

**Founded 1902 ~ Celebrating 120 years in 2022**

**Newsletter**

**March 2022**

**QUOTE:** *UN Women remains determined to give all we can of our energies, expertise, resources, alongside our partners within and outside the United Nations family. We use our voice in international political fora to ensure that women's rights, interests, voices and leadership are fully built into the global response to the war in Ukraine. UN Women is committed to playing our part to ensure that all women and girls everywhere are protected from the consequences of war, and will take every opportunity to support their resilience and leadership.* UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous

### **From the President, Ronniet Milliken**

While our focus in March and April reflects on women efforts to gain equality, respect and leadership positions in the nation's parliaments, local governments, public service, and private corporations this morning, I was drawn back to the basics – literally. An article appeared on the ABC Weekend Breakfast about Australian university research regarding leadership attributes as seen by primary school students – different perceptions of boys and girls, mainly male/female leaders, respectively. Frankly, there is a slump in girls' perception in the final year of primary school, that women are leaders, down from 70-80% to 40%!

Our Standing Committee Co-ordinator Dr Deborah Towns OAM and Education Adviser Pam Hammond are following up the important work done by Inbal Steinberg – alerting us in March 2021 to apparent inequity in primary school readers. In 2022 Deborah has unearthed public policy documents regarding gender stereotypes in children's literature from late last century – the 80s! No longer destined for the scrap heap these documents will form the basis of future advocacy. What is your experience when reading to children? Is there a difference today between school reading materials and what you see in your favourite book shop? Let's start at the very beginning – a very good place to start – frustratingly – passionately – tenaciously - all over again!

### **Short History of Ukrainian Women's Association in**

**Australia:** In September 1949 at the immigration camp in Cowra NSW, on the initiative of idealistic and patriotic Ukrainian women such as late Irena Pelenska and late Lydia Hayewska-Denes, and forthright women, - The Ukrainian Women's Association of Australia was formed, the first Ukrainian organisation founded in Australia. Women always take the initiative. Far from their homeland and in their newly adopted country, Australia,

these women, in difficult conditions and circumstances, banded together to form Ukrainian Women's Association which has contributed strongly over the past 73 years of settlement to the expansion, preservation and development of Ukrainian cultural and communal life on this green and gold continent. In Victoria, it has been affiliated with NCWV for many years. To commemorate ethnic groups who resided in Cowra from 1948 to 1955, the Cowra Rotary Club established Europa Park, erecting a wall of bricks, divided into sections, for each nationality to place names of migrants from Cowra. The Ukrainian community have a section on the memorial wall.

Aims and Objectives of our organisation:

- Community work
- Support for elderly, at home and in nursing homes
- Promotion of self-growth of women
- Various sponsorships
- Establishing contacts with other women's groups
- Retaining and promoting our culture and traditions.

Structure: National Executive Council (For this term is in New South Wales); 3 State Councils: Victoria - 5 Branches (Geelong, Noble Park, Melbourne, St. Albans, Ardeer); New South Wales – 7 Branches; South Australia – State Executive, also runs the cultural Museum in SA. The UWA is a member of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations who in turn are affiliated with Ukrainian World Congress; Committee on the Status of Women; General Federation of Women's clubs; International Council of Women; International Alliance of women; Committee on the Family. On the 73rd Anniversary of the Ukrainian Settlement in Australia we pay homage to all Ukrainian women for their initiative, hard work and devotion to duty over the last 73 years, establishing a strong bond and close relationship between the Ukrainian and Australian people.

The wheels of history have come full circle. Ukrainian women carried the beacon of freedom through history. Today this beacon burns with an even brighter luminance, inspiring the Ukrainian women to carry a righteous and just struggle for freedom where sovereignty and human rights are being trampled as we are witnessing in Ukraine.

*by Nadia Soloczynskij & Yanina Dukta*



## 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Pioneer Women's Ceremony, March 26



Elisabeth Newman AM, Hean Bee Wee AM, Chiou See Anderson, NCWA President, Brendan Rook, Fiona Patton MP

This once again celebrated Victorian Pioneer Women, conducted annually by the NCWV to acknowledge past and present women pioneers, this year at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden, Kings Domain in beautiful sunshine. As 2022 is the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of NCWV, the focus was on pioneer women who established Victorian women's organisations and who have continued these organisations up until today. Dr Judith Smart AM, co-author of the history of the NCW Australia, *Respectable Radicals* gave an overview of the history of women's organisations and the Great Granddaughter of Janet Lady Clarke, Barbary Clarke, also spoke.

