



AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S COALITION INC.  
Working collaboratively to advance the status of women



# ANNUAL REPORT

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S COALITION

JUNE 2010



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### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks and appreciation to the report editors Frances Panopoulos and Robyn Gaspari BA JP

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## MISSION

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'We the members of the Australian Women's Coalition will work collaboratively to advance the status of women'

## AWC MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

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The AWC is an entity comprising the following 20 national women's non-government organisations:

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement  
Australian Bosnian Women's Cultural Association Inc  
Australian Church Women Inc  
Australian Federation of Medical Women  
Catholic Women's League Australia  
Conflict Resolving Women's Network Australia Inc  
Council on the Ageing Australia  
Girl Guides Australia Inc  
Hindu Women's Council of Australia  
Mothers Union Australia  
Muslim Women's National Network Australia Inc  
National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Ltd  
National Council of Women of Australia Ltd  
Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association Australia Inc  
Soroptimist International of Australia Inc  
The Salvation Army  
UNIFEM Australia  
VIEW Clubs of Australia  
Zonta International District 24 Inc  
Zonta International District 23 Inc

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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I am very pleased to present the AWC Annual Report for 2010, which summarises the wonderful work undertaken by AWC Members working so effectively together on our common goal to advance the status of women. Some highlights have been:

1. a project advocating for a new model of long-term care for survivors of sexual violence, titled 'Happy Healthy Women, Not Just Survivors'. My sincere thanks to partners - the Australian Federation of Medical Women and Victorian Medical Women's Society - for their efforts in delivering this project.
2. an update on Australia's response to human trafficking and recommendations for continued policy improvements in this area, which has received a positive response from the Minister for Women and the Criminal Justice Division, Attorney General's Department.
3. an analysis of the AWC's inter-cultural bridge-building program and recommendations for building on our efforts in this area, including greater engagement in the public affairs debate.
4. a submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry into ATSI young offenders. The submission, made in early 2010, was based on significant background work undertaken by AWC in 2009.

Other highlights have included continuing advocacy work around AWC's invited Submission on the New National Women's Health Policy. I am particularly pleased that the submission drew on the diverse views of AWC member organisations.

On the employment equity front, AWC worked on two timely projects: the AWC Submission on the Government's Review of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace (EOWW) Act and Agency; and the joint-Alliances collaborative project, led by the National Foundation of Australian Women (NFAW), focusing on women and hidden unemployment during the Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

The 2010 Annual Report also gives an update of the outcomes from AWC's Advocacy Training Workshops. I was delighted with the direction AWC took in providing free advocacy training nationally, with more than fifty non-AWC organisations nominating women to attend the workshops. I am grateful for the efforts made by the partners involved in delivering this training: Zonta International District 24 Inc, the Australian Medical Association and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

Important improvements in corporate communications were also achieved. I am grateful for the work that went into the AWC website, including the recent development of a dedicated member section.

I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to all delegates and alternates who have helped make this a fruitful year of collaborative discourse and outcomes for women. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by the Salvation Army Delegate, Jenny Begent.

My thanks to the members of my Executive team: Vice Presidents Sharyl Scott and Rysia Rozen, Treasurer Zubeda Raihman, Secretary Margie Berlemon and Past President Robyn Gaspari.

Sincere thanks also to: web consultant Jerome Ferdinands; AMA graphic designer Lyndal Sayer; AMA NSW CEO Fiona Davies; and consultants Fiona Dempster, Caroline Taylor and Tanya van der Wall.

I am very grateful to the AWC Consultant/Coordinator Frances Panopoulos for her support and for her diligent management and coordination of AWC projects and advocacy initiatives. In particular I would like to acknowledge her recent contribution in delivering the sexual assault advocacy report to publication and her support in ensuring wide communication of the report's findings. In all her project

work and coordination duties, Frances has displayed a high degree of competence and initiative - qualities combined with a sense of humour, sensitivity and a committed sense of service. On behalf of the AWC I would like to thank Frances.

In closing I would also like to extend my thanks to the Australian Government Office for Women (OFW) for their continuing support and their offer to assist us with our advocacy work in the future.



GABRIELLE CASPER

## EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' REPORTS

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### **Vice President Sharyl Scott**

Being a member of AWC and part of the executive team this year has been an immensely rewarding experience. I have particularly enjoyed the wonderful friendship of the members, the other executive and President Gabrielle for her very personable leadership throughout this year. I especially thank Zonta International District 24 and District 23 for supporting me as delegate and the members of AWC for nominating me as Vice President (2009-2010).

Through my involvement in the AWC projects and committee work and with the wider group of women's organisations at Federal Government meetings, I have been impressed by the passion and deep commitment to advocate for women's rights by women's groups in Australia. It has been a privilege to be a part of AWC and the wider women's movement at this national level focusing on this goal.

My position responsibilities in the past year included coordinating the following AWC projects: the Human Rights update report on Trafficking; the Advocacy Training Workshops; Zonta's coordinated (survey) response for AWC's Submission to the Government's EOWW Review; and the Young Offender project with the AWC Coordinator Frances Panopoulos.

### **Vice President Rysia Rozen OAM**

In my time as AWC Vice President I have enjoyed tremendously the opportunities to network with so many different women from diverse backgrounds. I have also felt personal satisfaction in bringing to the table my considerable experience with NCJW at state and national levels since 1986 (NCJW Victorian President from 1996-2002; National President 2007-2011).

I facilitated the AWC National Advocacy Training Workshop in Melbourne and coordinated NCJWA input to the AWC's Submission on the EOWW Act and Agency Review. Of particular importance was NCJWA's involvement in the AWC inter-cultural bridge building activities and our opportunity to be involved in the report analysing the inter-cultural program. Finally, I was pleased to have served on the AWC Website Committee and am very proud indeed of the result we achieved with the launch of this important communication tool.

## Secretary Margie Berlemon

I have enjoyed the role of AWC Secretary for the past eighteen months. During this time I have attended General meetings and Executive meetings held in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. I was also part of the discussion and grant writing team for the Alliance Grant to the Government. I hosted and attended the Advocacy workshop in Adelaide. The networking opportunities that the AWC holds are invaluable to all women's associations and the opportunity to share quality time with the members is invaluable. I have had the opportunity to attend many workshops as a representative of the AWC and I have been active in making people aware of what the AWC is and its strength with the diverse organisations that belong. I would like to thank the members for their friendship, and particularly the Executive who work tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the organisation, and to Frances our dedicated co-ordinator who is always willing to assist (particularly whilst I was on sick leave) for my time as Secretary.

## Treasurer Zubeda Raihman: Report for the year ended 2010

In accordance with the funding agreement between Australian Women's Coalition and the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA), all funding provided has been expended by 30 June 2010. The audited financial statements show the result of operations for the year ended 30 June 2010. This period had been fully funded by FAHCSIA. A full audited financial report is attached. Please refer Appendix A.

The auditor, Peter G. Akehurst & Co., Chartered Accountant has conducted its audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards and has reported that the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Performance of the Australian Women's Coalition Incorporated presents a true and fair view of its operations for the year ended 30 June 2010.

Although the AWC's funding arrangement with Government ceased as of 30 June 2010, we are fortunate as a donation from a benefactor in 2004 will permit us to continue our advocacy work while we seek other funding. The 19 grassroots organisations are committed to continuing to work collaboratively and productively on critical issues affecting women, and believe the task of securing funding will not limit our ability to continue this important work.

## MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE FOR WOMEN

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The Office for Women is committed to advancing the status of women through strategic policy development, coordinated delivery of programs, services and funding, and by establishing and maintaining a strong relationship between the women's sector and the government.

We are pleased to acknowledge the work undertaken by The Australian Women's Coalition in 2009-2010 to further advance gender equality across a broad range of areas. We wish you the best with the future of your organisation and for your continued work as part of the women's movement.

Sally Moyle, Branch Manager, Office for Women



The Australian Women's Coalition Inc received funding under the Australian Government's Women's Leadership and Development Program.

## GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

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### Key Objectives

The AWC aims to:

- increase communication within the women's sector
- clearly identify the needs of women represented by the partners of the coalition
- initiate policies, programs and partnerships to address these needs
- advocate on women's issues to government and the community.

### Project Funding Grants received

The Australian Government Office for Women, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA) funded AWC projects from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 under the Australian Government Women's Leadership and Development Program.

