

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.



Alert: Access to the NCWV Website (blocked for a short time) is now resolved.

From the President, Elida Brereton



This is a belated Happy New Year greeting to you all, although not belated to our Asian-Australian members who have only recently celebrated their 2025 Lunar New Year. May 2025 be a happy and healthy year for us all. We still grieve with our Ukrainian, Muslim and Jewish members as they continue to face huge human rights and humanity challenges.

This year is significant for the **Vietnamese community**, commemorating **50 years of settlement** in Australia.

This report focusses on the recent **64th Annual Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden Ceremony** held on Sunday February 2nd and organised extremely well by **Vice-President Pam Hammond** and **Immediate Past President Ronniel Milliken**, and **Pam Robinson AM** who assisted with engagement of speakers. The event was attended by many despite the 39-degree weather. I thank Pam's family members Rod, Colin and Jazelle, Ronniel's family members especially Lachlan, for their vital work in setting up the facilities, and Ronniel and Pam for the organising, planning, programs and engagement of speakers and MPs.

With the 2025 theme of ***Celebrating Women in Agriculture***, we were fortunate to hear from **Michaela Settle MP**, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Regional Development, and the Deputy Leader of the National Party and Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Mental Health, **Emma Kealy**, followed by three keynote speakers offering important and interesting insights into the life and issues of female farmers, leading roles in organisations supporting women in agriculture and involvement in their community.

I thank all Committee members and other members for their valued contributions to this event.

In particular: June Anderson for the loan of her sound system and gifts for the speakers, Elisabeth Newman AM for the bouquet of flowers that we laid near the plaque to Pioneer Women, Robyn Byrne OAM and Dr Deborah Towns OAM for guiding attendees to the event, Hean Bee Wee AM who greeted all as they arrived, Vice-President Guosheng Chen for inviting the Tai Chi Troup and looking after guests, secretaries Dr Julie Stevens and Phoebe Swift for recording the speeches, all who brought food and drink for the picnic lunch, and all who helped with the clean up at the end.

We have just seen a press release from the Hon Ros Spence, Minister for Agriculture, in which these words appear (not actually mentioning NCWV by name but full of praise):

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria Michaela Settle joined leaders from across the state for the [NCWV] 64th Annual Pioneer Women's Ceremony, celebrating Victorian Women's role in Agriculture. The event marks 30 years since the Australian Bureau of Statistics recognised that women could list their occupation as 'farmer' in the Census. Representatives from industry, peak agriculture bodies and gender equality organisations came together to celebrate the impact and influence Victorian women have on the agriculture sector and their communities.

Guests heard from primary producer and Central Goldfields Shire Councillor Liesbeth Long, Victorian Director of Australian Women in Agriculture Narelle Hanrahan and Australian Women in Agriculture founding member Alana Johnson AM, who spoke about the Invisible Farmer Project – the largest ever study of women on the land. See page 3

Other matters to address:

1. **NCWA Triennial Conference:** based on subsequent reflections and discussions on three failed draft Resolutions, it appears the incoming Executive consider these have merit and will be revisited.
2. **The survey of NCWV members** regarding when and where you prefer our meetings to occur was sent out last year and we would be delighted if you could provide us with feedback.
3. **New members:** Applications from prospective members have been accepted by Committee and Council: Sarah Barnbrook, Rosalie Cooper (moving to Individual Member), Dr Kate Duncan AM, and Irene Szoeki.
4. **NCWA Constitution:** the NCWA Constitution needs updating and changing slightly, "for compliance" according to the NCWA Immediate Past President. In line with proper processes, changes need to be approved at an NCWA Extra-ordinary General Meeting. The EGM is set for Monday March 31st which gives NCWV an opportunity to review the proposals. The NCWV Committee will examine the documents and bring our appraisal and recommendations to the March 6th Council meeting.

February Council Meeting 6th February



Our speaker was **Dr Niki Vincent, the first Victorian Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner**. Dr Vincent commenced as in 2020 and was re-elected in 2024 for a second term.

Dr Vincent has overseen the implementation of the Act 2020 which includes obligations for public sector organisations to make lasting and genuine progress towards gender equality. We first heard from Niki when she presented to NCWV in February 2021 immediately prior to the commencement of Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020.

Niki provided an update on progress in the public sector regarding compliance with GEAPlan requirements and reporting as at February 2024. This includes the introduction of biannual workplace gender equality audits and a reporting platform for more than 300 Victorian public sector organisations published on the website. Due to Nicky's efforts, Victoria is on the world stage in pushing gender compliance, and building evidence on what works. Right Lane Consulting reviewed the 2023 reporting process. It consulted with stakeholders on how the Commission and duty holders can improve reporting. Report available at: <https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/independent-review-2023-reporting-process> One third of organisations demonstrated compliance for their whole progress report. Review found key areas of improvement:

- Reporting on gender impact assessments
- Making progress against the workplace gender equality indicators
- Women in leadership roles has increased
- gender composition of all levels of the workforce
- gender composition of governing bodies.

