

Newsletter

June 2021

Quote: “Let us remember that the price of the privilege of democracy is that all citizens shall participate fully in public life – women as well as men.” **Ruby Rich, 1967**

From the President, Ronnieta Milliken

Vinnies CEO Sleepout, Thursday the 17th of June, CEOs will be participating in the sleepout to raise awareness for the homeless this winter. Did you know that over 400,000 women in Australia over the age of 45 are at risk of homelessness? [Click here to support the CEO sleepout.](#)

June Speaker: Dr Farida Fleming: *Gender Equity in the Pacific*



Dr Farida Fleming who has a PhD, Master of International Education and Bachelor of Asian Studies, joined NCWV in 2020. She has over 20 years of experience in supporting social justice initiatives, overseas development, education - locally and internationally.

Farida stated that Gender Equality in the Pacific area has been a priority with activists for many years, developing refuges and advocacy for climate change issues as well as domestic violence prevention. Some churches have joined the anti violence efforts which is particularly important given their role in Pacific communities.

Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, written in August 2012, demonstrates the priority elected leaders are putting on women's rights. These government efforts are welcomed. In some countries such as Fiji, however, there is a history of coups and persecution of human rights activists. This can mean there is ongoing tension between government and women's rights defenders.

Farida noted specific issues of concern to women in the Pacific and the work of specific activists and organisations to address these issues.

* **Domestic violence** is a key issue for women in the Pacific. Research shows that women face twice the global incidence of violence in their lifetimes, with COVID-19 only making this worse, as well as disadvantaging women's employment etc more than men. Fiji is currently developing a national violence against women prevention plan, based on prevention plans developed in Australia and Victoria. Shamima Ali, who leads the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, is a critical figure in anti-violence.

The FWCC has expanded from its Suva base to provide refuges across Fiji and has also supported other Pacific nations to develop centres. More recent efforts within the Church to advocate for the elimination of violence against women are important. Reverend Lomaloma, from the Anglican Church in Fiji, an important advocate.

* **Climate change** is a material concern for women in the Pacific and they take leadership roles in addressing this. One example of mobilising women to address the challenge is Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls. Sharon established femLINKpacific, a local, regional, and national **catalyst for change** using community radio. femLINKpacific organises convenings of rural women and provides training so those women are able to provide critical weather information to their communities and represent the needs of their communities.

* There is a lack of **women in politics** in the Pacific. Data shows the Pacific has the lowest level of women's representation in politics in the world. There has been some experimentation to address this gap. For example, special measures were used in Samoa before the 2016 election. However these attempts to redress the issues are met with a lot of resistance.

* Young women face particular challenges - reproductive health and autonomy, roles as leaders and taking up non-traditional careers all require family and community support.

Farida noted two new funding mechanisms to support women's rights in the Pacific:

* Fiji Women's Fund which provides grants to women's organisations which are not traditionally funded - women in rural and remote areas and people who are gender non-conforming.

* Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Asia and Pacific (UAFA&P) is a regional women's human rights fund to protect, strengthen and sustain women rights defenders at critical moments. It is independent and integrated within local networks. It implements a common model of rapid response grantmaking, using online, text and mobile applications to act quickly at the grassroots.

The issue of what happens to donated funding was raised. Farida noted the emphasis within government on evaluating for outcomes. There are numerous evaluations conducted on women's empowerment programs. Farida was part of the team that conducted a mid-term review of the Markets for Change project for example. At a more macro level it is important to understand whether funding is going to the right sources - women's organisations. *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots* by By Angelika Arutyunova and Cindy Clark, AWID is an important report addressing this issue.

July Council Meeting



Kirsty Mead, Executive Director, PPFA, will speak at our July Council Meeting, 5:15pm, July 1st by ZOOM. This later time should enable students and those in paid work to hear this important talk.