An additional project grant was received from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing during 2009 for the AWC's invited submission on the new national women's health policy.

### Strategic Plan

Since February 2002 AWC has established a set of operational guidelines and a strategic plan which identifies specific outcomes in the areas of:

- policy advice
- consultation
- information and education
- advocacy

The AWC has continued to significantly progress these outcomes through the projects outlined in this report.

### Corporate Governance Developments

During 2010 AWC determined that the existing Constitution and Operational Guidelines required extensive revision to meet the changing structure of AWC within the context of the new operational model. These proposed changes will be considered for implementation at the Annual General Meeting on 25 September 2010 and if approved will be lodged with the Department of Fair Trading in the ACT where the AWC is registered.

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

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The past year has been a productive one for AWC and I am very pleased to have been a part of that success. I wish to thank the Executive and Members of the AWC for their continuing support and for their wonderful efforts in helping to deliver such a rich and diverse set of project outcomes.

I was particularly pleased to be involved in delivering the consultation report advocating for the long-term care of survivors of sexual violence. I believe the new model put forward by the AWC and its partners makes a significant contribution to advocacy in this area. A real strength of the project has been its focus on translating community and academic concerns into well-informed public policy.

Another highlight for me was working closely with Zubeda Raihman and Dr Trish Madigan on the analysis of the social and political impacts of the AWC's intercultural dialogue and activities. The Report made eleven recommendations about how Australian women, in their diversity, can be more effective in bringing their views to the academic and public affairs debates on issues of social importance.

It was also a pleasure to work closely with: Dr Alison Rutherford and Dr Jane Hirst on the AWC's national women's health policy submission and subsequent advocacy work; and Alexandra Heron from the Women and Work Research Group, University of Sydney, on the AWC's Submission to the EOWW Act and Agency Review.

I would like to acknowledge the significant support given in the past year by the AWC's Salvation Army Delegate Major Jenny Begent. I must also acknowledge: Gaye Casper's exceptional dedication and commitment to the role of President; Sharyl Scott for her strategic leadership on a number of projects and initiatives; Zubeda Raihman for her strong commitment to inter-cultural work and her expertise as Treasurer; Margie Berlemon for her dedicated work as AWC Secretary; and Rysia Rozen for her wisdom and unconditional support.

**Dr Frances Panopoulos PhD**  
Social Policy Consultant and AWC Coordinator

## AWC PROJECTS AND SUBMISSIONS

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**1 JULY 2009 to 30 JUNE 2010**

### **Leadership and Capacity Building through Advocacy Training**

Effective advocacy skills are vital if community leaders are to influence public policy and social change. Effective advocacy is also essential for any group that seeks to lead the way in bettering the lives of women and children. A program of advocacy training workshops was proposed and unanimously endorsed at AWC's August 2009 General Meeting. The Australian Women's Coalition (AWC), Zonta International District 24 Inc, the Australian Medical Association and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre worked collaboratively and provided 9 workshops titled 'Effective Advocacy Skills and Strategies'. Workshops were held in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney and were open to:

- members of AWC organisations and their affiliates
- members of other national women's Alliances
- non-Alliance women's organisations, individual activists and special interest sections within larger organisations
- in particular, smaller women's organisations with an interest in issues affecting CALD, ATSI, rural women and women with disabilities.

The mix of participants meant that, in addition to being trained, AWC women had the opportunity to connect directly with a diverse group of non-AWC members.

The more than 50 non-AWC organisations who nominated and attended the leadership capacity building workshops reported in feedback sheets that they would be more confident in future advocacy situations. Participants stated that the program provided a learning environment that facilitated the development of skills in advocacy, tailored to meet their needs, with specific action plans and tools to advocate on issues important to them.

The interactive workshop format consisted of modules in: lobbying skills; negotiation skills; and media skills. Program outcomes expressed by participants were that the training left them in a better position to:

- identify current important advocacy issues
- advocate for these issues within decision-making forums
- undertake lobbying delegations using a consistent, best-practice approach
- plan for and manage negotiations when advocating
- use the media more effectively to advocate for their issues.

## **Long-term Care for Survivors of Sexual Violence**

The 'Happy, Healthy Women: Not Just Survivors' Project advocates for a long-term model of care for the one in three Australian women who are survivors of sexual violence.

While the AWC acknowledges that the Australian Government has shown a strong commitment to the prevention of violence against women, the Government's initiatives to date have focused on the immediate aftermath of disclosure, with insufficient attention to the long-term physical, psychological and social needs of sexual assault survivors. The recommendations presented in the consultation paper therefore seek to address this gap in the national agenda.

A key strength of this advocacy project has been its emphasis on consulting a broad group of stakeholders. The approach was informed by several roundtable discussions with AWC organisations; doctors including A/Professor Jan Coles (Monash; Vice President Australian Federation of Medical Women) and Dr Raie Goodwach (Psychotherapist and President Victorian Medical Women's Society); Libby Lloyd AM (Chair Violence Against Women Advisory Group); Professor Carolyn Taylor (Foundation Chair Social Justice Edith Cowan University); and community advisers Major Jenny Begent (Salvation Army) and Robyn Gaspari (CRWNA). These initial consultations were followed by a National Summit which brought together representatives from survivor and advocacy groups, community organisations and service providers, medical and allied health professionals, legal professionals and academics.

There is a need for enhancements to the medical and mental health care system which provides formal support to survivors. The current system is fragmented and in need of an overhaul to reorient it towards inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral models of service provision (including the third sector that provides both services and advocacy).

Survivors require equitable access to affordable specialised counselling services that fit the ongoing nature of the health impacts of sexual violence. Medical professionals, in general, lack the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to appropriately identify, treat, and manage the complex health sequelae of sexual violence and the full range of issues that survivors may present with in various settings. Building the capacity of healthcare professionals through education and training therefore features among proposed solutions, especially for primary health care providers.

There is a recognised need for a comprehensive evidence based strategy that firmly establishes the relationship between sexual violence and lifetime health sequelae. The establishment of such evidence would guide future practice and provision of care to survivors.

The full report is available on the AWC website at [www.awcaus.org.au](http://www.awcaus.org.au) and the recommendations are as follows:

### **Recommendations for Reform**

#### *A. Effecting cultural change in Australia - changing community attitudes and behaviours*

Sexual violence should be recognised as a social issue that requires sociocultural change. Contextual factors associated with poor health and wellbeing in survivors must be changed in order to achieve social justice for survivors, empower survivors, reduce their alienation, and increase their connectedness to others in the community. Changing community attitudes and behaviours is critical and requires a national ‘joined-up’ approach to policy and responses across the lifespan.

Recommendation 1: Educate the Australian community as well as public policy makers, Governments, healthcare and legal professionals to raise awareness of sexual violence, its consequences, long-term sequelae and the needs of survivors

Recommendation 2: Provide survivors with information to assist them to negotiate the healthcare, support and legal systems and empower them to make decisions

Recommendation 3: Develop national ‘joined-up’ policy and coordinated responses

Recommendation 4: Develop schools-based education programs that raise awareness of sexual violence, include respectful relationships and are gender-sensitive throughout the community, as well as appropriate and targeted programs for high risk groups (people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders)

Recommendation 5: Develop national strategies to prevent the perpetration of sexual violence (community and prison based)

#### *B. Changing survivors’ behaviour related to health care*

There is a need to help survivors change their health-related behaviour so that they can lead healthier lives. The ability to recognise symptoms related to experiences of sexual violence will enable prompt self-referral and support, which will in turn aid recovery.

Recommendation 6: Educate patients to recognise the nexus between experiences of sexual violence and poor health and empower them to access and manage their health care (e.g. holding own medical records)

Recommendation 7: Create a national database for survivors (including information; self-help resources; referral pathways; profiles of agencies; recommended health, legal and support professionals) which includes the distribution of information in multiple (accessible) formats and languages

Recommendation 8: Initiate an ongoing health promotion campaign to raise awareness of sexual violence

Recommendation 9: Develop ongoing accessible and affordable community and healthcare services which extend far beyond the acute response

#### *C. Changing health care services*

There is a need for enhancements to the health care system that provides formal support to survivors (medical and mental health systems). The current system is fragmented and in need of an overhaul to reorient it towards inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral models of service provision (including the third sector that provides both services and advocacy). Current funding arrangements and the corporatisation of general practice, in particular, are regarded as problematic. Survivors require

equitable access to affordable specialised counseling services that fit the ongoing nature of the health impacts of sexual violence. Medical professionals, in general, lack the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to appropriately identify, treat, and manage the complex health sequelae of sexual violence and the full range of issues that survivors may present with in various settings. Building the capacity of healthcare professionals through education and training, therefore, features amongst proposed solutions especially for primary health care providers.

