

**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.*



**Our postal address is now: 239 A'Beckett St Melbourne, 3000. (Our PO Box has been closed.)**

**From the President, Elida Brereton**



We have come to the end of a very busy but productive year of advocacy, learning and involvement by NCWV.

**See NCWV 2023/2024 Annual Report which is available on our website: <https://ncwvic.org.au/publications.html>**

I thank the Executive: Vice Presidents Pam Hammond and Guosheng Chen, Treasurer Emma Fu, Standing Committee Convenor Robyn Byrne OAM,

Individual Members Convenor Sheila Byard OAM, Geelong Branch President Nonie Crozier, and Committee members Ronniel Milliken, June Anderson, Dr. Deborah Towns OAM and Hean Bee Wee AM, for their hard work throughout 2024, and we welcome our new Hon. Secretaries Dr Julie Stevens and Phoebe Swift. I also thank Pam Hammond for her continuing excellent work as Newsletter editor.

I thank Ronniel for this compilation of 2024 NCWV speakers and activities, which include expert speakers who provided members with real information about conditions and issues for girls and women in Victoria. This is consistent with the approach of our founders who were involved in researching issues, and prompts us to look beyond the single example that may trigger our interest. So thanks to our expert speakers regarding:

- Women in sport – from “ladylike” to world leaders
- Fashion and the Environment - the roadmap to improving the reuse and recycling of clothing and textiles in Australia
- State Schools Relief Committee supporting the needs of thousands of financially disadvantaged school students
- Tragic national epidemic that is domestic and family violence from Safe & Equal and Victoria Police Command
- Financial abuse: weaponisation of child support in Aus.

- Cyber Security - the potential dangers associated with the use of computers and computer networks
- Mate - A tool designed to make it easier for bystanders to recognise signs of domestic violence and empower them to intervene safely
- Issues emerging in services for CALD and wider community survivors of family violence
- Australia’s role in addressing the need to achieve child-related SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) targets.

With a strong participation in the Standing Committees we look forward to being in a position to increase our advocacy in 2025. What did we advocate, fight for, in 2024?

In 2024 the Victorian Health Adviser’s work included a submission to the Victorian Enquiry on Women’s Pain. At a Federal level we provided input to a potential submission by NCWA on improving the criminal justice system’s treatment of victims of sexual violence; and again, via the Victorian Health Adviser, the preparation of a submission from NCWA to the Senate inquiry into perimenopause [available here: [published online](#)] Congratulation to the Health Hub, so many of the Victorian recommendations have been taken up!

We gained a significant number of new members despite our ZOOM meetings, with some face-to-face. Highlights were the Pioneer Women’s Garden event in January, the Individual Members visit to the Royal Children’s Hospital, *My Vote My Voice* at Parliament House, and our recent Luncheon with Hazel Edwards OAM as our guest speaker. A group of us attended the NCWA Triennial Conference in Adelaide and were proud of NCWV’s achievements for the national cause. We enjoyed an afternoon reception at SA Government House when the Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, thanked those present for advocating for women in overcoming unconscious bias; addressing sexism; ensuring respectful workplaces and communities; stopping violence against women; achieving equal pay, and other issues : *I am pleased to see a diverse range of resolutions to be voted on at your conference. These address the challenges presented to women by 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, ... as well as its opportunities, such as supporting more women to work in the tech sector. The resolutions include challenges to women which affect society more broadly, such as support for action on repairing Australia’s landscapes, and creating a dental benefits scheme for all senior Australians. These resolutions provide a timely reminder that pursuing women’s rights is of universal benefit.*



NCWV members with SA Governor

I look forward to your loyal support in 2025, for new members, relevant involvement in women and girls' causes, and greater fellowship and friendship. Our hearts continue to go out to our Ukrainian and Jewish members and all those affected by conflicts, as we all hope and pray for peace and justice. I wish you all a special time during the festive season and a healthy New Year, and look forward to seeing you at the Pioneer Women's Garden on Sunday February 2<sup>nd</sup>.



We were thrilled when Hean Bee Wee AM was recognised for her exceptional contributions across NCW and ICW-CIF by being appointed Honorary Life Vice President of NCWA. She has served as Vice-President, Economic Adviser and NCWA President from 2006-2009, the first Asian-born woman to hold the position.

Hean Bee obtained federal funding for two projects, one to promote the well-being of Aboriginal women in Oodnadatta, the other to provide a culturally and linguistic TAFE leadership training course for non-English speaking women, both highly successful.

Hean Bee was Vice-President of ICW-CIF and is a current Board member, as well as President of the Asia Pacific Regional Conference (APRC). She led 27 members to attend the APRC General Meeting in Avignon giving voice to issues. Hean Bee continues to encourage, support, foster engagement and inspire women of NCWA, NCWV and abroad through active service and mentorship.

#### **NCWA Triennial Conference, Report from Pam Robinson AM**

I was most appreciative that my application seeking a grant from the 'Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest' to go to Adelaide for the NCWA AGM Conference, was approved. I thank the Committee Members of the Sylvia Gelman AM MBE Bequest, under Convenor Elisabeth Newman AM and President Elida Brereton for their support. Through attendance, I was keen to understand more of the workings of NCWA, understand its committee structure and how it relates to the State Councils. It was my great pleasure to be in attendance with NCWV Members, President Elida Brereton, Elisabeth Newman AM, Hean Bee Wee AM, Sheila Byard OAM, Robyn Byrne OAM and Pam Hammond and I enjoyed having the chance to engage with all at different times throughout the two days.

