

## Newsletter

December 2025

### 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://ncwvc.org.au/>

This is link for our social media LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-council-of-women-victoria-inc/> We encourage Members to create a LinkedIn account, set up their two-factor authentication, like the page and share content that they feel resonates with them.

**QUOTE:** *In an era of political division and social isolation, volunteering offers a powerful way to forge connections and foster our shared humanity. This year's theme, "Every Contribution Matters," reminds us that everyone has something meaningful to offer, and that every cause, from hunger, to climate, to humanitarian action, benefits from the enthusiasm and expertise of volunteers.*

António Guterres, Secretary-General UN

### From the President, Elida Brereton



Warm greetings to you all. The end of the calendar year is near and NCWV can look back on many positives including your support of our meetings when you were able to join us, excellent speakers, strong advocacy on behalf of causes including women's health, aged care meals, childcare, women's safety, children's cyber-safety, and so on.

Our End-of-Year Festive Luncheon was a great success, with 66 present, an engaging speaker in Coral Ross AM, donations for women in distress, attractive 2026 calendars donated by Stephanie and June Anderson with the Pioneer Women's Ceremony featuring on the January page, and much friendly networking.

Thank you Ronniel Milliken and Pam Hammond in particular for your planning and organising, and thank you all members who contributed to the event in any way.

Jan Kinnoch OAM was made an Honorary Life Member of NCWV for decades of service and we congratulate her.

We are looking forward to two major NCWV events in early 2026 – the Pioneer Women's Memorial Ceremony to pay tribute to women pioneers in aviation on Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup> and the Women's Health Forum at our grand Government House in the early evening of Thursday March 5<sup>th</sup>. Please plan to attend these events and to bring someone with you.

I also ask you to forward this and all Newsletters to your friends, families and colleagues as NCWV values new members. As I have said before, thank you all for your contribution this year to NCWV no matter what that was.

I wish you all a special Festive season and may you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or other faith traditions, with loved ones, and may you enjoy a happy and healthy New Year.

### NCWV Annual Luncheon, Thursday 27 Nov. 2025, Noon

We were back at William Angliss Restaurant. This wonderful face-to-face gathering started at Noon with a welcome drink, a two-course meal, tea/coffee, much chat, laughter, and sisterhood.



Presidents of NCWV Affiliated Organisations

NCWV President, Elida Brereton welcomed all and thanked members for all their advocacy over the year. She then presented Jan Kinloch with Hon. Life Membership (see p.3).

**Coral Ross AM**, our speaker, is a founding Director and Chair of AGEC [Australian Gender Equality Council] the members of which represent over 500,000 women in the workplace. Coral has had an esteemed career in local government and is currently the National Vice President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA). She has served as a Director of National Rural Women's Coalition. In 2014 she was named as one of the 100 Women of Influence by Westpac/Fairfax, in 2018 was awarded a Churchill Fellowship, in 2019 was inducted into the Victorian Women's Honour Roll. Coral shared what drives her and what others may consider:  
 \*Be Bold- take opportunities when they arise;  
 \*If it is said 'can't be done' - I'll prove it can;  
 \*A deep passion for gender equality and the disadvantaged.

They lived near C.S.Lewis, who she spent time with as a child. Coral recounted many of her experiences as a journalist starting in the UK at a local paper, following her father's profession, which was as a sports journalist.

She covered the story of Victoria Gillick's campaign against girls under 16 being prescribed contraceptives. Gillick's case involved a [health departmental circular](#) advising doctors about [contraception](#) for people under 16, stating that the prescription of contraception was at the doctor's discretion and could be prescribed to under-16s without parental consent. This matter was litigated because [Victoria Gillick](#) ran an active campaign against the policy, seeking a declaration that prescribing contraception was illegal because the doctor would commit an offence of encouraging sex with a minor and that consent needs to be invested in the parent; she was unsuccessful before the [High Court of Justice](#), but succeeded in the [Court of Appeal](#).

Coral also covered women becoming commercial pilots.

After moving to Australia, Coral worked across media, reading all papers, magazines, listening to TV and radio then writing stories. She took a helicopter to report on the filming of 'Home & Away'! She covered Royal Tours, travelling to Tahiti and Bali. One story was particularly memorable. A teacher was concerned about a young boy's welfare and phoned the home number he gave – a UK number!



Police followed up to find the father had abducted his son. The mother and her lawyer flew to Sydney, went to the school, picked him up and off to the airport. Another story was a NT couple who found a gold nugget, but crashed

their car and walked to the nearest town where they paid for their beers with the nugget. Fosters donated beer which Coral flew to the pub!



Coral then discussed issues in Gender Equality (GE), saying there is cultural change in local government with women councillors now 41%, with ALGWA mentors supporting, but fears of bullying still preventing some female candidates.

Industry GE varies depending on company and CEO attitude. The division of domestic labour, even when both partners work, shows weekly average for women being 64.4% and for men 36.1%. It is the primary cause of gender differences in positions within salary bands. <https://www.bls.gov/>

Coral spoke of Trump's impact; funding for gender courses withdrawn, affecting Australian universities and research

partnerships; religious bigotry; hundreds of words/phrases that have been banned from US Government websites and documents and/or flagged for review be Federal agencies.



Elida with leaders of the Australian-Asian Business Women's Assoc.



