women's Network in championing and empowering women into leadership and influential decision-making positions.



Emma Kealy MP, Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Mental Health, acknowledged the valuable work of the NCWV in supporting women's advocacy and leadership. She paid tribute to women pioneers, past and present, sharing stories of 19th-century women who, despite raising large families, made significant contributions to their towns and regions in the mid-late 1800s. She emphasised that, while being a mother is an important role, it does not define a woman's entire identity. Emma highlighted the example of Dr Kendra Clegg, a present-day pioneer, who led the Grampians emergency recovery response while balancing farm work and made significant contributions to the region and community.



Alana Johnson AM, Chair Victorian Women's Trust and Founder Australian Women in Agriculture

Alana described the early 1990s, where women in New Zealand, including Indigenous Māori and First Nations women, gathered to discuss identity, with Caucasian women remaining largely silent. Indigenous women wore the cloak of their ancestors, a source of cultural identity, while Caucasian women lacked that connection. Women settlers, especially in agriculture, have contributed significantly since colonisation, but their roles were often ignored in history.

In Australia, until 1994, women were not officially recognised as farmers. In 1891, the Census excluded women farmers, labelling them as “farmer’s wives.” Alana shared the story of her grandmother, a dairy farmer, who was known as a “farmer’s wife,” despite her significant work on the farm, such as raising ducks and making butter. This reflected societal constraints and cultural biases at the time which overlooked women’s contributions.

Alana referenced Marilyn Waring’s 1988 book *Counting for Nothing*, which analyses economics from a feminist perspective and the implications of discounting the work of women (half of the world’s population). Historically, women’s work, such as farm labour, was unrecognised in the Census. Many

women started labelling their work as “logistics manager” or “machinery operator” and recorded long hours with no income.

Alana continued with the women’s movement in the 60s and 70s, which pushed for equal pay, financial independence, and recognition. By the 1990s, conferences like the National Conference for Women in Agriculture were established. The first international conference, in 1994, attracted 800 women from 80 countries and drew media attention.

The Invisible Farmer Project was the largest-ever study of Australian women in agriculture. It began as a pilot project (2015-2016) and evolved into a three-year (2017-2020) nationwide partnership between rural communities, academic, government and cultural organisations, and received federal funding.

The project combined personal stories and research to highlight women’s roles in farming, climate adaptation, and rural communities. The project generated vast collections of materials and sparked public dialogue, ensuring women’s agricultural contributions were recognised.

Alana highlighted stories of female trailblazers such as Irene Lowe, who was the first woman in the Southern Hemisphere to earn an agricultural science degree. She was the only woman in her year at Dookie College. In 1918, Irene was the only graduate of her year as the men went to war. Today, 50% of agriculture students are women, with diverse career options. Cathy Wendelborn, a world champion shearer, was inducted into the Shearers Hall of Fame.



Councillor Liesbeth Long, Primary Producer and Councillor with Central Goldfields Shire

Liesbeth began by sharing that she didn't view herself as a "modern day pioneer" which she associated with harsh early Australian farming life. However, after reflecting on her own experiences, she thought her journey could be considered pioneering. Born in the Netherlands, Liesbeth immigrated to Australia aged 13 years in 1982, along with her parents, two sisters, and grandmother. The transition was difficult, with language barriers and cultural adjustments, but she managed to adapt, learn English and made new friends. During her school years, she developed a passion for agriculture, which later became a significant part of her life. After finishing high school, she attended Dookie Agricultural College, where she met her future husband, Andrew.

The couple moved across Australia for Andrew's job, eventually settling in various remote areas, including the Kimberley and Northern Territory, where they started their family. During this time, Liesbeth grew to appreciate the beauty of Australia, including *"the big, bright blue sky"*, *"the red ochre of the Kimberly"*, *"the smells of gumtrees after rain"* and *"the sounds of cicadas in summer and that moment when they all stop at once"*. In her early adulthood, Liesbeth regained her Dutch nationality and embraced dual citizenship. After a few years living abroad as expats in

Papua New Guinea, Liesbeth and Andrew returned to Australia, where they took over Andrew's parents' farm in the midst of the millennial drought.

Despite her excitement about working with her husband on the farm, the transition was difficult. Despite these challenges, Liesbeth persevered, eventually starting a bead shop to regain her independence.

She later transitioned into a career in retail and education, obtaining a diploma in Early Childhood Education. At age 50, she took a 'gap year' and returned to Europe, where she walked the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage. During this journey, she realised that Australia was her true home and decided to contribute to her community by running for local council, ultimately becoming a Councillor and, later, the Mayor.

Liesbeth faced numerous obstacles throughout her career in farming and local politics, however, she found strength in her experiences and reflected on the importance of embracing challenges and pushing forward. Liesbeth's journey has been one of resilience, adaptation, and a deep commitment to both her family and her community, resulting in an inspiring and impactful life.



Narelle Hanrahan, Victorian Director, Australian Women in Agriculture

Narelle shared her personal 20-year journey in agriculture, including various roles such as managing a cattle feedlot, trading grain, and working with Elders Rural Services in plant genetics. Raised on a small acreage in Ballarat, Narelle's early experiences with livestock and farming sparked her career in agriculture.

She highlighted the significant contributions of First Nations women, whose traditional knowledge and practices have shaped sustainable land management for over 50,000 years. These women have been key in the native foods sector, such as cultivating Kakadu plums and other bush foods, and they are vital in environmental conservation. Narelle highlighted that First Nations women constitute 85% of bush food harvesters but are underrepresented in agricultural courses, with only a few graduating annually. She showcased the work of leaders like Sharon Brindley and Natalie Sommerville, who advocate for and support Indigenous women in agriculture.

Narelle acknowledged the diversity of women in agriculture, from farmers to scientists, and their vital role in food production and rural economies. Despite challenges such as gender bias and limited resources, Narelle highlighted that women continue to push for gender equality and leadership roles.

Narelle spoke of the ongoing work of organisations such as Australian Women in Agriculture (including the Women on Agricultural Boards initiative) and the Country Women's Association in empowering women through advocacy, mentorship, education, and support.

Narelle concluded with the need for systemic change to ensure greater representation of women in leadership roles, particularly on agricultural boards. She honoured the resilience and impact of women in agriculture and called for a more inclusive future where women's contributions are fully recognised and valued.



ICW-CIF General Assembly

Marrakesh, Morocco – June 2025



Hean Bee Wee AM, then President, Asia Pacific Regional Council, reported that the General Assembly was attended by Members of Parliament and Heads of Department from across Morocco, which is one of the oldest Kingdoms in the world. She was impressed with the focus on women's welfare. The Morocco Government established three neighbourhood houses to support women. Two of these houses are training centres for women and the third is a hostel.

The Australian contingent was led by NCWA President, Fiona Dorman who presented an inspiring talk on '*No-one Left Behind*' and the advocacy of NCWA.

Hean Bee conducted a workshop with delegates countries around the Asia Pacific area. They were divided into regional groups and charged with listing what they wanted ICW-CIF to focus on for them, then report back. Hopefully some of their needs will be addressed in future action plans.

At the Gala Dinner, Salome Bentinck was a guest at Hean Bee's table. Salome is the retiring head of LELAF which has funded many projects for ICW young members, including one in Samoa. This year LELAF funded a project in Madagascar.

Linda Liu from Taiwan was elected President APRC ICW at the GA, as Hean Bee retired from the position.



Professor Cassandra Szoeki, Health Adviser for NCWV, attended the GA as an NCWA Delegate. Cassandra valued meeting up and sharing with delegates from across the World, especially from Asia/Pacific region, and reported that ICW GA in Morocco, had an emphasis on the directions being taken by the supreme ICW CIF body, hopefully for the improvement of the lives of women and girls around the world. Cassandra endorsed how Hean Bee's workshop was conducted and the resultant data.

Cassandra shared that ICW CIF has set up a young group in Portugal focussing on Poverty, Body Image, Attending World meetings to foster positive change. This is expanding with other groups being set up across the World.

Another session Cassandra attended was conducted by a Belgium Ambassador,

Myriam Bacquelaine, who highlighted the lack of women in leadership roles across the World, saying that more women in these roles would result in peace. She quoted Liberia, where war had been going on for many years, until a woman Ellen Srileaf was elected as President in 2005. Peace resulted in a short period of time and was sustained, and Ellen was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011.

Visiting some of the women's projects was a highlight including production of Argan Oil, IT skill development, baking and creation of arts & crafts. Facilities are designed to support women in need with accommodation, retraining and employment. The earnings from the gift store run by Australia and New Zealand were donated to the women at this facility.



Kitchen group-commercial baking

May Forum 2025

The **69th UN Commission on the Status of Women** in 2025 marked 30 years since the Beijing Platform for Action, focusing on ending misogyny and advancing gender equality.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres at CSW69 Townhall Meeting with Civil Society. *'Furious kickback against equality must end'*, UN chief tells women activists as conference adopts landmark declaration.

The 69th session of the CSW was held at the UN in New York, 10 - 21 March, 2025. It is 30 years since the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). CSW69 examined progress on the Platform for Action, 30 years on.

The Speakers at this NCWV May Forum were:

Dr Donnell Davis, UNAA National President and a Director with Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific; Board member National Foundation for Australian Women 2013-2017; Founder of Envirobusiness Foundation-Sisters4Sustainability. She holds a doctorate in urban climate governance, University Southern Queensland, and completed a post doctorate at Stanford University in Innovation, Ethics, design and accelerated interdisciplinary.

Dr Davis spoke about the Pact for the Future, adopted in September 2024, which includes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations. The Pact covers a broad range of issues including peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, human rights, digital cooperation, youth and

future generations, gender, and the transformation of global governance.

There were 159 countries represented, down from 189. Australia had a strong voice and advocacy with 120 delegates, leading in e-safety and youth wellbeing. There were intergenerational conversations, but as 9 – 19-year-olds were often neglected, there is a need to focus on their vulnerabilities.

Donnell stressed that there are laws in place to protect women and girls in many areas, but not all. **There are 5 dangers: Danger, Disease, Distress, Duress, Denied Freedom.**

<https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/adolescents-and-youth> *Great Grandfathers words: 'Granddaughters will shape the future'.*

Another vital area – Climate Health, which will disproportionately affect women. Over 39° can be fatal, and pathogenic diseases are aggravated by climatic hazards. Also, 1/3 of Pacific countries are threatened to be inundated.

Donnell will be speaking in Canberra and in the Australian Parliament about outcomes of CSW and how Australia can help shape the future.

