

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 link is 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: "International Literacy Day (ILD), 8 September to remind policy-makers, practitioners, the public of the critical importance of literacy for creating more literate, just, peaceful, and sustainable society. A fundamental human right, it opens the door to the enjoyment of other human rights" UNESCO

URGENT REQUEST

Have Your Say: Women's Health Survey. During Women's Health Week NCWV is inviting all members to complete a very brief "Women's Health Survey".

The Australian Senate has established a Select Committee on Women's Health, and NCWV is preparing a submission to help shape its findings. We want to hear about your experiences of healthcare, the barriers you've faced accessing care, and what you'd like to see change. Your input will help our government understand women's experiences of healthcare, barriers to care, and priorities for reform.

The survey is voluntary and you can skip any question. It is not exhaustive with only Ten quick questions about your health care. Your responses will be deidentified in any reporting and must not name individuals, services or institutions.

There is an option to recommend other areas that we should be looking at given this survey is constrained to current call.

Please respond by 25 September. Complete the survey:

<https://form.typeform.com/to/xA8Lj6IX>



President's Report to NCWV Council, September 3rd 2026

This is my last Report to the NCWV Council as President and thus it will focus in on my thanks to you as Individual Members, Delegates of our Affiliates and Committee Members of NCWV, for all that you have contributed to me

(a) **Pam Hammond** for her excellent and thorough planning, organisation, and leadership of the annual *My Vote My Voice* secondary schools event held at Parliament House on Friday September 21st, with over 100 students, staff, family and NCWV members present and speaker Dr, Rumbi Nyanhoto and panel. This is a major flagship event for NCWV with the quality of speakers from 13 schools high. Thank you, Pam, for the follow-up to this event, as you organise visits and awards to schools.

(b) **Our Health Adviser Prof Cassandra Szoek** has been honoured by the AMA with the award of the **2026 AMA Gold Medal** with part of her Citation stating:

"Professor Szoek is recognised for her outstanding contributions to medicine, advancing women's health and healthy ageing through pioneering research, clinical leadership, health policy reform, and advocacy that has transformed understanding of sex-specific health across Australia and beyond...She is an internationally recognised consultant neurologist and world-leading expert on sex-specific medicine and her research on dementia, ageing and women's health has informed major national and international policy bodies, including the World Health Organization." Some NCWV Members attended the presentation. I know that you share my delight and warm congratulations. We are very proud of you Cassandra!

(c) My sincere thanks go to **Vice-Presidents Pam Hammond and June Anderson, Immediate Past President Ronniet Milliken, retiring Convenor of Standing Committees Robyn Byrne OAM, retiring Individual Members Convenor, Sheila Byard OAM, and past assistant Treasurer Hean Bee Wee AM, Dr. Deborah Towns OAM, Sarah Barnbrook, Co-Hon Sec Phoebe Swift and Guosheng Chen**, who have all been valuable and valued fellow Committee members this last year, while I have appreciated the work of **Co-Hon. Sec. Dr Julie Stevens** who has looked after the NCWV Council. .

Other events and interests in the past month include :

- The visit of Robyn Byrne OAM, Ronniet Milliken and me to **WorkSafe** regarding the often appalling situation for female tradies on construction sites etc in relation to clean, accessible toilets, was a great example of NCWV being proactive via letters to Ministers and follow up visits, as in this case. **See update P. 3**

- I applaud members representing NCWV at recent multicultural/interfaith events for their involvement, including Pam Hammond, June Anderson, Ronniet Milliken, Sarah Barnbrook, Dr Deborah Towns OAM, Guosheng Chen, Robyn Byrne OAM and others, and may this continue. The Multicultural Dinner and Interfaith Dinner were both outstanding events which NCWV supports and will continue to support.



- The next **Triennial Conference of NCWA will be held in Hobart, Tasmania, November 2027**. Other key events are being held in Hobart at that time so accommodation will be scarce. There will be a survey of Members to ascertain which days of the week suit best.
- The Geelong Branch AGM was held on August 20th. I was delighted to attend and be the Returning Officer. The speaker, Jess, from “**The Orange Door**”, an umbrella organisation that supports victims of family violence, presented with distressing details about the prevalence of family violence and the cost of this especially in destroying many young children’s lives, but also about the work The Orange Door and its partners in Geelong are doing to alleviate the situation.

Congratulations to Nonie Crozier (President) and Barbara Abley AM (Hon. Sec) for their re-election.



Barbara Abley AM, Pres Nonie Crozier, speaker Jess and me after Jess' excellent talk about the work of *The Orange Door*.

- I thank Phoebe Swift, Co-Hon. Sec for collating the 2026 Annual report and being returning Officer for the AGM.

Elida Brereton, September 3rd 2026

NCWV 123rd AGM, 3 September, 2026

National Council of Women Victoria (NCWV) held its Annual General Meeting where outgoing President Elida Brereton delivered her final report, tabled the Annual Report and Financial Statement, both being approved. Elida then announced that two members, Sheila Byard OAM and Hean Bee Wee AM have been made Honorary Life Members of NCWV.



