

## Acknowledgement

*National Council of Women of Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Victoria and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. NCWV pays its respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past, present and emerging.*



**NCWV Website:** <https://ncwvic.org.au/>

**QUOTE:** *"This report (Building the evidence base: Inquiry into capturing data on people using family violence in Victoria), underscores the collective responsibility we all share in minimising, addressing, and preventing family violence."* Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee's Chair, Ella George. See P4

## From the President, Elida Brereton



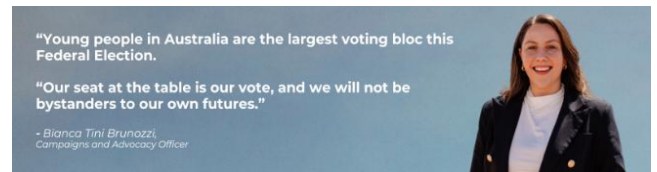
If you are like me, you will be finding the News quite depressing, with ongoing wars and tragic deaths in the Middle East and Ukraine, a terrible loss of life and shelter in Myanmar, and Thailand from the earthquake, violence and deaths associated with domestic violence, youth crime, trauma from warring communities, home invasions and evidence of homelessness and poverty around us.

Also floods and massive losses of income in southern Queensland and northern NSW; antisemitism, Islamophobia and intolerance here, and the insecurity and anger caused by the actions, words and global domination aspirations of the President of the United States.

It is therefore wonderful when kindness, compassion, generosity and productive support for others is in evidence. I would love to think that the ethos, friendships and deeds of NCWV would be a force for good, with all of us playing our part. The EGM to address proposed changes to the NCWA constitution, most of which Victoria disagreed with after you assisted the Committee in discussing them, has been postponed, after the NCWA Board, of which I am a part, indicated grave concerns.

A Working Group from the NCWV Committee, comprising Ronnieta Milliken, Vice-President Guosheng Chen, Sheila Byard, Emma Fu and me, is working on strategic directions for our organisation which we will share with the Committee and membership when we have a final report.

Patron in Chief: Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria



## YWCA insights into key issues for young women voters

As YWCA was one of the founding organisations of NCWV we determined to alert you to their current work.

*"Young people aren't just silent bystanders to our futures. More than 700,000 people are expected to vote for the first time this year in what the AEC has coined the best national youth enrolment rate in Australian history at a rate of almost 90 per cent. These numbers have swelled the power of our Gen Z and Millennial voter bloc to outnumber Baby Boomers on voting day in every State and Territory across Australia for the first time ever. YWCA has commissioned exclusive national polling on young women and gender-diverse people's voting preferences for this Federal Election – keep an eye on [the YWCA] campaign website to find out key issues for these voters as [YWCA] share results soon."*

Link to YWCA website [Read our 5 key election asks on the campaign website](#)

## 3<sup>rd</sup> April Council Meeting Speaker: Professor Helen Hodgson, Chair National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW), Ross House, Flinders Lane, CBD

Ahead of the 2025 Federal election, National Council of Women Victoria invited NFAW to 'Shine the Gender Lens' on policies of political parties'.



Dr Helen Hodgson has lectured in taxation at UNSW, Edith Cowen and Curtin universities. She was also a Member of the Legislative Council, WA from 1997 to 2001.

Helen holds qualifications in accounting, business law and taxation, is a Chartered Tax Advisor, a Registered Tax Agent, a Fellow of the Australian Society of CPA's and a member of the SMSF Association.

Dr Hodgson gave us some background stating that 'Women Budgets' started in the 1980s as part of Federal budgets, but have reduced, so in 1988 NFAW was formed to highlight gender responsible budgeting. They have prepared papers using a gender lens for 25 Federal budgets! The 2025 Statement below summarises the issues that Helen spoke of at the meeting. She did emphasise that the Stage 3 Tax cuts need to be more targeted at the lower end.

For any updates, check the NFAW website: [Gender Lens on the 2025 Election | NFAW](#)

## NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR AUSTRALIAN WOMEN (NFAW) CALLS FOR CONTINUED BOLD ACTION ON GENDER REFORMS

NFAW urges the next government to maintain momentum on critical gender reforms that have improved economic outcomes for women across Australia. Independent analysis by NFAW reveals the Albanese Government has effectively placed gender equality at the centre of policymaking, yielding tangible benefits for Australian women. *"The heart of the current government's reforms has been in the machinery of government,"* states Professor Helen Hodgson, Chair of NFAW's Social Policy Committee. *"This has included ensuring policy decisions incorporate analysis of effects on women, revitalising the Women's Budget through evidence-based fiscal decisions, and strengthening WGEA's role in monitoring Gender Wage Gap."* Key reforms benefiting women include amendments to the Fair Work Act, implementation of Gender Panels, wage increases in the predominantly female care sector, expanded childcare access, and progress on aged care reforms. These initiatives have already boosted female workforce participation, enhancing national productivity.

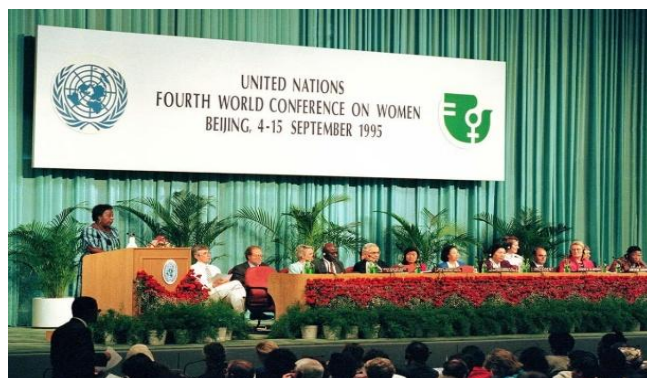
In the Federal Budget tabled in Parliament ahead of the election, the Government has followed through to provide funding for commitments to increased wages in the care sector, women's health, increased access to childcare and HECS/HELP relief.

