



September 2015

# Newsletter

## President's report

We are delighted to announce that the State's first female Governor has agreed to become our first Patron!

Linda Dessau is a strong supporter of women and the ALGWA executive thought it highly appropriate that she should be asked to be our Patron. We look forward to a great relationship. Please see below for further details on the new Governor.

We were also delighted that a large number of female councillors were able to attend the Melbourne Town Hall and be photographed in the Melbourne City Council chamber. The event was to mark the centenary of women being allowed to stand for local government and all 214 female councillors were invited to attend. We are grateful to Melbourne City Councillors and particularly Deputy Lord Mayor Cr Susan Riley, for their support and hosting the event. We were thrilled that the Minister for Local Government Hon Natalie Hutchins again supported our events and took part in the photograph. As well as being on our website, the photograph and accompanying article featured in *Local Government Focus* and can be seen here:

<http://www.lgfocus.com.au/editions/2015-07/historic-photo-celebrates-centenary.php>

In April we held our annual female Mayors forum hosted by the City of Moreland, together with the VLGA. The forum is held annually half way through the Mayoral term. It was very well attended, with more than half of the 30 women Mayors in attendance. The Minister for Local Government Hon Natalie Hutchins attended and we had a surprise visit from the shadow Local Government Minister David Davis. Thanks again to Metro Vice President Cr Helen Coleman for her organisation of this event.

Finally, the ALGWA executive is busy finalising plans for a mentoring program and developing a business plan. Those at our recent conference in Seymour would have heard the Minister for Local Government Hon Natalie Hutchins announce a \$20,000 grant to assist the ALGWA to develop a Business Plan and advance mentoring and support from the organisation. Our intention is to provide mentors for existing Councillors and candidates. Please watch out for details over the coming months.

**Cr Coral Ross**  
**President**

## Conference Report

The 2015 Annual Conference was hosted by the Shire of Mitchell and held at the Seymour TAFE. The Conference was opened by Hon Natalie Hutchins, the Minister for Local Government, who announced that ALGWA had been awarded a grant of \$20,000 to assist with mentoring and developing a business plan. We are very grateful to the Minister for her ongoing support. Other speakers at the conference included Ron Ben-David, the chair of the Essential Services Commission on the hot topic of rate capping; Suzanna Sheed MP for Shepparton, on running a grass roots campaign; Katie Williams, the 2014 Bursary Award Winner on how the Bursary had helped her; Pam McDonald on dealing with bullying and other challenging situations in a work environment and Mitchell's Young Citizen of the Year Audrey Flannery who spoke on her work for the Breast Cancer Foundation. The advertised dinner speaker, Moira Kelly, was unfortunately ill, but sent along her inspiring son Ahmed, a Paralympian, who wowed the audience with his enthusiasm for life, so much so that as one person remarked, his mother was not missed at all!



Mitchell Shire organisers and some of the ALGWA committee



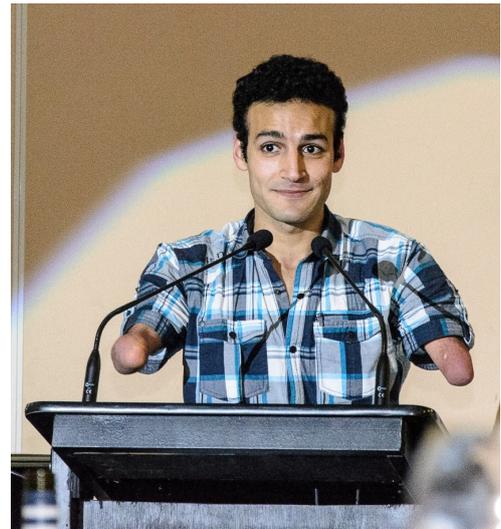
Katie Williams



Audrey Flannery

Our panel of female politicians spoke of life in the political sphere and Jenny Gray, the CEO of Zoos Victoria spoke about the challenges that we all face in life, and in preserving some of the unique species that share the planet with us. We also learnt of the lives of some of our Councillor forebears and the challenges they faced, and were updated on the latest statistics regarding women in public life. The Opposition Local Government Minister, David Davis, closed the conference.

