

Acknowledgement

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



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

QUOTE: *International Women's Day 2025, Australia, commemorates Beijing+30 and #MarchForward for a gender equal future. The world cannot afford a step back.*

From the President, Elida Brereton



Already we are in March and I thank all who have continued to work hard for NCWV. Thank you joint hon. secretary Dr Julie Stevens for your contribution of the speaker's presentations at the Council meetings and the Pioneer Women's Ceremony, and Immediate Past President Ronniel Milliken for overseeing the many emails coming to NCWV. Newsletters give a snapshot of our activities and those of our Affiliates. I encourage you to forward on to friends and acquaintances.

I know I am speaking for us all when I mention the continuing heartbreaking tragedy of the Gaza situation and appalling inhumanity of Hamas in handing over at least eight dead Jewish hostages including children, to devastated families. Some of our own members have family living in Israel, and some of our members have been victims of antisemitism in Melbourne, and we grieve with them to see the conflicts of the Middle East brought to Australia. The war in Ukraine continues into its 4th year and we have members who have family in Ukraine and who also grieve to see their homeland being destroyed, while the US changes its commitment with cruel messages from their President to Ukraine's brave leader. NCWV is a non-political body but we offer our support to the NCWV members and their families suffering from these conflicts, with so much death and destruction continuing.

Sadly we have lost a loyal member of many years in Biruta Don, whose funeral was held last Tuesday, attended by several NCWV members. Biruta was our Habitat Advisor for over 10 years, her passion for assisting the homeless did not diminish over time. We offer our deepest sympathy to her husband Peter, daughter Monica and family, at this sad time. page X

I represented NCWV at two International Women's Day events, Asian Australian Business Women's Association, and National Council of Jewish Women, Australian see p. 8. We celebrated International Women's Day at our Council meeting on March 6th, and we are so grateful to the Australian Institute of International Affairs and Manager Alastair Roff, for enabling us to use their delightful office space for the February and March Council meetings when Ross House was unavailable, so welcoming.

Our speaker was an inspiration to all women and it is apt that she joins us. **Denise Mary Allen** is an Antarctic Medal recipient (1989) and she has been one of the pioneers for the involvement of women in the Antarctic. See article below.

Our national body NCWA is considering changes to the Constitution and an Extra-ordinary General Meeting of the NCWA Board is being held on March 31st to vote on the proposed changes. We presented the proposed changes at the March 6th meeting. NCWA is also implementing the resolutions that were passed in Adelaide last November and has committed to revisiting the resolutions that were unsuccessful. Robyn Byrne and the Standing Committee members will be involved in those emanating from Victoria, including the Landcare and women's pain resolutions.

Pam Hammond has been successful in gaining a date for our annual "My Vote My Voice" event at Parliament House, which is Friday August 22nd and Ronniel has secured a booking for our End-of-year Luncheon back at William Angliss Restaurant for November 27th. Wonderful forward planning! Save the dates

We have more excellent speakers booked for coming meetings, which will be in person as well as by Zoom. We need your feedback to the survey sent to you last year regarding meetings, so please send the completed survey to info@ncwv.com.au as soon as possible. Thank you to those who have replied already.

March Council Meeting 6th March; Venue: Australian Institute of International Affairs Vic, 13th Floor, 356 Collins St.
Denise Mary Allen — Antarctic Medal recipient 1989



Denise Allen's career with the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) spanned 29 years, including six winters in Antarctica and three round trips. She joined the Bureau of Meteorology in Melbourne and was the seventh female observer since the war years. When she applied to be posted to Antarctica, she was initially met with discouragement from the men, including the instructors, who stated "we don't send women there", however, Denise was determined to expedition in Antarctica and fully embrace the experience.

She became a pioneer by persevering, inspired by Dr Louise Holliday, who was the first female expeditioner to winter at an Australian Antarctic station (at Davis Station in 1981) and who had a difficult experience and never returned. Growing up on a farm, Denise rejected the notion that she couldn't go somewhere because she was a woman.

Her initial postings included Willis Island, Queensland, which is the size of a football field. The male sentiment at the time was against sending women there 'because they don't wear enough clothes'! Denise was the first female observer in Queensland in 1984 and spent 6 months there.

She also spent time on Macquarie Island in 1985, reaching the island after a 4-day sail from Hobart. The first women to expedition to Macquarie Island did so in the 1950s. Women took on various diverse tasks on the station, including biological programs, pollen analysis, kitchen work and assisting diesel mechanics.

Denise arrived home from Macquarie Island and six weeks later was invited to expedition to the Antarctic. It was a last-minute assignment to Davis Station, then changed to Mawson Station. Arriving at Mawson, she faced skepticism from the men who "expected an all-male winter". She felt she needed to earn their respect, understanding that the future of women in Antarctica depended on her success. Denise made an effort to integrate, maintain morale, and earn the respect of her male colleagues.

During her time in Antarctica, Denise contributed to a water sampling program for Monash University in the Vestfold Hills Lakes. She also supported station operations by marking safe routes on the ice plateau and assisting scientific programs. She participated in ground truthing with satellite imaging, which was just starting at the time. Denise used VKOYL on shortwave radio to connect with other women. VKOYL was chosen for VK (Victoria), O (Antarctica), YL (Young Lady). She also found joy and helped maintain morale by running with the Huskies.

Denise shared her advice to younger women, specifically, the importance of having a goal or a dream, having belief and confidence in oneself, resilience, to take up opportunities and to develop new skills. She encourages all women to pursue their ambitions and seize opportunities. Her contributions and pioneering efforts led to her receiving the Antarctic Medal in 1989.



NCWV Congratulates Liana Buchanan, the new Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) Police Oversight Deputy Commissioner

Ms Buchanan brings extensive experience in oversight, integrity and legal system reform with senior leadership roles across the regulatory, justice and community sectors. Since 2016, Ms Buchanan has served as the Principal Commissioner for the Commission for Children and Young People, where she oversaw the establishment and implementation of the Reportable Conduct Scheme and Child Safe Standards.

She will commence her three-year term as IBAC Deputy Commissioner on 24 March 2025.