Despite this progress, Professor Hodgson identifies remaining challenges: *"Climate change is real, and women disproportionately shoulder disaster recovery burdens. Additionally, women receiving Jobseeker and other welfare payments continue living in poverty."* *"Ensuring affordable housing access for all Australians—whether as homeowners or renters—remains urgent. While this government has initiated important programs, we urge the incoming government to accelerate these efforts rather than changing course."*

While the economy has stabilised since the post-COVID period, NFAW cautions that Australia faces renewed geopolitical uncertainty. This environment could prompt the incoming government to reduce investment in equality programs.

In the Opposition's response to the budget, it committed to cutting red tape including cutting 41,000 jobs in the public sector. There is no commitment to continue the programs that have contributed to the improvement in the gender pay gap. *"The Coalition should explain how the functions that are currently met by public sector employees, and are particularly critical for women, will continue in the face of the massive job cuts. We call on the incoming government and all parliamentary members to be bold and continue investing in programs that reduce gender and intergenerational inequality,"* Jane Madden, Chair of NFAW, emphasises.

NFAW's policy analysis covers Cost of Living, Government arrangements for gender equality, Early Childhood Education and Care, Security in Retirement, Aged Care, Housing, Workplace Relations/Pay Equity, Climate Change, Paid Parental Leave, Social Services, Tertiary Education.



### Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 69 Beijing +30 roundtable

The 69th session of the CSW was held at the UN in New York, 10 - 21 March, 2025. Hear what happened at [CSW69 Beijing+30](#) from women who were there, including members of the UNAA Victoria Status of Women Committee (SoWC).

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. Read about why the Platform matters 30 years on – [here](#).

**Panel:** [Dr Donnell Davis](#) is the UNAA National President and a Director with Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific.

[Sarah Barnbrook](#) is a delegate for Soroptimist International of the South East Asia Pacific at CSW69 and a committee member of SoWC.

[Global Voices](#) CSW69 youth representative.

**When:** Tuesday 15 April 2025, 1.30pm to 3pm.

**Location:** East Melbourne

**Tickets** Free for **UNAAV Members**, \$10 for non-members. [Tickets](#)

**The NCWV May Forum, May 1, will be a panel discussing the outcomes of the 69<sup>th</sup> CSW, Ross House, Flinders Lane, CBD – details to follow.**

**ICW-CIF announces that the General Assembly 2025 will be held on 23 to 29 June in Marrakesh, Morocco.**

The General Assembly of the International Council of Women meets every three years to evaluate women's status and development around the world, to assess the activities and progress of ICW affiliates in the promotion of the current triennial theme, as well as to establish the new triennial theme.

The Regional Councils also take the opportunity of this global gathering to hold their meetings. An additional objective of the conference is the strengthening of this global network of women through reinforcing ties of friendship and cooperation among the members.

There will be a hybrid AGM where you are invited to attend in person or via Zoom.

NCWA Constitution allows each constituent NCW to nominate a person/people to attend.

## ADVISER NEWS

### Education Adviser: Pam Hammond

The Education Department's [Respectful Relationships](#) initiative is offering free professional learning for early childhood educators (Bachelor, Diploma, or Certificate III qualified) in Victorian government-funded kindergarten programs. The online learning program will run from Monday 5 to Friday 23 May 2025. It 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.

#### About the professional learning program

They developed the professional learning program in collaboration with world-leading experts from Monash University. The program aligns with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and National Quality Standard. The Department is offering a financial contribution to services that need backfill for staff who join this training. The professional learning program is an item on the [School Readiness Funding Menu](#). Services can also use the menu to arrange for backfill or additional support.

#### Program details

**Dates: Monday 5 to Friday 23 May 2025: Dates: 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, and 23 May 2025**

Format: online (one full-day workshop, and one 2-hour, self-paced learning module) Cost: free.

To register, visit: [Respectful Relationships in early childhood](#).

For more information, refer to [Respectful Relationships in early childhood](#).

For further enquiries, contact the Respectful Relationships team by email: [respectful.relationships@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:respectful.relationships@education.vic.gov.au)

### Standing Committee Coordinator: Robyn Byrne OAM

The Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee's final report, *Building the evidence base: Inquiry into capturing data on people using family violence in Victoria*, has been released. This follows an extensive consultation with organisations, authorities and experts in the sector. They have made 61 recommendations and 71 findings. See full report here: <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/fvpdata-reports>

**NCWV made a submission on this matter.** The final report is very professional and far reaching and the findings and recommendations on the collection and analysis of data may well have impacts for Victoria as well as other states in Australia. See our submission (No. 23):

[https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/495e80/contentassets/65bdc3b430664401aa78736212f51c4e/submission-documents/023\\_24.05.30\\_ncwv.pdf](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/495e80/contentassets/65bdc3b430664401aa78736212f51c4e/submission-documents/023_24.05.30_ncwv.pdf)

The report identifies key challenges in the current system, including fragmented and inconsistent datasets, limited understanding of people involved with family violence, and barriers to effective data sharing. It recommends a holistic and systemic approach to data collection, including:

- Establishing a whole-of-system family violence oversight and continuous improvement mechanism
- Creating a system-wide process to correct misidentification
- Expanding data capture to include a broader cross-section of people involved in family violence, including those not engaged with services
- Supporting a national population-based survey and qualitative, longitudinal, and multi-method research to address gaps in understanding perpetration trends, risk factors, and intervention outcomes.

