

Newsletter

June 2026

Acknowledgement

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



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

This is link for our social media LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-council-of-women-victoria-inc/> Members with a LinkedIn account, can like the page and share content that they feel resonates with them.

QUOTE: "National Reconciliation Week: Dates are the same each year 27 May to 3 June, commemorating two significant milestones – the [successful 1967 referendum](#), and the [High Court Mabo decision](#) respectively. Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples...In playing our part we build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and futures." Reconciliation Australia: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>



I hope this finds you all well and keeping warm as winter arrives. The day after our May Council the **Mothers' Day Women's Health event**, Friday May 8th was held at RMIT University and I cannot thank enough our joint Hon. Secretary, Dr Julie Stevens who worked long hours to organise this event from her end, also RMIT University for hosting us, Prof Cassandra Szoeko, Sarah Barnbrook and others who made the event come to fruition.

It was based on women's health and sex-specific training for Pharmacy students. While the audience was smaller than hoped (some attended by Zoom) those present found the video of the Government House panel and the live panel at the RMIT event interesting, relevant and informative. Thank you to attendees, and our organisers. *See May newsletter*

NCWA is holding its Mid-term National Conference in Canberra on Sunday June 28th and Monday June 29th The venue is the Museum of Democracy, Old Government House. I do urge those of you able to go to our nation's capital and keen to network and socialise with fellow NCW members from around Australia, to register. A major task of the Conference is to address aspects of society that NCWA should be discussing and advocating for, so each state constituency has submitted Resolutions for discussion, debate and endorsement... or not endorsed as the case may be. I thank Robyn Byrne OAM and her Advisers for working on these Resolutions, and thank members at the May Council meeting for endorsing the Victorian Resolutions. See p.3.

NCWV has been concerned that currently we have no National Advisers, and unhappy that at the NCWA level there are vacancies in some vital areas, so I am pleased that our Standing Committees Convenor Robyn Byrne moved at this June 4th meeting that two members of NCWV be nominated to NCWA to be voted into two Adviser roles.

Member and Adviser **Sarah Barnbrook** presented a second excellent submission to the **Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability and Insurance Scheme Inquiry into the integrity of the NDIS** on behalf of NCWV and AFK (her company) with our full blessing, and her submission puts a very strong case for the Inquiry to take full account of the implications for those removed from receiving NDIS support because of the illegal and immoral behaviour of a minority of fake providers who have exploited the system.

Robyn Byrne attended the *Monash Women and Children's Health Summit 2026* where amongst many matters the Minister for Health Harriet Shing announced support of more health services for women in rural areas of Victoria --- which are desperately needed.

As mentioned last month, the **Geelong Branch of NCWV** is holding its annual Luncheon on **Wednesday June 17th** and their hospitality is always warm. I urge you to consider making the trip to Geelong for this special event. See p.4.

Emma Fu, our Honorary Treasurer since 2024, has resigned because of work pressure and we thank her for her NCWV work 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. NCWV Executive members have interviewed qualified applicants for the position of Hon. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, positions advertised by us on a few key forums, and we are delighted to bring to the Council the names of two well-qualified and committed women recommended by the Committee, for ratification and appointment. **Ms.Meenakshi (Meena) Bhayani**, a member of the CPA (a Certified Practising Accountant), a member of the *CPA Belonging Network*, and Board financial adviser to the Beacon Hills Christian College, has accepted our offer to become our Honorary Treasurer. **Ms. Niti Bhargava** is a Certified Public Accountant, co-founder of *Businesswomen of Melbourne*, and member of the Small Business Council Victoria. She received the 2024 Multicultural Award for

Excellence. She is being offered the position of Hon. Assistant Treasurer. The Committee is confident that these impressive women will prove to be assets as Members and in their roles. Pam Hammond has arranged a date for the traditional and always excellent **My Vote My Voice** at Parliament House, **Friday August 21st**. Please consider being part of this special event when students from a range of secondary schools present their views about the set topic, and an expert panel adjudicates the merit of their presentation and arguments.

Please ensure that the **NCWV Newsletter** is sent to your friends and acquaintances, and feel free to send them emails announcing the monthly meetings. Sadly, I acknowledge the continuing war in Ukraine, in the Middle East, and in parts of Africa, and the ongoing examples of intolerance and antisemitism in our own nation. May peace be realised.

NCWV is Inviting expressions of interest to work with the current editor on the Monthly Newsletter.

Please contact with a CV to: info@ncwvic.org.au

NCWV June Individual and Council Meetings, June 4, level 3 Ross House, 11:00am and 12:15pm

Hannah Murray, Company Secretary, YMCA spoke to Individual members (and others) on how the YWCA Board Traineeship program contributes to board renewal. Hannah started with YWCA Australia in 2017, amassing a vast amount of historical knowledge about the YWCA movement and governance knowledge in that time. She is the proud owner of a Certificate in Governance Practice from the Governance Institute of Australia. Hannah is a firm believer that feminism without intersectionality is the patriarchy in a new hat and hopes to work towards a future when young women and gender diverse people lead change through governance.

