

Newsletter

October 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/>

Please like and share NCWV LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-council-of-women-victoria-inc/>

QUOTE: “The **United Nations International Day of Older Persons** is a global observance that **recognizes the contributions** of older people and addresses the challenges they face in a rapidly ageing world. It highlights their **roles as advocates and change-makers** in areas like health equity, community resilience, and human rights, countering stereotypes and promoting inclusion.” United Nations



After a most productive three years with Elida Brereton as President, 2026/7 President Ronniet Milliken reflects on what has been achieved and consider our future direction. We continue to be mindful of the principle of remaining politically neutral, especially ahead of the Victorian

Welcome to the NCWV Committee and Standing Committee

- See our website: <https://ncwvic.org.au/>

Health Advocacy

Thank you to the many women who responded to our NCWV Women’s Health Survey to inform the Australian Senate Select Committee on Women’s Health. The NCWV Submission drafted by our eminent Health Adviser Professor Cassandra Szoeki with deidentified input from you was lodged on 7 October. Once the Submission is published on the parliament website we will provide you with a link.

On 24 September, Professor Cassandra Szoeki, Immediate Past President Elida Brereton and I, were fortunate to meet with the Assistant Minister for Health Rebecca White to advocate for NCWV priorities including sex-specific education for health professionals servicing the needs of women and girls in Victoria, and the unfunded health pillars – raised originally in September 2025.

Feminist Reading

For many years, my lovely sister has been giving me books with a feminist perspective. What are you reading, your favourites?

At Council Meeting on 3 December our speakers will address Gender Equality at the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists - for consumers & training health professionals.

Election Scorecard and online Town Hall – with a gendered lens. We are mindful of the principle of remaining politically neutral. The Standing Committee is preparing for an online Town Hall meeting and scorecard considering policies of registered political parties ahead of the Victorian election. Join us at the Council Meeting on 5 November at 5:15 pm for a ‘background briefing’, and on Tuesday night 10 November for the online Town Hall involving representatives of political parties.

Increasingly Diverse Organisation

Multicultural Multifaith Victoria – we welcome the commencement of MMV on 1 October, marking the beginning of a new chapter in Victoria’s multicultural story. We are fortunate to belong to an open welcoming non-sectarian organisation with an increasingly broad demographic. This breadth is reflected in the profile of Individual Members, Member Organisations and their Delegates, the Committee and Standing Committee Advisers and volunteers, speakers, and participation at events like Pioneer Women’s Ceremony, My Vote My Voice and the Premiers Multicultural Gala Dinner. Earlier this year we were consulted by the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission regarding the anti-vilification legislation roll out video scenarios.

Respect and Social Cohesion

In this context, we are fortunate to have received a substantial donation from Past President Rysia Rozen OAM - to develop and implement a project to combat ignorance and racism, and encourage respect, harmony, and social cohesion in the Victorian community. **We look forward to your participation in events in 2027, as ambassadors for Respect and Social Cohesion.**



Ronniet, Rysia, Alex Jeffry, Malvina Malinek, Elida

Wellbeing and Interior Design – Save the date - Tuesday 24 November 2026 – conversation at Annual Luncheon with award winning designer Tonya Hinde.

Honorary Secretary

A warm welcome to Jane Frawley, appointed Honorary Secretary to NCWV Council immediately and to the Committee on the retirement of Hon Sec Phoebe Swift in the coming months. Dr Julie Stevens was elected as a general Committee Member at the AGM and as Co-ordinator of the Health Hub.

When will we need to stop our Advocacy?

The equal opportunity legislation was enacted over 50 years ago. As we advocate for the women and girls of Victoria, we stand on the shoulders of our foremothers around the world. We recall the untiring advocacy for equality and women's reproductive rights of Gloria Steinem, Editor of Ms. [See P.12](#)

We have the music of '9 to 5' ringing in our ears again following the death of Dolly Parton - as we recall the role of journalism, Art and humour in encouraging culture change.

Clearly some people did not get the memo, see the movie, or change their attitude or behaviour as a consequence of legislation or efforts at culture change to date. We are still addressing gaps and more recently push back has emerged.

Gender Equality in Victoria

We applaud the work of Dr Niki Vincent, who has twice spoken at NCWV Council meetings, in rolling out the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2026.

For the first time, we have longitudinal, sector-wide data showing how public sector organisations are progressing on gender equality over time.

This gives us a clear view of where structural change is taking hold, where progress is stalling, and where stronger action is needed. The report shows encouraging progress in some areas, including women's representation in senior leadership and men's uptake of parental leave. It also shows that key challenges remain, including gender pay gaps and workplace sexual harassment. Check out the report yourself [State of Gender Equality in Victoria's Public Sector 2026 report](#).

October Council Meeting, October 1, Ross House

Speaker: Káti Jahromi Gapaillard – Former CEO of The Fathering Project (TFP)



Káti Jahromi Gapaillard, presented parts of the Australian findings from the **State of the World's Fathers 2026** report. The research was done by Western Sydney Uni, for the Fathering Project, and is part of a bigger global study, 16 countries and around 8,000 parents.