3rd April Council Meeting Speaker: Professor Helen Hodgson, Chair National Foundation for Australian Women, Level 4 Ross House, Flinders Lane, 12:00pm

Ahead of the upcoming Federal election, National Council of Women Victoria invited NFAW to 'Shine the Gender Lense on the policies of various political parties'. We found the economic analysis of respective political party's policies, prepared and published by NFAW ahead of the previous Federal election, most valuable.



Dr Helen Hodgson has lectured in Taxation at UNSW, Edith Cowan University and Curtin University. She was also a Member of the Legislative Council in Western Australia between 1997 and 2001.

Helen holds qualifications in accounting, business law and taxation, is a Chartered Tax Advisor, a Registered Tax Agent, a Fellow of the Australian Society of CPA's and a member of the SMSF Association. Her areas of expertise include trusts, superannuation, the taxation of small business entities and tax policy, and she was a participant at the 2010 Tax Forum.

She is also a member of the Tax Advisory panel for ACOSS, the Social Policy Committee of the National Foundation for Australian Women and the Women in Social & Economic Research group. In this capacity she has contributed significantly to policy review in the areas of superannuation and the tax and transfer system. She now chairs the NFAW Social Policy Committee.

ADVISER NEWS

Education Adviser: Pam Hammond

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) conducts sample assessments every three years on behalf of all education ministers, in order to provide useful information for all policymakers in education. It recently released data on the National Assessment Program (NAP) Civics and Citizenship sample [ACARA released a report](#) which provides results from the assessment conducted in May 2024 (Term 2). The NAP–CC assessment is designed to measure students' cognitive competencies in Civics and Citizenship, including their knowledge of democratic principles, the Australian political system and related historical contexts. The assessment also evaluates students' capacity to apply this knowledge to engage with, and participate in, civic processes. The NAP–CC 2024 assessment shows that competence is dropping in Civics and Citizenship achievement against pre-pandemic levels, indicating that 70% of Australian Year 10 students are not meeting the expected level of Civics Knowledge for their year level. Interrogating the data by State, 34% of Victorian students achieved above the Australian average (28%), second only to ACT. At Year 6, 46% Victorian students achieved above the Australian average of 43%, also second only to ACT students. These data are still below the pre-pandemic levels.

Social Education Victoria (SEV), a small non-profit professional association for teachers, points out that there are no ongoing government-funded Civics and Citizenship professional learning programs in Victoria, which leaves organisations like them to “... *cross-subsidise Civics and Citizenship professional learning offerings... Many of our professional learning experiences in Civics and Citizenship are developed and hosted by teachers who have invested their unpaid overtime to build expertise. We salute those teachers who are doing an amazing job.*” Executive Officer, Laura Newman

While the ACARA report gives an indication of student achievement, the recent Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) [From Classroom to Community](#) report provides useful context and some insight both into the ‘why’ and the ‘where to from here’. In its foreword, this report states that: ‘There are many hard-working and passionate teachers in our schools, but they need to be better supported to deliver quality civics education through improved professional development and high-quality, nationally aligned teaching resources.’

Teachers are saying that Civics and Citizenship is not given adequate time in the school timetable, or in teacher education. Dr Libby Tudball noted that civics and citizenship is generally incorporated into larger humanities subjects where it is: ... *often pushed out by history and geography in the secondary years. There is no doubt that there is evidence amongst the primary years of a more integrated approach and more consistent learning across that area, which may explain the fact that the NAP-CC results for primary-age students are a little better than for the secondary years.*

However, when provided with platforms that respect their views, young people show they can research, deliberate and problem-solve. Interest and confidence in democracy can be supported by giving students meaningful opportunities to participate.

NCWV's My Vote My Voice event is designed to do exactly that. A theme is given to students, based on what is topical and of interest to young people, to research and develop a presentation expressing their opinion. They then present in the Legislative Council Chamber, Parliament of Victoria, at the Speaker's lectern. The quality of student deliveries and the research that has been carried out has been consistently of high quality. The students have been excited, engaged and passionate about the experience. In 2019 the theme was *Male and Female Youth as Future Voters*, with students researching opinions on voting from their peers. A suggestion from several groups was to lower the voting age to 16 years in local government elections, not compulsory. One common element was that there needs to be more and engaging ‘Civics and Citizenship’ content in the core curriculum. As an outcome, the then Minister for Education, the Hon. James Merlino, requested the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) to work together to improve civics and citizenship education in Victorian schools. A workshop was held on the implementation and resourcing of the Victorian Civics and Citizenship Curriculum hosted by the VCAA. Subsequently, VicSRC students developed digital resources and Monash University were contracted to conduct research into teachers' and students' experiences, with a pilot teacher professional learning program developed and engaging student resources.

NCWV endorses the recommendations of SEV to:

1. Invest in teacher support and professional development. Governments should direct more funding to subject and teacher associations, particularly in targeted professional development programs, to help better equip educators with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively teach civics and citizenship.
2. Cultivate experiential learning opportunities. Schools must provide resourcing and ongoing support to initiatives such as visits to parliamentary institutions, establishment of and participation in student governance in schools, and community engagement projects to provide students with practical and meaningful early experiences in civic participation.

Women and Employment Adviser: Dr Deborah Towns OAM

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:

Sign the open letter to support reform; Share your story if you've experienced skills underutilisation; Spread the word and encourage others to take action. **To learn more and take action, visit: activateaustralia.org.au**

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

Nutrition Adviser [Ageing and Schools]: Maggie Baron

Ageing well in Victoria: an action plan for strengthening wellbeing for senior Victorians 2022–2026

In **2022** the **Victorian Government** published the **Victorian Ageing Well Action Plan**. It outlines the Victorian Government's vision to support Victorians to age well, including the importance of nutrition. At the heart, the Plan references that Victoria's population is ageing. In 2021 there were almost 1.5 million Victorians aged 60 years or older (22% of the total population) which is expected to increase by around 60 per cent to more than 2.3 million people by 2046, when about 25% of the population will be 60 years of age or older. The Plan also references 8 key aspects to ageing well, point 7 of which is notes the importance of health and nutrition. A link to the plan here:

<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/ageing-well-action-plan>

NCWV will write to the State Minister early in 2025 to ensure we remain updated on progress in delivering the **Plan which expires in 2026**, and to thank them for this critical initiative.