Coral, Pam, June.



Guosheng, Julie, Cassandra, Eileen



Cindy Gui, Philipa Fisher, Di Gillies, Jane Xu, Helen Bruckner, Bev K



Alex Jeffrey, Sarah Barnbrook, Rumbi N, Cassandra S, June Anderson



Thank you to those who donated to  
**Impact for Women:**  
<https://impactforwomen.org.au>

## Congratulations Jan Kinloch, Hon Life Member of National Council of Women of Victoria (NCWV).



Pam Hammond VP, Jan Kinloch, June Anderson VP, Elida Brereton  
Jan's involvement with NCWV began as a member of NCW Geelong Branch in 1995. Since then she has been a member and delegate, and notably Geelong Branch Treasurer, since 2009 a period of 16 years.

From 2003-2012 Jan was Board Member, NCWV, Treasurer 2004-2008, and Vice-President in 2010.

While continuing to travel regularly to NCWV meetings in Ross House Melbourne, Jan raised significant sums of money via the monthly trading table, with items donated by members and her beautifully hand-crafted jewellery.

Jan's service to National Council of Women of Australia, included elected office from 2006-2009 as an Executive Member and Board Coordinator of Standing Committees, a significant role in the NCWA policy process and liaison between the NCW constituent councils in the States and Territories. Jan attended the 2005 International Council of Women/CIF mid-term Executive Committee Meeting in Rabat, Morocco as member of the NCWA delegation led by then NCWA President Leonie Christopherson AM.

Jan's history of voluntary involvement has informed her work with NCW Geelong including serving since 2003 as a NCW delegate of Osborne House Maritime Museum, the Geelong Historical Records Committee, from 2004 was President, now Deputy Secretary and Life Member. Other Geelong involvements have included since 1998 the St John of God Geelong Hospital Auxiliary President for 23 years, and now Deputy Secretary.

Jan's long association from 1981 with the Scouting movement, in NSW and Victoria, gave her a clear understanding of the importance of this youth training and service organisations. From 2005 Jan has served as the Treasurer, Geelong Scout Heritage Centre Museum, 1988-1995 Group Leader, 3rd Highton Group and 1995-1997 Assistant District Commissioner, Geelong Scouts, receiving Scouting's Outstanding Service Award in 2015.

In the Australian Honours List 26 January 2018, Jan was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia *For service to women, and to the community of Geelong.*

## NCWV Annual Pioneer Women's Ceremony 2026 – Save the Date – Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup>, 11:00am – at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden, King's Domain, Melbourne.



### Celebrating Pioneer Women in Aviation

**Let's Add Some Pink in Aviation.** We will celebrate the achievements of the Australian women who have contributed to the development of the industry over the past century. Women have played an important role in the founding of Australia's aviation industry. Young women in Australia saw accomplishments elsewhere and dreamt big. One was Nancy Bird-Walton. Known as the 'Angel of the Outback', Nancy always aspired to a career of flying. During a time where aviation was a curiosity for women, other women such as Jean Burns, Millicent Bryant and Mary Bell also had ambitions to make a living out of flying and being a pilot. Under the tutelage of Charles Kingsford Smith, at the age of 19, Nancy became Australia's youngest woman to gain a pilot licence.

Speakers at NCWV's celebration will include **Adrianne Fleming OAM**, Pilot and Head of Operations and CASA Flight Examiner for Tristar Aviation, who has held various state and national positions in the Australian Women Pilots' Association, encouraging women to pursue their aviation dreams. She received the Nancy Bird-Walton award 2012 for the most noteworthy contribution to aviation in Australasia, and the Order of Australia Medal for services to the Aviation industry in 2016.

Join the National Council of Women of Victoria, Sunday February 1, from 11 – 2:30. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy this beautiful location.

## NCWV December Council Meeting, Ross House, Flinders Lane & ZOOM, 12:15pm. 4 Dec. 2025

Speaker: Dr Rosemary Francis, <https://unimelb.academia.edu/RosemaryFrancis>

Rosemary's research and expertise are 20th-century Australian history, with a focus on oral, feminist and labour history. She has worked on several projects for the Australian Women's Archives Project, with the National Library of Australia housing interviews by Rosemary of Australian women leaders. She has presented conference papers over decades, published articles and edited books. One is *Seizing the Initiative, Australian Women Leaders in Politics, Workplaces and Communities*. Prior to her work as a historian, Rosemary taught languages, politics and history at Victorian high schools for 20 years.

She is a longstanding member of the League of Women Voters Victoria.

Dr Rosemary Frances and Dr Deborah Towns OAM



Rosemary presented the history of Muriel Heagney (1885-1974) Equal Pay Activist who lived to see the Australian Arbitration Commission rule for 'equal pay for work of equal value' in 1972 - her life's dream realised!! The family settled in Richmond, Melbourne in about 1900 and her parents were founding members of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party. Following her parents' example, Heagney joined the Richmond branch of the Labor Party at age 20 in 1906 after completing her education and primary teacher training. She worked in different occupations as a teacher, with the need for equal pay glaringly obvious. She understood that the question of equal pay was not a priority for the labour movement. She argued for equal pay in terms of social justice and as a means of preventing the undermining of the wages of male workers, rather than as a way of ousting women from paid employment. Many women workers feared losing their jobs if they received equal pay.

