



December 2014

Newsletter

President's report

This has been a very busy year!

At the beginning of the year we met with the former Minister of Local Government the Hon Jeanette Powell, highlighting issues raised by our members. Jeanette, who is a life member of ALGWA, retired at the November State election; in March she ceased being the Minister. Before that, however, she sent us a letter, which can be read here:

<http://www.algwa.com.au/manager/resources/powell-letter-2.pdf>

In May we held our very successful annual conference in Eltham, hosted by the Shire of Nillumbik. Victorian State Minister for Women's Affairs Hon Heidi Victoria opened the conference and it was closed by Shadow Minister for Women Danielle Green.

Keynote speaker Mary Crooks AO of the *Victorian Women's Trust* told the conference Australian women were the second in the world to achieve the vote. She then detailed the extraordinary sexism faced by our first woman Prime Minister Julia Gillard, and spoke of the *Purple Sage* movement and Cathy McGowan's victory in the Federal seat for Indi last year.

Where the City meets the country ... supporting community leadership showcased a smorgasbord of topics. Nillumbik *Citizen of the Year* Amanda Gibson spoke about *The Tree Project*, a worldwide blacksmithing project to forge an Australian gum tree honouring those who died in the 2009 bush fires. Conference delegates also visited the tree. Details can be seen here:

www.treeproject.abavic.org.au

Three of the five women Mayors of 2013 from the Victorian western region explained how they worked together for their area, supported each other and became a force to be reckoned with. Boroondara's Innovation Leader Rowena Morrow gave examples of innovation in Councils and how innovation can build community leadership.

Kellie Nagle from the Municipal Association of Victoria told why councils should *Take a Stand* on

domestic violence and detailed what councils were doing and what was working.

Whitehorse CEO and *Year of Women in Local Government* ambassador Noelene Duff revealed the low levels of women's representation at all levels of government and in business. I detailed ALGWA's 50:50 gender equity awards which aim to lift women's participation in local government.

Life membership of ALGWA was awarded to former Whitehorse Mayor and Moira Shire councillor Jessie McCallum, who served five terms on two councils and was twice Mayor of Whitehorse.

I would like to pay tribute to four of our executive who did not continue after this year's AGM: Jean Wise OAM, Pam McLeod, Cheryl Bromfield, and Deputy Mayor of Strathbogie Shire Colleen Furlanetto. Jean has been ALGWA's longest-serving Treasurer. We are indebted to her contribution to supporting women in local government. Pam is a former President and helped run our Bursary Award. Cheryl was our Rural Vice-President and also helped with the Award. Deputy Mayor Colleen made a valuable contribution as the ALGWA rural representative and organised our 2013 conference.

Our annual forum for female Mayors also took place in May, and was held in conjunction with the Victorian Local Governance Association. The forum gives Mayors the chance to talk about issues, learn from each other, and learn from previous Mayors. It was attended by the Minister for Women's Affairs, Hon Heidi Victoria.

Once again, we have hosted a women's delegation from China. This has become an annual visit, which we hold jointly with the National Council of Women (Victoria), and the Municipal Association of Victoria kindly provides us with a room. About 30 women attended the event and we talked about a number of issues. Members of the Chinese delegation were particularly interested in our work on domestic violence and on getting women elected to local government.

On September 25 we held our annual Bursary Award at Parliament House, Melbourne. In November we commemorated the centenary of women being given the right to stand for local government in Victoria (see reports below).

In October I was honoured to be named as one of the *100 Women of Influence* in the Westpac/Fairfax list. I was nominated for my work as twice being Mayor of the City of Boroondara, President of ALGWA Vic, on the Board of ALGWA, as well as my work with the Boroondara Family Violence network.

At the recent Mayoral elections 30 women were successful, equalling the record. That is a wonderful achievement – congratulations to all. Three members of the Victorian executive have been elected Mayor for the coming year – Cr Helen Coleman (Metro Vice President); Cr Felicity Frederico (Bayside); and myself.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Cr Raelene Carr of Whitehorse, who has been our ‘official’ photographer.

Lastly, I would like to thank the hard working ALGWA executive. As a team, we work well together. Despite the tyranny of distance, we have managed to meet regularly and hold teleconferences. I would particularly like to thank Helen Harris OAM for the huge amount of work and countless hours she puts in as Honorary Secretary. Without her efficiency our organisation would not be able to run as well as it does.

On behalf of the executive I wish all members a Merry Christmas and a healthy and productive 2015.

**Cr Coral Ross
President**



Bursary Award

Our Bursary Award ceremony this year was held at Parliament House, with special guest speaker Dr Sally Cockburn aka *Dr Feelgood*. We had 13 applicants for the Award, which is worth \$1000 to be used by an officer to help with her tertiary studies. More than 60 people attended the event. Special thanks must go to the organising committee led by Cr Raylene Carr, for its excellent arrangements; these included having the previous winner, Marie Downie of Baw Baw Shire, give a most heart-warming speech. The 2015 winner is Katrina Williams, Senior Landscape Architect in the Environment and Sustainable Living Department at Boroondara Council; Katrina is undertaking a Masters Degree in Urban Planning and Environment at RMIT. We look forward to her presentation during the State Conference.