Elida handed over to Phoebe Swift, Returning Officer, for the election of executive:

President – Ronniet Milliken
Vice Presidents - Robyn Byrne OAM and Sarah Barnbrook,
Hon. Treasurer and Public Officer – Meenakshi Bhayani
Convenor Standing
Committees – Sarah Barnbrook, and seven

general Committee

Members: Dr Julie Stevens, June Anderson, Guosheng Chen, Pam Hammond, Dr Deborah Towns OAM, Hean Bee Wee AM, and new Member Asha Chintapalli.

New/ Additional Standing Committee Advisers were appointed including Dr Julie Stevens as Coordinator General Wellbeing, Elida Brereton Adviser Education, and Arts and Letters, Asha Chintapalli as Adviser Habitat, Niti Bhargava as Adviser Economics, Women and Employment, and Multicultural Affairs. Immediate Past President Elida Brereton, Convenor of Individual Members, Pam Hammond and President, Geelong Branch Nonie Crozier are ex-officio Executive Committee Members.

The AGM celebrated retiring Committee Members and acknowledged new Member, Asha Chintapalli who was elected as both a Committee Member and Adviser.

Phoebe handed over to the incoming President, Ronniet Milliken, who thanked Phoebe and the retiring committee members and advisers.



Elida handing over the official NCWV Badge to Ronniet

Dr. Kaele Stokes from Dementia Australia



Dr. Kaele Stokes presented on Dementia, the leading cause of death for women and affecting over 447,000 Australians, women being overrepresented both as those developing the condition and as caregivers. Key points included the difference between normal ageing and dementia:

What is the difference between normal ageing and dementia?



	Normal Ageing	Dementia
Events	Memory may sometimes be vague	May forget part or all of the event
Words or names	Sometimes may forget - "It's on the tip of my tongue."	Progressively forgets, unable to find the right word/name
Instructions	Able to follow	Increasingly more difficult
Following stories	Able to follow	Increasingly more difficult
Stored knowledge	Recall may be slower, but information is retained	Knowledge is lost over time
Everyday activities	Retains ability unless impacted by physical changes	Progressively loses capacity to perform tasks

There are 150 types of dementia including Alzheimer's, frontotemporal dementia (often starts with personality and language changes), vascular dementia (restricted blood flow) Alzheimer's disease risk increases with age, first symptoms being loss of short-term memory. Proteins – Amyloids and Tau damage brain cells resulting in brain shrinkage. She showed parts of the brain responsible, if damaged.

How a healthy brain works

Frontal Lobes – Big Boss

- Decision making
- Planning and sequencing activities
- Regulating emotions & social awareness
- Insight into your own behaviour
- Drive and motivation. Personality
- Impulse control. Language. Speech

Temporal Lobes - Ears

- Hearing
- Understanding things people say

Brain Stem – Life support machine

- Breathing, heart rate and blood pressure, swallowing, sleeping/alertness



How a healthy brain works

Parietal Lobes-Safety Officer

- Proprioception. Spatial awareness
- Depth perception. Navigation
- Reading and writing
- Maths and calculation
- Processes touch, temp, pressure, pain

Occipital Lobes - Eyes

- Vision and colour processing

Limbic System- Survival Navigator

Amygdala attaches emotion to memories.

Hippocampus-Time Keeper

Short term memories to long term



Kaele stressed the need for better public understanding of dementia and brain health, and the importance of early intervention. She also emphasised that each person is an individual: genetics, general health and the environment impact on memory as we age.

Many conditions can affect memory: hormonal, some infections (eg urinary tract) interfere with the brain's ability to process information, diabetes, heart, liver, kidney issues, dehydration, stroke, and sleep apnoea.

Modifiable risk factors that could potentially prevent up to 45% of dementia cases, include - move regularly, eat well, manage blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, address sleep problems and fatigue, be socially connected, keep learning, limit alcohol and avoid smoking. Speak with GP if concerned.

See Dementia Australia: [Home | Dementia Australia](https://www.dementia.org.au/).

Prof. Cassandra Szoeki was mentioned as having expertise in the intersection between dementia and women's health, and agreed to explore this topic at a future meeting.

Congratulations Professor Cassandra Szoeki, outstanding NCWV Health Adviser since 2022, who has led advocacy in relation to women's health in Victoria and nationally.

Recognised by the Australian Medical Association (AMA) for outstanding contributions to medicine, advancing women's health and healthy ageing through pioneering research, clinical leadership, health policy reform, and advocacy that has transformed understanding of sex-specific health across Australia and beyond, Professor Szoeki is an internationally recognised consultant neurologist and world-leading expert on sex-specific medicine. Her research on dementia, ageing and women's health has informed major national and international policy bodies, including the WHO.

