

National Council of Women of Victoria



"Caring Women Make a Difference"



President's Report September 2012

My greetings are extended to our patrons, all organisational members, individual members and friends of NCWV.

This, the 109th annual NCWV report is my third and last as President.

I particularly wish to thank all members for their generous support, advice and continued participation in all we have undertaken in the past twelve months. Your loyalty and faith in our organisation and all we undertake is vital. NCWV's important advocacy work and the success of our programmes rely on the commitment and cooperation of all to achieve the goals set for Victorian women and their families.

With this in mind, as President, I wrote to all Victorian parliamentary ministers of portfolios within the areas of concern for women, seeking to build a closer working liaison and to inform the government departmental officials about our organisation. This proved most successful; NCWV and its Standing committees are now invited to many roundtable discussions and policy forums in the major areas of interest to NCWV to share our knowledge and ideas with other community groups.

Our major emphasis again this year has been highlighted within education and the empowering of young people, health, nutrition and wellbeing, status of women, cultural diversity and rural women's concerns. It has been rewarding to see our endeavours achieve success.

After two years of hard work, many aspects of the NCWV's infrastructure are now up and running smoothly. We also celebrate that the State Library Victoria has finally taken NCWV's 100 years of archived material. With these under control, the Executive has this year, concentrated on other pressing needs.

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Patron:
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In fact the year seemed to move by swiftly and many wonderful ideas and plans remained just that, as we tackled the very important time-consuming day to day matters that arise from greater liaison with the government departments and other bodies. There is definitely an increased awareness of our organisation and its advocacy work out in the general community, for which we must be grateful.

NCWV office must remain in its temporary Richmond accommodation due to our lagging finances. We would require a large monetary boost from increased fees and donations before we could consider moving again. With CBD rentals increasing constantly this could be some time away.

To remedy this situation a members' book of recipes and conversation is presently under collation. Written contributions have been requested from all organisational and individual members to highlight the programmes carried out by our affiliated partners. City of Melbourne Councillors and senior female students of Hallam Secondary College are involved in this project along with well known chefs and government departments. It is hoped all members and their friends will purchase a copy when the book is launched to spread the word about our organisation and to improve our resources.

I would like to thank the members of the small working committee for this book for all their efforts and co-operation in getting the project off the ground.

NCWV has proudly hosted two International Women's Delegations this year.

In June we met with eight West African women to discuss issues of great concern in their countries, violence against women, girls' education, women's health and rural women's issues, just to name a few.

Later in July a delegation from the Chinese Women's Federation met with us for similar discussions with the additional topic of women in local government. NCWV benefits greatly from this International interaction.

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Highlights of NCWV's 2011/2012 Calendar of Celebrations and Events:

We have gained a great sense of organisational pride from the success of the following functions and thank all who assisted:

- In September 2011 NCWV members were guests of the Archbishop's wife Mrs Joy Freier at Bishops court for morning tea to celebrate President's Day. The Salvation Army presented an excellent display of arts and crafts created by victims of Victorian bushfires and drought.
- In October, the President and Vice-President visited Mrs Elizabeth Chernov, the Governor's wife and our new Patron-in-chief to welcome her to NCWV.
- The Annual December Christmas Luncheon was held at William Angliss College with guest speaker Mr Andrew Macleod, CEO Committee for Melbourne.
- Pioneer Women's Memorial Day, 19th January was held at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden in the King's Domain with guest speaker Ms Carol Warren, CEO Home Economics Victoria. On this day the idea of a 'Mary Anderson Refuge Recipe Book' and NCWV's own recipe book were launched.
- March's President's Garden Party to honour Mrs Sylvia Gelman AM, MBE whose name had been placed on the 2012 Victorian Women's Honour Roll.
- On 5th March, the 101st International Women's Day, "Young People Speak" was celebrated at Parliament House. "The event was opened by the Hon David Davis, Minister for Health who spoke on Health and Wellbeing, then followed by youth representatives from our organisational affiliates, Girl Guides and Legacy.
- 3rd May NCWV Forum, -"Women-Agents of Change", for the UN Year of Cooperatives. It was held in the Yarra Room of Melbourne Town Hall, thanks to the Deputy Lord Mayor's keen efforts.