Sarah Barnbrook, a delegate for Soroptimist International of the South East Asia Pacific at CSW69 and a member of NCWV, is a committee member of State of the World's Children (SoWC), Founder of AFK (Away from the Keyboard) Inc, through which she is leading efforts to build safer digital environments while fostering human connection in an increasingly online world. As a teenager, she was targeted

and groomed online by an older predator, a manipulation that led to a coerced marriage. Her experience highlights the serious and long-term risks of online grooming and exploitation. Rather than remain silent, Sarah transformed this experience into a powerful platform for change.

She is an international speaker, author, Not-For-Profit advocate and was awarded Volunteer of the Year and recognised for Youth Impact at the *Women Changing The World* Global Awards in London in 2025. She is a Professional Member of Australian Women in Security Network (AWSN); currently serves as the Company Secretary for the Australian Gender Equality Council (AGEC), and is the Chief Revenue officer at Women 4 STEM.

Sarah expressed similar concerns to Donnell about the future of CSW, as prior to the start, President Trump had black banned some countries from entering USA and had dissolved some departments including the US Education Department.

CSW was huge in delegates and sessions. The Australian delegation met regularly to share what they had attended. Sarah was particularly drawn to Emerging Technologies, AI and the effect on children, with violence online and Child Marriage especially daunting. Sarah's workshop was *Unseen Risk of AI for the Girl Child* about which she is passionate. See: Beautiful.ai - Empowering Women Globally: Reflections on CSW69

Sarah states: *'I am committed to leveraging my experience and expertise to drive meaningful progress through advocacy, education and collaborative action. By amplifying grassroots voices, fostering intersectional solutions and empowering next generation of leaders, we can build a more just and equitable world for all.'*

'The closing declaration gained consensus, but a lot was lost! We need to stand ground, nothing further to be lost. No time for complacency! We need to hold governments accountable.'

NCWV Monthly Newsletter

NCWV publishes a monthly Newsletter including Reports on our Council Meeting speaker, relevant articles, media releases and reports from Advisers. These are designed to inform Members, Affiliates, Friends about current issues.

Monthly Council Meetings 2024 - 5

Council Meeting Speakers

Speakers at Council Meetings are organised by members of the Standing Committee with a focus on issues of interest as indicated by members in the 2022 Survey and topical issues, with a view to hearing from experts in the field to inform us and our advocacy.

July 2024: Xavier Towns. A Cyber Security student at Deakin University, Xavier introduced us to the cybersecurity landscape, highlighting the wide range of online and phone scams we must stay alert to and avoid in our digital activities. He also spoke about how to Protect yourself online and Resources including Scamwatch and Australian Cyber Security Centre, for comprehensive advice and resources.



August 2024 : Kirsty Tschirpig. After 15 years in Queensland Corrective Services, Kirsty joined MATE in 2019 to focus on preventing domestic and family violence. MATE empowers bystanders to foster respectful, safe communities through training, tools, and the *Be There* app. Passionate about gender equity, she helps equip people to safely challenge harmful behaviours.



September 2024 : Prof. Dr Manjula O'Connor, Chair of the Royal



Australian New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Family Violence Psychiatry Network, is an eminent psychiatrist and advocate for

migrant women's health. She successfully led the Dowry Abuse Campaign, Dr O'Connor spoke about the increasing incidence of misidentification of women as perpetrators in cases of domestic violence, where there are conflicting claims of abuse. This can have negative consequences and fear experienced by women. It can mean that the actual perpetrator is not held to account and can continue abusive behaviour. Also, if the woman is seen to be the perpetrator, court processes can be initiated against her, and she may lose financial benefits and other supports.

October 2024: Madhavi Srinivasan Johnson Originally from Chennai, South India, Madhavi moved to Australia in 2019. She spent 26 years in international development and humanitarian work with UNICEF, serving in countries including India, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Kenya, Namibia, and at the New York headquarters. Her work focused on child rights, gender equality, and designing strategies for social and behavioural change. In 2020, she published *Demon on Fire*, a short story and she is now writing a creative non-fiction based on her time in Africa.

November 2024 : Proposed resolutions for the NCWA Triennial Conference, i.e., Resolution: (1) Deepfake Prevention, (2) Ethical AI Guidelines, (3) Gender Equity in Technology, (4) Implementation of Inquiry Recommendations to Reduce Excess Sugar Consumption and Ultra-processed Foods to Improve Women’s Health, (5) Introducing a Seniors Dental Benefit Scheme as soon as possible, (6) Repairing Australia’s Landscapes, (7) Continuing Education on Women’s pain, sex specific trials and funding of research projects, and (8) Women’s Economic Sustainability starting in the Early Years.

February 2025: Dr Niki Vincent, Victoria’s first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner, led the



implementation of the Gender Equality Act 2020, requiring over 300 public sector organisations to improve gender

equity. A 2023 review highlighted gains in leadership and workforce composition but gaps in sexual harassment and workplace segregation. Niki provided an update on progress in the Victorian public sector as at February 2024. This includes the introduction of bi-annual workplace gender equality audits and a reporting platform for more than 300 Victorian public sector organisations published on the website. Dr Vincent’s leadership has elevated Victoria globally, with a strong focus on accountability, oversight, and continuous improvement.

March 2025: Denise Allen – a pioneer in challenging environments. Denise Allen worked with the Bureau of Meteorology for 29 years, including six winters in Antarctica. As one of the first female



Observers, she faced resistance but persisted. She was the first female Observer in Queensland in 1984 and later worked on Macquarie and Willis Islands. At Mawson Station, she earned respect while contributing to scientific and station operations. Awarded the Antarctic Medal in 1989, Denise encourages women to pursue goals with confidence, resilience, and courage.

April 2025: Professor Helen



Hodgson, Professor Helen Hodgson, Chair of National Foundation of Australian Women’s Social

Policy Committee, outlined the importance of gender-responsive budgeting and NFAW’s independent analysis since 2014. She explained how government policies affect women differently. NFAW released 11 policy papers assessing key areas such as pay equity, childcare, housing, and climate change. While noting progress in transparency, parental leave, and aged care, she highlighted gaps in job, housing, and climate policy. Hodgson stressed the need for ongoing gender equity efforts and NFAW’s nonpartisan role in accountability.

May 2025: our annual **May Forum** was organised by Robyn Byrne OAM, Convenor of the Standing Committees: The 69th UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2025 marked 30 years since the Beijing Platform for Action, focusing on ending misogyny and advancing gender equality. **Dr Donnell Davis** and **Sarah Barnbrook** shared insights on intergenerational leadership and adolescent advocacy. Key topics included digital ethics, climate change, and youth engagement. Australian-led efforts on adolescent health. Global challenges—child marriage, gender-based violence, and inequality—were addressed. The session emphasised urgent action, youth inclusion, and accountability to uphold commitments for a more equitable future.

June 2025: Dr Ros Otzen Ros, a retired educator and former Principal of Korowa Anglican Girls' School, has held leadership roles supporting education, including at the University of Melbourne and The Invergowrie Foundation. As inaugural Chair of the Hester Hornbrook Academy, she supports highly disadvantaged youth.



Ros spoke about Hester Hornbrook, a pioneering 19th-century Melbourne reformer who founded the Melbourne City Mission in 1854 to address social needs through house-to-house outreach. The presentation highlighted those who championed women's causes and helped shape early welfare efforts in a rapidly growing city.

The women who Hester had appointed in committees to run her nine schools got together and seamlessly continued her vision, forming the Hornbrook Ragged School Association. They provided support to 10 percent of children in Melbourne.

Many of the women who were part of the Hester Hornbrook Association set up schools in their own homes, which also gave them some income after they became widows. These schools were absolutely essential. In 1872, the Free, Compulsory, Secular Education Act came in and that really was the death knell of the association schools, because they depended on donations, so the numbers gradually whittled down. Eventually the only schools that remained were the ones in the areas where there was booze and gambling issues.

Together these women created the basis for social care in Melbourne. They are completely unacknowledged and unknown today.

My Vote My Voice 2024: Social Media – A Blessing or a Curse?

Education Adviser,
Pam Hammond

The outstanding annual student event ***My Vote My Voice***, conducted by the National Council of Women of Victoria, was held in the Legislative Council Chamber of Parliament House Melbourne on **Friday August 9th, 2024**.

Keynote Speakers: Meena Singh, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children & Young People; Missi Joyce, Youth Council.

Students from 12 government and independent schools addressed the topic: ***Social Media – A Blessing or a Curse***, designed to encourage students to consider the effect of Social Media on themselves, their peers and the wider community.

The schools were: MacRobertson Girls HS; Rosehill SC; Al Siraat College; Jiayuan Charity; Kingswood College; Beaumaris SC; Camberwell HS; Star of the Sea College; Melbourne Girls Grammar; Elwood College; Firkbank Grammar; and Ivanhoe Girls Grammar.

Meena set the scene initially by outlining her role as Commissioner. This is to advocate for and protect young people in out-of-home care (with relatives, share houses etc) youth detention centres and spaces where they are vulnerable. They advise government on how decisions affect young people, including the issue of minimum age of detention. They require organisations to be child safe and if not to rectify this.

The Commission works with a Youth Council made up of young people with lived experiences, who advise them and improve what we do. At a Forum designed to address why students should be involved in politics, the comment was made about the accuracy of information on social media, saying the print media would be better. As we know, this is not always the case.

Banning social media is not the way to go, as it can deprive people from the many positives: information from a range of sources; staying connected with friends/family and being supportive when needed and more.

Meena stressed that those who abuse social media must be held to account and punished. They should be banned! Young people need to make their own decisions, as they need to do for drugs, alcohol, sexual behaviour etc. A better approach is to provide education on social media safety to young people, parents and age-appropriate access.

Missi then spoke of her experiences after leaving home. Her siblings were separated so needed to keep in touch via social media, support each other. She also stated that young people need to make mistakes. If they have no experience of social media, when young and enter the 'real' world, they can be vulnerable to the negative aspects.

Students presentations followed. Some groups had carried out research, collected data from their peers and others to gain wider views, to inform presentation of their findings.



Gathering in Queen's Hall prior to Speeches



Gathering in the Legislative Council Chamber for the speeches



Meena Singh, Keynote Speaker

REPORTS

NCWV – Individual Members

Convenor, Sheila Byard OAM

It is an honour to have served as the 2024-25 Convenor for the Individual Members Group, and as representative for the Individual Members on the monthly meetings of the NCW Executive Committee. Thanks especially to Beverley Kannegiesser who has served again as 'Bookkeeper'.