ALP men and most women accepted the view that Labor women should support the men in the working class struggle for equality. A constant tension existed between women who insisted on the importance of economic independence for women workers and others who understood their role as supporting the male breadwinner. Equal pay, 'the rate for the job' was a means of achieving that economic independence.

From late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, women were a constant presence in the industrial labour force, earning lower pay than men, representing a threat to male workers as cheap labour. Members of the trade union movement attempted to exclude women from the paid work force, restricting them to a narrow range of occupations, and denying them access to most trades. The Harvester Judgement of 1907 established the basic wage as a family one, designed to meet the frugal needs of a man, wife and three children. This decision made it difficult for equal pay advocates to argue their case. Higgins' 1912 Judgement in the Fruitpickers Case, entrenched the sex-segregated nature of the Australian work force by categorising some jobs as male and others as female, with women's jobs attracting approximately 54 per cent of the (male) basic wage.

If women worked in 'male' jobs they earned the male rate to protect the male from the threat of low paid female workers.

The major obstacle to overcome was the construction of sexual difference, which allocated the breadwinner role to the male and that of homemaker to females, who were subject to masculine authority at work and in the home.

The collapse of the world economy from 1929-1933, with the resulting unemployment, exposed anxieties around the world about the place of women in the paid work force. In 1935 the Select Committee of the Victorian Parliament was instructed to inquire into 'the effect of the increasing ratio of femininity on male employment and whether equal pay should not be introduced in many industries'.

Identifying as a democratic socialist and accepting the views that economic independence was the pre-requisite for the liberation of women, Muriel challenged the status quo of the family or breadwinner ideology and fought to improve the lives of working women through the labour movement, despite its masculine hegemony. She believed that middle-class feminists did not understand the issues that working class women faced, despite the fact that they were advocating for the same things. She found that she needed to collaborate with feminist and conservative organisations to solve problems for working women.

By 1935 Heagney had developed an international perspective on equal pay and equal employment opportunity through her work on the Royal Commission on the Basic Wage from 1919-1920, as secretary of the Relief Fund for Stricken Europe and her travels overseas from 1923-25. She had met women such as the Australian Marion Phillips, the British Labour Party's Chief Women's Officer, gaining insights into the conditions for working women in that country and contacts with women activists in Europe. Her stint at the International Labour Office in Geneva in 1925 broadened her understanding of the issues which affected women workers around the world.

In 1929 in Berlin the international organisation, the Open Door International for the Economic Emancipation of the Woman Worker was formed. It aimed 'to secure that a woman shall be free to work and protected as a worker on the same terms as a man, and that legislation and regulations dealing with conditions, hours, payments entry and training shall be based on the nature of the work and not on the sex of the worker; for women to have the right to work despite marital status. In 1935 a Victorian branch was formed and took up the challenge of providing evidence to the Inquiry that women were not displacing men from industry. The Victorian branch of the ODI commissioned Heagney to make a submission to the Select Committee of Inquiry. Heagney's report demanded removal of all legal restrictions of women in employment, asking that protective legislation should apply equally to both men and women, boys and girls; equal pay for men and women and standard occupational rates.

Heagney was commissioned to write a book entitled *Are Women Taking Men's Jobs?* completing it in December 1935 demonstrating conclusively that women were not taking men's jobs and demonstrated the unsatisfactory conditions under which women in industry worked.

The Council of Action for Equal Pay (CAEP) was formed in July 1937, and set out to lobby state and federal governments to legislate increase to the adult female base rate to equality with the male rate. Heagney's optimism was misplaced as the conservative governments of Lyons and Menzies took no action. Assuming the Curtin-led Labor Government win in 1941, Heagney believed the CAEP to be on the brink of victory as Curtin had promised he would legislate for equal pay once in office.

The advent of World War Two in 1939 and the bombing of Pearl Harbour in December 1941, brought a new sense of urgency to the situation once men left jobs to serve in the Australian Defence Forces and women took on those jobs. The compromise solution was the establishment of the temporary Women's Employment Board (WEB) in May 1942, to determine the wage of women who replaced the men. They were awarded between 60 and 90 per cent of the male rate. Heagney was bitterly disappointed that 'the rate for the job' was not achieved. Heagney's single-mindedness and optimism sometimes caused her to overlook the opposition to the implementation of equal pay. She was regarded as uncompromising and difficult to deal with. The ACTU executive undermined her efforts. She met with criticism about her uncompromising approach within CAEP. Eileen Powell, a joint president of the CAEP in 1941, indicated that if Heagney had been prepared to compromise the equal pay struggle may have been less protracted. In Powell's view, *I likened her ... to Mrs Pankhurst with votes for women, she just let nothing else deflect her from her objective and she wanted it whole and immediately, Heagney was dedicated to equal pay in a way nobody else before or since has been, but things do not work that way.*

## ATTENTION: STOP PRESS

### IWD 2026 Women's Health Panel, 3 March, 5 – 7.30pm

The Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, is hosting the National Council of Women of Victoria at Government House where we will be presenting a panel of eminent women working in women's health.

This will be led by our Health Adviser, Dr Cassandra Szoek, with the MC being the ABC personality, Jacinta Parsons.



Women's health is a key area for NCWV, and our members. NCWV acknowledges the significant advances in focus on women's health since the Federal 2020-2030 National Women's Health Policy was launched in 2020, which set out five pillars.