However, I did not end up as completely clear as I thought I would be in terms of the NCWA Committees.

The first day Professor Kat Falkner, Dean Engineering Faculty, Adelaide University, gave a warm, welcoming Opening Address. Adelaide University is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> Year. Mention was made of the need for more statues of women. Professor Falkner spoke of the 'glass door'- that which is in between the glass ceiling and the glass cliff – it being important to remember there is a glass door, and it opens with opportunity when you 'look in' for another way forward.

This was followed by a long, protracted NCWA session on the business of Resolutions and one or two other matters, with 5 out of 8 Resolutions passing.

After the AGM we enjoyed a very pleasant Reception at Government House.

I enjoyed hearing the information provided by Symposium Speakers; Cecilia Wallin, Founding Partner, Onemi-Global Solutions; Chantelle Stratford PSM, Office for Women, Anna Moreno, Global Alliance for Care. It was good to see students present at this session and in my engaging with them pre the start of Symposium and during a break, I was again taken with the 'smarts' that so many students have and their ability to engage in a robust conversation and share their ambitions. Overall, from the Speakers, there were strong messages of: Gender equality, Gender inequality issues, collaboration, and partnerships, working the corridors to advance the issues of women, then also advice re: various organisations and contact numbers when help is needed, reference to economic growth while highlighting issues for those in need in terms of rent and data on those in single parent homes.

The significant issue of the worst of online child sexual exploitation had many names of those offending in Australia and from overseas mentioned, and it was good to hear some of the worst Clubs and individuals have been caught by policing from Australia and overseas. Reporting perpetrators to the Australian Centre for Sexual Crimes, is encouraged.

Climate change and the environment, with connection to health issues as well as landscapes, was mentioned in various ways as matters of high risk, high importance and are front and centre to many policies within Governments, businesses and Communities.

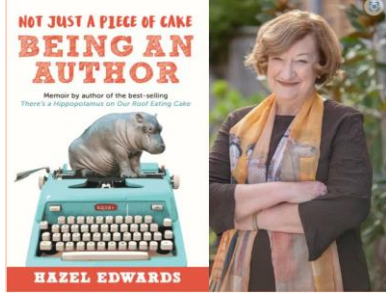
Reference to the 'Care Economy' provided many insights including statistics like 606 million women out of the paid labour market due to care responsibilities, compared to 41 million men. Australia, Canada, Finland, India, Nepal, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States are members of the International Alliance of Carer Organisations (IACO). IACO members work together and also work independently to raise awareness of family carers, identify and disseminate best practices and enhance carer well-being, and promote the sharing of best practices in caregiving programs between countries.

NCWA and its State Councils certainly are a strong voice for women and girls. Bringing about change to ensure there is equality and security for all in Australia requires ongoing work with issues which already are in the domain of NCWA as well as addressing various new threats of our times.



NCWV contingent at lunch.

## NCWV Annual Festive Luncheon, 28 November



**Hazel Edwards OAM**  
**Australian Educator,**  
**Author, Speaker and**  
**Literacy Ambassador.**  
Hazel has written books for children, teachers and adults.

As National Council of Women Victoria Inc has long been interested in children's education and books that encourage respect for girls and other cultures, we were delighted to have Hazel as our guest speaker at the 2024 Annual Luncheon. Her best-known publication is the children's picture book classic ***There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake*** (1980), now a series of picture books, classroom play scripts, a musical stage production and a short movie. Hazel is a prolific author with over 200 books across numerous genre. Her memoir ***'Not Just a Piece of Cake'*** (2013) takes the reader behind the books, sharing the diverse workstyle of a long-term author, as did her talk:

*Writing for Young People is harder than writing for adults. Deceptively simple but with subtext. And don't assume the age of the reader or audience is the IQ of the writer! I write for all genres, ages and mediums and getting picture book text right is the hardest. It is fifty years since I first published and I am still learning. 'Vintage' not old.*

*Why Write a YA Novel Called 'Wasted?' I care about certain political and social issues. But I don't march in protests. I write Young Adult fiction instead. Plotting a story, involving characters and humour from varied viewpoints, is NOT propaganda (which presents one viewpoint only). Literature takes you into the minds and motives of diverse characters via their thoughts and actions. You may not agree with some characters but at least you can work out where they're coming from in terms of their ideas. Strategically placed ideas matter. Sometimes, ideas in books have a longer life than even the author. Especially if it's a book you've read at a significant phase in your life when you're looking for answers. Many 13–19 year-olds can make a difference and are passionate about social issues but unsure if they can make a difference. A book or film can have a more lasting impact than a one-word chant. Different approaches to solving the problem can be portrayed through varied and fun characters.*

*'Wasted?' explores a mid-ocean Garbage Patch state where asylum seekers recycle bio fuel from waste, led by 16 year-old Head of State known as The GG.*  
<https://hazedwards.com/book/wasted/> This link is to the resources on 'Wasted?' and a sample of first three chapters.

Another free downloadable sampler is for gifted students 'Kaleidoscope of Ideas' used by Tournament of Minds.  
<https://hazedwards.com/book/kaleidoscope-of-ideas/>

*I use the letters of AUTHOR to cover the diverse aspects of my writerly life:*

A. Authorpreneurship; Audience; A.I. which has no soul; Age groups and different media.

U. Understanding. Especially cultural appropriateness, participant observations. 'Complete Your Book in a Year' mentoring for quiet heroes from migrant families.