At the 2026 AMA National Conference, AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said Professor Szoeki's work was particularly relevant given the AMA's and the broader community's focus on women's health in recent years. [AMA Gold Medal goes to Professor Cassandra Szoeki | Australian Medical Association](https://www.ama.org.au/AMA-Gold-Medal-goes-to-Professor-Cassandra-Szoeki-Australian-Medical-Association)

As Principal Investigator of the Women's Healthy Ageing Project, the longest study of women's health in Australia, Professor Szoeki authored the book *Secrets of Women's Healthy Ageing*, which was highly commended in the Educational Publishing Awards Australia, and was the Best-selling title in 100 years of Melbourne University Publishing in the genre of Medicine.

Professor Szoeki said she was honoured to receive the award. "So many great leaders have held this medal before me. It is a humbling list to be added to, and I do not take the honour lightly... I accept this on behalf of four hundred and thirty-eight women who gave us more than 30 years of their lives, one annual visit at a time. They did it for the women who come after them."



RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Can a cooling mattress help you sleep better on hot nights?

Hot nights are becoming more common across Australia, and warm bedrooms can place extra stress on the heart during sleep, especially for older adults. Griffith University are testing whether a mattress-based cooling device can help the body stay relaxed and recover overnight. The study takes place entirely in your own home, with no visits to a clinic or laboratory.

Could you take part? You may be eligible if you:

- ✓ Are aged 50 years or over
- ✓ Live independently in your own home in Australia
- ✓ Do NOT have air-conditioning in your bedroom
- ✓ Own a smartphone (iPhone 10 / equivalent or newer) and home internet connection
- ✓ Are in generally good health

What's involved?

Duration: About 7 months (September 2026 – March 2027), across spring and summer.

What you do: Wear a Fitbit smartwatch overnight and place a small temperature sensor in your bedroom. For part of the summer you'll use a cooling mattress device on your bed. Otherwise, you simply sleep as you normally would.

Where: Entirely in your own home, no travel required. Full instructions and phone support are provided.

As a thank-you for taking part, participants keep the cooling mattress device at the end of the study. Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time.

Interested?

Get in touch to learn more:

Dr Aaron Bach, Griffith University,
a.bach@griffith.edu.au 0485835 235

Leading Women in Health - grateful thanks for generous donations towards planned publication in November 2026

We are excited to be producing what is a unique publication, profiling numerous women in the health sector who have made a significant and sometimes unique contribution. Limited to around 100 women, the book only touches the surface of women's leadership and yet provides a wide and telling story about the enormous impact women of Victoria have had in improving health in Victoria, Australia and globally. The Introduction will recognise medicine and health provision by First Nations People before European settlers arrived, and their continuing influence in the development of holistic medicine in Australia.

Our Editor, NCWV Committee Member Dr Deborah Towns OAM, an award-winning author, social scientist, and historian, provides an introductory chapter.

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

As a not-for-profit volunteer organisation, it is impossible to take on special projects without support. Donations will enable the publication celebrating women's achievements in the past and current leaders, planned for November 2026.

We are hoping that member will support the production of this landmark publication.

If you are interested to donate please contact the President at info@ncwvic.org.au or on 0478783489

ADVISER NEWS

Education Adviser – 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 event commenced in Queen's Hall at 9:15, then moved into the Legislative Council Chamber, where Elida Brereton, President NCWV, welcomed guests, panel members, teachers, and students, then introduced the keynote speaker NCWV Adviser, Dr Rumbi Nyanhoto. Rumbi is an academic leader, social work practitioner, researcher and advocate whose work focuses on gender equality, child protection, family violence prevention, girls' education and culturally responsive practice. Her career spans higher education, frontline practice, research and community leadership.

Rumbi spoke on '*Leadership as Influence*'. She has a strong commitment to ensuring that the voices and experiences of women, children and diverse communities inform practice, policy and social change. As an Associate Professor and Course Coordinator in Social Work, Rumbi provides academic and strategic leadership across social work education, curriculum development and professional practice. Her work integrates human rights, gender equality, cultural responsiveness and social justice, reflecting her belief that education and leadership can be powerful vehicles for creating more equitable communities. She encouraged students to recognise that leadership begins long before they hold a title or formal position. She focussed on building confidence, developing character, making positive choices, taking responsibility, and understanding that everyone has the ability to make a difference in their school, family, and community.

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, Firbank Grammar, Star of the Sea College, Elwood Secondary College, Melbourne Girls' College, Bayside P-12 College Altona. All addressed the theme extremely well, with different emphases including: dehumanising women/girls, fake images, loss of creativity, critical thinking, honesty/plagiarism, saying assessment must focus on these, with analysis and oral/practical tasks. Some positives were: saving time on administrative tasks, finding factual information, tidying up own work. Many groups had conducted surveys and/or interviews on use and opinions.

