



# *National Council of Women ACT*

President's NEWSLETTER

May 2018 - Issue 336

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## **1. President's Report**

This will be my last newsletter to members (other than my Annual Report) as I will be handing over the reins of President to a new person in September.

I hope that the new ACT Council and membership will give the new President all their support as they have given me over the last four years.

Since the last newsletter NCW ACT has been very busy preparing for the Presidents' Lunch and the Seminar to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> July.

We have continued to hold our monthly meetings at the Yarralumla Uniting Church hall and have been greatly encouraged by the numbers of our members who have attended each meeting to hear some excellent speakers and to enjoy each other's fellowship.

In March Wendy Rainbird who is the ICW's (International Council of Women)



Environment Adviser spoke about some of her many activities as an environmental activist including her experiences at international meetings. Wendy is to be included on the ACT Honour Role of Women.

In April Cindy Richardson CEO of L'Arche Genesinet, and Eileen Glass, who established L'Arche in Canberra over 40 years ago, were our speakers. Eileen explained that L'Arche is an international organisation which began in France. She gave members a brief history of the origins of L'Arche and the various ways in which it adapts to different cultures. The ACT has five houses which house a community of people with, or without, intellectual disability, sharing life in the community. Cindy also highlighted the issues around adapting L'Arche to work with the NDIS.

This month Asha Clementi told us of her impressions of the CSW meeting in New York. She met a range of women from NGO organisations round the world. She found the problems of women in developing countries particularly concerning and noted how difficult it was for women in these areas to get an education. Asha commented that the majority of the government delegations were men. She also noted that many women who wished to attend the meeting were refused visas to enter the USA. A key phrase that she has taken away from the meeting is "If we're not at the table we're on the menu".

Preparations are well underway for our Seminar. Kate Muir has been working very hard to make this a successful event. We are hoping, as both our local and Federal parliaments are not sitting, that we can encourage some politicians to attend. It will also coincide with the school holidays and we shall reach out to all the high schools and provide a discount rate for students.

We held a successful Presidents' Lunch at the Canberra Southern Cross Club. My report on this event is later in the newsletter.

## **2. NCW(ACT) – A Bit of History**

In March 1888 the International Council of Women was founded. It was the first global NCO for the advancement of women all over the world.

Women leaders came together in Washington DC. There were 80 speakers and 49 delegates representing 53 women's organisations.

Australia is an accredited NGO with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. There have been members of the National Council of Women in the ACT who have attended such events at the UN.

The first gathering of women representatives of NSW women's organisations was called by Margaret Windeyer on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1896 and was attended by more than 200 women. This was the formation of the first NCW in Australia.

The National Council of Women was established in Canberra in 1939 when Canberra had unsealed roads, a phone was a luxury, bus services were limited

and access to shopping centres was also limited.

Any development in Canberra is incomplete if it fails to look at the contribution made by women, including NCW women.

NCW was critical in developing the Senior Citizens Centre in Turner.

In 1958 the Council organised a highly successful publicising of the pap smear test.

NCW has campaigned for equal pay for women, the need for a range of child care services, including occasional care and vacation centres. NCW worked to get women into decision-making.

### **3. Lady Cosgrove's Garden Party at Government House**

This event hosted by Lady Cosgrove at Government House and facilitated by NCWA was a very happy and relaxed. It was great to see so many NCW members from other states as well as CEOs of organisations which support NCW. The day could not have been more perfect and I am sure that all present were able to meet Lady Cosgrove.



### **4. NCW (A) Young Women's Subcommittee – Kate Wright**

The National Council of Women ACT young women's subcommittee held its first meeting earlier in the year and whilst attendance was low we are hoping to have more members engaged at our next meeting on 29 May 2018 as we have given more notice.

The subcommittee has been tasked with developing the mission statement for the NCW ACT and we will continue to work on this over the next few weeks to bring to the council.