The lowest compliance was for:

- sexual harassment in the workplace
- gendered segregation within the workplace.
- Read more: [key insights from 2023 progress reports](#).

It made clear that different organisations have different challenges. The review looked at things that worked well during the reporting process. It also found areas for improvement. The Commission commits to making improvements for future reporting, scheduled for 2026.

Council members were inspired to hear that the Commissioner had sent personal letters to the Chairs of the Boards of every organisation currently under the regime on the need and expectation for greater oversight, and the addition of an attestation to the plan from the CEO including adequate budget.

The Commission commits to making improvements for future reporting processes. This includes:

- Developing tailored resources and training materials

- Provide updated guidance and templates by May 2025
- Clarifying feedback, refining templates, and developing an updated compliance checking plan.

Council members had many questions and suggestions for the Commissioner, to be put to Dr Niki Vincent post meeting.

March Council Meeting 6th March, 12:15, NOT 5:15pm

Venue: Australian Institute of International Affairs Vic, 13th Floor, 356 Collins St. (between Elisabeth and Queen Streets)

Denise Mary Allen — Antarctic Medal recipient 1989



Denise Allen at Bechervaise Island channel (Photo: Doug McVeigh)

Denise Allen has been one of the pioneers for the involvement of women in the Antarctic. She has spent three winters in Antarctica as an observer for the Bureau of Meteorology, including two consecutive winters. She has carried out a water sampling program for Monash University in the Vestfold Hills Lakes and supported station operations by marking safe routes on the ice plateau, establishing fuel dumps for traverses and providing assistance to many scientific programs.

Congratulations Selba-Mtendere Luka OAM on being recognised in Australia Day Honours 2025.

Selba is founder and CEO of Afri-Aus Care Inc. In addition to being a trained Mental Health Clinician, Selba's work at Afri-Aus Care has also seen her become a grassroots community leader and impassioned advocate for ending family violence and implementing the NDIS within the African Australian community. Selba's engagement with community stakeholders has empowered her as a strong and effective advocate for CALD peoples.

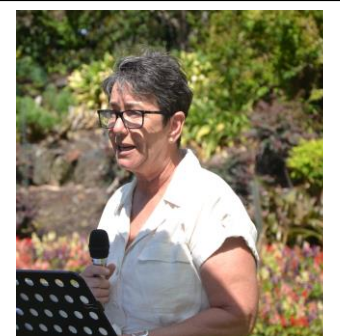
Selba and several colleagues spoke at the NCWV Annual Luncheon in 2019 about the work of Afri-Aus Care. NCWV donated \$500 towards their work at that time.

Photo (from left) May Hu, Nyanom, Selba, Veronica, June Anderson, Afri-Aus Care Board member and NCWV member



64th Pioneer Women's Ceremony: Sunday, February 2, 2025, 11:30am–2:00pm was held at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden in Kings Domain, Melbourne. This event celebrated Victorian Pioneer Women in Agriculture. In 2025 it is 30 years since women in Australia were legally considered farmers under the law and therefore the Australian Bureau of Statistics recognised, under occupations in the Census, that women can be farmers rather than simply "farmers' wives".

Two parliamentarians gave short addresses at the start of the event. **Michaela Settle MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Regional Development**, highlighted the \$20 billion agricultural sector and the critical role of the Victorian Rural Women's Network in championing and empowering women into leadership and influential decision-making positions. **Emma Kealy MP, Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Mental Health**, acknowledged the valuable work of the NCWV in supporting women's advocacy and leadership. She paid tribute to women pioneers, past and present, sharing stories of 19th-century women who, despite raising large families, made significant contributions to their towns and regions in the mid-late 1800s. She emphasised that, while being a mother is an important role, it does not define a woman's entire identity. Emma highlighted the example of Dr Kendra Clegg, a present-day pioneer, who led the Grampians emergency recovery response while balancing farm work and made significant contributions to the region and community.



Michaela (above) Emma Kealy



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

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

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

Alana referenced Marilyn Waring's 1988 book *Counting for Nothing*, which analyses economics from a feminist perspective and the implications of discounting the work of women (half of the world's population). Historically, women's work, such as farm labour, was unrecognised in the Census. Many women started labelling their work as "logistics manager" or "machinery operator" and recorded long hours with no income.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Despite her excitement about working with her husband on the farm, the transition was difficult. Her relationship with her father-in-law was strained, and she found herself isolated and lonely in a small farming community. Despite these challenges, Liesbeth persevered, eventually starting a bead shop to regain her independence.

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

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

Narelle Hanrahan, Victorian Director, Australian Women in Agriculture

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

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

Narelle acknowledged the diversity of women in agriculture, from farmers to scientists, and their vital role in food production and rural economies. Despite challenges such as gender bias and limited resources, Narelle highlighted that women continue to push for gender equality and leadership roles. Narelle spoke of the ongoing work of organisations such as Australian Women in Agriculture (including the Women on Agricultural Boards initiative) and the Country Women's Association in empowering women through advocacy, mentorship, education, and support.