**Dr Deborah Towns OAM introduced Dr Judith Smart AM**, and began by recognising what a significant year it is, not only for NCWV, but we share this year with all Australian (white) women who won the right to vote and stand for election in 1902. Victorian women had to wait until 1908 to vote in state elections and stand in 1924. Vida Goldstein, an early NCWV member was one of the suffragists who campaigned tirelessly, then unsuccessfully stood many times as an independent candidate. Judith is an Adjunct Professor at RMIT, an academic who has inspired and supported me and many others, is a patient, empathetic support to her students, giving them great advice. She has many publications and continues to write books and articles. Of importance to us today is that Judith co-authored with Dr Marian Quartly, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women of Australia, 1896-2006*. NCWV stories are in there too, but Judith has prepared her talk with new material about NCW Victoria and what we have got up to since 1902. A publication that Judith co-edited with Dr Shurlee Swain: *The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth Century Australia*, a compilation of books, articles and biographies of women leaders from the 20th century, from NCWV, NCWA and others. It is at: <https://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/>

**Judith Smart AM** highlighted the amazing women and their activism in the past. Thousands of women all over Victoria are working for women in so many areas that we continue to try and improve today. Equal pay for one.

Domestic violence; Safety in workplaces; Homelessness; Health; Childcare and more. She brought all this work to the forefront of Victoria's history. We have so many women to thank from the past.

**Her speech will be on the NCWV website shortly.**



Deborah Towns, June Anderson presenting to Dr Judith Smart a eucalypt in a beautifully crafted indigenous pot.

### **Barbary Clarke, Great granddaughter of Janet Lady Clarke**

Barbary spoke of her ancestor's women-centred activism. On reading her biography, I was astounded at what her Great grandmother accomplished, including founding with Vida Goldstein and others NCWV, welfare of community and advancement of women, also inspiring others. Barbary spoke of her Grandmother Ivy's parents, Pattie and Alfred's passion for equality of women and men along with her husband Herbert Brookes and Ivy's activism with NCWV for 50 years. She was on the NCWV Executive from 1912, President in 1938 when she represented Australia at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference of the International Council of Women in Edinburgh. She was NCWA President 1948-1952 and was appointed life vice president. This was a productive time for NCW, due partly to the Brookes family's close personal relationship with the PM Robert Menzies. NCW was active on marriage legislation, equal pay and migration policy – *and* the election of women senators from amongst its own ranks. Collaborating with Elizabeth Couchman in 1944, Ivy brought the Australian Women's National League into Menzies' new Liberal Party of Australia – but only after equal representation of women and men on all committees was guaranteed.

In 1937 Ivy represented Australia at the League of Nations Assembly in Geneva, as the *only* woman in the Australian delegation, later becoming Vice-president of the United Nations Association of Victoria for 18 years. She was also the first Chairwoman of its Status of Women Committee. Last year Barbary presented at the UN Commission on the Status of Women's 65<sup>th</sup> (Virtual) NGO Forum as a member of CoAL, the Coalition of Activist Lesbians Aust Inc, which was the first-ever lesbian-specific community organisation to gain UN ECOSOC accreditation. Ivy Brookes was a board member of the Royal Women's Hospital for 50 years,



President for two terms and the founding Vice-President of the Anti-Cancer Council being on board for 30 years.

'My mother, Jessie Clarke, was a member of the NCWV, but was also occupied with: raising 4 children, after Dad died when I was 2; running Nappie Wash, the family business; dealing with me having polio; being the first female member of the Institute of Directors; helping refugees to settle in; trying to establish an Abbeyfield aged care facility; helping establish the Broadmeadows Community Health Centre; dictating 14 hours of oral history to the National Library of Australia - and other activism. So she was not able to devote as much time to this organisation as my other forebears.'

'I'm engaged in 4 main spheres of activism:

- 1) As a polio survivor, on exclusion of people over 65 from the NDIS, and on no housing accessibility standards mandated in the National Construction Code.
- 2) As the Great-granddaughter of Alfred Deakin, it behooves me to pursue human rights for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples - and enshrining the Uluru Statement from the Heart in our Constitution.
- 3) Climate change is a big concern.
- 4) Most of my time over the past 30 years has been spent in activism for the rights of women, including lesbians.'

