

Acknowledgement

National Council of Women of Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Victoria and recognises our PO Box has been closed.

NCWV MAY FORUM, Thursday May 2, 12:00pm, Ross House, 247/251 Flinders Lane

Domestic and Family Violence, a National Epidemic

We all have a role to play in ending family violence (DFV). We hope our Forum can develop a shared understanding of actions being taken, how policy can be reformed, services improved and how effective strategies can be embedded in practice and innovation across the DFV sector.



Tania Farha, CEO Safe and Equal, which is a peak body for specialist DFV services providing support to victim survivors in Victoria. Their vision is a world beyond family and gender violence, where women, children and people from marginalised communities are safe and respected.

The organisation specialises in family and gender-based violence across the continuum, from primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery. Tania has held executive positions across Victorian Departments of Justice and Community Safety; Premier and Cabinet, including as CEO of the former Office of Prevention and Women's Equality.

Tania worked at UN Women for over four years as a policy specialist in the Ending Violence Against Women Section and worked for Victoria Police for over nine years to improve its responses to family violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

Tania spoke to us about Family Violence Reform in Victoria and Learnings from the Royal Commission recommendations. Tania discussed how family violence has been front-and-centre in the public discourse lately, which is in response to the rising rates of women being killed by violent perpetrators across the country. So far this year, one woman is being killed every four days in Australia. This is a deeply distressing national crisis – and the time for messages and platitudes from our leaders is well and truly over.

The way we approach family violence has changed significantly, driven by the Royal Commission, reforms and investments in the way Victoria prevents and responds to family violence. But the number of people still experiencing family violence and the shocking number of deaths demonstrates that there is still a long way to go. The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) ensures services are effectively identifying, assessing and managing family violence risk. Organisations that are authorised through regulations, and those providing funded services, must align their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools to the MARAM Framework.

Tania gave an overview of where we have come from in Victoria, what we've learned and what still needs to happen for us to realise the vision of a Victoria free from family and gender-based violence. When we talk about what action is needed, it's important to remember there is no one quick 'solution' to end family and gender-based violence – if there was, it would've been solved by now. What we need is a fully-funded and comprehensive response, one that takes time, investment and deep levels of engagement from everybody and continued focus from government and decision makers.

We know that without well-funded, accessible support services for all people who experience family violence, taking into account cultural differences and working with Aboriginal people, a focus on housing and recovery efforts, and continued investment in prevention initiatives, we are going to see more tragic, preventable deaths. Tania spoke of 'Orange Doors', hubs with access to many services. These are not quick or easy fixes. They will take time, but that time needs to start now, and needs to start at the top - with meaningful commitment from all our leaders – both state and federal - that goes beyond words or platitudes. Identifying risk before it escalates is essential, calling out inappropriate behaviour.

Tania discussed **Are You Safe At Home?**, a national awareness raising initiative developed by Safe and Equal which is designed to help people in the community understand what family violence can look like, how they can ask someone in their life if they're experiencing abuse, and how they can appropriately offer support. This week is the annual **Are You Safe At Home? Day, on Friday 10 May**. The message of this year's **Are You Safe At Home? Day** is **'Ask, Listen, Believe.'** With those three simple steps, people in the community can start to get involved and be a part of the change we need to see. Ending family violence is everybody's responsibility – and we will never address this issue in the long-term without everybody's commitment and action.

Please visit www.areyousafeathome.org.au for more information on how to get involved on **May 10**.



Rena Francesco, Director, Strategy, Policy and Reform - Family Violence Command at [Victoria Police](#), a role she has performed since November 2021.

Rena has been driving reform across Victoria Police (Crime Command, Gender Equality and Inclusion Command and Family Violence Command) since 2007. Her key area of focus has been the specialisation of Victoria Police’s responses to sexual offences through the establishment of the Sexual Offences and Child-Abuse Investigation Teams (**SOCIT**) across the organisation. She has also helped lead Victoria Police’s response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Rena spoke about the actions and strategies the Command leads to improve police responses to family violence, sexual offences and child abuse.