T. Titles; Themes: coping successfully with being different; Idea; Idea risk taking by author.

H. Humour. Subtext. Heroes; family history/mentoring; Hazelnuts

O. Original. *'F2m, The Boy Within'* - first trans YA novel co-written by trans author; Other mediums: *'Go! Go! Gecko'* my family gift story, translated into other languages, audio and 2D; Nanjing dual-language picture book exchanges.

R. Research facts for *'Antarctica'* and *'Wasted?'*. Rich life as an author in terms of experiences, not necessarily money.



Animated Hazel Edwards



VP Guosheng Chen with Hazel

**Congratulations:** At the lunch, we acknowledged three long-term very active members who are retiring: Nina Richwol, Jessie Handoll and Malvina Malinek OAM, who was the only one present. Sheila Byard OAM paid tribute to Malvina who was presented with a plant and card to commemorate the occasion.



Jenni Russell, Sheila Byard, Malvina, Elida

Malvina responded that she was very pleasantly surprised and quite embarrassed by the special mention and her contribution to NCWV, but very much appreciated it. She gave credit to Jennie Russell as her President earlier who was ready to take up every suggestion she made. The first one was the *Respect Women* pamphlet in response to the problem faced by newcomers, who were culturally ignorant about the status of women in their new country. *Today, I think it needs to be retaught to the youngsters if we are to have a civil and cohesive multicultural society.*

*I would like to see a future where everyone can respect each other whether in parliaments, organisations, and each other personally, young and old, able or disabled.*

We also acknowledged the generous contribution of RMIT, enabled by Dr Jing Qi, for printing the My Vote My Voice student certificates.



Guosheng, Ronniel Milliken, Elida, Robyn Byrne, Pam, Dr Qi



Fiona Patten, members and guests at luncheon

#### NCWV Geelong AGM



Alex Jeffery's Reflection: *"Ladies, as I reflect over the past four years during which I have been president of NCWV Geelong Branch, one thing has been a constant, the respect, camaraderie, and understanding towards one another, not to mention, friendship. These past four years have been years of change, also constancy: \*after three years of Covid, we are still strong,*

*a testament to our strength as like-minded women interested in civic improvement of the position of women and girls in Geelong - over 80 years; \*reconfiguring the president's role to facilitate shared responsibilities by spreading responsibilities through the Committee members, which has worked well; \*we supported the Geelong community with \$1,000 donations over the past four years: Christ Church pantry - feeding homeless; Feed me Geelong-FOOD INSECURITY; Ukrainian Women's Assoc. Australia - medical supplies; the ROAR program for DV/FV survivors at MELI; continually supported 2 students at NGSC with \$500 to honour Literacy Advancement. Above all, thank you all for your support and collegiality towards our civic role and personally, to me."*

**Office Bearers:** President: Nonie Crozier; Secretary: Barbara Abley AM; Treasurer: Jan Kinloch OAM.

**Committee members:** Jan Faulkner; Jill Graham; Alexandra Jeffrey; Anne Parton; Lyn Ranford.

#### 64<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Women's Ceremony : Sunday, February 2, 2025, 11:30am–2:00pm

This will again be held at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden in the Kings Domain, Melbourne.

**(Melway Map: 2G A10)**

This event celebrates Victorian Pioneer Women, conducted annually by the National Council of Women of Victoria to acknowledge past and present women pioneers.

In 2025 we are acknowledging 30 years since the Australian Bureau of Statistics recognised, under occupations in the Census, that women could be farmers. We will shine the light on women in agriculture including those in rural and regional Victoria. One speaker, Alana Johnson, will speak about the 'Invisible Farmer' Project and aspects of women in agriculture. Further speakers to be advised.

**At this event,** chairs, canopies and water will be provided, but please bring your own water bottle/cup. We also encourage those attending to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in this special place under the canopies or in the open on the grass.

So we have enough chairs, please notify NCWV of your attendance on [info@ncwvic.org.au](mailto:info@ncwvic.org.au)

This memorial garden of remembrance was created in Kings Domain as part of the 1934 celebration of the Centenary of Melbourne. A variety of fundraising ventures occurred, including producing and selling a commemorative book, and receiving public subscriptions to have a particular woman's name inscribed on a "sheet of remembrance". These sheets are buried beneath the sundial in the garden. The garden was designed by [Hugh Linaker](#) and is a formal, symmetrical garden traversed by a watercourse. This flows into a grotto which contains a [bronze](#) statue of a woman by the sculptor [Charles Web Gilbert](#).



## ADVISER NEWS

### Education Adviser: Pam Hammond

NCWV is most concerned about hearing the State Government is limiting the Schools Mental Health Fund to fully qualified mental health workers. This has angered schools in parts of Melbourne and Regional Victoria where such resources are scarce. The national peak body for psychologists has criticised the move as psychologists must undergo on-the-job training to become fully qualified, so tightening funding rules to schools could lead to fewer placements being available. They added that they are also an untapped resource which can assist with the short-fall of fully qualified psychologists.

Provisional psychologists hold a Masters degree in professional or clinical psychology and have earned an internship, which involves two years of weekly supervision by an approved mentor. Schools who have used them to support state-funded mental health for students, have received positive feed-back from parents, teachers and students. Ongoing support is under risk. The alternative is finding external mental health practitioners, at great expense, with long waiting lists.

