

Celebrating 123 years in 2025-6

ANNUAL REPORT

2025-26



Acknowledgement

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

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

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

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Introduction

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

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

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

NCWV Purposes

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

President's Report

NCWV President, Elida Brereton

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the 123rd Annual Report of the National Council of Women Victoria Inc (NCWV). In the 12 months since our previous Annual General Meeting, I believe that NCWV has been active, focused, relevant and hard-working. We are a not-for-profit organisation involving volunteers only and I am proud of our achievements, especially over the **July 2025-June 2026 year** covered by this Report. This full Annual Report includes coverage of events, meetings, and hard work done by so many of our members to advance our knowledge about the challenges facing, and opportunities for, the wellbeing of women and girls, and to suggest and/or support efforts to make meaningful changes to laws and practices. I thank all who have been heavily involved in the work done over the 12 months covered here, and who have contributed to this actual Report, for your commitment and your gift of time and talents to NCWV.

Speakers

We were again active with our regular meetings being held in person at Ross House and by Zoom. We are better informed having heard from Guest Speakers during the year who gave their time to share their deep knowledge. These are described separately below.

NCWV Events

The past 12 months have seen NCWV involved in many activities and highlights would have to include “**My Vote My Voice**” at Parliament House last August,

the Individual Members’ excursion to the fantastic exhibition at the Ian Potter Gallery re **65,000 years of Aboriginal Art** in October, our presence at the huge **Multicultural celebration event** in Broadmeadows in November, our **End-of-Year Luncheon** with good numbers and an excellent speaker in Coral Ross AM, meeting outstanding **female pilots** and leaders in the aviation industry in February at the **Pioneer Women’s Memorial Garden**, the wonderful **Women’s Health Forum** as guests of Her Excellency the Governor of Victoria at Government House in March, and follow up **Forum at RMIT University**, the **Geelong Branch Luncheon** in June, and our participation and recognition at the **Mid-term Conference of the National Council of Women Australia** at the end of June in Canberra.

The **Women’s Health Forum at Government House** in the week of International Women’s Day resulted from months of planning, and NCWV Health Adviser Prof Cassandra Szoeki was a prime mover from the beginning in gaining the services of an excellent and qualified panel. She was also influential in the invitations to many eminent women in medicine and health, which, allied with the invitations sent out from the Governor herself, led to a front row of female CEOs and Professors, the Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, the panel facilitator the excellent Dr. Jacinta Parsons, author and ABC presenter, and 280 guests. We were delighted that the President of NCWA, Fiona Dorman, flew over from South Australia to support us in this

venture. Hon. Sec. Dr Julie Stevens was the major organiser of the follow-up **Women's Health Forum held at RMIT University**, with the added aspect of sex-specific training of Pharmacy students at RMIT being introduced.

Our annual and always wonderful event involving students, **"My Vote My Voice"** was held in Parliament House's Upper Chamber and the theme was *What is special about Australian Democracy*, considering the value and nature of democracy in Australia in the 21st century. As always Pam Hammond was the major organiser and the 12 schools with teams of student speakers covered the full spectrum of government and independent secondary schools. The Chamber was nearly full of students, staff, family members and members and friends of NCWV. The speakers and panel were all of the highest quality and Pam Hammond deserves great praise for her hard work in organising the function and following up with visits to the schools to present awards and certificates.

Pam Hammond and Ronniet Milliken, helped by kind family members, set up the **Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden** near Government House in February this year for the annual outdoor tribute to pioneer women and their modern-day equivalents, this year being **Women in Aviation**. Our speakers included the famous Captain Deborah Wardley/ Lawrie who challenged Reg Ansett over her right to fly -- and won, and an author, trainer, and Qantas pilot.

A highlight for the Individual Members was the excursion in late October, to the Ian Potter Gallery at the University of Melbourne, to be part of **the exhibition of Aboriginal art and history** named "65,000 years of Aboriginal Art" curated by

Professor Marcia Langton AO. At the **NCWV End-of-Year Luncheon** in November members and friends enjoyed the gathering and the speaker, Coral Ross AM, who entertained us with her early journalistic career as an English immigrant in outback Australia, and updated us on the status of Australian women as Chair of the Australian Gender Equality Council.

Congratulations to the **Geelong Branch of NCWV** for the most enjoyable and well-attended **annual Luncheon** at The Pecten Centre in the Shell Club in Corio on **Wednesday June 17th** and their hospitality as always was warm, and the meal, venue, and speaker --- this year our own Sarah Barnbrook -- did not disappoint in any regard. President Nonie Crozier and Hon Sec Barbara Abley AM looked after us and Sarah's talk about the dangers of the use and misuse of IT in this digital world was brilliant, accompanied as it was by her slides that demonstrated the dangers so graphically. I thank all office-bearers and members of this active Branch for their loyalty and involvement with the overall work of NCWV.

Advocacy

In the 12 months until June 30th 2026, **NCWV advocated to governments and departments** in areas including perimenopause, NDIS issues affecting women especially as carers, the quality of food provided in aged care facilities, and economic security for older women. NCWV advocated directly to the Prime Minister regarding deepfake digital abuse and digital safety standards. We advocated for relief for rural single-parent households and for fair and consistent funding of the Victorian Patient Transport system, where we know many rural men and women depend so greatly on this transport but find the cost prohibitive.

At the Government House and RMIT

University Women's Health Forums a range of issues unique to women were canvassed and some followed up via letters to the relevant bodies. I thank the Advisers and in particular Sarah Barnbrook who has been inspirational, hard-working and global in her approach as a co-representative of NCWV at the prestigious Women Deliver 2026 Conference held this year in Melbourne (WD2026) and as a warrior against digital harm via being invited to speak at conferences in London and Geneva.

Committees

Emma Fu, our Honorary Treasurer since 2024, resigned in June this year because of pressure of work and we thank her for her work for NCWV and wish her well. I thank past Hon Treasurer **Hean Bee Wee AM** for her faithful and reliable work as acting Treasurer on many occasions when needed. Executive members of NCWV interviewed qualified applicants for the position of Hon. Treasurer and Assistant Hon Treasurer, and appointed **Ms. Meenakshi Bhayani**, a Certified Practising Accountant and member of the *CPA Belonging Network*, and Board financial adviser to the Beacon Hills Christian College, to be our Honorary Treasurer, and **Ms. Niti Bhargava** who is a Certified Public Accountant, co-founder of *Businesswomen of Melbourne*, and member of the Small Business Council Victoria, and who received the 2024 Multicultural Award for Excellence, became our Assistant Hon. Treasurer.

I thank Elisabeth Newman AM and her committee overseeing the best use of the **Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest funds**, which assist members of NCWV considering joining the Committee to gain experience that would benefit NCWV. It was pleasing that an Award was made to Sarah Barnbrook and three grants made to assist three new members including new

Advisers and our Hon Treasurer and Assistant Hon Treasurer to attend the NCWA Conference in Canberra.

Membership

I am delighted that we have welcomed new Individual Members and Organisations and their Delegates – over the last 3 years. We hope to see you become, or remain, as involved as possible as we welcome all who are interested in our work.

It has been a pleasure to welcome **8 new Individual Members to NCWV**, ie Guler Altunbas, Hyein Ellen Cho, Chris Skipper-Conway, Shucheen Yu, Dr Selba Luka and Geet Gaba, Meenakshi (Meena) Bhayani and Niti Bhargava. I encourage you to consider nominating friends and acquaintances known to you for membership.

Member Organisations' Events

Professor Marcia Langton AO, speaker at the National Council of Jewish Women Australia where I was a guest, drew parallels between Indigenous and Jewish minority experiences. **The Hon. Judith Maddigan** was fully qualified to speak about 101 years of women's right to stand for Parliament.

On Thursday March 19th Vice-President Pam Hammond and I were guests of a relatively new women's organisation, the **Women's Justice League**, led by CEO and founder, Kristina Snowball, at their Annual Luncheon held at the lovely Art Deco-featured Victoria Hotel. There were over 100 guests and Pam and I were impressed with the number of young women present. Speakers covered personal life experiences of sexual assault and domestic violence, a man shared his experience of mental and psychological abuse by his wife, and legal people shared statistics relating to battles by women to

gain protection and justice from the legal system and police. The organisation seemed to us to be active and quite balanced in their approach to supporting women and fighting domestic violence in particular. We felt most welcomed.

One highlight from events to which I have been invited in my role as President was the **Victorian Multicultural Commission Dinner** at the Broadmeadows Town Hall, on November 10th where Vice-President June Anderson, Dr Deborah Towns OAM, Pam Robinson AM and I joined hundreds of guests dressed in their national dress. We were warmly greeted by Viv Nguyen, the then Commissioner and NCWV member, and we enjoyed the Middle Eastern food, dancing and music.

We invited delegates from some of our Member Organisations to share the work and priorities of those organisations, with presentations by Marlo Newton for the **National Council of Jewish Women Victoria**, Nataliya Poshyvaylo-Towler for the **Ukrainian Women's Association of Victoria**, and Sarah Barnbrook for **Away from the Keyboard** provided us with insights about these organisations. Sarah has attended international conferences with more than one "hat" and NCWV has benefited from her shared learnings, especially in the field of digital abuse, and child exploitation material.

We became more aware of the work across Australia of NCJWA and its proud history, and NCWV expressed, regularly through me, our empathy with the Jewish community of Victoria and beyond as they face vile antisemitic attacks.

We learned from the Ukrainian Women's Association that in addition to the cruel invasion and ongoing war with Russia, significant numbers of Ukrainian children have been kidnapped and brainwashed by the Russian invaders.

I am sure that all Members and friends join with us in yearning for peace and justice around the world.

NCWA

In my role as President, I have attended [virtually] monthly **NCWA Board meetings** and appreciate that NCWV can learn from the other State Councils, while at the same time sharing our wisdom with them! NCWV has been congratulated by President Fiona Dorman for our active and proactive advocacy and work. We welcomed NCWA President Fiona Dorman and Convenor of Standing Committee Bridget Mather to the Women's Health Forum at Government House Victoria.

Vales

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

Barbara Brown, a foundation member of NCWV Goulburn Valley (Shepparton) Branch.

Yvonne Tully, individual member and Arts & Letters Standing Committee contributor.

June Danks, active contributor to the work of NCWV.

Katrina Plekan, former State Executive of the Ukrainian Women's Association.

Anne Parton, Vice President of the NCWV and the President of the National Council of Women Geelong.

"Leading Women in Health"

We are excited to be producing what we believe is a unique publication, "*Leading Women in Health*" profiling numerous women in the health sector who have made a significant and sometimes unique contribution. Limited to around 100 women, the book only touches the surface of women's leadership and yet provides a wide and telling story about the enormous impact women of Victoria have had in

improving health in Victoria, Australia and globally.

The Introduction will recognise medicine and health provision by First Nations People before European settlers arrived, and their continuing influence in the development of holistic medicine in Australia.

Our Editor, NCWV Committee Member Dr Deborah Towns OAM, an award-winning author, social scientist, and historian, particularly recognised for her qualitative research and public history work, is leading the book project involving other NCWV members, and will provide an introductory chapter.

We are delighted that Ms Ita Buttrose AC, OBE has generously agreed to be involved and write the Foreword. Ms Buttrose is a prominent journalist, editor, and businesswoman. In 2013 she was Australian of the Year, recognised for her trailblazing career in publishing and advocacy for social and health issues.

Thankyous

Finally, I want to thank all who hold key roles in NCWV, including Vice-President **Pam Hammond**, for her unwavering commitment and wisdom, her outstanding leadership roles in our annual *Pioneer Women's Ceremony and My Vote My Voice* events, and particularly for her excellent and hard work in producing our Newsletter every month; co-Vice President **June Anderson** for her faithful work and support; our Convenor of Standing Committees **Robyn Byrne OAM**, and all of her faithful Advisers, covering so many of the aspects affecting women and girls; Immediate Past President **Ronniel Milliken** who has been outstanding in supporting me and the Executive, especially with her diligence in reading and directing all the numerous emails coming to NCWV, setting up Zoom

meetings, keeping us grounded with her great knowledge of NCWV rules and practices; **Sheila Byard OAM** as Convenor of Individual Members and a source of much corporate memory on the Committee, and **Beverley Kannegiesser** (Book-keeper) of the Individual Members; former Hon. Treasurer **Emma Fu** who was supported well by **Hean Bee Wee AM**, and our new Hon. Treasurer **Meenakshi Bhayani**, Assistant Hon Treasurer **Niti Bhargava** Hon. Secretaries **Dr Julie Stevens** and **Phoebe Swift**, and all of the Committee, including **Robyn Byrne OAM**, **Sheila Byard OAM**, **June Anderson**, **Dr Deborah Towns OAM**, **Nonie Crozier**, and **Guosheng Chen**.

As I said last year, you have all ensured that despite the lingering bad effects on meetings of the Covid lockdown, and conflicting work demands for many of us, NCWV continues to be relevant as a major umbrella organisation of women's associations.