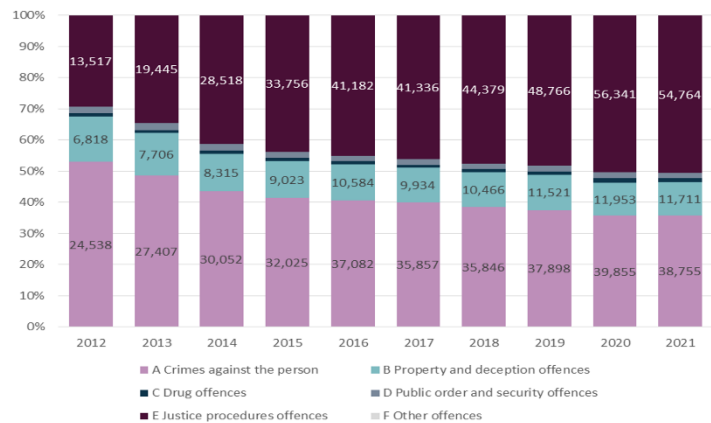
Rena outlined the Family Violence Response Model in Victoria Police and the Code of Practice for Family Violence. This includes a risk assessment aligned to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) to inform police actions at each family violence incident. These include criminal, civil and referral options. Risk assessment includes a specific focus on children.

Victoria Police now has 21 specialist FV Investigation Units (FVIUs) to investigate serious FV and manage high risk, complex and repeat cases; FV Liaison Officers in every 24hour station; FV Court Liaison Officers; 27 Sexual Offences and Child Abuse investigation Teams and 21 FV Training Officers.

Some SOCITs and FVIUs are located in Multidisciplinary Centres (MDC)s which are buildings that are deliberately located away from police stations and designed to provide a safe, welcoming and confidential environment for victims of sexual offences. They are a ‘one stop shop’ providing safe and discreet access to Specially trained police investigators; Counselling and advocacy support; Video audio recorded evidence (VARE) rooms where child victim survivors and adults with cognitive impairments can provide their statement to police; Clinic rooms where victims can have their general health and wellbeing needs assessed by qualified community health nurses; Treatment programs for children and young people up to 18 years of age who are displaying or engaging in sexually abusive behaviours; Forensic medical suites (at some locations) to enable forensic examinations..

Most years have recorded an increase in reports (average of 7.5% per year). However on 4 occasions a slight decrease was recorded (2003, 2005, 2017 and 2021). Increases in reporting are likely due to greater community awareness of FV surrounding the Royal Commission into Family Violence (2015-2016). The spike in family violence reporting that occurred in 2020 can be attributed to the COVID-19 lockdown. The increase of family violence over the past five years is 21.5% (2017 vs 2021).

The three most common categories occurring in the FV context are **Crimes against the person, Justice procedure offences** and **Property and deception offences**. In the FV context, the **Justice Procedure** category is primarily made up of offences relating to contraventions of intervention orders or family violence safety notices. In 2012, **Crimes against the person** made up just over 50% of all FV related offences - in 2021, 50% of all FV offences were **Justice Procedures**. Although there is an increase in the raw numbers across these categories, **Justice Procedures** continue to increase as a proportion of FV related crime. Intimate partner family violence (IPV), has consistently accounted for almost two thirds of IPV reports over the past ten years. IPV between current partners was the most common in 2012, however former partners continue to increase in prevalence since then, in 2021 former partners were the most common relationship. The number of incidents between former partners has increased, particularly over the past three years. The number of reports of FV, IPV has increased since 2012 by 84.5% (18,424 to 33,985); as a proportion of all reports, it has held steady at just over a third of all reports.



Change is happening! Significant changes across the last 10 years of action and reform across both Victoria Police and the broader system has seen continued growth in reporting and action. Where will Victoria Police target its future efforts? The organisation will deliver a new strategy on family violence, sexual offences and child abuse later this year which introduces an outcomes focus in relation to victim, perpetrators, children and young people and organisational capability and capacity through a focus on its people, to support police to consistently deliver high-quality responses in a sector-wide approach.



Some of those watching on ZOOM, 16 attended in person.