Hannah presented an overview of the Board Traineeship Program which provides young women and gender diverse people aged up to 30, with a 12-month voluntary placement to observe and participate in board meetings without legal liability. The typical timeline for trainees includes 3-6 months of observation followed by 6 months of active participation. Hannah detailed the program's origins in 2020, focusing on the women's development in governance and addressing the challenge of gaining board experience. ywca.org.au

When advertising, you need to understand the purpose, demographic and give a clear description of the role, duties and time required. This needs to be circulated widely – members, peer and director networks. Selection needs to evaluate candidates' interest in feminist leadership, their relevant experiences, and how they will use the learning experience. Interviews need to focus on their understanding of governance, knowledge of YWCA content, their unique skills and their potential to thrive.

Induction and supporting board trainees includes meeting with CEO, CFO, Chair and buddy pairings with directors.

The presentation covered challenges in building cohort diversity, managing expectations versus reality, and the program's success in helping trainees transition to other board roles and even other boards.

NCWV Council meeting Our speaker was



PETER BRUKNER OAM, MBBS, D Sc (honoris causa), FACSEP, FASMF, FACSM, FFSEM a specialist sports and exercise physician who is the founding partner of *Olympic Park Sports Medicine Centre* in Melbourne and Professor of Sports Medicine at LaTrobe University.

A founding Executive Member of the *Australasian College of Sports Physicians*, he served two terms as President and played a key role in establishing sports medicine as a medical specialty in Australia. Peter is the co-author of the widely used text book *Clinical Sports Medicine*, and has been team physician for professional football clubs, national athletics, swimming, soccer and men's hockey teams: *Socceroos* Team Doctor, 2010 World Cup in South Africa; Head of Sports Medicine and Sports Science at *Liverpool Football Club*; *Australian cricket team* doctor 2012-17, and a consultant to the *Melbourne Football Club* in their premiership year, 2021.

Peter is the co-founder of the public health campaign *SugarByHalf* and is committed to the challenge of improving the nation's health with improved diet and increased physical activity. His best selling book '*A Fat Lot of Good*' was published in 2018. He is also the Founder and Chair of *Defeat Diabetes*, an app/web-based program, aimed at improving diabetes control through diet. His latest book '*The Diabetes Plan*' was published in March 2023.



Peter shared his personal experience transitioning to a low-carb, healthy fat diet in 2012 after being diagnosed with pre-diabetic conditions including fatty liver. He described how the diet change led to significant weight loss, losing 13Kg, improved health markers, and the resolution of his fatty liver condition over three months.

He discussed the rise in obesity, Australia being in the top 5 countries with 1 in 2 women, seven in 10 men and one in four children being obese. With type 2 diabetes, there are 280 Australians diagnosed every day. Peter attributed this rise to the changes in 1980s dietary guidelines which arose from 1976-1980s data that encouraged low-fat foods. He explained how the food industry replaced fats with sugar to maintain flavour.

Peter highlighted the high sugar content in various processed foods and beverages:



BBQ sauce 125 teaspoons=497gm! Peter recommended eating real, unprocessed foods and avoiding ultra-processed items, suggesting a low-carb diet as a healthier approach. He also criticised current medical advice for diabetics, arguing that the low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet is inappropriate.



Peter discussed his journey from believing medical advice for 30 years to becoming an advocate for low-carb food after personal experiences. He described his charity "Sugar by Half" which has reached half a million students with educational lessons, and his book that became a bestseller.

Peter shared details about his "Defeat Diabetes", an app and web-based program which has helped 15,000 people, but faces challenges from the medical profession, but has received positive feedback about low-carb approaches from a doctor who credited the program with saving her life.

Processed foods include Sugar, Vegetable oils, Grains.

Ultra processed food examples:

- processed meat such as sausages and hamburgers
- breakfast cereals or cereal bars
- instant soups
- sugary fizzy drinks
- chicken nuggets
- cake
- chocolate
- ice cream
- mass-produced bread
- many "ready to heat" meals such as pies and pizza

Peter's message: Just Eat Real Food (JERF).

[Read Peter's story about cutting back on sugar.](#)

SYLVIA GELMAN AM MBE BEQUEST

As in the May newsletter the Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest is offering a limited number of grants to assist new members to NCWV to attend the NCWA Conference in Canberra 28th/29th June 2026. We are now able to confirm the grant is worth \$800.00. This covers the registration fee of \$225.00 with the extra to assist with accommodation and travel costs. Attendance at such meetings provides valuable insight into NCWA for Members.

To apply for a grant kindly contact Elisabeth Newman AM, Convener of the Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest: elisabeth_mn@hotmail.com

In keeping with Sylvia Gelman's wishes preference is given to new Members to NCWV - a Delegate or Individual Member. It is with pleasure that the Members of the Committee of Management of the Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest announce that Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto has received a grant to enable her to attend the NCWA Conference.



Elisabeth Newman AM Convener
Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest
Committee of Management: Hean Bee Wee AM, Alex Jeffreys, Tracey Ahern, Ex-Officio Member and NCWV President Elida Breerton

May 27th 2026



The NCWA Mid-term National Conference, Canberra, Sunday June 28th & Monday June 29th; Venue: Museum of Democracy, Old Parliament House: NCWA Member cost: \$225 [Register](#)

The Midterm Conference of the National Council of Women of Australia marks a significant point within our triennium - a time to reconnect, reflect, and reaffirm our shared purpose. Bringing together members from across the nation, this gathering provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships, share knowledge, and shape advocacy agenda for the years ahead. As a volunteer-led organisation, our strength lies in our work, and in the fellowship and camaraderie that sustain it. Through collaboration and dialogue, this conference centres members and affiliated organisations, so that many voices contribute to advancing the status of women in Australia.