A report in *The Age 18/11* quotes a spokesperson for Psych in Schools, an agency that earlier this year paired 40 provisional psychologists with schools over six months, that they hoped for a change of heart. *"We will continue to work with the Department of Education to find a solution which would allow provisional psychologists to continue to fall within the ambit of the funding criteria. In the meantime, our services will only be available to schools who can afford our services."*

**We invite NCWV members to use whatever influence they may have to encourage a reversal of this funding limitation.**

### Health Adviser: Prof Cassandra Szoeké

#### 'These mistakes cost lives': The medical bias that affects half of Australia

*The Age* 2/12/2024

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/these-mistakes-cost-lives-the-medical-bias-that-affects-half-of-australia-20241130-p5kurq.html>

Primary school teacher Nikki Purtill knew something was wrong when, in the middle of teaching a class, she was overcome with a migraine so severe she wasn't able to use her phone to call for help. Her vision went blotchy. She couldn't walk. There was an intense pain in her head. But when the 25-year-old spoke to a GP, advice was dismissive and unhelpful. The doctor diagnosed her with "COVID stress" and recommended she lock herself in a dark room when she felt a migraine coming on.



*Credit: Simon Schluter*

Nikki Purtill says her concerns were dismissed. That consultation was one of more than 10 times Purtill attended the same GP clinic over an 11-month period, seeking help for worsening headaches and other worrying symptoms that started escalating. The doctors referred her to a psychologist and offered her headache medications but repeatedly declined to send her for a brain scan. "I kept getting told that I was young and fit and healthy." When Purtill got the correct diagnosis, after a brain scan identified a mass in her brain, she was on the brink of death.

**Medical misogyny** is rooted in a long history of failures to study and understand female bodies. Women report that their pain has been dismissed or misdiagnosed, while some doctors say the Medicare system gives them insufficient time and funding to manage complex women's healthcare issues. The consequences can be fatal. Women admitted to hospitals with serious heart attacks were half as likely to receive necessary tests and treatments and died at twice the rate of men six months after discharge, according to a [2018 study by the University of Sydney](#).

Historically, women have been discouraged from participating in clinical trials and are more likely to be misdiagnosed or diagnosed late for various health issues. It takes an average of six to eight years for women to get a diagnosis for endometriosis, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Women are not just 'small men', their health issues are different. A recent survey of 3000 Australian women, care givers and experts found 2/3 had experienced gender bias in the healthcare system. This was part of push by government and from within the healthcare system to address medical misogyny within the National Women's Health Strategy.

Gender bias in research funding is also evident says Prof Sue Matthews, chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Vic and member of federal government's National Women's Health Advisory Committee. *"Five times more funds go into research on male erectile dysfunction (affects 19% men) than premenstrual syndrome (affects 90% women)"*.

**On another matter, Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria** calls for submissions : see website for terms of reference and making a submission: <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/inquiry-into-ambulance-victoria/submissions/> .

NCWV would like to hear from NCWV members, delegates and friends. Email Prof Cassandra Szoeké at [Healthhub@ncwv.org.au](mailto:Healthhub@ncwv.org.au) with experiences that could be added to our submission.

## From Women's Health Victoria:

A major priority for Women's Health Victoria is to sustain and develop the key health focus area of Women with Cancer. This is evident in the wonderful service provided by Counterpart. Counterpart is a service of Women's Health Victoria that connects, supports, and informs women with cancer to live well. Counterpart is a community-based, supportive care service that complements the medical system and other cancer support services. Our highly-trained and professional Peer Support Volunteers have lived experiences of cancer and can provide unique understanding and support. We also help women find reliable, evidenced-based information that is tailored to their individual issues and needs to assist them in making informed decisions for themselves. <https://whv.org.au/our-focus/women-and-cancer>

Our services are confidential and provided at no cost to the service user.

- [Peer Support](#)
- [Information Sessions](#)
- [Webinar Recordings](#)
- [Advanced/Metastatic Cancer Services](#)
- [Find information with the Navigator](#)

## Standing Committee Coordinator: Robyn Byrne OAM

The Federal Minister for Women, Katy Gallagher has announced that five National Women's Alliances will work with the Minister for Women and Assistant Minister for Women to improve outcomes for women in Australia. Following a competitive grant round, five specialist organisations have been selected to form the National Women's Alliances, sharing in \$10.88 million. See: <https://ministers.pmc.gov.au/gallagher/2024/national-womens-alliances>

National Women's Alliances represent a diverse range of women and play a key role in understanding and sharing the experiences and issues affecting women in Australia and supporting Government to implement *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*. The Alliances will continue to lead work across: gender-based violence; women's economic equality and leadership; and to represent the diverse experiences of First Nations women; migrant and refugee and culturally and linguistically diverse women, women living in rural, regional and remote areas; and women with a disability.

The following National Women's Alliances will operate from 2 December 2024:

- Working with Women Alliance – led by YWCA Canberra
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
- National Rural Women's Coalition
- Women With Disabilities Australia
- Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia – leading a new migrant and refugee and culturally and linguistically diverse women's Alliance

[National Foundation for Australian Women \(NFAW\)](#) is a leading feminist organisation in Australia dedicated to promoting and protecting women's rights through policy advocacy, research and education. NFAW welcomes the announcement by the Assistant Minister for Women, Kate Thwaites, on 29 October 2024 that the Australian Government has finalised a new set of agreements for five National Women's Alliances. These organisations play a crucial role in coordinating and supporting women's organisations and feminist movements in Australia and have done so since 2012. The new arrangements represent some continuity, but also disruption to the sector.