Dr Deborah Towns OAM spoke on the Elsie Conference: Elsie, Past, Today, Future



Today inspired by the Elsie Conference I will talk about past, current events and look to the future, related to Domestic and Family Violence (DV). Unfortunately, it's not a new topic of concern to the NCWV as two of our earliest members from a century ago were vocal and practical about DV and Sexual Harassment. Terminology was different as it reflected the cultural environment. Termed 'moral danger', 'battered wives', 'wife beating' and so on. The Elsie conference celebrated 50 years since the first 'Elsie' Refuge was established in Glebe, NSW in 1974. Today there are 800 around Australia. An early one was established in Geelong by the local Women's Electoral Lobby when my mother Margaret Kyle was convenor. At the Elsie conference 50 women were awarded Elsies for their women's refuge work so if I may I would like to take the opportunity today to celebrate my mother's work towards drawing attention to DV in the early 1980s and in the establishment of Geelong's first women's refuge.

Sexual harassment, sexism and bullying in schools and its relationship to DFV is not new. In 1985 when I was the manager of the Equal Opportunity Unit in the Education Department of Victoria we gained government funding and employed a team to develop *Sexual Harassment out in the Open: a kit to assist in combatting sexual harassment in schools*. Every government secondary school received a free copy with guidelines from the Director General of Education advising how principals, teachers and parents could use it to bring about cultural change in schools. That was 40 years ago. Was it acted upon? Today schools are expected to run 'Respectful Relationship' activities. However recent events suggest that not all schools are able to provide a respectful and safe environment for girls and women teachers. This article based on current research demonstrates what was found. "*Make me a sandwich*": our survey's disturbing picture of how some boys treat their teachers", was published last week <https://theconversation.com/make-me-a-sandwich-our-surveys-disturbing-picture-of-how-some-boys-treat-their-teachers-228891> Girls and female teachers were subjected to sexist and abusive language. Male students ganged up to physically intimidate women teachers. They were described as 'menacing'.

'*Make me a sandwich*' is an internet meme men employ to annoy, insult, or dismiss women - the stereotype that women belong only in domestic spaces, such as the kitchen. We also know that women and girls continue to be represented in children's literature and school readers in less numbers than men and boys and more often in domestic and servile roles. Such representation deems women and girls as less important and promotes male entitlement. Accessibility of pornography to young people is a problem. These are examples of why we must look at the whole of society when we consider how to make the world a safe place for girls and women.

The Elsie Conference... Note that the NCWV's April newsletter had my comprehensive article about the two-day event held at the Sydney University of Technology (UTS). Professor Anne Summers organised the conference and has recently been appointed as professor of Domestic and Family Violence in UTS's Business Faculty. Why the Business faculty? Well it's recognised that DV cost the economy billions. Being recognised as a business issue is good. It's more than that of course but if Anne and UTS can solve it, that's wonderful. The conference began with an address by the Prime Minister. He calls DV a national endemic and aims to solve it in "ten years". He can be watched here [Video | Facebook](#) It was wonderful to be with 500 women, most of whom stayed to the very end. Rare for a conference. The display of 50-year-old posters told a story. Advertising 'Reclaiming the Night' from decades ago, another suggested there was 'a war against women'. We learnt that women can be financially and verbally abused, not always physically. TV personality Ray Martin, the dinner's speaker, spoke about being a 'survivor', growing up in an abusive household, leaving home as a young man.

I found so many matters disturbing, but the technology/facilitated abuse workshop showing this growing form of abuse was nightmarish as it often involves young men and it's so hard to prove. Only last weekend we were subjected to *The Age* highlighting how Smart Refrigerators and many other devices can be set up to abuse and harass women. The program: https://www.elsieconference.com.au/files/ugd/bfe391_07912bbc56f54800aeed1a1dd22f29d1.pdf

One of the many ideas discussed to bring about change was how the media approach DV and women's murder. Women's and children's murders are usually sensationalised rather than showing respect for the murdered woman, who is not the criminal and is innocent. It could look at men's behaviour and feelings of entitlement, use of drugs and alcohol, perpetrator's jealousy, feelings of powerlessness, patterns of behaviour, general lack of respect for women, so women's concerns not taken seriously. It is recommended that murdered and violated women should be humanised to develop empathy and sympathy. Linking considerations of gender, race and class as root causes is recommended.

Anne and others have previously provided advice and ideas for future activities to support DV victims and their families and develop preventative measures. One is to provide longitudinal studies about the perpetrators. Generally, we know more about the murdered woman than the murderer.