Another key area of nutrition and ageing is food and nutrition in aged care facilities. I was shocked to read that the **rate of malnutrition** (or at risk of) is **68%** across aged care residents and that at the home **Maggie Beer** worked with in her **Big Mission** TV program, it was **74%**. Depression was also a major area of concern. I rewatched the series with an eye to ageing well. Maggie did a power of work in raising awareness of the less-than-ideal environment of food preparation, nutrition and importance of meals in aged care homes. She drew attention to the physical environment as well as nutritional value and smell in raising appetites and encouraging people to enjoy their meals.

On 3 December 2024 **Minister Anika Wells** announced the Australian Government is investing **\$37 million** in a cost-of-living funding boost for **more than 500 aged care meals providers**, so nutritious, quality, meals are delivered to older people in their homes. **From 1 January 2025**, all Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) meals providers will receive a **10% cost-of-living top-up** of their 2024–25 **meals funding** to alleviate cost pressures and reduce impact on service delivery. This will increase funding to CHSP meals providers by \$37 million over the next three years. CHSP supports over 835,000 older people to access entry-level aged care services, including meals, to help stay healthy and connected.

I wrote to Minister Wells to get an update on the aged care nutrition area and received a reply from the Director, Resident Experience and Food Policy Section. She advised the following key aspects currently being implanted:

- **Acknowledgment** that **Maggie Beer's Big Mission** has highlighted the need for continued improvement in the standard of food, nutrition and dining in aged care
- The Federal Government supports the Maggie Beer Foundation to deliver education and training to upskill people preparing food in aged care facilities
- **Funding was extended** recently to allow this program to extend through 2025/26 financial year - **cost of \$6.7 million**
- The government has also established a **Food, Nutrition and Dining advisory support group** which provides expert advice, education and resources to residents, their families and providers. This group also hosts a complaints hotline and resulted in around 600 matters being acted on in 2024.

Aged care standards will be strengthened with the **new Aged Care Act 2024** commencing on 1 July 2025. Link to fact sheet and Act: www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/about-the-aged-care-act-2024-fact-sheet-easy-read and more details here: www.health.gov.au/our-work/improving-food-nutrition-aged-care

Standing Committee Coordinator: Robyn Byrne OAM

Endometriosis Awareness Month

Too many Australians suffer in silence with endometriosis - often waiting years for diagnosis while dealing with pain and facing stigma. This Endometriosis Awareness Month, let's break down what endo really is and how you can get help. You can find one of our Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Clinics here: <https://lnkd.in/g/yfAnKaa>

You can also find more information on endometriosis here: from **Endometriosis Australia** at <https://lnkd.in/g9KPyMvG>

From: **Australian Coalition for Endometriosis** here www.acendo.com.au/ Or from: **QENDO** here www.qendo.org.au

The Stella Prize

The purpose of this Prize is to promote books by Australian women in all their diversity, support greater participation in the world of literature, and create a more equitable and vibrant national culture. Letter from the 2025 Stella Prize Chair, Astrid Edwards:

"Literary prizes are subjective beasts, but I assure you, the works on this year's longlist are remarkable. Fiction dominated the year, accounting for seven works on the longlist. Jumaana Abdu, Melanie Cheng, Michelle de Kretser, Dylín Hardcastle, Emily Maguire, Mykaela Saunders and Inga Simpson have each created entire worlds for readers to fall into. While different in form and function, each work fulfils its promise to the reader with exceptional craft. These are works to transport you elsewhere and reflect on not only our history but what yet may come.

The four non-fiction works on the list are so different they each warrant their own categories.

In alphabetical order by surname, the Stella Prize longlist is:

- *Translations* by Jumaana Abdu (fiction)
- *Naag Mountain* by Manisha Anjali (poetry)
- *The Burrow* by Melanie Cheng (fiction)
- *Black Convicts* by Santilla Chingaipe (non-fiction)
- *Theory & Practice* by Michelle de Kretser (fiction)
- *A Language of Limbs* by Dylín Hardcastle (fiction)
- *Rapture* by Emily Maguire (fiction)
- *Black Witness* by Amy McQuire (non-fiction)
- *Cactus Pear For My Beloved* by Samah Sabawi (non-fiction)
- *Always Will Be* by Mykaela Saunders (fiction)
- *The Thinning* by Inga Simpson (fiction)
- *Peripathetic* by Cher Tan (non-fiction)

Shortlist announced. 8 April 2025. Winner announced. 23 May 2025.

Media Report, with thanks to Beverley Kannegiesser

In case you missed it [Australia passes social media minimum age law, cracking down on app use by kids](#)

Australia has approved a social media ban for children aged under 16 after an emotive debate that gripped the nation, setting a benchmark for jurisdictions around the world with one of the toughest regulations targeting Big Tech. The law forces tech giants from Instagram and Facebook owner Meta to TikTok to stop minors logging in or face fines of up to 49.5 million Australian dollars. A trial of methods to enforce it will start in January with the ban to take effect in a year. The Social Media Minimum Age bill sets Australia up as a test case for a growing number of governments which have legislated or plan to legislate an age restriction on social media amid concern about its mental health impact on young people.

Apple AAPL.O recently said it will introduce a way for parents to share the age of a child with app developers without revealing sensitive information such as birthdays or government identification numbers. The move comes as a number of U.S. state and federal lawmakers consider age-verification laws for social media and other apps. States, such as Utah and South Carolina, are debating laws that would require app store operators to check ages of users. There is a conflict in the tech industry over which party should be responsible for checking ages for users under 18 — app stores, or individual app. Meta META.O has long argued in favour of legislation requiring app stores to check ages when a child downloads an app. Apple said it does not want to be responsible for collecting sensitive data for those age verifications.

Apple said it will roll out what it calls "age assurance." Parents will be able to input a child's age when setting up a child's account. The parent can then choose to allow the child to share what Apple calls a "declared age range" — rather than an exact birthday or other identifying information — with third-party app developers and will have the ability to turn off age-range sharing. "This protects privacy by keeping parents in control of their kids' personal information, while minimising the amount of information that is shared with third parties," Apple said. A Meta spokeswoman said the Apple technology is "a positive first step" but it still requires the child to share age range data, making it more difficult for Meta to put to use. "Parents tell us they want the final say over the apps their teens use, and that's why we support legislation that requires app stores to verify a child's age and get a parent's approval before their child downloads an app," Otway said.