'Regarding the NCWV's key priority of ending violence against women, I am aware that you have run campaigns against female genital mutilation. I am particularly concerned about the increasing (but invisible) incidence of a new variety of FGM in Australia. I would be happy to discuss this further with anyone who is interested.'

'I congratulate *every member* of NCWV for the individual and collective parts you have played, over the past 120 years and wish you *even greater success* in the next 120!'



**Mannie Kaur Verma, Director YWCA Victoria**, spoke as part of the panel representing four of the founding organisations of NCWV who met on 19 March 1902.

Mannie spoke with passion about the rich history of YWCA, the Victorian arm founded in Melbourne in 1882 by Sarah Crisp Booth. Mannie emphasised the strong bond between YWCA and NCWV 120 years ago and still there today with the commitment to gender equality unwavering. She stressed that such organisations who have stood the test of time have done so on the shoulders of remarkable women who paved the way.

And while across YWCA's 140-year history, many things have changed, the intention to support all women to aim high and live a noble life has not. Indeed, for both organisations, a desire to best serve the women and girls of Victoria and Australia remains. That desire driven by the remarkable women of these organisations has helped reduce the gender pay gap, delivered family law reform and improved support for survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence. These are just a few of the ways the NCWV has also made a significant contribution to making gender equality a reality, which YWCA has been proud to support as an affiliate.

However, she emphasised that work is not over. Mannie, as a lawyer who specialises in domestic violence, sees how far too many women and girls struggle to access the support they need, navigate the complex legal system and find the resources they need to rebuild their lives. The fight for gender equality and to ensure all women and girls can live that noble life is not done.



Mannie Verma, YWCA; Ronniet Milliken, NCWV President



**Beverley Kannegiesser, The Austral Salon Melbourne and NCWV Committee member** (above), spoke about the rich history of The Austral Salon of Music founded in 1890 by a group of strong and talented women journalists who based the Austral Salon on similar overseas clubs. She explained that the Austral Salon was to be a meeting place for professional women to discuss current issues, be a platform for informative speakers, for dramatic and musical entertainment. The members were heavily involved in the rights of women and social welfare. They encouraged and financially supported young artists, mainly singers. The Austral Salon was also a generous philanthropic group. One of the earliest acts was to send Tilly Aston, a blind girl, to university. Tilly became a leader and a wonderful contributor to society. She is remembered by the federal seat of Aston and the three bells memorial located on the way to the Pioneer Women's Garden.

Beverley spoke of Agnes Murphy, one of the founding journalists, a trail blazer as a journalist, author, radical suffragette, political activist, and as a gifted speaker.

Newspapers at the time facetiously described her as 'pen lady in chief to Melbourne society', and 'high priestess of the Austral Salon'. At an Austral Salon meeting in 1891, Agnes gave a lecture titled 'Letters and Letter Writing', demonstrating her extensive reading by referencing an affectionate letter from Napoleon to Josephine; a brutal one from Lord Byron to Lady Caroline Lamb, and an amusing letter by an Irish leader in the rebellion of 1798. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that telegrams had killed private letter writing, what would they have thought of our present-day emails or worse our tweets. In 1895 Agnes wrote a novel titled 'One Woman's Wisdom'. Set in Melbourne it looks at life of women in the 1890s. The book sold very well in the UK.

A reprint was done by the British Library in 2011 and Melbourne University holds an 1895 copy. In 1909 Agnes and Vida Goldstein, a member of both the Austral Salon and the NCWV, spoke at a meeting in Melbourne titled 'The Truth About the Suffragettes', defending them as being gentle, refined women, many were elderly, some were titled ladies co-operating with working women to improve social conditions, who held orderly meetings.

Beverley cited one lecture in 1921 when Agnes chastised the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne for not providing enough hostels for women and girls, stating that these should have common spaces for the women to socialise, which would improve the women's mental health and they would no longer need to cook and sleep in the same room. Beverley said she was pleased to give a vignette of one of the remarkable pioneering women who founded the Austral Salon.

She finished by saying that in 2022 the Austral Salon is still supporting young musicians by giving them an opportunity to perform before audiences and by making annual financial awards to students at the VCASS.