Day 1: Sunday half day: lunch and afternoon tea included. Registration from 11:30am (tea/coffee refreshments).

Sunday afternoon: presentations by Constituent Councils and NCWA Executive and outcomes of membership survey.

Evening: For those who wish to attend a conference dinner, an additional cost will be determined at a later time.

Day 2: Monday all day, morning tea, lunch & afternoon tea. Monday morning - resolutions discussed and voted on.

Later in the afternoon, we will explore the work of our affiliate members and issues central to NCWA's core priorities.

Nominated Members of the International Council of Women (ICW-CIF) Board, Standing Committees and RCW Presidents: In accordance with extension of the emergency resolution adopted at the 2025 General Assembly in Marrakech, pursuant to the legal obligations applicable to the ICW (CIF), it will hold its **Statutory 2025 Ordinary General Assembly** online **Sunday, 28 June 2026, 1:00 pm. (Paris time)**

The meeting should not exceed two hours.

The purpose of this General Assembly will be to deliberate and vote on the following items:

- adoption of the Annual Report;
- adoption of the Financial Report;
- approval of annual accounts and allocation of the result;
- discharge of the Board of Directors for its management;
- approval of the budget for the following financial year;
- appointment of the Statutory Auditor upon expiry of the current mandate.
- Electronic voting, with counting during the meeting.

You will receive all documents submitted for approval, together with details regarding participation and voting at least 15 days in advance. Our **ECM 2026** will be held in London during the **first week of November**. This meeting will be hosted by the National Council of Women of Great Britain, whom we warmly thank. Dates to be sent shortly.



President Nonie Crozier and NCWV Geelong Branch members of the National Council for Women Victoria warmly invite you and your friends to join us at our 82nd Annual Luncheon to be held on Wednesday 17th June 2026, noon for 12.30pm.

Our luncheon venue is the Pecten Centre located separately within the Shell Club precinct, cnr Bacchus Marsh Road/Purnell Road, Corio entering from the Bacchus Marsh & Service Road.

Cost: \$75-00 per person. Drinks at Bar Prices.

RSVP: June 7th 2026

Try Booking: <http://www.trybooking.com/DLMBQ>

Enquiries: President Nonie Crozier 0409994528



Our Guest Speaker is Sarah Barnbrook, an award-winning international advocate, including United Nations forums as an accredited delegate, a charity leader, and digital safety expert; Founder of *Away from Keyboard Inc.*, a registered Australian charity focused on preventing digital harm and promoting safer, healthier online and offline lives for children, young people, communities and carers.

"New Tools, Old Powers: How Disconnection Makes Women More Vulnerable Online" This provocative talk reveals how digital tools amplify age-old power imbalances—exacerbating coercion, economic disparity, and exploitation—and how reconnection and agency can disrupt these patterns.

Sarah is also involved in leadership roles across women's advocacy, STEM and governance organisations, helping shape policy, education and community responses to emerging challenges. Known for translating complex global issues into clear local relevance, she empowers audiences to think critically, act confidently and engage with change in meaningful ways, informed, inspired and better equipped to navigate a rapidly changing world.



[The-Melbourne-Declaration-for-Gender-Equality.pdf](#)

Rebalancing the Ecosystem for Accountability, Rights, and a Future of Gender Equality was launched at the Women Deliver 2026 Conference (WD2026) in Narm (Melbourne). This was the result of collective work, 30+ consultations around the world, over 650 people across the gender equality ecosystem, to create a shared vision for gender equality rooted in care, solidarity and justice. A commitment to centring States' human rights obligations to all and the planet in the work we all do.

Some NCWV members attended this conference, including Ronniet Milliken, Past President. This is her report:

Melbourne was selected as the site of WD2026 following Victoria's success as regional convening partner for the previous conference held in Kigali, Rwanda 2023. 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. [44% Oceania, 20% Africa, 15% Asia, 9% Europe, 3% Latin America].

At the Closing Ceremony it was reported that 6123 delegates from 189 countries gathered 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.

As well as Ronniet, NCWV Committee Member and Adviser Sarah Barnbrook attended – both self-funded but as authorised representatives of NCWV. Sarah was able to attend as a media accredited representative from her company *Away from Keyboard Inc.* Sarah and Ronniet were spread thinly across numerous morning, afternoon and evening conference sessions from which to choose.

The main venue was 'Jeff's Shed' with free events on the Sunday evening at the Royal Exhibition Building (cuisine & culture), and the Melbourne Museum - open for 2 hours.

Ronniet chose to visit the First Peoples Exhibition (informative & confronting). She selected sessions loosely based around NCWV interests and concerns:

- From Resistance to Renewal: Seizing the moment to build a Feminist Future
- No time to lose: Scaling solutions and Financing to end Child Marriage in Humanitarian settings and Beyond [panellists included Bridget Mather, NCWA Convenor of Standing Committees]
- 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 session
- Voices for Change and Action: Empowered Youth-led Advocacy against Female Gender Mutilation FGM/C
- Embedding Sex and Gender Equity across Health Systems, policy and research [Deakin]
- How can education be used to deliver Sustainable Development Goals to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030
- Culture as context for Dowry Abuse related Gender Based Violence in Australian Indian immigrant women [Ms Gauri Kapoor and Professor Manjula O'Connor – both from Australasian Centre for Human rights and Health]
- Navigating Gender Backlash through CEDAW [General Recommendation No 41]
- Noted launch off-site of Report by Equipundo on The State of the World's Fathers
- Reclaiming the Digital World: Insights from Youth Activists and Funders [tools to respond to Technology - Facilitated Gender-based Violence (TFGBV) – building innovative responses]

The Victorian Government supported participation in the Women Deliver 2026 Conference through targeted scholarships, supporting representation and contribution of First Nations women, free venue hire for local events at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre, participation of Victorian organisations in the conference exhibition space.