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- 21st June we hosted the delegation of West African Women, recipients of an AusAID fellowship Award to discuss issues of major concern in both West Africa and Australia.
- 12th July Excursion ‘behind the scenes’ at Melbourne Town Hall, many thanks to our Patron, Emma Page Campbell and her assistant for their input by arranging the event.
- 17th July A delegation from the Chinese Federation of Women’s Unions was hosted in the Municipal Headquarters, Collins Street
- 3rd September: State Library of Victoria visit to view the names of the donors who financed the Pioneer Women’s Garden and later to view “Gusto” the culinary exhibition.

I thank all members and their friends who attended these functions to help create their success.

Monthly Council Meetings:

Late last year members requested more time be devoted to the guest speaker of the day whose topic, where possible, followed the standing committee areas.

The speakers in 2011/2012 were:

- Ms Mmaskepe Sejo from the UN Human Rights Police Unit
- Ms Penny Hutchinson, Director of Arts Victoria
- Mr John Searle, Victorian Chairman of Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.
- ACRATH: Catholics against Trafficking in Humans and the Slave Trade.

On the 5th July 2012 members participated in and offered their opinions in valuable discussions on NCWV’s future directions. The outcomes of this day will influence our course next year.

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Thanks must be extended to the loyal and reliable members who gave their time monthly to ensure all aspects of the Council meeting ran smoothly. Members, who willingly prepared the room for the meetings, manned the trading table, front desk and name tag table. Not forgetting those who prepared the tea and coffee table and set up the sound system as well as took photos when required. These tasks, undertaken quietly without fanfare were essential to a meeting's success and greatly appreciated by all. My sincere and special thanks go to Eleanor Holden, Mavis Lynch, Judith Ryles, Anne Parton, Jan Kinloch, Billy Lindsay, Dr Pat Phair, Janet Galley and Clare Nugent for their contributions.

Regional Branches:

NCWV's Regional Branches will furnish their own AGM reports however I must mention of the following Regional events and congratulate the participants:

NCWV's October 2011 Council meeting was graciously hosted by Geelong Branch and held at Osborne House in North Geelong. A most varied and interesting Geelong Regional Programme followed the meeting. The day was a triumph for our Victorian rural women.

Mrs Barbara Brown, Regional Vice-President and President of the Goulburn Valley Branch invested much time in conducting an on-line survey to gauge rural and regional interest and commitment to the NCWV in the region. The results were most interesting and will hopefully guide their future. Barbara has devoted much time to her branch and must be commended for her efforts.

Likewise Jan Baxter and the Central Gippsland Branch held discussions on their future directions with interesting and helpful results.

Geelong Branch and their president Anne Parton must be commended once again for their excellent annual 2012 Luncheon; this will no doubt be mentioned in their report.

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Achievements:

- For several years, at the annual Christmas Luncheon, members generously contribute small gifts of toiletry items for women in need who are assisted by two Salvation Army Women’s Refuges. This year Karen Hagen, Manager of Mary Anderson Refuge requested we write a book of recipes for these women. An easy simple recipe book using minimal ingredients and equipment was produced and donated to the refuges at our May Forum. The presentation was graciously made by our Patron-in-chief, Mrs Elizabeth Chernov. The recipe book has been placed on a disc and given to many other refuges nationwide thus heralding success.
- As mentioned earlier, the NCWV book of recipes and “Kitchen Conversations” is now well under way. Not only will this book highlight all NCWV members whether individual or organisational by the presence of their recipe, it will also be a valuable tool to be used with schools. The pilot schools programme has commenced with interaction from senior secondary students at Hallam Secondary College, the results of this cooperative work between NCWV and the students is proving most worthwhile.
- This programme is a natural extension of the school participation in NCWV’s International Women’s Day where our aim is youth empowerment and the development of leadership skills to prepare young people for life and work in our community.
- It is pleasing to report that more and more people in the general community are using the NCWV website as a resource. Improvements are still required and future demands will increase. This is definitely an area of growth and as such, more resources must be made available. In future it is hoped all council reports and the newsletter will be found on website.