Recommendation 10: Provide holistic, integrated and affordable healthcare models of service which address both physical and psychological needs and include complementary models of wellbeing

Recommendation 11: Provide long-term, dedicated government funding of, and policy priority for, specialised services for survivors of sexual violence

Recommendation 12: Assist the Government to augment and improve service provision across all sectors to intervene and effectively respond to the health consequences of sexual violence thereby reducing the economic burden to the nation

Recommendation 13: Provide family-oriented, relationships-based services (particularly to address the flow-on effect to children)

Recommendation 14: Improve coordination and communication within and across services (including intra-sectoral and cross-sectoral partnerships, and interdisciplinary teams) to improve linkages and understanding between agencies

Recommendation 15: Provide Medicare reimbursement that appropriately remunerates all service providers for time-intensive services (including history-taking; multi-disciplinary health care planning, and long-term psychological therapy) and rebates patients (thus recognising the economic burden of long term utilisation of services)

Recommendation 16: Incorporate long-term health sequelae of sexual violence (including assessment, treatment, management, and referral pathways) in undergraduate medical curricula, postgraduate training, and continuing medical education to equip doctors to recognise and respond effectively to the needs of survivors

Recommendation 17: Establish a national clearinghouse for healthcare professionals (including research in the field, patient resources, professional support and referral resources)

#### *D. Investigating the impact of sexual violence over the lifespan*

There is a recognised need for a comprehensive evidence based strategy that firmly establishes the relationship between sexual violence and lifetime health sequelae. The establishment of such evidence would guide future practice and provision of care to survivors.

Recommendation 18: Establish a multi-disciplinary foundation or Centre of Excellence (including referral pathways to strengthen access to care) to drive initiatives

Recommendation 19: Conduct Australian longitudinal research into all aspects of the health impacts of sexual violence (including the disaggregation of gender-based violence data by gender and type of violence) to provide evidence for policy, healthcare, and support programs and services and provide resources so existing Australian longitudinal data can be analysed

Recommendation 20: Improve the evidence for models of care and community interventions to effect change

#### *E. Changing the legal environment in Australia*

More criminal convictions of perpetrators of sexual violence are necessary to change cultural and community attitudes. However, it is also recognised that the

adversarial legal system often re-traumatises survivors (Taylor, 2004a; 2004b). At present, few survivors receive compensation for past and future losses sustained as a result of the violence.

Recommendation 21: Simplify the prosecution process; for crimes of this nature, replace the accusatorial system with an inquisitorial system (e.g. as in France)

Recommendation 22: Impose sanctions or outcomes to reflect the seriousness of the crime

Recommendation 23: Publicly critique and change legal and medical discourses that perpetuate tolerance of sexual violence (e.g., definition of incest as less harmful form of abuse)

Recommendation 24: Implement Australia-wide education of police, legal professionals, and judges towards responsive and sensitive practice and services that protect survivors from re-traumatisation

Recommendation 25: Establish Australia-wide third party insurance (or similar) to compensate survivors for special damages and general damages resulting from sexual violence, and facilitate claims by parents/guardians on behalf of abused children.

## **National Women's Health Policy Submission**

The AWC was invited by the Department of Health and Ageing (Cth) to make a submission on the new National Women's Health Policy. The Submission made 28 recommendations to Government, grouped under the following key themes:

- Need for implementation and evaluation plans
- Links to other key State and national policies
- Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Health professional education in the impact of gender on health
- Access to appropriate health care, particularly in rural and remote areas
- Women on health decision making committees
- Gendered analysis of health policies
- Health needs of young female offenders and their dependents
- Equity for older women on low incomes
- Prevention of osteoporosis
- Sex and gender disaggregated data
- Maternal health and early intervention approaches
- Priorities of the new policy cardiovascular disease prevention
- Reproductive health and sexuality, including menopause
- Emotional and mental health
- Violence against women
- Health needs of women as carers
- Improvements in health services for women
- Research and data collection

After making the Submission, the AWC continued to advocate through its networks to ensure the recommendations were disseminated to key stakeholders, including relevant Ministers.

## **Durri Aboriginal Women's Health Project**

Aboriginal women's cervical cancer mortality rate is 5 times greater than that of non-Aboriginal women. The AWC worked with the Durri Aboriginal Medical Corporation Service ('Durri') to assist with their 'While ya down there' project. The project aimed to improve access to sexual health services for the Aboriginal women of the Macleay and Nambucca Valleys, thus enabling them to make better choices about their sexual health as part of a broader women's health program. The

approach offers women the opportunity to take control of their own sexual health in a gender and culturally appropriate manner within a safe environment.

While AWC would like to provide informed and representative advice to government relevant to the circumstances of women, it presupposes that pertinent data is both accessible and available. In terms of the sexual well being of Aboriginal women this is not the case, mainly because few projects/programs/services exist from which the data required for such advocacy can be extracted and reliably used. This small grant has enabled AWC to complete a pilot project and have enough data to undertake advocacy work at the State and Federal government levels aimed at improving Aboriginal women's sexual health.

### **Submission to House of Representatives ATSI Committee Inquiry**

Based on its consultation project conducted in 2009, the AWC made a submission in early 2010 to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Affairs. The submission was in response to the ATSI Affairs Committee inquiry into Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system. The key issue that AWC drew to the Committee's attention is the need for policy makers and administrators to recognise the unique needs of young ATSI women and girls when formulating prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation policies and programs for young offenders and those at risk of offending. Because of their relatively smaller numbers compared to young men and boys, young women and girls (in general) are sadly often over-looked as a distinct group with distinct risks and needs, and are further disadvantaged by not having a consistent national advocacy 'voice' in this context. The submission provided evidence of some of the additional risks and needs affecting young ATSI women and girls caught up in the criminal justice system.

### **Health Consumers and Medical Decision Making**

The last few decades have seen greater recognition of the importance of involving consumers in all areas of the health system, including policy development, health service planning and delivery, and health and medical research.

AWC members recognise and value the significant involvement of women in health consumer advocacy. With this in mind, the AWC worked with the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) to analyse the contribution health consumer representatives make to medical decisions and outcomes and explore ways of optimising the value of consumer representative participation.

Overall, the research project found positive outcomes from consumer representation in medical decision-making. Recommendations were put forward to strengthen the evidence base, including:

- studies using quantitative methodologies to enable the costs and benefits of consumer representation to be more rigorously assessed
- further investigation of the facilitators and barriers to effective consumer representation to increase understanding of how to maximise the contribution of consumer representatives
- addressing some of the possible disadvantages of consumer representative programs identified in the literature (such as the potential for under-representation by minority groups) to assess whether or not these issues are significant and, if so, how they can be addressed
- exploring the gender issues involved with consumer representation to determine whether or not the current gender imbalance within consumer representative programs has any impact on their effectiveness.

## **Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Advocacy Project**

As a result of a partnership between CRWNA and Lifeline Hawkesbury to Harbour (H2H), AWC learned that funding for the important community needs of suicide prevention and suicide bereavement were no longer being funded by the Department of Health and Ageing. The members of AWC are aware that the incidence of suicide is not on the decrease but sadly on the increase. Every member of AWC has through their own family or the wider community knowledge of someone who has committed suicide or a family that is bereaved by the loss of a loved one who has taken their own life. This awareness persuaded AWC to commission Lifeline H2H to develop, deliver and assess the outcomes of programs to address these identified needs. The aim was to accumulate and analyse evidence to advocate to the NSW State Government on behalf of the 15 LifelineCentres in NSW who offer Counselling support 24 hours a day and 7 days a week by telephone and to the Federal Government for all Lifeline Centres in Australia.