Jane Madden, President of NFAW said: *"The loss of Equality Rights Alliance, ... will be missed. NFAW stands ready to work in close collaboration with the new Working with Women Alliance, led by the YWCA of Canberra. We look forward to participating to ensure the new Alliance is established on feminist principles of collegiality, participation, and openness"*. NFAW expects that working with the new alliance will help to strengthen and hold the government to account for the Implementation of *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* announced on the 7 March 2024.

**Foodbank Victoria:** there is an increasing demand for food, but dwindling supply with a 15 per cent decrease in donations. At the beginning of 2023, 50,000 Victorians asked for help from Foodbank. That figure is expected to jump to 70,000 this Christmas. The Foodbank Hunger Report 2024 found [3.4 million households across Australia were experiencing food insecurity](#) and, of those, two million households were experiencing "severe" food insecurity.

**ABC Gives Appeal:** The ABC is supporting Foodbank Victoria for this year's *ABC Gives Appeal* to bring attention to people experiencing food insecurity in Victoria. Every 1.5 seconds, Foodbank provides a meal to someone in need. In Victoria, Foodbank provides food and grocery relief to 500 front-line charities and more than 1,015 schools to help feed 69,000 Victorians in need — every day of the year. Foodbank Victoria chief executive Katie Fisher said *"any amount donated would be amplified. We can buy a whole lot of fresh produce in bulk and take it out to Victorians who are doing it tough,"* she said. See <https://www.abc.net.au/gives/abc-radio-gives-vic-2024/104490180>

## Accident Research Centre calls for barriers around schools after fatalities in Victoria

The Accident Research Centre is calling for infrastructural change around schools after recent fatalities.

The centre's director says bollards, barriers and rocks can be placed around schools and playgrounds to help stop vehicles crossing roadsides and footpaths.

A Victorian primary school has been campaigning for years to get a median strip or roundabout built outside the school.

**The NCWV calls on the Minister for Roads and Roads Safety Melissa Horne to fund road safety infrastructure to make it safer around schools**

## OTHER NEWS

### Listening To Parents and Carers

### MEDIA RELEASE

State Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn has announced that a new survey is open – encouraging parents and carers of children 12 and under to offer their insights as part of the ongoing improvement of the Government's services.

The survey includes questions about how Victorians find parenting information, what services they use, which services are most useful, what barriers exist to accessing services, and how services may be further improved.

The survey complements a series of roundtables taking place across Victoria designed to make it easier to access services for children. The roundtables are taking place in Melbourne and rural and regional Victoria – to talk about families experiences of moving between services as their children grow and their needs change.

Roundtable discussions, as well as feedback from the survey, will inform policies, programs and initiatives that impact children up to 12 years of age. The series of 18 roundtables that began in May finishes next month.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, in partnership with the Department of Health and Department of Education, is delivering the series of roundtables. Topics of discussion have included maternal and child health, early childhood education and care, early parenting centres, kindergartens and family services.

**NCWV encourages members to please inform all families with children under 12 that you know.**

The link is open until 15 December 2024 - <https://engage.vic.gov.au/Children-in-Victoria-Survey>



<https://www.travellersaid.org.au/our-services/>

Read Travellers Voice Newsletter

Letter to our past president Elisabeth Newman AM from Travellers Aid, a previous Affiliate of NCWV

As we work to deliver access and inclusion to more people and places, we are constantly humbled by the impact made possible through our partnerships. This collaborative effort has seen us increase the geographic reach of our services. In the first three months of 2024 Travellers Aid assisted 16,670 people, a 35% increase on 3 months 2023.

Our Melbourne Airport Assist pilot program is well underway and getting a great response from travellers. Working alongside airline staff, our team has assisted more than 3,000 people in the first six weeks, see the newsletter.

Travellers Aid is developing partnerships in Bendigo with our new Out and About Safely program. Run in October, the program showed older residents how to stay connected through public transport and scooter safety training.

We're also very excited to be providing our services at Geelong's GMHBA Stadium in December when the venue hosts a friendly between the Matildas and Chinese Taipei. With another busy year coming to a close, Travellers Aid is thrilled to have won in the access and inclusion category of the Melbourne Awards.

We are proud of these tangible, measurable examples of collaboration in action and hope you enjoy reading about our recent activities. We also invite you to be part of our journey by [donating to our Summer Appeal](#). Your contribution goes directly to recruiting and training more volunteers to deliver our services where they are needed.

Thank you for your support. Together we are creating change. Elias Lebbos, Chief Executive Officer

## AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health

**ACHRH Annual General Meeting Friday December 13th, 2024 6:30pm to 9:30pm**

Level 4 Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: MS. FARAH FAROUQUE (CEO ECCV)

To book:

[Annual General Meeting - AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health Tickets, Fri, Dec 13, 2024 at 6:30 PM | Eventbrite](#)

## **Contribution from a Beta Sigma Phi sister, a NCWV Affiliate: Hope you read it but never have to do it!**

When you are alone and have a heart attack. What are you gonna do then?