In her report *The Choice. Violence or Poverty* which can be downloaded and is well worth reading, Anne describes domestic violence and its consequences, including recommendations: <https://www.violenceorpoverty.com/> These are limited to reforms and changes directly addressed in this report that would see an immediate amelioration of the poverty currently experienced by single mothers. The findings illustrate unambiguously that around 50% of single mothers escaping violent relationships receive incomes that are clearly inadequate, which is so incontrovertible that the only issue for government ought to be how quickly, and by how much, payments for single parents can be increased.

These recommendations do not address the wider issues of other forms of financial and/or in-kind support for women escaping violent relationships, nor the much bigger issues of a major overhaul of the social welfare system or the urgent reforms needed to address the inadequacies of the Jobseeker scheme whose payment amount is insubstantial; moreover, the financial support for recipients falls further relative to the situation of pensioners and allowees every six months because of CPI-only, rather than wage, indexation. **However, they include recommendations for improvement in data collection so that policy can be informed by more comprehensive information than is currently the case.**

The Australian Government should:

1. change the eligibility rules so that the Parenting Payment Single (PPS) allowance is available to all single parents until their youngest child reaches 16 or is still in high school;
2. increase the PPS allowance rate so it is equal to the age pension single rate;
3. change the indexation and benchmarking of the PPS so they align with how pensions are indexed; that the PPS would equal 27.7% of male total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE) rather than the current benchmark of 25% of MTAWE;
4. abolish the Mutual Obligations requirements and provide optional job-training and job-seeking opportunities;
5. abolish the Parents Next scheme with immediate effect and investigate replacing it with a proven effective voluntary scheme for preparing young parents for employment;
6. instigate an immediate scoping study into the feasibility of establishing a comprehensive longitudinal study whose focus included the behaviour of perpetrators, including financial and technological abuse in addition to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, which includes all population groups including, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are currently not including in the PSS. This report and its recommendations would have benefited immensely from longitudinal data that supplemented the invaluable cross-sectional data provided by the Personal Safety Survey 2016.

A recent article <https://theconversation.com/the-long-history-of-gender-violence-in-australia-and-why-it-matters-today-119927> drew attention to the publication, *Gender Violence in Australia: Historical Perspectives*, by Alana Piper and Ana Stevenson. It stated, '*Violence against women is often represented as a timeless and universal phenomenon, suggesting the problem is too large to fix, or only the worst abuses are worth our attention.*' The authors explained that understanding the history of gender violence can undermine this belief, providing many examples of past injustice and improvement too. In the past apparently men could be charged with 'wife assault' but wives would contest the punishment of going to jail as he was the breadwinner. Early frontier violence led sexual and economic exploitation of indigenous women. Reformers over previous decades changed laws and attitudes that helped women. The age of consent was raised. Marital rape was only made illegal in all Australian states by 1992!

Data that shows how DV and sexual harassment plays out in Australian society is significant. The Australian economy is estimated to lose \$13.6 billion a year (cost of government services and lost productivity), due to DV and sexual harassment overwhelmingly committed by men. Why don't men want to avert this loss of revenue? Longitudinal data discussed above was suggested by Anne Summers. Her recent reports discussed above are important. However, *The End of Equality, work babies and women's choices in 21st Century Australia* published by Anne is worth another read. In it she shows how women's progress towards equality is being undermined. This book was published 20 years ago and is relevant today. She addressed the lack of equal pay, childcare problems, women choosing not to have children, increasing sexual harassment, and less than 10 of senior executives being women, a figure that has not shifted. She provides advice on how women can "Act Up" to bring change. '*Historical gains against gender violence in Australia only occurred because of the willingness of some to stand against complacency. The problem will not be solved by the simple march of time. Action is needed.*'

ADVISER NEWS

Education Adviser: Pam Hammond

Early Years: VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority) wants insights from parents and children help to shape learning framework. The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) sets out outcomes and practices principles to guide early years professionals and teachers in their work with families and their children from birth through the first 8 years of a child's life. The framework is currently being revised in collaboration with parents, legal guardians, and their children, to help shape the development of VCAA resources to support its implementation.

The VCAA is using an online survey to capture family/legal guardian voices, and their children's voices, to inform revision of the VEYLDF and support resources. The survey is now live. It has two parts.