**Jan Shattock, Executive member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Victoria (WCTU)**, spoke about the purpose of the WCTU from its origin in 1897, set out in its motto – "For God, Home and Humanity". This was updated in the 1990s to "To promote a Drug-Free Lifestyle and Christian Values in the Home and Community." Throughout its long history, WCTU has worked and written letters to Members of Parliament and other relevant authorities about issues with which it is concerned, particularly regarding alcohol policy, moral issues and the welfare of women and children, especially regarding family violence. Submissions have been made to ANZFA and others regarding the need for warning labels on alcoholic drinks concerning the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant. A highlight at this time was the hosting of the WCTU World Convention in 1995 held at the Townhouse Hotel.

Jan spoke enthusiastically about the Drug Education in Schools, developed in the 1970s and 80s by Margaret Rayment and Ruth Miller and, assisted by Nancy Garth, did excellent work in schools. They handed over to Anne Bergen by 1995 and Anne, with Robyn Welham or Jan Shattock continued this valuable work. By 2010, there were two teams – Anne and Roger Bergen, Jan and Rhona Theodore - with about 1000 Grades 5/6 and Years 7/8 students annually in State and Christian Schools (country and city) receiving greatly appreciated presentations. Other efforts to reach children and young people about the danger of alcohol and other drugs in the late 1990s included Youth Breakfasts with speakers such as David Parkin and Professor. Dr. Michael Carr-Greg. Also, various competitions (web/poster designs and mocktail recipes) were held.



One way of reaching out to the community has been stalls in public places. One held in the Bourke Street Mall in 1998 gave away 500 non-al drink tastings and leaflets. Another in 2001 during the Grand Final parade, gave 800 drink tastings. In 2015, Jenny Godden held an outreach stall at the Burwood Traders' Festival. In 2008 Ellen Chandler organised a most successful youth outreach with 300 volunteers over five nights at the National Christian Youth Convention by resourcing a venue in the Night Life 'Mock 'n Mingle'. More than 1600 drinks were served introducing young people to non-al drinks and a drug-free lifestyle.

Jan proudly outlined successes. WCTU wrote to the Government regarding the need to increase taxes on 'alcopop' drinks- resembling soft drinks but with often more than 5% alcohol - aimed at young people. The government did this. On similar lines we objected successfully in 2002 to the introduction of "Moo Joose" - milk with alcohol added. In 1998 WCTU wrote opposing a proposal to allow the sale of liquor in milk bars, service stations and convenience stores which did not proceed. No doubt others opposed these proposals but we added our voice. In 2020 WCTU joined others in successfully opposing Dan Murphy's plan for a huge bottle shop near a dry aboriginal area near Darwin.

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) has long been a major concern for WCTU. In 1995 the first modern, well-researched information leaflet about FASD was written by Anne Bergen and the Victorian Health Department took several thousand for their use. There have been updates since to keep material looking modern. WCTU has used new ideas for publicising the need to avoid alcohol while pregnant or breast-feeding. In 2005 Ellen Chandler developed "seedsticks" – a small packet like a packet of matchsticks but the "matches" had forget-me-not seeds on them. "Forget me not Mummy. When you smoke, I smoke too." Later we bought little plastic packs containing several band-aids having a picture of a pregnant woman and the message: "Babies and grog don't mix. Band-aids won't fix." The most recent gimmick was a sticky notepad with the message: "Take note! Babies and booze don't mix."

"No alcohol is the best fix." Thousands of these were distributed to doctors, Infant Welfare Centres, and anywhere else members went. A new venture in 2018 was to put an advertisement about FASD on the side of a bus in Geelong. It has a picture of four babies, a no alcohol symbol and the message, "For baby's sake THINK – DON'T DRINK especially if pregnant or hoping to be pregnant." The following year the ad was put on a bus in Bendigo. During 2021 the ad was changed to fit on the rear of three buses – one each in the Frankston area, Pakenham, Tullamarine areas and Ballarat. From October 2019 WCTU has been showing FASD ads on TVs in doctor's waiting rooms in the Dandenong area. At the end of 2021 there were ads running in six waiting rooms. Jan stated that warning labels have now been mandated, for which we congratulate them. FASD Day is celebrated on 9<sup>th</sup> September annually. FASD material is always displayed at any WCTU function.