Káti talked about what happens when men share the care and what that means for children, women, and men themselves. and noted the positive impact to children, fathers and the welfare of families more generally, when fathering is promoted and encouraged by Australian culture, policy and law makers.

The aim of the Australian report is to inform policy and

government thinking on the importance of fathering to families in Australia. The survey of mums asked about who does the care at home, the attitudes, the work, the money, the leave, the well-being, and even what people would vote on.

TFP interviewed each of the 25 parents who brought along one photo of their biggest worry for their child, and one of what gives them hope.

TFP found that fathers really want to care, and the heart of the report is a very hopeful one. 97% of dads say they really enjoy caring for their kids and feel confident doing it. **And 9 in 10 parents say it's more normal for dads to care now than it was in their own father's day.** The confidence is real, but there's still a tension. If you ask parents for 3 words about fatherhood, they'll say love, responsibility, and care, which is fabulous. But ask them to pick a dad's two most important roles and providing comes out on top. So 63% overall, and it was 67% of men who felt still that providing was the most important role they had, as in financial.

Interestingly, women put time together first at 67%, with providing at 55%. So on the left, almost everyone agrees that care matters as much as paid work, and that dads who share it make good partners. However, on the right, most people also agree that a father's job is to provide, and a mother's is daily care of the household and the children.

Four in ten even say boys shouldn't be taught how to sew, cook and clean. Men agree with that more than women, 43% to 35%. We would think that younger fathers are more progressive on the provider role, but in fact, that's not what came through the research you'd expect the younger dads to be most progressive. 72% of Gen Z dads, which are 14 to 29 year olds at the moment said that a father's sole job was to provide. For Gen X dads, it's 57%.

Feeling financially insecure pushes families back to the breadwinner model, and it brings us to the money and to the finding of the report, which says that that matters for policy. Among those who feel insecure, (54%), 76% don't feel man enough unless they're providing.

Men and women see the division of care differently. Three quarters of parents with a partner now or in the past say they share the care equally. Men believe they are caring, 80% of them believe they're sharing the care, whereas women say, no, only 66% say they are. The report linked that gap to the less visible work that women do, which probably counts for the mental load that mums carry,

Financial pressures see 72% cut back on spending. Mums tend to work fewer hours, leave jobs, turn down promotions in order to care, whereas dads tend to do overtime, take second jobs, and draw on Super in order to be able to feed their families and meet financial needs. So she ends up less financially independent and he ends up less available at home.

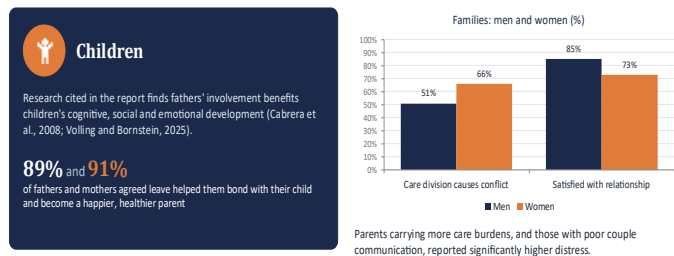
Dads reported higher psychological distress than mums. In the two weeks before the survey, a third of dads had thoughts of suicide, compared with 23% of mums, and over half had drunk heavily at least once. Dads who see caring

as central to who they are reported much lower stress.

Parental Leave - Kati spoke about the effect of Parental “Leave. 89% of dads and 90% of mums said leave helped them bond with their child and become a happier, healthier parent. So, how important parental leave is, and the need to take it. Mums often take it, dads often don’t or take a small amount of it. Since July 2026, parents can share up to 26 weeks of leave. Now, 73% of dads in the survey say they took all their leave, but only 56% of mums say their partners did.

What shared care means for children and families

Children: evidence cited in the report and parents' own accounts. Families: survey findings on conflict, communication and satisfaction



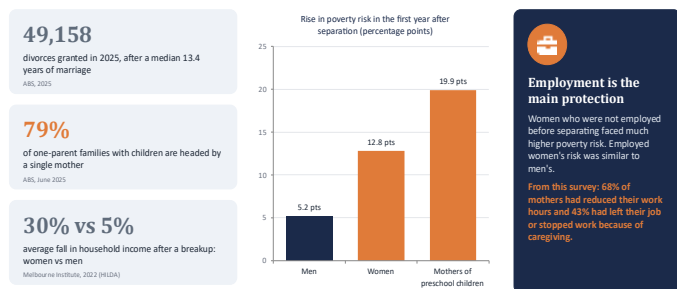
The report: policies that make shared caregiving practically possible "are also investments in the stability and quality of family relationships."

Source: State of the World's Fathers: Australia 2026 (Western Sydney University for The Fathering Project)

Support for New Dads - so what support is there around new dads? Not a lot, really, 82% felt supported by the health system when their first child was born, though mostly as support for mum and baby. Only 14% got all the support they needed, and more than half have never been told about services for fathers. Only 3% turned to other dads, which is one of the reasons at the Fathering Project we help dads groups to make sure that dads could support each other. Dads want support from work and from their partner.