Part 1: Family Voices. Engages the child's parents/legal guardian and collects information around what is important to them about their child's health, wellbeing, learning and development.

Part 2: Children's Voices. Engages parents/legal guardian together with their child. Whilst engaging in play, their child is asked a series of questions around what is important to them about their health, wellbeing, learning and development.

The VCAA values the voice of the child as an instrumental influence on the decisions made for their education and wellbeing. We are providing a unique opportunity for children to tell us about their experiences at their early years setting and school in relation to the key concepts in the VEYLDF.

We need to get the best outcome for the revision of the VEYLDF. Listening to the views of parents/legal guardians and their children will deliver insights that will be used to help shape the revised VEYLDF and the development of resources to support its implementation. Accessing the [VEYLDF Revision website](#). Access [the survey](#)

State education Inquiry hearing dates: [Hearings \(parliament.vic.gov.au\)](https://parliament.vic.gov.au)

The Inquiry is looking at trends in student learning outcomes, disparities associated with geography and socio-economic disadvantage; the state of the teaching profession, including the administrative burden on teachers; and student wellbeing, including measures to address poor mental health, school refusal and student disengagement. The Committee is considering best practice models and educational settings used to improve student learning outcomes and wellbeing.

The parliamentary inquiry will hold two days this week in Melbourne. You **can watch the live broadcast of the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee from 9 am on both Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 May.**

Witness transcripts from earlier hearings are published online. The report is due to be tabled in parliament by 15 Oct 2024.

Migration Adviser: June Anderson

Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) has a 50-year history and over 3000 membership/networking groups. They focus on mental health projects in the broad migrant community including women and men. There are many mental health issues with men as well as women, especially in male dominated cultures. Most family violence is against women and children due to men losing control or suffering mental health problems. Men's behaviour can impact on the whole family (also on generations) in male-dominated societies with men as the role model (young people can be influenced and copy).



ECCV formed a focus group on multicultural mental health issues operating for the last two years (I am representing the Chinese community). The multicultural representatives regularly have roundtable discussions and provide information and advocacy issues of the community. ECCV works in the mental health sector through the Multicultural Mental Health Network which was launched in 2022. The priority areas of the Network are: to promote mental health needs of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds through evidence-informed, strategic approach to policy and system design; provide a platform for agencies, researches, clinical experts, advocates, people with lived experiences to share information.

The 74 recommendations from ECCV workshops and discussions, have resulted in ECCV receiving \$230k for this year to implement some of the projects. At this stage I am not sure about the details of those projects. I am focused on Asian Migrant women and family issues, through their life and lived experiences, trying to advocate some strategies that can be implemented to prevent violence happening in the family, community and society.

NCVM may consider DR Judy Tang (Victoria Multicultural Commissioner) as speaker about multicultural mental health issues.

OTHER NEWS



RANZCOG (The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists) Women's Health Summit 2024 Ignites Call to Action Against Systemic Gender Bias in Healthcare. [now available online](#)

RANZCOG was honoured to present the 2024 Women's Health Summit on 14 March at Parliament House alongside the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Honourable Ged Kearney. The Summit brought together a range of experts in the field of women's health, both health professionals and those with lived experience, to work together to make progress on our shared goals of improving access, care and outcomes for women, empowering women, making our health care system safe, and translating research to practice. [Start watching:](#)

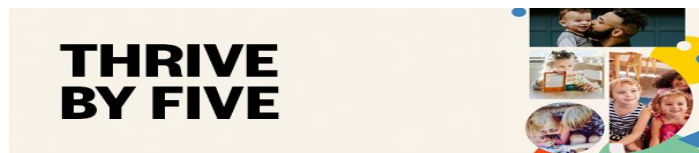
[Opening of Women's Health Summit 2024](#) 74:34

[Session 1: Improving Access, Care and Health Outcomes for Women - WHS 2024](#) 48:29

[Session 2: Empowerment - WHS 2024](#) 33:27

[Panel: Health Ministers - RANZCOG WHS 2024](#) 26:42

[Session 3: Ensuring our Health System is Safe for All Women - WHS 2024](#) 36:33



There's a big moment in federal politics approaching that could have a huge impact on families and early childhood educators... In just a few weeks, Treasurer Chalmers will hand down the Federal Budget

The reason this moment is so big? It's an opportunity for

the Federal Government to take two important steps towards creating a truly universal early education and care system by:

- **Locking in the urgently needed wage rise for early childhood educators** – addressing the workforce crisis in the sector, which is critical for ensuring every child has access to high quality education and care ;
- **Abolishing the Child Care Activity test** – allowing 39,620 women, including single mothers, casual workers, and low-income workers to choose to return to work or increase their hours.