Jan quoted Anne Bergen, President, as saying while there are other organisations that are concerned about alcohol and other drugs, there is still a unique place for WCTU with our Christian and total abstinence stand for membership. We can and must work together with other like-minded organisations to make the most impact on government legislation. Jan finished saying *'It is encouraging that our organisations are linked in the work we do to enhance the learning and status of young girls, women and for youth'*.



Rhona Theodore, Jan Shattock, Beverley K, Mannie V, Barbary Clarke, Pam Hammond thanking panel, Judith S, Deborah T

### Beta Sigma Phi invitation

In memory of one of their members: Mudite Luyt, the Alpha Chapter is holding an afternoon tea with special guest speaker, Lisa Pavane, Director of the Australian Ballet School and an exclusive Q&A with school leaders. 'Behind the scenes of the Australian Ballet School'.

When: Saturday 9 April, 2:00pm;

Dendy Park Function Room, Breen Drive, Brighton East.

Cost: \$19.50 + booking fee = \$20

<https://www.trybooking.com/BXBZA>

Profits go to The Australian Ballet School in her memory.

### Australian Heritage Advocacy Alliance 2022 Campaign

The AHAA campaign seeks to inform candidates in all 151 electorates that heritage assets are of immense value, but without adequate policies and will are being lost. AHAA are requesting that people consider heritage assets/interests in their location and email examples of:

- Assets lost
- Assets under threat

These will be added to those on the website (no names will appear on the website).

Email: [info@ahaa.net.au](mailto:info@ahaa.net.au)

Website: <https://ahaa.net.au/heritage-lost-threatened/>

## VALE

**Noële Cook, OAM (lifetime member of NCWV, Geelong)** passed away 21 March 2022.

Noële received OAM in 2014 for services to the community - particularly the advancement of the status of women. Noële was Soroptimist International Geelong Life Member.

She worked tirelessly for Soroptimists for over 45 years

Noële Cook will be greatly missed by those who knew her. She was a long-time member of NCWV Geelong Branch as was her mother Mrs. C.H. Dabb MBE, who was also President of NCW Geelong Branch (1963-1966).

Noële's honorary and voluntary contribution to NCWV Geelong Branch will continue on in the two publications she researched and compiled – 'The Next Decade 1994-2004' and 'Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2004-2014'. As with the first NCWV Geelong Branch 50 years 1944-1994 they are well researched and compiled.

Noële's voluntary and honorary work for National Council of Women of Victoria will be remembered with admiration for her dedication to assist all people.

1998-2001

Elected President NCWV Geelong Branch

2000

Appointed as NCWV Representative to Public Transport

Customer Charter Committee.

2001-2002, Elected NCWV Regional Vice President.

Participated in 'Our Nation on Parade (100 years Federation of Australia)

2002 Awarded NCWV Centenary Certificate.

2003 Attended ICW/CIF 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Perth

2005 Attended ICW/CIF General Assembly, Morocco

2003-2007 Elected NCWV Executive Committee.

2009- Geelong Branch – Minute Secretary.

2011 Speaker – Geelong Branch 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch 'Brief History of 65 Years of Geelong Branch'.

2012 Appointed Honorary Life Member NCWV Geelong Branch.

Reference Sources - NCWV Geelong Branch Publications:

NCWV Geelong – 50 Years – 1944-1994, Lorna Gawith

The Next Decade 1994 – 2004, Noële Cook

Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2004 – 2014, Noële Cook OAM.

NCWV Regional Branches History 1927-2002. (researched and compiled by Janet Galley OAM).

*Researched and written by Hon Archivist, Janet Galley OAM,*

## **Joan Marie Elliston AM** - Contribution to NCWA

1997-2003 National Adviser Human Rights

Along with usual functions as National Adviser, Joan:

Started a "Keeping in Touch" newsletter with all State HR Advisers to hear and distribute each state's contributions.

Represented NCWA in the 1998 Public Consultation on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW being prepared by the Australian Government to present at CSW, UN New York.

Submitted recommendations, 1999, to Office of the Status of Women on CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action.

In 2001 Facilitator, "Human Rights are Women's Rights" Women's Workshops, National Women's Conference ACT.

Award for "Work for the Betterment of Women"

In 2002 Wrote 10 Year Review of Progress in Australia "Violence Against Women – Its causes and consequences" for the UN Special Rapporteur (SRVAW) for reporting at 59th Session on the UN Commission on Human Rights.