Individual Members of NCWV were well represented at the 121st AGM of NCWV on 5 September 2024 at Ross House, Flinders Lane, Melbourne and by Zoom. We were pleased to able to host a 'Bring and Buy' table on the day, and to try to restart the practice of contributions bowl or basket to go towards off- setting the Ross House charges that have recently gone up by 10%. \$50 was collected and banked by the Hon Treasurer into the NCWV general account.

The 2024 Millie Peden Excursion was to the Royal Children's Hospital on Wednesday 11 September 2025 and a sum was donated for the RCH Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Nursing Development Scholarship. Thanks to members Carole Lowens and Robyn Buccheri for liaison with the RCH Auxiliaries team and to Pam Robinson AM for her work in relation to the missing plaque from the NCWV Associates Bicentennial Grove of Honour.

At the next Individual Members meeting on the first Thursday in October at Ross House, Members and some Delegates who were interested came before the

main Council Meeting to hear Honorary Life Member Elisabeth Newman AM speak about her trip to South America and 'How to Fish for Piranhas'.

There was also discussion of the opportunity to attend the 2024 NCWA Triennial Conference in Adelaide. At the June 2025 Individual Members meeting Coordinator of Standing Committees Robyn Byrne OAM clarified the relationship between ICW/CIF, NCWA and the constituent councils like NCW Victoria.

It is reassuring that NCWV continues to attract new Individual Members, and NCWV depends on them old and new for support in various ways.

Some join when they are recruited to work in different policy areas as Advisers through the Standing Committees, some choose to join as individuals following their experience as Delegates, some have been elected to serve on the NCWV Executive, and still others help swell the numbers of attendees at Council meetings, and other activities, like the November 2024 End of the Year lunch with guest speaker author Hazel Edwards OAM, the Pioneer Women's Ceremony in February 2025, the May 2025 Forum focusing on ending misogyny and advancing gender equality, , the well-attended 81st anniversary Luncheon organised by the NCWV Geelong branch in late June 2025.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, Emma Fu

Financial Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2024

National Council of Women of Victoria
Inc. Registration No. A0004465H ABN
18227073059

Statement by Members of the Committee

The Committee Members submit the financial report of the National Council of Women of Victoria Inc. for the financial year ended 30 June 2025.

Committee Members

The names of the Committee Members authorised to sign off on the accounts are:

- Elida Brereton
- Emma Fu

Principal Activities

The National Council of Women of Victoria Inc. is a non-party political, non-sectarian, not for profit, umbrella organisation - with Individual Members and Organisational Members - with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives empowering women and girls and raising awareness of gender equality; acting as a voice on issues and concerns of women and girls at a State level; and developing policies and responses on behalf of women and girls on a State-wide basis -

through the debate of ideas and the publication of information on our website and in our monthly Newsletter; and monthly Council Meetings and annual activities such as the Pioneer Women's Ceremony celebrating women pioneers in various walks of life and *My Vote My Voice* encouraging and listening to the voice of Victorian youth - to enable Members and our wider network to become more informed on issues of the day and to act where appropriate, including making submissions to Government, to Parliamentary Committees and other inquiries and bodies.

Through a variety of programs and activities for Member organisations and individuals we encourage the participation of women in all aspects of community life.

Significant Changes

There have been no significant changes in the nature of these activities during the financial year.

Schedule 1

Regulation 15

Form 1

Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012

Sections 94 (2)(b), 97 (2)(b) and 100 (2)(b)

Annual statements give a true and fair view of financial performance and position of incorporated association

We, Elida Brereton and Emma Tianci Fu being members of the Committee of National Council of Women of Victoria Inc. certify that:

“The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial performance and position of the above – named association during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending 30 June 2025.”

Signed: Emma Tianci Fu

Date: 4th August 2025

Signed: *Elida Brereton*

Date: 21st August 2025

Balance Sheet
National Council of Women Victoria
Inc

30-June-25
ABN: 18227073059
Reg Number: A0004465H

	2025	2024
Assets		
Current Assets		
Westpac Cheque Account - 033-031 263920	6,304.94	4,124.47
Westpac Term Deposit	30,000.00	30,000.00
Westpac Cheque Account SG	9,427.90	14,472.06
Westpac Term Deposit SG	159,449.91	153,375.42
Total Current Assets	205,182.75	201,971.93
Total Assets	205,182.75	201,971.93
Liabilities		
Total Liabilities	0.00	0.00
Net Assets	205,182.75	201,971.93
Equity		
Members Equity	205,182.75	201,971.93
Total Equity	205,182.75	201,971.93

**Profit and Loss National Council
of Women Victoria Inc**

01 July 2024 - 30 June 2025

ABN: 18227073059

Reg Number: A0004465H

INCOME

	2025	2024
Membership		
Organisational Membership	2,400	2,960
Individual Membership	2,460	1,840
Interest Income	7,533	4,000
Functions	5,757	4,625
Income		
Grant	0	0
Donations	2,179	700
Awards	1,300	1,510
Other Income	1,000	1,000
Total Income	22,629	16,635

OVERHEADS

Rental	3,118	2,395
NCWA Affiliation	1,273	1,234
Insurance	1,218	1,205
Office Costs	1,152	3,466
Functions	6,213	4,799
Awards	1,400	1,250
SG Award	4,044	1,500
Other		595
Outflows	1,000	1,000
Total Expense	19,418	17,444

Operating Surplus (- Loss)

3,211 (- 809)

Members Funds B/F

201,972 202,781

Members Funds C/F

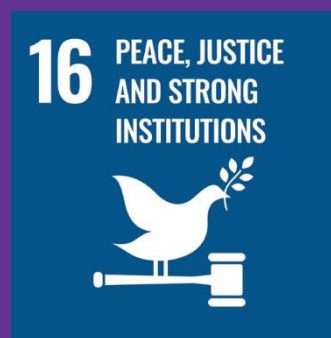
205,183 201,972

Cash Flow
National Council of Women Victoria Inc
01 July 2024 - 30 June 2025
ABN: 18227073059
Reg Number: A0004465H

	2025 Total	2024 Total
INFLOWS		
Functions		
End of Year Lunch	4,396	3,622
Parliament Events	1,361	1,003
May Forum	0	0
Total Functions	5,757	4,625
Membership		
Individual Membership	2,400	1,840
Organisational Membership	2,460	2,960
Total Membership	4,860	4,800
Other Income		
Coin Collection	0	0
Donations	2,179	700
Awards	1,300	1,510
Grants	0	
Trading Table	0	
Other	1,000	1,000
Total Other Income	4,479	3,210
Interest		
Interest Income	7,533	4,000
Total Interest	7,533	4,000
Total Income	22,629	16,635
OUTFLOWS		
Other		
Sundries	0	595
Gifts	0	
Donation Expenses	0	
Awards - Citizenship	1,400	1,250
Sylvia Gelman Award Administration	1,000	
SG Award	4,044	1,000
Other		1,500
Total Other	6,444	4,345
Function Expenses		
Health Week	0	955
Christmas Lunch	4,345	2,363
My Vote My Voice	1,444	1,011
Pioneer Women's Garden	424	470
Total Function	6,213	4,799

Insurance	1,218	1,205
NCWA	1,272	1,234
Office Expenses		
Printing & stationery	218	0
Postage & courier	0	0
Website	672	2,083
Office supplies	0	
Telephone and Internet	213	1,319
Other Expense	49	64
Computers	0	0
Total Office Expenses	1,152	3,466
Rent	3,119	2,395
Total Expenses	19,418	17,444

NCWV Standing Committees are mindful of the United Nations Sustainable



Development Goals, particularly 5, 13 and 16, the Beijing Platform for Action and applicable UN Conventions.

SDG 5 – achieve gender equality and empower all girls and women

SDG 13 – take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

SDG 16 – promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

NCWV Standing Committees

Status of Women

- Human Rights – Women Prisons - **Barbara Latham**
- International Relations and Health - vacant
- Legislation – vacant
- Implementation of Conventions – vacant

Sustainable Development

- Economics – **Emma Fu**
- Women and Employment – **Dr Deborah Towns OAM**
- Consumer Affairs – **Robyn Byrne OAM**
- Rural and Urban Women – vacant

General Well-being

- Health – and Health Hub **Prof Cassandra Szoek**
- Environment – **Pam Robinson AM**
- Habitat Birute Don until February 2025
- Nutrition – **Maggie Baron**

Communications

- Arts and Letters – **Sandy Bird**
- Education – **Pam Hammond**
- Mass Media / Social Media – **Sarah Barnbrook**
- Music – **Beverley Kannegiesser**

Social Issues

- Child and Family – **Lily Fetter**
- Youth – Sport – **Sara Morgan**
- Ageing – vacant
- Migration / Multicultural Affairs – **June Anderson**

Standing Committees Reports

Coordinator for Standing Committees, Robyn Byrne OAM

Council Meetings

In February, March and April 2025, I organised holding the NCWV Council Meeting at the Australian Institute of International Affairs Vic, 13th Floor, 356 Collins St Melbourne. Our thanks to Alastair Roff and his team for their hospitality and use of their outstanding facilities.

2022–2025 Standing Committees Plans of Action

At the International Conference of Women's (ICW) Triennial Conference held in May 2022, the Delegates passed the 2022–2025 Standing Committees Plans of Action, designed to promote, and bring about the ICW's theme of "Social protection for all women and girls: Sustainable development for the world."

Here is the link to read them and check how they apply to our Standing Committee Advisory roles: "Women's Empowerment: Peace and Sustainable Development" <https://www.icw-cif.com/our-objectives/>

Dr Cassandra Szoeki as NCWV Health Adviser attended the General Assembly of the International Council of Women - CIF, our head body in Marrakech, Morocco from 23 to 29 June 2025 as one of the NCWA Delegates.

Monthly meetings

Our monthly meetings of the Standing Committee of Advisors on the third Monday of the month between 4-6pm via Zoom continued to be well attended with lively, informative discussions, where we provided advice and made

decisions about NCWV's policy activity that included letter writing and submissions.

We wrote a number of letters to both State and Federal Members of Parliament on the issues that are of core interest to NCWV.

Advocacy

In 2024 NCWA Health Adviser Professor Cassandra Szoeki was the lead author in a NCWA Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs on Perimenopause and Menopause, by NCWA.

