



Patron: The Governor of Victoria, The Hon Linda Dessau AC

Victorian Branch Newsletter – December 2019

President's Report



As the year comes to an end and this being my last note as President of ALGWA – Vic, I am delighted to have been part a of successful Macedon Ranges conference with wonderful feedback coming back to both MRC and also myself. Each committee member of ALGWA Vic has contributed over this year positively to encouraging further engagement with female councillors across our state. Much of the work goes unnoticed and being a volunteer on a committee can be a thankless task, therefore I am grateful for the support as President. We said thank you and goodbye to our amazing Intern for 2019, Nicola Voss, who performed a considerable amount of work in an exemplary fashion. Again we acknowledge the

support that VLGA continues to give our appointed interns with a hot desk at their office.

I am excited to see the strengthening of our Deakin partnership. The 2020 Bursary will be hosted by Deakin university for the first time. We have brought forward the Bursary and AGM as this is an election year. My personal interest in moving the AGM to earlier in the year is to encourage new female councillors to consider standing for a position on the ALGWA Vic committee. I will be standing down as President and as a committee member. In my humble opinion true leadership is sharing and encouraging other female councillors to consider a term on the committee. A great space to continue to grow your skill set and be supported by other leaders in the sector. ALGWA's mantra is to support woman in local government. I have met some incredible females councillors in my capacity as President over the last two years and I am very excited to see new blood come onto the committee and contribute to the sector. With the state government granting ALGWA \$17,000 towards our mentoring program assisting candidates and new councillors to be supported into elected office. I wish you well over the Christmas break. Lock in the bursary / AGM date for 2020, as I look forward to formally signing off as President and to welcome a new committee.

Cr Michelle Kleinert

Executive Officer's Report

As mentioned at this year's AGM, I will be retiring from this position at our next AGM, having completed ten years of handling the administration of the organization—six years as secretary, and then four in the newly-created position of Executive Officer, a combination of the secretary and treasurer positions. This position is an interesting one, and attracts a small hourly payment and a laptop. I'm happy to provide more details about the duties involved to anyone who is interested in taking on the position, and a summary will be included when nominations for office bearers are called for in February 2020.



When I first took on the position of secretary from the late Kaele Way AM, I received numerous boxes of records, some dating back to the 1970s. Over many months I have sorted and catalogued these records, and prepared lists and indexes. Some of the information, such as a record of office bearers, and of the Councils who hosted Conferences, is on our website, along with a brief history of both the National and Victorian organisations. The Victorian records themselves were then lodged at Melbourne University Archives, while the National material was lodged with the National Library. Both of these institutions hold earlier material from the Association. The preparatory work undertaken will be useful if we are successful in obtaining a \$12,000 grant to undertake a special Centenary project—an online database of all Victorian women Councillors, thus rescuing many women who have been hidden from history. (Details of this project are given below.) To promote the centenary I have given a number of talks to local and family history organisations during the year, encouraging them to research their pioneer women Councillors. The material will also be useful for a future history of the organization and the people who have been devoted to it.

Helen Harris OAM

Our activities

Committee member Cr Sandra Wilson completed our submission to the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Australian Workplace, being conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Again this year, Deakin University hosted a leadership course for Indonesian women. Members Crs Coral Ross, and Steph Amir represented ALGWA, and we thank them for doing so.

'Our voice our vote', organized by the National Council of Women, for female secondary school students, was held once more at Parliament House. ALGWA was represented by committee members Crs Coral Ross and Sandra Wilson.

Commemoration of centenary



We know that some Councils are already preparing a list of activities to commemorate the centenary of the election of Mary Rogers to the City of Richmond Council in November 1920; what does your Council have planned? We are happy to publicise Councils' activities on our website and in our social media, please email details to helen.algwa@gmail.com.

In June 2018 we applied to the then Minister of Local Government, Maureen Kairouz, for funding for a number of grants to help with various projects, including an extension of the mentoring scheme. A separate grant application was for a project to commemorate the centenary of the first Victorian woman elected to a Council in 1920, by expanding and updating the details in our publication *The right to vote; the right to stand* onto a specially designed website. With a new LG Minister after the election, we renewed our grant applications, and in September this year were advised that we would receive a grant of \$17,000 to assist with our mentoring programme. We have now signed off on the agreement, which allows for mentoring of not only new Councilors in next year's election, but mentoring support for those women who were elected in 2016 and are considering whether to stand for re-election.

Our centenary grant application was refused, and has now gone to the Minister for Women. We are awaiting a decision from her.

Bursary High Tea

The City of Melbourne once more hosted our Bursary High Tea in April; we were extremely grateful for their support, as it enabled us to put any profit towards funding of the Bursary, now worth \$1,750. Our guest speaker was the Lord Mayor, Sally Capp, and the winner was Adelle Mansour of Darebin Council. Adelle has been employed in local government for eight years and is currently studying for a Master of Public Health degree at the University of Melbourne. She is the Program Liaison Officer at the East Preston Community Centre, where she works to provide services to the local community, including the establishment of a community garden at the adjoining public housing complex.

The judges were also impressed with the entry from Eva Wu of the City of Melbourne, and decided to award her a Special Commendation and \$250. Eva has been employed in local government for seven years, and is currently studying for a Master's degree in Project Management at RMIT. She is the Project Coordinator on the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal Program, the largest capital works investment in the city's history.

We also thank the judges, Barbara Abley AM, Cheryl Bromfield, Tony De Fazio, Pam McLeod, and Robin Matthews for the time they put into the assessments and Raylene Carr for all the behind the scenes work she puts into both the nomination process and the announcement and running of the event.