PPFA is committed to supporting teenagers who suffer severe period pain, pelvic pain, and endometriosis to allow them to fulfill their potential and live the best life possible. To do this, they are committed to bringing medically responsible, positive, and interactive education to schools in Australia. On 21st November 2018, the PPFA-developed Periods, Pain and Endometriosis Program, PPEP Talk[®], which was launched in South Australia and on 12th October 2020 in Western Australia. PPEP Talk[®] is bringing the latest in modern knowledge and the new neuroscience of pain to Australian teens. The program is funded by both State and Federal Governments. The talk is free and is an Australian first being rolled out in secondary schools across Government, Catholic and Independent sectors. Students attending PPEP Talk[®] range between the ages of 12-19 years of age.

Aged Care: Where to next? Is there the *Political Will* to Fix the System? Report from NCWV Adviser Edith Chen; Elisabeth Newman AM, Dr Deborah Towns OAM

In 2000, a Victorian nursing home was caught bathing its elderly residents in diluted kerosene as a treatment for scabies. The kerosene caused the skin to blister and rashes to appear over many residents' bodies. The scandal led to the nursing home's closure. It attracted outcry from the media and the Australian community. The Federal Government agreed to overhaul the aged care complaints system following an Ombudsman's report later that year. However, the account on 18 major inquiries and reviews into aged care in Australia since 1997 - the sector which provides services to about 1.3 million Australians - is still dogged by incidents of abuse and negligence.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/24-years-18-inquiries-can-we-face-the-truth-of-aged-care-20210225-p575qs.html> Topsfield, J., 2021

2018 to 2019 saw the release of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Interim Report "*Neglect*", highlighting inadequate care and lack of transparency.

* The Royal Commission's Final Report, "*Care, Dignity and Respect*" with 148 recommendations, published and tabled in March 2021, is scathing of the Aged Care system.

This long journey of inquiries has exposed the full extent of the problems in aged care with little to no change.

Is it surprising that people may well wonder if the system can be fixed at all?

Take the workforce as an example in the system. The Federal Government's 1997 Aged Care Act removed the requirement for nursing homes to spend a fixed proportion of their funding on direct care, including the salaries of nurses. A change NCWV and many other organisations, including the Australian Nursing Federation (Vic), strongly advocated against. It led to registered nurses being replaced by low-skilled care workers and an increase in nursing homes being run by private for-profit providers.

Recently, advocates argued the estimated workforce would need \$10 billion to bring it up to the standard. According to Wood, E. (2021): Victoria has urged the federal government to introduce minimum staffing in private aged care and made a \$40m pledge for the area only last November. The State has legislated public aged care facilities to have staff ratios in the morning of one nurse to seven residents, plus a nurse in charge; in the evening one nurse to eight residents, plus a nurse in charge; and one nurse to 15 residents overnight. However, in the May 2021 Federal budget \$7.8 billion was allocated over five years but the staff ratio was not mentioned. <https://budget.gov.au/2021-22/content/overview.htm#two>

Recognising *Political Will* is required. NCWV, in applauding the findings and recommendations released in 2021 Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care, will continue to advocate for older citizens to be treated with respect and dignity by receiving quality services and care and treated as valued citizens. **This is a basic Human Right.**

* Summary and recommendations, of the "Care, Dignity and Respect" Report can be read at: <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-03/final-report-volume-1.pdf>.

WHO DO YOU CALL?

Seniors card	1300 797 210	My Aged Care	1800 200 422
Centrelink: Retirement	132 300	Aged Care Complaints Commissioner	1800 951 822
Disability, Sickness and Carers	132 717	National Carer Gateway	1800 422 737
Seniors Information Service	1300 135 090	Department of Veterans Affairs	133 254
Elder Abuse Helpline	1800 353 374	Employment Services	132 850

Over the 20 years between 1999 and 2019, the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over increased from 12.3% to 15.9%. Thus, the Ageing area is gaining momentum!

June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD).

Students Take Over Parliament! Spread word to schools

The outstanding annual student event *My Vote My Voice*, conducted by the NCWV, will be held in the Legislative Council Chamber of Parliament House, Melbourne on **Monday August 9th 2021, 9:00-12:30pm**.

Students from government and independent schools in Melbourne and Geelong, will address the topic: ***My Vote My Voice: Democracy - Past; Present; Future. Is politics structured to benefit society in the future?*** This is designed to encourage students to consider what a future political system may look like to benefit all of society in the future.