The Committee also highlighted the importance of addressing specific areas such as elder abuse and the distinct needs of children and young people who experience or use family violence. These recommendations aim to refine data systems and improve service responses to better support these groups.



### Renee Chopping & Collective Shout, Australia

Thanks to relentless activism—over 150,000 petition signatures, thousands of reports, emails, and public pressure—Spotify has removed every single harmful Andrew Tate course we flagged. And there's more—we also called out SoundCloud for hosting Tate's 'Pimping Hoes Degree' (PHD) course. Within 48 hours, they removed the course, confirming it violated their terms of use. Two major platforms have acted, proving that together, we can force change.

👉 Our Andrew Tate campaign is not done yet! Hear about our next steps [collectiveshout.org/joinus](https://collectiveshout.org/joinus)



**Human Rights Adviser: Barbara Latham** draws our attention to a current, serious issue:

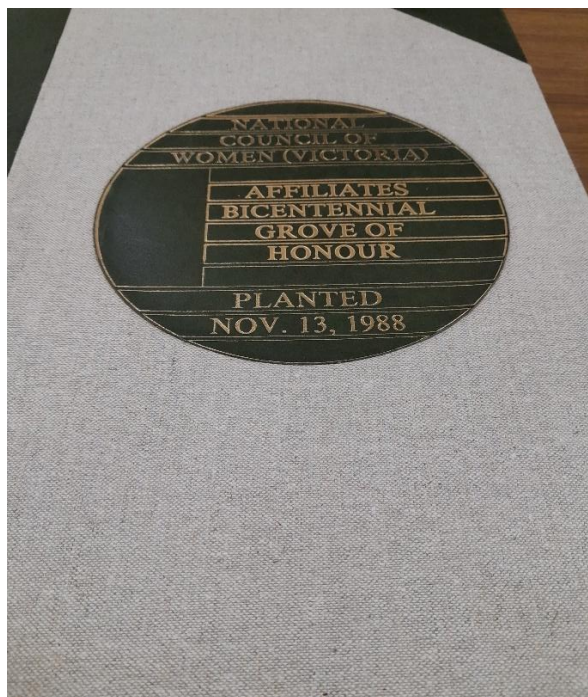
The Guardian editor-in-chief, Katharine Viner's article: *Adolescence and the global conversation about young men*. To begin with, [Netflix TV drama "Adolescence"](#), the story of a 13-year-old boy arrested for the murder of a female classmate, has created a national conversation about young men and boys and their relationship with social media. Television writer Michael Hogan called the drama a show ["so powerful it could save lives"](#). It is now an international sensation, the most-watched show on Netflix around the globe. Then, the former England men's football manager Gareth Southgate gave a thoughtful and moving televised lecture about [how the world is shaping young men](#), warning about the role of toxic influencers in shaping some of their views. The discussion around "Adolescence", particularly, has revealed just how worried so many parents are about what their children, especially boys, are consuming online. Jack Thorne, the show's co-writer, spoke of his own angst about the matter and called for an outright ban on smartphones for under-16s, or a digital age of consent similar to the one [recently introduced in Australia](#).

The Guardian editorial: "Encouraging boys to be resilient, empathetic and capable of real relationships requires investment in families, schools and youth clubs that foster connection. They need space to be themselves – and the confidence to reject the empty validation of a social media feed."

This is a global story with huge implications, for this generation of young people – men and women – and for our collective future. We will continue to interrogate it in depth.

## **Rural and Urban Women Adviser: Pam Robinson AM**

### **Royal Park, Parkville – the Future**



**Pam Robinson AM and Sheila Byard OAM** attended a meeting at Walmsley House, Gatehouse Street, Parkville about the Draft Royal Park Master Plan. This is Pam's report.

My interest in Royal Park and attending the meeting was in regards to two things.

1. The current Melbourne City Council Draft Master Plan, and concern about the Park's future - and
2. The matter of the "NCWV Affiliate Bicentennial Grove of Honour planted November 13 1988" and the loss of that planting over time to increased Park infrastructure, loss of the records of that planting and the disappearance of the plaque that was unveiled on the day by NCWV President Sylvia Gelman AM MBE and then Lord Mayor of Melbourne Winsome McCaughey, a planting that I attended as then State President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association. After a thorough presentation by Ron Jones, Landscape Architect and who has had a long-term link with the various Plans for the Park over the years, there was a call for comment or questions, so I took the opportunity to say a few words.

In identifying myself I indicated that I had been present at the NCWV planting in 1988, participated in the planting days at the area below the Zoo when the wetlands was created, and with other Park participation, and I also spoke of the loss of the 1988 planting, the loss of the records of that event and the loss of the plaque - Sheila whom I was there with had all the information on that aspect. I spoke in regard to the endless 'nibbling' away of the Park's most important facility - its natural resources - and that it would be a grave error to keep taking and taking, incorporating endless hard infrastructure features as every area lost undermines the strength of the rest of the Park to survive - and unless this matter is taken seriously, there would be a time in the future, when next generations would say "what were you thinking of?" in diminishing such a special City Park.