But if Treasurer Chalmers is going to take these two steps in the Federal Budget, he needs to hear from everyday families, early childhood educators and others - he needs to know that these are two key measures people in Australia want to see. Your voice can seriously help get these measures over the line.

There were reports in the media just last week that a wage rise for educators is in final stages of negotiation. This is a really encouraging sign, but it's not locked in yet. We also know that Treasurer Chalmers will be looking for ways to alleviate the cost-of-living pressure on families – and removing the Activity Test will do just that for so many families, allowing them to return to work, or increase their hours. **So we know that there's a serious chance that these two measures will be included in the Budget – and that together, we can put pressure on the Treasurer to lock them in.**

[Will you take a moment now to send Treasurer Chalmers an email, asking him to take these two important steps in the Federal Budget to fix the early education and care system? Click here now.](#) Together, we can create a better future for Australian families and make sure all children have the chance to thrive. Thank you, Jay Weatherill, CEO



EXHIBITION: MELBOURNE'S STORIED LANEWAYS

We all have our favourite Melbourne laneway and, for this exhibition, curator David Thompson has chosen some of his favourites which reveal intriguing Melbourne stories. When we think of today's gussied-up, tourist-friendly laneways like Guilford Lane and Hosier Lane, it is hard to imagine that a mere 50 years ago the laneways were workaday places full still of small factories and light industry. This exhibition has grown out of the RHSV's latest publication which is an updated version of historian Weston Bate's *Essential but Unplanned: Melbourne's Laneways* which came out 30 years ago in 1994.

**NCWV Geelong's Annual Luncheon – Mon, 17 June; RSVP: Helen Rodd 0400 983 037
Money raised to be donated to ROAR, a 12-week support for women survivors.**



The line-up for the **Free + Equal Conference on 6-7 June**: The Conference will include 12 engaging sessions and events over two days with a diverse line-up of more than 60 eminent experts, thought leaders, social justice advocates and community heroes. Delegates will learn about the positive change and opportunities a Human Rights Act will deliver, as well as how to activate community support and engagement for this landmark reform.

Sessions will also focus on a range of key human rights issues including: enhancing Australia's anti-discrimination laws; preventing racism; improving children's rights/youth justice; exploring the intersection of business, technology and human rights; and marking 40 years of Australia's ground-breaking Sex Discrimination Act. See our [Speakers](#) page.

Venue: The Hyatt Regency in Sydney's central business district. Accommodation packages are available.

More Dads Groups to Support Victorian Fathers

The State Government is helping new Victorian dads feel supported and connected – awarding \$2 million in grants to 18 community organisations and local councils to establish more Dads Groups across the state. One recipient is the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Cooperative (VACCA). For groups like VACCA, culturally safe programs for Aboriginal fathers are crucial, with the organisation using its grant to deliver dads' groups across 12 local government areas. It will be focused on inclusivity for all dads of Aboriginal children – Aboriginal dads, non-Aboriginal dads and carers, to encourage a healthy family life, such as taking an active role in caregiving to help promote bonding and gender equality in parenting. The groups will share evidenced-based information with new dads on early childhood health and development, strategies for self-care, and an increased awareness of their perinatal mental health.

Face-to-face and online sessions will be offered, while dedicated support for rainbow families, and tailored support for families with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds will be available to ensure every dad feels heard.

Each session will be open for up to 20 participants, for multiple sessions each year. They will also host a community day at the end of each program cycle for all participants and their wider families and communities.