Thank you to members who attended our monthly meetings – in person or by Zoom, but we would love to see more of our members involved in these meetings.

This Annual Report has been formatted and edited by Co-Hon. Sec. **Phoebe Swift** and I do thank her for this significant task.

As this is my final Annual Report as President, and as I hand over the role to my successor after three years in this role, I urge you to continue to support the work of NCWV, and where possible to join all other members face-to-face in future meetings and celebrations.

It has been a great honour for me to lead this wonderful organisation, but NCWV needs to continue to be relevant and engaging. There is more to be done for women and girls!

NCWV acknowledges the support received including:

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

As a not-for-profit volunteer organisation, it is impossible to take on special projects in addition to the usual schedule of NCWV activities, without support. We really appreciate donations for our work. Your generous donations will enable the publication of the book celebrating 'Leading Women in Health', planned for November 2026: donations thus far are from Victorian Medical Women's Society, Women Support Inc, National Australian Chinese Women's Association, Elida Brereton, Guosheng Chen, Pam Hammond, Robyn Byrne OAM and Sheila Byard OAM.

Regarding My Vote My Voice 2025:

NCWV acknowledges support from: The Hon. Shaun Leane MP, President, Legislative Council; Maree Edwards MP, Speaker, Legislative Assembly; Parliamentary Services AV staff and Mary-Dee Morgan, Events Coordinator.

Generous donations: The Bessie Rischbieth Memorial, Trust of the League of Women Voters, Victoria; Victorian Electoral Commission; Soroptimist International Victoria; June Anderson; Victorian Community Education Engagement Team; NCWV Individual Members; WCTU-Drug-Free Lifestyle
Donors – including anonymous donors large and small.

NCWA Mid-Term National Conference

NCWA held its Mid-term National Conference in Canberra on Sunday June 28th and Monday June 29th.

NCWV was represented by: President Elida Brereton, Vice-President and Hon Life Member NCWV Pam Hammond, Convenor of Standing Committees Robyn Byrne OAM, Hon Life Vice-President NCWA and past NCWV President Elisabeth Newman AM, Hon Life Vice-President NCWA and past NCWA President Hean Bee Wee AM, past President NCWV Ronniet Milliken, Hon Sec Dr Julie Stevens, Hon. Treasurer Meenakshi Bhayani, Assistant Hon. Treasurer, Niti Bhargava, Adviser /Committee Member Sarah Barnbrook, and Adviser Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto.

Our Victorian Delegation was the largest, and we held the proxy votes of NCW Tasmania. The venue was the Members Dining Room, Old Government House, in all its 1926 Art Deco glory, and it proved

to be an excellent venue with frequent and quite delicious offerings of food..

Federal Minister for Women **the Hon. Senator Katy Gallagher** opened the Conference with an appropriate speech. Before she left to cross the space to the new from the old Parliament House to resume the daily Parliamentary sitting, Senator Gallagher urged us to make a difference in Australia with our advocacy on behalf of women and girls.

The major purpose of the Conference was to establish the directions NCWA should take, via the debate about the draft Resolutions and other focused discussions, and to inform all Delegates of salient issues which were linked to our priorities, : all external speakers were excellent in their fields and we learned a great deal from those sessions.

All Nine Resolution Passed

To summarise:

- Resolution 1: that **child protection and consent** education comprising a mandatory **national curriculum** be adopted in Australia, by all states and territories.
- Resolution 2: that **laws** relating to the **safety of women and girls** be standardised across the nation.
- Resolution 3: that there be equity in **access to healthcare** across Australia, in regional areas especially.
- Resolution 4: that the Government assist in the promotion and cost of **installation of residential rainwater** tanks across Australia.
- Resolution 5: that **child marriage** in Australia be eliminated under the age of 18, with a focus too on eradicating **forced marriages**.
- Resolution 6: that a national framework be developed and implemented to **prevent and respond to technology facilitated abuse**, coordinating justice, child protection, online safety education and AI.
- Resolution 7: that effective and culturally sensitive and community approaches to locating and supporting **child-headed households** be developed, (in light of issues facing some groups, which is leading to school avoidance, crime, child neglect etc)

- Resolution 8: that issues of **cost in compulsory work placements of student women** be addressed, including travel and accommodation costs of trainees in nursing, social work, teaching etc across Australia
- Resolution 9: that a **gender-responsive climate, economic, humanitarian and environmental lens** should be applied by NCWA Advisers that recognises the **disproportionate impact on women and girls of climate change**.

NCWV was very active at the conference and moved Resolutions 5,6, & 7, and seconded Resolutions 1,2,3, & 4!

We were complimented by NCWA President Friona Dorman for our strength and positive contribution to the Conference.

I was proud to be part of NCWV and, with all eleven of us, to share this time of collegiality with fellow NCW members across Australia, to embrace old and new friendships, and the networking, including via the expert speakers from all over the nation, whom we may invite to address us in the future.

Elida Brereton, President

Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest Award

Convenor, Elisabeth Newman AM

Sylvia Gelman AM MBE was a highly respected and dedicated member of NCWV, also of the National Council of Jewish Women (Victoria), whose passion was education, particularly of the young. Keen to encourage members of NCWV to develop leadership skills and hold executive positions within the Council and their respective Organisations, Sylvia left a Bequest to NCWV to be used to encourage and promote talent within the NCWV family, innovation and the strengthening of NCWV and its Organisations. The Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Award has been designed to do that. Members, particularly if recently joined NCWV either as a Delegate or Individual Member, are encouraged to apply for an Award. The Award is initially granted for one year and is valued at \$3,000 per annum, with the possibility of renewal for up to three years, to a maximum value of \$9,000. There is no age restriction.

The Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest also offers grants for NCWV Members, particularly if recently joined, to attend NCWA Conferences.

April 2026 Sarah Barnbrook received a Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Award initially for a year. Sarah, a relatively new member to NCWV has been appointed a member of NCWV's Committee of Management. She also holds a number of Standing Committee positions including Communications and Child and Family. Through these two portfolios she advocates for the digital safety of children and youth and, by promoting ethical use of AI, warns of its potential dangers

through misuse. Sarah has a positive vision for NCWV, particularly in relation to attracting and recruiting younger members.

Grants were given to three new members, Meenakshi Bhayani, Niti Bhargava and Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto, to assist them in attending the NCWA mid-term Conference in Canberra at the end of June. All three found the experience most rewarding.

At the end of August 2025 Emma Fu successfully completed one year of the Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Award. Due to changing personal circumstances, Emma was unable to complete the full three-year program. Well mentored by Hean Bee Wee AM, she served for a year as Treasurer for NCWV.

The Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest is overseen by a Committee of Management comprising Elisabeth Newman AM Convenor, Hean Bee Wee AM Finance Officer, Alex Burns Jeffrey, Tracey Ahern and Ex-officio member, Elida Brereton NCWV President. This past year we have been reviewing the terms and application form for the Award and have also set up a dedicated Gmail address viz.

convenersgbequest@gmail.com.

We operate two bank accounts: an operational account and a Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest term deposit account, which holds the majority of the funds and is renewed annually. (For details refer to NCWV financial report).

The Committee is pleased that the Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest continues to support leadership, development and member engagement across NCWV and, with Members encouraged to apply for an

award or grant, looks forward to receiving further applications in the coming year. For further information and an application form please contact me, Elisabeth

Newman by email:
convenersgbequest@gmail.com.

NCWV Annual Luncheon 2025

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

NCWV President, Elida Brereton welcomed all and thanked members for their advocacy over the year.

She then presented Jan Kinloch OAM with Hon. Life Membership.



Pam Hammond VP, Jan Kinloch, June Anderson VP, Elida Brereton

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

Coral Ross AM, our speaker, is a founding Director and Chair of the Australian Gender Equality Council [AGEC], the members of which represent over 500,000 women in the workplace. Coral has had an esteemed career in journalism and local government and is currently the National Vice President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association

(ALGWA). She has served as a Director of National Rural Women's Coalition. In 2014 she was named as one of the 100 Women of Influence by Westpac/Fairfax, in 2018 was awarded a Churchill Fellowship, in 2019 was inducted into the Victorian Women's Honour Roll.

Coral shared what drives her and what others may consider:

- Be Bold- take opportunities when they arise;
- If it is said 'it can't be done' - I'll prove it can;
- A deep passion for gender equality and the disadvantaged.



Coral Ross, Pam Hammond, June Anderson

Coral recounted many of her experiences as a journalist starting in the UK at a local paper, following her father's profession, which was as a sports journalist. She covered the story of Victoria Gillick's campaign against girls under 16 being prescribed contraceptives. Gillick's case involved a health departmental circular advising doctors about contraception for

people under 16, stating that the prescription of contraception was at the doctor's discretion and could be prescribed to under-16s without parental consent. This matter was litigated because Victoria Gillick ran an active campaign against the policy, seeking a declaration that prescribing contraception was illegal because the doctor would commit an offence of encouraging sex with a minor and that consent needs to be invested in the parent; she was unsuccessful before the High Court of Justice, but succeeded in the Court of Appeal.

Coral also covered women becoming commercial pilots.

After moving to Australia, Coral worked across media, reading papers, magazines, listening to TV and radio then writing stories. She took a helicopter to report on the filming of 'Home & Away'! She covered Royal Tours, travelling to Tahiti and Bali.

One story was particularly memorable. A teacher was concerned about a young boy's welfare and phoned the home number he gave – a UK number! Police followed up to find the father had abducted his son. The mother and her

lawyer flew to Sydney, went to the school, picked him up and off to the airport.

Another story was of a NT couple who found a gold nugget, but crashed their car and walked to the nearest town where they paid for beers with the nugget. Fosters donated beer which Coral flew to the pub!

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

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

Coral spoke of Trump's impact; funding for gender courses withdrawn, affecting Australian universities and research partnerships; religious bigotry; hundreds of words/phrases that have been banned from US Government websites and documents and/or flagged for review by Federal agencies.



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



Guosheng, Julie, Cassandra and Irene Szoeko



NCWV Hon Life Member Jan Kinloch OAM

Jan's involvement with NCWV began as a member of NCW Geelong Branch in 1995. Since then, she has been a member and delegate, and notably Geelong Branch Treasurer, since 2009, a period of 16 years. From 2003-2012 Jan was NCWV Board Member, Treasurer 2004-2008, and Vice-President in 2010.

Jan's service to National Council of Women of Australia included elected office from 2006-2009 as an Executive Member and Board Coordinator of Standing Committees, a significant role in the NCWA policy process and liaison between the NCW constituent councils in the States and Territories. Jan attended the 2005 International Council of Women/CIF mid-term Executive

Committee Meeting in Rabat, Morocco as member of the NCWA delegation.

Jan's history of voluntary involvement has informed her work with NCW Geelong including as a NCW delegate of Osborne House Maritime Museum, the Geelong Historical Records Committee, since 1998 the St John of God Geelong Hospital Auxiliary President for 23 years, and now Deputy Secretary; Geelong Scouts and Scout Heritage Centre Museum.

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



65th Annual Pioneer Women's Ceremony

1 February 2026, Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden King's Domain.



We celebrated the achievements of the Australian women who have played an important role in the founding of Australia's aviation industry and continue to do so, as we heard from Captain Deborah Lawrie AM [née Wardley], Kathy Mexted, Davida Forshaw and Adrienne Fleming OAM.

Captain Deborah Lawrie AM



Deborah - who took on Ansett in the High Court to become a commercial airline pilot when she was 25 - currently flies with Virgin Australia. She was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2001, received the Master Air Pilot award in 2017, was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2019, and in 2022 inducted into the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame.

In 2023 Sydney Airport named, in her honour, a flyover connecting the International and Domestic terminals. At the opening Captain Lawrie said *"If someone had said to me when I was 25, taking on Ansett in the High Court to become a commercial airline pilot, that one day there would be a flyover into Sydney Airport named after me, I would have thought they were mad"*.

Fight for Flight: Deborah learned to fly at the age of 16, working multiple jobs to pay for the lessons. After 11 lessons across 11 months, she flew solo.

Deborah went on to teach flying at Moorabbin Airport while working as a school teacher. She became aware of the new Equal Opportunity Act 1977 legislated in Victoria. Fay Marles AM, Victoria's first Equal Opportunity Commissioner, raised the issue with Sir Reginald Ansett, who reportedly stated: *no woman would ever set foot in one of his aircraft*.

The High Court ruled that Victoria's law prevailed. Deborah flew for Ansett for 10 years.

After the pilots' strike in 1989, Deb took up a position with KLM, in the Netherlands. She rebuilt her career there over 16 years, working as a flight safety investigator and serving on international aviation committees—roles she continues today. Deb returned home, worked for Jetstar, based in Christchurch NZ, then returned to Australia with Tigerair, where she became a Check and Training Captain.

Today, women make up approximately 8% of pilots at Virgin, 7.5% at Qantas, with similar figures globally.

Captain Lawrie, aged 72, is the longest-serving female pilot in the World.