- Reproductive health (female preponderant conditions), Mums & Babies, which received \$793million in 2025
- Violence against women - with the elimination of violence centre 2025,
- Mental Health in Women,
- Chronic Diseases in Women and
- Healthy Ageing

Through our expert members we have made submissions to Senate Inquiries into Pain in Women and Perimenopause, and were invited to present expert evidence to the Senate Inquiry based on this submission.

Australia includes a number of internationally recognised world leaders in women's health. Our own members include the Victorian Medical Women's Society, and members of AMWF, AMA etc. Through these we have sourced some excellent suggestions for the program.

We have chosen potential speakers, to match the pillars in National Women's Health Policy that are yet to receive focus, based on the speakers' communication skills and ability to engage and entertain the audience.

From 5pm, guests may park onsite, make their way to the Ballroom, and mingle with some food and drinks. Official proceedings will commence at 6pm, with a welcome address from the Governor, followed by the panel discussion for 30-40 minutes, following which the State Apartments would be open for guests to wander through, network/continue discussions informally, and enjoy refreshments.

## ADVISER NEWS

### Human Rights | Youth | ICT | Communications Adviser: Sarah Barnbrook

#### Global Conversations: Women Economic Forum Australia 2025

From 19–22 November, I attended the Women Economic Forum Australia 2025, opened in Shepparton before continuing in Melbourne, bringing together speakers and delegates from more than 16 nations, including ambassadors and diplomats from Kosovo, Thailand, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia, Vietnam and Türkiye, Australian MPs and community leaders. I delivered two keynote presentations: *Advocacy & Activism: Women Making a Difference* and *Gender Equality in the Digital Age*. I spoke about the strength of women's grassroots leadership, the importance of community support, and the growing impact of technology on safety and opportunity. I also highlighted the unique experiences of women in regional and rural areas and the need for safer, more inclusive digital environments.

**Highlight:** A standout moment was hearing the address from H.E. Ms. Arjaree Sriratanaban, Ambassador, Kingdom of Thailand to Australia. Her keynote offered a deeply insightful perspective on sustainability as an economic, social, and human agenda, grounded in decades of community-focused initiatives led by Thailand's Queen and Queen Mother. She spoke about Thailand's commitment to the UN 2030 Agenda, climate resilience, and gender-responsive approaches to green growth. She emphasised that sustainable development cannot be achieved without women's full participation, highlighting women's pivotal roles in peacebuilding, food security, health systems, and innovation. Thailand's progress is significant — including strong legal protections, growing political representation, and one of the highest percentages of women in executive positions in the Asia-Pacific region. Also, 45.97% of Thailand's researchers are women.



I spoke with Ambassador Sriratanaban, discussing how women form the fabric of communities, often leading the first response to local challenges. We also spoke about the transformative impact of education for women and girls, and how access to learning strengthens families and helps build resilient, peaceful communities. I had a meaningful conversation with the Philippines Consul on the prevention of violence against women and emerging challenges in physical and digital spaces.

I was honoured to receive an invitation to speak at the G100 ASEAN gathering in the Philippines in June, an opportunity to continue these global conversations on women's empowerment, leadership, and safety across our region.

**Reflections:** The Forum was energising and deeply affirming. The themes raised, women's safety, digital inclusion, leadership, belonging, and equitable access, reflected many of the concerns we hear within our own communities. I'm grateful for the opportunity to bring these insights to members and look forward to continuing these important conversations.

Picture: Hon. Kim O'Keeffe MP (on right) presenting Sarah with certificate.

**Sarah Barnbrook presented the workshop: *Ctrl + Alt + Delete Violence: Rebooting Social Media for Safety***, part of UN *16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls*. Sarah, Founder/CEO, **Away from Keyboard (AFK) Inc.** <https://afk.org.au/> and **Kylee Dennis** Founder/Director, **Two Face Investigation** <https://www.twofaceinvestigations.au/> presented the workshop on Friday 28 November 2025 as a Hybrid Event, in person: Ross House, Melbourne and online. While the intention of the Social Media Minimum Age Regulations is to create safer digital environments, the conversation is far more complex: touching on privacy, freedom, identity, and the role of regulation in an increasingly algorithmic world.

**This workshop** invited participants to step into this conversation, offering a clear, practical, and balanced exploration of what the new laws mean, not just for platforms, but for families, schools, and those working to prevent technology-facilitated gender-based violence. While some Social Media platforms are to be banned for people 16 and under, Sarah emphasised that other online platforms have not been banned and can present issues.

People, young and older, become vulnerable when lonely, isolated, feel they do not belong, or don't have outside interests. Belonging is the antidote! Offline belonging is to be encouraged, join interest groups etc. Parents/ carers need to support young people in navigating the online world safely, use their devices appropriately, and recognise patterns in behaviour. Kylie supported these comments adding prevention strategies from her work with those who have been scammed.

It is important that there be "Connection before Correction", be empathetic and non-judgemental, curious not accusatory when issues arise and create safe exit paths. Discuss and co-design boundaries with your young people,

**Chris Skipper-Conway, Chair, Women4Stem**, a sponsor, attended in person: <https://women4stem.com.au/> a not-for-profit organisation that operates to increase the entry, retention, and progress of women in the STEM industries.