Between sessions there was an opportunity to network with organisations that had a space in the exhibition area – for Ronniet that included Girl Guides Victoria, ANU Gender Institute/NFAW/Gender Lense, GenVic [Lighthouse Foundation for Youth, that provides 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.

Reflection – what resonated most with me:

- time in the First Peoples Exhibition at the Melbourne Museum,
- the Marshall Islands action in the International Court of Justice and decision by Hilary Charlesworth
- Dowry Abuse related Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Australian Indian immigrant women,

- housing for women fleeing GBV,
- development of sophisticated GBV reporting apps for phones and chain of evidence for justice,
- preventative community based educational programs like film Finding Affection.
- praise for Australia's prohibition on underage use of social media
- Education powering Sustainable Development Goals
- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – what if state does not report – cancellation – passive aggressive
- Youth – find us, trust us, listen to us
- 25 year report on the state of the world's fathers.

CONGRATULATIONS – Selba-Gondoza Luka OAM

Ms Selba Luka OAM was presented with the Doctor of Social Science honoris causa, by Ms Peggy O'Neaí AO, Chancellor, RMIT University. "RMIT is committed to positive community impact, and we are inspired by Selba's unwavering dedication to providing hope through compassion and transformative Social change and by supporting our students to gain hands-on experience through clinical placement."

June Anderson, Pam Hammond and Dr Deborah Towns were honoured to be guests at this inspiring ceremony.



Selba, an Individual Member of NCWV, is a Mental Health Clinician specialising in at-risk Youth within the African and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities. She spoke of arriving from Malawi and founding Afri-Aus Care in 2015. The incorporated community organisation, located in Dandenong, Springvale and Pakenham offers biopsychosocial and well-being risk assessment and counselling. Guided by the African philosophy of Ubuntu, she pioneered the Positive Change Model that fosters healing, resilience and social cohesion. This led to her turning to sport as a Primary Intervention tool and in 2016, she co-founded the Men's and Women's Black Rhinos Peregrine Falcons Basketball and Soccer Clubs. Since their creation the Clubs have worked with many Youth to repair the impact of their missteps to ensure they forge strong, positive relationships with families, communities, government and private organisations. Afri-Aus Care also offers cooking, gardening, sewing, drug and alcohol diversion programs, education support, and referrals to specific health organisations.

ADVISER NEWS

Education Adviser – Pam Hammond

Next Thursday 11 June marks UN [International Day of Play\(opens in a new window\)](#). This year's theme is 'Protect play', protect childhood'. It is a reminder that play is integral to happy and healthy childhoods. This report is from:



Bronwen FitzGerald, Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood Education, Department of Education, 3 June 2026

A free event, [A Day of Play: Shaping Their Start in Victoria](#), at the [State Library next Wednesday 10 June](#), will be hosted by the Department. Children and families are invited to join in interactive play experiences and discover how play helps shape the start of a child's life. Through play, children engage with the people, places and objects around them. It builds creativity, resilience and social skills. It also helps develop positive attitudes to learning. It fosters persistence, curiosity and imagination. As outlined in the [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework\(opens in a new window\)](#), play-based learning is central to developing children's cognitive skills and wellbeing.

In Victoria, ... we are helping more children get the best start to their learning. Children are accessing more hours of kindergarten in the 2 years before school. ... In 2025, Three-Year-Old Kinder enrolments grew to 73,300 children, with participation rising to 92.2 per cent, up from 90.1 per cent the year before. Services also delivered an average 14.4 hours per week (up from an average 13.8 hours per week in 2024). More than 79,000 children were enrolled in Four-Year-Old Kinder, and we had 4,240 First Nations children enrolled in kindergarten in 2025, the highest number ever, a 14 per cent increase on 2024. This success is a credit to all the professionals in the sector. Children are gaining significant learning and developmental benefits from this increased participation.

In this edition, you can learn how to strengthen culturally safe and inclusive practice for First Nations families at your service through a series of professional development opportunities. First Nations community and departmental stakeholders designed the online learning modules which provide practical guidance and activities. [Bringing Change Together: First Nations professional learning](#)

Children's Week 2026 runs from Saturday 24 October to Sunday 1 November. Applications are open for grants towards the cost of an event or activity. Up to \$700 is available for councils and up to \$1,000 for eligible not-for-profit organisations across Victoria. For more information visit [Children's Week 2026 Grants program\(opens in a new window\)](#).

Environment Adviser - Pam Robinson AM

The 40th Anniversary of Landcare in Victoria is 2026. I am proud to have been involved since the beginning and to have served on regional, State and National Committees during the development and over subsequent years with the implementation of various successful programs and projects.