As usual, our indefatigable member Cr Raylene Carr, was there to photograph the event for us.



Ahmed Kelly



Politicians' panel: (from the left) Danielle Green MLA, Stephanie Ryan MLA, Jaclyn Symes MLC, Wendy Lovell MLC



A new addition at this Conference was a free massage during breaks. This was enthusiastically taken up, so much so that there seemed to be a perpetual queue.

## **Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria**

On 1 July 2015, the Honourable Linda Dessau AM was sworn in as Victoria's 29th Governor, the first female in the role. Governor Dessau was born in Melbourne in 1953, and was educated at St Catherine's Girls' School, matriculating in 1969, before attending the University of Melbourne, where she gained the degree of LLB (Hons). In 1975 she was admitted as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria. She was appointed a Magistrate in 1986 and a Judge of the Family Court of Australia in 1995, serving for 18 years.

Immediately before her appointment as Governor, she was President of the Melbourne Festival, Chair of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Victorian Regional Committee and a national Board member of the Trust, a Commissioner of the Australian Football League, a Trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria, a Board member and former Chair of AFL Sportsready and Artsready, a Board member of the Unicorn Foundation, and a Patron of Sports Connect.

In 2010 the Governor was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to family law, and the community.



## Annual General Meeting

This was held during the conference, with President Coral Ross providing an overview of the last year's activities. There were no elections, as office bearers serve for two years, but a swap of positions, with Jennifer Yang becoming treasurer, and Felicity Frederico the Metro Representative. Long serving committee member Helen Relph announced her resignation from the committee, which was accepted with regret. Helen was responsible for organising a number of functions for us, including the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Old Government House Canberra in 2011, and more recently, the historic photo at the Melbourne Town Hall. We will miss her wise and generous assistance.

The committee subsequently seconded Cr Meghan Hopper of Moreland Council to Helen Relph's position.

Meghan is a strong supporter of women, formerly worked for Emily's List, and is completing a PhD in journalism and the representation of women candidates in federal elections. She is currently Moreland Mayor, (only the second in its history) and the Councillor responsible for the Status of Women. We hope Meghan enjoys her time on the committee.



Meghan Hopper

## Bursary Award

Applications for the 2015 Bursary Award are now open. Details can be seen on our website

<http://algwa.com.au/about/bursary.php>

The winner will be announced at an afternoon tea function at Parliament House on 8 October; we will be using an online booking service again, and details will be forwarded closer to the date.

Once again we have to thank Cr Raylene Carr and her hardworking team for undertaking the arrangements and judging of the Award.

## Networking luncheons

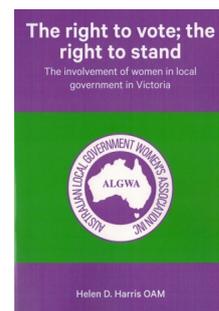
Our North East branch remains active, and their networking lunch is to be held at the *Tuileries* restaurant in Rutherglen on the 21<sup>st</sup> August. RSVP is required by the 11<sup>th</sup> August, to

[Cr.rhonda.sanderson@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:Cr.rhonda.sanderson@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au)

The committee have decided to arrange networking lunches in various districts, commencing in a rural area, with Ararat on the 4 September. Rural Vice President Barbara Abley AM CGSJ will be the guest speaker. The venue of this event is *Vines Café*, 74 Barkly St. Ararat, 12.30 for a 1.00 p.m. start. Enquiries to Cr Glenda McLean on [gimclean.01@gmail.com](mailto:gimclean.01@gmail.com)