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

June, Liesbeth Long, Alana Johnson, Narelle Hanrahan, Pam H



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

ADVISER NEWS

Education Adviser: Pam Hammond

With VCE or equivalent behind them, students are looking towards their future options. They know their skills, abilities, personality traits and passions, none of which are represented in their ATAR or the equivalent, which would have been emphasised by their teachers and others. There are many pathways to a rewarding career. These young people have been encouraged and supported by devoted, experienced, wise educators who can tweak the curriculum to suit their students' needs, make the most of unexpected gems that arise and give of their time whenever it is needed. It is a highly rewarding profession. Seeing the growth in students in your care, the light-bulb moments when a concept is understood, the successes and challenges that occur, the bonds and collaboration developed.

Teaching is the profession that teaches all professionals. Teaching is not for the faint-hearted, but a slogan that I once saw on a mug – "Touch the future – Teach" says it all. We need teachers who believe this and not only know the curriculum and effective collaborative learning strategies, but can empathise with, encourage and affirm our children and young people. To do all this and not 'burn out', teachers need support in their schools, especially new teachers, with mentoring and specialist subject teachers working with them to enable the development of effective classroom and teaching practices. NCWV believes that extra funding, targeted to this purpose, will be a saving down the track as more teachers stay in the profession, and we encourage the State Government and the Department of Education to facilitate this.

Over their 13 years of schooling, recent school leavers would have experienced inspiring teachers who have encouraged, supported and affirmed them, and understand the vital role they have played in their development. It would be great if some of those students are inspired to go into teaching themselves and potentially "Touch the Future".

Women and Employment Adviser: Dr Deborah Towns OAM

NCWV is pleased to see that the concerns and issues within the TAFE system are finally being addressed:

TAFE Teachers, Senior Educators, and Education Managers Report

For two and a half years, we have campaigned to secure a deal that addresses TAFE members' key issues and gives them the respect they deserve. Latest update:

On 7 February, The AEU TAFE and Adult Provision Council endorsed an in-principle agreement for TAFE teachers.

[View in-principle TAFE agreement](#) [See classification changes & salary tables](#)

Key highlights of the in-principle agreement include:

- Minimum 21% pay increase over four years
- First increase of at least 7.4% for all members backdated to November 2024
- Casual rates of pay increasing in line with full-time and part-time rates of pay
- Curriculum development, out-of-class assessment, planning, preparation, and student consultation time increased from 400 hours to 600 hours per year (up from the current 30 minutes to 45 minutes per teaching hour), with a consequent 200 hour reduction in non-teaching-related duties.
- All in-class assessment will be counted as face-to-face teaching.
- Improved teacher and education manager classification arrangements, including recognition of qualifications for those who have teaching as their vocational qualification or who have a higher teaching qualification.
- A cap of 20% on casual employment at each TAFE institute per semester.

Standing Committee Coordinator: Robyn Byrne OAM

In 2024, as a result of the rise in gender-based violence, the Commonwealth Government set up a committee to have a rapid review into prevention approaches with six expert panel members. Dr Anne Summers AO, who addressed NCWA in 2022, was on the Rapid Review Expert Panel.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - *Unlocking the Prevention Potential*:

Executive summary, Prepared by the Rapid Review Expert Panel

On 23 August 2024, the Australian Government received the final report from the expert panel appointed to undertake a rapid review of evidence-based approaches to prevent gender-based violence. The report provides specific and practical advice to strengthen prevention approaches, and builds on considerable work currently underway in the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. The report makes 21 recommendations across 6 key areas for action by federal, state and territory governments. The recommendations will be taken forward as a priority for discussion by the National Cabinet.

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/unlocking-the-prevention-potential-executive-summary#the-prevention-potential-01>

The 21 recommendations are

1. [A National Emergency – and an ongoing national priority](#)
2. [The prevention potential](#)
3. [Prevention through people](#)
4. [Prevention through responses](#)
5. [Prevention through systems and industries](#)
6. [Prevention through learning and data](#)

For further information click on the links to go to the recommendations.

On 6/9/2024 the Commonwealth Government announced investments to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. The Government will commit \$4.4 billion in new funding to address the scourge of gender-based violence and respond to *the Rapid Review into Prevention Approaches*, including through investing in frontline services and initiatives to prevent violence.

Gender and Disaster Australia (GADAus)

NCWV applauds the appointment of **Dr Margaret Moreton as CEO of Gender and Disaster Australia** recognising the specific needs of women during a disaster. This national organisation is offering evidence-based education, training and resources to address the harmful impacts of gendered expectations in disaster. Her commitment is to work so that diverse genders are safe before, during and after disasters, have a voice in building their own disaster resilience and are able to survive, contribute, and thrive in their communities and organisations.