8 June - World Oceans Day - Action Theme for 2026 is "Strong Marine Protected Areas for Our Blue Planet". This theme focuses on supporting the global goal of protecting at least 30% of the world's lands, waters, and oceans by 2030. The theme emphasizes creating and strengthening Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) to safeguard ocean wildlife, habitats, and overall ecosystems health. Stronger MPAs are identified as a critical, nature-based solution to combat the climate and biodiversity crisis. The purpose of the Day is to inform us all of the impact of human actions on the oceans. World Oceans Day is observed by all UN Member States, of which Australia is one.

Children's Garden – Royal Children's Hospital

The Children's Garden at The Royal Children's Hospital is a special place for patients, their families, staff, and visitors to enjoy – whether as a place to relax or indeed to participate as a volunteer with 'hands on'. One can imagine, for a patient, to be able to walk out of the hospital into a garden – a garden that is alongside Royal Park – it gives not only a chance to be in the fresh air but also to be in nature which provides emotional comfort, solace, and healing for physical, mental, and spiritual pain. If you would like to learn more about the stories from the garden at The Royal Children's Hospital or could support in either financial or volunteer ways, contact Annalese Fowler below – who in turn will provide you with further information. annalese.fowler@rch.org.au | rchfoundation.org.au

Arts & Letters News

Children's book '*Once I was A Giant*', by Zeno Sworder, has won Australia's Book of the Year, 2026. A beautifully illustrated book about a pencil that was once a tree, it includes the cycle of life and the interconnectedness of every living thing. Mem Fox, children's book author, received the award for outstanding services to the Australian Book Industry.

Mother Stories from the NGV collection, National Gallery of Victoria, [Federation Square, until 12 July, free](#). This is an amazing collection of NGV treasures, paintings, icons, photographs, both religious and secular. Well worth a visit.

Standing Committee Coordinator: Robyn Byrne OAM

Robyn attended the *Monash Women and Children HEALTH SUMMIT 2026*, where the Minister for Health, Harriet Shing announced services for rural areas including mobile clinics, more telehealth with specialists and emergency telehealth. Although there were reports of cuts in services at Werribee Hospital there are news reports on increase in money for buildings at Werribee Hospital. Werribee Mercy Hospital is a major public hospital in Melbourne's western suburbs, providing a 24/7 Emergency Department and comprehensive medical services, including maternity, mental health, and surgical care. See website: [Mercy Health Services](#) . Services offered:

- 24/7 Emergency Department: Urgent assessment and treatment for all ages and conditions.
- Maternity & Neonatal: Obstetric and special care nursery services.
- Mental Health: Acute and community psychiatric care programs.
- Subacute Care: Aged care, palliative care, and Hospital in the Home (HITH) options.

[Werribee Mercy Hospital](#) received a major \$95 million funding boost as part of the state budget to open and operationalise its newly upgraded emergency department. However, this capital investment occurs alongside broader structural shifts in Victorian healthcare funding that are causing widespread cost pressures.

1. The \$95 Million Funding Boost (Capital Expansion). The primary funding update is a \$95 million allocation dedicated to completing and opening the hospital's vastly expanded Emergency Department (ED) later this year. This injection is part of a larger \$280 million package targeting specific high-growth emergency networks.

- Capacity Increase: The funding doubles the ED's physical treatment spaces from 33 to 67.
- Patient Volume: It enables the facility to treat an additional 25,000 patients annually once fully operational.
- Specialised Zones: The project includes 4 new resuscitation bays, 16 short-stay beds, and 6 dedicated mental health, alcohol, and substance use treatment spaces.

2. Operational Funding Challenges (System-Wide Constraints)

While the physical infrastructure is receiving targeted financial support, the hospital operates within a tightly constrained operational budget due to recent state-wide health system shifts:

- Removal of Activity-Based Funding: The Victorian Government has altered the way larger hospitals are remunerated. Previously, hospitals received funding directly correlated to patient demand ("activity funding").
- Cost Containment Pressures: The removal of flexible demand funding, paired with strict state cost-cutting mandates, has forced hospital administrations across Victoria to target internal savings. Health sector peak bodies like the Victorian Healthcare Association have warned that these cumulative cost measures may restrict broader staff hiring and service expansion, despite the newer buildings.

The new Footscray Hospital has just opened and is 22 kilometres from Werribee Hospital and has a new maternity wing. As the disruptions of the renovations occur they may want patients to go to Footscray hospital in the meantime.

Healthy Ageing Adviser

The Maggie Beer Foundation is very pleased to announce that it has secured funding of \$7.2 million over the next four years from the Australian Government to continue its impactful national workforce capability program, Improving food in aged care through education and training. This investment, announced in the 2026-27 Federal Budget, provides critical support to sustain the program's core initiatives and ensure older people in aged care continue to benefit from improved food.

Read the full media release for further details.

https://maggiebeerfoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/MBF-Budget-MR-13-May-2026.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawSCWEVleHRuA2FlbQlxMABicmlkETFCszN6b1VBa29mTThKQ3U0c3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHrY23vw4L1P6Y_f1zgUDKlwrsPDIYS7GxrV658bJPB73n2nRAXm7taE5OrJ_aem_S0G11PIQkxbngfCrO53B3g

Her Place Museum: *Finding Her* Exhibition, Studio 1.28, Convent Building, 1 St Heliers Street, Abbotsford

Her Place Women's Museum opened on March 30th, and celebrated Australia's first interactive digital map, showcasing stories of outstanding women in Victoria's public places, *Finding Her*. **There can be no history without her story.**

Over 100 women are on the map — 25 added this year.