Kathy Mexted



Kathy Mexted is the author of two books on Australian women who fly. Her first book features 10 Australian women who fly fixed wing aeroplanes. This begins with Nancy Bird in the 1930s, through to the modern day. It includes a chapter on Deborah Lawrie.

Kathy was in Year 12 when Deborah's court case was happening in 1979, growing up in Finley in the Riverina and hearing the sound of the agriculture planes taking off for work at 5am. Her experience was of local flights with her Dad in his four-seat Archer.

Her Dad handed her the controls one day saying *"You seem to be enjoying that. If you wanna learn to fly, I'll pay for it"*. Kathy was working in Singapore RAAF when a friend suggested she join the Air Force. *"Excitedly I suggested they could teach me to fly"*, *"Oh. They don't have any women pilots"*.

Kathy came back to flying in 1991 when she got her private pilot's licence.

When writing her book she needed to write an inspiring yarn about women right through to the modern day, to span the generations, the types of flying they did, and the geography of the country.

Kathy knew she had to include Nancy Bird. She was the first female pilot in New Guinea in the 1950s. There were engine failures, forced landings, headhunters and guns. She was 88 when she told this story

and Kathy was so glad she was there to hear it.

In the 1930s, **Lores Bonney** flew herself to England and then to South Africa. **Freda Thompson**, a Melbourne girl who, saw an aeroplane fly over the houses. In 1934 she hopped into her open cockpit wood and fabric biplane, with one small bag and a thermos of water, and flew herself solo from England to Australia in ten-hour hops.

Mardi Gething went to England as an 18-year-old to be presented at court. She convinced her father to divert the funds to a British aero club - she ditched a date with the King of England to take flying lessons!

She was one of 166 women who flew with the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) during World War2. Back in Australia, she was recognised for her outstanding achievements. Despite her achievements during WW2, it took 43 years for the Australian Air Force to allow women pilots, which Kathy suspects was in part forced by Deb Wardley's 1980 High Court victory.

Davida Forshaw



Davida has spent her career balancing the high-stakes world of the flight deck with a deep interest in leadership and people. Her journey began in 1979 at Moorabbin Airport, where she started flying aged 16. As one of Australia's first female jet pilots, she has flown aircraft from majestic B747

Jumbo, Airbus A330 to the magnificent Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Davida is dedicated to amplifying the stories of women who break barriers, a mission exemplified by her work with the short film ***Breaking Glass*** where Davida highlighted the persistent gender gap in the aviation industry. She debunks myths regarding women's interest or suitability for flight by showcasing the legacy of pioneers like Nancy Bird-Walton and the thousands of women who applied for the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) program (1942–1944) in World War 2.

Davida proposed a cultural shift, arguing that *feminine* traits are actually *essential*, *hard safety skills* required for modern Threat and Error Management.

Ultimately, she framed diversity as an existential business necessity for an industry facing a massive pilot shortage, calling for an aviation culture that recognises women as pilots in their own right.



Ronniet, Adrianne, Amy Crevola (past trainee), Julie Stevens

Adrianne Fleming OAM

Adrianne has held various state and national positions in the Australian Women Pilots' Association, encouraging women to pursue their aviation dreams. She received the 2012 Nancy Bird-Walton Award for the most noteworthy contribution to aviation in Australasia, and

the Order of Australia Honour for services to the Aviation industry in 2016.

Adrianne dreamed of becoming a pilot from the age of 6. One day she saw on the news that a woman pilot was fighting a man for the right to fly for his company. This riled her sense of justice.

She asked her mother *"What if I want to be a pilot and they won't let me fly their aeroplanes"* Her response *"I am sure they will have changed rules by then but if not, we'll fight them too"* That one sentence made everything possible.

Adrianne studied maths and physics, like all the books said was needed to be a pilot. She googled and found organisations such as the Australian Women Pilot's Association, founded by Nancy Bird-Walton. Adrianne said: *"I heard her interviewed on the radio. Nancy advocated for women and for aviation both of which I hold close to my own heart. Many of our lives have been shaped for the better because this one woman decided to set up the Women Pilots' Association"*

Today we have aviation high schools, there's Girls in Aviation, Cool Aeronautics, Girls Engineering in the Skies, Open cockpit days, many career events now that feature aviation and pilot training. Multiple scholarships through AWPA <https://awpa.org.au/scholarships-awards/> and WAI, Programs at school where there is an introduction to flying. VET Aviation at school where students can learn to fly in Years 11 and 12, or they can complete that university preference card to go to university where there are HECs places for degree courses including a commercial pilot licence, or cadet pilot programs with extra sponsorship for women and flight school programs. Opportunities are out there and up for the taking.

Adrienne ended saying “We have come a long way and I am grateful for those women who have gone before to help make my path a little smoother and I hope I too may have done my small part in that

also. But we are not at 50% and I don’t know if we will ever be, but it is worth the try. We as adults need to ensure that we become enablers not inhibitors”.



Kathy Mexted, Adrienne Flemimg, Deborah Lawrie, Davida Forshaw Speakers with Vice-President Pam H and President Elida



Official Party placing Australian Native flowers, supplied by Elisabeth, near the commemorative plaque on the left of the Grotto

Women Deliver 2026 Global Conference

Melbourne, April 2026

The Women Deliver 2026 global conference held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre in Narm (Melbourne) from 27 to 30 April 2026, was the first held in the Oceanic Pacific region.

Having the WD2026 conference in Melbourne showcased our region's gender equality priorities and leadership. It provided opportunities to strengthen and form new national and regional partnerships.

At the Closing Ceremony it was reported that 6123 delegates from 189 countries gathered at the conference to break barriers and address gender equality challenges experienced by women, girls and gender diverse people from around the world, sexual and reproductive health and rights, climate justice, First Nations Treaty and truth telling, economic empowerment and ending gender-based violence. [Delegates from : 44% Oceania, 20% Africa, 15% Asia, 9% Europe, 3% Latin America]

NCWV Committee Members Ronniet Milliken and Sarah Barnbrook attended - self-funded - as authorised representatives of NCWV – with Sarah able to attend as a media accredited representative from Away from Keyboard Inc. Sarah and Ronniet were spread thin across numerous conference sessions:

- Scaling solutions and Financing to end Child Marriage in Humanitarian settings and Beyond
- Empowered Youth-led Advocacy against FGM/C

- The Honourable Julia Gillard AC in conversation with Julie Inman Grant PSM Australia's eSafety Commissioner
- Emily's List Australia – Achieving Gender Equal Parliaments – update
- Embedding Sex and Gender Equity across Health Systems, policy and research
- Using education to deliver SDG5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030
- Culture as context for Dowry Abuse related GBV in Australian Indian immigrant women - Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health
- Navigating Gender Backlash through CEDAW [General Recommendation No 41]
- The State of the World's Fathers
- Reclaiming the Digital World: tools to respond to technology -facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV)

Between sessions there was an opportunity to network with organisations that had a space in the exhibition area – that included Girl Guides Victoria, ANU Gender Institute/ National Foundation of Australian Women/ Gender Lense, GenVic [including Lighthouse Foundation for Youth – that provide support to child brides], MSI Reproductive Choices, Our Watch: the Line, Women's Agenda, The George Institute for Global Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health.

At the time of the closing Ceremony, 10 States had signed on to the Melbourne Declaration for Gender Equality – not including Victoria or Australia.

IWD Health Forum



Research into women's health matters not only because women make up more than half the population, but also because women fulfil vital roles across families, workplaces and communities, as caregivers, partners, leaders and colleagues. Improving sex- and gender-aware research and clinical education strengthens health outcomes for everyone. This message was reinforced at the 2026 **Women's Health Panel** hosted by NCWV Patron, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria, at Government House ahead of International Women's Day 2026, organised in partnership with the National Council of Women Victoria.

As Australia marked International Women's Day, the Governor highlighted the importance of meaningful conversations and practical action to address gender inequity. Elida Brereton also welcomed guests on behalf of NCWV, outlining the 124 years of NCWV advocacy.

The event brought together researchers, clinicians, policymakers and advocates to examine longstanding gaps in women's health research, treatment and clinical training, with leading experts sharing insights into persistent gender bias in

medical research and healthcare, outlining ways to build a more equitable health system for women and girls.

The NCWV Health Panel discussion, moderated by Dr Jacinta Parsons, provided thought-provoking insights and highlighted the latest evidence and remaining gaps in women's health. The panel featured leading experts, including Professor Cassandra Szoeki, NCWV Health Adviser and author of *"Secrets of Women's Healthy Ageing"*, the Hon. Ged Kearney MP, Federal Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care (Women's Health), Professor Helena Teede AM, Director of Monash Centre for Health Research Implementation, Monash University and an Endocrinologist at Monash Health, Professor Jayashri Kulkarni AM, Head of Women's Mental Health at Cabrini Health, and Sarah Barnbrook, Founder of Away from Keyboard (AFK) Inc.

Professor Cassandra Szoeki highlighted that women were historically excluded from clinical trials, a legacy that continues to affect treatment outcomes today. *"Women were only mandated to be included in clinical trials at the turn of this century... before that time, they weren't included. In*

the last decade information on the sex differences has doubled in the diseases impacting Australian women, diseases of brain & heart. ..., There are now tens of thousands of publications outlining different symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention for women compared to men". (200 of these are by Prof. Cassandra)

Professor Helena Teede explained that women's hormonal systems influence health across the lifespan and are closely linked to risks for chronic disease, cardiovascular conditions, bone health and mental wellbeing. *"Our hormonal systems are different in women and fluctuate throughout life, from puberty to pregnancy and menopause, with significant impacts on physical and psychological health."*

Professor Jayashri Kulkarni emphasised the importance of recognising women's distinct mental health pathways, particularly the interaction between trauma and hormonal change. *"Our research shows two key platforms underpin women's mental health: trauma and hormonal change. For some women, depression linked to hormonal changes responds better to hormone-based treatments than standard antidepressants."*

Sarah Barnbrook, NCWV Human Rights, ICT and Social Media Adviser, warned that emerging technologies are rapidly changing the scale of harm experienced by women online. *"Artificial intelligence is changing the scale and the velocity of harm. Abuse and misinformation can now be generated instantly, replicated infinitely, and distributed across borders. If we are serious*

about improving women's health outcomes, we must address the digital environments where misinformation and technology-facilitated abuse can undermine women's safety, wellbeing and access to trusted health information."

As Australia marked International Women's Day, the discussion reinforced the importance of collaboration between researchers, clinicians, policymakers, and community organisations to ensure health systems better reflect women's biological realities and lived experiences.

Each attendee received a 'Bookmark' produced by NCWV listing symptoms of possible heart attack in women and suggestions for prevention.

Ged Kearny MP, via Zoom, thanked the NCWV for their ongoing advocacy and Prof Szoek for her leadership in women's health



"I truly believe the Government Health Packages were won because we have more women in parliament than ever before. ...The more women in leadership, the more women working collectively, the more progress we make for our movement".



Bridget Mather, Robyn Byrne, NCWA President
Fiona Dorman, with Pam and Elida



NCVV Exec with Sarah, Helena, Cassandra



NCVV and NCWA members with the Governor after the Women's Health Panel, Government House

Sex-specific Health Education in the Pharmacy Curriculum: Launch



On Friday the 8th of May, to coincide with Mother's Day, NCWV members, friends and delegates, together with RMIT University and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), gathered at RMIT University City Campus for the official launch of the first sex-specific health education in an undergraduate health degree, specifically in the pharmacy curriculum, to address gender disparities in health.

Following the successful International Women's Day Women's Health Forum at Government House on Tuesday 3rd of March, hosted by Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria and organised in partnership with the National Council of Women Victoria (NCWV) which highlighted emerging evidence, persistent gaps in women's health, and the critical importance of sex-specific education for health professionals, NCWV & RMIT University came together to host a rescreening of the original event, followed by a live panel discussion of the importance of teaching sex-specific health within university health degrees, including:

- **Professor Catherine Itsiopoulos**, Deputy Vice-Chancellor STEM College and Vice-President, RMIT University
- **Professor Cassandra Szoeki**, Neurologist, Consultant Physician, Author of Secrets of Women's Healthy Ageing
- **Dr Julie Stevens**, Pharmacy Program Manager, Discipline of Pharmacy, RMIT University
- **Ms Atinuke (Tinu) Abraham**, President, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victoria)

RMIT was proud to launch the landmark health education program in its undergraduate pharmacy degree, marking a significant step forward in equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to support sex-specific health differences in clinical practice.

Sex-specific differences arising from biological factors such as hormones, metabolism, and body composition translate to differences in the way diseases present and respond to treatments, leading to missed diagnoses and suboptimal care. Women also experience higher rates of some medical

conditions and are four times more likely to experience adverse drug reactions than men, highlighting the need for sex-specific teaching in prescribing.

By incorporating sex-specific curricula into its undergraduate pharmacy degree, the university has recognised the need to advance clinical education in health degrees, to provide safer, more effective care and better health outcomes.