Robyn Byrne believes organisations like CWA and the NCWs across Australia should be consulted about women's needs in disasters. Does it mean access to phones, money, transport and housing or more?

Contribution from a Beta Sigma Phi sister, a NCWV Affiliate: *Hope you read it but never have to do it!*

When you are alone and have a heart attack. What are you gonna do then?

This is a really good post that can't be shared often enough:

1. Take a 2 minute break and read this: Let's say it's 5:25 pm and you're driving home after an unusually hard day's work.
2. You are really tired and frustrated. All of a sudden your chest pains. They are starting to radiate in the arm and jaw. It feels like being stabbed in the chest and heart. You're only a few miles away from the nearest hospital or home.
3. Unfortunately you don't know if you can make it...
4. Maybe you've taken CPR training, but the person running the course hasn't told you how to help yourself.
5. How do you survive a heart attack when you're alone when it happens? A person who is feeling weak and whose heart is beating hard has only about 10 seconds before losing consciousness.
6. But you can help yourself by coughing repeatedly and very strongly! Deep breaths before every cough. Coughing should be repeated every second until you arrive at the hospital or until your heart starts to beat normally.
7. Deep breathing gives oxygen to your lungs 🫁 and coughing movements boost the heart and blood circulation. Heart pressure also helps to restore a normal heartbeat. Here's how cardiac arrest victims can make it to the hospital for the right treatment.
8. Cardiologists say if someone gets this message and passes it on to 10 people, we can expect to save at least one life. 🙌
9. FOR WOMEN 👩: You should know that women have additional and different symptoms. Rarely have crushing chest pain or pain in the arms. Often have indigestion and tightness across the back at the bra line plus sudden fatigue.

Have your say on the Draft Royal Park Master Plan by Sunday 23 February.

The Draft Royal Park Master Plan has been developed in partnership with the community, stakeholders, Traditional Owners and other park users through extensive consultation to guide the management of the park for the next 20 years. The draft master plan elevates the voice and role of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners, while also considering challenges of population growth and climate change, balancing the needs of existing and future generations. Extensive community and stakeholder consultation has been conducted, along with detailed research and analysis by the City of Melbourne. The analysis examined heritage and Traditional Owner cultural values, ecology, traffic and parking, recreation needs and social values including community safety. A discussion paper released for public consultation in November 2023 received a broad range of feedback from almost 1900 community members.

Have your say: Learn about the [Draft Royal Park Master Plan](#) or read the [one page fact sheet \(PDF 170 MB\)](#) then complete the [survey](#). **Consultation closes 5pm on Sunday 23 February.**

Health Adviser: Prof Cassandra Szoeki OAM

Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria calls for submissions: see website for terms of reference and making a submission:

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/inquiry-into-ambulance-victoria/submissions/> . The Committee is **accepting submissions until 28 February 2025**.

NCWV would like to hear from NCWV members, delegates and friends. Email Prof Cassandra Szoeki at Healthhub@ncwv.org.au with experiences that could be added to our submission.

AABWA International Women's Day Luncheon. This event is a wonderful opportunity to connect with inspiring women, share ideas, and celebrate our collective achievements. All welcome.

- **Date: Saturday, 8 March, 2025. Time: 12:30pm for 1:00pm starts.**
- **Venue:** Kew Golf Club - [120 Belford Rd, Kew East](#).
- **Special Guests:** Kathy Kaplan, Founder of Impact for Women
- Sara Pantaleo, Past CEO of La Porchetta
- Therese Oneil, Building a Strong Brand
- Kaushi Gunasekera, MC.

Please register by clicking this link: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1346060>

Vale Dr Rosalind Terry 1 July 1940 – 31 January 2025

AUSTRALIAN
MEDICAL
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Precise of Tribute by Kay Dunkley, edited by Taryn Sheehy and Vanessa Murray, AMA Victoria

Raised in Melbourne and Geelong, won a scholarship to MLC, for her secondary schooling and successfully completed her matriculation. In her final year, her father was unsupportive of her university aspirations. “Nobody in the family has been to university and a girl is not going to be the first.” he stated. He finally allowed her to undertake a three-year science degree in 1957, when Ros won a Commonwealth scholarship to attend the University of Melbourne. While studying, she won a fees scholarship, allowing her to live at the University’s Women’s College allowing her to blend study and working in the Microbiology Department at the University while completing a Master of Science majoring in Microbiology.

Ros moved to the United States for three years. In Chicago, working as a biochemist and in a veterinary laboratory, her supervisor encouraged her to pursue medicine. Back in Australia, Ros received similar encouragement while working in the veterinary laboratories in Launceston. With no medical school in Tasmania, she returned to Melbourne and in 1969 commenced studying medicine at the University of Melbourne, classes during the day, working in the laboratories at the Royal Melbourne Hospital at night, graduating in 1973. Her father celebrated with a family dinner at the Windsor Hotel.