This is a really good post that can't be shared often enough:

1. Take a 2 minute break and read this: Let's say it's 5:25 pm and you're driving home after an unusually hard day's work.
2. You are really tired and frustrated. All of a sudden your chest pains. They are starting to radiate in the arm and jaw. It feels like being stabbed in the chest and heart. You're only a few miles away from the nearest hospital or home.
3. Unfortunately you don't know if you can make it...
4. Maybe you've taken CPR training, but the person running the course hasn't told you how to help yourself.
5. How do you survive a heart attack when you're alone when it happens? A person who is feeling weak and whose heart is beating hard has only about 10 seconds before losing consciousness.
6. But you can help yourself by coughing repeatedly and very strongly! Deep breaths before every cough. Coughing should be repeated every second until you arrive at the hospital or until your heart starts to beat normally.
7. Deep breathing gives oxygen to your lungs 🫁 and coughing movements boost the heart and blood circulation. Heart pressure also helps to restore a normal heartbeat. Here's how cardiac arrest victims can make it to the hospital for the right treatment.
8. Cardiologists say if someone gets this message and passes it on to 10 people, we can expect to save at least one life. 🙌
9. FOR WOMEN 👩👧: You should know that women have additional and different symptoms. Rarely have crushing chest pain or pain in the arms. Often have indigestion and tightness across the back at the bra line plus sudden fatigue.

## **Single Mother Families - SMF**

The Australian Child Support Scheme, which supports 1 million children, is fundamentally affected by economic and systemic abuse. Creating meaningful change requires persistent and dedicated effort. The Financial Services Regulatory Framework Committee on Financial Abuse has shown courage, honesty, and diligence in addressing these concerns.

Single Mother Families Australia congratulates the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services Committee on tabling of its report *Financial Abuse: an insidious form of domestic violence*. CEO Terese Edwards said: "We thank the Member for Swan Ms Zaneta Mascarenhas MP who initiated the Inquiry and Chair Senator Deb O'Neill for her leadership. The voices of women have been heard loud and clear. This is reflected in the Committee's finding that government services and systems such as child support, Centrelink and the tax system are being widely manipulated and weaponised by perpetrators to commit financial abuse against victim-survivors." "Single Mother Families Australia strongly welcomes the Committee's focus on child support, a scheme which affects around one million Australian children and in too many cases, is being weaponised against them and their mothers". Ms Edwards said: "We welcome the Committee's recommendation to transfer child support back to the ATO and that women receive refundable tax credits for any child support debts owed to them. Debts would then become a debt owed to the Commonwealth and collected using the power of the ATO. It means that women and children would not be left waiting for child support, sometimes for years". Media release. <https://smfa.com.au>

Mutual Obligations. Our first call is to abolish mutual obligators. In the meantime we also see the value in some quick changes. Our most recent meeting was with Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. The recommendations below have been part of our submissions and asks. We are pushing hard for some changes in time of the school holidays.

1. Pause mutual obligations during school holidays.
2. Family and Domestic Violence Exemptions - 12 months.
3. Allow and calculate voluntary work as a mutual obligation for women under 55 years.
4. Parent Pathway (voluntary services, replacing ParentsNext) allow women with children older than 6 years to attend.



Every year, the Commission speaks with thousands of Victorians who have faced discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation and vilification. They also hear from many organisations and individuals seeking to better understand their rights and responsibilities, so they can effect positive change and ensure every Victorian is treated fairly. Addressing these issues – via information and education, dispute resolution, reviews and investigations targeting systemic issues – is a vital part of progressing their vision for a fair, safe, inclusive Victoria where every person is respected and treated with dignity. The 2023-24 Annual Report introduces the 2024-26 strategic priorities that allow them to mobilise that vision:

- embed a culture of human rights
- prevent inequality
- eliminate racism and hate speech
- promote the rights of First Peoples.

*“The report unpacks the focus on our work to realise each strategic priority during the 2023-24 financial year. Our achievements would not have been realised without close collaboration with stakeholders, peers, supporters and government. I extend our deepest thanks for your continued support and collaboration.*

*Together, we can ensure that we continue to improve the lives of all Victorians and build a fair, safe and inclusive community in our state. I’m pleased to share with you our [2023-24 Annual Report](#) “*

Warmly, **Ro Allen (they/them)**, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner



International Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December. On this day in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Every year we recognise and celebrate this day through a week of events, connection, and advocacy. Human Rights Week 2024 (HRW2024) is from **Tuesday 3 December to Tuesday 10 December 2024**, 'a week of daily action' when Victorians are invited to take part in a challenge that tests your knowledge and understanding of human rights. Every day, we'll post an action on social media and our website. Your task is to 'do' the action then consider how to apply this knowledge in a practical way. To participate in HRW2024 - and receive daily actions via email - [please sign up](#). Involve friends, family, co-workers to make it more interesting/fun.

## Congratulations

**Professor Christina Mitchell AO**, Executive Dean of Monash University's Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, and academic clinical haematologist, has been inducted to the Monash Honour Roll. Honour Roll inductees are recognised for their ability to build and sustain successful teams and cultures, their generosity in contributing to the broader academic agenda, willingness to share knowledge, experience, and expertise, with their colleagues and their expertise in research field.

Professor Mitchell is a health and medical research leader and physician-scientist specialising in clinical haematology. Professor Mitchell's research focuses on the characterisation of the metabolic pathways that regulate phosphoinositide signalling in human cancer. She leads one of the top phosphoinositide research groups worldwide, and is the leading researcher in her field in Australia. She has published over 150 papers, has an h-index of 64 and has 11,000+ citations.