RMIT Deputy Vice-Chancellor STEM College Catherine Itsiopoulou said the initiative, supported by NCWV and PSA, will set a new benchmark for health education and training and how it can, and should, respond to the needs of industry and community.

“This new approach represents a landmark step in allied health education, in being one of the first instances of formally integrating sex-specific education into an undergraduate allied health degree,” she said.

“It reflects RMIT’s commitment to advancing education, providing our graduates with the skills they need in the workforce, and improving health outcomes through forward-thinking, evidence-based training.”

Dr Julie Stevens, Program Manager in RMIT’s Discipline of Pharmacy and Executive Member of NCWV, said despite thousands of published studies, sex-specific treatment knowledge has yet to be systematically translated into health professional training. “Advancing women’s health is critical because women represent over half the population, yet their health needs have historically been under-researched,” she said.

“For decades, clinical trials have disproportionately included men, translating to guidelines and treatments that don’t always reflect women’s needs.”

RMIT will take a staged approach to integrate the sex-specific curriculum into its pharmacy program, before applying it across the whole degree. Students in their later years of study will be the first to adopt the program as they undertake placements, work with clinical professionals and apply their learnings in practice.

The University will also explore opportunities to implement sex-specific health education into other disciplines within the School of Health and Biomedical Sciences.



Monthly Council Meetings

NCWV circulates a monthly Newsletter which includes detailed Reports on our Council Meeting speaker, relevant articles, media releases and reports from Advisers. These are designed to inform and educate Members, Delegates and, Friends about current issues.

Speakers – thank you for taking the time to share your deep knowledge.

Speakers at 2025/6 Council Meetings:

July 2025 : Dr Simone McCarthy, Executive Dean Research Fellow, Deakin University, presented research demonstrating that gambling among young Australian women has increased, and is driven by targeted marketing, social norms and digital influence. Younger women are particularly vulnerable to gambling harm, raising public health and gender equity concerns. She called for comprehensive advertising bans, stronger regulation of digital marketing, gender-sensitive education campaigns and continued independent research to reduce gambling-related harms.

August 2025 : Hean Bee Wee AM, one of NCWV, NCWA and ICW's most highly esteemed members, shared her experiences and learnings at the International Council of Women General Assembly in Morocco, with an emphasis on the directions being taken by the supreme ICW body for the improvement of the lives of women and girls around the world. Then Professor Cassandra Szoeki, Health Adviser for NCWV, Professor of Medicine, Doctor, Scientist, and Clinical researcher, an expert in women's health, an AMA Councillor and author of *Secrets of Women's Health Ageing* - shared her experiences and learnings at the recent Asia Summit on Global Health in Hong Kong, focused on fostering global

collaboration in the healthcare sector, and the ICW event in Morocco

September 2025 : Vivienne Nguyen AM, Chair of the Victorian Multicultural Commission and Australian Centenary Medal recipient, outlined the Victorian Multicultural Commission's role in strengthening connections between communities and government, promoting inclusive services, and empowering newly arrived migrants through trust, civic participation, and partnerships with organisations to foster belonging and social cohesion.

October 2025: Zoe Upton, Member of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, Bunurong Land Council, outlined Victoria's treaty process, the structure and governance of the First Peoples' Assembly, and its commitment to gender equality and community consultation. She highlighted key milestones over four decades of advocacy, explaining that the treaty will recognise First Nations expertise and establish stronger decision-making, accountability, and infrastructure to improve outcomes for First Nations communities.

November 2025 : Alexandra Pierce, Peace worker, Australian Living Peace Museum, explored Australia's history of conscription resistance, highlighting women's leadership from World War I to the Vietnam War. Women organised campaigns, supported draft resisters, and led influential protest movements that shaped public opinion and political change. Her award-winning oral history project preserves these stories and contributes to Australia's peace and nonviolence history through the Australian Living Peace Museum.



December 2025: Dr Rosemary Francis, PhD and feminist historian, examined the life and activism of Muriel Heagney(1885–1974) as a leading advocate for equal pay and women’s equality. A teacher, unionist and ALP supporter, Heagney challenged claims that women displaced men during the Great Depression, exposing poor working conditions and unequal pay. Her advocacy helped establish the Council of Action for Equal Pay in 1937, despite ongoing resistance. Dr Francis has authored a biography of Muriel Heagney.

February 2026 : Sarah Barnbrook, NCWV Human Rights Adviser and Founder and CEO of Away From Keyboard Inc, highlighted risks from automated NDIS assessment tools, particularly I-CAN, which can influence funding decisions and disadvantage people with complex or fluctuating needs. She raised concerns about dignity, safety, discrimination and accountability, noting unpaid carers can bear the consequences of system failures. Sarah recommended a Carer Forum, stronger lived-experience advocacy, and dedicated Carers and Disability Advisers.



Sarah Barnbrook

March 2026 : Kerry Pell, Impact and Engagement Coordinator for Prison Network, shared her journey from engineering to social work after volunteering with women in prison. She highlighted the complex challenges women face, including violence, homelessness, addiction and limited support after release. Through Prison Network, volunteers provide connection and practical assistance, while post-release programs support housing, legal needs and employment. These initiatives have significantly reduced reoffending and support successful reintegration.



April 2026 : Marshida Kolthoff, from Council on the Ageing (COTA), presented a summary of COTA Victoria’s report, ***Addressing economic security gaps for older women in Victoria.*** Older women face significant economic insecurity, with one in three single women over 60 living in poverty, rising homelessness, lower superannuation and persistent gender pay gaps. Disadvantage is greater for First Nations, CALD, migrant, disabled,

LGBTIQA+ and regional women. Structural inequalities accumulate across women's lives through employment, caregiving, housing, retirement, family violence and elder abuse, requiring coordinated action.

May 2026 : Dr Kirsten Abernethy, Executive Director of the Victorian Women's Trust, discussed women's leadership, gender equality and systemic reform. She highlighted the importance of women's voices in civic life and leadership, particularly those from regional communities. Kirsten showcased the Trust's research, advocacy, grants and youth programs, and introduced **Madam Speaker**, a digital archive preserving women's speeches and challenging traditional notions of authority.



June 2026: Professor Peter Brukner OAM, Chair of *Sugar By Half*, discussed reducing sugar consumption to address obesity, diabetes and tooth decay. He shared his personal weight-loss experience through adhering to a low-carbohydrate, healthy-fat diet over three months, and highlighted Australia's growing rates of overweight and diabetes. Peter also outlined the Defeat Diabetes Program, which supports dietary changes and physical activity, helping participants improve diabetes management and, in some cases, achieve remission.



My Vote My Voice 2025: What is special about Australian Democracy?



This is the image of the Legislative Council Chamber taken from the Speaker's Chair, Elida Brereton, Pam Hammond in front.

Since 2014, 40 different schools have participated in My Vote My Voice (MVMV) some many times, and a total of 600 students. These events have raised students' awareness of the rights and responsibilities of voting; gender issues in local and state governments; lack of diversity in local organisations and councils; attitudes of young people to voting; when women and First Nations people were able to vote; giving voice to students about the role of Treaty in achieving Reconciliation and whether Social Media is a blessing or a curse.

The 2025 theme: *What is special about Australian Democracy* was designed to have students examining our democracy and comparing with other countries. The event commenced in Queen's Hall then moved into the Legislative Council Chamber, where Elida Brereton, President NCWV introduced the keynote speaker Lucy Skelton, who was part of the Melbourne Girls' College team and speaker at MVMV in 2018 and 2019. Lucy realised that being involved in politics was the way to influence change and show that young people should be there, so she ran for

Parliament, only losing by 3000 votes. With nearly a decade of experience in advocacy and volunteering, Lucy is now a policy analyst, CEO and founder of FORE Australia, a social enterprise which assists organisations to get ideas to decision makers. Last year, she joined the team at Global Voices, where she helps lead delegations of young Australians to international forums.



Lucy Skelton

Lucy challenged the students '*What will you do after your speech?*' **She outlined three steps: have a clear Ask – what is the issue; Identify who to approach, why reach out/trust them; what do you want**

them to do; choosing the right level of government. We then played the *Jurisdiction Game*. She encouraged all to get politically involved and not to be concerned about their age.

In 2025 the schools participating were: Firbank Grammar, Jiayuan Charity Music School, Al Siraat College, Mullauna Secondary College, Melbourne Girls' Grammar School, MacRobertson Girls' High School, Star of the Sea College, Rosehill Secondary College, Melbourne Girls' College, Ringwood Secondary College.

Most students spoke clearly, making eye contact with the audience. All addressed the theme extremely well, with different emphases, including compulsory voting; women voting/standing for parliament before other countries; preferential voting; access to parliamentarians; and local government system. The Panel assessments of each group were used to judge Awards. Matthew Fregon MP, Deputy Speaker, spoke about voting and the responsibility of MPs, congratulating the students and encouraging them to become involved.

Pam Robinson AM, NCWV Council Member: *"Wow, what a great morning of Student Presentations. An absolute winner, which provided a valuable experience for the students presenting in Parliament House, and for their schools, as well as others attending. Leaving Parliament House, I wonderfully came across one of the male students on his phone saying 'Hi Mum, it was really, really good' and at the bottom of the steps down to Spring Street, a bunch of the girls stopped me to say they were going to ask their teacher and parents if they can join NCWV, asking me 'it's free for us to join isn't it? Can we just come to some things if not all?'. My reply: Yes, Yes."*

From one of the guests: *"May I congratulate you and your "National Council of Women" team for the wonderful session you organised from so many schools covering our youth view of explaining "Why our Democracy is special". The students were informed, passionate, articulate and all-round fantastic. Watch out world - here they come! And well equipped they are to do so".*



MacRobertson Girls' College



Star of the Sea College



Melbourne Girls' College



Ringwood Secondary College



Pam Hammond, Ronniet Milliken, Al Siraat College



Jiayuan Cherity Music School, Elida Brereton, Guosheng Chen

REPORTS

Individual Members

Convenor, Sheila Byard OAM

This is my final report as Convenor for the Individual Members Group, and the representative for the Individual Members at the monthly meetings of the NCWV Executive Committee. My thanks to Beverley Kannegiesser as Book-keeper, and others for their support including Barb Joyce and June Anderson who signed my nomination last year.

One important aspect of Australia's democracy is the vitality of member-based organisations. Much of our work as volunteers is through Civil Society Organisations, and the story of National Council of Women is as an 'umbrella' or 'roof' organisation, for member-based groups, to facilitate evidence-based input to policy processes, and a non-party voice for the vulnerable.

Over the twelve months since the last IM Annual Meeting the Individual Members Group conducted two 'Millie Peden' excursions, one in September 2025 to the *Potter Gallery* to see the 65,000 years of First Nations Art, and in July 2026 to learn about the civic function of the *Old Treasury* especially the room used for meetings of the Governor in Council.

The list of Individual Members published in the NCWV 2024-25 Annual Report showed nearly 50 names, many more than my first attendance at an Associates meeting in the 1990s when there were just six in the room, and it is gratifying that new members continue to join.

Although the Individual Members Group meets only every second month, an

examination of the attendance book for our customary hybrid Council meetings shows that, in general, more than half of the attendees, whether in the room or via Zoom, are Individual Members.

NCWV activities over the last year including the August 2025 student event 'My Vote My Voice' at the Parliament of Victoria, the 122nd AGM for NCWV, the end of the year luncheon at William Angliss, the 2026 Pioneer Women's Ceremony of firsts & forerunners among 'Women in Aviation', our Patron the Governor of Victoria Women's Health Forum, the 82nd NCWV Geelong Branch luncheon, were all well attended by Individual Members.

Several Individual Members attended the NCWA Mid-Term Conference held in Canberra in June 2026, including those who were assisted by the NCWV Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest Program, and the NCWV report back session with Sarah Barnbrook's slide- show summary was most effective.

Individual Members used to pass around a purse at meetings and hold a trading table at Council meetings. More recently we have put out a bowl for both IMG meetings and the Council meeting so that donations have been banked to NCWV directly. A sum is provided to annually to NCWV for a *MVMV* award and an additional amount yet to be approved will support the publication of the book 'Leading Women in Heath'.



Pam Hammond , Hean Bee Wee, Sheila Byard, Beverley Kannegiesser, Elida Brereton

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, Meenakshi Bhayani

Financial Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2026

National Council of Women of Victoria

Inc. Registration No. A0004465H ABN

ABN 18227073059

Statement by Members of the Committee

The Committee Members submit the financial report of the National Council of Women of Victoria Inc. for the financial year ended 30 June 2026.

Committee Members

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

- Elida Brereton
- Meenakshi Bhayani

Principal Activities

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

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

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

Significant Changes

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

Schedule 1

Regulation 15

Form 1

Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012

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

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

We, Elida Brereton and Meenakshi Bhayani being members of the Committee of National Council of Women of Victoria Inc. certify that:

"The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial performance and position of the above – named association during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending 30 June 2026."