After separation, women's finances fall further than men's

The fall is largest for mothers of young children, and smallest for women who were employed



Sources: ABS Marriages and Divorces 2025; ABS Labour Force Status of Families 2025; Broadway and Kab (2025, HILDA 2001 to 2021); Melbourne Institute (2022)

So, what do parents want from the government? 86 to 88% of parents would vote for a party backing affordable elder care, flexible work, and quality childcare subsidies.



No to Violence is asking politicians across all parties to back the earlier intervention Victorians need. NTV are in the process of locking in key political speakers and will announce the full program soon. Right now, NTV need your help to spread the word. [Victorian Election Forum: Join us to say "Fear Shouldn't Live Here" Tickets, Wednesday 14](#)

[October • 1 PM - 3:30 PM | Eventbrite](#)

"Politicians promising ever tougher responses to crime must also ask whether we are investing enough in the health, care and early intervention systems that actually prevent violence in the first place. Right now, Victorians are paying twice: through the devastating human cost of family violence and high costs to government systems responding primarily after damage is done. By the time the system acts, women and children may already have experienced significant harm. The next era of reform must keep men in view, challenge violent behaviour earlier and create sustained pathways to change **before the cycle repeats**.

"Early intervention is not only good social policy. It is good economic policy. Every act of violence we stop is harm, trauma and public cost avoided. Victorians need government to act on family violence early. It will save Victorians the cost of waiting for violence to escalate and give victim-survivors, including children, adult parents, partners and ex-partners a real chance at recovery and healing to stop violence in its tracks.

"No to Violence has a plan to help the next government make earlier intervention a reality. The plan is common sense, focused on what needs to change to avoid costly mistakes stacking up. Please join us to demand different from the next government.

Register to attend in-person or online (or receive the recording and resources) here: [Victorian Election Forum: Join us to say "Fear Shouldn't Live Here" Tickets, Wednesday 14 October • 1 PM - 3:30 PM | Eventbrite](#)



NCWV endorses the statement for peace adopted on 8 November 2023 at the ICW-CIF Conference in Manila, part of which is shown here

We, the members of the International Council of Women, are deeply concerned about the suffering and the high costs caused by armed conflicts and the violations of human rights of women and girls in the forms of gender and sexual violence, displacement, other harm, injury and death arising from the increasing conflict and unrest around the world. We, therefore, call for the cessation of all armed conflicts and the re-establishment of peace and security in the world. Martine Marandel ICW-CIF President

Welcoming Multicultural and Multifaith Victoria
Louise Perry Interim Multicultural Coordinator General, Multicultural and Multifaith Victoria said :

"As we take this next step, I have been reflecting on the important role that migrant and refugee communities play in shaping modern Australia and Victoria. I recently attended the book launch of 'Three Shocks' by journalist, economist and demographer George Megalogenis, which explores some of the major social and economic changes that have influenced Australia's modern identity.

“One key focus is Australia's status as an English-speaking nation where migrants and our children make up the majority of the population. Here in Victoria, culturally and linguistically diverse communities continue to drive our growth and enrich our communities. Behind these statistics are the stories of people who have chosen to make Victoria home. People who have helped build our industries, established businesses, strengthened our institutions, shared cultures and traditions, and improved every aspect of community life.

“Our diversity is not simply something we celebrate; it is one of Victoria's greatest strengths and a vital part of our future.

“The creation of MMV reflects this, ensuring that multiculturalism is not confined to a single government portfolio. It touches every aspect of Victorian life, from education, health and transport to business, industry and economic development. Ensuring multicultural and multifaith communities have a strong voice in shaping that future is at the heart of MMV.

“As we embark on this next chapter we would also like to thank our outgoing Commissioners, Dr Judy Tang OAM and Sylvia Coombe, for their dedicated years of service. Their contribution to the Victorian Multicultural Commission, and to multiculturalism in Victoria, has been invaluable. We wish them every success in the next chapter of their journeys.

Sign the Mothers' Call for peace. From one of our Affiliated Organisations NCJWV and their international organisation: ICJW

Dear Members,

Your signature on this initiative would be greatly appreciated and helpful. This proposal has already agreed upon. Lilian Grinberg has already signed. If you support this initiative please consider signing.

*I just signed the **Mothers' Call for Peace**, created by **Reem Al-Hajajreh and Yael Admi, a Palestinian and an Israeli mother** working together for a better future. Together, they founded Mothers' Call to bring Palestinian and Israeli women together and demand freedom, safety and dignity for their children.*

They believe that the majority of the people of both nations share their mutual desire and together they turn this call to people from all around the world both young and old, religious leaders, people of influence, community leaders, educators, and those who hold this issue close to their hearts, to add their voices to the Mother's Call. Together, we can help them demand peace. Sign here: <https://mothers-call.org/mothers-call/#petition?source=email&>

Thank you for taking the time to learn more and participate.

Debbie Wasserman, President ICJW

National Council of Jewish Women Australia (NCJWA) Conference

The Governor-General, Her Excellency the Hon. Sam Mostyn AC was pleased to welcome members of the National Council of Jewish Women Australia (NCJWA) to Admiralty House for a roundtable discussion and reception ahead of their National Conference in Sydney. At the Official Reception held the night before the Conference, Her Excellency welcomed 77 participants for a special event which included remarks and presentation of awards. The Governor-General announced the winners of the inaugural NCJWA Esther Awards, honouring outstanding women who exhibit courage, strength, resilience and contribute to strengthening the social fabric of Australia. We offer congratulations from NCJWV to Rysia Rosen OAM who was presented with a Life Governor Badge of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, by the Governor General Her Excellency the Hon. Sam Mostyn AC.