2003–2006 Board Member, NCWA, National Coordinator Standing Committees with responsibilities for Blue Book; updated "Yellow Book" for National Co-ordinators, State and Territory Co-ordinators.

2006 – 2012` National Adviser for Music

*Prepared by N Barkl, President NCW NSW, 2014*

## DEMOCRACY SAUSAGE SIZZLE ANYONE?

**Thursday, 7 April 2022 12:15 pm – 2 pm by ZOOM and at Ross House if you wish to meet face to face**

Ahead of the Federal and Victoria elections both due in 2022, join us at the combined NCWV Individual Members and Council Meeting following on from Professor Marilyn Lake's brilliant address about women's suffrage, standing as independents, and democracy in Australia, to hear two excellent speakers who will also provide their views on democracy with a gender lens.

- **Dr Vanessa Teague, who is extremely interested in cryptographic protocols that support a free and democratic society, will discuss her work as a researcher on democratic decision making, digitisation and e-voting.**

Dr Teague is a cryptographer, CEO of *Thinking Cybersecurity* and Adjunct Associate Professor in the College of Engineering and Computer Science at the Australian National University. Her PhD: "Combining Cryptography and Game Theory" was completed at Stanford University in 2004. Her main areas of expertise are Computation Theory and Mathematics, Data Encryption and Distributed Computing Not Elsewhere Classified. She works on openly available research and open-source software for supporting democratic decision making and empowering ordinary people to make choices about their own data. Her current research focuses on cryptographic methods for achieving security and privacy particularly for issues of public interest such as election integrity and the protection of government data.

- **Carolyn Ingvarson will speak about her unique experience standing as an independent for the Australian Women's Party in 1977 and add her current work supporting an independent candidate in Kooyong.**

Carolyn Ingvarson BA Dip Ed MA Dip PWE has a background as a secondary school biology teacher, and as a public servant with the Victorian Government. The latter involved work in the equal opportunity unit (with Deborah Towns) then state training, occupational health and safety, and finally with the freight and logistics industry, where she received the Australian Freight Industry Personality of the Year in 2003.

Carolyn has always worked in her local community in the 70s and 80s with the Women's Electoral Lobby, which included standing for the Women's Party for the Senate in 1977. In the 1990's as a local government councillor, then chairing the Board of WIRE for 7 years in the early 2000s and in 2006 she founded and ran *Lighter Footprints*, a climate change action group in the Kooyong electorate. Over the last 15 years, this group has grown to significant size, and is building a broad local base to press all levels of government to act on climate change. She has recently taken leave from Lighter Footprints to work on the campaign of Monique Ryan who is standing in the federal seat of Kooyong in the coming Federal election.

**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."*



## Adviser news

**Submission to the Victorian Inquiry into support for older Victorians from refugee and migrant backgrounds – A Precise:** The National Council of Women Victoria (NCWV) established in Victoria in 1902, is one of the oldest women's organisations in Victoria. It is non-sectarian and non-party political in encouraging the participation of women in all aspects of community life. After consulting our membership, which includes women representing organisations from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Victoria, a common concern was that many of the problems for older Victorians from refugee and migrant backgrounds were shared with older women in Victoria generally.

**CALD Comparison by National Seniors Australia:** The analysis considers and compares - Australian born elders and elders from different waves of migration - by elder age groups, gender, marital status, country of origin, 25 language groups, living arrangements, social and economic well-being. Some policy implications are discussed in the conclusion.

Concerns expressed by our members included:

**Reliance on use of technology** - often mentioned involved the rate of growth in and increasing reliance on technology by the 3 levels of government (Federal, State and Local) to communicate with the community and for so many things.

**Effective communication:** There are problems with insufficient interpreters and the inability to access them too because of disability and lack of technological competence. Historically and today older family members rely on family members for support in communication regarding health and online. Effective communication by carers is a universal concern.

**Isolation:** Amongst others, elderly Somalian women during pandemic lockdowns experienced isolation generally in the Victorian community and were unable to access their usual East African women's groups and speak Arabic and Somalian with friends. It affected these women badly. It impacted on their physical well-being as well as mental well-being. Even though lock-down is over, the effects for older people can be long lasting. Their minds and bodies are still suffering.