After two years at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Ros charted a course to St Vincent’s in Sydney to study surgery, becoming Sydney’s first female surgical registrar. St Vincent’s second year of surgical training included a six-month placement in Papua New Guinea where she met her future husband and her 6 month stay extended to 10 years. Medical and surgical practice in Lae required a wide breadth of medical practice, and juggling multiple roles. Sometimes people would bring their sick animals to Ros with her experience in veterinary labs in USA and Tasmania meant she was well equipped to treat them.

After a decade in Lau, Ros took the post of Chief Medical Officer on Norfolk Island. She was responsible for all emergency surgery with the anaesthetic provided by the assistant medical officer.

In 1990, back in Melbourne, Ros had a pivotal role in establishing the Emergency Department at Werribee Mercy Hospital. She secured a permanent role at the Alfred Hospital, where she became the hospital's first female senior Emergency Department physician. When Ros turned 70 years of age, she asked her boss if there were any rules requiring her to retire and he replied, “I don’t know, and you are not going to retire yet”. At The Alfred, Ros contributed not only through her skills in trauma management, general medicine, and surgery but also through the warmth of her camaraderie and her dedication to teaching. Ros is treasured by those who worked with her at The Alfred.

In her retirement, Ros’ influence in the medical community continued. She generously devoted time to volunteering with the AMA Victoria Peer Visitor Program visiting isolated elderly doctors. Ros had been a member of both the AMA Victoria Board and the Board of the Victorian Medical Benevolent Association, had active involvement in groups such as the AMA Victoria Women in Medicine Committee and the Victorian Medical Women’s Society, committed to elevating women in the medical field. Ros enjoyed the company of her peers on and dinners organised by the AMA Victoria Retired Doctors Group.

Thank you, Ros for your extraordinary achievements and incredible contribution to healthcare and society. Your journey is not just a personal triumph but a legacy that has paved the way for other women to follow in the medical profession.

Dr Ros Terry as a member of the Victorian Medical Women's Association and Australian Federal Medical Women’s National President has attended NCWV meetings either as a proxy for Rosalie Hudson or with Rosalie. Plus she generously invited Young NCWVic members working on the *Changemakers* project to attend several of the monthly mentoring meetings held for women medical undergrads and women being supported in their progress towards specialist qualifications. So, this was a part of the story told in the *Changemakers* photo project publication in 2015. [Copies Direct](#)

OTHER NEWS

Melbourne Women's Foundation

Violence against women and gender-based discrimination remain pressing issues in our communities. But together, we can drive meaningful change.

Join us for an insightful and inspiring panel discussion on Gender-Based Violence and Community Action, moderated by Safe and Equal CEO Tania Farha.

This event brings together an expert panel of leaders and advocates:

- Julie Kun – Acting CEO, Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Adele Murdolo – CEO, Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Hana Assafiri OAM – Social Activist & Founder, Moroccan Soup Bar
- Sue-Ann Hunter – First Nations Leader, Deputy Chair & Commissioner of the Yoorrook Justice Commission

📍 Venue: Canva, 30 Rupert St, Collingwood

📅 **Date: Thursday, 27th February | 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

💬 Format: Panel discussion + refreshments before and after

💰 **Tickets: Just \$35 – [Purchase them here](#)**

This is an opportunity to hear from trailblazing women, engage in critical conversations and be inspired to participate in change. Everyone is welcome. Please feel free to bring a friend!



Victorian Multicultural Commission

Cultural Diversity Week 2025

Victoria's largest multicultural celebration is back! From 17 - 23 March 2025, our state will come together for Cultural Diversity Week and celebrate the power, influence and stories of Victoria's rich multicultural communities.

The theme for 2025 is "Embrace The Journey, Shape Our Future". The theme highlights the unique and shared cultural journeys that define our diverse communities, encouraging us to honour our own cultural stories and those of others, fostering understanding, belonging, and connection. Whether it's as an individual, community group, business, or government agency, we encourage you to host a Cultural Diversity Week event or activity. You can also join the statewide conversation by using the hashtags #CulturalDiversityWeek, #CDW2025, #EmbraceTheJourney, #ShapeOurFuture.

For resources, inspiration visit: [Cultural Diversity Week: 17 - 23 March 2025 | multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au](#)

Activate Australia's Skills Campaign

Activate Australia's Skills is a coalition of 90+ business groups, community organisations, and unions calling for urgent reform of Australia's skills recognition system.

Currently, nearly 620,000 permanent migrants are working below their skill level—nurses, teachers, engineers, and other professionals unable to work in their trained fields despite critical worker shortages. This skills underutilisation is costing the economy significantly and impacting essential services, leading to longer wait times and rising costs.

How to Get Involved:

1. Sign the open letter to support reform.
2. Share your story if you've experienced skills underutilisation.
3. Spread the word and encourage others to take action.