**VCOSS Amplify** <[communications@vcoss.org.au](mailto:communications@vcoss.org.au)>

## **Regional All Abilities Participation Grants**

These Grants support grassroots sport and active recreation clubs and community-based not-for-profit organisations, to enable ongoing, sustainable, and meaningful participation for people with disability in regional Victoria.

Grant amount: Up to \$25,000 per category

**Open: 6 November 2024**

**Close: 10 February 2025**

A web page with fully accessible guidelines has been developed for this program.

To view it, please go to [2024-25 Regional All Abilities Participation Grants – Program Guidelines](#).

PDF and accessible Word versions of the guidelines can be downloaded.

Regional All Abilities Participation Grants assist organisations to increase participation opportunities and address barriers to participation for people with disability in regional Victoria.

Grants will support organisations to:

- purchase modified equipment, assistive technology, adaptive clothing and environmental aids
- recruit, mentor, employ and retain a person with disability to a paid or voluntary position
- employ a specialised workforce to support people with disability
- reduce travel costs for active participants with disability
- broaden the range of on-going, flexible and place-based sport or active recreation programs; and
- increase awareness, understanding, acceptance, community pride and connection.

Eligible organisations must:

- be not-for-profit and non-government
- be operating in Victoria
- be a legal entity, possessing an Australian Company Number (ACN), Incorporated Association Number (IAN) or an Indigenous Corporation Number (ICN)
- currently deliver activities that encourage participation in sport, active recreation or physical activity
- deliver project funding in one of Victoria's 48 regional and rural council areas.

Funding priorities for the 2024-25 period include:

- projects led by or involving people with disability in the decision-making process
- projects that address intersectionality and increase participation in communities or population groups with existing low levels of participation in sport and physical activity, including women and girls, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTQIA+ and older adults
- organisations located in areas identified with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage.



In this update, you can read about the results of our recently completed Social Return on Investment evaluation. Partnering with Think Impact, the evaluation looks at the change that has occurred for the women who live in our homes and the value of that change. This is compared to investment required to provide 122 homes owned by WPI in the 2022/23 financial year. We were thrilled with the results and it is rewarding to see the tangible difference our homes make for women, their children and government. ... I encourage you to read more at: [A5 SROI Report](#). Thank you to women who talked about changes in their lives since they accessed affordable homes with WPI.

In August and September we opened the doors to new homes for 28 women in Kensington in partnership with Local Residential, a leading Build to Rent Developer. WPI is delighted to work with Local to offer modern one and two-bedroom homes to women over 55, and key workers who are women and earning a moderate income. With several exciting affordable housing projects and partnerships in various stages of delivery, we are looking forward to opening more homes to vulnerable women and their families throughout 2025.

Please reach out to me, or the team, if you have any questions on how to get involved in our work. Thank you for your support of WPI and the women that we serve. I wish you all health and prosperity for 2025.

Warm Regards, Roberta Buchanan, CEO, Women's Property Initiatives

## Premier's Speech: Jacinta Allan re Commencement Of Treaty Negotiations

Today, marks the commencement of Treaty negotiations here in Victoria. ... At the same time, it also marks just another milestone on this journey. A much longer journey to make our state a better, fairer, kinder and stronger place – for all. That's at the heart of what Treaty is.

Today I wanted to begin by talking about what Treaty is not. And in doing so share with you what I have learnt from Aunty Eleanor Bourke. As she's said: *Treaty is not about blaming or shaming*. It's not about finger pointing. And it's not about pulling us backwards – or apart. It's about moving us forward, together. I thank you Aunty Eleanor, for continuing to teach us and guide us through your leadership with the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

This is our once in a generation opportunity to reset that relationship between our State – and those who've called the beautiful lands of Victoria home for tens of thousands of years. Home to the oldest continuous cultures on the planet. Treaty is our chance to build a stronger Victoria. A Victoria where Aboriginal people have a say over the policies and programs that impact their lives: like their healthcare, family's housing, kids' education, and the practice of their culture. To me, it just makes sense: when you listen to people, you get better outcomes. That's what Treaty is. A practical way to achieve practical change. ... From literacy to life expectancy. And across almost every measure and metric: Treaty works. ...

Like any negotiation – there'll be things we agree and at times, things we disagree on. And that's okay. This is a real, vital negotiation. We'll be negotiating how to give First Nations people a proper say over their families and communities. And how we can lay the foundations for a better future – for all of us. It's important that we get this right. And that we take the time to make sure we get it right. ...

I'd like to thank everyone, some for whom it has been a lifetime, for us getting to today, all those who bravely and selflessly attended hearings, made submissions and gave evidence to the Yoorrook Justice Commission's truth-telling process. Your words and experiences, whilst difficult to hear, and even harder to recall, will form the foundation of Treaty going forward.

Aboriginal people have come to this process with an open and courageous heart. And today, I commit to you that we, the Victorian Government, will do the same.

### Understand the past, present and future of Treaty with Victoria's First Peoples.

'The technical term for treaty is two parties to come together and strike an understanding, a contract of sorts, and a promise of sorts. And a treaty incorporates peace, that's what it stands for' – Ringo Terrick, Wurundjeri Elder, Camp Sovereignty.