**Single Women:** A significant mention was made about women who are elderly, single, migrant or refugee women. They may have always been single or become widowed - which is common. They are alone then in a strange country as they have left behind family and friends when they came to live and work in Australia. There are older women who become homeless but for a migrant or refugee woman it can be more dire.

**On Wednesday 30 March 2022** at the Eastern Hub Community Centre, Geelong, Nurcihan Ozturk, the NCWV's Migrant and Multicultural Adviser and Dr Deborah Towns, the Convenor of the NCWV's Standing Committees, addressed the Legal and Social Committee members of the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Support for Older Victorians from Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds. The Legal and Social Issues Committee members were; Natalie Suleyman – Member for St Albans, Chris Cousens – Member for Geelong, Meng Heang Tak – Member for Clarinda.

We addressed the following questions posed to us by the Committee:

- how to improve communication between carers and older people
- how to address older women's social isolation, particularly following the pandemic
- how to improve the digital inclusion of older women from culturally diverse backgrounds
- how the Victorian Government could improve services for culturally diverse older women
- the benefits of positive ageing and how the Victorian Government could support this
- how to strengthen collaboration between government, community organisations and service providers.



Meng Heang Tak -Member for Clarinda, Chair-Natalie Suleyman-Member for St Albans, Nurcihan Ozturk- NCWV's Migrant & Multicultural Adviser, Dr Deborah Towns, Convenor NCWV's Standing Committees, Chris Cousens-Member for Geelong.



**ALGWA Vic** prepared a submission to the State Government's Local Government Culture Project with input from its membership. The Culture Project has an objective, *'to make local government a safer space for women and to encourage more women to nominate for election as the Government aims to reach gender parity in local councils by 2025.'* Watch for the full submission in April.

### **Leading Women to Forge their Way into Local Government**

An innovative leadership program will encourage more women to represent their local communities as the Andrews Labor Government continues to support the advancement of women in local government. Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane today launched the *Leadership for Women in Local Government Program*, to be delivered by the Institute of Community Directors Australia. The Program will support 120 women over three years, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to succeed as community leaders. It will also give participants the connections and tools to campaign as candidates in the next local government elections in 2024. Women in under-represented municipalities and those who are Aboriginal, have a disability, or identify as LGBTIQ+, are strongly encouraged to apply.

Minister Leane thanked the Gender Equality Advisory Committee (GEAC), led by MPs Kat Theophanous and Juliana Addison, for steering development of the program. GEAC members include women from local government peak and community organisations and councillors. First round of the leadership program is scheduled to begin in July 2022, with applications opening in April. To find out more about the Program, GEAC and other LGV programs supporting gender equality visit [localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/gender-equity](https://localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/gender-equity).

### **Boosting Opportunities for Women Impacted By COVID-19**

The Andrews Labor Government is increasing support to ensure women get back into the workforce despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams has announced more than \$1.1 million in funding for six organisations that will help women overcome barriers to economic security. The funding will support more than 800 women at greater risk of economic insecurity, addressing the needs of women at different stages of their employment. It will provide support and mentoring to build confidence and skills to pursue employment, establish a small business or access further education.

The funding will include support for Aboriginal women, women over the age of 45 years, single mothers, women with a disability and women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including migrant and refugee women.

Financial support will be provided to the following organisations:

- SisterWorks Social Enterprise Employment Expansion Project to increase employment outcomes for women of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, with a focus on English language.
- Ngarrimili – Empowering First Nations Women in Business project to provide one-on-one support, along with workshops for First Nations women who have experienced family violence and women who are living with a disability or living in out-of-home care.
- AfriAus iLEAC – CALD Women in Relational Entrepreneurship program to support culturally and linguistically diverse women to establish small businesses
- The Fitted for Work – Women's Work Futures Program to deliver services, training, and upskilling opportunities for women, ready to be placed into employment through Fitted for Work's recruitment social enterprise, 'She Works'.
- Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE) to upskill bi-cultural workers to provide peer-led financial capability education for migrant and refugee women.
- Migrant Women in Business, founded during the pandemic, to provide migrant women with one-on-one business advice, coaching, mentorship, a support network, and the ability to connect with business opportunities.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **From Women's Agenda**

New changes to super laws will help narrow the gender gap. New changes to family law proceedings in Australia will mean that starting April 1, parties to post-divorce legal settlements can apply to the courts for information from the Australian Taxation Office about their ex-partner's super. This latest change will ensure the party that requires details of their ex-partner's retirement savings as part of their divorce property settlement, historically women, will no longer be met with extensive delays and costly legal fees. When a couple file for separation or divorce, their combined super can be split between them by mutual agreement or by court order — their super is treated like any other asset, like real estate or other investments. When the division of the super is decided, the super is required to stay within the super system until a condition of release is met. It cannot be paid as cash. The new laws allow greater transparency around an individual's super assets, ensuring a simpler process of dividing super and not losing out on an ex-partner's super assets.