Sarah mentioned **Digital Nutrition™** *all about using devices in an intentional and intelligent way that supports your wellbeing. It's about empowering the next generation of tech users with the skills to become savvy digital citizens, and getting the adults upskilled and updated to support cybersafety and digital wellbeing.* <https://jocelynbrewer.com/digital-nutrition/> Sarah ended by stating that **Creating safe online platforms is now a human right**.

**Together, we can Ctrl + Alt + Delete Violence and rebuild a digital world grounded in safety, respect, and equality.**

## RURAL WOMEN ARE BEING LEFT BEHIND, By Sarah Barnbrook

I recently attended a national roundtable hosted by the National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC), where more than 40 organisations from across Australia came together to discuss an urgent issue: women in rural and regional communities cannot afford to access the healthcare they need. Every day, women are travelling long distances for cancer care, dialysis, pregnancy services, and specialist appointments. Many are juggling caring responsibilities, chronic illness, farm work, financial pressure, and the isolation of distance. What became clear in this roundtable is that the current patient travel support systems are inconsistent, inadequate, and deeply unfair.

Across Australia, each state and territory runs its own patient travel subsidy scheme, with differences between them stark. Some women receive meaningful support. Many do not. Because of where they live, women are experiencing financial distress, delays in treatment, and in some cases having to choose between their health and their household budget.

Women shared stories of driving hundreds of kilometres just to see a specialist. Some reported sleeping in their cars because accommodation subsidies do not cover even the cheapest motel. Others spoke about cancelling essential appointments because they could not afford the cost of petrol. Many lose income every time they travel. The message was clear: when healthcare becomes unaffordable, it becomes inaccessible.

Victorian women are particularly disadvantaged. The Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS) was identified as one of the **least** supportive in Australia. Victoria provides the lowest accommodation reimbursement at \$45 per night, which does not cover basic accommodation. Fuel reimbursements remain very low, and women must also contribute out-of-pocket costs. Many essential allied health services are excluded, despite their importance for managing chronic conditions that disproportionately affect women.

For rural and remote Victorian women, this means cancelled appointments, treatment delays, financial stress, debt, and worsening health outcomes. It impacts First Nations women, older women, women with disability, carers, migrant women in regional areas, and young women – all of whom already face barriers to accessing healthcare.

NRWC is gathering lived experience evidence from across Australia to support a national advocacy push. Women want fairer travel subsidies, affordable accommodation options, recognition of hidden costs such as childcare and lost income, better telehealth access, and more consistent systems across states.

To support this work, NCWV is exploring ways to ensure the voices of Victorian women are represented. This includes supporting the national call for fair and consistent patient travel assistance, and collecting stories from Victorian women about their experiences with VPTAS.

More information will be shared with members soon about how to contribute to this important work.

## Education Adviser: Pam Hammond

### **EDUCATION FORUM: What really works to re-engage students in education: hear student voices.**

The **Community Sector Education Forum**, run by VCOSS and supported by the Victorian Department of Education, was held on Thursday, 13 November at Melbourne Town Hall.

In the lead-up to the Forum, VCOSS was honoured to interview students from **Hester Hornbrook Academy**, who shared their experience of mainstream schooling and how it compares to their time at Hester Hornbrook Academy.

The video was a particular highlight of the day, and we give a big thanks to Hester Hornbrook Academy and the amazing students we interviewed – Charlie, Salma, Nix, Jackson, Haz, Tasha and Levi.

Watch the video by clicking the link: [Students from Hester Hornbrook Academy share their experiences of education](#)

## Arts and Letters

**Westwood | Kawakubo: World-First Exhibition At NGV:** A new global-exclusive blockbuster fashion exhibition is landing at NGV this summer – supporting local jobs in the cultural capital. *Westwood / Kawakubo* will open at NGV International on 7 December celebrating the careers of two of fashion's favourite rule breakers in a world premiere.

The exhibition, funded through the Major Events Fund, features five decades of showstopping designs from international fashion icons Vivienne Westwood and Rei Kawakubo, founder of *Comme des Garçons*. Both self-taught designers, Westwood and Kawakubo transformed fashion with their work that challenged taste, gender and beauty, as well as the function and form of clothing. From legendary punk ensembles of the late 1970s popularised by *The Sex Pistols*, to Carrie Bradshaw's wedding dress from *Sex and the City: The Movie*, the exhibition brings together more than 140 designs, including works from the NGV Collection and loans from international museums and private collections.

It also includes nearly 40 works from a recent donation gifted by *Comme des Garçons* to the NGV especially for this exhibition, including a runway version of Rihanna's 2017 Met Gala red carpet dress, and works from the 2025 Spring Summer runway. NGV will also present a free interactive exhibition for children and families – *Let's Party: NGV Fashion for Kids* – opening 28 November 2025 and featuring garments from the NGV's Fashion and Textile Collection which will allow children to create party outfit designs and have a fashion photography shoot.