Signed:

Elida Brereton

ELIDA BRERETON
President, NCWV

Date: August 2026

Signed: *August 20th 2026*

Meenakshi Bhayani

MEENAKSHI BHAYANI

Date: August 2026

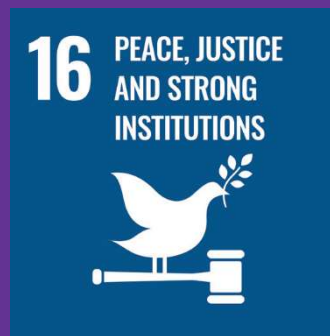
August 20th st. 2026.

Balance Sheet			
Details	2026	2025	Notes
Assets			
Current Assets			
Westpac Cheque Account 3920	10,480	6,305	
Westpac Term Deposit	30,000	30,000	
Westpac Cheque Account SG	3,028	9,428	
Westpac Term Deposit SG	172,460	159,450	
Geelong Branch Account	3,618	-	Note 1
Total Current Assets	219,587	205,183	
Total Assets	219,587	205,183	
Liabilities	-	-	
Total Liabilities	-	-	
Net Assets	219,587	205,183	
Equity			
Members Equity	219,587	205,183	
Total Equity	219,587	205,183	
Notes:			
Note 1: Geelong Branch financials have been consolidated from FY2026 onwards. Amount includes carry forward values from previous years.			
Note 2: Individual Members financials not consolidated here.			

Profit and Loss Statement			
Details	2026	2025	Notes
Income			
Membership			
Organisational Membership	3,360	2,400	
Individual Membership	2,550	2,460	
Functions Income	6,182	5,757	
Grant	-	-	
Donations	5,608	2,179	
Awards	1,800	1,300	
Interest Income	14,285	7,533	
Other Income	1,180	1,000	
Geelong Branch Income	3,618	-	Note 1
Total Income	38,583	22,629	
Expenses			
Rental	3,978	3,118	
NCWA Affiliation	1,366	1,273	
Insurance	1,558	1,218	
Office Costs	2,225	1,152	
Functions	4,941	6,213	
Awards	1,550	1,400	
SG Award	5,400	4,044	
Other Expenses	3,161	1,000	
Total Expense	24,179	19,418	
Operating Surplus (- Loss)	14,404	3,211	
Members Funds B/F	205,183	201,972	
Members Funds C/F	219,587	205,183	
Notes:			
Note 1: Geelong Branch financials have been consolidated from FY2026 onwards. Amount includes carry forward values from previous years.			
Note 2: Individual Members financials not consolidated here.			

Cash Flow Statement		
Details	2026	2025
Inflows		
Functions		
End of Year Lunch	3,805	4,396
Parliament Events	2,377	1,361
Total Functions	6,182	5,757
Membership		
Organisational Membership	3,360	2,460
Individual Membership	2,550	2,400
Total Membership	5,910	4,860
Other Income		
Donations	5,608	2,179
Awards	1,800	1,300
Other Income	1,180	1,000
Geelong Branch Income	3,618	-
Total Other Income	12,206	4,479
Interest Income	14,285	7,533
Total Inflows	38,583	22,629
Outflows		
Function Expenses		
Christmas Lunch	2,694	4,345
My Vote My Voice	1,528	1,444
Pioneer Women's Garden	719	424
Total Function Expenses	4,941	6,213
NCWA Membership	1,366	1,272
Office Expenses		
Insurance	1,558	1,218
Rent	3,978	3,119
Printing & stationery	50	218
Website	1,074	672
Telephone and Internet	512	213
Other Expense	2,161	49
Computers	589	-
Total Office Expenses	9,922	5,489
Other		
Awards - Citizenship	1,550	1,400
Sylvia Gelman Award Administration	1,000	1,000
SG Award	5,400	4,044
Total Other Expenses	7,950	6,444
Total Outflows	24,179	19,418
Net Cashflow	14,404	3,211

NCWV Standing Committees are mindful of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly 5, 13 and 16, the Beijing Platform for Action and applicable UN Conventions.



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

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

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

NCWV Standing Committee Members 2025-26

Standing Committees Coordinator, Robyn Byrne OAM

Status of Women

Adviser Implementation of Conventions Robyn Byrne OAM

Adviser Human Rights Sarah Barnbrook

Adviser Legislation Ronniet Milliken

General Wellbeing

Adviser Health Prof Cassandra Szoeki

Adviser Nutrition Maggie Baron

Adviser Environment Pam Robinson AM

Sustainable Development

Adviser Women and Employment Dr Deborah Towns OAM

Adviser Rural and Regional Women Sarah Barnbrook, Christine Rippon

Communications

Adviser Arts and Letters Robyn Byrne OAM

Adviser ICT, Social Media & Mass Media Sarah Barnbrook

Social Issues

Adviser Child and Family Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto

Adviser Youth Sarah Barnbrook

Standing Committees Reports

Coordinator for Standing Committees, Robyn Byrne OAM

This financial year 2025 -2026 Standing Committees meetings were held via Zoom most months except for a break over December/ January. At the AGM last September 12 women nominated for policy positions and were successful. My thanks to them all for their work over the year in providing articles for the Newsletter and drafts of letters to send to Government on various issues.

NCWA is a member of the peak body the International Council of Women and it decided that Our Triennial Theme for 2025–2028 is *“Women’s Empowerment & Leadership: a Quantum Leap for Peace, Progress and Equality.”* This new theme, adopted at the 2025 General Assembly in Marrakech, reaffirms our ambition to accelerate transformative change for women and girls worldwide. To achieve the goals of the 2025–2028 triennium, we strengthen our collaboration with our National Councils, Advisers, Coordinators, and UN Representatives. Together, we work to amplify women’s voices, shape global policy, and drive measurable progress.

Hean Bee Wee AM, Elisabeth Newman AM and Dr Cassandra Szoeki attended the General Assembly of the International Council of Women ICW/CIF, in Marrakech, Morocco from 23 to 29 June 2025.

Here is the link to read about the new theme and how they apply to our Standing Committees Advisory roles:
<https://www.icw-cif.com/about-us/our-objectives/>

Our monthly meetings of the Standing Committees of Advisers on the third Monday of the month between 4.30-6pm

via Zoom continued to be well attended with lively, informative discussions.

Advocacy

We provided advice and drafted letters to government for consideration of the Executive. We wrote a number of letters to both State and Federal Members of Parliament on the issues that are of core interest to NCWV.

NCWV Standing Committee made a major contribution to the discussion on women’s health in Victoria. Special thanks to Dr Cassandra Szoeki, Sarah Barnbrook and Dr Julie Stevens for their work on information sessions and the important event at Government House and RMIT.

Consultation

In early March, NCWV was invited by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to provide input into the development of anti-vilification educational videos – to help educate rights holders, duty holders and the broader public on civil protections within Victoria’s anti-vilification laws due to commence in April 2026. An unscheduled meeting was held and a letter was developed by participants including several scenarios/ examples. Particular thanks go to Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto and Professor Manjula O’Connor for their contributions.

“Vilification’ is unlawful where a person engages in public hate or hateful behaviour, or encourages others to hate, because of a person or group’s protected characteristic (also known as ‘attributes’).The protected

characteristics are disability, gender identity, race, religious belief, sex, sex characteristics and sexual orientation, or personal association with someone who has one of these protected characteristics.

Speakers

During the year working with members of the Standing Committee, especially Ronniet Milliken Adviser Legislation, we organised speakers for the NCWV Council

Meetings to increase our knowledge on topical issues, refer Monthly Meetings.

Newsletter

Policy Advisers regularly contributed articles to the NCWV Newsletter. Thank you to the following: Sarah Barnbrook, Dr Cassandra Szoeki, Dr Deborah Towns OAM, Pam Hammond, Robyn Byrne OAM, Barbara Latham, Ronniet Milliken, Dr Yee Man Louis, , Dr Rumbidzai Nyanhoto, Pam Robinson AM, Chris Rippon, June Anderson, and Wendy Rainbird.

Status of Women

Adviser Human Rights and ICT, Social Media & Mass Media Sarah Barnbrook

As Human Rights and ICT Adviser to NCWV, I represented the NCWV across international forums throughout 2026.

Working as an accredited UN delegate to CSW and ITU WSIS. At CSW70 in New York, I delivered four workshops under the NCWV banner: “Signals of Safety: When Technology Listens to Women,” “Reimagining the Possible: Women, AI, and a Fairer Future,” “Clearing the Water Upstream: Disrupting Injustices Letting Girls Slip Unseen,” and “Girl Code 2.0: Building Safer Digital Futures for Global Youth.” Each brought a human rights and gender lens to how technology is designed and governed.

Later in Geneva, I delivered my own WSIS session, “Inclusion Without Safety Is Not Empowerment,” and a masterclass for AI startups called “Build Trust First,” and I facilitated the Women in AI High Level Roundtable. I was also in the room for the inaugural UN Global Dialogue on AI

Governance, a moment I didn’t take lightly.

Looking around at who else was there, and who wasn’t, it was hard not to feel the weight of representing NCWV and the women we speak for in spaces where these rules are still being written. Being present for that first conversation means the voice of NCWV is on the record from the very start, not added later once the shape of things has already been decided.

NCWV is named as a co-organiser in the official outcome document from my WSIS session, through AFK’s membership of NCWV.

I was also named to the inaugural WSIS Women and Girls Trendsetter cohort and invited into the ITU Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in ICT.

On 30 April 2026 at Women Deliver 2026 in Melbourne, I facilitated an **official Declaration Hub consultation on technology-facilitated gender-based**

violence. The session sold out and brought together 28 people from 10 countries across Australia, the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, including frontline practitioners, digital rights lawyers, policy advisers, and community advocates. What came out of it was strong agreement on platform accountability, safety-first design, legal reform, and digital literacy as protection. NCWV is recognised in the resulting report through my facilitation role.

I also contributed to updating the NCWA Red Book, adding a matrix that maps our advocacy priorities against the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This gives the NCWV a clearer, more evidenced footing for the positions we take going forward.

National Submissions

- Federal Department of Social Services Submission: Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032
- Senate Submission: Inquiry into AI and data centres
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education Submission: Inquiry into the factors driving educational attainment
- OAIC (Privacy Reform Implementation & Social Media Taskforce) Submission: Exposure Draft, Privacy (Children's Online Privacy) Code 2026
- Senate Community Affairs Committee Submission: NDIS Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026
- Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) Submission: WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge
- Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) Submission: Gender equality as a national security and economic security imperative (with Women 4 STEM)

UN Contributions

- UN CSW70 Contribution: Public launch of Alt-TAB; workshop delivery
- UN CSW70 Contribution: ESCAP intervention
- UN AI Dialogue Partnerships Hub Contribution: Alt-TAB submission with SMART commitment (390 assessments by June 2027)
- UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance Contribution: Attendance and contribution to discussions on data sovereignty and traditional knowledge
- ITU WSIS Forum Contribution: Session 243 delivery, "Inclusion Without Safety Is Not Empowerment"; NCWV named as co-organiser in outcome document
- ITU AI for Good Summit Contribution: Masterclass, "Build Trust First"
- Women in AI High Level Roundtable Contribution: Facilitation

Sustainable Development

Adviser Women and Employment, Dr Deborah Towns OAM

This report provides an overview of issues affecting women in the workplace, with a particular focus on government-funded programs that aim to advance workplace gender equality. Relevant websites are included for further information. It includes a summary of my community activities since last years' report.

Australia continues to stand out globally, as despite decades of equity programs in educational and training institutions, workplaces and the community, it has one of the highest levels of occupational gender segregation in the OECD. Men and women concentrate in different occupations, limiting individual choice and leaving capability under-utilised across the economy.

Women in Trades

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) presents data on apprenticeship and traineeship training contracts. Its 2025 report found that, while female trade commencements decreased overall, commencements by women in male-dominated trades such as electrotechnology and telecommunications increased. Programs such as Tradeswomen Australia and others have invested millions of dollars and thousands of hours over decades to encourage and support women in trades. However, women's participation in male-dominated trades remains low. In industries with major skills shortages, such as construction, electrotechnology and automotive, women make up only 2% of qualified trade workers. [Constructing](#)

[Change: "Future Lady Tradies"](#)

[Empowering Women in Australia's Trades - Melbourne Build Expo 2026](#)

Gender Equality in the Public Service of Victoria, 2020-2026-

The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Service of Victoria was established to implement the Gender Equality Act 2020. 500, 000 people work in public sector jobs which is 11 per cent of Victoria's workforce. The Commissioner recently stated after five years in the job that inequality is an entrenched structural and social issue. I don't think that is a new finding. Isn't that why the legislation was introduced? We seem to be going in circles.

The Commissioner is focused on the workplace inequalities that cause the greatest harm and where meaningful change is both necessary and achievable. This includes workplace sexual harassment prevention and response closing gender pay gaps closing parental leave gender gaps meaningful use of gender impact assessments in public policies, programs and services. [State of gender equality in Victoria's public sector 2026 |
genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au](#)

The Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)

WGEA has reported a positive change with significant increases in the number of employers reporting they were undertaking a gender pay gap analysis and

taking action as a result. Other changes included: Men accounted for a larger share of employees taking primary carer's parental leave; CEOs, board members and workplace leaders are paying attention, and challenging the status quo to improve their policies, practices and workplace culture to support gender equality and 66% of organisations have gender-balanced boards which has increased.