Source: Governor General's Facebook

Australian Muslim Poll

Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia in Australia has launched **the Australian Muslim Poll, a national initiative** delivered in partnership with Deakin University that will capture the diverse experiences, perspectives and wellbeing of Muslims across Australia.

The Australian Muslim Poll is Australia's first nationally representative, annual study of its kind. It will build a robust evidence base to better understand Muslim communities and inform policy, community programs and public discourse with high-quality, data-driven insights.

<https://www.oseci.gov.au/news/article/launch-first-national-australian-muslim-poll>

It will run across 2026–2027, with the first findings expected in September 2027, to be shared through reports, events and briefings.

ADVISER NEWS

Education Adviser – Elida Brereton & Pam Hammond

National Council of Women of Victoria: My Vote My Voice, Friday 21st August 2026

My Voice My Vote was held in the Legislative Council Chamber, Parliament of Victoria. This year's theme was: **How AI Affects Your Education**, designed to have students gain insights from their peers and others on their use of AI, or not, particularly focussing on education.

The schools participating were: MacRobertson Girls' High School, Melbourne Girls' Grammar School, St Margaret's Berwick Grammar, Al Siraat College, Methodist Ladies College, Beacon Hills Secondary College, Camberwell High School, Beaumaris Secondary College, Firkbank Grammar, Star of the Sea College, Elwood Secondary College, Melbourne Girls' College, Bayside P-12 College Altona. All addressed the theme extremely well. Selecting groups for awards was very difficult. All students received certificates. **Awards were given to:**



Al Siraat Colleg



Bayside College, Altona



Beacons Hills College



Camberwell High School



Elwood Secondary College



Firkbank Grammar



MacRobertson Girls' High School



Melbourne Girls' Grammar School



Methodist Ladies College



Star of the Sea College



St Margarets Berwick Grammar



Speaker: Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto

Can nature play support young children's (2–12 years) relationships with their parents, siblings and peers

This paper by researchers: Kristel Alla & Kylie Butler, summarises the research evidence about whether nature play can support young children's (2–12 years) relationships. It highlights characteristics of nature play that can encourage meaningful interactions and describes how this can support positive relationship building. It also outlines some considerations for practitioners and other professionals working with young children and families.

A growing body of research suggests that engaging with nature may be linked with a wide range of physical, cognitive, social and emotional benefits for children and adults. Research also suggests that shared outdoor experiences, such as nature play, can support meaningful relationships between children and important people in their lives.

See: [Can nature play support children's relationships with family and peers? | Australian Institute of Family Studies](#)

Legislation Adviser – Ronniet Milliken

On 23 September 2026, Victorian Women's Trust [[VWT] hosted a webinar regarding women's reproductive rights. Concern was expressed about the likelihood of changes to reproductive health services and access arising from any change in the composition of Members of Parliament resulting from the upcoming Victorian election. A report on the webinar will be produced by VWT in the coming weeks.

The speakers included

- VWT CEO Dr Kirsten Abernethy who addressed a recent NCWV Council Meeting about Women's Voices.
- Dr Nisha Khot President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

In the chat it was noted that The Victorian Charter of Human Rights does NOT apply to abortion – see Section 48 – Savings Provision- “ Nothing in this Charter affects any law applicable to abortion or child destruction, whether before or after the commencement of Part 2.” [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)

Background information shared previously by NCWV

You may recollect information shared by NCWV previously in regard to women's reproductive health:

- July 2022 NCWV Newsletter - Statement from ICW-CIF: “Abortion, a fragile right”. – see attachment
- April 2023 NCWV Newsletter – presentation regarding RU486 by The Hon Judith Troeth AM, a Liberal member of the Australian Senate from 1993 to 2011, for the State of Victoria.

A trailblazer for rural women in politics, social justice and human rights, to improve access to the drug RU486 (the abortion pill) which induces abortion in the early stages of pregnancy, in 2005 *Senator Troeth assembled a working party across Party lines to develop a Private Members Bill to hand back decision making to the TGA*. The four women in the Australian Parliament, who worked together were: Senator Claire Moore (ALP QLD), Senator Fiona Nash (NAT NSW), Senator Lyn Allison (Dems VIC), Senator Judith Troeth (LIB VIC). [2023 April NCWV Newsletter.pdf](#)

- July 2023 NCWV Newsletter - presentation by Dr Kate Duncan AM on Women's Reproductive Health [2023 July NCWV Newsletter.pdf](#) .Dr Duncan concluded with listing what is needed for Effective Reproductive Health Care:

KNOWLEDGE: General education, literacy, specific sex and contraceptive education, awareness of screening available.