Each story strengthens the push for a simpler, faster, and fairer system for recognising overseas experience.

To learn more and take action, visit: activateaustralia.org.au.



Understand the past, present and future of Treaty with Victoria's First Peoples.

'The technical term for treaty is two parties to come together and strike an understanding, a contract of sorts, and a promise of sorts. And a treaty incorporates peace, that's what it stands for' – Ringo Terrick, Wurundjeri Elder, Camp Sovereignty.

Victoria is on a path to Treaty with First Peoples – a path that could bring us closer together and mark a significant step towards reconciliation. As Victoria moves forward on the path towards Truth and Treaty, it is timely to reflect on our history, hear from Victorian Aboriginal communities and consider what the future may hold. In this exhibition, explore a historic collection of items related to the first and only known claim to 'treaty' in Australia, the Batman Treaty.

For Future Reference Lecture: A Woman's Word (About Science)



Credit: Glen Allsop

Dava Sobel is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Galileo's Daughter* (Walker 1999 and 2011), *A More Perfect Heaven* (Walker/Bloomsbury 2011 and 2012), *And the Sun Stood Still* (Bloomsbury 2016), *The Glass Universe* (Viking 2016, Penguin 2017) and *The Elements of Marie Curie* (Grove/Atlantic 2024). She has also co-authored six books, including *Is Anyone Out There?* with astronomer Frank Drake, and edits the "Meter" poetry column in *Scientific American*.

Date **07 March 2025, 7:30pm–9:00pm**

Cost

\$45 (general admission), \$36 (paid members admission), \$25 (concession and under 30s admission), \$20 (First Nations admission), \$20 (livestream admission)

Bookings

Bookings required

[Book Now](#)

Location

Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Marie Curie was a revolutionary of science in her lifetime, discovering polonium and radium and winning two Nobel Prizes. But did you know she mentored scores of young women who went on to have just as inspirational lives? *New York Times* bestselling author **Dava Sobel** has dedicated her career to unearthing stories of scientific discovery – demystifying technical language and bringing women who were previously background characters to the forefront. In the lead-up to International Women's Day, Dava will be joining us for the 2025 *For Future Reference* lecture, endowed by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, to reflect on Marie Curie's and her contemporaries' lesser-known contributions to science.

Attendees can view rare books acquired through the Library's [Women Writers Fund](#) initiative prior to the event.

This event will be Auslan interpreted and livestreamed. Doors will open from 7pm. Drinks will be available to purchase.

TRUST WOMEN Lunch break sessions: 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**, 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 >](#)

First Free Webinar: [Energy: Is Nuclear an Option for Australia?](#) 📅

12pm AEDT, Tuesday 25 February 2025

Wendy Farmer, Community Organiser, Voices of the Valley & Friends of the Earth

Alex Engel-Mallon, Advocacy Director, Climate Council

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

[Register](#)

Trust for Nature and Bush Heritage Australia warmly invite you to join the 14th annual Celebrating Women in Conservation. Corinne Proske, Trust for Nature, will be joining forces with Bush Heritage Australia CEO Rachel Lowry to MC the event. We're excited to be moving to a new, larger venue so we can bring together even more of the environment sector for a morning of inspiration, networking and celebrating women in conservation. We hope you can join us in person or online!

FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER >>

Date: Friday 28 February 2025

Time: 7.30am for 8am start until 11.00am, Venue: Grand Ballroom - Sofitel Hotel, 25 Collins Street, Melbourne,

Tickets: Standard - \$118 Individual | \$1100 Table of ten;

Not for Profit - \$105 Individual | \$1000 Table of ten

Virtual tickets - \$10 Individual registration; \$150 Stream the event at your workplace



Keynote Speaker, Teagan Shields, 'Empowering Aboriginal-led Traditional Knowledge for biodiversity conservation in Australia. Teagan Shields is a proud Arabunna descendant from Lake Eyre country, who grew up in Newcastle, Awabakal country. For the past 15 years, Teagan has worked in strategic policy reform, community engagement and biodiversity conservation across NSW, ACT and WA, as well as at an international level as an ambassador to the World Indigenous Network.

Teagan is currently undertaking a PhD with the University of Melbourne; Investigating systemic changes to empower Indigenous Land and Sea Managers in biodiversity conservation, and is an Indigenous Research Fellow at Curtin University, working under the Resilient Landscape Hub of NESP. She is also Deputy Chair of the Indigenous Advisory Committee, and serves on the Biodiversity Council, the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance and the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists.

Fun(draisers)

Book Summer Fun(draiser) tours



[Re/discover Royal Park with GML Heritage and City of Melbourne](#)

Royal Park is the largest open space in the City of Melbourne. Join [GML Heritage](#) and the [City of Melbourne](#) on a guided tour through Royal Park and delve into its rich history and significant heritage values.