Before 30 June, will you make a tax-deductible gift to Her Place? Your donation will directly fund:

- Finding Her — Adding more women to the map
- The Feminist Reading Room at the Convent — books, and programs open to anyone who walks through our door
- Education sessions — bringing women's history to the generations

Justine Dalla Riva, Executive Director, Her Place Women's Museum Australia, herplacemuseum.org.au

DONATE NOW

OTHER NEWS

Victorian Multicultural Commission (VWC)

Vivienne Nguyen AM, Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission



The Multicultural Film Festival (MFF) celebrates multiculturalism through the lens of short films that explore stories of cultural diversity and living in multicultural Australia, home to the world's oldest continuous cultures and people who identify with more than 300 ancestries. Delivered in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology and SBS, the festival premieres during Refugee Week at **ACMI Cinemas on Thursday 18 June 2026**, featuring powerful stories of resilience, hope and cultural identity. Building on the tradition of the MFF Chairperson's Awards, the VMC proudly introduced a new category in 2025: the Chairperson's Refugee Stories Award, recognising outstanding storytelling by and about people with lived refugee experiences. This year's theme, 'A Million Stories' acknowledges the richness that refugees bring to our cultural tapestry through their lived experiences, creativity and contributions. Tickets on sale now!

Join us for the premiere and awards ceremony during Refugee Week:

Date: Thursday 18 June 2026; **Time:** 6:30pm – 9:30pm; **Location:** ACMI Cinemas, Melbourne

Limited tickets available — includes canapes at our networking function plus a drink and popcorn in the cinema! [Book now](#)

The Attorney-General has announced the appointment of four new judges to the County Court.

NCWV congratulates them and is delighted that three of these are women, one of whom is the first Aboriginal person appointed as a Magistrate in Victoria - **Her Honour Judge Rose Falla**.

Judge Falla commences as a Judge of the County Court having served as a Victorian Magistrate since January 2013. This is a milestone appointment of significance; Judge Falla was the first Aboriginal person appointed a Magistrate in Victoria and is now the first Aboriginal person appointed a Judge of the County Court of Victoria. Judge Falla is a proud Wotjobaluk/Wemba Wemba/Mutti Mutti woman, and is the daughter of much respected Elder, the late Uncle Kevin Coombes.

Her Honour Judge Tara Hartnett was appointed a Magistrate in 2018 and since 2022, has been the Regional Coordinating Magistrate at Melbourne Magistrates' Court. As a Magistrate, her Honour has sat exclusively in the Criminal Division of that Court, including managing the Major Trial list and Intensive Case Management List. As RCM, she has had the added responsibility of overseeing listing structures and allocations.

Her Honour Judge Rebecca Wilson. Prior to her appointment, Judge Wilson was a Senior Member at VCAT since 2024, having been a Member of VCAT (sessional) since 2021. Her Honour has sat in Civil Claims, Owner's Corporation, Building and Property and Human Rights, Review and Regulation Lists over that period. Judge Wilson has held a number of positions, including: Special Counsel in Government Law at Mallesons Stephen Jaques and General Counsel at VGSO.

To read more about these appointments go to: County Court of Victoria <https://share.google/GEivf8GhqOfH3qKj8>



Gellung Warl, body created through Australia's first Treaty, is established, Ciara O'Callaghan

Gellung Warl will be hosting a Treaty Webinar for organisations on June 17th. This webinar will be an opportunity for organisations to get to know the new body created through Australia's first Treaty: Gellung Warl, learn how you can support and ask any questions! [View our full media release here.](#)

[Register here and please share the webinar far and wide!](#)

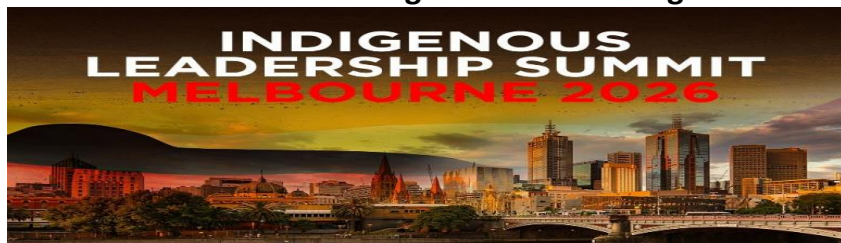
Newly elected Members of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria have chosen their Co-Chairs for the coming term at the Assembly's inaugural meeting held on Dja Dja Wurrung Country. [Newly-elected First Peoples' Assembly Members](#)

Gellung Warl means tip of the spear in Gunaikurnai and includes three arms:

- The **First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria** will continue as the democratically-elected group of Traditional Owners representing and making decisions on behalf of First Peoples across the state.
- The accountability arm **Nginga Ngainga Wara** (meaning *you will do* in Wadi Wadi) will provide independent oversight and accountability for Government on behalf of First Peoples.
- The truth-telling arm of Gellung Warl, **Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna** (meaning *to sit, to listen, to hear, to remember* in Wamba Wamba/Wemba Wemba), will continue the Truth-telling and healing process.

[More information about Gellung Warl can be found here](#)

Melbourne 2026 - A Defining Moment for Indigenous Leadership - From Recognition to Power



[Indigenous Leadership Summit](#) is returning to Melbourne this June. This year's theme, *From Recognition to Power*, focuses on what comes after acknowledgement and what it truly means to translate commitment into action.