Multicultural Adviser: June Anderson

Ethnic Community Council of Victoria has been the voice of multicultural Victoria since 1974, building a cohesive society, and we were delighted to celebrate our 50th anniversary with so many friends old and new at our Annual General Meeting. **We** believe we can build unity while upholding the right to free speech and engaging in debate on the issues that matter to us as individuals and communities. Being able to worship freely and safely is a fundamental human right

and must be respected. ECCV condemns and rejects antisemitism, Islamophobia and racism in all forms. Diversity and difference are at the heart of what makes our state great.

If you are curious about ECCV's history, you can watch a short film commemorating our organisation's 50-year legacy [here](#), featuring interviews with myself as well as ECCV co-founder George Papadopoulos, multicultural champions Marion Lau OAM and George Lekakis AO, and new ECCV CEO Farah Farouque. Eddie Micallef, Chairperson ECCV

Consumer Affairs:



Tom Abourizk, CHOICE

This is a major win. After years of campaigning together, big businesses like banks, telcos and digital platforms will soon be required to follow new rules to detect and prevent scams, or face fines of up to \$50 million. Businesses will also be on the hook to compensate victims if they don't follow the rules.

The new laws have been passed, but this wouldn't have happened without the support of tens of thousands of CHOICE supporters. Whether you shared your story, signed the petition or emailed your MP, you've made a huge difference.

These many acts of courage showed the government that we're not going to stand by and let big businesses continue to shift the blame and responsibility for preventing scams onto consumers – when they have the resources and technology to stop scammers in their tracks but simply choose not to. [Here's what we achieved together:](#)

The new laws may not be perfect, but there'll be more opportunities to ensure specific rules on each sector are strong, and that more sectors are captured as soon as possible, including superannuation and crypto. We'll keep up the fight to ensure consumers can enforce their rights and access compensation through a complaints process that is fair and fast.

Housing report, from the late Adviser: Biruta Don:

I went on the Open House Melbourne tour on 18 January that was advertised in the Dec 2024 NCWV Newsletter. The tour was most informative and very well run with a variety of speakers. The refurbishment of the building is a terrific example of the adaptive re-use of a former electricity building for homeless housing. It was a very successful co-ordination of various levels of government and community providers. It is soon to open with health facilities on the ground floor and a communal room in the basement for events and training courses. There are 5 floors with 50 studio apartments and a rooftop garden and entertaining area. I recommend having a tour of the building (July Open House) or a speaker from MCC or others associated with this project at a future NCWV meeting. Kind regards, Biruta

Also from Biruta: Flammable cladding on apartment complexes leaves painful legacy months after ban, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-06-20/victoria-flammable-cladding-apartment-buyers-removal-cost/100228692>

Key points:

- Ms Robertson said unknown cost with flammable cladding on her apartment is a source of "constant stress"
 - Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV) expects to have 200 buildings underway for cladding rectification by the end of June
 - Defects beyond combustible cladding are not covered by CSV and must come from homeowners' own pockets
- They later received a notice from the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) saying their building was "a danger to the life, safety or health" of residents and clad with combustible expanded polystyrene. CSV has promised to help pay for the replacement of the cladding on the Robertsons' apartment block, but only if the owners address a list of defects and other conditions that can add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the repair bill.

The [Victorian government banned flammable aluminium composite panels and rendered expanded polystyrene for use as external wall cladding for all new multi-storey developments](#). The VBA said more than 3,200 private and public buildings have been inspected as part of ongoing Statewide Cladding Audit. "We're also inspecting thousands of properties under construction each year as part of our Proactive Inspection Program, which identifies non-compliance early," VBA executive director of regulatory operations Lynda McAlary-Smith said. The VBA are looking at apartment buildings with three storeys or more constructed after March 1997. In 2019, the state government committed \$600 million to remove combustible cladding from 100 higher-risk residential buildings each year for five years. CSV was established to oversee the process. In 2021, 25 residential buildings had been completed and about 200 were either completed or underway. There were also Sixty-two out of 112 government-owned buildings have been completed, 17 are underway and 33 are in tender stages.

There is a 2025 update: <https://www.vic.gov.au/cladding-remediation-partnership-program>. CSV has made progress in identifying and replacing dangerous combustible cladding on buildings found to be at highest-risk across the state. Since the program was announced by the Victorian Government, CSV has worked with hundreds of owners' corporations who are at various stages in the program. With a solution now in place for the highest-risk buildings, which are being funded and fixed by CSV who is working with owners, it's time to deal with the remaining buildings with combustible cladding, but presents a lower risk. These buildings need a response that is proportionate, measured and consistent.

And because any work on these buildings will need to be funded by the owners, the aim is to reduce risk in the most cost-effective way. <https://www.vic.gov.au/i-am-part-owners-corporation> . Leveraging the learnings from CSV's program and with the expert assistance of regulators, Municipal Building Surveyors, policy makers, external practitioners and academics, including CSIRO Data61 and RMIT, CSV has implemented a process for identifying practical solutions to address the risk posed by cladding on these lower-risk buildings underpinned by the [Protocols for Mitigating Cladding Risk](#).

Postscript: Biruta would have been delighted with the recent announcement from the UK: Seven organisations criticised in wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster could be banned from bidding for public contracts, the government has said. Cladding and insulation firms are among those set to be investigated and all recommendations of a public inquiry into the fire will be met. The government is working on a list of reforms to building safety following Grenfell, and will begin implementing changes from 2028. The Grenfell Inquiry had uncovered "*serial incompetence and negligence, complacency and inaction, and blatant dishonesty and greed*" which led to the fire, and government would take "*tough action*" to reform the system and "*ensure no community will ever have to face a tragedy like Grenfell again*".

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



Notes prepared by Sheila Byard OAM.
Biruta was beloved wife of Peter, cherished mother of Monica, mother-in-law to Matthew, devoted grandmother of Rory, Lachlan and Sadie. Rest in Peace.
Although Biruta and I were a few years apart in age, we had things in common, including parents deeply committed to our education, and mothers who lived remarkably long lives, her mother Ona reaching 100 years on 19 March 2024, only to die on 5 September.
The blessing of a strong family network will surely help Peter, children and grandchildren, and the extended family and friends, at this time. We give thanks for her energetic and sociable disposition which enabled her to be a great bridge-builder, including her introducing so many of us to the warmth of Lithuanian Australian hospitality!