Lifeline H2H Counsellors are very professional, highly trained and experienced in all levels of counselling. They reported that telephone counselling is a good start for people who are so stressed that suicide seems their only alternative at that stage. However, the setting is sometimes ineffective or insufficient for the clients to consider other options available. The provision of opportunities for personal counselling could be a more effective intervention. On the other hand, for families who had no idea what their sons, daughters or spouses may have been contemplating there is a need for more ongoing support and comfort than a telephone call can give. AWC is now ready in association with Lifeline, to advocate for policy change on this important societal need to all levels of government and to the wider community.

## **Human Trafficking Update**

During 2004 AWC submitted a report to OFW on the problem of trafficking of women into Australia. More recently AWC - in conjunction with Frances Simmons and Professor Burn (from the Anti Slavery Project, University of Technology Sydney)- reviewed progress with this issue and submitted a report to OFW in March 2010.

In the past five years Australia's response to human trafficking focused on sex trafficking. Now more attention is being paid to labour trafficking outside of the sex industry. The issues of trafficking for forced labour, forced marriage, organ removal and the broader issues of criminal exploitation are beginning to attract greater attention. The report made 5 major recommendations:

- Review Australia's legal response to human trafficking
- Conduct a consultative review of the government funded Support Program for Victims of Trafficking
- Improve the access of trafficked people to opportunities to seek financial compensation and civil remedies
- Develop an enhanced community awareness campaign to raise awareness of all forms of labour trafficking in consultation with stakeholders
- Provide trafficked people and people who are vulnerable to trafficking with information about their legal rights under Australian immigration and labour law.

AWC circulated the report's recommendations to relevant Australian Government Ministers including the Minister for the Status of Women, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and the Attorney General. In June 2010 the Minister for Women wrote to the AWC to say that the report would be brought to the attention of the Australian Government People Trafficking Operational Working Group. In August 2010 the AWC received a reply from the Criminal Justice Division, Attorney General's Department, indicating the report would be brought to the Government's attention once the outcome of the Federal election was known.

## **Collaborative Project on the Global Financial Crisis (GFC)**

The AWC supports and is committed to the Australian Government's Social Inclusion strategy and in particular those principles which increase social, civil and economic participation - building partnerships with key stakeholders and building on individual and community strengths that enable all people to have a greater voice. In keeping with this commitment, AWC members agreed to participate in (and provide some funding for) consultation costs associated with an important and timely project examining the impact of the global financial crisis (GFC) on women, particularly the hidden unemployed. The project, led by the National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW), was a joint exercise between NFAW, AWC and the other three women's Alliances: WomenSpeak, Security for Women and the National Rural Women's Coalition. A series of national consultation workshops, led by Ms Marie Coleman of NFAW, was completed in the latter part of 2009 and included input from AWC members.

Of particular interest to our members was the impact of the GFC on migrant and refugee women, including specific issues relating to VET and TAFE training access for these groups. The project enabled AWC to continue to work collaboratively with the other Alliances to explore and assess common concerns. The consultation report was launched at Parliament House on 9 February 2010, and AWC was represented at that event by the Coordinator. The full report is available on the NFAW website.

## **Submission to the EOWW Review**

In July 2009 the AWC Coordinator represented AWC at a Roundtable Discussion on the Government's Review of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace (EOWW) Act and Agency (EOWA). The Roundtable was hosted by the Women and Work Research Group (WWRG), University of Sydney. During August-October AWC worked with WWRG to assist AWC in preparing its Submission to the Review. The process included WWRG running an AWC Roundtable and preparing a Discussion Paper to draw out the key points from the Government's Issues Paper, which was released in early September 2009 as part of the Government's formal Call for Submissions.

The WWRG Discussion Paper was targeted to AWC and acted as a platform for more in-depth consultation interviews with a sample of representatives from AWC member organisations. The formal AWC Submission, authored on behalf of AWC by WWRG researcher Alexandra Heron, was made to Government on 16 October 2009. The submission strongly advocated for government action to dramatically improve women's equality at work (including pay equity) over the next five years. The completed submission was also circulated to relevant Government and Opposition policy-makers as well as Agency heads during late October/early November 2009. The full submission may be viewed on the AWC Website: [awcaus.org.au](http://awcaus.org.au)

## **AWC's Capacity to Inform Government on Inter-Cultural Policy**

AWC worked closely with Dr Trish Madigan to conduct a study of the social and political impacts of the intercultural dialogue and activities undertaken by AWC. The report, completed in mid-March 2010, is titled: 'Report on the AWC Intercultural Bridge-building Project: a study of the social and political impact of women's intercultural dialogue'. The report made 11 recommendations about how Australian women, in their diversity, can contribute more effectively to bring their perspectives to the academic and public affairs debates on issues of social importance.

The project met its aims which were to:

- (a) discover the impact of women's intercultural/dialogue activity on the social understanding and practice of the women participants.
- (b) ascertain the extent to which the women believe that women's insights and opinions receive a fair hearing in public debates on inter-cultural/ inter-racial/ inter-religious issues. What difficulties do they experience? Do only sensational or extremist positions receive publicity?
- (c) make recommendations about how to improve women's advocacy in this important area.

Dr Madigan summarised the findings from her analysis of AWC activities in the following way:

*'The women, who participated in the AWC intercultural events, both 'long time' Australians and more recent arrivals, enjoyed the experience of getting to know each other better. Real relationships have been formed. Many misconceptions were broken down and ignorance dispelled. There was growing appreciation of the values inherent in a harmonious and socially inclusive society. The important contribution that women can make to national social cohesion, in promoting strong relationships of understanding and friendship between people from diverse cultural backgrounds, was highlighted.*

*The AWC, embracing a wide range of cultural and faith organisations, is well placed to make a strong contribution towards building social cohesiveness in Australian society and to engage with communities and individuals who may currently be disengaged or marginalised (see Australian Government National Action Plan).'*

## **Inter-Cultural Bridge Building Program**

By its nature, AWC brings together diverse groups of women community leaders who might not otherwise have an opportunity to meet and interact. These close interactions are key to breaking down barriers between women which will continue to have a positive trickle-effect in their communities. The program is in response to an identified need to break down barriers caused by misinformation and fear, especially as regards Muslim customs and related activities. At the August 2009 General Meeting AWC Delegates agreed to participate in a number of formal cultural exchange and bridge-building activities planned for September to December 2009. Organisations involved in these activities included: VIEW Clubs Australia; Australian Bosnian Women's Cultural Association; the Hindu Women's Society of Australia; the NSW Jewish Women's Group; and the Muslim Women's National Network of Australia. It is intended that this initiative will continue as part of AWC's future programs.

## **Other advocacy issues addressed during the year**

AWC was also involved in advocacy around the following issues:

- Osteoporosis prevention and treatment
- Government recognition of 100 years of Guiding
- the Henry Tax Review
- the Commission on the Status of Women Report for the United Nations
- the Paid Parental Leave Submission

## AWC DELEGATE BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Rosney Snell - Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement**

ALRM's representative on the AWC is Ms Rosney Snell, a Wiradjiri woman from NSW. Rosney has a Bachelor's and a Masters degree plus numerous other formal qualifications. Rosney is a published author on various Aboriginal and related topics. She is the CEO Nunga Mi:Minar Inc, an Aboriginal women's and children's domestic violence accommodation service in Adelaide and current Vice Chair & Sec/Treasurer of ALRM. She also holds board membership on a number of organizations and a member of a SA Ministerial Housing Advisory Committee.

### **Behka Custovic - Australian Bosnian Women's Cultural Association**

Behka Custovic is the President of ABWCA and the delegate to AWC. Behka recently achieved her Masters Degree in Social Science. Behka is employed by the Department of Housing NSW. She is very family oriented and still has her Mum living with her. Behka openly expresses her concern about issues within the Bosnian Community as many of the residents have come to Australia from their war torn country and a lot of healing is necessary for them to have fruitful lives in Australia. Through all her community activities Behka is committed to make a difference for all women living in Australia

### **Margaret Flint OAM - Australian Church Women Inc**

Margaret Flint is the President of National Executive of Australian Church Women Inc. She was a teacher for over thirty years principally in South Australia, but 1972-74 took leave to serve through Australian Volunteers' Abroad. She lectured at Balob Teachers' College, Lae, PNG. Margaret's church involvement through Anglican Church of Australia has been at national, diocesan and parish level in areas of Christian Education, overseas mission and ecumenical affairs. Margaret's involvement in women's affairs has included being President NCWSA (2000-3) and on various committees e.g. Executive, Constitution, Nominations, Newsletter. Since graduation she has been member of AFUW SA Inc. and served as a committee member and Secretary. She has intentionally sought to be involved in a cross section of women's groups through membership of WIS Support Group, IWD Luncheon Committee, and UNAA (SA) SOW Committee. Margaret is a past president of ACW SA Unit and currently is its Promotions Officer. As ACW Inc's delegate to AWC Inc. she values the opportunity to meet and network at national level with other women's organisations as they explore issues and concerns of women. Margaret was awarded an OAM for service to the Anglican Church of Australia in a range of committee roles, and to the community through women's organisations.