Applications for the 2020 Bursary will open earlier in 2020, in February, with details on our website www.algwa.com.au, Facebook and LinkedIn pages, and distributed via email.

The announcement of the winner of the 2020 Bursary will take place at a new venue, Deakin Downtown at the Docklands.

Please **SAVE THE DATE – Wednesday 25 March 2020**. A formal invitation will be distributed closer to the date.

State Conference:

Our State Conference was this year hosted by Macedon Ranges Council and featured a most interesting array of speakers and excursions. Below are some photos taken at the events during the conference.



Attendees with Mary Anne Thomas, MP for Macedon



Helen Harris OAM, Macedon Mayor Janet Pearce, Crs Rosie Clark, and Bev Columb and partner



Pam Robinson OAM, Angela Hughes, Danni Findlay



Cr Kathy Majdlik, Cr Natasha Gayfer, and Helen Coleman OAM



Dinner speaker Dr Amy Nethery, Deakin University



Llama Treks to Hanging Rock was one of the Sunday options for attendees

New members

Earlier this year we wrote to every female State Parliamentarian, inviting them to join ALGWA to show their support for women's participation in both the political sphere and as employees of local government. We thought that those who had been former Councillors themselves would be particularly supportive. We were disappointed in the poor overall response to our invitation, but are very grateful to Fiona Patten, Cindy McLeish and Roma Britnell, who did sign up, joining long time member Danielle Green. We also wrote to every Council CEO and Mayor, similarly inviting them to join, and were delighted when a number did. We welcomed Cardinia, Casey, Colac Otway, Mansfield, Mildura, Port Phillip and Yarra Ranges Councils. As we receive no ongoing government funding, membership is one way we can help to cover our running costs and provide the Bursary funding.

National Delegate's Report



The National AGM was held Blacktown NSW on 16 May 2019, as part of the National Conference. As required under the Constitution, I stood down as President after serving the maximum two terms. Cr Marianne Saliba, Mayor of Shellharbour Council NSW, was elected President, I was elected as Vice President, and Debra Thurley, President of the Tasmanian branch was elected as Treasurer. There were no nominations for Secretary. In line with the Constitution, a financial member can be seconded, and Flora Lepouras of Shellharbour Council was subsequently elected to the position.

The following motion was passed at the meeting, and has been referred to the new Board:

'We request that the Board - for all future ALGWA events - avoid booking and using venues that are associated with owners and operators of poker machines, noting the enormous social and economic harm caused by poker machines and the associated gambling addiction that poker machines cause to our residents and ratepayers.'

In June, together with Mayor Saliba I met with the Federal Minister for Local Government, Hon. Mark Coulton, and the shadow Minister for Local Government Jason Clare. Both were very productive meetings. We voiced the need for a national mentoring program and a survey of local government councillors and employees.

South Australia has held a series of events this year, including the unveiling of a bronze statue, to celebrate the centenary of the election of Susan Grace Benny to Brighton Council in 1919. Nationally the inaugural Susan Grace Benny award for gender equality was awarded as part of the Local Government Awards.

Elections in Western Australia has seen a jump in the number of women elected to Council. Following the half council elections 38.8% of councillors in WA are women. Tasmania still has the highest percentage of women councillors—39.9%, and Victoria has the third highest with 38.1% women elected at a general election.

Cr Coral Ross

Awards and honours

Coral Ross was this year inducted into the Victorian Women's Honour Roll <https://www.vic.gov.au/councillor-coral-ross>, and for the first time in the history of the organisation, four members of our Executive—Felicity Frederico; Helen Coleman; Marg Attley; and Jill Parker—were each awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in this year's Honours lists. Well done to all concerned.



From left: Committee members Helen Harris OAM and Helen Coleman OAM with recipient Cr Coral Ross.



Helen Coleman and Felicity Frederico



Marg Attley



Jill Parker

All pictured receiving their awards at Government House, Melbourne.

Committee members

President:	Cr Michelle Kleinert
Metro Vice President:	Helen Coleman OAM
Rural Vice President:	Barbara Abley AM CGSJ
Executive Officer:	Helen Harris OAM
Metro Representative:	Cr Sandra Wilson
Rural Representative:	Jill Parker OAM
Committee:	Marg Attley OAM
	Felicity Frederico OAM
	Cr Coral Ross

From the archives — 50 years ago

I am sure all Members who attended the 6th Conference at Mildura met Ex Cr. Mrs. Kathleen Richardson, Mildura's first woman councillor — her story of her efforts to become a councillor are most interesting: "With my husband & 2 children I arrived in Aust. in Dec 1922—Oct 26 saw us taking up virgin land in the Millewa country — between Mildura & the S.A. border. Here we cleared land & endeavoured to grow wheat but between droughts & depression, by June 1934 we were in a hopeless position & so left the farm & decided to live in Mildura. Prior to the second World War I started taking an interest, particularly at that time, in things that affected women and the home. Was secretary of the [Mildura] Branch of the Victorian Housewives Assn. among other things. I often wrote letters to the paper so that my name became known to the people. The first suggestion that I should stand for Council actually came from the Editor of Sunraysia Daily; this was in 1941. With the backing of a number of business men, I nominated & although I polled well, was unsuccessful. In 1942 no Municipal Elections were held. By 1943 I was working ... However in 1944, although still working, I decided to nominate again ... again I was defeated & this story was repeated in 1945, 46 & 47. However 1948 brought success and in that year I was the first candidate to reach a "four figure" mark. I served two full terms and should have been Mayor for the 1953/54 year, but this was more than the men could take although three of them did support me. This of course was the year of the Queen's first visit & the actual day she came to Mildura was my 52nd birthday. 1954 saw my defeat by a young man.

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