We consider it significant that many of the recommendations included in the NCWA Submission have been taken up by the Committee in the Report released in September 2024.

Advisors prepared letters in relation to the following:

- **Gender Equity in Universities and Health Sector** - Letter to Dr Nikki Vincent, Gender Equity Commissioner.
- **Universal free three and four year old kinder and childcare** - in October 2024 NCWV campaigned, regarding national financial support for three and four year old kinder and childcare (already in Victoria.) We supported this call by Thrive by Five and in our Newsletter encouraged our members, delegates and organisation members to access the website and complete the email.

- **Safer roads around schools** - in our December Newsletter NCWV called on the Minister for Roads and Roads Safety Melissa Horne to fund road safety infrastructure to make it safer around schools.
 - **Food, nutrition and dining in aged care** - Maggie Baron NCWV Nutrition Advisor wrote to the Victorian Minister in Aged Care early in 2025 about the *Ageing Well in Victoria: an action plan for strengthening wellbeing for senior Victorians 2022–2026* to ensure NCWV remain updated on progress in delivering the Plan which expires in 2026, and to thank them for this critical initiative
 - Request for **Immediate Release of Additional Home Care Packages** – letter to The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Ageing -
 - **Strengthening Victoria’s Response to Online Harm: A Call for Systemic Online Safety Education and Community Empowerment** – letter to The Hon Ben Carroll MP Victorian Minister for Education and others
 - Seeking Collaboration on State and National Advocacy to **Address Systemic Failures Impacting Aboriginal Children** – letter to the General Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI) Subject:
- family violence and empowering bystanders
 - **Madhavi Srinivasan** Johnson from Chennai South India. “UNICEF - A Promise to Stay for Children in Crisis”.
 - **Professor Manjula O’Connor** regarding the increasing incidence of Misidentification of women as perpetrators in cases of domestic violence
 - **Denise Mary Allen** — Antarctic Medal recipient 1989 - a meteorological observer about succeeding in challenging and remote environments
 - **May Forum** about the Convention on the Status of Women of CSW69 held in New York in March 2025. Both **Dr Donnelle Davis**, UNAA National President and a Director with Soroptimist International SouthEast Asia Pacific; and **Sarah Barnbrook** committee member of State of the World's Children (SoWC), Founder of AFK (Away from the Keyboard) Inc, Individual Member of NCWV and SI Melbourne spoke about their experiences of attending and the outcomes.
 - **Professor Helen Hodgson**, Chair of NFAW Social Policy Committee on gender responsive budgeting and policy analysis
 - **Dr Ros Otzen**, a retired educator on unsung pioneering women of 19th century Melbourne who championed and shaped early welfare efforts in Melbourne that continue today, and education of disadvantaged children in the era before public school education.

Speakers

During the year working with members of the Standing Committee we organised speakers for the NCWV Council Meetings to increase our knowledge on topical issues:

- **Kirsty Tschirpigg** from MATE - focused on preventing domestic and

Newsletter

Policy Advisors contributed 47 articles to the NCWV Newsletter.

Thank you to the following: Pam Hammond for articles on Education, Sarah Barnbrook for her considerable expertise in a variety of areas, and Dr Deborah Towns OAM for the articles on Women's economic status; NCWV Health Adviser Professor Cassandra Szoek of Monash University who continues to monitor Women's health issues, provide articles and seconded the successful NCWA Resolution on Dental Services for the Elderly by NCW Tasmania, at the Triennial NCWA conference in Adelaide in November 2024.

Thanks to June Anderson, Barbara Latham, Beverley Kannegiesser, Lily Fetter, Emma Fu, Sandy Bird, Maggie Baron, Pam Robinson OAM and Guosheng Chen for all the articles that they wrote.

We look forward to the Women's Health Panel event in March 2026 that Professor Cassandra Szoek will lead as the NCWV Health Advisor.

Sustainable Development

Advisor, Women and Employment, Dr Deborah Towns OAM

This report shows how my work in the NCWV and the community promotes and introduces data and activities in Victoria and Australia that impact on the employment of women and girls. This work supports the ICW-CIF Standing Committees' Plans of Action 2022-2025,

and its triennial theme, "Women's Empowerment: Peace and Sustainable Development". <https://www.icw-cif.com/our-objectives/>

Domestic Violence impacts on women's employment and education

Professor Anne Summers has recently followed up her ground-breaking report, *The Choice - Violence or Poverty* https://assets.website-files.com/62b998c0c9af9f65bba26051/63228540ce74a60866ee4e98_TheChoice-violence-or-poverty-web.pdf with ***The cost of domestic violence on women's employment and education***, <https://www.paulramsayfoundation.org.au/news-resources/new-report-reveals-severe-impact-of-domestic-violence-on-womens-employment-and-education>

Summers found that there is 'an employment' gap between women who have endured economic abuse compared with women not subjected to such abuse. This 'employment gap' can be as large as 9.4 per cent. The report also found an 'education gap'; by the time they are 27, there is a nearly 15 per cent difference in the rates of university degree attainment between victim-survivors and other women.

'As a result of domestic violence, women's individual progress, and the historical advancement of women, are both jeopardised. This has significant repercussions for Australia's economic and social progress.'

Workplace Gender Equality update

The Australian Government's Workplace Equality Agency (WGEA) reports annually to the Australian government on the progress of gender equity in private sector workplaces across Australia. Businesses, including universities, that employ over 100 staff are required to report on their progress. However, it

must be considered that most women work in private sector jobs in businesses that employ less than 100 staff - so how most working women fair is difficult to monitor.

This year the WGEA reported that the gender pay gap was 21.8 per cent in the private sector, 6.4 per cent in the Commonwealth public sector and that only 21.9 per cent of CEO's are women. To learn more about the WGEA's work

<https://www.wgea.gov.au/>

Working For Women update

In 2024, 'Working for Women' was established by the Australian government as a strategy for all Australians to achieve gender equality. Its 2025 report was released on International Women's Day in March 2025.

<https://genderequality.gov.au/status-women-report-cards/2025-report-card>.

Well worth a read. It shows how everyone can take action to achieve gender equality.

The Report does not mention much community progress, but reported interesting data.

- Australia is ranked 24th for gender equality internationally, according to the World Economic Forum.
- On average, women do 32 hours of unpaid work and care a week, 9 hours more than men. Women do more unpaid work than men across all demographics
- just over 12 million people (61%) aged 15-74 years were fully engaged in work, study, or both, 71% of men were fully engaged, 51% of women were fully engaged.

Gender Equality Commission for the public sector in Victoria

Differently to the WGEA that monitors the private sector in every Australian state and territory, the Victorian Gender Equality Commission is expected to improve gender equity in the public sector in Victoria. The [Gender Equality Act 2020](#) applies to around 300 organisations with 50 or more employees. These organisations are called duty holders, (or 'defined entities' in the Act), and include:

- public service bodies
- public entities
- special bodies
- local councils
- universities
- Court Services Victoria
- Office of Public Prosecutions.

This year their website is up to date with data from 2025. Entities are required to report on their progress towards gender equity according to guidelines. You can search their reports on the website

<https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/your-organisations-gender-equality-obligations>

Progress in Science, Technology, and Trades

The Australian Academy of Science , <https://www.science.org.au/about-us/philanthropy-and-partnerships/partnerships/support-women-science>,

The STEM women project encourages Australian women and girls to consider STEM careers and for the scientific community to provide an environment for them to thrive and progress, as they believe it is considered a shared responsibility of the STEM sector. Doing so is critical to drive excellence, strengthening the STEM pipeline and

talent pool, and drive economic growth and global competitiveness. As part of a broad-ranging program to support women in STEM, the Academy launched STEM Women in 2019 with the support of the Australian Government and in collaboration with Science & Technology Australia, CSIRO and the Australian Science Media Centre. Since then:

- Their community has expanded from 100 to over 3000 profiles, and growing
- The site has been searched over 30,000 times
- Hundreds of active connections have been made

However recent research shows that a majority of girls in Australia are not performing well in science or maths subjects, and they are less likely than boys to study these subjects in Years 11 and 12. Girls are slipping back, and in early and middle years, for the first time, Australian boys outperformed girls in both subject and year levels, even as programs are rolled out nationwide to encourage females into STEM careers.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-04/australian-students-maths-science-international-rankings-timss/104682586>

Overall Australian students, both boys and girls, are slowly improving as Australia's Year 4 students improved marginally in maths, ranking 20th out of 58 countries — up from its previous position of 27. **It was here, though, that Australia's gender gap was the highest — it tied in last place with France, for the biggest difference between boys' and girls' test scores.**

Some experts consider that teaching the basics well in primary school is more important than the costly and so far ineffective STEM programs encouraging girls to study maths and science.

Tradeswomen

<https://tradeswomenaus.com/>

Trades are still proving to be unpopular with girls. Women are only three per cent of 'tradies' in Australia. This is despite many hours and millions spent on programs to encourage them over decades.

Further Activities

As a Committee Member of the NCWV, the **NCWA** National Advisor Women and Employment and Economics and President of the NCWV-member League of Women Voters Victoria (LWVV) I led and supported various activities.

For the NCWA Triennial Conference held in 2024 in Adelaide, Pam Hammond and I authored the NCWA Resolution, 'Women's Economic Sustainability must start in the Early Years', and it was passed.. Attending Gracia Baylor's funeral was important to me as I admired her not only as she was a past president of NCWV and NCWA and a pioneering woman MP, but we worked together on a status of women committee in the 1980s and kept in touch.

In 2024, I completed 35 of the alumni biographies of the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE), University of Melbourne for the FBE's centenary celebrations, https://fbe.unimelb.edu.au/centenary/our-stories?queries_tags_query=alumni and authored a short history about the FBE's biography project, published in *Pharos*, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3451077656/view>

Employed by Brimbank Council as an Expert Witness, I was examined at the Heritage Council Victoria's (HCV) hearing where I argued the case that the former Sunshine Technical Schools' 'girls' and

'boys' buildings should be retained by gaining heritage listing.

https://assets.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/assets/HCV-Determination-INCLUDE-Former-Sunshine-Technical-College_20JAN2025.pdf

In January 2025, the HCV determined that the former technical school had State level cultural heritage significance and that it be included in the Victorian Heritage Register in the category of Registered Place.

As a member of Graduate Women Australia, Victorian branch, and Scholarship Assessor we assessed and awarded three scholarships to Master of Education students who were challenged by physical, mental, or family commitments but have shown academic acumen and the potential to succeed.