### **Dr Gabrielle Casper - Australian Federation of Medical Women**

Dr Gabrielle Casper is a Sydney gynaecologist with a special interest in women's health and human rights. She is the immediate Past President of both the Australian Federation of Medical Women and the Medical Women's International Association (MWIA). She has represented MWIA at the World Health Organisation and United Nations Meetings. In 2003 she was part of the official Australian delegation to the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women in New York. Dr Casper received the 2004 Australian Medical Association (AMA) Women's Health Award and also the 2004 AMA Women in Medicine Award. In 2006 Dr Casper was awarded the Vocational Pride of Excellence Award for her contributions to medicine by Rotary International District 9680. Dr Casper enjoys working as a gynaecologist and cares for her patients with compassion and understanding while lobbying to improve women's health in Australia and overseas. Dr Casper was one of the original representative members of AWC from 2002. She held the position of Vice President until she was elected as President in 2008. She is the current President of AWC.

### **Madge Fahy - Catholic Women's League Australia**

I am the National President of the Catholic Women's League Australia. I have been married to my husband Tom for 47 years. I am the mother of 5 children (4 daughters and 1 son), and grandmother of 8 (5 granddaughters and 3 grandsons). Girls rule in our house. We have moved often but are now settled in Melbourne where we have created a record by living in our current home for 10 years. We lived in Brussels, Belgium for 7 years and our last two children were born there. I came into the Catholic Women's League quite by accident and had the privilege of having four great women as tutors in all things CWL. I have held a number of positions including representing Catholic Women's League Australia at the CSW Meetings in New York for six (6) years. For so long now League members have gone about their work without fanfare or fuss to the point that we have almost humbled ourselves out of existence. It is my hope that during my term of office the Executive is able to promote the volunteer work done by our members throughout Australia and have that work acknowledged by the community.

### **Catherine McGrath - Catholic Women's League Australia**

Catherine has been State President of Catholic Women's League Australia New South Wales Inc (CWLA-NSW Inc) for the past four years and is the CWLA's alternate delegate to AWC. She is involved in volunteer work in both her Organisation and in her Parish Community and part of the Parish Management Team. Catherine is the alternate delegate to the AWC for Catholic Women's League Australia Inc (CWLA Inc). She was the leader in Catholic Women's Leadership Development project which aimed at giving women skills in leadership. She was involved in World Youth Day 2008, instigating the sewing of Altar Linen by all Dioceses in NSW, as well as being involved in the EXPO at Darling Harbour. Catherine has been nominated as the Australian Board Member to World Union of Catholic Women's Organisation (WUCWO) and will travel to Jerusalem in October 2010. She was involved in AFS International Exchange Programs and is a Life Member of the Organisation. She is married with two adult daughters and three grandchildren.

### **Robyn Gaspari BA JP PHF - Conflict Resolving Women's Network Australia Inc**

For over 30 years Robyn has been involved in diverse activities that have heightened her awareness of the issues for both women and men who have experienced unwanted sex incidents as children, as teenagers and/or as adults. In the past few years Robyn has provided supervision to Managers and their staff in a number of NSW Women's Refuges. Her other hands-on experience includes: 10 years as a cancer support worker; 2 years as a hospital chaplain; 24 years as a conflict resolution practitioner in Australia, NZ, Malaysia and India; and a number of years on the Boards of Christian Community Aid Eastwood and Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury. She is currently Chairman of Lifeline NSW, vice Chairman of Lifeline h2h, Past President of Chatswood Rotary Club and past District Secretary of Rotary District 9680 and is currently the District Historian. Robyn has been associated with the AWC since 2002 - originally as District 24 Governor of Zonta International from 2002-04 and subsequently as President of CRWNA Inc from 2004-10. Robyn held the roles of AWC Financial Convenor from 2002-04, Treasurer from 2004-06, President 2006-08 and Immediate Past President from 2008-10.

### **Sheila Rimmer AM - Council on the Ageing**

Sheila Rimmer AM is a former President of Council on the Ageing (NSW) and a former National President of COTA Australia. She is a consumer representative, the longest-standing member of the CHF Governing Committee and a member of the CHF Executive Committee. In 2000 Sheila was appointed as a member in the General Division (AM) for her services to the welfare of the aged. She accepted the role of Secretary of the Consumer Health Forum in 2002. Sheila has been an active representative as a consumer on many committees and her wise counsel has often influenced decision making in relation to health issues. She was appointed as a board member of COTA and served in that role from 1998 onwards until her

retirement. Sheila is a long-term benefactor to the University of NSW and is one of the original members of AWC. She has been inspirational in her passion and concern for community issues especially for aged persons. One of AWC's earliest projects was on grandparents and concerns for their rights to receive some assistance when they were full or part-time carers and the submission resulted in policy change by the Federal Government.

#### **Margie Berlemon - Girl Guides Australia Inc**

Margie represents Girl Guides Australia on the AWC as a delegate and as AWC Secretary. She is the immediate past State Commissioner for Girl Guides South Australia, and currently holds the position of Community Projects Officer. Her involvement in Guiding in South Australia has allowed her to engage in community activities and work with disengaged families, youth in remand, and secondary school students, providing community programs to assist with life skills for the betterment of the children.

#### **Anita Sharma - Hindu Women's Council of Australia**

Mrs Anita Bachan Sharma migrated to Australia from India about 24 years ago and has several years of experience working in a wide range of fields including: the education sector; insurance and financial industry; learning and development; IT project management area; and other voluntary services to assist the wider community. She was associated with the Multicultural Radio Association (MCRA) as one of the community broadcasters, and served the Indian community on a voluntary basis for more than ten years. She continues to work for the wider community by remaining associated with HCA, HWCA and other community associations. Mrs Sharma has extensive experience in Project Coordination; Learning and Development Co-ordination; Budget Management; Training Administration and Management; Customer Support; and Teaching. She holds two degrees: a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Education from India. She also has a Certificate IV in Assessment and Training.

#### **Madhu Singhal - Hindu Women's Council of Australia**

Madhu Singhal is the alternate delegate to AWC representing the Hindu Women's Council of Australia which is a member of Hindu Council Ltd. Madhu is an Executive Member of the Hindu Council. She graduated with a degree in Science in 1968 and was married in 1970. Her family immigrated to Australia in 1975 and they have always lived in New South Wales. She has three married daughters and is a proud grandmother to two beautiful granddaughters and two grandsons. She worked for 22 years as a Technical Officer (Scientific) for TAFE.

#### **Deane Bray - Mothers Union Australia**

I have been a member of MU Australia for over 40 years. I encourage and support young mothers and children in their Christian faith through family issues. Before my marriage to Eddie, a teacher, I was a nurse. We have three children and eight grand children. We have lived in a number of towns and cities in Queensland and were supported by older members of MU whenever we lived apart from family. I was involved with junior sport during our children's younger years. For many years I was a Girl Guide Leader and involved in many other volunteer activities. I have always been an active member of my Parish Family and also in the wider Church at the Diocesan and National level. My hobbies are needlework and gardening.

#### **Zubeda Raihman - Muslim Women's National Network of Australia Inc**

Zubeda holds a Masters Degree in Leadership and Management from Macquarie University and a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from the University of the South Pacific and has associate membership with Certified Public Accountants in Australia. Zubeda is currently the Manager, Revenue Services at the Macquarie University, Sydney. In her volunteer community service capacity, she is the Muslim Women's National Network of Australia Inc (MWNNA) representative to the AWC and current Treasurer AWC. She is actively involved in women's issues in the Muslim community

and is the project manager and treasurer of MWNNA and Liverpool Women's Association. She was recently elected as the Secretary of the Regional Islamic Dawah Council of South East Asia and the Pacific, based in Malaysia.