There were many good points put forward by others attending and overall, it was very clear to all present that there must be an Independent Review of the Current Draft Royal Park Plans, as many proposals fly in the face of previous Royal Park Management plans which had a long-term view of management. Additionally, with so much infrastructure already in place, Council has a lot to maintain - and now is the time to ensure the future of the Park is in line with international thinking of more natural environments in Parks so people can enjoy the health benefits of being in a natural resources area.

## AGM of the National Australian Chinese Women Association (NACWA) and the Celebration of International Women's Day



President: Rowena CHEN



Prof. Guosheng YANG CHEN

To celebrate the 115th International Women's Day, NACWA meticulously organized a series of colourful activities at the venue of the Cambodian Chinese Association of Victoria, located at 54 Queens Ave, Springvale, Vic. The activities attracted the enthusiastic participation of numerous female compatriots, and everyone spent a joyful, warm and meaningful festival together.

President Rowena CHEN reviewed many wonderful memories left by all the sisters since 2024 as they worked hand in hand.

President Rowena CHEN extended sincere festival greetings and best wishes to all women, fully affirmed the outstanding contributions made by women in various fields, and encouraged everyone to continue to demonstrate the grace and strength of women. She pointed out that 2025 is a year full of hope and opportunities. "Today's celebration is not only an affirmation of our past efforts but also a mobilization for future struggles. I hope that every sister can feel warmth and strength here and draw the motivation to move forward. Let us devote ourselves to work and life with even greater enthusiasm, add lustre to society with practical actions, and earn respect for ourselves."



### **Discovery to lead to better health outcomes for women in the short and long-term, by Dr Elysia Robb, FRACGP, VMWS Representative**

We recognise that gender identity is fluid. In this article, the words and language we use to describe genitals and gender are based on the sex assigned at birth.

As a female GP in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, I spend the majority of my working day consulting young women and solving, or at least attempting to solve, their medical dilemmas. One very common presentation, is recurrent bacterial vaginosis, commonly expressed as "BV". In addition to this, another similar but different recurrent problem is vaginal candida, also known as "thrush". Although these problems are quite distinct, fundamentally they both involve the vagina; primarily affect women mostly in their 20s and 30s, and cause months to years of frustration and discomfort.

It has been difficult to identify a cause of these problems, that seem to be related to sexual activity but not always, and hence it has been difficult to solve these issues thoroughly and satisfactorily. My practise has involved prescribing anti-microbial medications and discussing genital care generally, with the excellent assistance of the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre "Genital Skin Care" fact sheet: <https://www.mshc.org.au/sexual-health/sexual-health-fact-sheets/genital-skin-care-fact-sheet>

Fast forward to very recently, to an extremely welcome development in the field, from Vodstril\* et. al. to discover that BV can be treated more thoroughly and permanently by treating the male sexual partner at the same time as the female is treated. This finding will hopefully lead to better outcomes for patients in the short and long-term. Treatment for the female is an antibiotic - either a per vaginal cream or oral tablet. It is recommended that male partners treat themselves with an oral antibiotic tablet and an antibiotic cream at the same time.

Reassuringly, further studies are being conducted to investigate partner treatment in LGBTQIA+ relationships to determine if partner treatment also improves BV cure in this community. In couples where both have a vagina, it is recommended to test both partners to treat any cases of BV at the same time where possible. For people with multiple partners, it is recommended to consider treating all sexual partners simultaneously to reduce the risk of reinfection where possible.

See here for further information:

- medical information and guidelines: <https://www.mshc.org.au/health-professionals/bv-health-professional-info/clinician-instructions-for-bv-partner-treatment>
- news article: <https://www.9news.com.au/national/bacterial-vaginosis-new-study-published-in-new-england-journal-of-medicine-reveals-common-condition-is-a-sexually-transmitted-infection/abf05f88-cff4-48d1-be3a-320c6defd7e3>
- original article: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2405404>

\*Dr Lenka Vodstril, successful female author and Melbourne-based post-doctorate scientist, whom I have studied with.

## Shingles vaccine linked to reduction in dementia diagnoses, study finds, By science reporter [Jacinta Bowler](#) and health reporter [Olivia Willis](#), Thursday 3 April

The shingles vaccine has been linked to lower dementia risk, according to a large study in Wales. Researchers say vaccination may have this effect by reducing reactivations of the virus that causes chickenpox and shingles, or through broader immunological effects.

**What's next?** Experts suggest more direct research is needed to confirm why this is occurring, while the team of researchers are now looking at funding a large clinical trial.

[abc.net.au/news/shingles-vaccine-dementia-natural-study-diagnosis-risk-wales/105126940](https://www.abc.net.au/news/shingles-vaccine-dementia-natural-study-diagnosis-risk-wales/105126940)

Scientists may have produced the strongest evidence yet that the shingles vaccine is linked to reduced dementia risk. Using the health records of more than 280,000 older adults in Wales, researchers found those who received the shingles vaccine were 20 per cent less likely to develop dementia over the next seven years than those who did not receive the vaccine.

The findings, [published on Thursday in Nature](#), build on other recent studies that have demonstrated associations between herpes virus infections and an increased risk of developing dementia.

Lead author Pascal Geldsetzer, from Stanford University, said the protective effects of the vaccine appeared to be "substantially larger" than those offered by existing dementia medications, but that further research was needed to determine if the observed effects were truly causal.

"If the shingles vaccine really prevents or delays dementia, then this would be a hugely important finding for clinical medicine, population health, and research into the causes of dementia," Dr Geldsetzer said.