Most students spoke clearly, making eye contact with audience, some were reading. The panel noted these, complemented the students on the quality of their presentations, and gave general feedback. Their assessments of each group have been used to nominate Awards. Ronniet Milliken, Past President NCWV thanked the Panel, congratulating the students and encouraging them to become involved. **Awards to be announced shortly.**

Many positive comments, some written feedback received included:

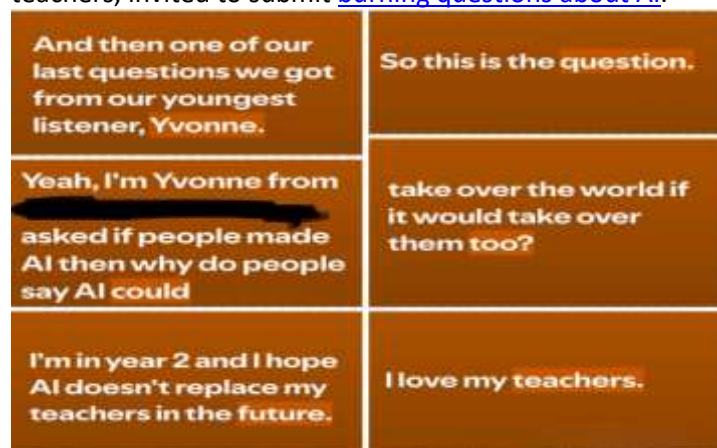
Suan Sow, Quality & Development Manager, Girl Guides, Victoria: *"I just wanted to start by congratulating NCWV on another successful My Vote My Voice. I've left yet again inspired by the students, and also thought that the topic "How AI Affects your Education" was an important topic, and to hear students' voice their thoughts that is not just relevant to education but in workplaces too."*

From one of the teachers: *Hi Pam, a quick note to say a massive thank you for hosting us at Parliament House today for the "My Vote My Voice" presentations! Our students thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to participate, share their ideas, and experience the program firsthand. We deeply appreciate all the hard work and organisation that went into putting together such a wonderful event. Thank you again!!*



Queen's Hall

National Science Week initiative, 'Ask an Expert: AI uncovered', a collaboration between the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society and the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child. It was for students and teachers, invited to submit [burning questions about AI](#).



From how AI works to its role in creativity and everyday life, we heard questions big, small and unexpected.

Selected questions were featured on the 'Ask the Experts: AI Uncovered' podcast.

Meenakshi's son, Yuvaan participated, and his question was selected for the podcast.

Yuvaan's question (misspelt as Yvonne) on left.

Sending the podcast link and transcript screenshot.

Listen to the episode here:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1XdU6quFL0bF5HDZUJ6dpy?si=d979db8d1f884ff3>

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

This paper summarises the research evidence (researchers: Kristel Alla & Kylie Butler) 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](#)

Multicultural Adviser – June Anderson: 2026 Premier's Multicultural Gala Dinner

Premier, the Hon. Ben Carroll MP, Minister for Multicultural and Multifaith Victoria Paul Edbrooke, and the Victorian Multicultural Commission invited guests to attend the 2026 Premier's Multicultural Gala Dinner on Saturday, 22 August. This special event celebrated the vibrant contributions, achievements and diversity of Victoria's multicultural and multifaith communities. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together, celebrate our diversity, and recognise the important role multicultural communities play in strengthening Victoria's social harmony and community connections.

As a member of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) Regional Advisory Council for the Eastern Metropolitan Region, I was honoured to attend this wonderful event and represent our diverse community. It was a privilege to connect with community leaders and representatives from different cultural backgrounds, sharing friendship, culture and a strong commitment to building an inclusive and harmonious Victoria.



Minister Paul Edbrooke, June, Hon Ben Carroll Premier



Xiaoyue Wang, June, Stephanie Liu

FECCA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026: Many Stories, One Future

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 preliminary program is now available on the [Conference website](#)

Environment Adviser - Pam Robinson AM



Spring is off to a warmer-than-average start across Victoria, following a record-breaking winter. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) predicts that both daytime and overnight temperatures will very likely remain above average across the entire State for the rest of Spring. It is likely due to the warmer forecasts and dry conditions, there will be an increased bushfire risk. Excellent and constantly updated detailed information can be found on the Bureau of Meteorology web site (BOM). Spring long-range forecast 2026 is available at the homepage at <https://www.bom.gov.au> On top of this there are additional matters that are causing considerable environmental concern to be aware of. However, it's important not to be overwhelmed by the many climate change, environmental and nature-based changes happening – rather it is to be informed about them, see in what way we can play our part in addressing some of the issues, as indeed we are all part of the solutions in whatever way we can give time and hands-on to assisting.

H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu). Australia was the last continent to be free of the deadly H5 bird flu. However, it was not possible to be immune long term given the migratory flight paths from other parts of the world. H5 bird flu was first experienced earlier this year in WA, then SA and the virus then arrived in Victoria in June. There have been several cases of dead birds found and now there is a concerted effort in place to protect the Phillip Island and St Kilda Fairy Penguins who are being vaccinated to protect them. The current situation in Victoria as per Agriculture Victoria is:

- H5 bird flu is present in wild birds in Victoria.
- It has not been detected in commercial poultry.
- Cases have been confirmed in wild birds and recently a fox (the first mammalian detection in the state), with surveillance focused on high-risk coastal and wetland areas like Port Phillip Bay and the Mornington Peninsula.