With the passage of the statewide treaty legislation in late 2025, Victoria has become the first state in Australia to move beyond recognition and into a new phase of Indigenous self-determination, shared authority and decision making.

This June, we will gather to continue that work and create a space where Indigenous leadership is visible and supported. It is designed to move conversations forward, challenge assumptions and deepen understanding of what leadership looks like when power is shared and outcomes are real. This summit invites Indigenous and non Indigenous leaders alike to engage, participate and take responsibility for the role they play in shaping the future of leadership in this.

You'll hear from incredible speakers including:

- **Jessica Mauboy**, *Internationally Acclaimed Singer, Songwriter and Cultural Leader*
- **Katriina Heikkanen**, *Indigenous Business Lead GHD*
- **Glenn Milliken**, *Head of First Nations Strategy BUPA*
- **Scott Gorringe**, *Director and CEO Murri Matters*

📍 16 - 19 June 2026 | Novotel Melbourne [Download Event Guide](#) [Register For The Summit Here](#)

The Leadership Institute also launched – [Celebrating 10 Years of Impact](#) a rich collection of interviews, stories and reflections from alums, collaborators and their team. This publication is, above all, a celebration of our wonderful community – women's voices, achievements, and role in shaping the Australian political landscape. The Institute invites you to spend time exploring the publication. Read here: [Publication: Celebrating 10 years of impact - Pathways to Politics](#)

Locals in Melbourne's south east can access free mental health care, closer to home.

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt has opened the Cardinia Mental Health and Wellbeing Local, located in Pakenham and Cockatoo. The free service is now delivering tailored support in-person at the two locations and via telehealth. It is part of a statewide network of 22 Locals providing care to adults experiencing mental illness or psychological distress across 24 locations throughout Victoria.

Accessing care is simple – you don't need a Medicare card or GP referral and services are completely free. Locals act as a 'front door' to the system making them an important tool in early intervention. The network of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals has already helped more than 41,000 Victorians.

Care is delivered by a multidisciplinary team of experienced mental health professionals, wellbeing staff and peer support workers. The network is a flagship initiative by the Labor Government in response to the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*. Services at the Cardinia Mental Health and Wellbeing Local are delivered by Mind Australia in partnership with Monash Health. The service operates at 16 Station Street, Pakenham and from Eastern Dandenong Ranges Association at 7-17 McBride Street, Cockatoo.

Appointments are available at the Pakenham site from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm and the Cockatoo Site, Monday and Wednesday 9am to 5pm.

More information and contact details are available at betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-wellbeing-locals

Asking young people about respectful relationships: This survey run by the Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission), is surveying 14–18-year-olds about consent, relationships and sex education. Listening to young people helps inform stronger education that supports respectful relationships and creates safer communities. If you have a young person in your life, please share this 10–15-minute anonymous online survey with them. Your participation is voluntary and valued.

[See the story](#)

About this study: This survey is about learning how young people experience and think about relationships, sexuality, consent, and respect. It's part of a bigger Australian Government project to help schools teach young people about healthy relationships and positive consent.

Automated Aged Care Assessments: Commissioners Fitzgerald and Finlay welcomed the Ombudsman's investigation into the Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT), a digital system determining aged care eligibility and costs. Concerns have been raised about transparency, human oversight, and fairness in how the tool works in practice. As automated tools influence critical decisions, ensuring accountability, accessible review processes, and protection against unintended discrimination is essential to safeguard older Australians' rights, dignity, and wellbeing.

NCWV's Adviser, Sarah Barnbrook gave a presentation on the IAT, using her professional expertise and lived experience. See NCWV 2026 February Newsletter: <https://ncwvic.org.au/files/2026%20February%20NCWV%20Newsletter.pdf>

GET INVOLVED in our 40 YEARS PROGRAM: [Find out more about our 40 Years program](#)

We're inviting everyone be part of the activities marking our 40th anniversary as Australia's national human rights institution.

Nominations for 2026 Australian Human Rights Awards: Help honour and celebrate the work of everyday human rights heroes by nominating individuals and organisations for this year's Awards, our annual showcase of the best in all of us. If you know or admire someone who inspires others, stands up for fairness or drives positive change, then nominate them and help shine a light on their impact. Categories are: Human Rights Medal; Young People (under 25 years; Law; Community; Media and Creative Industries).

Nominations close 3 August 2026 <https://hra.awardsplatform.com/>

TWA: Tradeswomen Australia 18/05/2026

[New Gender Impact Assessment Reveals Barriers Facing Women in Australia's Electrical Industry](#)

A new Gender Impact Assessment Report (GIA) produced by Tradeswomen Australia highlights the persistent structural and cultural barriers preventing women from entering and completing electrical apprenticeships in Australia, at a time when the sector urgently needs a larger and more diverse workforce. [Read more.](#)

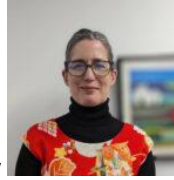
Learn more about our [research](#), [media coverage](#) and [blog posts](#) for further information on the barriers tradeswomen face and what Tradeswomen Australia are doing to solve them.

Helping You Find and Secure Your Next Role: Are you having difficulties finding the job or apprenticeship in your preferred industry or location? Our consulting and recruitment experts are here to make sure you land your next role. [Contact us today and together we'll make it happen.](#)

TWA is launching a pioneering initiative aimed at directly addressing systemic barriers women face in clean energy careers, at the same time creating a sustainable framework for industry-wide transformation.