My contact with Biruta really began in the early 1990s with the emergence of the RAPI Victorian Women's Planning Network (now part of the [Planning Institute Australia Women in Planning Network](#)). This not-for-profit organisation aimed to promote the role and interests of women in the planning and development industry. At this time the *Victorian Local Government Women's Charter* was being developed. Finalised in 1996, It is endorsed by the [Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition](#) (WPILGC), [Municipal Association of Victoria](#) (MAV) and [Victorian Local Government Association](#) (VLGA) and aims to promote gender equity, diversity and active citizenship. I was at that time working within the Urban Studies Unit at Victoria University interested in equality of opportunity for public sector town planning, and Birute was working as a demographer with the then Country Roads Board. I recall that she had assisted the YWCA in Victoria with its strategic plan. She helped the UNAA Victoria and National Council of Women of Victoria as umbrella bodies, to bring together a wide range of organisations, to better equip them to deliver information sharing programs, events and support, especially for women involved in community organisations, planning and allied professions.

Biruta had resumed her role as a member of the NCWV Standing Committee holding the portfolio of Habitat Adviser. We reconnected on the issue of flammable cladding, with her knowledge and experience in relation to housing briefing NCWV on opportunities to submit to various enquiries, including the *Inquiry into the National Housing and Homelessness Plan Bill 2024 (No. 2)* where her own submission appears on the parliamentary website. It was her view that the dire housing needs of women who had suffered domestic violence or for other reasons had been unable to obtain safe accommodation, needed the advocacy of women for better public policies, to meet their needs.

Parliament of Victoria is requesting submissions from the public in Victoria for the following Inquiries.

The supply of homes in regional Victoria including the methods of building them and the mix of housing forms and types.
The closing date for submissions is 31 March 2025 and report no later than 15 December 2025.

The Committee will inquire into the main risks facing Victoria's built environment and infrastructure from climate change and the impact these will have on the people of Victoria, including how the Government is preparing for these impacts, the barriers in upgrading infrastructure to become more resilient to the impacts, and the preparedness for future climate disaster events. <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/inquiries>

Make a submission by 31 March

NCWV is most interested in this area as women are adversely affected by climate change.

International Women's Day



Mac.Robertson Girls HS IWD breakfast, 28th February

NCWV Vice-President Pam Hammond, is here with Alveena, Mandy, Sakina and Ruthvi of the Mac.Rob leadership group. The keynote speaker was Professor Elif Ekinci, Head of the Department of Medicine at University of Melbourne and a past student of Mac.Rob. She spoke of her early life and path to medicine, and of her work with remote communities on diabetes treatment in Arnhem Land and as part of the Central Australian Diabetes Outreach Service researching alternative ways of checking blood sugars.

She spoke of addressing healthcare inequities and her commitment to fostering diverse high-performing teams and mentoring future leaders. There was also a Q&A with a panel of high achieving past students. All very inspiring for the students and community members who were there.



I was delighted to be invited to the International Women's Day event of the National Council of Jewish Women Australia at the Catani Gardens rotunda in St Kilda. I was honoured to be part of this special celebration of Jewish women. Deborah Conway and her musical partner were wonderful and MPs Jess Wilson and Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah both spoke very well and relevantly, acknowledging the ongoing tragedies in Gaza and Israel as exemplified by the return of dead hostages by Hamas including Shiri Babas and her young family. Penny Goodman and others spoke with passion and the need for support of Jewish women by women's organisations and feminist groups was stressed. Many thanks Marlo and Rysia for the warm welcome. Elida Brereton



I was also delighted to be invited to the **AABWA International Women's Day lunch**. The venue, meal, speakers, and musical items all added up to make this Luncheon special and exciting. The large numbers present included so many highly successful people, many of them young, and they would have gained many valuable ideas from the speakers as well as being able to network.

Thank you June Anderson and Jane Wei and best wishes to Kim Wen as you take on the leadership of AABWA. Elida Brereton

OTHER NEWS

Queen Victoria Women's Centre: IWD and Women's History Month @ QVWC

14 MARCH: Feminist History Walking Tour lead by Barbara Wheeler, QVWC's [Feminist Historian in Residence](#)

Celebrate Women's History Month 2025 by learning about three prominent Melbourne women activists **Helen Lothan Robertson, Dr Constance Stone** and **Zelda D'Aprano**— unionist feminists who led the way on equal pay and working conditions and the provision of professional health care for all women and children. Share stories and connections from the sites of **Victorian Trades Hall Council** (Victoria/Lygon Streets), the **Welsh Church** (La Trobe Street) and the **Queen Victoria Women's Centre** (Lonsdale Street), highlighting the importance of these sites to Melbourne's feminist history.

Friday 14 March 9.45AM – 12.30PM - Tickets \$30 + booking fee. Limited spots! Book [here!](#)

Walk commences at Victorian Trades Hall Council, 54 Victoria Street, forecourt at statue of Zelda D'Aprano @ 9.45AM.

Accessibility information: [QVWC](#) * [Victorian Trades Hall Council](#) * Welsh Church, Ground Floor access with no steps.

FROM 3 MARCH: Display of IWD 2025 Portraits by Suzanne Phoenix (Sponsored by [Australian Femicide Watch](#))

Suzanne Phoenix's 2025 photographic portrait series of cis and trans women and gender diverse people responding to what IWD means to them. Exhibition runs Portraits on display for public viewing **from 3 March until 31 March Mon-Fri 9AM-5PM** – Viewing by appointment - email jess.hutchison@qvwc.org.au

Q&A – BREAST CANCER RESEARCH UPDATE: CURRENT PROGRESS AND FUTURE PATHWAYS,

Wed 19 March from 5-6:30pm (AEDT) [Breast Cancer Q&A - Research: Current Progress and Future Pathways](#)

We invite you to an informative and engaging online Q&A event where experts will provide the latest updates on breast cancer research, focusing on the key research areas that are transforming the landscape of patient care.

Moderated by Author and Journalist Annabel Crabb, the panel will discuss key research themes of:

Treatment Optimisation – This aims to reduce the intensity of treatments for breast cancer patients, while maintaining effective outcomes. Learn how new research is enabling clinicians to refine treatment plans, offering a more personalised approach, while minimising the potential side effects of treatment.