The human health risk remains low. Australia use an 'Avoid, Record, Report' approach.

It is extremely important not to touch any dead birds or animals – but immediately report them as the authorities across. The main contacts for reporting being **the Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888** or through **Agriculture Victoria**. (However, if for any reason you are unsure of to whom to contact or can't get through, then do get in touch with your local Council or Vet Clinic who will assist in having the location of your sighting reported to the authorities).

Agriculture Victoria has 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>

There are some key environmental dates and awareness events for late September and early October 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> and CVA: <https://www.conservationaustralia.org.au>



All of September is **National Biodiversity Month** – a month-long focus on safeguarding Australia's unique land and water plants and wildlife. Some specific dates worth checking out are:

September 20: World Cleanup Day – a major global push to clear litter and care for local places.

September 27: World Rivers Day – Celebrates waterways like the Yarra and other regional rivers.

October 1: World Habitat Day – A Day dedicated to the preservation of natural living spaces.

October 4: National Walk to Work Day: - An initiative supporting clean air and healthy habitats – plus of course good for our own health.

The Saying: ***"When we heal the Earth, we heal ourselves"*** – is a reminder that honours our connection to the natural world...and how we can play our part by getting our hands dirty.

Pam at an early morning revegetation project.

TRUST for NATURE

Advice: Like everyone, we care deeply about the future of our native species and recognise the uncertainty that H5 bird flu brings. We are closely monitoring developments and working alongside government agencies as the situation evolves. You can help by reporting sick or deceased wildlife to Agriculture Victoria using the [Wildlife Disease Reports form](#).

Please report:

- Clusters of five or more sick or deceased wild birds of any species anywhere in Victoria.
- Any sick or deceased: - wild seabird, waterbird, shorebird or bird of prey-marine mammal (seal or dolphin).

As managers of 40 nature reserves across Victoria, Trust for Nature is increasing monitoring activities across our estate, with a particular focus on reserves considered to be at higher risk so we can understand any impacts on wildlife and respond quickly if concerns arise.

Health Advice

Anyone who has had direct contact with a sick or dead bird, bird droppings, or contaminated environment should:

- Report the incident through the appropriate reporting process
- Monitor for flu-like symptoms or eye irritation
- Seek medical advice if symptoms develop and advise the healthcare provider about the potential exposure

Arts & Letters Adviser – Elida Brereton



NCWV is delighted with the Children's Book Council of Australia award for these books, *A Loo of One's Own*, the first Picture Story Book by comics artist **Eleri Harris**.

NCWV has been advocating regarding the often appalling situation for female tradies on construction sites lacking clean, accessible toilets. This book is based in the 1920s when Australia's first Parliament House was built with no anticipation that women may one day enter Parliament!

And - *Once I was a Giant*, Zeno Swords, tracks the wood from tree through to a pencil.

OTHER NEWS

WorkSafe Vic. Toilets for Women tradespeople

As reported in the August NCWV Newsletter – front page - on Monday July 27th, Robyn Byrne OAM, Elida Brereton and Ronniet Milliken met senior members of **WorkSafe Victoria** including Sam Jenkin, Chief Health and Safety Officer, regarding our concerns about, and submission regarding, the provision of safe and hygienic toilets for women tradespeople on work sites in Victoria. We were well received and received assurances that WorkSafe was working to ensure that toilets were provided and monitored, but they agreed that there were deficiencies in the system which they are hoping to address.

We asked that data about the Compliance Code, inspections and improvement notices mentioned in the meeting be shared with us.

WorkSafe Victoria have reviewed their systems and advise *"that for the period January 2022 to January 2026, a total of 426 improvement notices were issued within the construction industry in relation to inadequate workplace amenities. Of those notices, 54.5% were issued as part of a proactive strategic visit, while 45.5% were issued in response to a specific matter or complaint. It is important to note that this data relates to all workplace amenities, and not just the adequacy of toilet facilities, but demonstrates the extent to which WorkSafe addresses these issues both proactively and reactively."*

The WorkSafe's Compliance Code: Facilities in Construction, can be accessed here: [Compliance Code: Facilities in Construction](#). Compliance is deemed as compliance with the OHS legislation.

We will follow up with Trades Women Australia and continue to press this vital case.

Ronniet Milliken, Adviser Legislation

The Second Annual Mary Rogers Awards Ceremony on Thursday 3rd September 2026



Mary Rogers.



Pam Robinson AM, Nonie Crozier, Barbara Abley AM.



Nonie Crozier, President of WILD (Geelong).
Jenny Wills OAM, Cr Elise Wilkinson
Greater Geelong Council, Barbara Abley AM.

NCWV members, Geelong President Nonie Crozier, Pam Robinson AM and Barbara Abley AM were delighted to join the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) and Local Government Minister the Hon Tim Richardson at Queen's Hall, Parliament House, for the second annual Mary Rogers Awards Ceremony on Thursday 3rd September 2026.