According to the researchers, there are two potential mechanisms that might explain how the shingles vaccine could reduce the risk of dementia, and they may even work in tandem.

The first is that vaccination reduces reactivations of dormant varicella-zoster virus, which have been shown to cause long-lasting cognitive impairment and brain pathology akin to what is seen in Alzheimer's disease. Varicella-zoster virus, a type of herpes virus, causes chickenpox and can linger in the body for years, later reactivating as shingles.

"There is a growing body of research showing that viruses that preferentially target your nervous system and hibernate in your nervous system for much of your life may be implicated in the development of dementia," Dr Geldsetzer said.

## Women in Sport's Post



### [Women in Sport](#) (edited)

History in the making 🏆 For the first time in its 131 years, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) will be led by a woman. Kirsty Coventry, Zimbabwe's sports minister and a two-time Olympic gold medallist, will take over from Thomas Bach on June 23rd. This is particularly poignant given the IOC's troubling history of excluding women: 1896 – Modern Olympics began. In 1900 – Women were allowed to compete in 5 sports – but they made up 22 of the 997 athletes. 2012 – It took a further 112 years for all sports to be opened to women. Paris 2024 was the first Games with near equal numbers of male and female athletes. But even as women's participation in the Games grew, power remained firmly in the hands of men. It took until 1981 for the first women to even be appointed as IOC members. Now, in 2025, the IOC has a woman at the helm. This is more than a milestone – it's a reminder of how far we've come and how long it's taken to get here.

## Australian Gender Equality Council: 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES – WORKING FOR BALANCE

*"Women make up just over half of Australia's population and yet we continue to face significant safety issues in our homes, workplaces and communities, additional barriers to accessing employment, and, as a result increased income insecurity throughout our lives."* – Coral Ross, Chair Australian Gender Equality Council

In the 2025 Federal Election, the Australian Gender Equality Council is calling upon all parties and candidates to commit to priority actions to address women's safety and respect at work, at home, and in the community, and to commit to addressing the root causes of violence; women's inequality, and the attitudes and behaviours which fuel disrespect and violence.

[Read More »](#)

Please amplify our call to all parties and candidates by supporting these key priorities for a gender-equal Australia.



## OTHER NEWS

### Victorian Multicultural Commission

As part of Diversity Week, Pam Hammond visited the Multicultural Festival 2025, which was on 21–23 March at the iconic Grazeland in Spotswood, as part of the celebration of Victoria's multicultural communities. There were food stalls featuring around 50 cuisines and cultures. Also live music, cultural performances and activities for all ages. There were many family groups enjoying this amazing venue, including some that included four generations. This really represented multicultural Melbourne.

#### Victorian Multicultural Festival - a huge success! From Viv Nguyen, Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

We're thrilled share this video of our first-ever [Victorian Multicultural Festival](#) held at Grazeland. A heartfelt thanks to our incredible sponsors, partners and members for making this event and the Cultural Diversity Week campaign truly extraordinary! Your support brought Victorians together, strengthened communities and created lifelong memories.

#### Multifaith leaders to gather at Parliament House

In that spirit of positivity and optimism, multifaith leaders will **gather at Parliament House on 11 April** to cultivate peace-building through contemplation, compassion and common humanity: essential elements to healing and progress, both individually and collectively. The forum is a collaborative effort between the VMC Multifaith Advisory Group and key institutions that support our ongoing commitment to nurturing understanding across diverse communities.

### Statement from the Minister for Multicultural Affairs

### Media Release

On International Day to Combat Islamophobia, the State Government reaffirms our steadfast commitment to standing up against hate, discrimination and racism in all their forms.

Sadly, Victorian Muslims have experienced an alarming increase in hateful, Islamophobic incidents. Hate goes against the fibre of the diverse and multicultural state that we are. There is no place in Victoria for racism or discrimination of any kind. It's why we are helping to support victims and bystanders of Islamophobia by partnering with Muslim communities to develop a guide on Combatting Islamophobia. This will aim to build awareness of the impacts of Islamophobia within the broader Victorian community and highlight safe referral and support pathways for those who experience Islamophobia, ensure that Islamophobia is understood, addressed, and called out wherever it occurs.

As part of Victoria's five-year *Anti-Racism Strategy*, the State Government adopted a new definition of Islamophobia as 'A fear, prejudice or hatred of Muslim people (or those perceived to be Muslim) and the religion of Islam. This can manifest in hostility, violence, intimidation, harassment and abuse.'

We are also developing a whole of Government framework and working group, ensuring we can respond to challenges as they arise in a community-informed, timely and meaningful way.



Underpinning these efforts is Victoria's first *Anti-Racism Strategy*, which is working to ensure Victoria is a place where everyone can thrive irrespective of cultural background or faith. Every Victorian has a role to play in rejecting Islamophobia, antisemitism, racism and hate – which is why our *Anti-Vilification and Social Cohesion Bill* is so important.

Find out more about the Strategy in the media release [here](#)

No Muslim should fear attending mosque. And no Muslim woman should be fearful walking down the street wearing their hijab. But we know that they are. This reform is for them, as multicultural Victorians who deserve to live without the fear of vilification and harm.