Immunotherapy – Immunotherapy is rapidly changing how we approach cancer treatment. Experts will discuss the latest advancements in immunotherapy for breast cancer, explaining how these treatments work by harnessing the body's immune system to target and destroy cancer cells. Find out how immunotherapy is being integrated into treatment regimens and its potential to improve survival rates.

Metastatic Breast Cancer – Metastatic breast cancer remains one of the most challenging aspects of breast cancer care. In this session, we'll explore the cutting-edge research aiming to improve the prognosis for patients with metastatic disease, the latest in new therapies and clinical trials.

Breast Cancer in Young Women – Breast cancer in young women presents unique challenges in both diagnosis and treatment. We'll discuss the specific needs of younger patients and cover ongoing research into how breast cancer in younger women differs from that in older populations.

Genomic Testing – Genomic testing is becoming a cornerstone in breast cancer treatment, helping to identify genetic mutations and tailoring therapies accordingly. This session will shed light on how genomic testing is being used to understand the genetic profile of breast cancer and how this knowledge leads to more precise and effective treatments.

Victorian Multicultural Commission

Cultural Diversity Week 2025, 17-23 March

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](https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au)

As part of Diversity Week, join us to celebrate at the flagship Victorian [Multicultural Festival 2025, 21–23 March 2025](#) at the iconic Grazeland in Spotswood, the celebration of Victoria's multicultural communities, with food, entertainment and culture.

-  Explore Global Flavours; indulge in an outdoor dining experience featuring cuisine from around the globe!
 -  Enjoy live music, cultural performances and activities for all ages, making it the ideal outing for families and friends.
 -  Dress for the Occasion; wear your favourite cultural attire or colours and celebrate diversity in style!
 -  \$4 entry fee (children under 12 enter free); Gates open Friday evening and from noon on Saturday and Sunday.
- Visit the Cultural Diversity Week website for full event details: <https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/cdw>

Helping Organisations Become Champions of Cohesion

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Multicultural Affairs Ingrid Stitt has announced that Hass Dellal AO, Carmel Guerra AO, Miriam Suss OAM and Mark Duckworth PSM will form a Targeted Advisory Group, to be led by the respected George Lekakis AO, to review Victoria's multicultural policies and institutions. **The Victorian Multicultural Review** will provide recommendations on how the Government can ensure Victoria's systems, organisations and policies are set up to resolve conflicts, build bridges and celebrate the strength of our multicultural and multifaith communities. It will also facilitate discussions with communities, key multicultural and multifaith stakeholders, peak bodies and groups to identify strategies to confront discrimination, promote unity and strengthen Victoria's social cohesion. This includes work within the Victorian Multicultural Commission to ensure it can deliver this agenda.

With the delivery of Victoria's first Anti-Racism Strategy, and the Anti-Vilification and Social Cohesion Bill before the Parliament, now is the time to make sure Victoria's multicultural organisations can bring this vision to life and help deliver for all communities, including new and emerging ones.

The Victorian government recently released its Anti-Racism Strategy, the first of its kind in the state and Australia. ECCV welcomes the Strategy and helped develop it as a member of the Victorian Anti-Racism Taskforce alongside other peak bodies and organisations advocating for First Nations, multi-faith and multicultural communities.

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



Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) and Safe and Equal have partnered to produce a suite of eLearn Modules to enhance practice capability of practitioners supporting victim survivors with disabilities. This event is centred around the launch of the first module: **'Unlearning Ableism: from Bias to Best Practice'** aims to build practitioner's understanding of unconscious bias and ableism, and how ableist attitudes impact people with disabilities, specifically victim survivors of family violence. This event will introduce practitioners to this first foundational eLearn, providing context and promotion of the ongoing project and an opportunity to hear from the family violence and disability experts who contributed to the eLearn. The event aims to strengthen practitioner's capacity to recognise and challenge bias and ableism and promote a safe, inclusive and equitable service system response to victim survivors with disabilities. The event will be online via Zoom in as a webinar. Attendees will be able to interact with the webinar using the Q&A and Chat functions. The launch will be preceded by presentations from the Family Violence and Disability Practice Leaders on the work that they are doing to promote a safe, inclusive and equitable service system for victim survivors with disabilities. Following the launch event, the eLearn will be available online on the WDV and Safe and Equal websites.

Wed, 26 Mar, 10am - 11:30am AEDT [Get tickets](#)

Three Free Workshops: Pleasure for Every Body: Accessible and Inclusive Intimacy

In collaboration with **Women's Health in the North** and **Women with Disabilities Victoria**, these three free interactive workshops will be exploring the importance of pleasure and its role in our lives. These workshops are for women and gender diverse people with disabilities, as well as allies, who want to better understand the importance of pleasure and to make their intimacy more accessible and inclusive.

Each workshop will cover the same topics, multiple dates and locations offered to ensure as many people as possible can attend. AUSLAN interpreters and light dinners will be provided at every workshop. Topics that will be explored include: Pleasure as a human right; * How pleasure impacts health; * Ways to think about pleasure; * Consent and communication; * Sex toys as accessibility tools; * Resources and services available.

Workshop Date One: Thursday the 13th of March, 6:00PM to 8:00PM at Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub in the Clara Southern Room (in person).

[Register for Workshop One](#)

Workshop Date Two: Thursday the 20th of March, 6:00PM to 8:00PM at Coburg Library Meeting Room (in person).

[Register for Workshop Two](#)

Workshop Date Three: Thursday the 27th of March, 6:00PM to 8:00PM at Your Community Health in Preston (in person).

[Register for Workshop Three](#)

Heti Mackallah, Sexual & Reproductive Health Promotion Officer, Women's Health In the North (WHIN): heti.m@whin.org.au.

Vital Upgrades to Aboriginal Aged Care Service Complete

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt and Member for Northern Metropolitan Region Sheena Watt toured the redeveloped Aboriginal Community Elders Service (ACES) in Merri-bek. The important project was delivered via a \$6 million grant from the *Metropolitan Health Infrastructure Fund* (MHIF), with works refurbishing the nursing home and other linked facilities. Administered by the Victorian Health Building Authority, the refurbishments will help to improve patient flow, with new counselling and consultation rooms, new staff amenities, more workspaces and an upgraded kitchen. ACES is a not-for-profit Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation, established by the Koorie community in 1991 to care for elders previously isolated in hospitals and other institutions. With a dedicated team of professionals, ACES offers tailored support, including medical, allied health, and lifestyle programs, ensuring Elders receive culturally appropriate, holistic care, and features single rooms with ensuites and vibrant community spaces to promote comfort and connection.