Councillor Melina Sehr from Stonnington City Council was named the 2026 winner of the Mary Rogers Award for Women in Local Government.

Queen's Hall was overflowing and buzzing with excited families, supporters and many elected representatives from across the State's municipalities to witness the Award proceedings. These awards celebrate the outstanding contributions of women civic leaders and councils championing gender equality across Victoria.

This prestigious Award was named in honour of Mary Rogers, Victoria's very first female councillor, elected to Richmond Council in 1920. Her great, great granddaughter delivered a moving speech detailing Mary's early life—navigating early widowhood with four surviving children to support, before making history in 1920-1925 as Victoria's first female councillor elected. She was an incredible community support to many families, and the secretary and later president of the Women Office Cleaners' Union, and vice-president of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union. She was also an active trade unionist and representative at the Trades Hall Council, as well as a prominent organiser for the Australian Labor Party Victorian branch. While the post-WWI era retarded progress for women in leadership, Mary successfully opened doors for future generations.

Hosted by the VLGA and Local Government Minister, the awards celebrate the women and councils continuing her legacy by championing diversity and gender equality in local government today. Sadly, her many successors in the 21st century Local Government space, continue to face denigration, bias and in extreme cases, abuse, which Mary undoubtedly did.

Diversity in local government strengthens decision-making, fosters good governance, and builds fairer communities. Mary was later amongst the first women to be appointed justices of the peace in Victoria [February 1927], she was a special magistrate at the Children's Court at Richmond. It was said of Rogers that she 'worked on countless committees to countless beneficent ends' and showed 'force of character, devotion to principle, and great organising ability'. She died of cancer on 25 September 1932 at Richmond. Three daughters and one son survived her. At her burial in Boroondara cemetery, Kew, with full Catholic rites, trades union and Labor officials were prominent, and Arthur Calwell was a pallbearer.

Diversity in the council chamber inevitably leads to strengthened and more informed decision-making and good governance and contributes to the prevention of fraud and corruption in local government. VLGA has committed to holding the Mary Rogers Awards annually.

Contributed by Barbara Abley AM, NCWV Geelong

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.](#)

The ROSE project



Seeking older women for interviews

Have you had an unwanted sexual experience since the age of 60?



- 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.

Researchers at the University of Melbourne would like to interview women who have had an unwanted sexual experience after the age of 60. It might be a partner, husband, care giver, family member, friend or stranger - harassing, pressuring or forcing you into sexual things that you didn't want or couldn't consent to. Researchers want to raise awareness and improve service responses, because older women's experiences are often invisible. About the interviews:

- The interview goes for about an hour and can be on the phone, using Zoom (video conferencing) or in person at Melbourne University.
- Researchers will ask participants to talk about any unwanted sexual experiences that have happened to them after the age of 60, the impacts it had, what helped and what they needed to recover, and what they want the community to know about older women's experiences.
- Researchers want participants to feel comfortable sharing whatever they want to share, and if they would prefer not to answer a question that's fine.
- If participants agree, researchers will record the audio of the interviews, saved on secure password protected servers at Melbourne Uni.

More information about the research is here: <https://www.restorecentre.org.au/rose-interviews> including a video and easy to read information. The study has ethical approval from the University of Melbourne (approval no. 33849) and is funded by the Australian Research Council.

To participate, women can [express interest using this form](#). Or email womens-health@unimelb.edu.au or call 8344 5159.

Dr Mandy McKenzie | Research Fellow, Department of General Practice and Primary Care | Melbourne Medical School | Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences, Level 3, Medical Building, the University of Melbourne, Victoria 3000



Future You starts now: The health choices you make today shape how you feel tomorrow. So with support from the Alan and Kate Gibson Foundation, a healthy ageing hub has been created. It's designed to help you understand your body and

take steps to support the future you. Whether you're approaching midlife or supporting someone who is, 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

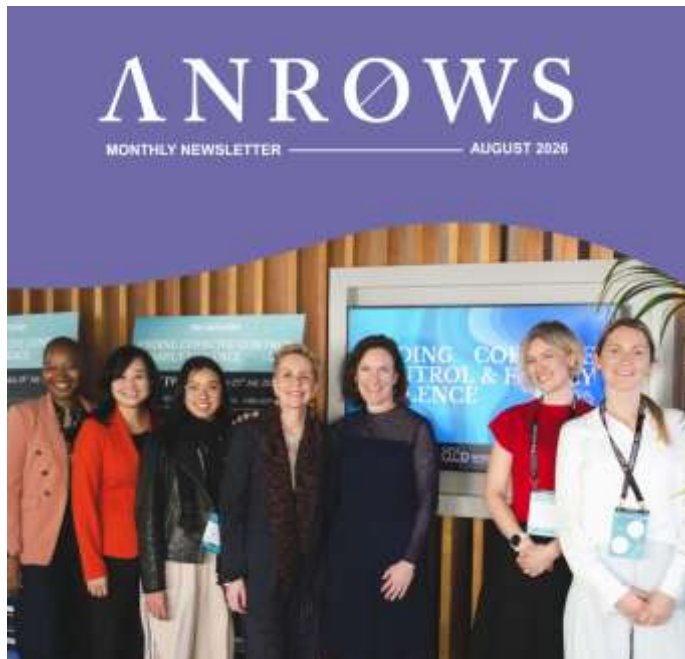
If you have been diagnosed with dementia or want to reduce your risk, these tips can help



Welcome to Women's Health Week September 7-11, 2026

Every year, it is about starting conversations that matter, breaking down stigma and empowering you to take steps for your health – and this year is no different. Get set for honest stories, expert videos and tips galore!