*Westwood / Kawakubo* will be on display from **7 December 2025 to 19 April 2026** at NGV International. [NGV website](#)

## 4 12 2025 - Media release

Screen Australia's Drama Report shows expenditure on drama production in Australia reached a record \$2.7 billion in 2024/25, a 43% increase on the previous year. The uplift points to holistic sector growth driven by high-budget features and subscription-video-on-demand (SVOD) production, with a \$678 million increase from an expansion of international activity. Of the 174 titles that entered production in 2024/25, 71 were Australian, with \$1.1 billion spent on local stories – a 14% increase in expenditure from 2023/24. The findings reflect Australia's interconnected screen ecosystem where both domestic and international production contribute to the health of the sector, providing economic benefit, infrastructure, training and employment opportunities.

Screen Australia CEO **Deirdre Brennan** said, *"This strong result is a testament to the hard work and creativity of our screen practitioners, who are navigating a rapidly evolving landscape. The numbers reflect a complex story of production value and content volume. While there is moderate growth in local drama expenditure, fewer TV titles entered production across free-to-air, subscription-video-on-demand and children's content, showing ongoing shifts in commissioning behaviour. This presents an industry challenge, but also an opportunity to seek out new areas of collaboration and innovative production to ensure we continue to elevate Australian storytelling."*

The Drama Report also highlights an increase in expenditure from international TV and video-on-demand (VOD) productions amounting to \$458 million, and a record spend of \$1 billion from 20 international features filming in Australia.

**Kate Marks**, CEO of Ausfilm, a government and industry partnership that promotes Australia as a leading film and television production destination, said, *"We celebrate this record level of international production activity, driven by the reformed Location Offset. This activity helps sustain the ecosystem that supports Australian stories by keeping our crews working, funding training, enabling investments into screen businesses and building capabilities. At a time of global industry disruption, the ongoing mix of local and international work makes our screen industry resilient, sustainable and globally competitive."*

<https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/sa/media-centre/news/2025/12-02-drama-report-2024-2025>

## OTHER NEWS

### Soroptimist International Victoria Foundation-Launch Event, Queen's Hall, Parliament House, Melbourne, 26 November 2025.



Dr Deborah Towns OAM, Robyn Byrne OAM and other NCWV members attended. Deb reports: There were 160 guests and Soroptimists celebrating the launch of a new milestone for Soroptimist International Victoria Foundation. Clubs in Victoria have met for more than 50 years of service. They sold their headquarters in South Yarra and transformed its legacy into the **Soroptimist International Victoria Foundation**. The inaugural nine grants of \$20,000 each were announced. They funded grassroots projects to empower women and girls in the community.

The Margaret Mitchell Major Grant of \$100,000 per year for up to 5 years was awarded to **Women's Property Initiatives**, to provide housing for homeless women. Photo shows **Margaret Mitchell, President of Soroptimist International of Melbourne Inc.** announcing the winner of this grant.

*'The Soroptimist International Victoria Foundation represents a significant financial commitment to advancing the lives of women and girls through education, equality, and enablement opportunities. This launch marks not just the beginning of a fund, but the continuation of a vision: strong, peaceful communities where every woman has the chance to thrive.'*

<https://communityfoundation.org.au/grant-rounds/soroptimist-2025-grants/>

It was an exciting, impressive, event, and the grants are supporting 'at risk' women and girls in immediate and practical ways.

## Victorian Multicultural Commission, Vivienne Nguyen AM, [End of Year](#) 2025 event



Cover of VMCs Annual Report 2024-2025



Shashila Sri Lankan Dance troop

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) recently held its 2025 End of Year event and President Elida Brereton, and other NCWV members, June Anderson, Pam Robinson and Deborah Towns were guests.

Held at the Broadmeadows Town Hall on Monday 10 November, 400 community members and leaders reflected together on the VMC's past year and future plans. Highlights were the rich variety of national dresses proudly worn by the audience. The VMC's annual report was launched, and it captured the VMC's achievements, advocacy and engagement. Chairperson, Vivienne Nguyen, emphasised that the past year's activities were '*set against a backdrop of global uncertainty and local challenges. It highlights the VMC's vital role in working alongside government, community organisations and multifaith networks to ensure the success of our multicultural state*', she continued. We heard from the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Ingrid Sitt, about how the VMC plays such a significant role in fostering inclusion throughout the state.

Further events were the brilliant Sri Lankan and Italian dancers and musicians. We were impressed when Pam Robinson represented us by dancing with other guests on the 'dance' floor. It was an informative, vibrant, and happy event. There were times when the audience jumped up and clapped and jiggled along with the music. Last but no mean least was the delicious and generous supper. <https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/end-year-event> for full report and photos.

VMC Annual Report 2024-2025 [Our annual reports | multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au](#)



Pam Robinson AM, Vivienne Nguyen, Elida, Deb Towns OAM



Vivienne with leaders of cultural groups.



**Tradeswomen Australia Group (TWA)** is a non-profit organisation working to increase the representation of women in skilled trade roles and create safe workplaces for everyone. We aim for gender equality and empowerment for all women to access, participate and succeed in trades. <https://tradeswomensaus.com>

TWA is now taking expressions of interest from women looking to power up their careers in the clean energy sector. The Powering Her Pathway program provides a road map for women interested in entering clean energy trades. It starts with a 6-week FREE tailored vocational training course at TAFE Gippsland, followed by support to land a placement, apprenticeship or job in a skilled clean energy position across the Gippsland region.

TWA is pleased to announce that details of the TAFE Gippsland course are now live, and TWA have commenced accepting expressions of interest.



