

# Newsletter

February 2019

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## 2019 FOCUS : Homeless Women of Canberra

At the end of 2018 We launched our intention to work on one focus project for the Council for 2019 year. The Council identified there was a gap in emergency shelter accommodation for women in the ACT experience homelessness. Specifically, this gap related to women who were not victims of domestic violence (DV) or those travelling with children.

At our October 2018 meeting Richard Griffiths from Safe Shelter was our guest speaker. Safe Shelter is a men's only shelter that runs over the winter months sharing three different church locations to split the nights to support men escaping the cold winter months. Richard spoke about the obstacles that stood in the way of safe shelters creation including those of not having shower or food facilities on ground, they

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worked around this by having the churches participating in the program either in walking distance or a bus route to those organisations that could facilitate the showers and food services.

This has worked for the men. Why not the women?

It's too hard! Women who are homeless must have children, or be escaping DV?

One of the fastest growing groups of homeless is women the over 55s. There are many reasons homelessness can occur for women including, but not limited to, : unaffordable housing, losing employment, lack of superannuation or spouse dying, or change in health circumstances.


Often it is hard to identify the number of homeless women as of the shame associated with it. A certain amount remain 'hidden' sleeping in cars or couchsurfing. Those sleeping rough may for safety reasons deliberately make themselves unseen for their own protection.

While NCW ACT recognises that there is no quick fix to 'homeless women' we did identify that we could make it more comfortable nightly for those experiencing sleeping rough by recommending and pursuing the implementation of, at a minimum, the equivalent of the of Safe Shelter that is currently being run for men.

What are we doing?

- NCW ACT is inviting guest speakers to our monthly meetings that work or have experience in the area of homelessness (as we were of Dec and Jan and had our Christmas party in November) Our next Speaker was Nicole Wiggins from the Early Morning Centre in Civic in February.  
[https://www.canberracityuca.org.au/html/early\\_morning\\_centre.html](https://www.canberracityuca.org.au/html/early_morning_centre.html)

Nicole's organisation supplies breakfast to those in need Mon-Fri. They also offer internet access and showers until 2pm 5 days a week. Nicole welcomes the idea of having a safe place for women to go at night. Nicole's experience suggested once you have been identified by the 'homeless system' in Canberra it is a 3 week wait for Men and a 2-3 MONTH wait for women before suitable accommodation can be found.



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- NCW ACT Exec member have been writing to MLAs including Yvette Berry Minister for Women and Minister for Housing and. Caroline Le Couteur ACT Greens..
  - NCW ACT Exec members have meet with Marcia Williams CEO Women's Health Matters, Marcia can provide case studies which will help with our communication with Minister Berry and has an extensive background in the women's issues related to the ACT. <http://www.wchm.org.au/>
  - Written to the Archbishop Prowse requesting help with identifying parishes willing to offer a site.
    - which has been responded to with a recommendation to meet with Anne Kirkwood of Catholic Care

Planned or upcoming meetings with

- Susan Helyar - ACT council of Social Services <https://www.actcoss.org.au/about>
- Richard Griffiths - Safe Shelter <https://www.facebook.com/safeshelteract/>
- Anne Kirkwood - CEO Catholic Care <https://catholiccare.cg.org.au/>
- Diane Kargas - Common Ground <https://www.commongroundcanberra.org.au/>

**Below is a short documentary film Hidden Women realised by the YWCA, highlighting the experiences of older women in housing.**

[Watch our launch video](#)

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## Member Participation

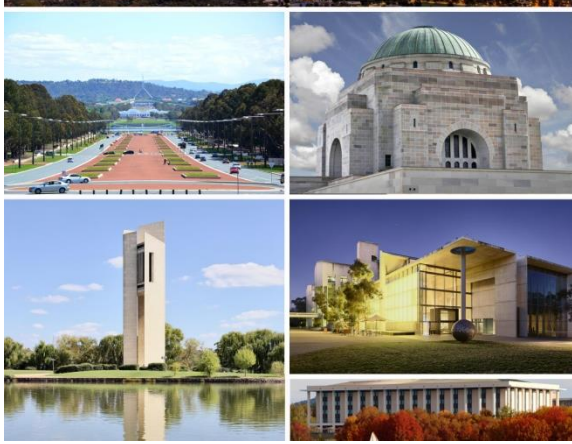
- Calling on members to participate ‘Promoting a positive message about being older’ ‘combating ageism’ and raising awareness of elder abuse. If you would like to work in a small committee of council members to facilitate some of the above notions - we want you! Please contact Wendy Rainbird [wpainbird@grapevine.com.au](mailto:wpainbird@grapevine.com.au) or myself [juanitaflett@bigpond.com](mailto:juanitaflett@bigpond.com)
- Files? Files? Where are the Files? Do you have any documentation relating to NCW ACT at your home? Anything you think may be relevant to be archived and even if you are not sure please contact Margaret Findlater-Smith [lilylangtry@inet.net.au](mailto:lilylangtry@inet.net.au)
- Wendy Saclier has offered to make and sell reusable fruit bags to help eliminate single use plastics if you would like to order some please contact Wendy at [wendysaclier@netspeed.com.au](mailto:wendysaclier@netspeed.com.au) for more information on reducing your waste please follow this link [Our Focus: War on Waste - ABC](#)

## Invite your Friends

The NCW ACT will be planning to hold a movie night fundraiser in May. Keep your eyes out for an invitation to attend in the near future. Any questions can be forwarded to Clare Caitcheon [clarecaitcheon@gmail.com](mailto:clarecaitcheon@gmail.com)

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## Around Canberra – Affiliate News



Soroptimist International Women's Day Breakfast will be held on the 8th of March in Deakin. Guest speaker will be Laura Auon Chair of the Canberra Multicultural Women's Forum. Tickets are still available at <https://charitydos.com.au/do/31169>

Check out what is happening with these links to affiliate organisations websites:

Zonta Canberra [Zonta Facebook](#)

YWCA [YWCA Website](#)

The Rotary Club of Woden [Woden Rotary Club](#)

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## Upcoming Meeting Dates and Guest speakers

Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Uniting Church Hall in Yarralumla.

Commencing with a light lunch for a \$5 donation and a guest speaker at 12.30pm.

March 14th - Alex Adorni - Dickson from Onlink - hub for Canberra Homeless

<https://www.onelink.org.au/>

April 11th - Susan Linfield - Clark Toora Womens Inc <https://www.toora.org.au/>

May 9th - TBA

June 13th - TBA

July 11th - TBA

I look forward to a positive and productive 2019, Thank you for your support

Juanita.

President NCW ACT

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Please Contact Newsletter Editor Kate Muir [katemuir@yless4u.com.au](mailto:katemuir@yless4u.com.au) with any submissions or suggestions for the Newsletter

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National Council of Women ACT

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