Safe Transport Victoria - Digital Driver Licences

Following a successful trial in Ballarat, [digital driver licences](#) will soon be available in the [myVicRoads](#) app to all Victorian full licence holders. This new option will provide a convenient, secure way to verify your identity, confirm your licensing status, and prove your age, it will also be available on [Service Victoria app](#). **Here's what you need to know to get ready:**

1. **Set up your accounts:** Start by creating a myVicRoads or Service Victoria account, if you haven't already. Then, download the Service Victoria app to access your digital license.
2. **Keep carrying your physical license:** While VicRoads rolls out digital licenses statewide, you must continue to carry your physical license with you when driving.
3. **Stay informed:** VicRoads are committed to making this transition as smooth as possible, recognising the adjustments required. Digital licenses are a new feature for Victoria, so if you encounter any issues or have questions, you can always check the VicRoads and Service Victoria websites or contact our support team.

Caroline Chisholm. She was the friend, the safe person to turn to when things were not quite right for the many immigrants who came to Australia to change their luck and build a better life.

“Advance Australia” *Caroline Chisholm*, 1852. Painted by A C Hayter; [H15493](#)



Caroline arrived in Sydney for the first time, September 1838 accompanied by husband, Captain Chisholm, and their two young sons. What she found there was troubling. At the time there were two systems of immigration: the Government System and the Bounty System. The latter was so-called because the Government paid a ‘bounty’ for every immigrant within a certain standard whom they landed in Australia. Bounty agents were paid to travel through the UK urging people to emigrate. Life in the colonies was painted in glowing colours, whose object was to induce large numbers to emigrate, regardless of suitability, or likelihood of adapting themselves to colonial conditions. So, upon arriving to Australia these people learnt that there were no provisions put in place to receive them.

The saddest thing was the large numbers of girls who left their homes in search for that glowing life painted by the agents. By the 1840s there were hundreds of girls and young women – homeless – wandering the streets of Sydney. Once Caroline understood the situation, she started to act, working tirelessly towards helping and guiding the immigrants. She found positions for girls and sheltered many of them in her home. In January 1841 she approached the Governor and Lady Gipps and the proprietors of the *Sydney Herald* and others, with a plan for a girls’ home. [State Library Victoria catalogue](#).

Her next concern was to disperse the unemployed into the country, sending out hundreds of circulars, franked by Governor Gipps, to small farmers, police magistrates, clergymen and other people of influence to ask them about demand for labour in their country communities. Thanks to Caroline’s efforts, resting stages and employment agencies could be found in a dozen rural centres. In 1846 she sailed back to England. Here she fought to get help for the wives and children of immigrants or convicts still serving their punishment in Australia, to bring them to Australia and reunite families. She was a strong believer that families needed to stay together as the only way in which a society would move forward.

She returned to Australia in 1854 – to Victoria which was now a separate colony. She wanted to visit the goldfields, to see how people lived and what the conditions were. She’d heard many stories, and was agreeably surprised to find ‘such a fine body of intellectual men’ on the fields. But was concerned that most diggers had wives and children back home and the cost of bringing them over was out of reach and it was difficult for them to secure land on which to settle with their families. Caroline considered that the lack of accommodation could be fixed by establishing second-class hotels at several points along the way to the diggings. The sheds were to be built a day’s march from each other at Essendon, The Gap, Gisborne, Keilor, Keilor Plains, the Black Forest, Woodend, Carlsruhe, Malmesbury and Elphinstone. Caroline was to manage the society which organised the shelters. By November 1855 the shelters were ready for reception. The shelters were a success, enduring for another 50 years, but no others were built.

She changed lives, she saved lives. Her efforts made a great difference to the way Australia was receiving and caring for its newest citizens: the immigrants. Her work led to bills and laws being passed and changed so that people from all over the world would be able to settle here and build better lives.

Chinese Heritage Books and Characters: Xin Jin Shan Chinese Library, 200 Sturt Street, Ballarat Central, Victoria; **10:00am-5:00pm; Wednesday-Sunday only until May 18**

This free event displays more than 50 items, the first time the City of Ballarat has exhibited these collections to the public. Since the 1840s, Australian society has benefited greatly from Chinese immigrants from all over the world, and City of Ballarat is one of the most popular cities to Chinese immigrants. In a recent census, 5% of the Australian population identified as having Chinese ancestry. It’s important to introduce Chinese heritage and stories to Australian society to know about the treasures of Chinese culture. As a library, we would like to display interesting stories to the public and create friendly bonds.