#### **Aziza Abdel-Halim - Muslim Women's National Network of Australia Inc**

Mrs Aziza Abdel-Halim AM BA (Hons) Dip Ed migrated from Egypt more than 3 decades ago. She is married with 2 daughters and 4 grand children. Her husband is a linguist and educationist. She is a retired Teacher (English and Arabic/Islamic Studies). She is an active community worker and has been the founding member of MWNNA and also Women's Interfaith Network (WIN). She has been the president of MWNNA since its inception in early 1990's and is also the Chairperson, RISEAP Women's Movement. She has served on many government boards and committees as well as community organisations and is the MWNNA alternate delegate to AWC.

#### **Rysia Rozen OAM - National Council of Jewish Women Limited**

Rysia was born in the USSR and grew up in Poland, arriving in Australia in 1957. In 1986 she joined the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) Victoria and was elected President NCJW Vic (1996-2002). She established a Tax Deductible 'arm' for NCJW Vic for Community Services. In 2004 she was elected President of the National Council of Women of Victoria, (NCWV), serving in that role till 2007. Rysia is currently President of NCJWA, since 2007 and also serves as Vice President of AWC, a role she has held since elected in 2008. Among Rysia's other achievements are: receiving the Centenary Medal for outstanding contribution to the Australian Society (April 2003); receiving the OAM (January 2004) for service to the Jewish Community of Victoria, particularly through the National Council of Jewish Women.

#### **Hean Bee Wee - National Council of Women**

Hean Bee is a successful accountant and educationalist and has had a significant community involvement since her student days at the University of Adelaide. She has been a member of NCWSA representing the Penguin Club since 1997, became an executive member in 2001 and Vice President in 2004. She held the position of Treasurer of NCWA before she took on the role of President 2006-2009. In 1991-92 Hean Bee Wee was one of the foundation members of a new group the Asian Women's Consultative Council Inc. set up to enable Asian Australian women to more fully participate in consultation with government. Hean Bee has had a significant role in education, especially with the International Baccalaureate program, acting as Chairman for SA Co-ordinators Committee 1992-1996. Hean Bee and her husband, Victor are both retired. They have a son Sam who is a management consultant.

#### **Luisa Latukefu - Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association Australia Inc**

Luisa currently works full time as Maternal and Child Health Nurse with ACT Health. Her special interest is in working with Youths and Teenage Parents. Luisa holds the roles of: Vice President for the National PPSEAWA Executive Committee; Past president of PPSEAWA Canberra City Group ACT; Represents Youth, Women and CALD women in the Department of Territory and Municipal Services Community Advisory Group in Canberra; and holds the qualifications of Bachelor of Science in Community Health and Graduate Diploma Women Studies (ANU).

#### **Major Jenny Begent - Salvation Army**

Jenny is currently the State Director of The Salvation Army's social and community services in Western Australia. She has been a Salvation Army officer for 25 years, serving in social and community services. Her main area of expertise is Family Violence. She has held office on several state peak bodies, been appointed to a number of state Committees and Boards, and is active in community activities in her personal life. Her particular interests are social policy and reintegrating the marginalised into safe and secure communities and ensuring that women who experience violence are able to live full lives following the violence.

### **Catherine Evans - Soroptimist International Australia**

I am a retired government veterinarian who has worked in the export meat industry so my professional interest has been in public health. I have been a Soroptimist for almost 20 years and joined when I changed my travelling job so was able to join organisations. I am currently the National Representative or probably more easily understood as the President for Soroptimists in Australia and will represent Australian Soroptimists on the board of Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific for 2010-2012. My interest has always been in the projects and service work we do whether at club or region level and now at a country level, particularly those in the education area for women and girls. I am also a member of Australian Graduate Women and a joint guardian and financial manager of an elderly Soroptimist.

### **Margaret Findlater-Smith - Soroptimist International**

Margaret is a retired public servant and currently National Representative for Australia on the Board of the Federation of Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific. Margaret has been a Soroptimist member for over 30 years and has an enduring interest in issues concerning women and children including wellbeing, human rights and the status of women. Margaret has been the Soroptimist representative on the AWC since April 2008 and will continue as a member in 2010 but this time representing the National Council of Women of Australia as she is also the National President of NCWA.

### **Sue Conde AM - UNIFEM Australia**

Sue has held various Executive Leadership positions at State and National levels of Girl Guides Australia serving as Deputy Chief Commissioner from 1998-2002. International experiences include attending the UN General Assembly Special Session on Women in New York in 2000. As a member of the Australian Government delegations, she has attended the UN Special Session on Children in 2002 and the Commission on the Status of Women in 2006. She joined the UNIFEM Australia National Committee in 2002 and was elected Vice President in 2005. From 2003-2007 she was actively engaged as a member of the National Leadership Group in UNIFEM Australia's launch of the new Australian initiative- the White Ribbon Campaign. Sue is currently the President of UNIFEM Australia.

### **Susan Groenhout - View Clubs of Australia**

Born and raised in Sydney, I followed a career in nursing largely spent in aged care. During this period I spent a number years living in both Malaysia and Indonesia. The years in Malaysia and home schooling three children, one of whom was in high school, made me realise how easily we 'take for granted' the ease of access to education within our society. I joined VIEW Clubs of Australia 15 years ago at the time that The Smith Family was beginning the ED-U-CATE Program, providing scholarships to disadvantaged Australian children. This program has now become the Learning for Life Program which continues to transform the lives of Australian children and their families. My ongoing commitment to advancing the voice of women within our communities and to equal opportunity has been the focus of these years. I have held senior roles within VIEW Clubs of Australia and recently concluded a term as National Vice President.

### **Sharyl Scott - Zonta International**

Sharyl is currently the Principal of a State Primary School in NSW and a dedicated teacher with a strong belief in social values and equity. She has been a member of Zonta International for nearly 20 years holding board positions at both club and district level. Sharyl has been the Zonta International District 24 and District 23 delegate to AWC since 2005, and has served as AWC Vice President since 2008. She strongly supports initiatives in the wider community to support the development of women and children. Sharyl is married with 2 children, and has interests in the Arts, reading, travel and walking National Parks.

## AWC MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

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### Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement

[www.alrm.org.au](http://www.alrm.org.au)

The Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM) provides legal aid through advice and representation and other support services to the Aboriginal people of South Australia. Our legal aid program includes criminal, civil, family and child protection legal services. We also provide other services such as community legal education, restorative justice, low income support, Aboriginal visitor's scheme, juvenile justice, and financial counselling. Our Board of governance is made up of 10 Aboriginal community members and is chaired by Frank H Lampard OAM, a Ngarrindjeri Elder. We have offices in Adelaide, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Ceduna and Murray Bridge.



### Australian Bosnian Women's Cultural Association

[www.speakout.org.au/abwca04-05.htm](http://www.speakout.org.au/abwca04-05.htm)

Australian Bosnian Women's Cultural Association (ABWCA) is a member of AWC and CALD Women's Network. ABWCA collaborates with Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, along with numerous other women's organisations, forums and groups. ABWCA is established as a community response to social and cultural needs of women from Bosnian background, residing in Australia. A group of enthusiastic women, on a voluntary basis, has undertaken activities for community capacity building in the Bosnian community. As a result of their great commitment to women, children and family issues, they developed and realised a range of projects and programs, aimed to have women together to share mutual interests, to be empowered by information, education, knowledge and skills and to be able to take a more proactive role in their lives, families, community and broader society.



### Australian Church Women Inc

[www.acwnational.org.au](http://www.acwnational.org.au)

In 1960 plans were made to facilitate the linking of Women's Inter-Church Councils already existing in all States and Territories. An Interim Planning committee was set up by the then Australian Council of Churches to draft a Constitution, which was ratified in 1965. ACW Inc. seeks to unite Christian Women across denominational boundaries to promote peace, understanding and unity through faith and love in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It became incorporated on 2009. ACW Inc. is linked with The Fellowship of The Least Coin, a global movement of prayer for peace, justice and reconciliation. It is responsible for the Winifred Kiek Scholarship Fund, which enables women to do further study in an area which will better equip them for service in the church and community. Observance of the World Day of Prayer is encouraged. ACW Inc. participates in the Asian Church Women's Conference through an Australian representative on the General Committee. It maintains relationships and dialogue with the National Council of Churches of Australia, other ecumenical bodies and member denominations. The National Conference is held biennially with each State and Territory having the right to host the National Conference and provide the National Executive in rotation. The National Executive for October 2009 - October 2011 is based in South Australia. The Theme for its term is "Turning Darkness into Light". ACW Inc. has been a member of AWC Inc. since its inception.