THRIVE BY FIVE



We have had a major victory! Jay Weatherill

Parliament has passed a new law that will do two of the things our community has been campaigning for!

1. Officially **guarantees 3 days of subsidised early learning** for Australian children and families.
2. **Abolishes the punitive Activity Test**, removing a significant barrier to access.

Thanks to your support and advocacy over the years, over **126,000 children**, mostly from vulnerable households, will now be able to access the life-changing benefits of early childhood education and care. Over **40,000 primary carers**, almost all of them women, will have the opportunity to re-enter the workforce if they choose to.

These reforms are long overdue. They represent a giant step forward toward our campaign's biggest goal: establishing a truly universal early childhood education and care system.

[We are still campaigning hard to make early learning affordable for families with fees capped at \\$10 a day and for early learning to be free for low-income households.](#)

While we're not quite there yet, we're closer than ever! I have pride in our community, in the contributions made, and in the important role in transforming Australia's early learning system for the better.

Please ask the Prime Minister to make early learning \$10 a day; free for low-income families. [Sign our open letter here.](#)



[Spotlight Series - A Chat with Dr Jennifer Green - 13 March 2025 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm AEDT](#)

AFMW is interviewing Orthopaedic Surgeon Dr Jennifer Green to discuss International Orthopaedic Diversity Alliance.

The online session is confirmed **for 8pm AEDT, Thurs 13 March 2025**. AFMW members and non-members are invited to attend this Zoom session. Register today. [Find out more](#) [Spotlight Series](#)

COUNTERPART Connections

A monthly email from Counterpart
with events and information for
women affected by cancer.



Our 2025 program of events has kicked off. We have a have lots of exciting things planned. In March we have a [webinar](#) on using exercise to manage the side effects of cancer treatment. We are also heading to [Apollo Bay](#) and [Horsham](#) for more Regional Wellbeing Days. Visit the [Counterpart events website](#) to be the first to book your place at these and other events we have planned. Over the next few weeks we will be attending the [VICS Optimal Care Summits colorectal cancer consultation](#) and the [2025 National Cancer Survivorship Conference](#).

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

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

Counterpart Peer Support Volunteers are:

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

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

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



Empowering Female Leaders with renowned business leader Jennifer Westacott AO

We are excited to invite you to our ALGWA monthly Masterclass on March 13. This is the first in a series of three webinars sponsored by KPMG, designed to empower and educate female leaders in local government.

In this March Masterclass, you will have the chance to hear from Jennifer Westacott AO, a distinguished leader who will share valuable insights and perspectives on authentic leadership. With a wealth of experience in both the private and public sectors, Jennifer is recognised as one of Australia's most esteemed business leaders. After Jennifer's presentation, there will be an opportunity for you to ask questions and engage in discussions with your peers.

Date: Thursday 13 March 2025; **Time:** 7.00pm – 8.00pm AEDT

Register NOW: <https://events.humanitix.com/empowering-femal-leaders-with-jennifer-westacott-ao>

Making Public Histories: The glass ceiling: Shattered, cracked or stubbornly intact?



Thursday 27 March, 5:00 – 6:30pm by ZOOM

As women joined the paid workforce in increasing numbers in the twentieth century they battled long-established discrimination. Low pay, exclusion from jobs defined as 'men's work', and forced 'retirement' on marriage were just a few of the barriers in place. In the 1970s feminists identified a less-visible form of discrimination — the 'glass ceiling', the invisible, but equally-powerful set of assumptions that blocked women from promotion and from appointment to senior management. Many companies now promote their commitment to gender equity, but how real is it? Have women really shattered the glass ceiling, or does it continue to block women's progress? Join our three expert speakers, Karen Downing, Kate Fitch and Clare FE Wright, as they debate the impact of the glass ceiling on the working lives of women.

This free webinar is co-presented by Monash University Publishing and Old Treasury Building. [Book now](#)

The State Government has responded to each of the 73 recommendations in the final report on the October 2022 flood event in Victoria. You can [read the government's full response](#) to each of the 73 recommendations.

It supports 16 in full, 43 in principle and six in part. It doesn't support two recommendations and six are under review.

'The Government acknowledges the significant contributions of community members who made submissions and gave evidence to inform the final report, including those still feeling the flood event's impacts,' the response said. The inquiry by the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee investigated and made recommendations relating to:

- Flood governance arrangements
- Planning and flood risk
- Flood mitigation infrastructure
- Flood emergency warnings
- Resourcing and the response of the State Emergency Service (SES)
- Flood relief and recovery

The inquiry received nearly 900 public submissions and held two open mic sessions, as well as 12 days of public hearings.



This is a reminder that this event is coming up later this month **March 28-30** and we would love to welcome you/members of your organisation to join us for this important opportunity to bring women together to amplify our actions towards climate security locally, nationally and internationally at this extremely challenging time. Part festival and part congress, this event will be a gathering of visionary leaders, changemakers, and diverse women climate action advocates from across the country.

We are already receiving significant interest from across the women x climate change sector – which has been further fuelled by the disappointing outcomes from (mostly men) world leaders at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP)29 in Azerbaijan last year, in relation to fossil fuel phase-out and climate finance, as well as international backsliding on gender equality. These challenges have been further exacerbated by the new political regime in the US and other national and international challenges. We have lined up a dynamic program of keynotes, workshops, and panel discussions to delve into these critical issues and come away with some clear actions.

Congress webpages include draft program and speaker details: <https://womensclimatecongress.com/vic-congress-2025>
[Registration is here](#)

Sponsorship Proposal

To assist women to attend this meeting we have offered a range of payment options using our economic principle of 'Offer what you can - Ask for what you need'. Understandably many women (who we know are chronically underfunded and doing huge amounts of voluntary work already) have opted to pay the 'supported fee'.

We know that most of your organisations are also running on the smell of an oily rag but if you can manage a small sponsorship towards the cost of this event, we would be eternally grateful!