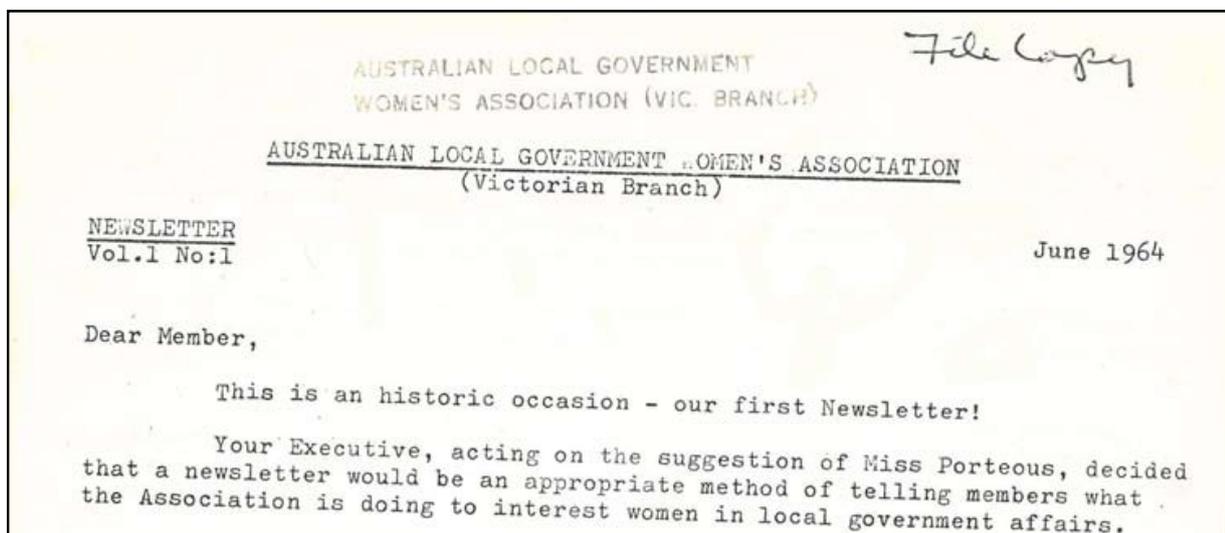
## Publication

A 3rd edition of our book *The right to vote; the right to stand* is now available for purchase at a members' discount of \$5 plus postage. (It is \$15 for non-members.) This edition has some 20 additional names of past Councillors.



## From the Archives

Our first ever Newsletter was issued in June 1964, and a copy is held at the National Library in Canberra (Figure 1).



This first issue consisted of three typewritten pages, and was prepared by the then secretary Jean Manning of Hawthorn. The treasurer was Mrs J. Miller of Parkville, and the annual membership subscription was one guinea – one pound one shilling, equivalent to \$2.10. At that time there were 31 women Councillors, and they were listed. The Newsletter was issued after the Bendigo conference and contained details of some of the activities during the conference. Those in attendance included Alderman Marjorie Propsting, president of the NSW Branch, Mrs N. Cameron, national president of the C.W.A. and Mrs G.N. Frost, president of the National Council of Women. One of the topics for discussion was the franchise, because it was limited at that time. Members debated whether we should support full adult franchise with compulsory voting or without compulsory voting, and it was decided that the president, Mrs. Hallenstein (a lawyer) should draft a questionnaire for the members to complete. (It was 1982 before the full adult franchise was legislated.)

A summary of the conference is available on our website, [www.algwa.com.au](http://www.algwa.com.au) under the *About Us* heading.

### 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 CGSJ  
 Secretary – Cr Helen Harris OAM [helen.harris@whitehorse.vic.gov.au]  
 Treasurer – Cr Jennifer Yang  
 Metro Rep – Cr Felicity Frederico  
 Rural Rep – Cr Jill Parker  
 Interface Rep – Cr Meralyn Klein  
 Committee Member – Cr Meghan Hopper