# Amplify.

The newsletter for Victoria's social and community sector. November Newsletter

## VCOSS WORKFORCE SURVEY: Renting in Victoria

VCOSS has released its annual [Renting in Victoria Workforce survey](#). Anyone who works on renting issues and those who interact with renters/provide indirect as well as direct support to renters are urged to participate.

Renters continue to experience some of the toughest housing market conditions we've ever seen – spiralling rents, homes that fail to meet minimum standards, and renters often facing exploitative landlords and agents not following the laws and regulations.

It's important that we keep shining a light on the current state of play, and new and emerging challenges. Community sector worker insights about renter issues help to ensure that fairer, safer renting remains a key policy priority.

[VCOSS' Renting in Victoria survey](#) helps VCOSS to coordinate insights across all parts of the community sector and amplify the sector's voice on:

- The key issues facing renters
- The impact of Victoria's current renting laws in delivering fairness – for example, whether the renters you/your organisation supports know about their rights or feel safe to assert them
- The critical role that community sector workers play in providing information, advice and assistance to renters to navigate challenges
- Additional steps that the Victorian Government can take to improve renters' rights.

Please note that the survey is not limited to one response per organisation, it's for workers to fill out about their own practice experience. Your insights will be integral to the annual [Renting in Victoria report](#), which helps influence policy makers, regulators and funding bodies, and drives significant political and media engagement on renting issues.

[Complete the survey here](#) by 5pm on Monday, 22 December..



On the 17<sup>th</sup> November Pam Hammond attended the launch of the Gender Equality Evidence Hub hearing from the creator, **Dr Leonora Risse**, and special guests the **Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP** (Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury in the Australian Government, and Parliamentary Member for Fenner in the ACT), **Mary Wooldridge** (CEO of the Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency), **Dr Niki Vincent** (Victorian Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector), **Siri Chilazi** (Gender Equality Researcher at Harvard University), **Stacey Ong** (Executive Director of One Red Step and Women's Leadership Institute Australia Fellow) and **Professor Matt Duckham** (Director of Information in Society Enabling Impact Platform at RMIT University).

The Hub aims to bring together a range of people across the gender equality (GE) landscape – researchers, practitioners, policymakers, business and community leaders, educators, students, advocates and members of the wider public – to harness the strengths of collectively sharing our insights and experiences. Research on GE is huge in Australia. The Hub is designed to bring together research method, data and outcomes, amplifying the GE work that so many are passionately pursuing. *'We hope you'll feel illuminated and empowered by the resources that the Hub offers, and a feeling of connection to community that the Hub aims.'* **Dr Leonora Risse**, Gender Equality Economist [www.genderequality.com.au](http://www.genderequality.com.au)

The Gender Equality Evidence Hub is freely available at [www.genderequality.com.au](http://www.genderequality.com.au). You are welcome to [subscribe for updates](#) and follow the [LinkedIn page](#). The Hub is about building a community.

The Gender Equality Evidence Hub is supported and funded by philanthropic and educational organisations – the [Trawalla Foundation](#), [Women's Leadership Institute Australia](#) and [RMIT University's Enabling Impact Platforms](#) – who share a common goal to advance gender equality through the greater sharing of knowledge and practice.

## Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Monthly newsletter



### Encouraging inclusive engagement

We've launched a new guide to encourage more inclusive and accessible community engagement in the Victorian Government and beyond.

[Read the Better practice guide for inclusive engagement](#)

**Grants and programs:** Latest round of grants for disability self help groups:

Grants of up to \$7,000 a year for one or two years are available.

Apply by 4pm, **Tuesday, 27 January 2026**.

[Apply](#)



### Submit your film to the Multicultural Film Festival 2026

Whether you're an emerging filmmaker or an experienced creator, we want to hear your story of diversity.

Entries close on **Tuesday, 10 March**.

[Submit a film](#)



NOVEMBER  
**CMY Voice**



## Statewide Forum on The Social Media Ban and Multicultural Youth: “Social Media is a lifeline.”

On Wednesday 19 November, CMY hosted a Statewide Forum on The Social Media Ban and Multicultural Youth, bringing together youth-facing organisations and services, government representatives including the eSafety Commission and the Victorian Office for Youth, as well as youth advocates and others working with young people to learn, share and strategise for collective action to address gaps and challenges the Ban may bring. CMY CEO Carmel Guerra OAM opened the Forum with a reflection on CMY’s journey in research and advocacy in the lead up to the Ban. She touched on the reality that multicultural young people use social media to learn, connect and integrate themselves into society. *“For multicultural and newly-arrived young people, social media is not a luxury, it’s a lifeline.”*

The Forum gave attendees an opportunity to hear the voices of young multicultural people and explore how the sector can work to ensure young people and their families remain connected, informed and supported once the ban comes into effect. Findings from the report, [Blocked: The Social Media Ban, Multicultural Young People and Settlement](#), were presented by CMY Policy Officer Harini Kasthuriarachchi who shared key insights and concerns from multicultural and newly arrived young people and families ahead of the Ban. *“Social media is integral to settlement,”* Harini said.

One panellist, Bonnie Dukakis, CEO of Koorie Youth Council, shared that research reveals that First Nations communities use social media more than any other community in Australia. *“I’ve got family members that don’t have a phone number. Their only means of contact is Messenger, Instagram, things like that,”* Bonnie said.