We've received fantastic initial feedback about the online Q&A and sincerely thank our panel of experts and moderator, Annabel Crabb, for their time and expertise. **Missed the event?**

If you were unable to view the Q&A live or would like to re-watch it, simply click on the 'Watch Here' button below. [Watch Here](#)

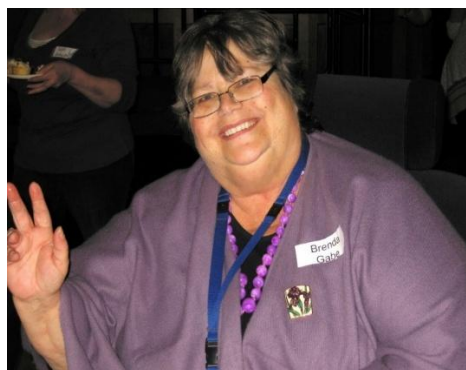
[Support Breast Cancer Research](#)

If you'd like to actively support Breast Cancer Trials in our mission to stop breast cancer threatening the lives of everyday Australians, click on the Support Breast Cancer Research button above.

## Applications are now open for the 2025 Brenda Gabe Leadership Award!

Nominations opened **Thursday the 13th of March 2025. Nominations close Wednesday 23 April 2025 at 5:00pm.**

[Find out more and nominate](#)



### About the Brenda Gabe Leadership Award

Supported by Dr Helen Sykes, the Brenda Gabe Biennial Leadership Award is a WDV initiative that celebrates leadership amongst Women and gender diverse people with Disabilities in Victoria. The Award recognises and rewards the contribution women and gender diverse people with disabilities have made, as a direct benefit to women and gender diverse people with disabilities, or to making a more inclusive community, in Victoria. The Award is presented every two years. **You can nominate yourself or your group (self-nomination) or any individual** who identifies as a girl/woman (cis or trans), non-binary, or a gender diverse person who identifies with the values and ethos of WDV, and with a disability, who resides in Victoria.

The winner of the Award receives \$2,000 towards a capacity building project, or professional development. It is expected the winner will be able to demonstrate the award money was used appropriately, and provide a report the following year on what they've done since winning the award.

Brenda Gabe was a much loved and respected member of Women with Disabilities Victoria, who wore many hats; she was a school teacher, psychologist, champion swimmer, businesswoman, wife and mother. After being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) in 1994, she became involved with Mulgrave Neighbourhood house and successfully completed the Leadership Plus course in 2007. Brenda went on to become a strong and committed disability advocate, perhaps one of her most enriching roles. She made time to represent Women with Disabilities Victoria on various committees, forums and conferences, and played a leading role on disability-related campaigns including making both housing and public transport more accessible and preventing violence against women with disabilities.



Each year, to celebrate **Women's History Month**, the RHSV offers our Women's History lecture. The 2025 speaker was **Margaret Anderson**, a public historian and museum administrator who is director of the Old Treasury Building.

Museums in the 1970s were largely masculine preserves, staffed almost exclusively by men in white coats. Women were thin on the ground. Their stories were equally rare. Those few women who did appear in museum exhibitions were mostly royal women, or in the Australian context, governors' wives. But as feminist historians recast the discipline, museums followed in their wake. From feminists to felons, matriarchs to monsters, women's stories began to be presented in exhibitions. This lecture explores some of the challenges encountered in exhibiting women's history, especially where the stories themselves might be described as 'difficult history'.

Photo: Deb Towns OAM, Sheila Byard OAM at the RHSV.

## Housing, Heritage, Density: Vibrant neighbourhoods or Hong Kong without the view?



The seminar will be chaired by Charles Sowerwine, RHSV Heritage Committee

**Date:** Tue 29 April

**Time:** 5:30pm - 7:30pm

**Cost:** \$10/ \$20

**Event Type:** In person only

[Book Housing Heritage Density here](#)





**GEN VIC** Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC) is undertaking a project to identify gendered gaps and loopholes in Victorian legislation and policy, and to find potential solutions and we need your help.

Gender issues encompass the social, cultural, economic, and political challenges arising from societal norms and expectations related to gender. These issues often highlight disparities in gender equality – differences in power, opportunities, and treatment between genders that can lead to inequality and injustice. Gender issues arise, for example, in workplace rights, representation in leadership roles, and protection from gender-based violence.

While GEN VIC is aware of some specific examples of gaps in legislation and policy that impact genders differently, we are seeking insights from people with direct experience to identify further gendered gaps and loopholes and, also, to identify potential solutions.

This survey is one of the ways in which GEN VIC is seeking to engage people in this process, and we would very much value your contribution. **The survey should only take 5 -10 minutes to complete. Survey closes Friday 2 May.**

[Complete Survey](#)

#### **Arts in Melbourne: [YIRRAMBOI Festival](#) 1 - 11 May, 2025**

YIRRAMBOI returns in May for its fifth and boldest iteration — a 10-day feast of artistic expression, deeply rooted in purpose. Shaped by four anchors — Legacy, Joy, Reclamation and Akin — this year’s festival delivers its most ambitious program yet. Arts Centre Melbourne hosts World Premieres and Australian Exclusives, breaking preconceived notions of First Nations ‘art.’ Immerse yourself in powerful stories and performances, cracking open the heart of Narm to reveal the hum of Country beneath. [Explore the entire program.](#)



Report, by Madeline Hislop, Editor

#### **It's time for an uncomfortable conversation: alcohol is killing women in record numbers**

The number of Australian women dying from alcohol-related health conditions is at its highest rate in a decade. The number of young women drinking at risky levels is also rising. It's time for a national conversation and the support they need to make positive changes. It can be challenging to quit when companies aggressively and relentlessly target women, selling drinking as a tool of female empowerment and independence and as a reward for the disproportionate mental and domestic load women shoulder. This 'mummy wine culture' may line pockets of alcohol companies, but it is killing women.