Historically, the process has been long and convoluted, forcing many women, particularly those from low-income households, to miss out on assets they are legally entitled to. In the past, the legal fees required to pursue an ex-partner's super balance cost more than the value of a split contained in a property settlement. This week, industry super fund HESTA has announced a new streamlined, plain-language super splitting request form that does not require legal assistance, and significantly reduces the time to complete it. More than 80 percent of HESTA's 900,000 members are women, working mostly across healthcare, education and community services sectors. The new Simpler Super Splitting forms are the first in the country, and can be used across the super and legal sectors and by the courts.

**The Australian Nurses Memorial** will be holding the ANZAC Commemorative Service on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 2.00pm at the Memorial to the Nurses Fawcett Towers Forecourt, 431 St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Please complete the RSVP via the link [ANZAC Commemorative Service 2022](#) You may like to consider a contribution to the 'Collaborative Wreath'. Instead of purchasing a wreath, you can make a donation to the ANMC Scholarship Fund. All contributors names will be read out at the service whilst laying the Collaborative Wreath. You can contribute via the website. [Donate here](#) or by phoning our Centre Manager Liz to process via credit card. [Elizabeth Allwood](#), Centre Manager.

### Thrive by Five

With their own jobs on the line in the Federal Election, our leaders are listening more carefully than ever to what voters - like you - want. Which makes it such an important opportunity to put pressure on them, and to make sure they know that fixing early learning is a matter of urgency right across the country. Educators are exhausted and overworked, parents are struggling, children are missing out. **Our new Friends of Thrive by Five video** was developed with the help of early childhood educators across the country, to help spread the word about our Friends of Thrive by Five program. The program is designed for educators and centre directors who are keen to step up their involvement in the campaign. [Click here to watch the video and find out more now, then sign up to be a Friend of Thrive by Five.](#)

### NCWV Dates for 2022, venue/ZOOM to be notified for each meeting

April	Thursday 7	Individual Members and Council Meeting 12:15 – 2:15, Democracy with a Gender lens: Carolyn Ingvarson and Dr Vanessa Teague
	Monday 11	Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30-6:00pm
	Thursday 21	Committee Meeting, 10:00am-12:00pm
May	Thursday 5	May Forum: 12 noon - 2pm Focussing on STEM education and work (including brief Council Meeting)
	Monday 9	Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30pm – 6:00pm
	Thursday 19	Committee Meeting, 10:00am-12:00pm
June	Thursday 2	Individual Members and Council meeting, 12:15-2:00pm
	Monday 20	Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30-6:00pm
	Thursday 16	Committee Meeting, 10am-12 noon
July	Thursday 7	Council Meeting, 5:15-7:15pm
	Monday 11	Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30pm – 6:00pm
	Thursday 21	Committee Meeting, 10am-12 noon
August	Thursday 4	Individual Members Meeting, 10:15-11:30am, Council Meeting, 12:15-2:00pm
	Monday 8	Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30-6:00pm
	Thursday 18	Committee Meeting, 10am-12 noon
September	Thursday 1	NCWV AGM, 12:15-2:00pm
	Monday 12	Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30pm – 6:00pm
	Thursday 15	Committee Meeting, 10am-12 noon
October	Thursday 6	Individual Members Meeting, 10:15-11:30am, Council Meeting, 12:15-2:00pm
	Monday 10	Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30-6:00pm
	Thursday 20	Committee Meeting, 10am-12 noon
November	Thursday 3	Council Meeting, 5:15-7:15pm
	Monday 14	Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30pm – 6:00pm
	Thursday 17	Committee Meeting, 10am-12 noon
	Thursday 24	End of Year Celebratory Luncheon, 12.00, Angliss Restaurant, 550 Little Lonsdale St Melbourne, nr Spencer Street.