## Australian Federation of Medical Women

[www.afmw.org.au](http://www.afmw.org.au)

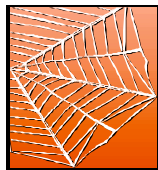
AFMW seeks to promote the interests of Australian women doctors in matters relating to their professional lives and to act to represent medical women in all matters of mutual interest at national and international levels relating to our patients. The first State Branch of AFMW was formed in Victoria in 1896. AFMW is affiliated with the Medical Women's International (MWIA). Formed in 1919, MWIA now has membership from 86 countries across 5 continents. MWIA is represented on the World Health Organisation, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and UNICEF. AFMW's aims and goals are: to promote the cooperation of Medical Women in different countries and to develop friendship and understanding between Medical Women throughout the world; to actively work against gender related inequalities in the medical profession between female and male doctors including career opportunities and economical aspects; to offer medical women the opportunity to meet so as to confer upon questions concerning the health and wellbeing of humanity; and to overcome gender-related differences in health and healthcare between women and men, between girlchild and boychild throughout the world.



## Catholic Women's League Australia

[cwlanational@bigpond.com](mailto:cwlanational@bigpond.com)

Catholic Women's League Australia (CWLA) seeks to promote and support the formation of women to meet contemporary challenges; liaise with other organisations and faith communities for the respect of human rights with particular focus on women and children. Further we promote the spiritual, social, cultural and intellectual formation of women and uphold the dignity of women and encourage their participation in social and public life. CWLA is a NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. We are a Member Organisation of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisation (WUCWO) which has 5 million members worldwide. WUCWO represents its member organisations at ECOSOC in New York and Geneva, the ILO in Geneva, UNESCO in Paris, FAO in Rome and the Council of Europe Strasbourg. Our National Executive moves from state to state every two years. Currently the Executive resides in Victoria under the Presidency of Madge Fahy.



## Conflict Resolving Women's Network Australia Inc

[robyn@gaspari.com.au](mailto:robyn@gaspari.com.au)

CRWNA was formed in 2004 as an NGO and its main purpose is to make training affordable and accessible for all. CRWNA hopes this initiative will help people in isolated areas to have access to conflict resolution and problem solving skills and strategies. CRWNA is prepared to travel anywhere in Australia to make this initiative work for you and your organisation or local community. In the past few years CRWNA has been privileged to work with a number of women's refuges in NSW and has become increasingly aware of the continuing family violence and the homelessness of so many Australian families. CRWNA is also working with Lifeline H2H and is concerned with the rising number of suicides and the need to advocate for funding for both suicide prevention and suicide bereavement for the families. These experiences have impacted on CRWNA to work in partnership with AWC to increase advocacy to all levels of Government, the Business Sector, Community Support Groups and individuals to recognise that this is a whole of community problem that cannot be resolved without united effort.



## Council on the Ageing Australia

[www.cota.org.au](http://www.cota.org.au)

The Council on the Ageing (COTA) protects and promotes the well-being of all seniors.

COTA is an independent consumer organisation run by and for senior Australians.

COTA has been serving the interests of Australian Seniors since 1951.

COTA has been very active in lobbying for the increase in the aged pension. This is very important for single older women, the majority of recipients.



## Girl Guides Australia Inc

[www.girlguides.org.au](http://www.girlguides.org.au)

'Our Mission is to enable girls and young women to become confident, self respecting, responsible community members'.

GGA is currently celebrating the Centenary of World Guiding. Over 3000 members attended the launch of this important anniversary at Girls Celebrate in Brisbane in September 2009. Since then, and with generous assistance and funding through the Office for Women, GGA has developed several resources and held a number of major events to highlight this very special year. GGA launched two partnerships at Girls Celebrate with Clean Up Australia and UNICEF Australia. Of significance is the Centenary Service Challenge which is enabling girls to learn about the importance of education for girls in achieving the Millennium Development Goals whilst raising funds to help UNICEF support the education of girls in Papua New Guinea. This fits well with the new direction of our World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, the international organisation of which GGA is a foundation member, which has determined the need for girls and young women in Guiding to be at the forefront of advocacy and to achieve the goal to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015 - Girls worldwide say 'together we can change our world'.

GGA was thrilled and proud when the Prime Minister declared that 2010 would be 'The Year of the Girl Guide' acknowledging the contribution that Guiding has made to the Australian community since 1910. The past year has also seen GGA closer to achieving the goal to reposition and in particular with the assistance of Dr Peter Shergold of the Centre of Social Impact and Richard Fleming from Bain and Company, GGA has revised the Strategic Plan and agreed to an exciting 2015 Aspiration 'To be Australia's leading organisation for girls and young women in leadership and personal development'. Some courageous decisions made by the Board will enable a new governance and management structure to be implemented in 2011.



## Hindu Women's Council of Australia

[www.hinducouncil.com.au/hinduwomencouncil.html](http://www.hinducouncil.com.au/hinduwomencouncil.html)

The Hindu Women's Council of Australia (HWCA) Ltd is an umbrella organisation representing the interests of all Hindu women living in Australia, irrespective of their caste or country of origin. The objectives are to: articulate issues that concern Hindu women at the Local, State and National levels in Australia; negotiate with the Government at all levels or other organisations/associations in matters concerning Hindu women's culture and religion; organise functions promoting Hindu culture and religion to foster cooperation among participating organisations; act as a non-political, non-sectarian, non-profit organisation to promote legitimate social, cultural, educational and religious needs of Hindu women in Australia; support the establishment of any charitable institution for the benefit of Hindus and the overall community; function as an information source for schools, general community; publish materials promoting HWCA activities; arrange seminars, conferences etc to promote better understanding of Hindu culture and religion in the multi-cultural Australian community and overseas; represent the Hindu community at official functions such as opening of Parliament and Australia Day celebrations; present a unified Hindu viewpoint on various current social issues relevant to the multi-cultural Australian society at conferences and in submissions to Government institutions; and, publicise the existence of the Council by advising media, Local Councils and State and Federal Governments.



## Mothers Union Australia

[www.mu.org.au](http://www.mu.org.au)

MU Australia - part of the Worldwide Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union aim and purpose is to demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities Worldwide through the nurture of family in its many forms. MU is a charity within the Anglican church and operates in 81 countries with over 4 million members. In Australia there are approximately 9000 members working in all 23 Dioceses. We support overseas projects in developing countries e.g. Literacy Circles, Parenting Programs, and Family Life Programs and promote and teach good health practices. At the local level we run Parenting Programs, work with Indigenous people and Immigrant groups, as well as meeting the needs of families in our communities as they arise. We are a "grass roots" organisation of volunteers. The well being of families, especially women and children, is a major concern to us.



## Muslim Women's National Network Australia Inc

[www.mwnna.org.au](http://www.mwnna.org.au)

Muslim Women's National Network of Australia (MWNNA) Inc continued with its bridge building events with the aim to promote understanding and engagement between Muslim women and other sections of the community. The goal is to develop more harmonious and positive attitudes and reduce the susceptibility of Australians to biased and separatist thinking by dispelling myths about Muslim women, exploring common interests and concerns and building friendly relations between Muslims and Non-Muslims. Also, to facilitate Muslim women's access to resources, opportunities, skills and knowledge necessary to address issues which hinder their development and empowerment, MWNNA in conjunction with its Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria, partnering with other community organisations, educational institutions and government agencies, undertook successful capacity building training programs in each State in empowering and mentoring Muslim women in their communities.



## **National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Ltd**

[www.ncjwa.org.au](http://www.ncjwa.org.au)

NCJWA was established by the late Dr. Fanny Reading MBE in 1923. NCJWA's Mission is: To promote social justice, welfare, and the advancement of women in Jewish and general communities. We address issues of community, education, Status of Women and Israel. NCJWA's Vision is: To further the organisation's relevance to the Jewish and wider community which it serves and represents. In March this year NCJWA hosted Dr Sharon Shenhav as Scholar in Residence. Sharon is an international advocate for women's issues. She travelled to all Sections, meeting with Rabbis, students, politicians, Office for Women, Israeli Embassy, University of Canberra, corporate sector, women of Jewish and other religions. Rysia Rozen accompanied Sharon to Canberra and Adelaide. AWC's members joined them at those meetings. In May, a delegation of 13 members travelled to Cape Town, South Africa, to attend the 21st International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) Convention. Delegates from 23 countries were represented and Sharon Gustafson of USA was elected as new President. Many Australian delegates joined the ICJW Executive. The Convention theme was: "Ubuntu" meaning together. All came back enthused and rejuvenated.