Women are more likely to experience serious health complications from excessive drinking, including liver problems, cardiovascular disease, several types of cancer, and mental health issues, and it can exacerbate the impacts of menopause. Drinking can also be a way of self-medicating to block out childhood trauma.

But one of the biggest problems for women in this situation is the barriers to treatment and support when they are ready to make a change. Women are less likely to access treatment and support services, which are often designed in ways more suited to men. Models like Alcoholics Anonymous, where participants are asked to surrender their power to a higher source, can be daunting for women. The public disclosure nature of these groups can also be a barrier. Women often view their drinking as shameful or not serious. Mothers worry they'll struggle to find childcare or lose custody of their children.

Around 80 per cent of women who seek treatment have a history of sexual and physical assault and many experience PTSD. They may not feel safe in a medical waiting room or rehab facility with men. We need support options specifically designed for women, that recognise the unique challenges they face and provide more nuanced care. There are only ten female-only treatment services in Australia, inadequate for the demand. Having a judgement-free, digital space to share experiences and know they are heard and understood is powerful. It's vital that we create a treatment system that addresses the urgency of the situation, empowers women, creates safe spaces to access support early. Lives depend on it.

## Get election day ready – Build a Ballot,



With political literacy at an [all-time low](#) and misinformation on the rise, we created **Build a Ballot** to cut through the noise. It helps voters understand exactly where parties and candidates stand on the issues that matter most to them and plan their vote accordingly. That way, they can head to the ballot box prepared, confident they're preferencing candidates who reflect their values.

Discover how your local candidates and parties are approaching the issues you care about and plan your own preferences, ready for election day. **Build a Ballot** will be live about 3 weeks before the election (once the AEC confirms all the final candidate data). Search for the candidates currently running in your electorate and state. Plus, find a heap of useful resources to help you do your research. [Candidate Finder](#)

*Tegan Lerm and Lizzie Hedding, co-founders of Project Planet.*

Learn more about your candidates: why they're running, what their policies are, what experience they have that makes them qualified for the job. Some places to look: check their own website and social media accounts - see what they say about themselves! Use the **Matching Tool** to find how parties match your issues: [Research Hub](#)

## ACTF Education: Explore Civics and Citizenship during the federal election campaign

We are excited to announce the launch of a pilot version of our new [Civics and Citizenship: Curated Clip Collection](#), designed to support teachers during the election period. While this resource is still in development, the pilot offers a great opportunity to explore key concepts like leadership, democracy and active citizenship at a time when these topics are front and centre in the media. Each module includes a short scene from an Australian television series, accompanied by engaging activities that help students dive deeper into these topics, and their role in shaping society.

Civics and citizenship education is more important than ever. There's recognition that students need a better understanding of how democracy works, with research finding many young people are unsure about their rights, responsibilities and the importance of being engaged citizens. This evolving collection provides an interactive, accessible way to learn about civics, with new materials and content being added throughout the year to enrich the experience

Australian screen stories have the power to make civics come alive by showing real-life situations and relatable characters, helping students connect with complex topics in a way that is both fun and impactful.

**Year Level:** [F-2](#) [3-4](#) [5-6](#) [7-8](#) [9-10](#)

**Learning Area:** [English](#) [Humanities and Social Sciences](#)



In a time of rapid change and growing inequality, trust in leadership and public policy has never been more important. That's why we're launching **Trust Women: Lunch Break Sessions**, is a new webinar series designed to break down some of the most important gender equality policy challenges facing Australia today. From February to June 2025, we'll host expert-led discussions on key issues such as nuclear energy, early childhood education, abortion access, housing, youth mental health, and tech-facilitated abuse.

Each session will offer insights from leading thinkers, advocates, and policy experts, helping us better understand the blockers to progress and, more importantly, the pathways forward. [Free, registration essential >](#)

### [Housing Security: Navigating the Crisis in 2025](#)



12pm AEST, Tuesday 6 May 2025



Free Zoom Webinar [REGISTER >](#) Speakers TBA

**Mary Crooks AO (moderator)** Executive Director, Victorian Women's Trust

### [Youth Mental Health: How Can We Better Support Teens?](#)



12pm AEST, Tuesday 27 May 2025



Free Zoom Webinar [REGISTER >](#) Speakers TBA

### [AI and Tech-Facilitated Abuse: What Does the Future Hold?](#)



12pm AEST, Tuesday 17 June 2025



Free Zoom Webinar [REGISTER >](#) Speakers TBA

## Counterpart: Connections

Our 2025 program of events has kicked off. We have a have lots of exciting things planned.

If there is an event or activity that you'd like us to host or if you would like to talk about us organising a regional wellbeing day in your area, please [let us know](#).

Would you like to provide understanding, emotional support and hope to other women with cancer?

Counterpart Peer Support Volunteers are:

- women with a lived experience of cancer
- kind and non-judgmental
- above all, willing to listen.

Training is provided through an online course, attendance at an orientation day and 'on the job' training, working alongside staff and more experienced volunteers (if you live in regional Victoria this can be done remotely).

**Applications close 21 April.** [Read more about volunteering, download the PD and express your interest.](#)



1300 292 153 | [enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au)

### New digital learning program



**Preventing and responding to sexual harassment in workplace – A guide for people leaders** is our new digital learning program. Designed for leaders and people managers.