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Submissions and Letters:

The NCWV Standing Committees will furnish a full and detailed report for the AGM however I must take this opportunity to highly commend and congratulate their co-ordinator, Major Jenny Cloke, and the full Standing Committee for the tremendous progress they have made in this vital aspect of Council work. Results show a wide range of current topical issues are always discussed at their meetings.

Interaction with other organisations by the President or her

Representative:

The co-operation and communication between members of affiliated organisations and the Council has definitely increased. Rarely a week went gone by this year without one or more of the affiliates being in contact for discussions or offering an invitation to attend a function. The interaction with the book of recipes definitely assisted and increased the communication to achieve this goal.

I should also include the Government Departments who have kept us informed and offered invitations to attend their projects and forums. With greater awareness and knowledge of each other's projects and goals we can both offer greater support and can therefore generate a larger impact overall.

I thank all departments and organisations who included NCWV in their functions and mail outs and look forward to the same in the future. (All such events were reported on in detail when they occurred).

Council Executive:

Council executive work continued this year on updating and improving all relevant aspects of NCWV matters. Most tasks are routine and regular while others such as looking for grants and sponsorships definitely put a spurt in the learning curve. Like all volunteers and working women, members of the Executive fulfil many other roles within and outside the Council in other groups and bodies. The time they can and have devoted to Council matters is greatly appreciated.

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Elisabeth Newman, NCWV Vice-President and Board member of International Council of Women-

Barbara Brown, Regional Vice-President, Convener of communications and website committee.

Malvina Malinek OAM, Hon Secretary.

Judith Ryles, Acting Treasurer. We thank Judy most sincerely for her five years of loyal service to NCWV and wish her well in the future.

Major Jennifer Cloke, Co-ordinator of Standing Committees

Elected Executive members, Bronwyn Badham, Eva Court (Convener of Strategic Plan Committee), Clare Nugent, Major Christine Pickens, and Norma Wells.

Branch Representatives: Jan Baxter, President- Central Gippsland, Barbara Brown, President Goulburn Valley and Anne Parton, President Geelong Branch and Ross House Representative.

Janet Galley OAM Individual Members' Convener

To all members of the Executive I sincerely thank you for your work and support through the year. It must be appreciated that, for branch representatives and an executive member living in the country, it is difficult for them to offer practical hands-on help or even find train timetables that fit with meeting times. Their efforts to meet our time restraints has been keenly acknowledged and appreciated. Some of the Executive will be retiring at the end of this term; we wish them well and thank them for their contribution.

NCWA:

The NCWA Triennial Conference will be held in Canberra after the completion of this Victorian term, a report will be furnished next year. The State resolutions for the conference were discussed at the 2nd August meeting of NCWV.

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The bi-monthly national teleconference of board executive members and state presidents has looked at issues within the new ERA alliance, ICW matters, made preparation for the triennial conference and also discussed suggested changes within the Council’s framework.

Members:

To those members who have been greatly missed at meetings due to long term illnesses, operations and accidents this year, we wish you a speedy recovery along with good health and happiness.

To the families of the wonderful, loyal long term members we have lost, we send our condolences. NCWV wants these families to know how much we appreciated their contributions made to the Council and we are saddened by their deaths.

In conclusion:

I believe over the past few years there have been positive improvements made but like equity, there are aspects of NCWV that will take time to achieve. Unlike many Not for Profit organisations that have the opportunities of tax deductibility and paid staff, NCWV must do the same tasks and achieve the same results with just a few dedicated volunteers, this is very time-consuming.

I thank every member of NCWV for their thoughts, ideas, efforts and contributions. Their faith and guidance in our organisation and in my role as President has been gratifying.

To those special members who have given me strength and support, so often when I felt overburdened I am eternally grateful. It has been a privilege for me to learn from your wealth of knowledge and experience and gain from your guidance.

Jennie Rawther-Russell
NCWV President

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