<https://r.showmine66.com/item/452b9cac-a9f9-49a3-9be0-3a1ac16ef47b>



Celebrating 50 years of the Victorian Heritage Register

Help build the Statue of VIDA GOLDSTEIN

The City of Melbourne is creating a series of commemorative statues of women to narrow the gender gap in statues across the City. Currently there are only ten out of 580 statues in the city to celebrate real women from Melbourne's history – that's less than two per cent.

The first in the series is VIDA GOLDSTEIN. *“Vida Goldstein was a remarkable Australian, internationally renowned in her day as an influential political campaigner and strategist.”* Vida never managed to win a seat in Parliament, but it is fitting that she will stand strong and upright in the civic landscape, her legacy permanently honoured by this statue. *“If it's true that you can't be what you can't see, this statue will be a concrete reminder to Victoria's girls and boys that active participation in democracy can change the world.”* Clare Wright OAM Renowned historian and author, and Independent Chair of the Advisory Board to the City of Melbourne

YOU CAN DONATE TODAY TO SUPPORT THE MAKING OF THE VIDA STATUE.

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is working with the City of Melbourne to accept donations on behalf of the Melbourne Art Trust.

[DONATE HERE](#)

The Statue needs \$250,000 to be completed.

Find out about Vida Goldstein and [City of Melbourne's statues of women.](#)



In April 1985, the historic Royston House in Flinders Lane was purchased and renamed Ross House. After extensive renovations (funded by the State Government, grants from philanthropic trusts and corporate donations), the five-storey building

was opened in 1987 and immediately began serving the needs of a multitude of community organisations. With ownership transferred to the Ross House Association in 2011, the Association achieved full independence and became a community asset in every possible sense. www.rosshouse.org.au

Ross House is centrally located at 247- 251 Flinders Lane in the heart of Melbourne that offers resources to a diverse range of self-help and small community and environment groups. Ross House operates as a not-for-profit and is self-managed by its members, providing a dynamic working model of the community in action.

We provide affordable and central office space, meeting rooms and resources to self-help and small community groups committed to social justice and environmental sustainability. The Ross House building is currently home to over 50 tenant groups and over 20 non-tenant members, ranging from one or two persons, all volunteer operations, to those with numerous paid staff and thousands of members. These include self-help groups, advocacy organisations, environment and conservation groups, cultural associations and many others working for social change.

Newly appointed Chair, Colin Neave stated *“Ross House is a unique institution. The vision of those who saw the potential of establishing such a facility should never be far from our thoughts. Given the importance of our history, I am honoured to join its Committee and contribute to its affairs by continuing its plans to strengthen it financially and preserve its mutually supportive culture. All of us who are part of Ross House are working to serve the Victorian and Australian community”.*



Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference 2024 registrations open!

Date: 11 - 14 June 2024; **Location:** Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Register for the AIFS Conference 2024 and hear from the experts about the big challenges and emerging issues for Australian families.

Secure your early bird tickets today by clicking on the button. [Register now](#)

A select number of scholarships are available. Click [here](#) to find out more.

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."

National Council of Women of Victoria Meeting Dates for 2024

Month	Date	Day	Meeting Type	Time	Method
May	16 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
June	6 th	Thursday	Combined Individual Members & Council Meetings	12:15	Zoom
June	17 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	Zoom
June	20 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
July	4 th	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	Zoom and RH
July	18 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
August	1 st	Thursday	Individual Members Annual Meeting; & Council Meeting	11:00, 12:15	Zoom and RH
August	9 th	Friday	My Vote My Voice	9:00	Parliament
August	12 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	Zoom
August	15 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
September	5 th	Thursday	AGM	12:15	Zoom and RH
September	19 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
October	3 rd	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	Zoom and RH
October	14 th	Monday	Standing Committee Meeting	16:30	Zoom
October	17 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	7 th	Thursday	Council Meeting	17:15	Zoom and RH
November	15 th	Thursday	Committee Meeting	10:00	RHSV
November	21-22	Thursday - Friday	NCWA Triennial Conference details to follow.		Adelaide SA
November	28 th	Thursday	Annual Luncheon	12:00	In person
December	5 th	Thursday	Individual Members & Council Meetings	11:00, 12:15	Zoom and RH