Program provides practical guidance on how people leaders can prevent workplace sexual harassment, and provide trauma informed and person-centred responses to reports and complaints. The cost of this program is scaled according to the number of users; contact us for pricing.

[Education | Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#)

Check out other digital learning modules - essential professional development opportunities for Victorian workplaces and public authorities that use engaging case studies and best practice examples to build your team's capability.

- [Fair, safe and inclusive workplaces](#) – This 30-minute module for staff at all levels of seniority aims to give your team the knowledge and skills they need to comply with their positive duty under the Equal Opportunity Act.
- [Prevention of sexual harassment](#) – This 30-minute module will help your team understand workplace equality and prevent sexual harassment.
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities](#) – The 6 modules in this program are designed to help public authorities and their staff meet their obligations under the Charter to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights in their decisions.
- [Equal pay matters](#) – The 3 modules in this program introduce the concept of equal pay, examine the key principles and employers' legal requirements, and highlight the value of committing to equal pay and the benefits for small and medium enterprises.



# WHAT'S ON SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



[Learn more](#)

Let the little ones loose in Yayoi Kusama's free rainbow wonderland. Then find more affordable fun to keep them busy.



## Free pop-up cinema

**Where:** narrm ngarrgu Library

**When:** 10 April

The library is hosting a free family-friendly cinema. Watch the galactic adventure flick Astro Kid, then snacks and a chat.

[Learn more](#)



## Free comedy show for kids

**Where:** Fed Square

**When:** 18 April

Comedy Festival has saved the funniest gags for the littlest fans. See comedians, street performers, DJs and more.

[Learn more](#)



## Fun things to do for teens

**Where:** Various locations

**When:** School holidays and beyond

Shoot hoops on a rooftop basketball court. Rock climb overlooking the city. Snap some memories in a photobooth.

[Learn more](#)



## Dress-up theatre show

**Where:** The Capitol, Swanston Street

**When:** 5 to 20 April

Don your best costume for this enchanting show. The fairies from A Midsummer Night's Dream join Tinkerbell on a magical quest.

[Book now](#)



### **Cute garden adventure**

**Where:** Fitzroy Gardens Visitor Centre

**When:** 5 to 21 April

Embark on an epic game of I-Spy in the beautiful Fitzroy Gardens. Search for plants, buildings, animals and more to score a prize.

[Learn more](#)



### **Kids Day Out festival | Free**

**Where:** Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

**When:** 18 April

Bring a toy for a check-up at the teddy bear hospital. Enjoy carnival rides and craft workshops at Good Friday Appeal event.

[Learn more](#)



*President Nonie and members warmly invite you and your friends to attend the 81st Annual Luncheon of the NCWV – Geelong Branch*

***To be held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025, 11.30am for noon***

*proceeds supporting Geelong's Lazarus Community Centre. RSVP: June 23 2025*

*Our luncheon will be held in Geelong's newest multi- functional entertainment centre, located within the Shell Club precinct, cnr Bacchus Marsh Road/ Purnell Road, Corio.*

*<https://maps.app.goo.gl/32mFkNU6E9ffWZK77> Melways Map 432 B8 Cost: \$70-00 per person*

*We are privileged to have as our Key Note Speaker Emelia Young, whose groundbreaking research and multidisciplinary work saw her receiving the Ministers Award for Outstanding Leadership in the development of a specialty area that incorporates occupational therapy and maternity care, and nurturing independence and support of the growing number of young parents with disability/ies.*

**Enquiries:** Secretary: Barbara Abley AM Email: [rivendell.b@bigpond.com](mailto:rivendell.b@bigpond.com) Mobile: 0419358223

**Registrations:** Anne Parton Email: [ivpanne@inet.net.au](mailto:ivpanne@inet.net.au) phone: 03 52419344

*\*Please advise dietary requirements, \*names of guests to be seated together. Tables of 8.*

**PAYMENT due by 23rd June 2025**

Preferred Payment by *\*Direct Deposit to BSB 063512 A/C No 10134722*

***\*PLEASE indicate ANNUAL LUNCHEON and YOUR NAME in the Reference Line***

*Enquiries regarding other forms of payments should be directed to:*

**Treasurer,** Jan Kinloch OAM Email: [jan@pecs.com.au](mailto:jan@pecs.com.au) Mobile: 0408346691

**10/15-16 Jewel Place Highton 3216**

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

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

### National Council of Women of Victoria Meeting Dates for 2025

Month	Date	Day	Meeting Type	Time	Method
April	14 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
April	17 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
May	1 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	May Forum & Council Meeting	12:00	Ross Hse/ZOOM
May	12 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
May	15 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
June	5 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	Ross Hse/ZOOM
June	16 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
June	19 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
June	30 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Geelong's 81 <sup>st</sup> Annual Luncheon, Lazarus Community Centre, Geelong	11:30 for 12:00	Melways Map 432 B8
July	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	Ross Hse/ZOOM
July	14 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
July	17 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHS
August	7 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members Annual Meeting; & Council Meeting	11:00, 12:15	Ross Hse/ZOOM
August	18 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
August	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Friday	My Vote My Voice	9:15	Parliament
August	21 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
September	4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	AGM	12:15	Zoom/Ross Hse
September	15 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
September	18 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
October	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meeting	11:00, 12:15	tbc
October	13 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
October	16 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	6 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	tbc
November	20 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	27 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Annual Luncheon	12:00	William Angliss
December	4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meeting	11:00, 12:15	tbc

This publication is compiled and edited by Pam Hammond, Vice-President NCWV, with support from President, Elida Brereton.