Wednesday 26 February 2025, 5.30pm—7pm

Bookings required, \$55

[Discover Pentridge Piazza with ASPECT Studio](#)

The former Pentridge Prison in Coburg has been dramatically transformed.

Join [ASPECT Studio](#) on a walking tour through key spaces, as well as other areas around the site where interpretation of its previous use have been installed.

Friday 21 February 2025, 10—11am

Bookings required, \$45

The 'Let's Talk Ageing' Series: [The 'Let's Talk Ageing' Series | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

About

In the interview series 'Let's Talk Ageing', the Age Discrimination Commissioner, Robert Fitzgerald AM, sits down with prominent Australians and thought leaders to discuss ageing positively and the human rights challenges facing older people. The Q&As will come in a variety of formats, including written responses and recorded videos. See link for details.

The first Let's Talk Ageing episode for 2025, we hear from **Ms Dorothy Hoddinott**, human rights and refugee advocate and educator. Awarded the Australian Human Rights Medal in 2014 for her work with refugee and asylum seeker young people, Ms Hoddinott continues to pursue this advocacy work as part of her active volunteering.

She sees many sides to ageing, including being able to put to use your lifetime accumulation of knowledge and experience, but without the "luxury of a lifetime ahead of you". "I think the key challenges for people as they get older include loss of agency and a sense of purpose in life...I may need to be dependent on others for the last years of my life. Until then, I plan on living life to the full.

The Multicultural Youth Group invites you to "UNSEEN" - An Immersive Art Exhibition by Moey Eltom that explores identity, migration, and youth empowerment through the transformative power of art. For one night only, step into a deeply personal and thought-provoking visual journey featuring never-before-released photographs, paintings, digital art, videos, raw footage, and hidden works. Through these untold stories of resilience, displacement, and belonging, UNSEEN highlights the transformative role of storytelling in amplifying marginalised voices.

UNSEEN sheds light on the lived experiences of migrant and refugee youth, using creative expression to foster education, inclusion, and economic empowerment. This event also presents a networking opportunity, with special guests—including Ministers, MPs, government representatives, community leaders—who are committed to supporting youth and the arts.

Moey Eltom was born in Sudan and raised in public housing within the African diaspora, is a Melbourne-based photographer, director, and DOP. His work bridges art and advocacy, amplifying underrepresented voices while mentoring young creatives.

Event Details

- Location: Bittersweet Studios, 21/442 Geelong Rd, West Footscray VIC
- Date: Saturday, 22nd February 2025; Time: 6:00 PM - 10:30 PM
- Tickets: Limited Tickets Available – [Get your tickets here now](#)

A light dinner, refreshments, and drinks will be served.

Anne Jolic Takes the Helm at Development Victoria

Anne Jolic has been appointed as the new CEO of Development Victoria, the State Government's development arm which helps to deliver thousands of homes right across the state.

Ms Jolic brings a wealth of experience from her extensive career in the private sector and property industry. She has held senior roles at Lendlease and Mirvac, as well as leadership positions with the Property Council of Australia, including a two-year tenure as Victorian President. With a career spanning more than 25 years, she has led diverse multi-disciplinary teams to deliver award-winning projects. In her most recent role as Head of Operations at Lendlease, she oversaw a \$4.1 billion portfolio of complex projects spanning mixed-use developments, residential, commercial, retail, and build-to-rent projects.

Ms Jolic is well placed to lead Development Victoria to revitalise urban areas and unlock government land, create cultural and recreational facilities, and build diverse, affordable and sustainable communities.

This includes working closely with the Government to unlock and rezone surplus government land, enabling the delivery of approximately 9,000 homes across 45 sites in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Development Victoria will continue to partner with government, industry and communities to deliver transformative projects like the iconic Fitzroy Gasworks.



Madam Speaker is a digital speech archive born from a collaboration between the *Victorian Women's Trust* and *Your Creative*. We will correct the public record by platforming women's vital contributions throughout Australian history. Help us grow the archive — nominate a speech today. <https://www.vwt.org.au/as-you-turn-the-pages-theres-something-missing-the-voices-of-women-diana-bryant-ao-kc-on-the-need-for-madam-speaker/>

The following is a transcript of a speech delivered by Diana Bryant AO KC, Former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, at the launch of *Madam Speaker* on 20 November 2024.

Photo: Anna Burke, Mary Crooks AO, Diana Bryant AO KC

When Mary invited me to launch this, I was immediately sympathetic to the project she was doing - giving a voice to women. Imagine this, as we've heard, flipping through an anthology of great speeches, a collection that promises to showcase the most impactful words spoken throughout history. But as you turn the pages, there's something missing; the voices of women. In fact, if you could look at the most famous collections of speeches, you might find that women's voices are hardly present.

In many Australian anthologies, again, as we've heard, women's speeches are often relegated to margins, or worse, completely erased. But why is this? Why are the words of so many women left out of the conversation? Let's take a moment to look at some of the most well-known anthologies of great speeches in Australia. Collections like *Great Speeches of the 20th Century* – All of the Australian Speeches include names like John Howard, Walt Whitman, Bob Hawke, all important figures in Australian history. But how many of us would be able to name even a handful of female speakers who had a similar impact?