ACCESS: Availability of healthcare personnel, contraceptives, facilities, medications, and surgery. Removal of barriers to attendance (social, legal, political, familial or religious)

AFFORDABILITY: Strengthened public health provisions and avoidance of exploitation. Adequate maternity or sick leave

SAFETY: of medications, surgical procedures and obstetric care; of freedom from assault and violence;

EMPOWERMENT: freedom from reproductive coercion, either forced pregnancy/birth, or termination or sterilisation

Multicultural Adviser – June Anderson/ Niti Bhargava

FECCA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026: Many Stories, One Future:

<https://futureeventslab.app/gettickets/fecca-2026-conference>

Join Australia's largest gathering of multicultural leaders, professionals and community advocates.

The event will take place on 15 and 16 October 2026 at Old Parliament House in Canberra.

It highlights that Australia's strength lies in its diversity, shifting the focus from "managing" multiculturalism to leveraging it as a powerful foundation for growth. A program is available on the [Conference website](#)

Adviser IT, Social Media, Mass Media – Sarah Barnbrook

Gender and AI: Where's the Harm?

I recently attended the Victorian Women's Trust's *Feminism in the Pub* event, where Dr Elise Stephenson presented her research into 20 gendered harms associated with artificial intelligence.

What struck me was how familiar many of these harms already are. Discrimination, exploitation, surveillance and inequality have been around for a long time. AI is giving them new ways to spread, often much faster and with far greater consequences. One finding that stood out was that 15 of the 20 occupations most exposed to automation are female-dominated.

I was particularly interested in the discussion around AI in healthcare. We're introducing tools that can capture incredibly sensitive information, but do patients really understand what they're agreeing to? Where does that information go, who has access to it and what happens to it afterwards?

Something I feel strongly about is that we keep expecting people to recognise risks and protect themselves, even when they have no way of knowing those risks exist. Surely the responsibility should sit with those designing, selling and introducing the technology to understand the potential harm before putting it into people's lives?

I also loved the question raised about why we treat AI advancement as inevitable, yet continue to accept that gender equality might take generations. Both are shaped by the decisions we make. We should be asking who gets to make those decisions and whose interests are being considered.

For me, this is why prevention matters so much. We need to think beyond the intended purpose of technology and consider how it might affect people whose circumstances, vulnerabilities and experiences are often overlooked.

It was a really worthwhile evening and a reminder that we have more influence over the future of technology than we're sometimes led to believe. We shouldn't have to choose between technological progress and people's safety.

Read more: www.vwt.org.au

Environment Adviser - Pam Robinson AM



When significant weather conditions come about, such as heavy rain over a short period of time, or high temperatures are recorded over many days, misinformation of what is happening or discussion on the pattern of the weather is a 'free for all'. The weather is such an important part of our everyday life, this is to be expected.

The following information will help clarify some of the current wet weather perspectives being talked about; provided by professional weather science at the [Bureau of Meteorology \(BOM\)](#)

Key Facts on October Rainfall in Victoria & Melbourne

October is typically Melbourne's wettest month of the year, averaging roughly 65.7 mm to 66 mm of rainfall.

- **Rain Days:** October averages around 10 to 15 rain days, marking a peak in spring variability.
- **State-wide Records:** While October is a wet benchmark for Melbourne, state-wide records fluctuate; for instance, October 2022 became the wettest month on record for Victoria overall since records began in 1900.
- **Recent Weather:** Melbourne experienced heavy downpours at the start of October catching a significant portion of its monthly average in just a single day of severe flash flooding

H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu) You will have either read or seen/heard press coverage on this matter. Australia was the last continent to be free of the deadly H5N1 bird flu strain. However, it was not possible to be immune long term given the migratory flight paths from other parts of the world. Whilst I wrote about this last month, I bring the important matter to you again with updates and hotline contacts should you **see** any dead birds or animals. It is extremely important not to touch any dead birds or animals – but immediately report them to the authorities in Victoria or if you are in any area across Australia as they use an 'Avoid, Record, Report' approach.

Personally touching or removing any dead bird or animal is a 'no no' and would compromise the information the experts need to take into consideration when they reach the site you report and check out the bird or animal.

The main contacts for reporting being the **Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888** or through **Agriculture Victoria** who have an extensive amount of information regarding this matter – the accurate details are well worth seeing in a visit to their website and to see what you can do to help such as reporting the sighting of any dead birds and/or unexpectedly finding other dead land and water animals. Go to <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/bird>

(However, if for any reason you are unsure of to whom to contact or can't get through to the points of reference above, get in touch with your local Council or Vet Clinic who will have the location of your sighting reported to the authorities).

As of **1 October 2026**, Australia had **680** confirmed events of H5 bird flu in wildlife.

- 10 in Western Australia (WA)
- 323 in South Australia (SA)
- 68 in New South Wales (NSW)
- 2 in Queensland (QLD)
- **230 in Victoria (VIC)**
- 46 in Tasmania (TAS)
- 1 in Other Territories*

Key environmental dates and events for October and early November which include a mix of Victorian, Australian, and global awareness. Many of the events and celebrations on these key environmental dates are being run by Local Government Councils along with Organisations such as Environment Education Victoria (EEV) website: <https://www.eev.vic.edu.au>, Conservation Volunteers Australia website: <https://www.conservationaustralia.org.au>, and through Landcare Victoria <https://www.landcarevictoria.org.au> to find your local Landcare Group.