WGEA's new legislation requires that employers who directly employ 500 or more employees are required to select 3 gender equality targets and meet or demonstrate improvement against each of them at the end of 3 years. However, 97.3 per cent of businesses in Australia employ under 20 people so most businesses most businesses are not required to report. Of the top 200 Australian Businesses only 19 have a woman CEO, which is 10 per cent, and this percentage has not changed for years. [Workplace Gender Equality Agency Australia | WGEA](#)

2026 Annual Status of Women Report Card. The findings considered key outcomes and indicators in the Australian Government's ambitious Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality 2024-2034. Australia is at 13th globally for gender equality. This is Australia's highest-ever score and a major improvement from a rank of 43rd in 2022. [Status of Women Report Card 2026 | Working for Women](#)

Overall, we are learning more about women in workplaces and their needs and we are using more finely grained research to monitor and measure progress towards

gender equality at work. However, gaining equity in workplaces continues to be slow.

Further Activities

- Authored articles and provided advice to the Victorian Government's History of Public Education's website, August 2025- April, 2026, [The history of Victorian government schools | vic.gov.au](#).
- Author, 'I'll be a Post Feminist in a Post Patriarchy', in Alva Geikie and Deborah Schnookel, *Radical Women of Second Wave Feminism*, to be published in 2026.
- Curator, 'Cherishing, Challenging, Democracy, Civics, Rights, Responsibility. Parliament House, 16 July 2025.
- Attended 'Founding Stories, Forging Communities, Feminist Futures: Nurturing Feminist Futures in Precarious Times' History Network Conference and Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the *Lillith* Journal, 24/25 November 2025
- Attended the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Symposium, University of Melbourne, 21 December 2025
- Attended 'Reclaiming Democracy Together', Town Hall, Melbourne, 9 May, 2026.
- Assessor, Graduate Women Postgraduate Scholarships, annual program, April 2026-June 2026.
- Attended 'AI and Professional Historians' Workshop, Carlton, 26 June, 2026.
- Editor, *Leading Women in Health*, to be published in 2026.

Adviser Rural and Regional Women

Christine Rippon

Over a hectic 6-week period, 11,000+ native trees have been planted by BlazeAid volunteers, School children, University students, Community and Corporate Groups, Landcare volunteers as well as LandMate crews from the Langhi Kal Kal Corrective Services.

Travelling the 70+ kms to the fire zone several times a week for the planting project has been a hectic time, let alone the hours spent planning and co-ordinating back home here in Ballarat. This project has given our bushfire affected farmers hope, as well as a much-needed spring in their step.

I was fortunate I could deliver treeguards to local schools for the schoolchildren to draw pictures on as well as write encouraging messages to the fire-affected farmers and their families before they came out to these farms to plant their trees. The farmers have been deeply touched by the children's genuine care for their farms wellbeing as well as regenerating the eco system and biodiversity plus providing shelter from the elements for the farmers livestock and the native inhabitants that enjoy the native trees.

During July, I was fortunate to meet with the Minister for Agriculture, Michaela

Settle MP, the Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Natural Disasters, Vicki Ward, and local MP Martha Haylett, Member for Ripon and just recently elected Parliamentary Secretary for Rural and Regional Victoria.

We discussed:

- how BlazeAid can be considered a priority to access disaster zones to give support in disaster recovery without all the red-tape that currently can take weeks to be worked thru
 - the impact on women and children in rural communities during and following a disaster as they are so often left to manage the day-to-day running of the farm whilst the husband is supporting emergency services such as the CFA, SES, etc..
- When we BlazeAiders get to visit these farming families we see how much the disaster has affected them in so many ways that can affect them more than we realize and for an extended period of time.

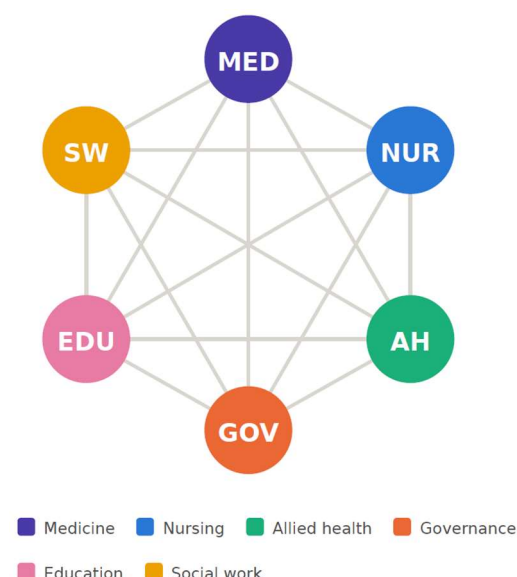
Many other topics were discussed with the BlazeAid CEO, National Business Manager and myself of which many involved rural women and children.

General Wellbeing

Advisor Health, Dr Cassandra Szoeki

Since January 2025 NCWV has run its Health and Wellbeing advisory work as a Hub, led by Professor Cassandra Szoeki (Medicine, Health Advisor), with Dr Julie Stevens (Allied Health), Elisabeth Newman AM (Nursing), Dr Deborah Towns OAM (Teaching), Alex Jeffry Burns (Medical Administration and Governance), Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto (Social Work) and Dr Kate Duncan (Obstetrics and Gynaecology).

The health hub model



The 2026 IWD NCWV Women's Health Panel, hosted by our Patron the Governor, and the RMIT University launch of sex-specific education in the Pharmacy Degree, led by the NCWV Health Adviser and NCWV Hon Secretary Dr Julie Stevens, also Pharmacy Program Manager, are reported elsewhere in this Annual Report. Other milestones for women's health and wellbeing in this period appear below.

A national education partnership. NCWV participates in an NHMRC Partnership project delivering the first national sex-specific education course on cardiovascular risk and the prevention of disease in women, accessible to all doctors through the Australian Medical Association. The programme went live on 1 July 2026. NCWV carries the consumer and community voice into what doctors are taught, and holds the right to adapt the same evidence base for community education, drawn from the same source as the professional curriculum.

Don't Miss a Beat. A Women's Health Victoria initiative launched 23 April 2026 with Ambulance Victoria, St John Ambulance Victoria, Monash University and Medibank. St John Ambulance Victoria will examine and update its CPR training so that it explicitly addresses sex-based barriers and normalises appropriate CPR on women and girls. Ambulance Victoria supplies the cardiac arrest registry evidence behind it, which shows men are three times more likely than women to receive defibrillation.

Advice to government. In September 2025 NCWV wrote in support of broader expertise in national women's health advice, covering chronic disease, mental health and healthy ageing. In 2026 the Government established time-limited Ministerial Expert Panels, the first taking women's cardiovascular health as its subject. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, on behalf of the Assistant Minister, has personally invited Professor Szoeki to the Clinical

Roundtable on Women's Cardiovascular Health on 24 August 2026, convened to support the work of the Expert Panel. Its agenda is the Hub's agenda almost line for line: healthcare provider training and continuing professional development, clinical guidelines and their application in practice, patient education, culturally safe care for First Nations women, and consumer insight.

Sex-specific education in the classroom.

Students taught the new sex-specific health and prescribing module in the Pharmacy Degree at RMIT University returned near-perfect evaluations: 15 of 16 strongly agreed they had learned valuable information and were satisfied overall, every item scored between 4.69 and 4.94 out of 5, and not one respondent disagreed with any item. One wrote: "This needs to be taught at undergraduate level, so everyone is aware."

The year ahead. Commonwealth investment of \$792.9 million has reached the first pillar of the National Women's Health Policy and \$83.6 million the fifth. Chronic disease, mental health and healthy ageing have received no allocation, although they carry the leading causes of death, disease and disability in Australian women. The Hub's focus in the coming year is advocacy to government on those three remaining pillars. Addressing them is essential to correcting historical inequities and the entrenched medical misogyny that produces delayed diagnosis, misdiagnosis and poorer treatment outcomes for women. We will continue to support the full implementation of the 27 recommendations of the Victorian Inquiry into Women's Pain; offer the Hub's clinical

and consumer expertise to the design of the Medicare item for menopause review; and sustain the community education stream drawn from the same evidence base as the national professional curriculum.

More detail is set out in the separate Health and Wellbeing Hub Report to Council 2025 and 2026, on the NCWV website.



NCWV COUNCIL OF WOMEN VICTORIA

HEART DISEASE

is the 2nd leading:
cause of death (COD) in women

PATHOLOGY IS DIFFERENT IN WOMEN

Most women have MICROVASCULAR heart disease.

Common cause of
POOR HEART FUNCTION & STRAIN

Common symptoms: Fatigue, discomfort in chest, neck, jaw, arm
Shortness of breath, dizziness, cold sweat, feeling weak, stomach distress, palpitations, malaise, can be at rest

LEAST WELL STUDIED type of heart disease

NOT AMENABLE TO current treatments of BYPASS (CABG) or STENTING

Some women have MACROVASCULAR heart disease (the most common heart disease in men)

Common cause of
HEART ATTACK

Common symptoms: Crushing chest pain that can radiate to arms, neck.
Shortness of Breath nausea, vomiting, lightheaded, sweating, activity triggers

MOST STUDIED type of heart disease CAN BYPASS (CABG) or STENT BLOCKAGES

Women can also get SPONTANEOUS CORONARY ARTERY DISSECTION Heart Attack & STRESS CARDIOMYOPATHY "Broken Heart Syndrome" (inflammation of the heart muscle meaning it doesn't work properly)

These Risk Factors & Pathologies also make women at risk of DEMENTIA & STROKE
1st and 3rd leading cod in women

©ProfSzoekse_scXXspED

Adviser Environment, Pam Robinson AM

NCWV is committed to ensuring as much current knowledge as possible is shared with its members and friends on matters relating to environmental sustainability, to issues that require adaptation responses to climate change, and by showing we all need to be part of taking the steps needed to address both the positive and negative impacts therein.

Understanding ***we are part of nature – not apart from nature*** – is the awakening that takes us to hands-on participation. NCWV always has women and girls at the forefront of their thinking and regarding every facet of life. In the Newsletters, over the past twelve months, links have been provided to take everyone to more information on what many National and International Associations and Organisations are working with to address the critical issues relating to our natural environment and its relationship to human health and well-being while also heightening understanding and awareness of the impacts of climate change. Importantly NCWV has provided

information about how we can all be part of the solutions and of how important it is to both take part personally as well as encourage others across all ages to participate through *hands-on* responses in our communities.

It is recommended that to find out links to various information, the 2025-26 Monthly Newsletters be revisited as in there one will find many well respected and leading voices and with ways to participate in environmental days and programs.

Examples of two such entities:

For local on-ground environment and community partnership opportunities, Landcare, which is celebrating 40 years of achievements in Victoria is a great way to connect with a group and activities in everyone's local community.

www.landcarevictoria.org.au Also the Climate Council, which is an independent, community-funded non-profit organisation with respected expert climate councillors is one of Australia's leading climate change communicators. www.climatecouncil.org.au

Communications

Education - Pam Hammond

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 states: *To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*

The UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child states: *Children have the right to be active participants in all matters affecting their lives.*

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

NCWV has been focussed on several of these priorities.

Early Childhood Education

In August 2025 a Legislative Council Select Committee called for public input on its inquiry into the Early Childhood Education and Care sector in Victoria, established after revelations about child safety impacting the sector. The inquiry examined the adequacy of current quality and safety standards, as well as the quality and oversight of educator training, professional development and qualifications including the effectiveness of Working with Children Checks. It also considered the impacts of Victoria's privatised system, workforce conditions, the adequacy of staff-to-child ratio regulations, and whether there is sufficient oversight of the Department of Education.

The Committee's Interim Report was tabled on 31 March 2026. The Committee received evidence from submissions and public hearings that the Early Childhood Education and Care sector is in need of systemic reform, better oversight and accountability, to ensure the paramount interests of Victorian children in care.

The Victorian Early Childhood Education and Care sector operates within national and state-based frameworks. Over 95% of Victorian services are regulated under the National Quality Framework. Reforms to the National Law were implemented in stages between August 2025 and February 2026 following the Rapid Child Safety Review and after receiving agreement from state and territory education ministers. Inquiry stakeholders were supportive of the changes. The Committee will monitor the implementation and outcomes of the changes throughout the Inquiry. Final Report is due later in 2026.

The Victorian Government commissioned the *Rapid Child Safety Review* to examine immediate actions to improve child safety in Early Childhood Education and Care.