‘Adults’ need young people’s help with technology a lot of the time, but it’s funny that in discussion of the Social Media Ban it turns to be framed that *‘Oh, young people actually don’t know what’s going on and they need ‘adults’ to make the decisions for them.’*’

Professor Julian Sefton-Green from Deakin University pointed out that the Ban has a lot of downsides that will spark important conversations about how we work with young people. *“It’s asking questions about what we think is a good childhood. It’s asking us to consider how we relate to young people and why we don’t treat them as equals in a number of decision-making opportunities.”*

Shannon White, MYAN’s National Policy & Advocacy Lead, reflected on the importance of centring youth voice in policy, especially in legislation that affects them so closely like this Ban. *“Young people aren’t just passive recipients of policy, they are our partners, and they need to be treated as such and be given the space to do that well. They have an extraordinary ability to create new worlds for us, but they need our support to get that into reality.”*



[Type here]

Two workshops were held so that attendees could talk with each other about the Ban and people from different sectors could plan and prepare together.

While there is still some uncertainty around how the Social Media Ban will pan out in 2026, attendees left CMY’s Statewide Forum with ideas and actions they can take back to their workplaces across the sector

[Type here]

## CMY welcomes investment in youth justice early intervention and mentoring

CMY welcomes the Victorian Government's announcement of new investment in Youth Justice early intervention approaches, establishing the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and funding to continue our family centred, lived experience mentoring project. CMY has long been advocating for evidence-led, health-based measures which are part of a whole-of-system approach to intervention crime prevention. The Government's initial \$19.8 million investment to establish the VRU, coupled with a further \$7.7 million investment in a youth mentoring program, are important steps in the right direction.

There is still significant work to be done engaging with the sector, communities and young people to build evidence-informed solutions that address systems issues and the drivers of youth offending. We urge the Government to work closely with the sector, young people, mentors and communities, whose knowledge and experience will be vital in shaping the priorities of the VRU to drive long-term systems change. Key principles of the VRU outlined by the Government include '*taking a preventative and public health approach to address the root causes of violence*' as well as '*coordinating across Government and local services so crime prevention works better, with fewer gaps.*'

CMY is grateful for the support of the Government and the Youth Justice Commissioner and interim CEO of the new Unit, Andrea Davidson, who was instrumental in backing the pilot of CMY's family centred Lived Experience Mentoring Project.

CMY is deeply concerned by the Victorian Government's announcement that it will introduce a Bill, allowing adult jail sentences for children aged 14 and over, for certain serious offences. While we support efforts to enhance community safety, the proposed 'Adult Time for Violent Crime' Bill represents a serious departure from evidence-informed policy and violates human rights obligations. Research consistently demonstrates that adult sentencing and detention **increases** youth reoffending rates, undermining the community safety outcomes the Government seeks to achieve, risks deepening cycles of criminalisation, particularly for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The changes will place further strain on a system already under significant pressure, and be costly to implement.

The Government must prioritise sustained investment in early intervention and prevention measures to address systemic inequity, and culturally safe, evidence-based therapeutic responses that address root causes of offending. We urge the Government to reconsider the proposed legislation which is likely to have devastating impacts on young people, and instead focus its efforts on evidence-informed measures proven to reduce reoffending and break cycles of harm.

**QVWC  
SHOP!**



### MADE WITH HEARTS & HANDS BY WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES

When you purchase a handmade item, you are buying the accumulation of time, patience, passion and skill that each woman has put into honing her craft.

You're choosing to support creativity over mindless production and consumption.

Gift mindfully this festive season. [SHOP HANDMADE GIFT IDEAS](#)

QVWC SHOP QV Square 210 Lonsdale Street Melbourne, Victoria 3000



**End of Year Celebration, Thu, 11 Dec, 4pm - 6pm AEDT**

Queen Victoria Women's Centre, Melbourne VIC, Australia [Tickets for End of Year Celebration](#)

We invite you to **Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC)** and **Safe + Equal** for our End of Year Celebration on Thursday, 11 December! Held at the historic Queen Victoria Women's Centre, the event will be an opportunity to get together with colleagues and friends, reflect on the challenges of 2025 and, of course, celebrate the wins!

We're pleased to be joined on the day by **The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**, Minister for Women and Prevention of Family Violence. The Minister will be retiring from her ministerial portfolios at the end of the year so we will also be acknowledging the legacies she leaves. Light refreshments will be provided. Please register below as places are limited.

**TIME: 4-6pm DATE: Thursday, 11 December,**

**VENUE:** Queen Victoria's Women's Centre - Wayi Djerring

For any inquiries, please contact [genvic@genvic.org.au](mailto:genvic@genvic.org.au).

Queen Victoria Women's Centre, 210 Lonsdale St, Melbourne VIC 3000, Australia

[Type here]

[Type here]

[Type here]

**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 2025/2026

Month	Date	Day	Meeting Type	Time	Method
December	4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	Ross House
January 2026	th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
February 2026	1 <sup>st</sup>	Sunday	Pioneer Women's Ceremony <u>Pioneer Women in Aviation</u>	11:00 – 2:00	Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden, King's Domain, St Kilda Rd
March 2026	5 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	International Women's Day Women's Health Panel	5:30 – 7:30pm	Government House Victoria

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