Earlier this year I enjoyed the International Women's Day Breakfast event at the University of Melbourne where we were addressed by the new Vice Chancellor, Professor Emma Johnston AO. A scientist and gender equity advocate she is the University's first woman Vice Chancellor in its 171 year history.

I attended the recent launch of Emeritus Professor Judy Brett's, *Fearless Beatrice Faust*, the Women's Electoral Lobby's founder.

General Wellbeing

Health – and Health Hub, Dr Cassandra Szoek

In her capacity as Health Adviser for NCWV, Professor of Medicine, Doctor, Scientist, and Clinical researcher, an expert in women's health, an AMA

Councillor and author of "*Secrets of Women's Health Ageing*", Cassandra attended the recent Asia Summit on Global Health in Hong Kong in June 2025, focused on fostering global collaboration in the healthcare sector. Cassandra delivered a plenary lecture and panel at the conference with the after-hours lecture attracting over 100 attendees. One learning was that Chinese medicine (TCM) has always treated male and female health issues differently, recognising the difference in their bodies, unlike western medicine. NCWV continues to take a lead role on Health nationally. Updates to July 2025 include:

1. Australia's first ever seXXspecific education for Health professionals

As part of this NCWV signed on to a major Partnership Grant Application as a community group representing women to help codesign and codevelop seXXspecific education for health professionals.

Other partners include WHV, WHNSW, RACP, AMA and academic partners and several healthcare services.

Prof Szoek presented to NCWV a support letter from the Federal Department of Health which noted

"I am pleased to convey my support for ... a state of the art, codesigned and evidence-based education program to answer the Australian Government call (September 2024) for sex-specific education to be taught to registered health practitioners to address a significant knowledge gap."

"The Women's Health Access Matters Report shows that publications on sex differences in health have doubled in the last 10 years, however, there are significant gaps in knowledge to get this

information to currently registered practising health professionals. In 2023, the Department commissioned Monash University to undertake a literature review to examine gender bias in the health system, including current Australian health guidelines. An article based on the literature review was published in the Medical Journal of Australia in February 2025 showed that most clinical guidelines fail to consider sex and gender differences appropriately. This Partnership Grant will build on this work, to provide the evidence based required to help to ensure that current clinical guidelines are updated with the latest sex and gender differences."

Note this is in addition to the Victorian Department of Health support letter and financial co-contribution already committed.

Whilst we are pleased the National Women's Health Advisory has formally recommended the Australian Medical Council consider including sex and gender teaching to medical schools in Sept 2025, we are hopeful our partnership grant application will be successful to upskill Health professionals immediately on women's needs, without needing to wait for new health professionals to complete training.

NCWV Members have been very active in contributing throughout this process. All but one contribution has been adopted by the partnership to date and included in the proposal documentation. The inclusion of gender was not taken up only because, whilst there is now an enormous body of knowledge on the sex differences in symptoms, diagnosis and management between, for example, heart disease in women compared to heart diseases in men, there is insufficient evidence on gender differences between hearts. So whilst

we can upskill Health professionals today on the sex differences we need more research on gender to determine gender differences.

A new issue that NCW members have raised is identifying those trained health professionals who receive the training once the program is completed so community can know who to access with up to date knowledge. This will be raised formally at the next Partnership meeting but in conversations about this agenda item I can informally let our members know that Monash has put up the idea of offering micro credentials to those who take units and also to consider awarding a degree of some type in seXXspecific health to those who complete sufficient units. WHV has also loved the NCWV suggestion, saying their community often raises this issue and they are routinely asked for Health professionals who know about women. In light of this AMA has now stepped forward to consider an AMA endorsement of some type that health professionals could use.

Thank you for all your contributions, it's hard to convey in brief how important and valued the NCWV contributions are in this partnership. A small suggestion from our members leads to 3 or 4 additional outcomes for this program.

At this stage we await outcome if funding arrives to move forward. I will keep everyone posted

2. NCWV representative at the first Asia-Pacific Conference on women's health outside the bikini and the ICW.

Prof Szoeki gave a talk to members on 8th august covering both attendances which is summarised in Council minutes. A recording is available for participants.

3. – Victorian Women’s Health Forum March 2026

Planning for the Forum is underway in confidence with the venue, host, speakers and date to be confirmed in October.

4. Advocacy

- Gender Equity - Letter to Niki Vincent - Victorian Gender Equity Commissioner, regarding academia and health sector
- Expedited release of Home Care packages required - Letter to Minister for Ageing - Mark Butler-

Nutrition – Maggie Baron

Nutrition and Ageing

In **2022** the **Victorian Government** published the **Victorian Ageing Well Action Plan**. It outlines the Victorian Government’s vision to support Victorians to age well, including the importance of nutrition.

A link to the plan can be found here:
<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/ageing-well-action-plan>

Highly regarded ambassador for improving nutrition for people in aged care, **Maggie Beer** has returned to her passion following a fall in late 2024. Her appearance at the National Press Club in August 2025 provided the opportunity for her to continue her push for improving nutrition to enhance the wellbeing of ageing Australians. Her commitment to her beliefs included serving a meal she routinely prepares for aged care residents, to the acclaim of guests at the Press Club. She also flagged gaps for older people living alone who often didn’t see themselves as deserving

of the effort to prepare a delicious and nutritious meal.

The Australian Government’s funding for **aged care meals providers** has allowed the food budget to be doubled to \$15 per day. From 1 January 2025, all Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) meals providers received a 10% cost-of-living top-up of their 2024–25 meals funding to alleviate cost pressures.

Aged care standards have been strengthened with the **Aged Care Act 2024** commencing on 1 July 2025. Link to fact sheet and Act below

www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/about-the-aged-care-act-2024-fact-sheet-easy-read

and more details also here:

www.health.gov.au/our-work/improving-food-nutrition-aged-care

Much continues to be done in this area.

Advocacy

We are monitoring implementation in Victoria.

Maggie Beer AO Australian Food Icon, addressed the National Press Club of Australia in partnership with Women in Media. about the importance of nutrition in aged care facilities at the Press club 13/8/2025 at 12-30 or on IVIEW.

Maggie Beer AO, Maggie Beer AO respected Australian food icon says – “it is our responsibility as a society to ensure health and happiness for every older Australian and that flavourful, nutritious, seasonal foods that bring pleasure and joy are a key to quality of life.”

Having established The Maggie Beer Foundation a decade ago, with a mission to set new standards to change the food and dining experience in the aged care sector, Maggie's mantra is "Make every mouthful count".

From the outset, the Foundation's strategy has been to advocate, educate, facilitate research, and share the latest knowledge and skills required with the Cooks and Chefs who are able to do so much to change the lives of the residents in their care.

and now...Maggie's most ambitious project to date, **Maggie Beer's Big Mission**, a world first social experiment to transform the meals and dining experience at an aged care home in Perth, Western Australia – an inspirational three-part series; the one she will be the proudest of, in the hope that it could provide a roadmap for a new model of care.

"It looks fresh, it tastes fresh, every mouthful counts!" – Maggie Beer

<https://maggiebeerfoundation.org.au/news/>

<https://www.facebook.com/mbeerfoundation/>

Communications

Education - Pam Hammond

Education Advisor: Pam Hammond

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 states: *To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.* The UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child states: *Children have the right to be active participants in all matters affecting their lives.*

To accelerate Goal 4, countries must prioritise inclusive policies and financing that simultaneously address access, learning and equity. This includes scaling up quality early childhood education, enforcing legal guarantees for free and compulsory education, closing digital and infrastructure gaps and expanding lifelong learning opportunities for adults and marginalized populations. NCWV has been focussed on several of these priorities.

Early Childhood Education

Over the past several years, NCWV has written letters and briefings to Ministers and Members of the Parliament of Victoria on the need for free kindergarten and childcare for three and four-year old children. It is pleasing that this is being implemented across the State. Recently, NCWV has written to the Minister for Child Protection and Family Services, Victoria in relation to reports on alleged child abuse in childcare.

It is pleasing to report that the Education Department's [Respectful Relationships](#) initiative is offering free professional learning for early childhood educators in Victorian government-funded kindergarten programs. The online learning program aims to strengthen the capacity of early childhood educators to:

- promote respectful relationships, positive attitudes and behaviours within their teaching approach, to enable children to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence
- understand the role of gender equality in the prevention of family violence, and learn practical strategies for promoting gender equality in their teaching practice
- recognise and respond to family violence and build support networks.

This Program aligns with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and National Quality Standard.

Curriculum Issues

Civics and Citizenship: The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) conducts sample assessments every three years on behalf of all Education Ministers, in order to provide information for all policymakers in education. It recently released 2024 data on the National Assessment Program (NAP) –CC sample [ACARA released a report](#). The NAP-CC measures students' competencies in Civics and Citizenship, including their knowledge of democratic principles, the Australian political system and related historical contexts, it also evaluates students' capacity to apply this knowledge to engage with, and participate in, civic processes. The NAP–CC 2024 assessment showed that competence is dropping in Civics and Citizenship achievement against pre-pandemic levels. Interrogating the data by State, 34% of Victorian students achieved above the Australian average (28%), second only to ACT. At Year 6, 46% Victorian students achieved above the Australian average of 43%, second only to ACT students. However, when provided with platforms that respect their views, young people show they can research, deliberate and problem-solve. Interest and confidence in democracy can be supported by giving students meaningful opportunities to participate.

NCWV's **My Vote My Voice** event is designed to do exactly that. The quality of student deliveries and the research that they carried out has been consistently of high quality. The students have been excited, engaged and

passionate about the experience. In 2019 the theme was *Male and Female Youth as Future Voters*, with students researching opinions on voting from their peers. A suggestion from several groups was to lower the voting age to 16 years in local government elections initially, but not compulsory. This is a suggestion being put forward at the moment in the media.

Back to Basics: There has been much said and written about changes needed in the National Curriculum. The "back to basics" movement in education reflects a desire to prioritise foundational skills and knowledge in core subjects. This assumes that the basics have not been prioritised by teachers enacting the curriculum.

The role of teaching reading/writing and mathematics has always been prioritised by teachers. It is the methodology that is being questioned.

If this is delivered in a 'rote learning' memorising manner, this narrow focus on basic skills without deep understanding, can stifle creativity, critical thinking, and a love of learning. Education needs to remain holistic and engaging for all students, to adequately prepare students for the complexities of the 21st century and enable lifelong learning. The Capabilities dimension of the Curriculum provides the vital elements of problem solving, critical/creative thinking, digital literacy, ethical and intercultural understanding, personal and social capability, literacy and numeracy that need to be embedded in the learning of 'the basics'.