Victoria is on a path to Treaty with First Peoples – a path that could bring us closer together and mark a significant step towards reconciliation. As Victoria moves forward on the path towards Truth and Treaty, it is timely to reflect on our history, hear from Victorian Aboriginal communities and consider what the future may hold. In this exhibition, explore a historic collection of items related to the first and only known claim to 'treaty' in Australia, the Batman Treaty.



**The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)** welcomes the Senate's passage of the new *Aged Care Act*, a critical step towards embedding respect, equity and dignity into the aged care system. FECCA has long called for reforms that prioritise the rights of all older Australians and ensure no one is left behind due to cultural or linguistic barriers. This Act offers an opportunity to create a framework where culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) older people are treated with the same respect and dignity as everyone else.

Peter Doukas OAM, Chair of FECCA, said: *"This is an important milestone in aged care reform, but the real work begins now. We must see implementation that delivers tangible, rights-based outcomes for all older Australians. That means ensuring the voices of CALD communities are heard and their needs represented at every level of aged care policy and service delivery."*

Mary Ann Baquero Geronimo, CEO of FECCA, added: *"To truly realise the potential of this Act, we must focus on three key areas: providing support to navigate the aged care system, educating CALD older persons about their rights and available services, and ensuring the sustainability of smaller yet effective providers serving CALD communities."*

FECCA has advocated for an aged care system that is inclusive, culturally competent, and reflective of the multicultural fabric of Australian society, emphasising that true reform will only be achieved if the Act's implementation leads to:

- Accessible and culturally sensitive aged care services for all, irrespective of background.
- Strong engagement with CALD communities to inform policy and ensure inclusive practices.
- Robust oversight to guarantee the rights of all older Australians are upheld.

FECCA will work with the Federal Government and stakeholders to ensure these principles remain at the forefront of reform.

**SIGN UP: FECCA Healthy Ageing & Aged Care News**



Trust for Nature and Bush Heritage Australia warmly invite you to join the 14th annual Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast on Friday 28 February 2025.

Corinne Proske, Trust for Nature, will be joining forces with Bush Heritage Australia CEO Rachel Lowry to MC the event. We're excited to be moving to a new, larger venue so we can bring together even more of the environment sector for a morning of inspiration, networking and celebrating women in conservation. We hope you can join us in person or online!

[FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER >>](#)

**Date: Friday 28 February 2025**

**Time: 7.30am for 8am start until 11.00am, Venue: Grand Ballroom - Sofitel Hotel, 25 Collins Street, Melbourne,**

**Tickets: *Standard* - \$118 Individual | \$1100 Table of ten; *Not for Profit* - \$105 Individual | \$1000 Table of ten**

***Virtual tickets* - \$10 Individual registration; \$150 Stream the event at your workplace**



**Keynote Speaker, Teagan Shields, 'Empowering Aboriginal-led Traditional Knowledge for biodiversity conservation in Australia.** Teagan Shields is a proud Arabunna descendant from Lake Eyre country, who grew up in Newcastle, Awabakal country. For the past 15 years, Teagan has worked in strategic policy reform, community engagement and biodiversity conservation across NSW, ACT and WA, as well as at an international level as an ambassador to the World Indigenous Network.

Teagan is currently undertaking a PhD with the University of Melbourne; Investigating systemic changes to empower Indigenous Land and Sea Managers in biodiversity conservation, and is an Indigenous Research Fellow at Curtin University, working under the Resilient Landscape Hub of NESP. She is also Deputy Chair of the Indigenous Advisory Committee, and serves on the Biodiversity Council, the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance and the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists.

**Open House Melbourne presents *Making Home***, a series of talks and tours that helps public audiences better understand social and affordable housing. You're invited to tour *Make Room* with representatives from Unison Housing, City of Melbourne, cohealth and 12C Architects to hear about how this ground breaking, adaptive reuse project represents an innovative and collaborative approach to deliver successful supportive housing.

**Saturday 18 January                      Tours run 11am, 11.30am, 12pm + 12.30pm**

**\$7 booking fee                              Book now**



**NCWV acknowledges all our volunteers and others in our society: Happy International Volunteer Day!**

**December 5: International Volunteer Day (IVD)**, is held each year on 5 December which celebrates the vital role volunteers play in our community. Happy International Volunteer Day, and a big thank you to all our volunteers!

It is a unique chance for volunteers and organisations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values, and to promote their work within their communities. For more information visit the [UN website](#)

## National Council of Women of Victoria Meeting Dates for 2025

Month	Date	Day	Meeting Type	Time	Method
February	2nd	Sunday	Pioneer Women's Ceremony, Pioneer Women's Garden Kings Domain	11:30–2:00	In person
February	6 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meeting	12:15	tbc
February	17 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
February	20 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
March	6 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	tbc
March	17 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
March	20 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
April	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc
April	14 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
April	17 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
May	1 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	May Forum & Council Meeting	12:00	Zoom/Ross Hse
May	12 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
May	15 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
June	5 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc
June	16 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
June	19 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
July	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	tbc
July	14 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
July	17 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHS
August	7 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members Annual Meeting; & Council Meeting	11:00, 12:15	tbc
August	18 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
August	21 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
September	4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	AGM	12:15	Zoom/Ross Hse
September	15 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
September	18 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
October	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc
October	13 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	tbc
October	16 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	6 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	tbc
November	20 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	27 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Annual Luncheon	12:00	tbc
December	4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	tbc