October 11 – 17 'Earth Science Week'.

Earth Science Week is a global movement that aims to increase the understanding and awareness of the importance of Earth science and its value to our everyday lives. It is an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the world around us and to discover how Earth Science really is everywhere. <https://www.eev.vic.edu.au>

October 19 – 25 'Aussie Bird Count'.

The Aussie Bird Count is a fun, easy way for all of us to take a national snapshot of the birds around us as we connect with nature. With just 20 minutes, you can help build a picture of how our feathered friends are faring and contribute to something that really counts. There are many opportunities for Councils, Schools, Businesses and Community Groups to take part. To find out more and see what resources are available, contact your Council or Landcare Group along with going to learn more from Birdlife Australia <https://www.birdlife.org.au>

November 6 'FrogID Week'.

Hosted by the Australian Museum, FrogID is Australia's biggest frog count. Held annually, it's when anyone with a smartphone can help record frog calls through the free FrogID app as a measurement of frog health and distribution around the country. <https://www.AustralianMuseum>

Environmental Film Festival

Melbourne's premiere showcase of environmental cinema is back for 2026, screening more than 20 films from around the world. The EFF26 program includes feature documentaries, shorts, experimental cine-art, talks, events and, of course, the annual festival litter-pick.

Audiences can expect rousing stories of communities taking daring stands against unbeatable odds, eye-opening reflections on the power of care and kindness, intimate accounts of responsibility, grief, conservation and custodianship, and heart-tugging animations to remind us of our interconnection with flora, fauna and the more-than-human world.

When: Sunday 25 October to Sunday 8 November

Where: Locations across Melbourne

<https://environmentalfilms.org.au/eff26>

OTHER NEWS

National Self Advocacy Day 2026! BY SARU is a chance to celebrate self-advocacy across Australia and the achievements of people with disability for a day of connection, learning and celebration.

Hear from inspiring speakers, share stories, meet new people, take part in fun activities and celebrate the strength of the self-advocacy movement.

Who should come?

Self-advocates, People with disability, People who support self-advocacy groups, People working in the disability sector, Anyone interested in learning more about self-advocacy.

Where? Collingwood Town Hall, 140 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford

When? Tuesday 13th October 2026, 10am– 5:30pm

Free food and drinks will be provided throughout the day, followed by an afternoon tea networking session.

Learn more about Disability Pride at www.drc.org.au/disability-pride-and-culture/

Can't come to Melbourne? Watch the event live online or gather with your local self-advocacy group to celebrate together and join the live stream. **If you need help registering, please contact SARU on (03) 9539 6856.**

Equality Institute - 'What Does Intersectional Gender Equality Look Like at Work?'

Equality Institute wanted to reach out about an **upcoming free webinar** that may be of interest to our network.

It's called **'What Does Intersectional Gender Equality Look Like at Work?'**, **on 28 October at 12pm.**

Further information about the webinar and speakers, as well as registration details, is available here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QGKDA8wAR5KGY1tGfZvS-Q#/registration

Aged Care Complaints Commissioner launches *Let's talk about complaints*



The newsletter *Let's talk about complaints* provides practical information about aged care rights, raising concerns and making complaints, to help older people feel more confident in speaking up. Visit [Let's talk about complaints](#) on the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's website to read the first edition and subscribe

The Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, Treasure Jennings, has launched *Let's talk about complaints*, a new regular newsletter. Issue one is now available. It is designed to help older people, their families and supporters better understand their rights and the complaints process in aged care.

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. [1300 76 50 50](tel:1300765050) nationalseniors.com.au

[Visit the website](#)

COTA Wise Helpline: 1300 135 090 | Seniors Rights Victoria Helpline: 1300 368 821

COTA Australia led the successful consortia of organisations to fund different models of navigation that would help people understand and engage with the aged care system. Evaluation at: [Aged Care System Navigator Measure | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)

The findings from these trials informed the design of the Care Finders program. [COTA Australia created a number of Care Finder resources](#) to assist Care Finders in their work. Local Care Finders can help older people who need extra, intensive support to access aged care services and supports in the community. [Find your local care finders here.](#)

When the findings are reported, researchers won't include any names or other details that could identify women.

Participants will receive a \$50 voucher for their time.

take steps to support the future you. Jump in now for information on bone health, sexual health, nutrition and more.
Health checklist – your 40s: Future-proof your health with our essential health checklist for women in their 40s. Features

expert advice from GP Dr Melanie Hemsley

40s checklist

Health checklist – your 50s: Dr Hemsley shares her future-proofing checklist for your 50s. Includes advice on menopause,

Health checks and bone health.

50s checklist

Get answer

Brain ageing – what's OK? 9 tips for brain health

Get tips

If you have been diagnosed with dementia or want to reduce your risk, these tips can help

Victorian Healthcare Association (VHA)



CHSP extended to 30 June 2029

The Australian Government has announced that the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) will be extended as a standalone program to 30 June 2029.

'CHSP provides critical early intervention, home and community-based aged care services that support older people to remain independent at home and in their communities. The VHA's Position Statement on CHSP makes clear that the VHA supports the program being maintained as separate from Support at Home.