Powering Her Pathway is being collaboratively delivered with key partners TAFE Gippsland and global energy leader ENGIE Aus, whose expertise and commitment will be instrumental to the project's success.

The project will operate across multiple Gippsland locations, including Morwell, Loy Yang, Yallourn, and Hazelwood.



The feminised professions left behind

Counsellors and psychotherapists make up a workforce of over 25,000 qualified professionals, 78% of whom are women. Like aged care workers, early childhood educators, and community support workers before them, they've been systematically undervalued despite meeting substantial community need. The pattern is familiar: when women dominate a profession, that profession is underfunded, under-recognised, and treated as supplementary rather than essential.

The Fair Work Commission's landmark gender undervaluation review acknowledged what women have known for decades – that female-dominated industries are systemically underpaid because they're associated with women's work. Awards covering health services, children's services and community care have been adjusted to remedy this "gender-based undervaluation". Yet counselling and psychotherapy remain locked out of Medicare, exclusion justified by the same gendered assumptions the Fair Work Commission is working to dismantle. Jobs and Skills Australia's recent research confirms that 98% of occupations see men out-earn women, with pay gaps widening in highly gender-segregated roles. The care and support workforce, 72% female, remains "*female-dominated, undervalued and insecure*," key drivers of Australia's gender pay gap. The national gender pay gap is 21.1% in total remuneration, meaning women earn 79 cents for every dollar men earn (\$28,356 less per year).

The Australian Government recognises that "*paid care work is dominated by women... and is undervalued and often low paid and insecure*". It acknowledges that achieving equality requires "*valuing the substantial contribution unpaid and low paid care makes to families, the community and the Australian economy*".

Including counsellors and psychotherapists in Medicare's Better Access scheme isn't just workforce policy, it's a matter of gender equity. In a workforce dominated by women, exclusion from Medicare recognition reinforces a broader pattern in which feminised care professions are undervalued, despite delivering critical mental health support. Australia has built this workforce. We've trained, credentialed, and regulated them. Now we need to fund them. The Australian Government recognises that "*paid care work is dominated by women... and is undervalued and often low paid and insecure*". It acknowledges that achieving equality requires "*valuing the substantial contribution unpaid and low paid care makes to families, the community and the Australian economy*".



Report by [Rita Nasr](#) 3 June 2026

The Fair Work Commission's decision to lift minimum wages by 4.75 per cent from 1 July has been welcomed by Australian unions. For the three million workers who rely on these wage decisions, Tuesday's increase offers long-overdue relief in an economy where the cost of living has become a daily crisis. With inflation sitting at 4.2 per cent, this rise broadly keeps pace with price pressures and prevents the lowest-paid workers from falling even further behind.

This decision includes a 6 per cent increase for around 100,000 workers on the very lowest award rates — matching the ACTU's claim. It lifts the base rate for ongoing work from \$24.95 to \$26.44 an hour, an extra \$56 a week for a full-time worker. A retail worker on level 2 of the award will see a \$49.78 weekly increase, or \$2,588.70 a year.

Women make up more than 60 per cent of award-dependent workers. They dominate the lowest-paid sectors, which include retail, hospitality, aged care, disability support, childcare, cleaning, and health support. These are the jobs that keep our communities functioning, our children cared for, our elderly supported, and essential services running. In other words, when we talk about minimum wage increases, we are talking about women. No one in a wealthy, first-world nation should be living below the poverty line, yet hundreds of thousands of women are.

The gendered impact of low wages is not limited to the weekly pay packet. It compounds over a lifetime. Lower earnings mean lower superannuation, fewer savings, and greater financial vulnerability. This is why women over 50 are the fastest-growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness in Australia. Many have worked their entire lives in feminised industries that are essential but undervalued. They raised children, cared for ageing parents, and held together the social fabric only to find themselves locked out of financial and housing security in later life. A minimum wage rise will not solve this crisis, but it will help prevent more women from joining its ranks.

The Fair Work Commission acknowledged the "wild card" economic impacts of global conflict and instability. But for women in low-paid work, the real wild card has been a labour market built on the assumption that "women's work" is worth less. The sectors where women cluster are not low-paid because they lack skill or social value, but because they are feminised.

Still, it matters. It lifts the wage floor and puts money directly into the hands of workers who spend almost everything they earn stimulating local economies. And it recognises the dignity and value of the people who keep this country running.

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

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

National Council of Women of Victoria Meeting Dates for 2026

Month	Date	Day	Meeting Type	Time	Method
June	16 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
June	17 th	Wednesday	Geelong Annual Luncheon	12:00pm	Pecten Centre,
June	18 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
July	2 nd	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	Ross Hse/ZOOM
July	13 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
July	16 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHS
August	6 th	Thursday	Individual Members Annual Meeting; & Council Meeting	11:00, 12:15	Ross Hse/ZOOM
August	17 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
August	21 st	Friday	My Vote My Voice	9:15	Parliament
August	20 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
September	3 rd	Thursday	AGM	12:15	Ross Hse/ZOOM
September	13 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
September	17 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
October	1 st	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc
October	12 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
October	15 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	5 th	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	Ross Hse/ZOOM
November	16 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	ZOOM
November	19 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	24	Tuesday	Annual Luncheon	12:00	William Angliss
December	3 rd	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	Ross Hse/ZOOM
December	17 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
			Pioneer Women's Ceremony		