The first workshop run by our SisterACT team, Ellen Scott and Caitlyn Williams, was great. Ten year 9-10 students from three different schools in Canberra participated in the first of three workshops as part of the pilot SisterACT program. The first workshop was on self-awareness and incorporated a MyCareerMatch quiz for the students. Anika Simek ran an interactive activity on self-awareness using the example of social media and the pressures it places on students. Anika provided useful tools and frameworks for the students to use in any difficult situations to overcome challenges in everyday life. SisterACT received very positive feedback from the both participants and teachers and we are looking forward to supporting Ellen and Caitlyn in the running of the next two workshops.

Our ACT subcommittee members, Anna O'Leary and Kate Crowhurst, have now started as administrators for the NCWA Facebook page and look forward to receiving content from all members. If you have an article, post or event you would like to have on the NCWA Facebook page please email [ncywa.comms@gmail.com](mailto:ncywa.comms@gmail.com).

## **5. Habitat Adviser's Report – Wendy Rainbird**

Wendy has provided a comprehensive report in a previous email. I have taken a small snippet from her report. I do urge you to read her more detailed report.

Exactly a decade ago in 2008, the Australian government committed to **an ambitious strategy** to halve national homelessness by 2020. Through stepped-up early intervention, better homelessness services and an expanded supply of affordable housing, the problem would be tackled with conviction. Instead, as succeeding governments regrettably abandoned the 2008 strategy, homelessness in Australia has been on the rise." **"Many policies, or policy failures, are implicated in these trends.**

Australia's homelessness problem is getting worse (Ref. Australian Homelessness Monitor):

- Homelessness in Australia is outpacing population growth.
- Rough sleeping levels are increasing.
- Severe overcrowding is the largest group.
- Older Australians increasingly experience homelessness.
- Indigenous Australians are overrepresented.
- There's increased demand for homelessness specialist services.
- The main reasons for seeking assistance are changing.

## **6. The Presidents' Lunch**

We held a successful Presidents' Lunch at the Canberra Southern Cross Club. Although the numbers were down on previous years the people who attended had an enjoyable time and were impressed with our speaker. Tammy Ven Dange, the CEO of the RSPCA in the ACT the title was **Walking in My Boots**. In future the new Council may look at holding this event in March so as to avoid clashes with Easter, school holidays and the budget meetings.



## **7. YWCA 'She Leads' Program**

NCW(ACT) supports the 'She Leads' Program and this is the report from the YWCA about the 2018 College Conference.

YWCA's fourth She Leads College Conference was held on Thursday 22 March, and welcomed 80 young women from 10 ACT and Canberra-region schools in years 11 and 12.

Attendees left the Conference with a greater understanding of leadership, how to affect change, how to identify positive and negative situations in their homes and communities, and gained new skills and tools to manage the myriad of issues that they face each day. Attendees were also exposed to a range of post-school career options through the speed networking session, providing them with an opportunity to explore their future options, and define their interests and aspirations.

The program included local MC, Codie Bell, two keynote speeches from Hani

Abdile and Karlie Noon, a panel featuring Hannah Gissane, Laura Piscopo, and FLTLT Esther Suh, a speed networking session including Engy Salah, Tahlia-Rose Vanisum, Ashleigh Streeter, Lavanya Kala, Ashley St George, Tomasina Purcell, Joanna Richards, and Elizabeth Bowler, and two workshops: Making Positive Change hosted by YWCA Canberra Youth Engagement team members, Annie-Lea Rowley and Aoife Herrick, and Leading Together to Achieve as One hosted by Defence Force Recruiting team members FLTLT Esther Suh and PO Alee-Marie Scarfone.