To provide a concrete example, I pulled from my own bookshelves in the last couple of days two books of speeches. I'm a bit of a fan of speeches. The first was *The Art of Great Speeches* by Dennis Glover, an Australian. Clearly in its art form, as Mr. Glover sees it, few women have the skills he wants. Of 51 speeches, only three appear: Julia Gillard, not the misogyny speech, Pauline Hanson, her maiden speech, and Sarah Palin. It does make you a little concerned about his criteria.

The second is an international book with historical pretensions abounding. It starts with *The Bible*, incorporating Moses' 10 Commandments and *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount*. It concludes with George W Bush's address to the nation on 9/11 and covers everything in between. Nevertheless, women seem to have fared a little better over time; of 48 speeches, 6 are by women. And it's not a bad cohort, if a bit thin; Elizabeth I, Emmaline Pankhurst, Marie Curie, Shirley Chisholm, and that we should absolutely celebrate, Golda Meir and Mother Teresa. We take a deeper look at these anthologies, it's not hard to see the pattern. Women's voices are not only underrepresented, but they're also often excluded entirely. The few women who do make an appearance are exceptions rather than the rule, and while the speeches of men like John Curtin or Malcolm Fraser are given entire chapters in books, the speeches of women are often condensed into footnotes or single paragraphs. Now that I reflect on it, women have so often been excluded from the positions where their speeches might be taken seriously, and even where such positions have been held, their speeches are often overlooked. Indigenous women have a double hurdle.

This pattern isn't just an oversight, it's a reflection of a broad historical trend; for centuries, women have been systematically denied platforms to speak in public, let alone to shape political discourse. When they did manage to speak, their words were often dismissed, distorted or ignored. But despite this, many women found ways to challenge the status quo and speak up for change, and these voices deserve to be heard and recognised, and they should be in the perspective they provide.

In 2014 I was involved in the launch of a book called *Australian Feminist Judgments, Writing and Rewriting the Law*. In many different areas of law, significant judgments were rewritten by academics to reflect a feminist perspective, and unsurprisingly, to not only provide a much more nuanced narrative, but also a different result. In the spirit of complete disclosure, I should add that a judgement I had authored was rewritten by feminist authors. We can't change the content of the anthologies to which I've referred, but we can now identify women's speeches and place them in the digital world where current and future generations can readily access them. That's what is occurring with the launch of this online archive, which at present has 250 speeches, but promises many more, it seeks to rectify the silencing of women's voices in the public space.

Trawling through the speeches is a delight, comparing the speeches of women following the end of World War One, where the presence of important Australian women on the world stage, was largely ignored here, to the more recent speeches of Catherine Branson and Justice Jayne Jagot about human rights. I note the comments of Mary Gordon on the establishment of the Australian women lawyers, and I count myself lucky that I've been at some of the occasions on which those features were delivered.

I hope you think about including at least some of the speeches of Julie Bishop, which I came across recently, not political ones, but on the downing of MH 17, the Malaysian Airlines Flight, and the speech she gave in relation to the responsibility of Putin for this to happen. If you listen to that speech, I doubt the impact would have been the same if a man had given the speech.

They were substantial and courageous and deserve recognition. I think it's incumbent on us to report the speeches of women we hear and which deserve preservation and publication. This will be an excellent resource for academics involved in women's studies and for young women simply looking for words of inspiration from other women will, for the first time, be given a voice.

It's important to have a say in the digital world. I congratulate the *Victorian Women's Trust* and particularly Mary Crooks and *Your Creative* on this, this overdue and very important initiative. And I have much pleasure launching it. Thank you.

National Council of Women of Victoria Meeting Dates for 2025

Month	Date	Day	Meeting Type	Time	Method
February	17 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
February	20 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
March	6 th	Thursday	Council Meeting NOTE Changed time	12:15	AllAV, Level 13, 356 Collins St
March	17 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
March	20 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
April	3 rd	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc
April	14 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
April	17 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
May	1 st	Thursday	May Forum & Council Meeting	12:00	Zoom/Ross Hse
May	12 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
May	15 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
June	5 th	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc
June	16 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
June	19 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
July	3 rd	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	tbc
July	14 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
July	17 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHS
August	7 th	Thursday	Individual Members Annual Meeting; & Council Meeting	11:00, 12:15	tbc
August	18 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
August	22 nd	Friday	My Vote My Voice	9:15	Parliament
August	21 st	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
September	4 th	Thursday	AGM	12:15	Zoom/Ross Hse
September	15 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
September	18 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
October	2 nd	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc
October	13 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
October	16 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	6 th	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	tbc
November	20 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	27 th	Thursday	Annual Luncheon	12:00	tbc
December	4 th	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc

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