This could be in the form of 'paying forward' the value of 1 or 2 full registrations @ \$300 each, or donation of any amount of your choosing. Donations can be made here: <https://womensclimatecongress.com/donate1>

We're a registered charity and donations are tax deductible.

We would of course recognise your donation in our communications about the event.

A Statement of Support

I know from my previous personal emails to your organisation that some of you are unable to attend but are nevertheless very supportive of our event and the work of the WCC. It would be great if you could add a few words of support to this online form. We will use these testimonials in social media and will also have them available at the event for others to see the extent of the support there is within the women's movement for our work. [Send a statement of support here](#)

With very warm wishes, Dr Janet Salisbury, Founder, Women's Climate Congress. janet.salisbury@iinet.net.au;
www.womensclimatecongress.com; [LinkedIn](#); [Read our WCC Charter for Change](#).

Ethnic Communities Council Victoria



Tal Fitzpatrick – Craftivist and Artist

Changemakers: Crafting a Difference is a travelling exhibition from the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, proudly sponsored by Commonwealth Bank's Next Chapter program, which supports victim-survivors of domestic violence and financial abuse in achieving long-term financial independence. [Her Place Website Changemakers exhibition page](#)

Celebrate activists and their allies who have championed justice and equality this Women's History Month!

In celebration of **International Women's Day** and **Women's History Month**, **Her Place Women's Museum**, in partnership with the **Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (MoAD)**, invites you to ***Changemakers: Crafting a Difference*** at the **Queen Victoria Women's Centre**. **Changemakers** is an **exhibition and workshop** that invites you to try your hand at **craftivism**. Craftivists celebrate and subvert cliched notions of needlecraft and other 'women's work' to bring attention to a range of **social justice issues**.

This exhibition showcases eight textile banners created by Australian craftivist Tal Fitzpatrick, each representing historical and contemporary activist movements. Made predominantly from upcycled materials, these banners reflect the rich tradition of craftivism—reclaiming traditional needlecraft as a powerful tool for social justice. Textile banners have long been symbols of activism, from women's suffrage campaigns to protest movements displayed in town halls and churches. Through this interactive exhibition, you can explore the intersection of craft and activism, highlighting how 'women's work' continues to be a vehicle for political expression and social change.



From Feminist to Felon

From feminists to felons, matriarchs to monsters, some stories might be described as 'difficult history'.

Are there 'no-go' areas in history exhibition – and what happens if we challenge them?

Date: Tue 18 March
Time: 5.30 pm – 7 pm
Cost: \$10-20
Event type: In person / Zoom



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



You can learn more about the event

here: <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/event/feminists-to-felons-exhibiting-womens-history/>



[Soapbox](#) Podcast: 'Mainstreaming misogyny'



International Women's Day! And with the UN Chief declaring we're seeing the 'mainstreaming of misogyny' we're examining how real, passionate and tireless action leads to monumental change for women.

Lawyer, advocate, survivor and Dharug woman **Karen Iles** joins the discussion as we examine the significant recommendations handed down by the Australian Law Reform Commission recently that could change things for victim-survivors of sexual assault, the majority of whom are women.

Less than 1 per cent of perpetrators are ever held as solicitors and advocates for victims/survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, leveraging her legal expertise and public platform to drive systemic change.

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) found that with one in five women and one in 16 men experiencing sexual violence since the age of 15, fewer than one in ten such incidents are reported to police. From there, 75 to 85 per cent of such reports do not proceed to charges, and even fewer go to court. As such, the ALRC has [outlined a roadmap](#) for fixing the justice system, including 64 recommendations for meeting the twin goals of access to justice and accountability. [Read more on the findings here.](#)

Karen Iles is Founder of Violet Co Legal & Consulting, Karen and her practice provide legal advice and representation to victim/survivors. She works tirelessly to reform justice processes, advocating for improved police responses and reducing stigma around rape and sexual assault. Recognised for her impactful work, Karen was named Private Practitioner of the Year by the Women Lawyers Association of NSW (2023) and received the Law Society of NSW Pro Bono Service Award (2022). Karen is a victim/survivor of child sexual assault.

Listen on iTunes or Spotify or: [Podcast: 'Mainstreaming misogyny' ends today](#)



Harmony Day is a celebration of our diversity that brings together Australians from all different backgrounds. It's important to celebrate diversity and the successes of our multicultural society. However, it's also important to recognise the urgency of combating racism. The Commission has developed resources on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD), called Harmony Day in Australia since 1999.

[See the story](#)



New report: urgent reform needed in the child justice system National Children's Commissioner Anne Hollonds has released a statement welcoming the interim findings by the first ever Senate Inquiry into Australia's child justice and incarceration system.

The [interim report](#) highlights the urgent need for political leaders to drive systemic reform to ensure child justice is made a national priority. It followed 223 submissions and testimonies from 40 witnesses, including all of Australia's Children's Commissioners, Guardians, and Advocates. The Commissioner said: *"The Senate Committee heard there is a role for the Federal Government to provide national leadership on reform based on evidence and human rights."*



Trust Women: Lunch Break Sessions, is a new webinar series designed to break down some of the most important gender equality policy challenges facing Australia today.

From February to June 2025, we'll host expert-led discussions on key issues such as nuclear energy, early childhood education, abortion access, housing, youth mental health, and tech-facilitated abuse.

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

[Early Childhood Education and Care: Making a Fairer System for Families and Children](#)

📅 12pm AEDT, Tuesday 18 March 2025

👤 Free Zoom Webinar [REGISTER >](#)

Maddy Butler, Campaign Director, The Parenthood

Luara Ferracioli, Associate Professor, University of Sydney

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

[Reproductive Justice: Abortion Access in Australia](#)

📅 12pm AEST, Tuesday 8 April 2025

👤 Free Zoom Webinar [REGISTER >](#)

Madison Griffiths (moderator) author, podcaster and artist, Speakers TBA

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

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

National Council of Women of Victoria Meeting Dates for 2025

Month	Date	Day	Meeting Type	Time	Method
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	Ross Hse/ZOOM
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	Ross Hse/ZOOM
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	Ross Hse/ZOOM
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	Ross Hse/ZOOM
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	Ross Hse/ZOOM
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 Meeting	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	William Angliss
December	4 th	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meeting	11:00, 12:15	tbc