The Review's report made 22 recommendations directed to the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments. Summary of recommendations in the *Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's rapid assessment of child safe practices report*:

- *Strengthen the National Quality Framework to address inconsistencies and misinterpretations, including that applying under the roofline ratios should be used in exceptional circumstances only.*
- *Approved providers to meet their obligations and responsibilities under the National Quality Framework, including extending testing to require providers to demonstrate their understanding of their role in child safety and due diligence in employing staff.*
- *Improve access to enhanced, clear and targeted guidance materials and practice support, through developing enhanced guidance material and communication.*
- *The design of service buildings and outdoor spaces must facilitate supervision of children at all times and remove opportunities to isolate children, including audits to services' existing building designs and reviewing building design and physical environment requirements.*

Source: Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, *Rapid assessment of child safe practices*, Canberra, 2025.

Civics and Citizenship:

There has been much said about students being dis-engaged with politics, be it local, state or federal. However, when provided with platforms that respect their views, young people show they can research, deliberate and problem-solve. Interest and confidence in democracy can be supported by giving students meaningful opportunities to participate.

NCWV's **My Vote My Voice** event is designed to do exactly that. The quality of student deliveries and the research that they carry out has been consistently of high quality since 2014. The students have been excited, engaged and passionate about the experience. In 2025 the theme was *What is special about Australian Democracy*, with students researching opinions from their peers.

The **Australian Children's Television Foundation** has developed a teaching tool for Civics and Citizenship for an engaging way to explore democracy, rights and responsibilities with students, the *Civics and Citizenship: Curated Clip Collection*. This resource offers a range of short video clips alongside ready-to-use activities designed to prompt discussion and foster critical thinking in the classroom. Developed in line with the Australian Curriculum, the collection supports students to make connections between their everyday lives and broader civic concepts.

Attracting and Retaining Teachers

Teaching is the profession that teaches all professionals. Teaching is not for the faint-hearted, but a slogan that I once saw on a mug – “Touch the future – Teach” says it all. With VCE or equivalent behind them, students are looking towards their future. These young people have been

encouraged and supported by devoted, experienced, wise educators over 13 years. It is a highly rewarding profession, but at times highly stressful, demanding and exhausting. To fulfil the complexity of teaching and not ‘burn out’, teachers need support in their schools, especially new teachers.

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

Activities

As Convenor of the Civics and Citizenship Program, I contact schools, speaker and panel members for the Annual *My Vote My Voice* event in Parliament. I send invitations to NCWV members and others and liaise with Parliamentary Services. After the event award decisions are made, I visit schools and organise school visits for donors to present the Awards.

I have been part of webinars, one by Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL). Hosted by Travers McLeod, Executive Director of BSL, this talk brought together perspectives on what the *Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters* (HIPPY) 21 sites transitioning to local First Nations providers, have taught us, with a further 7 communities choosing partnership models that embed cultural governance. Discussions explored education, childcare, financial knowledge

and wellbeing, cultural governance, community-based management capacity, family issues and the role of allied organisations. It was gratifying to hear that the Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that in 2026, 98% of First Nations pre-schoolers are attending kindergarten or the equivalent.

I attended the Interfaith Eid Al-Adha Dinner at Al Siraat College in Epping, with distinguished guests from government,

the Victorian Multicultural Commission, education, emergency services, faith groups and community organisations, for an evening dedicated to strengthening relationships and fostering greater understanding across diverse communities.

I attended the 2026 NCWA conference in Canberra as part of the 11 strong Victorian contingent.



Ronniel Milliken, Rumbi Nyanhoto, Pam Hammond, Niti Bhargave, Hean Bee, Sarah Barnbrook, Elisabeth Neuman, Dr Julie Stevens, Meenakshi Bhayani, Robyn Byrne, Elida

Social Issues

Advisor Child and Family, Dr. Rumbi Nyanhoto

I attended the following:

July 2025 – International Childhood Trauma Conference: Presented on the prevalence and prevention of child marriage in Australia, contributing to professional and public awareness of child marriage as an issue of child protection, gender equality and human rights. The presentation helped bring greater visibility to an issue that can remain hidden within Australian communities and reinforced the importance of prevention, education and culturally responsive responses.

September 2025 – Wyndham Learning Festival: Invited as a keynote speaker to speak on families and mental wellness. The presentation promoted stronger families, community wellbeing and the importance of supportive relationships, contributing to community education and conversations about strengthening the wellbeing of families.

March 2026 – International Women's Day, Australian Multicultural Women Association Inc.: Delivered the keynote address, "Leading with Compassion: When

Purpose Meets Impact.” The presentation encouraged women, particularly women from multicultural communities, to recognise their capacity to lead from where they are and to use their experiences, values and influence to create positive change.

April 2026 – She Rise Foundation Launch, Western Melbourne: Delivered a keynote address on women and leadership, with a particular focus on encouraging multicultural women to develop their leadership capacity, recognise the value of their voices and take up opportunities to lead within their families, professions and communities. This contribution supported

greater representation and participation of culturally diverse women in leadership.

July 2026 – United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR): Selected as one of 30 academics globally to participate in a global higher education forum. I contributed to discussions on artificial intelligence and the future of higher education, participated in the AI Global Summit and Global Education Summit, and contributed to the development of a white paper arising from the discussions. My participation brought perspectives from social work - AI and human centred learning.

NCWV Geelong Report

Nonie Crozier, President NCWV Geelong

It is with pleasure that I provide my NCWV Geelong President's Report for the 2025/2026.

A Year of Transition

This past year has been a period of significant change for our Branch:

- **New Venue:** We moved from our long-established meeting room at St David's UCA, Newtown, to a purpose-built facility in Newcomb.
- **New Schedule:** We successfully shifted our general meetings from the third Monday of the month to the third Wednesday of the month.
- **Strategic Focus:** A high priority of my role has been promoting and advancing the work and aims of NCWV, ensuring Geelong complements the broader state-wide picture.

Embracing Renewal

Serving as your President this past year has been an honour. While the vast history of the NCWV underpins much of what we do, change is inevitable. It is not about "throwing the baby out with the bathwater," but rather about keeping an open mind toward renewal. Being part of the NCWV community is vital for sharing ideas, practices, and maintaining a sense of collective effort.

Governance and Administration

My primary responsibilities have been supporting our Branch through strong, consistent communication, facilitating monthly member meetings, and representing the Branch at the State level.

I have worked closely alongside our Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer to coordinate meetings and administer the business and membership of the Branch.

Since our last AGM, we have met monthly with a set agenda to manage our:

- Finances and membership
- Policies and procedures
- Strategic relationships
- Participation in the regional community of not-for-profit women's service groups and those of our Affiliates.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Branch members for your support, time, and participation during this year of adaptation. Your dedication is particularly appreciated as we continue aligning our operations with the legislative requirements, policies, and procedures that govern us as a subsidiary of the NCWV.

Membership and the Future

Reflecting on the past year and looking forward, membership growth is a key area for improvement. There are many benefits to joining us—not least of which is our very reasonable membership rates.

We should also celebrate the fact that our Branch is over 82 years old. While our numbers have dipped and grown over the decades, changing demographics within the Barwon South West Region show a clear increase in the female population. This presents a major opportunity to recruit new members, particularly by identifying avenues to participate in regional business and professional activities. Moving forward, we strengthen our connections with service clubs and like-minded organisations to elevate the status of women and girls in both community and professional life.

Today, we have a core membership representing all walks of life and expertise. To help this grow in the coming year, we will focus on researching the opportunities to increase our Affiliate numbers, and embrace the opportunities which we identify to support useful connections with younger women's groups such as SisterUp. Our Branch has provided financial support to this programme, and their leader will be our Guest Speaker in November. SisterUp provides structured opportunities for social connection, professional mentorship, skill building, and personal growth.

Two of our Affiliates, SIG and ZONTA, have strong programmes catering specifically to women in their teens, 20s, and 30s who want to forge meaningful friendships or seek community-specific support, and we are happy to be part of their programmes.

We want to make NCWV Geelong membership beneficial to each member individually and collectively by working cohesively with our Affiliate groups to support and enjoy each other's successes.

Final note: we appreciate the support of President Elida and members of the NCWV committee(s) throughout the reporting period, and look forward to the next twelve months with optimism and renewed determination. As we build on our achievements, we remain collectively committed to empowering women across Victoria. We embrace the new opportunities ahead with a steadfast dedication to advancing the core mission and advocacy of the NCWV.

Archivist Report

Acting Hon NCWV Archivist, Sheila Byard OAM

During the recent Open House Melbourne weekend on 25 July 2026, it was possible to have a behind the scenes visit to the 100 km of records from the 1830s to the present day held by the Public Records Office of Victoria. A briefing explained the way in which PROV also acts as an access point for the National Archives of Australia. These entities are by law obliged to conserve and make accessible all types of records recording the activities of governmental entities. Archives are generally defined as documents, text, photographs, video material, sound, analogue & digital records and it is increasingly common for non-government entities to prepare an archives policy to ensure their stories are conserved.

In the Honorary Archivist Reports for 2023-24 and 2024-25 it was recommended that there should be a plan of action to review paper records and memorabilia belonging to the National Council of Women of Victoria held in the office space on the Mezzanine Level at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Some of the records of NCWV are already located in the manuscripts section of the State Library of Victoria, and other material including transcripts of interviews for Respectable Radicals: A History of National Council of Women of Australia 1896-2006 by Marian Quartly and Judith Smart are held in the National Library of Australia. Because of the acceptance of the Ann Jackson papers to the RHSV and

more recently receipt of the Janet Galley papers, the need for a plan of action to review NCWV archives has become more urgent.

In April 2026 Ronniet Milliken and Sheila Byard began a conversation with Jillian Hiscock, RHSV Collections Manager and Volunteer Coordinator to consider next steps in evaluating what to keep and how it might be possible to fund costs associated with preservation or digitisation of the event photos provided over more than twenty years by the late Anne Parton, an Honorary Life Member of National Council of Women of Victoria; most of which are in ageing plastic albums but do include names of individuals shown in the photos.

A second possibility is linked to the NCWV *bank note* banners on plasticised fabric created for the Centenary of Federation 'Our Nation On Parade' including one featuring Muriel Heagney, themed as *Equal Say Equal Pay*. An offer of the banners to the State Library of Victoria was discussed but did not proceed as they would no longer be available for use. Now we have access to good design process through the Janet Galley archive and the chance to interview of the three women including Robin Laurie and Eva Glen who worked on the research, design and execution of the banner project, there to be possible funding for a project leading to an on-line or travelling exhibition

Vales

Barbara Brown

1947 – July 2025



Barbara Brown was a foundation member of NCWV Goulburn Valley (Shepparton) Branch (GVB) from its formation in 1999, was elected NCWV Regional Vice-President 2007-2012 and she continued until the GVB closed in 2013, becoming an NCWV individual Member.

Barbara was a member with enthusiasm to publicise the GVB and its activities; also Individual Members and Council. She supported NCWV Awards e.g. Dame Phyllis Frost Award, Rural Women's Voice Workshop.

Barbara was Convenor and individual Members' Representative on NCWV Executive, Sept. 2013-2015. Since that time, Barbara's support for NCWV remained a part of her life for more than 20 years.

Barbara is remembered as our friend, colleague and NCWV Honorary Life Member. We recall the massive amount of time and energy Barbara put into the Shepparton-hosted biennial Australian National Piano Awards program which some of us used to attend.

Yvonne Tully

1947 – 21 July 2025.



Yvonne Tully, originally from Queensland, was an active Individual Member of NCWV through the pre-COVID years. She was a well-informed contributor to the Arts & Letters Standing Committee and attended many NCWV activities.

Members will recall that after Geelong Branch member Jan Kinloch retired from running the trading table at NCWV monthly meetings, Yvonne took over that responsibility, encouraging members to share home cooked good, handwork & other valuable items - a way of maintaining a vital revenue stream for NCWV over and above subscriptions & cash donations.

June Danks

1931 – 26 March 2026

For many years June Danks was an active contributor to the work of National Council of Women Victoria.

Said Sheila Byard OAM "Elisabeth Neuman AM and I had a little to do with June, a lovely lady, when I was active as NCWV Health Convenor/ Adviser in the 1980s/90s, she was a good support to me as well as to NCWV in general."

Katrina Plekan
1937 – 14 July 2025



Katrina Plekan joined the Ukrainian Women's Association becoming an active member of the State Executive UWA, Victoria. She was appointed a NCWV representative. At meetings she attended Katrina met Sheila Byard. Sheila, Vasylyna Lewinski, Nataalka Hrynewych and Kartina together produced the historical photographic booklet of Ukrainians in Newborough.

Katrina was one of the volunteers at the Ukrainian Museum in North Melbourne. Katrina was a gifted embroiderer. She will be sadly missed.

Anne Parton
1937 – 12 September 2025



For 60 years, Anne Parton has advocated for marginalised women, championed women's issues and raised funds for families, social causes and communities

Anne was the Vice President of the National Council of Women Victoria and the President of the National Council of Women Geelong for multiple terms. Anne was admitted to the Women's Honour Roll Victoria, an honour richly deserved.

. She was a loyal attendee of virtually all Council meetings in Melbourne.