Explore the week



Recognition and responsibility: How we understand violence shapes our response

How we describe violence shapes what people recognise, what they minimise and how urgently systems respond.

That is the focus of a new blog by ANROWS Senior Research Officer Dr Jessica Seamer, [“He’s not physically violent”: The myth that puts women at risk.](#)

‘Coercive control, stalking, surveillance, isolation, emotional abuse and financial abuse are not lesser forms of harm. **They can be indicators of escalating risk.**

‘We see similar minimisation in public discussion of sexual violence, when serious allegations are softened into “bad behaviour” or attention shifts towards the careers, futures and reputations of accused people and institutions. Respecting due process means being clear when conduct is alleged. It doesn’t require us to diminish the seriousness of alleged sexual violence.’

‘Language alone will not prevent violence. We also need to keep responsibility in view and strengthen our understanding of people who use violence: how patterns develop, where intervention is being missed and what helps people stop. ANROWS [new research on interventions for migrant and refugee men](#) who use domestic, family and sexual violence shows why responses must also account for differences in language, migration pathways, visa status and support needs.

Culturally safe, in-language and community-connected services can strengthen engagement without weakening accountability. How we describe violence influences whether risk is recognised. ‘ Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine, ANROWS CEO

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.**

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 of 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](#)

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.

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

Women's Agenda – article republished from The Conversation

Talking to your children about consent and sexual violence can be hard

While we focus on building adolescents' knowledge, starting conversations about consent as [early as possible](#), and as often as possible, is the best approach, writes [Stephanie Wescott, Monash University](#) and [Jane Gilmore, Monash University](#) in this article, republished from [The Conversation](#). Recently, there have been multiple alleged incidents of sexual [violence](#) against women and girls, some involving

It's important for [parents to feel confident](#) when talking about consent and sexual violence so they can be clear about information and answer questions. Use accurate words instead of euphemisms and, don't try to soften the discussion by hiding from the realities of violence. According to the latest [Australian Bureau of Statistics data](#), nearly 30% of all sexual assaults reported to police in 2024 were against girls between 10–17 years old. Children and teens need to know the facts and risks, and to be in no doubt that their parents will support them through any experience.

A good starting point is to ask children what they have read about in recent [media reports](#), what they think about the issues and what their friends have said. Keep the conversation open and don't instruct. Try to keep the conversation calm, nonjudgmental and open. Encourage your child to talk to you about concerning experiences and topics.

It's essential parents and carers discuss the [role social media companies](#) play in spreading misogynistic content. Helping young people [think critically](#) about what they are seeing in their feeds can reduce the potential for harm.

For more, see: [How to talk to your children about consent and sexual violence](#)



Wellbeing Afternoon for Women and Gender Diverse People with

Disabilities Including Cervical Cancer Screening, Education Session **Delivered by** Women with Disabilities Victoria **in partnership with** Women's Health Grampians, Grampians Disability Advocacy Inc., and **Stawell Neighbourhood House**. **This project is supported by** Cancer Council Victoria **with funding from the Victorian Government**. **This is a FREE event.**

What to expect:

- Learn how cervical cancer screening protects you
- Tips for a comfortable and stress-free experience
- Chat with a sexual health nurse
- Connect with others over a creative activity facilitated by local artist
- Enjoy lunch!
- Free self-care pack and resources

These sessions are designed for women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 years, in line with the National Cervical Screening Program recommendations.

When: Thursday 10th September 2026, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Where: Stawell Neighbourhood House, 42 Sloane Street, Stawell

For further information or support with registering, contact Carly: carly@whg.org.au or phone 5322 4100

Registrations are essential to help plan for dietary and accessibility requirements. **Register Now**



[K Conference Information](#) Event: 2026 Neurodivergence Wellbeing Conference

Dates: Monday 28 September – Tuesday 29 September 2026

Location: Gold Coast, QLD; **Venue:** RACV Royal Pines Resort

Partnering with NWC26: Find out more [here](#). If you have any questions about the conference, please [get in touch](#). **The NWC26**

Team Find out more [here](#). [Book Your Place at NWC26](#)



Upcoming webinar

Promoting collaboration in early education to support children's mental health

Presenters:

Yihan Sun (Researcher and Teacher-Educator, Monash University and University of Sydney),
Michelle Hamilton (Senior Advisor - Education, Emerging Minds),
Wei (Educator and Emerging Minds Child and Family Partner)