## **National Council of Women of Australia Ltd**

[www.ncwa.org.au](http://www.ncwa.org.au)

The National Council of Women of Australia is an umbrella organisation with over 350 affiliated member organisations and 500 individual members across six states and territories. We represent the views of a wide range of women's organisations from faith groups to advocacy groups, migrant and refugee organisations and service providers. We have been in existence since our beginnings in New South Wales in 1896 and continue to grow and provide a voice for a large number of small organisations across six states and one territory. NCWA's objectives are broadly humanitarian and educational, seeking to raise the awareness of women as to their rights and responsibilities as citizens and encouraging their participation in all aspects of community life.



## **Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association Australia Inc**

[www.ppseawa.org.au](http://www.ppseawa.org.au)

PPSEAWA (Australia) is a non-political, no-profit women's organisation with links to 22 countries in the Asia-Pacific region by its affiliation to PPSEAWA International, a UN accredited women's NGO formed in 1928. It aims to foster peace and cooperation and to promote women's social and economic development in the region. In Australia groups meet monthly and every 3-4 years an International PPSEAWA conference is held where delegates workshop a theme related to women's role in cultural understanding and peace building. The Australian President Coral Fleming led a delegation to the 24th International conference in Bali in May 2010 with the theme: "Fostering Peace through Strengthening Unity in Diversity". At the 2010 AGM the delegates reported it had been an extremely successful conference that met the goals of peace and harmony.



## The Salvation Army

[www.salvationarmy.org.au](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au)

One of the more distinctive denominations of the Christian Church, The Salvation Army operates as both a church and a network of social services, stemming from its worship of God and its Christian values. There are currently 1,650,000 Salvationists (members) in over 113 countries. The Salvation Army is one of the largest and most diverse social welfare providers in the world. Our philosophy is that we can best express our love for God by compassionately reaching out to help people. In a typical week, The Salvation Army will provide people in need with an estimated 100,000 meals. It provides beds to 5,000 homeless people, rehabilitation to 500 addicted and refuge to 400 victims of domestic abuse. It also provides counselling to several thousand people.



## Soroptimist International (SI) Australia

[www.siswp.org](http://www.siswp.org)

Soroptimist International Australia Inc has 83 clubs located in all states except NT and is the largest group of clubs in our South West Pacific Federation (SWP) of 13 countries. SWP is one of 4 federations of Soroptimist International. We focus on the needs of women and girls, providing support for many under-privileged women, through advocacy, fundraising to provide scholarships, support for aboriginal women, women prisoners, disabled and the needy. We do this in many different ways. Some projects are developed by clubs, some initiated and progressed by regions as was the bushfire relief project initiated by the Region of Victoria last year which was supported by other Australian clubs.

A national project this year has been coordinating a petition to the Australian government advocating free osteoporosis screening for women at menopause and men over 60 years to determine the likelihood of osteoporosis developing so that preventative procedures can be put in place. One of the projects developed by SI Region of Riverina over the last 12 months raised awareness of water problems for the towns of the Riverina by inviting water specialists to participate in fora in many towns and organising 'Walks 4 Water' in their towns and encouraging Soroptimists elsewhere in Australia to also 'Walk 4 Water'. This water project has just won an international best practice award from the International organisation.



## UNIFEM Australia

[www.unifem.org.au](http://www.unifem.org.au)

UNIFEM Australia began in 1989 and since evolved to include the National Committee based in Canberra, six chapters including Canberra, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney and International Women's Day (IWD) events across Australia. UNIFEM Australia is one of 17 National Committees including the U.S., United Kingdom, Sweden and Canada. The National Committees support UNIFEM through membership programmes, raising public awareness of gender and development issues and supporting regional programmes through fundraising.



## **VIEW Clubs of Australia**

[www.thesmithfamily.com.au](http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au)

In 1960, the General Secretary of The Smith Family, George Forbes, created VIEW Clubs of Australia (Voice, Interests and Education of Women), for women. At this time women were prohibited from joining Lions, Rotary and other service clubs. The purpose of VIEW then was to offer companionship and help deal with social isolation, particularly of rural women, and improve opportunities for women to have their say especially at government level, while recognising that they needed a network of support for this to happen. VIEW, an independent, non-biased, non-denominational organisation, has provided a critical support network for women and continued to play a pivotal role in enhancing opportunities for members to engage more fully in society, while helping disadvantaged children and families to increase their ability to participate too. In the late nineties when The Smith Family transformed from a welfare organisation to one helping children and families to break the cycle of disadvantage through education, VIEW changed its focus too. Today VIEW is a national, self-governed women's organisation with more than 21,000 members in 400 communities across the country.



**Zonta International**  
*Advancing the Status of Women Worldwide*

## **Zonta International District 24 Inc**

## **Zonta International District 23 Inc**

[www.zonta.org.au](http://www.zonta.org.au)

Zonta International is a world-wide organisation of over 32,000 business and professional women in more than a thousand Clubs in 66 countries. Zonta International seeks to advance the status of women by improving the legal, political, economic, educational, health and professional status of women, through service and advocacy at the global and local levels. Australia has been a part of Zonta since 1966, and is presently home to three Zonta Districts.

Zonta International District 24 Inc encompasses 27 Zonta Clubs in NSW and the ACT. Very active in service (contributing to local, District and international service projects) and advocacy (eg. making District submissions on human rights, paid parental leave, and the women's health policy), priorities for 2010-2012 include inspiring the community to advance the status of women, and collaborating extensively with other clubs and the general community to achieve our objects. For more information about District 24 visit [www.zontadistrict24.org](http://www.zontadistrict24.org)

Zonta International District 23 Inc encompasses 36 Zonta Clubs in Victoria, Tasmania, SA, WA and NT. With such a significant geographical dispersal, the service and advocacy interests of Zonta Clubs are naturally highly diverse. Zonta Clubs take on a wide variety of service projects in their own local community as well as maintaining a substantial commitment to the projects funded by the Zonta International Foundation. More information about Zonta District 23 is available at [www.zontadistrict23.org.au](http://www.zontadistrict23.org.au)

## AWC Public Officer

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### **Coral Fleming**

A graduate in medical science from the University of Queensland in 1957, Coral worked as a research biochemist in the Dept of Medicine UQ, a secondary mathematics teacher in Melbourne and Canberra and a distance education specialist in the Northern Territory before retiring from the paid workforce in 1987. She became involved with voluntary women's organisations after joining the Pan Pacific and SE Asia Women's Association in Canberra in 1988 and has represented Australia at five different International PPSEAWA Conferences since then in Thailand, Tonga, Cook Is, New Zealand and Indonesia. As national president she led the Australian delegation of twelve to the 24th International PPSEAWA conference in Bali, Indonesia in May 2010. Coral was President of the ACT group from 1998-2000, a Vice-President of PPSEAWA (AUST) from 2001 to 2007 & National President 2007-10. She represented PPSEAWA on the Australian Women's Coalition from 2003 to 2008 and remained as Public Officer since then. Coral is an Honorary Life Member of both the National Council of Women of the ACT & PPSEAWA (ACT) and a member of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women.

## AWC Coordinator

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### **Dr Frances Panopoulos**

Frances is a Social Policy Consultant and the AWC's Coordinator. Her professional experience covers the private, public, academic and NGO sectors. Her public service has included policy and program roles with the Australian Government Departments of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA); Defence; and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. In her work with the AWC she has been a key contributor to several projects and policy documents, including: the AWC's invited submission on the Australian Government's New National Women's Health Policy (2009); and the AWC's consultation report on a new national model of long-term care for survivors of sexual violence (2010). She is a committed advocate for women's issues, with a particular interest in: mental health reform; inter- and intra-cultural issues; and the translation of community and academic concerns into well-informed public policy. She holds a PhD, Master of Psychology (Applied) Hons and Bachelor of Science (Psychology) Hons.