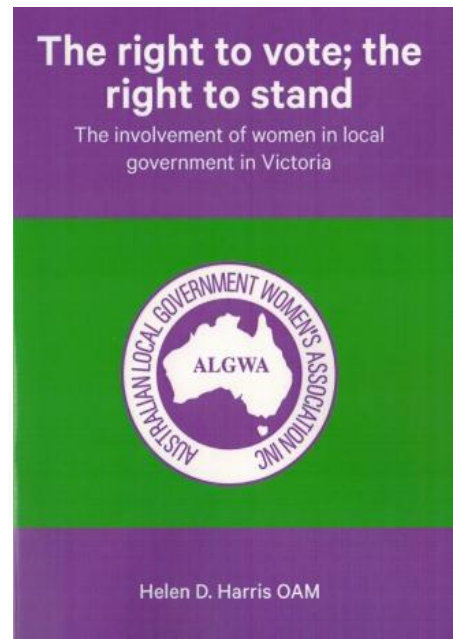
Katrina Williams (centre) with two of the judges, Cr Raylene Carr (left) and Life Member Pam McLeod (right).

Centenary celebration

As mentioned above, ALGWA, along with the MAV took part in the VLGA-organised function at the Hobson’s Bay Substation on 6 November, at which our publication *The right to vote; the right to stand* was launched. Our Secretary, Cr Helen Harris OAM, researched and wrote this history of women’s involvement in local government, including short biographies of the first seven women councillors. Helen is a professional historian and uncovered a large amount of previously unknown detail relating to women voting in local government elections, from the 1850s. As part of the project she compiled a comprehensive listing of every woman councillor since the first, Mary Roberts in 1920. *The right to vote* is selling well, the first edition having sold out in three weeks. Three additional names were provided in time for the second print run, but no more have come to light, so hopefully it really *is* a complete listing of every woman councillor in Victoria. The discount price to members of \$5 is less than the cost price; it retails at \$15 and postage costs vary depending on quantity and distance to delivery. Contact Helen for further details.

The MC of this event was Mary Crooks AO, CEO of the *Victorian Women’s Trust*, who had been a speaker at our State conference earlier this year. Other speakers included ALGWA Life Member and former Minister of Local Government, Jeanette Powell, who represented the new Minister, Tim Bull, while Heidi Victoria, the Minister for Women’s Affairs, sent a video presentation as she was unable to be present.

Among the more than 100 in attendance were former ALGWA office bearers Morna Sturrock AM (National Secretary 1972, Victorian Secretary 1975) and Priscilla Pescott OAM (Victorian President 1981–1982, National President 1986–1987). Also present was the first woman elected to Footscray Council, Sika Kerry OAM, (1972–1977) who is featured on one of the eight display panels we had prepared for the occasion. The panels are now available for short-term loan to any Council or library that would like to use them to raise awareness of the centenary. The only expense in using the panels would be the cost of transportation. The panels measure 930 x 600 cm, are made of coreflute, and can be attached by Velcro or similar. To date they are booked until early March and for May, but other months are free. Please contact Helen for further details.



The right to vote; the right to stand details the circumstances of how women were allowed to stand for council., and contains a list of all women who have served as councillors in Victoria.



Sika Kerry OAM pictured with a display of cartoons of her, published during her terms as a councillor.)



Morna Sturrock AM and Jeanette Powell

Photos from the Centenary celebration



(Standing, left to right) Priscilla Pescott OAM, Helen Harris OAM and Coral Ross; (seated) Morna Sturrock AM.

(L-R) Mary Crooks AO, Ruth McGowan OAM, Samantha Dunn and Linda Bennett.



Joanne Smith and Maree Cilia from City of Hobsons Bay

State Election Results

While a number of current Councillors stood in the November State Election, it would appear that only one of our members was elected. Warm congratulations go to Samantha Dunn of Yarra Ranges Shire, who was elected to the Upper House as one of the reps for the Eastern Metro Region. Samantha would be known to many people as the former President of the VLGA and Chair of the Eastern Transport Coalition.

As a result of the successful election of another Monash councillor, former Mayor Stefanie Perri has returned as a Councillor there after a countback. We look forward to once again seeing her at ALGWA functions.

2015 Activities

National Conference:

The ALGWA National Conference *Step Up & Top Up at the Barossa* will be held from 25–28 March 2015 at the Barossa Valley, South Australia. Among the keynote speakers is journalist and presenter of the *Kitchen Cabinet* on the ABC, Annabel Crabb. Details of accommodation and the programme can be seen here: <http://algwaconf2015.com/wordpress/>

State Conference:

Our own Annual State Conference *Imagine* will be hosted by the Mitchell Shire Council at a venue in Seymour on 22–23 May 2015. Further details will be distributed as they come to hand.

ALGWA Victoria Branch Executive Committee 2014 – 2016

President – Cr Coral Ross [coral.ross@boroondara.vic.gov.au]

Metro Vice-President – Cr Helen Coleman

Rural Vice President – Barbara Abley AM

Secretary – Cr Helen Harris OAM [helen.harris@whitehorse.vic.gov.au]

Treasurer – Cr Felicity Frederico

Metro Rep – Cr Jennifer Yang

Rural Rep – Cr Jill Parker

Interface Rep – Cr Meralyn Klein

Committee Member – Helen Relph