Facilitator: Jacquie Lee (Practice Development Advisor, Emerging Minds)

Date and time: Wednesday 23 September 2026, 1:00 – 2:00PM (AEST); 12:30 – 1:30PM (ACST)

Partner: [Emerging Minds](#)

[Register here](#)

This webinar will explore how early childhood educators can work together with mental health professionals and families to support children's mental health and wellbeing, including those impacted by trauma. Drawing on emerging evidence, the webinar will consider how collaboration can build educators' confidence and wellbeing, improve educator-child interactions, and support children's mental health, wellbeing and their ability to learn and engage. This webinar will give you:

- an overview of the complementary roles of early childhood educators and mental health professionals in supporting children's mental health and wellbeing, including those impacted by trauma.
- insight into the common professional, organisational and system-level barriers that limit effective collaboration, as well as tips on how to overcome them.
- an understanding of how to build collaborative relationships to support child mental health, including the key factors that support these partnerships with professionals and families.

This webinar is co-produced by CFCA and [Emerging Minds](#) in a series focusing on children's mental health as part of the Emerging Minds: National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health, funded by the [Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#) under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program.



Meet the sector leaders and lived experience advocates helping to shape a connected, engaging conference experience <https://aifs.gov.au/conference/registration>

Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) together with MCs will help create stronger connections between sessions, bring fresh perspectives to conference discussions and ensure lived experience and sector expertise remain at the heart of the program.

Melbourne from 9–11 September 2026 as AIFS explore the theme, *Changing families in changing times*.

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: Standard: \$195 (1 August – 30 September); Final Release: \$220 (from 1 October)

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

Location [Get directions](#) Wayi Djerring - Us Together (located within the Queen Victoria Women's Centre)

210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000

More Kinders for Victorian Families

MEDIA RELEASE, 7th Aug 2026

The Victorian State Government announced it is delivering more than 1,000 new kinders for families across Victoria, in the places they're needed most. Minister Blandthorn announced seven new early childhood projects.

Five new kinders coming to government schools: Edenhope College and the future Thompson East Primary School in 2028.

Further kinders will open at Point Lonsdale Primary School, Banum Warrik Primary School and Maiden Gully Primary School in 2029. Together, these five projects will create up to 591 new kindergarten places.

New kinders in community hubs: Bald Hill Community Centre will open in Beveridge in 2028, creating up to 237 kindergarten places. The centre will also provide maternal and child health services, plus rooms for consulting and community use.

Riverwalk Community Centre in Werribee will offer maternal and child health services from late 2028, and kinder from Term 1, 2029 with up to 178 places. These two projects are under Building Blocks Partnerships with Mitchell Shire and Wyndham City Council, with government contributing \$15.75 million to support construction and delivery.



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.

According to a statement shared on her Instagram page, "Steinem passed away peacefully at her home in New York City, surrounded by some of the many who loved her." "Gloria's near-century on earth were years well-lived, and she continued working for equality until the very end," the post said.

"Gloria's greatest gift was her ability to listen to others, to make others feel seen and heard. Her words, actions, and example gave people permission to be their truest selves."

By [Rita Nasr](#)



This Book Week, playgrounds around the country were full of tiny princesses, wizards and superheroes. But imagine a different kind of costume on display. Imagine girls walking into assembly in polka dot dresses, chins up, telling their teachers they have come as the woman who became Victoria's first female Premier. That image is exactly what a new children's book is hoping to make real, and it could not have arrived at a more necessary moment.

Polka Dot Joan is the debut title from **Little Shero Stories**, a new feminist children's publishing imprint founded by **Gender Lens Australia**.

It is an illustrated biography [of the late Joan Kirner, tracing her path from a young activist and teacher through to the day she became the first woman to lead the state of Victoria](#). Aimed at readers nine and up, it is written to make political history and gender equality feel like something a child can hold in their hands.

As a reviewer and as a woman who has spent a career watching other women get torn down for the way they dress, the way they laugh, the way they simply take up space in public life, I found this book quietly devastating in the best possible way. "*Joan's polka dot dresses became a source of political attack by the media and her opponents. But she learned to reclaim them as sheroic, adopting the **Spot On**, Joan slogan,*" says Dr Maree Overall, co-founder of Gender Lens Australia. That single act of reclamation, turning ridicule into a rallying cry, is the emotional heart of this book and it is a lesson many grown women are still learning today. Specific slogans change. The underlying contempt for women who dare to lead does not. That is why Joan Kirner's legacy that live beyond her time as Premier matter so much. After leaving office, she co-founded EMILY's List Australia in 1996, built to support female candidates committed to equity, diversity and reproductive choice.

Polka Dot Joan is the first in a planned series profiling trailblazing Australian women, and if this debut is any indication, it is a series worth watching closely. [educationfeminismjoan kirnerVictorian PremierWomen's leadership](#)

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.

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.

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

Bring a picnic and enjoy this beautiful location.



National Council of Women of Victoria Meeting Dates for 2026

Month	Date	Day	Meeting Type	Time	Method
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
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