Feedback about the Conference was overwhelmingly positive. Of the 48 evaluation surveys received:

- 100 per cent strongly agreed (56.25) or agreed (43.75) that the Conference provided a safe space for women to discuss leadership
- 99 per cent strongly agreed (76.60) or agreed (21.28) that they would recommend the Conference to other young women
- 100 per cent of respondents rated the College Conference as excellent (75.00) or good (25.00)

YWCA Canberra gratefully acknowledges NCW's support in providing scholarships to ensure equal access to this one of a kind leadership event

**Note:** NCW ACT supports 20 college students to attend the She Leads College Conference and two young women to the She Leads Conference.

### **8. *YWCA Leading the Change Advocacy***

Last week, YWCA Canberra released our flagship research report, *Leading the Change: The Pathway to Gender Equality*, which sets a clear agenda to achieve gender equality in the ACT.

The report makes a series of recommendations across four areas that we believe would have the biggest impact on gender equality for ACT girls and women.

These areas are:

- a gender responsive government
- equality in the workplace
- a life free from violence, and
- housing security.

In the lead up to the release of the ACT Government's 2018-19 budget on Tuesday 5 June, we need your help to send a message that gender equality is achievable and should be a priority for the ACT Government.

Here's how you can help:

- download our Advocacy Toolkit from our website, which provides

everything you need to add your voice to our #LeadingtheChange campaign, and help us convince government and the community that our vision of an equal ACT is possible

- share your views and passion for gender equality by filming a through a short vox pop video and sending it to us via our Dropbox folder for us to share across our social media platforms
- contribute your thoughts to the conversation online by using the hashtag #leadingthechange, and sharing information about the campaign with your own networks.

We'd love to hear about your efforts to – please keep us in the loop by emailing [caf.team@ywca-canberra.org.au](mailto:caf.team@ywca-canberra.org.au).

We're excited to bring the YWCA Canberra community together to create social change for ACT girls and women, and ensure gender equality is at the centre of government decision making.

### **9. *NCW (ACT) Biennial Seminar 'Canberra- A Livable City for Whom?'***

As you know the biennial seminar is being held on the 18th July, 2018 and is called 'Canberra- A Livable City for Whom?' We have been very lucky to secure Professor Kate Auty, who is the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment and a Professorial Fellow with the University of Melbourne as our Keynote speaker. We have also been very lucky to get Jenny Mobbs, who is currently the Chief Executive Officer for the Council on the Ageing (ACT), and Helen Machalias, who is the Director, Communication, Advocacy and Fundraising YWCA. Handouts will be available for anyone at the next meeting for you to share with your groups and other interested parties. Several parties have expressed an interest in seeing our findings from this seminar. This is an important piece of work for our group for this year, so please encourage all and anyone interested to join us on the day.

### **10. *Office Bearers for 2017–2018***

- President: Helen Raymond
- Vice President Juanita Flett
- Secretary Laurayne Bowler
- Treasurer Clare Caitcheon
- Newsletter Editor Kate Muir
- Committee: Kate Wright  
Nadia Vanag  
Kate Crowhurst

## **11. Life Members**

- Mrs Julia BILES
- Mrs Coral FLEMING
- Mrs Monica GLENN OAM
- Mrs Jenny JARVIS
- Mrs Wendy SACLIER
- Ms Margaret FINDLATER-SMITH
- Mrs Margery SMYTH OAM
- Mrs Jean THOMSON OAM

## **12. Affiliated Associations**

- ACT Chinese Women Cultural Association Inc
- Anglican Women's Diocesan Council
- Anglican Mother's Union Diocese of Canberra/Goulburn
- Australian Church Women Inc
- Canberra Mothercraft Society
- Canberra Multicultural Women's Forum
- Country Women's Association (CWA)
- Girl Guides (ACT and SE NSW Region)
- National Council of Jewish Women Australia (Canberra)
- St Andrews Evening PWA
- Salvation Army ACT and NSW
- Soroptimist International of Canberra Inc
- View Clubs of Australia
- YWCA Canberra

## **13. Editor Information**

I continue to encourage you to send me anything that you think might be of interest to our members. Also photos of events etc are really useful as they liven up the newsletter.

*Kate Muir*

Editor