Students may carry out research, collect data from peers and others to gain views on the future of our political system. Students can then make a group presentation in the Chamber.

The quality of past student presentations has been outstanding and inspiring, so these students should also make a valuable contribution to improve the participation of Victorian Youth in our democratic processes.

Also, we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Australian Federation of Women Voters, and the 75th+1 of League of Women Voters Victoria (LWV). A speaker will share the Victorian history of voting and the role of LWV.

Contact **Pam Hammond, Convenor**, on **0417 326 847**

Centenary of Australian Federation of Women Voters-National Library of Australia Appeal - Help share the stories of amazing women and their work for equality. The National Library of Australia (NLA) is committed to preserving and sharing stories that have shaped Australia. The priority this year is to highlight voices of women who have championed equality. 2021 is the centenary of the Australian Federation of Women Voters (AFWV). Many women were members from Victoria until it was disbanded and superseded by other organisations in 1974. In 1921, the Australian Women's Register was established in Melbourne. It lobbied the government about women's affairs, and encouraged women to register to vote, as voting was not compulsory until 1924. Then it changed its name to the Australian Federation of Women Voters to take account of changes to voting rights.

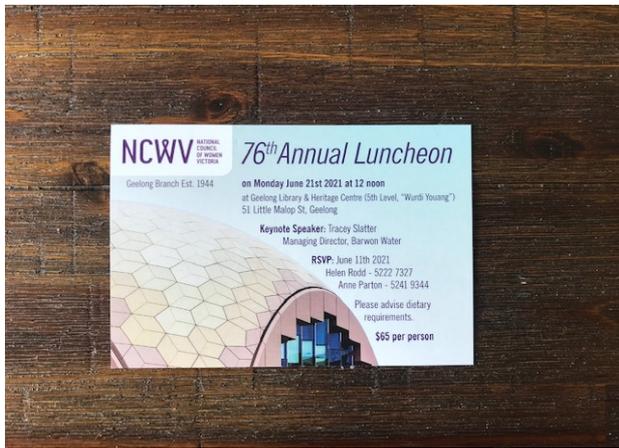
This year the NLA has established an appeal to digitise the AFWV's records. There are letters, minutes, reports, photographs, newspaper cuttings and many more important documents. The collection and conservation of Australia's historical records is threatened by insufficient funding. So, this appeal is a worthy cause for the NCWV's membership to consider. It's our history. **The LWV, a NCWV affiliate, is donating \$100 to the appeal. Further details and how to donate here: <https://www.nla.gov.au/content/appeal-australian-federation-of-women-voters>.**



The AFWV's first president in 1921 was Bessie Rischbieth, a national and international leader in women's rights activities during the last century. Her financial legacy is administered by the League of Women Voters Victoria today and it assists with the funding of the NCWV's annual event, *My Vote My Voice*. In this photograph, Bessie Rischbieth, is seated in the middle, taken at the AFWV meeting in Melbourne, 1930. Unsure of other notable women in photo.

Advice welcomed.

Article by Dr Deborah Towns OAM.



NCW Geelong: Annual Luncheon:

Monday June 21st, 12:00pm

Geelong Library (a short walk from the station)

Speaker: Tracey Slatter, Director, Barwon Water

Contact for this event: Helen Rodd- 5222 7327

Other News

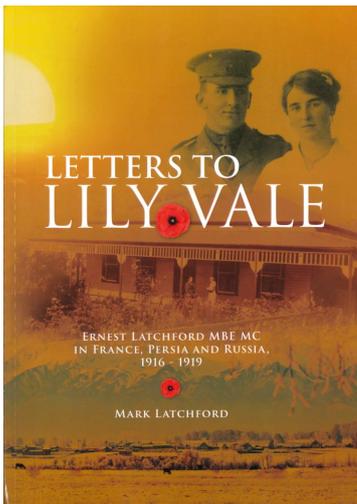
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Women & Leadership Australia (WLA) supports women across all sectors and industries by providing world-class leadership development programs for emerging, middle and senior leaders. These work-integrated programs provide skills and strategies to address real-world leadership challenges, designed to maximise learning outcomes. Scholarships are available to support the development of women leaders. Scholarships of between \$1000 and \$5000 will support participation in one of three leadership development courses designed for emerging through to senior leaders.