'The VHA welcomes this announcement and looks forward to engaging with the Australian Government on further opportunities to strengthen delivery Commonwealth aged care programs and reforms.'

Read the [VHA's Position Statement on CHSP](#).

Read the [Australian Government's announcement](#).

Dr Leigh Clarke, CEO

The VHA Conference will be held Tuesday 20 October - Wednesday 21 October.

First look: Day one of the VHA 2026 Conference

Across the day, delegates will explore adaptive leadership, digital disruption, workforce safety and wellbeing, moral distress, and the capabilities needed to lead in environments shaped by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Day one is designed for leaders at every level

VHA are pleased to welcome a strong line-up of [day one speakers](#).

Dr Simon Kos, Chief Medical Officer of Heidi Health,

Thea Stein, Chief Executive of the Nuffield Trust

Sam Jenkin, Chief Health and Safety Officer at WorkSafe Victoria.

Dr Betty Mutwiri, LEADS Global Associate and leadership consultant, [Register now](#)

Setting The Standard for Women's Health In Victoria

MEDIA RELEASE

Labor's landmark *Inquiry into Women's Pain* heard from over 13,000 women and girls, revealing experiences of medical bias, sexism and dismissal. While there are exemplary models of care in Victoria, the Inquiry demonstrated that it is not everyone's experience. The pain and experiences of women and girls must not only be heard but acted on.

The State Government is taking this seriously, launching the *Victorian Women's Pain Standard*.

The Australian-first initiative sets clear expectations for how health services recognise, assess and respond to pain. The expectation is that care should be consistent and high quality, regardless of where a woman lives in Victoria. It means Victorian women can have greater confidence they will be heard and believed when seeking care for pain.

Created alongside clinicians, experts and everyday Victorian women, the Standard is guided by four key principles:

1. Women must be taken seriously and believed when discussing their pain
2. Women must be listened to and supported to ask questions and express their concerns
3. Women must be respected as partners in decisions about their body, treatment and care
4. Women must be given choices and practical support to manage their pain safely and effectively.

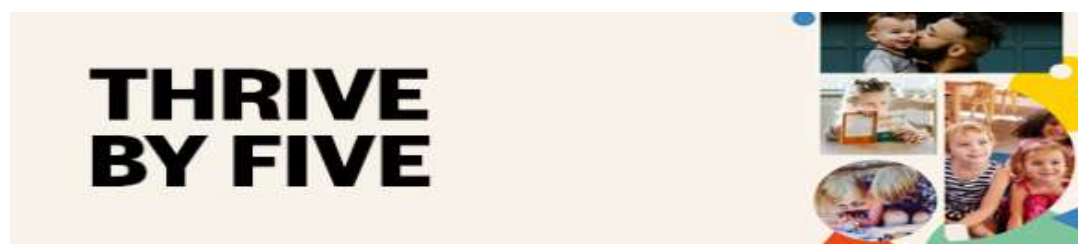
The Standard recognises the expertise of health professionals and provides a basis for learning and improvement. It will be embedded at all public health services, including 20 Sexual and Reproductive Health Hubs and 20 Women's Health Clinics.

This is only one part of the work underway to improve women's health care in Victoria following the Inquiry.

The Government is taking decisive action to support Victorian women and girls with free and accessible care closer to home.

Backed by a \$153 million investment, women and girls continue to access key services across the state. This includes through the hubs, virtual and mobile clinics and a dedicated Aboriginal women's health clinic.

NCWV is proud that we have had significant input into this Inquiry as well as other submissions and advocacy.



Thrive by Five is launching our national Early Childhood Community Survey to understand how families and educators across Australia are navigating early learning and care.

Your input on the affordability, access and safety of early learning is critical. Take the 3 minute Community Survey now.

Complete the survey

We're asking because governments across Australia are actively consulting on the design of an independent National Early Education and Care Commission. With a strong remit, a National Commission will help Australia act on the issues that matter *most* to families and educators, such as access and affordability gaps, workforce planning, and ensuring high standards of quality and safety. This important reform should include:

- A clear, holistic view of the nation's early learning sector.
- A central place for data to identify problems and enable planning ahead.
- The ability to scale best practice to benefit communities.
- Clearer national stewardship – currently early education and care is funded by the Commonwealth but regulated independently by states and territories, meaning where you live shapes your experience and the sector's rules.

Your feedback will inform our campaign and our advocacy with Commonwealth, state and territory governments, ensuring a future commission is built on what Australian families need. By sharing what matters most when choosing or using early childhood services, your answers will help us build a better picture of how affordability, accessibility, safety and trust influence real decisions. The survey is anonymous and takes less than three minutes to complete.

You can [share your thoughts here](#). Thank you for sharing your experience and helping us advocate for a better early learning system for every Australian child.



»Article and photo posted on September 4, 2026



by [Madeline Hislop](#)

VALE: Gloria Steinem who is being remembered for her trailblazing activism that shaped the path for the expansion of women's rights across decades.

"American journalist and giant of the feminist movement Gloria Steinem died on Wednesday aged 92 and is being remembered for her trailblazing activism that shaped the path for the expansion of women's rights across decades.