These are not 'fluffy' areas as has been said, but essential to base content in relevant contexts for students. At a recent NCWV event, a student quoted how the Cross-Curricula Priority

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture had been the context for their learning in Mathematics, English, History and Science.

Attracting and Retaining teachers:

Teaching is the profession that teaches all professionals. Teaching is not for the faint-hearted, but a slogan that I once saw on a mug – “Touch the future – Teach” says it all. With VCE or equivalent behind them, students are looking towards their future. These young people have been encouraged and supported by devoted, experienced, wise educators who can tweak the curriculum to suit their students’ needs, make the most of unexpected gems that arise and give of their time whenever it is needed. It is a highly rewarding profession: seeing the growth in students, the light-bulb moments when a concept is understood, the successes and challenges that occur, the bonds and collaboration developed. School leavers would have experienced inspiring teachers over 13 years. It would be great if some are inspired to go into teaching themselves and potentially “Touch the Future”.

The community needs to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of our teachers, so that we can reverse the *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018* data where 55 per cent of teachers felt undervalued:

http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TALIS2018_insights_and_interpretations.pdf.

This reversal can occur through teachers and principals being respected and valued by the community for their knowledge and skills, as are other professions. This is certainly the case in Asian and Scandinavian countries, where they are held in high esteem. Part of this valuing is in their remuneration. As found

in the PISA study

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-i_53f23881-en.html “While intrinsic factors are no doubt important for current teachers, PISA studies do not explain why other ‘potential teachers’ elected alternative careers instead of teaching, or quit teaching after a while. In fact, studies that survey a larger pool of graduates about their career choices found that... had teachers’ salaries been higher, more “potential teachers” would have seriously considered a career in teaching.” P.15

To fulfil the complexity of teaching and not ‘burn out’, teachers need support in their schools, especially new teachers, with mentoring and specialist subject teachers working with them to enable the development of effective classroom and teaching practices.

NCWV believes that extra funding in the form of salaries and support will be a saving down the track as more teachers stay in the profession. We encourage the Victorian Government and the Department of Education and Training to acknowledge the vital roles of teachers and principals and promote them as true professionals, with appropriate remuneration. Hopefully, this will make a lasting, positive difference to the community attitude and respect and encourage our top students to consider teaching as a profession.

Activities

I have been part of webinars, one by a Parliamentary Inquiry into teaching and learning in Victorian regional and metropolitan schools. The inquiry held seven days of public hearings, in Melbourne, Bairnsdale, Traralgon, Bendigo and Shepparton.

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/news/society/education-report>

I attended the International Women's Day lunch at MacRobertson Girls' High School and the Interfaith Eid Al-Adha Dinner at Al Siraat College in Epping.

I attended the 2024 NCWA conference and AGM in Adelaide, and stood in for our President at NCWA Board meetings by ZOOM.



As Convenor of the Civics and Citizenship Program, I contact schools, speaker and panel members for the **annual My Vote My Voice** event in Parliament. Also, preparing invitations to NCWV members and others in our network and liaising with Parliamentary Services. After the event there are decisions on awards, then organising visits to present awards to the student

I keep up to date with changes, issues and good news stories around education, to inform the Standing Committee and NCWV as to possible action.

As Editor of the monthly NCWV Newsletter, I check various sources of information for publishing suitability.

I liaise with Jaz Lee on updating the website with newsletters, notices and submissions. In this regard, my role overlaps with the Mass Media portfolio.

Mass Media / Social Media Sarah Barnbrook

Cybercrime in Australia 2024 — Key Findings, Gaps, and Risks for Women
Prepared for the National Council of Women of Victoria (NCWV)

Introduction

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has released its *Cybercrime in Australia 2024* report, based on survey responses from Australians **aged 18 and over**. It provides an important snapshot of online harm but excludes the experiences of children and young people. This omission means significant risks, such as online grooming, child sexual exploitation, gaming-related harm, and scams targeting young people, are not represented. For NCWV, this is a concern because it leaves a gap in understanding how cybercrime affects all Australians, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Why This Matters for NCWV

I am bringing this report to the attention of NCWV because cybercrime is not just a technology problem; it is a women's safety, equality, and well-being issue.

NCWV has a long history of advocating for policies that protect women and promote equality across all aspects of life. The *Cybercrime in Australia 2024* report highlights serious online risks, yet it fails to address some of the most urgent threats to women and future generations.

Cybercrime impacts women differently: it can be an extension of family violence, a barrier to financial independence, and a tool for silencing women's voices. When reports like this omit key areas, such as the experiences of children, youth, and those facing technology-

facilitated abuse, it leaves gaps in policy, education, and support services.

Women are more likely to experience image-based abuse, stalking, and online harassment, which can silence their voices and limit professional opportunities.

Children and adolescents face grooming, exposure to harmful content, and scams tailored to their age group, which can cause lasting harm.

Older women can be targeted for financial scams, romance fraud, and identity theft, often losing life savings.

Culturally and linguistically diverse women may be targeted through scams and abuse in their native language, making detection and reporting harder.

When national reports exclude these realities, the risks to our communities become invisible to policymakers.

By reviewing and responding to this report, NCWV can:

- Advocate for the inclusion of gender-specific and youth-focused data in future research.
- Ensure cybercrime prevention strategies address the unique ways women and girls are targeted.
- Influence policy so that emerging technologies like AI are developed with safety and ethics at the core.

If we don't act on these gaps now, we risk letting new forms of harm grow unchecked, especially as technology evolves faster than policy.

Key Cybercrime Risks Identified

The report found that almost half of adults experienced some form of cybercrime in the last 12 months. The top risks were:

Unauthorised access to accounts This means someone gains entry into your

email, social media, or banking accounts without permission. It can lead to identity theft, financial loss, and personal safety concerns.

Fraud and scams This covers deceptive activities designed to steal money or personal information, such as phishing emails (fake emails pretending to be from trusted organisations) or romance scams.

Malware attacks Malware means "malicious software". This is harmful computer code that can damage devices, steal information, or spy on users without their knowledge.

Ransomware attacks This is when cybercriminals lock your files or computer and demand payment to unlock them. Even if the ransom is paid, there's no guarantee the files will be restored.

Online abuse and harassment This includes threatening messages, image-based abuse (such as sharing intimate images without consent), and targeted harassment. These behaviours can cause serious emotional and psychological harm.

Risks to Women

Women are more likely to be targeted in certain types of cybercrime. Key risks include:

Technology-facilitated abuse Partners or ex-partners may use spyware (surveillance software), GPS trackers, or hacked accounts to control or monitor women.

Image-based abuse This includes the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, often used for blackmail or public humiliation.

Romance and trust-based scams Scammers may build fake relationships over weeks or months to exploit women emotionally and financially.

Professional targeting Women in leadership or public roles are more likely to face coordinated harassment or attempts to damage their reputation online.

Missing Areas in the Report

While the report offers valuable insight, it leaves out critical issues:

Children and youth The survey excluded anyone under 18, which means harms like grooming, exploitation, gaming-related abuse, and teen-focused scams are not captured.

Emerging online threats New technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) can be misused for deepfakes (manipulated videos), automated scams, and impersonation attacks.

Intersectional risks The report doesn't examine how cybercrime disproportionately affects women with disabilities, migrant women, or First Nations women.

Coercive control online This includes restricting a person's access to money, friends, or information through technology an important link between family violence and cybercrime.

Emerging Technologies and AI Risks Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are creating new opportunities for both innovation and harm. Risks include:

Deepfakes AI can generate fake but realistic images, videos, or audio, which can be used to spread false information, impersonate victims, or create non-consensual sexual material.

AI-powered scams Criminals can use AI to create highly convincing phishing messages or clone voices, making scams harder to detect.

Automated harassment Bots and AI tools can be programmed to flood victims with abusive messages,

amplifying online abuse.

Data exploitation AI relies on large datasets, and if personal data is included without consent, it can be used in ways that breach privacy or cause harm.

Bias and discrimination Poorly designed AI systems can reinforce gender bias, affecting hiring, policing, or credit scoring in ways that disadvantage women.

Without safeguards, these technologies can scale up harm far more quickly than traditional cybercrime. This means prevention and safety-by-design measures are urgent.

Recommendations for NCWV Advocacy

1. **Call for disaggregated data** in future cybercrime reporting that separates statistics by gender, age group, and other vulnerabilities.
2. **Advocate for inclusion of child-focused cybercrimes**, grooming, exploitation, and gaming risks in national statistics and prevention strategies.
3. **Ensure Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence is recognised as cybercrime** and tracked alongside financial and fraud-based offences.
4. **Push for integration of emerging technology risks**, including AI-driven threats and deepfakes, into Australia's cyber safety and law enforcement strategies.
5. **Support prevention and education initiatives** for women, children, and Seniors to build resilience against cybercrime, including digital literacy and online safety awareness programs.
6. **Encourage law enforcement training** on identifying and

responding to gendered and child-focused cybercrimes.

7. **Promote cross-sector collaboration** between government, NGOs, education providers, and tech companies to share intelligence and prevention strategies.

Cybercrime is becoming faster, more sophisticated, and more personal. AI and emerging technologies are evolving at a pace that outstrips current laws and safeguards. **If we do not advocate now, women and children will be left at greater risk, their experiences under-reported, their safety compromised.**

By adding our voice, NCWV can help ensure that future national cybercrime reporting reflects the lived reality of the people we serve and influence meaningful policy change that prioritises prevention, safety, and equality.

Summary

The *Cybercrime in Australia 2024* report is a useful starting point, but its gaps risk leaving women, children, and vulnerable communities unprotected in national strategies. NCWV can lead the call for more comprehensive reporting, greater recognition of gendered and child-specific harms, and a stronger focus on emerging technology threats.

Our message is clear: cybercrime is not just a technical issue. It is a women's rights issue, a child safety issue, and a community wellbeing issue. Now is the time to ensure our national picture is complete and that the most at-risk voices are heard.

Social Issues

Migration / Multicultural Affairs – June Anderson

ICW Plan of Action 2022-2025 for Migration:

- Work towards supporting and caring for refugees including asylum seeking women and children.
 - Prevent exploitation of migrant women and girl workers.
 - Prevent negative attitudes e.g., hate speech, with regard to refugees.