Expressions of interest close on 18 June. Find out more and register at: <https://www.wla.edu.au/funding.html>

Royal Historical Society Victoria

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/rhsv-events/>



LUNCHTIME LECTURE

Fri 11 Jun, 12:30pm - 1:30pm, Free by ZOOM

Speaker: Mark Latchford

In late 1918, thousands of Australian soldiers, exhausted and scarred by war in Europe, began to head home. This is the story of Ernest Latchford MBE MC, told through his articulate, observant letters. He (and some Australians) was selected by General Sir John Monash to serve in the Dunsterville Persian campaign of elite troops across present-day Iran to prevent an invasion of India. His responsibility was to train Armenian refugees against the Ottoman Army to protect the oil wealth of the Persian Gulf. At the end of the war, instead of returning to Australia, he became the only Australian to be deployed in Siberia to train White Russian forces against the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. [Register for Ern Latchford lecture here](#)

See more details and registration for the following events by clicking on the link:

Thu 24 Jun 5:30pm: [Twentieth Century Science, Technology and Engineering](#)

Thu 8 Jul 5:30pm: [History of the Spencer Street Bridge](#)

Oral History Victoria symposium - Sun 20 Jun 2021, 10 am to 1pm via Zoom:

'Plan or perish: Ensuring the survival of community oral histories'. Presenters include:

- National Library of Australia - Shirleene Robinson, Senior Curator Oral History and Indigenous Programs
- State Library Victoria (SLV) - Greg Gerrand, Senior Librarian; Jenelle Colston-Ing, Head of Collection Development
- Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) - Jillian Hiscock, Collections Manager / Volunteer Coordinator
- Hotham History Project - Lorna Hannan, chair

Find out more at the OHV website: <https://oralhistoryvictoria.org.au/event/2021-symposium/>

Podcast Masterclass: Sat 31 Jul and 8 Aug 2 full-days (limited to 15 people) by Zoom.

NCWA Triennial Conference 25-26 November, 2021, Canberra—Save the Date



Program

Thursday 25 November morning: **NCWA Business – Resolutions**

Thursday 25 November afternoon: **Public Conference**

Thursday 25 November (tbc): **Reception – 5.30pm**

Hosted by Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley at Government House

Friday 26 November 2021 – **Public conference**

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 and raising awareness of gender equality; act as a voice on issues and concerns of women and girls at a 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 the 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 Dates for 2021 – venue or online to be confirmed

- June:** **Monday 14th:** Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30-6:00pm, Ross House
Thursday 17th: Committee Meeting, RHSV, A'Beckett St
- July:** **Thursday 1st:** Council Meeting, **5:15-7:15pm. Late Time!**
Kirsty Mead, Executive Director, Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia
Monday 12th: Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30-6:00pm, Ross House
Thursday 15th: Committee Meeting, RHSV, A'Beckett St
- August:** **Thursday 5th:** Individual Members Annual Meeting 11:00am;
Council Meeting 12:15pm,
Sandra Buckle, CEO Women in Superannuation
Monday 9th My Vote My Voice, Parliament of Victoria, 9:00am-12:30pm
Monday 9th: Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30-6:00pm, Ross House
Thursday 19th: Committee Meeting, RHSV, A'Beckett St
- September** **Thursday 2nd: Council Annual General Meeting,** 12:15am, Room 4.1 Ross House
Monday 14th: Standing Committee Meeting, 4:30-6:00pm, Ross House
Thursday 16th Committee Meeting, RHSV, A'Beckett St
- October:** **Thursday 7th:** Individual Members meeting; Council Meeting 12:15pm
Monday 11th: Standing Committee Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm
Thursday 21st: Committee Meeting, RHSV, A'Beckett St
- November:** **Thursday 4th:** Council Meeting, **5:15-7:15pm. NOTE late time**
Thursday 18th: Committee Meeting, RHSV, A'Beckett St
Tuesday 23rd: Annual Festive Luncheon, 12:00pm, William Angliss Restaurant
Thursday 25 – Friday 26 November, NCWA Triennial Conference in Canberra 2021