Steinem was a leading second-wave feminist figure in the late 1960s and 70s, and an acclaimed journalist who worked to uncover untold stories affecting women. A life of fierce activism and optimism, she will forever be remembered as a giant of progress. "

Empowering Women: A Summit for Growth, Power, Purpose



For a day of inspiring conversations, meaningful connection and fresh perspectives join the Empowering Women Summit 2026. Hosted by Melbourne Centre for Women's Mental Health, this unique one-day event brings together leading women from psychology, health, leadership, business, sport, advocacy, finance and the creative arts to explore the themes of Personal Growth, Professional Power and Shared Purpose.

Held at the beautiful Queen Victoria Women's Centre in Melbourne, the Summit features keynote presentations, panel discussions and interactive conversations exploring leadership, wellbeing, resilience, creativity, financial empowerment, social change, women's health and living a purposeful life.

Hear from an outstanding line-up of speakers, including:

Liz Gosper OAM – Award-winning coach, educator and inclusion advocate, presenting the Summit keynote on Women Leading Change and Inclusive Sport,

Lynne Cazaly – International keynote speaker and author exploring cognitive load, modern work and the hidden cost of holding it all together.

Dr Olivia Ong – TEDx speaker, physician and author sharing her powerful story of resilience, self-compassion and recovery following life-changing adversity.

Jane Monica-Jones – Global leader in trauma-informed financial wellbeing exploring the relationship between money, safety, agency and women's financial lives.

Malavika Kadwadkar – Systems change leader and advocate discussing lived experience, collective leadership and creating meaningful social change.

Tamara Protassow Adams – Creativity mentor and writing coach exploring permission, self-expression and finding your authentic voice.

You'll also hear from **Kabinga Mazaba, Karyn Fitts, Esther McConnell, Maria Dietrich, Abby Wake, Caryn Griffin, Katherine Gokavi-Whaley and Dr Sonja Skocic**, who will lead engaging conversations throughout the day.

Whether you're seeking professional development, personal inspiration, practical ideas or connection with a community of women committed to positive change, the Empowering Women Summit offers a day to learn, reflect and be inspired.

Ticket Prices: Final Release: \$220 (from 1 October)

Date: Friday 23 October 2026; 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM (UTC+10)

Location Wayi Djerring - Us Together (located within the Queen Victoria Women's Centre), 210 Lonsdale St, Melbourne

You're invited to attend the 2026 Kep Enderby Memorial Lecture on 2 November 2026 – online !

Racism and the scapegoating of migrants: Reshaping the narrative on immigration.

Join us for this important and thought-provoking event that will examine racism towards migrants, current public narratives about immigration and the impact on migrant communities and others affected by racism.

This year's orator is **Mariam Veiszadeh** - DEI Executive, Anti-Racism Expert & Human Rights advocate.

This will be followed by a dynamic panel discussion moderated by writer and broadcaster **Ben Law**.

Panellists:

- **Adama Kamara**, Co-CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia
- **Braden Hill**, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) at Edith Cowan University
- **Laurie Berg**, Co-Executive Director of the Migrant Justice Initiative
- **Giridharan Sivaraman**, Race Discrimination Commissioner

Event details

Monday 2 November

- **12.30pm - 1.45pm**
- **FREE event**
- **Online only**

Information and registration

The lecture will be delivered online via Zoom.

AUSLAN interpretation and live captioning will be available.

NCWV Pioneer Women's Annual Ceremony, Sunday February 7th 2027, 11:00am

Conducted early February in the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden, King's Domain, Melbourne to celebrate pioneering women in Victoria. Topics recently: Pioneer Women: in Education; in Sport; in Aviation; and

in 2027 Pioneer Women in Trades, including the first women's garage and taxi service.

On 17 September (1926), Alice Anderson, 29, died from a gunshot wound to her head in her auto garage on Cotham Road in Kew, Melbourne. Alice avoided the conventional careers for women of the 1920s and opened "Alice Anderson Motor Service", offering petrol, vehicle repairs, a driving school, and chauffeuring. She had just returned from a successful 2414km (1500 mile) journey to the Northern Territory in a baby Austin. LORETTA SMITH is a Melbourne-based writer, public speaker and life coach. Her bestselling biography *A Spanner in the Works: The extraordinary story of Alice Anderson and Australia's first 'all-girl' garage* (Hachette, 2019) has been optioned for a TV series and inspired the play *Garage Girls*, performed to a sell-out audience La Mama Theatre in 2023. The play will be touring regionally throughout Victoria in 2024 as part of the VCE playlist.

Save the date and Join the NCWV, Sunday February 7, from 11 – 2:30.

Bring a picnic and enjoy this beautiful location.



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
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
February	4 th	Thursday	Council meeting	12:15	TBA
February	7 th 2027	Sunday	Pioneer Women's Ceremony	11:00	King's Domain

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

This publication is compiled and edited by Pam Hammond, Convenor of IMs, with support from President, Ronniet Milliken

NCWV NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN VICTORIA

Founded 1902 ~ Celebrating 124 years in 2026/7

M: 0478 783 489 | W: www.ncwvic.org.au

E: info@ncwvic.org.au

Number A0004465H ABN: 18227073059

Reg.