VMC Multicultural Film Festival

On the 19 June 2025, I attended the premiere of the Victorian Multicultural Commission - Multicultural Film Festival (MFF). This annual short film festival that explores diversity and multiculturalism through powerful and thought-provoking films from around the globe. Launched during **Refugee Week**, the MFF serves as a vital platform to amplify the diverse voices that enrich our State. Delivered by the VMC in partnership with Swinburne University, the festival showcases stories from filmmakers of all backgrounds, including emerging creatives, reflecting the richness of multiculturalism.

Tackling migrant worker exploitation

The Australian Government has introduced a new law to tackle migrant worker exploitation: *The Migration Amendment (Strengthening Employer Compliance) Act*. The law deters employers and others in the labour chain from using a person's migration status to exploit them. They help create a level playing field for businesses doing the right thing.

From 1 July 2024, the new law aims to:

- reduce temporary migrant worker exploitation
- increase employer compliance
- improve workplace justice outcomes

The laws protect all migrant workers, no matter their visa status. This includes people who have a visa with work rights, an expired visa and those who are working in breach of their visa conditions.

Health in My Language

Health in My Language began in 2022 as a national response program to address barriers to vaccine literacy and vaccine update during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Australian Government's innovative and successful *Health in My Language* program is entering a new phase – focusing on sexual and reproductive health for migrant and refugee communities. The next phase of the program focuses on women's sexual and reproductive health education. Topics include understanding menopause, safer sex, contraception and pregnancy choices.

This delivers on the 2023 Senate Committee recommendation made in the '**Ending postcode lottery**' in response to the **Inquiry into Universal Access to Reproductive Healthcare** which identified the *Health in My Language* Program as an important national platform for advancing sexual and reproductive health equity.

The *Health in My Language* program is delivered by the Multicultural Centre for

Women's Health in partnership with seven other organisations to deploy a team of highly skilled Bilingual Health Educators who will receive accredited training to deliver health education in over 20 languages/dialects.

The new phase is part of the Government's strong focus on improving the health and wellbeing of all Australian women and girls, including our multicultural communities. Throughout this new phase the program will expand by recruiting, training, and coordinating bicultural women's health educators. Sexual and reproductive health education sessions are expected to begin in November, once health educator training is completed.

See this *Health in My Language* website for further details. [Health in My Language - Multicultural Centre For Women's Health](#)

'Making the Links'

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health in late 2024 released its 'Making the Links' guide to developing prevention activities and early intervention actions for supporting women from multicultural backgrounds who are at risk of experiencing sexual assault. Based on insights from multicultural organisations and sexual assault services across Victoria, 'Making the Links' recommends six principles to inform best practice.

[Making the Links Project Outcomes and Learnings Report - Multicultural Centre For Women's Health](#)

NCWV Geelong Report

Nonie Crozier, President NCWV Geelong

I have much pleasure in presenting the 81st Annual Report of the Geelong Regional Branch of the National Council of Women Victoria.

The Geelong Branch Honorary Life Members include:

- Marita Fitzpatrick
- Jan Kinloch OAM
- Janice Latham
- Anne Parton
- Helen Rodd
- Jill Graham

The Branch consists of 15 individual Members, and 9 Affiliate Memberships including:

- Zonta
- Greater Geelong District Girl Guides
- Sacred Heart Alumni
- Ukrainian Women's Association Geelong
- St John of God Auxiliary Geelong
- Foundation 61
- Soroptimist International Geelong
- Liberal Women's Council Victoria
- PLC Old Collegians

The aim of the NCWV Geelong is to be engaged with and responsive to the community's needs where possible, and an advocate on behalf of women and children in the Geelong regional area.

Geelong Branch Meetings are held monthly on the 3rd Monday of the Month at St David's Uniting Church Newtown at 1.30 pm

Two Committee meetings were held on 13 February 2025 and 17 June 2025 at Noble St Uniting Church Hall.

NCWV Geelong is a member of the following organisations:

- National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame
- Geelong Historical Society
- Osborn Park Association
- Anam Cara
- Heritage Centre within the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre- Geelong
- St John of God Hospital Auxiliary

Guest Speakers: 2025

17th March 2025 – Michael Kenneady – Manager of Lazarus Community Centre.

30th June 2025 - Annual Luncheon – Speaker Emelia Young – Parenting with a Disability

NCWV Geelong Donations

The Lazarus Community Centre Proceeds \$1,204.00

North Geelong Secondary College Bursaries \$ 500.00

NCWV – Geelong Luncheon 2025

The focus of the NCWV Geelong Branch's 81st Annual Luncheon held on Monday June 30th 2025 was "Parenting with a Disability", presented by Ms Emelia Young whose groundbreaking research and multidisciplinary work saw her receiving the Victorian Minister's Award for Outstanding Leadership in the development of a specialty area that incorporates occupational therapy and maternity care, through nurturing independence and support of the growing number of young parents with disabilities.

In Australia, a significant number of children live with parents who have disabilities. About 15% of children aged 0-14 live with one or both parents with a disability*. These parents face various challenges including societal barriers, outdated stereotypes, and lack of accessible resources and supports. They often face open discrimination, when people assume that having a disability affects someone's ability to be a competent parent.

Parents with disability are highly capable and bring unique strengths to parenting. Many of the skills they've developed in navigating a world not always designed for them—like creativity, adaptability, ingenuity, and problem-solving—make them exceptional parents. These qualities, combined with the same deep love and care that all children need, equip parents with disabilities to foster a nurturing and supportive environment.

Emelia stated that being able to support new families before and after the birth of their babies through the one-of-a-kind program in Victoria was a privilege for her and for Yooralla. [Yooralla is one of Victoria's oldest and largest disability services providers creating equal opportunities for people with disabilities.]

"We are striving for equality in our society and that requires giving people access to the right type of supports to enable independence and participation in everyday life," said Emelia. "This

includes providing information, support and equipment to parents with a disability. When these are implemented, parents thrive caring for their child and feel empowered."

Emelia works every day to assess and implement strategies and equipment for people with disability, to increase their participation and engagement in meaningful everyday activities.

"When parents feel supported, their stress and anxiety around parenting is reduced, and they therefore have a more positive experience in the early stages at home with their baby," said Emelia. "This is why I am passionate about continuing this program."

Proceeds from the raffle amongst 105 attendees, were directed towards supporting the work of the Lazarus Community Centre which offers sanctuary and support to those facing homelessness and social isolation in the heart of Geelong. Management have advised that the money was used to purchase a much needed, upgraded dishwasher.



Archivist Report

Acting Hon NCWV Archivist, Sheila Byard OAM

In the 2023-24 NCWV Annual Report, the Archivist report noted it would be timely for there to be a review of paper records and memorabilia of National Council of Women accumulated since the registered office moved in 2015 to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) possibly coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the publication of the NCWA history, in 2025.

This must be a priority for 2025-26 since in February 2025, further boxes of material relating to the work of NCWV and several of its affiliates has arrived at the RHSV from the family of the late Janet Galley OAM, former NCWV Honorary Archivist.

While the National Library of Australia has in recent years gradually attracted support for the digitisation of records of notable women and various women's organisations, the 1999 Australian Women's Archives Project (AWAP), and the Australian Women's Register (AWR), as fruit of a long-standing collaboration between the University of Melbourne and the National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW), has had to undergo certain change, due to changes at the University of Melbourne.

[National Council of Women of Victoria | AWR](#)

While it is possible still to find on the AWR website a profile of the late Gracia

Baylor AM, [Baylor, Hilda Gracia | AWR](#) and information about **'NCWA Stirrers with Style'**, the video clip about Presidents of 'NCWA Stirrers with Style' the content with bios of all the NCWA Presidents has been 'retired'.

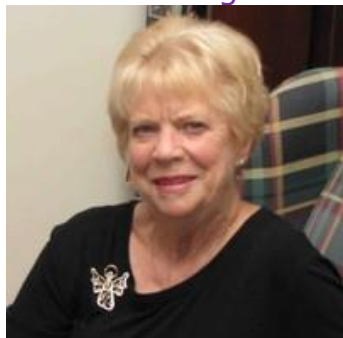
[Stirrers with Style! - Presidents of the National Council of Women of Australia and its predecessors](#)

As the 2023-24 report also noted, we were grateful to Rosemary Cameron and to the RHSV for arranging to receive the boxes of papers from the estate of the late Ann Christine Jackson nee Palmer whose extensive involvement in women's organisations in Victoria included membership of several NCWV affiliated organisations. This year, thanks to the significant sum raised from donors by the RHSV in an EOF appeal, it has been possible for Bronte Laffin-Vines, a RHSV staffer who has been working with Jillian Hiscock, RHSV Collections Manager, to review the Jackson collection and to prepare a first small display of items from the collection.

We hope that there will be further opportunities to draw on the Jackson and Galley archival material to promote a better understanding of the role of member-based or Civil Society Organisations in contemporary Australian society.

Vales

Judith Ada Ryles OAM
1938 - 21 August 2024



Judith was recognised for her long-standing and wide-ranging services to the Community of Melbourne, which includes being a long-term NCWV member, Delegate for the Larnook Former Students, and Honorary Acting Treasurer of NCWV; Honorary Treasurer and Fellow of the Home Economics Institute, Melbourne and other institutes and societies in Melbourne, including University of Melbourne, State Library, National Gallery and President of Friends of the Elms.

Judith was a Senior Lecturer in Food and Nutrition at Deakin University. In her capacity as a Home Economist she was involved in education and the various professional associations of Home Economics at State, National and International level.

Judith gave generously of her talents in a quiet and unassuming way. Her passion, dedication and commitment to the various areas over many years was inspirational.

Fay Marles AM
1926 - 1 November 2024



Born in 1926, Fay graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma in Social Studies in 1948 before enjoying a career as a social worker, academic and later Chancellor of the University.

She was Victoria's first Equal Opportunity Commissioner from 1977 to 1986, and instrumental in ushering in laws to end discrimination. Her legacy for women's rights is remembered by institutions and colleagues across Australia. Fay was a great supporter of NCWV.

"Fay Marles was a leading feminist in Victoria and a fierce advocate for the right of women to take their place in Australia's workforce," the University of Melbourne said in a statement after her death.

"As the first person to occupy the [equal opportunity commissioner] office, she pioneered and defined it.

"During the 70s and 80s, she changed the face of Victorian workplaces and their accessibility for women."