2025–26: About Us

Patron in Chief

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

NCWV Committee Members 2025–26

President, Elida Brereton

Vice Presidents, Pam Hammond, June Anderson

Honorary Secretary Phoebe Swift, Dr. Julie Stevens

Public Officer, Phoebe Swift

Honorary Treasurer, Emma Fu (resigned), Meenakshi Bhayani

Assistant Honorary Treasurer Niti Bhargava

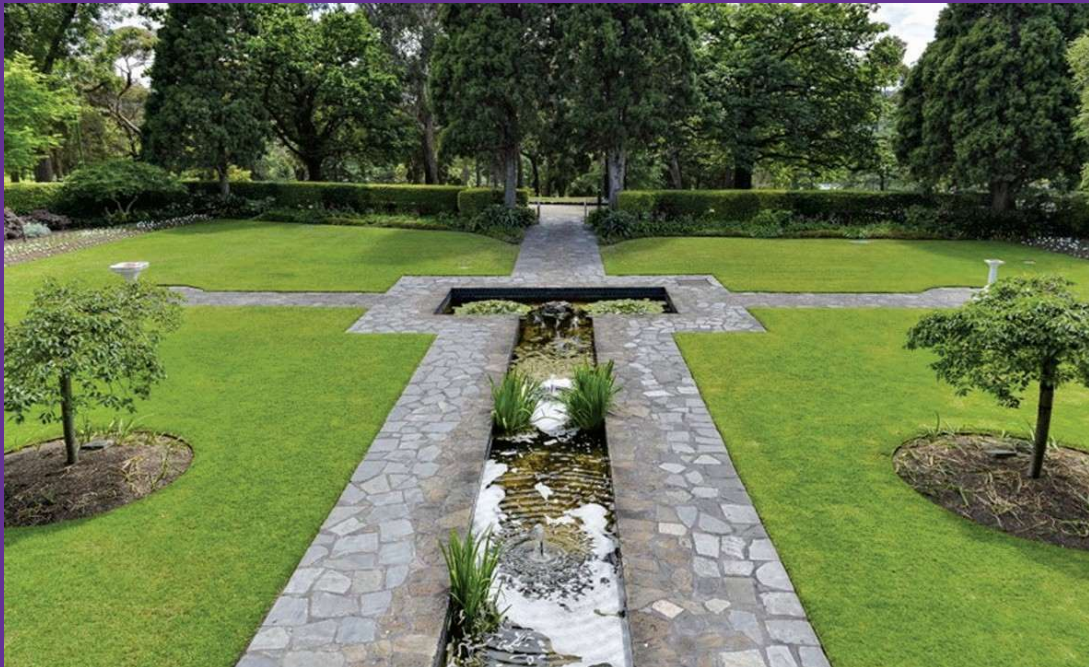
Standing Committees Coordinator, Robyn Byrne OAM

Individual Members' Convenor, Sheila Byard OAM

Geelong Branch President, Nonie Crozier

Ordinary Members

Ronniet Milliken, Dr Deborah Towns OAM, Guosheng Chen, Sarah Barnbrook, Hean Bee Wee AM



NCWV Standing Committee Members 2025-26

Standing Committees Coordinator Robyn Byrne OAM

Status of Women

Coordinator Robyn Byrne OAM

Adviser Implementation of Conventions Robyn Byrne OAM

Adviser Human Rights Sarah Barnbrook

Adviser Legislation, Ronniet Milliken

General Wellbeing

Coordinator Prof Cassandra Szoeki

Adviser Health Prof Cassandra Szoeki

Adviser Nutrition Maggie Baron

Adviser Environment Pam Robinson AM

Sustainable Development

Coordinator Dr Deborah Towns OAM

Adviser Women and Employment Dr Deborah Towns OAM

Adviser Rural and Regional Women Sarah Barnbrook, Christine Rippon

Adviser Consumer Affairs Robyn Byrne OAM

Communications

Coordinator Sarah Barnbrook

Adviser Education Pam Hammond

Adviser Arts and Letters Robyn Byrne OAM

Adviser ICT, Social Media & Mass Media Sarah Barnbrook

Social Issues

Coordinator Dr Yee Man Louie

Adviser Child and Family Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto

Adviser Youth Sarah Barnbrook

Adviser Multicultural Affairs June Anderson

Hon NCWV Archivist, Sheila Byard OAM

Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Awards Management Committee

Convener Elisabeth Newman AM

Finance Officer Hean Bee Wee AM

Alex Burns Jeffrey

Tracey Ahern

Ex-officio Member NCWV President Elida Brereton

International Council of Women

Elisabeth Newman AM, Life Member

National Council of Women Australia

(Positions held by NCWV members)

Elisabeth Newman AM, Honorary Life Vice President

Hean Bee Wee AM, Honorary Life Vice President

Elida Brereton, Board Member as NCWV President

National Council of Women Victoria

Honorary Life Members

Col (Rtd) Joyce Fisher

Elisabeth Newman AM

Dr Pat Phair OAM

Anne Parton (deceased)

Freda Kaufman

Pam Hammond

Jan Kinloch OAM

Life Members

Beverley Blyth Bailey
Sheila Byard OAM
Sandy L Munro
Leonie Christopherson AM
Elisabeth Newman AM
Jenny Russell OAM
Katherine Karas
Guosheng Chen

Individual Members 2025–26

Tracey Ahern	Geetanjali Gaba	Fiona Patten
Guler Altunbas	Deborah Geddes	Pam Robinson AM
June Anderson	Di Gillies	Christine Rippon
Maggie Baron	Suzanne Howarth	Rysia Rozen OAM
Sarah Barnbrook	Barbara Joyce	Chris Skipper Conway
Niti Bhargava	Beverley Kannegiesser	Dr Julie Stevens
Meenakshi Bhayani	Olga Korytsky	Phoebe Swift
Elida Brereton	Barb Latham	Dr Cassandra Szoeki
Robyn Buccheri	Dr Yee Man Louie	Irene Szoeki
Edith Chen	Li Lu	Hean Bee Wee AM
Hyein Ellen Cho	Dr Selba-Gondoza Luka	Pam Williams
Deb Colville	Ronniet Milliken	Margaret Wilson
Terri Dry	Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto	Abi Hodan Yassin
Emma Fu	Vivienne Nguyen	Shucheen Yu

Organisational Members 2025-26

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

AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health – Dr. Manjula O'Connor

Australian Local Government Women's Association Inc (Victoria) – Cr Karen Foster / Cr Sarah Gilligan

Australian Psychological Society – Dr Zena Burgess

Away From Keyboard – Sarah Barnbrook

Beta Sigma Phi Victoria Inc - Ronniet Milliken / Helen Bruckner

Firbank Old Grammarian's Association – Amanda Webster / Diana Cudmore

Food for Thought Network – Kalli Taifalos / Christina Pallikaris

Girl Guides Victoria – Suan Sow

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

Methodist Ladies College Old Collegians – Sarah Mote/ Bridget Ward

National Australian Chinese Women's Association Inc – Rowena Chen

National Council of Jewish Women (Victoria) – Marlo Newton / Anna Serry

NCWV Geelong Branch – Nonie Crozier / Beryl McMillan AM / Barbara Abley AM

Presbyterian Ladies College Old Collegians – Robyn Byrne OAM

Soroptimist International of Victoria – Susannah Dax / Elizabeth Butler

Ukrainian Women's Association of Australia, Victoria Yanina Dutka / Orysia Stefyn

Victorian Women's Medical Society – Daisy Lu / Michelle Li

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

– Rhona Theodore / Jan Shattock/ Anne Bergen

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

Women Support Inc. June Anderson / Stephanie Liu

From our Member Organisations

NCJWA Victoria

This year was marked by exciting growth and significant milestones across our programs. Caring Mums celebrated supporting more than 1,000 mothers from over 30 cultural backgrounds, reflecting the rich diversity of the community it serves. Our Connect Seniors Program continued to bring older community members together, with 132 seniors participating throughout the year. We also welcomed the third cohort of our highly sought-after Accelerator 8 week Program, which empowers women to strengthen their leadership capabilities, build confidence and expand their networks, helping to shape the next generation of community leaders.

Following several years of successful volunteer-led delivery of Jewish Women of Words (JWOW), the Jewish Women's Directory and the Accelerator Program, we took an important step towards professionalising and strengthening this work. These initiatives have now been brought together under "Make Space For Her", our dedicated leadership, empowerment and advocacy program, led by newly appointed Program Manager Kate Same.

Together, these milestones reflect our continued commitment to responding to the evolving needs of women across every stage of life.

Soroptimist International

**Soroptimist International Victoria :
Foundation-Launch Event Parliament
House, 26 November 2025.**

There were 160 guests and Soroptimists celebrating the launch of a new milestone for Soroptimist International Victoria Foundation. Clubs in Victoria have met for more than 50 years of service. They recently sold their headquarters in South Yarra and transformed its legacy **into the Soroptimist International Victoria Foundation.**

The inaugural nine grants of \$20,000 each were announced. They funded grassroots projects to empower women and girls in the community. The Margaret Mitchell Major Grant of \$100,000 per year up to 5 years was awarded to Women's Property Initiatives, to provide housing for homeless women.

The Soroptimist International Victoria Foundation represents a significant financial commitment to advancing the lives of women and girls through education, equality, and enablement opportunities. This launch marks not just the beginning of a fund, but the continuation of a vision: **strong, peaceful communities where every woman has the chance to thrive.** It was an exciting, impressive, event, and the grants are supporting 'at risk' women and girls in immediate and practical ways.



Victorian Medical Women's Society



Over the 2025/2026 years Victorian Medical Women's Society is proud to have continued advocating and providing opportunities for connection for medical women and advocated for gender equity. We held four successful major events during 2025 including the Ask Me Anything: Speciality Training, Prescribing Parenthood, The Hospital Hustle and Women in MedTech (in collaboration with NEXUS MedTech). We also started our mentorship program and had increasing success with our Jobshare Database. This year we had another fantastic panel of speakers at the Prescribing Parenthood event and had a truly inspiring event at the Building Community and Mentorship in Medicine. We hope to continue our connection with NCWV and support its membership.



Methodist Ladies College Old Collegians

During 2025/26, the Methodist Ladies' College Old Collegians' Club (OCC) strengthened its engagement with Old Collegians through a growing program of events and initiatives. Major events included International Women's Day with Old Collegian Professor Christine Kilpatrick AO, Celebration Evening with Nikita Le Messurier, and the Chapel Service and Lunch with Helen Walker OAM, alongside the annual Golf Day. Attendance increased across the program, with particularly encouraging renewed participation in the Chapel Service and Lunch and Golf Day.

Since its inception, the OCC's Mentoring Program has involved more than 100 people, while the Val Kerr Fellowship

Grant continues to support Old Collegians undertaking not-for-profit ventures that empower women. In March 2026, Sarah Mote commenced as President alongside a newly elected Executive and several new Council members. Council members also increased their presence at reunions and other gatherings, extending the OCC's reach across year groups that had previously had less contact with the Club.

In 2026/27, the OCC looks forward to building on this momentum by broadening participation, strengthening connections across generations and increasing awareness of its programs throughout the Old Collegian community.

Presbyterian Ladies College

During 2025/26, the Presbyterian Ladies' College Old Collegians Association (PLC OCA) strengthened its engagement with Old Collegians through a growing program of events and initiatives.

Major events included Meet the Old Collegian Writers with Prof Anne Buist (The Oasis Menzies Mental Health) and Grace Chan (Every Version of You), Tennis match and Hockey match against students the annual Golf Day. This year we have established an OC orchestra practicing in our Performing Arts Centre and with a performance date in November.

PLC OCA has run a number of Professional based networking Program this year. We continue to advertise the opportunity for old collegians to apply for the Women Out There Award to support Old Collegians undertaking not-for-profit ventures that empower women. We met for the first

time in Ballarat and Robyn Byrne went to Sydney and Brisbane with the Development Office to meet with Old Collegian in those cities.

In May 2026, Robyn Byrne continued in her second year as President alongside an experienced Executive and several new Council members. Council members will increase their presence at reunions and other gatherings, extending the OCC's reach across year groups that had previously had less contact with the Club.

In 2026/27, the OCA looks forward to building on this momentum by broadening participation across Victoria and the east coast, strengthening connections across generations by having two events per year and increasing awareness of its programs throughout the Old Collegian community through publishing its activities in PLC In Print and its Facebook Page.

Associate Organisations

COTA Victoria: Council of the Aged

HAAG: Housing for the Aged Action Group

Her Place: Women's Museum Australia Ltd.

Jean Hailes Foundation

Prison Network

Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust

Returned and Services Nurses Club

Ross House Association

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

Safe Steps

Turkish Women's Recreation Club

Travellers Aid

Women's Property Initiative

Women with Disabilities Victoria

WIRE: Women's Information and Referral Service

Victoria Women's Trust



QUEEN VICTORIA WOMEN'S CENTRE



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ABN 18227073059

Registration No A0004465H

Affiliated with:

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