Biruta Don (nee Leveris)
1 April 1951–21 February 2025



Biruta had an energetic and sociable disposition which enabled her to be a great bridge-builder, including supporting the UNAA Victoria and National Council of Women of Victoria as umbrella bodies, to bring together a wide range of organisations, to better equip them to deliver information sharing programs, events and support, especially for women involved in community organisations, planning and allied professions.

Biruta had resumed her role as a member of the NCWV Standing Committee holding the portfolio of Habitat Adviser for NCWV. Her knowledge and experience in relation to housing issues led her to brief NCWV on opportunities to submit to various enquiries, including the Inquiry into the National Housing and Homelessness Plan Bill 2024 (No. 2) where her own submission appears on the Federal parliamentary website.

[Hilda] Gracia Baylor AM
8 October 1929 – 23 May 2025



Gracia was one of the first two women elected to the Victorian Legislative Council in 1979, the other being Joan Coxsedg. During her time in Parliament, she saved the remaining tower of the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital for Women by persuading fellow Upper House colleagues to block legislation to sell this piece of Crown land to developers. The building became the Queen Victoria Women's Centre (QVWC), a focal point for women to access services and facilities.

Gracia Baylor initiated the Council approved baby capsule program which all new parents use to safely carry their infants in cars. *'Before this program, babies were just placed in the back of the car in a bassinet and if there was an accident, they didn't have a hope,'* she said. She was also instrumental in getting mammograms approved for the Medicare register.

Gracia was an active member of the NCW at the national and state level, serving as President of NCWV from 1990-93 and of NCWA from 1997- 2000, helping prepare submissions to government on issues concerning women's health, migration, education, nutrition and environment.

2024–25: About Us

Patron in Chief

Her Excellency Professor the Hon. Margaret Gardener AC Governor of Victoria

NCWV Committee Members 2024–25

President, Elida Brereton

Vice Presidents, Pam Hammond, Guosheng Chen

Honorary Secretary Phoebe Swift, Julie Stevens

Public Officer, Phoebe Swift

Honorary Treasurer, Emma Fu

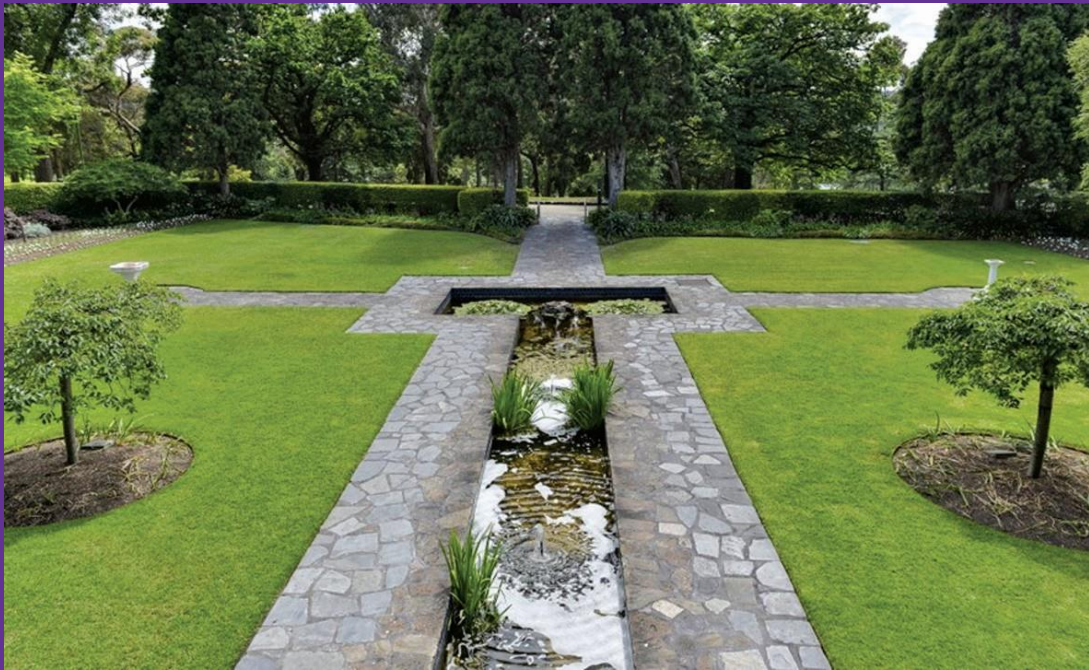
Standing Committees Coordinator, Robyn Byrne OAM

Individual Members' Convenor, Sheila Byard OAM

Geelong Branch President, Nonie Crozier

Ordinary Members

Ronniet Milliken, Hean Bee Wee AM, June Anderson, Dr Deborah Towns OAM



NCWV Standing Committee Members 2025
Standing Committees Coordinator, Robyn Byrne OAM

Status of Women:

Human Rights in Victoria - vacant
Women in Prisons - Barbara Latham
International Relations and Peace - Sankhaja Gunathilaka
State Legislation in Victoria - Ronniet Milliken
Implementation of Conventions Status Women - Sarah Barnbrook

Sustainable Development:

Economics - Emma Fu
Women and Employment - Dr Deborah Towns OAM
Rural Women and Landcare - Pam Robinson AM

General Well-being:

Health - Dr Cassandra Szoeki
Mental Health - Australian Psychological Society
Environment - vacant
Habitat / Housing - vacant
Nutrition in Aged Care and Schools - Maggie Barron

Communications:

Education - Pam Hammond
Arts and Letters - Sandy Bird
Media and Australian Film - Robyn Byrne OAM
Music - Beverley Kannegiesser

Social Issues:

Child / Family - Lily Fetter
Youth - Sara Morgan
Ageing - vacant
Migration - June Andersen / Nurcihan Ozturk

Hon NCWV Archivist, Sheila Byard OAM

Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Awards Management Committee

Convener, Elisabeth Newman AM
Gracia Baylor AM
Leonie Christopherson AM
Hean Bee Wee AM
Pam Hammond
Ex-officio Member NCWV President Elida Brereton

International Council of Women

(Positions held by NCWV members)

Elisabeth Newman AM, Adviser to ICW Board
Hean Bee Wee AM, President, Asia Pacific Regional Council.

National Council of Women Australia

(Positions held by NCWV members)

Elisabeth Newman AM, Honorary Life Vice President
Hean Bee Wee AM, Honorary Life Vice President
Elida Brereton, Board Member as NCWV President
Professor Cassandra Szoeki, National Advisor, Health
Dr Deborah Towns OAM, National Advisor Women and Employment and Economics

National Council of Women Victoria Honorary Life Members

Gracia Baylor AM (deceased May 2025)
Col (Rtd) Joyce Fisher
Elisabeth Newman AM
Dr Pat Phair OAM
Anne Parton
Freda Kaufman
Barbara Brown (deceased July 2025)
Pam Hammond

Life Members

Beverley Blyth Bailey
Sheila Byard OAM
Birute Don (deceased February 2025)
Sandy L Munro
Leonie Christopherson AM
Elisabeth Newman AM
Jenny Russell OAM

Individual Members 2024–25

Tracey Ahern	Carol Walters	Michelle Gibbings
Sandra Bird	Rysia Rozen OAM	Pamela Williams OAM
Maggie Baron	Judith Ryles OAM Prof (deceased August 2024).	Neva Halverson
Sarah Barnbrook	Deb Colville	Phyll Williams
Elida Brereton	Olga Korytsky	Dr Julie Stevens
Jessie Handoll (retired August 2024)	Barbara Latham	Margaret Wilson
Fiona Patten MP	Connie de Silva	Pam Robinson AM
June Anderson	Terri Dry	Guosheng Chen
Emma Fu	Dr Cassandra Szoeki	Phoebe Swift
Benjie Perryman	Irene Szoeki	Dr Kate Duncan AM
Barbara Joyce	Adrianne Fleming OAM	Christine Rippon
Carol Robertson	Hean Bee Wee AM	Favour Ijiyera
Barbara Brown (deceased July 2025)	Sarah Morgan	Viv Nguyen AM
Beverley Kannegiesser	Ronniet Milliken	Rhumbi Nyanhoto
Robyn Buccheri	Norma Wells	Elizabeth McLeod
Katherine Karas		Dr Yee Man Louie
		Janet Rowe

Organisational Members and Delegates 2024–25

Australian Asian Business Women's Association – Jane Wei/ Kim Wan

AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health

Australian Local Government Women's Association Inc (Victoria)

Australian Psychological Society

Beta Sigma Phi Victoria Inc - Ronniet Milliken/ Helen Bruckner

Firbank Old Grammarian's Association

Girl Guides Victoria – Suan Sow

League of Women Voters of Victoria – Dr Deborah Towns OAM / Robyn Buccheri

Liberal Women's Council Victoria – Helen Phillips / Glenda Grant

Methodist Ladies College Old Collegians – Alex O'Keefe/ Sarah Mote/ Bridget Ward

National Australian Chinese Women's Association Inc - May Hu / Nancy Wang

National Council of Jewish Women (Victoria) – Marlo Newton/ Lisa Ezekiel

NCWV Geelong Branch – Nonie Crozier/ Anne Parton

Presbyterian Ladies College Old Collegians - Anne Parton / Robyn Byrne OAM

Returned & Services Nurses Club of Victoria Sub-Branch - Pam Webster / Pru Cox

Soroptimist International of Victoria – Sue Whitehead / Susannah Dax

Turkish Women's Recreation Club Inc – Nurcihan Ozturk / Fidan Diekcan

Ukrainian Women's Association of Australia, Victoria Yanina Dutka / Nadia Soloczynskyj

Victorian Women's Medical Society – Dr Rosalie Cooper OAM/ Dr Kate Duncan AM

Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) – Drug Free Lifestyles

– Rhona Theodore / Jan Shattock/ Anne Bergen

Women's International Zionist Organisation – Hila Kwiat/ Penny Goodman

Women's Property Initiatives – Roberta Buchanan

Associate Organisations

COTA Victoria: Council of the Aged
 HAAG: Housing for the Aged Action Group
 Her Place: Women's Museum Australia Ltd.
 Jean Hailes Foundation
 Prison Network
 Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust
 Ross House Association

Royal Historical Society of Victoria
 Safe Steps
 Travellers Aid
 Women with Disabilities Victoria
 WIRE: Women's Information and Referral Service
 Victoria Women's Trust



QUEEN VICTORIA WOMEN'S CENTRE



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ABN 18227073059

Registration No A0004465H

Affiliated with:

National Council of Women of Australia
Inc. Ltd and thus to the International
Council of Women (ICW-CIF) which has
consultative status with the United
Nations Economic and Social Council.