



December 2015

Newsletter

President's report — Christmas 2015

Not sure where the year has disappeared to, probably because it has been such a busy one!

We have held a number of events during the year and it has been great catching up with so many people. I would like to thank the Shire of Mitchell for hosting this year's conference. It was a great event with a wonderful array of interesting and informative speakers. It was also a great opportunity to network and catch up with friends. Next year our conference will be in Banyule and we will be in touch when the dates are confirmed.

We enjoyed the hospitality of the City of Melbourne when we celebrated the 100 years of women being allowed to stand for local government with a photograph of more than 70 of the current women councillors. The picture is on our website. We were delighted our new Patron, the Governor of Victoria, joined us for afternoon tea at Parliament House to announce our Bursary winner. The Governor's speech was very well received by all.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Cr Raylene Carr of Whitehorse, who has once again been our "official" photographer.

At the recent Mayoral elections, 27 women were elected Mayor. A special mention to Helene Cameron of Queenscliffe, who was elected Mayor for the fourth term consecutively and to Margaret Rae of Murrindindi elected for the third time consecutively plus Debra Swan from Strathbogie and Amanda Stevens from Port Phillip who stepped down after three straight years as Mayor.

We will also be in touch in the New Year regarding our mentoring programme. We will be offering training and asking for people to become mentors - to existing or newly elected councillors following the 2016 election.

Finally, I encourage you to give yourself a Christmas treat and see the film *Suffragette*. It has a very strong cast and amazing that it took 100 years to make the film. The film is set just before women in Victoria were allowed to stand for local government. It is worth remembering that Emmeline Pankhurst was gaoled twelve times in one year, just for wanting the vote, let alone the right to stand for council or parliament. In the film Emmeline, played by Meryl Streep says: 'We do not want to be law breakers. We want to be law makers.' I very much believe that with rights come responsibilities. With the right to vote comes the responsibility to take part in the democratic process. Next year we must encourage more women to stand in the October local government elections so that we have more than the current 34% representation level.

On behalf of the executive, I wish all members a Merry Christmas and a healthy and productive 2016.

Coral Ross
President



Bursary Award

Our Bursary Award this year was held at Parliament House, with our new Patron, the Governor of Victoria, The Hon. Linda Dessau AM, as special guest speaker. We had 12 applicants for the award, which is a scholarship worth \$1000, for an officer to help with their tertiary studies. More than 60 attended the event. Special thanks must go to the organising committee, led by Cr Raylene Carr, for their excellent arrangements. Pam McLeod handled the protocol arrangements which were quite extensive. The winner this year is Melissa Crane Senior Planning Officer, Murrindindi Council, who is studying a Graduate Diploma in Management through Swinburne University, a course specially tailored for local government and designed with the M.A.V. We look forward to her presentation during the State Conference. Subsequent to this year's Bursary award, the committee met and reviewed the amount given for the Bursary. It was decided to increase the value of the Bursary to \$1750 from 2016, as it has been the same amount for more than ten years.



The Bursary winner Melissa Crane, with The Hon Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria and Victorian (and National) President Cr Coral Ross.



From the left: Cr Raylene Carr, chair of the organising committee, former Presidents Pam McLeod and Priscilla Pescott OAM, current President Cr Coral Ross, Treasurer Cr Jennifer Yang, metro Vice President Cr Helen Coleman, The Hon. Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria, Rural committee member Cr Jill Parker, Metro committee member Cr Felicity Frederico, Rural Vice President Barbara Abley AM.

Some of the happy attendees at the Bursary Award



Speaking of the Bursary, we received an email recently from the 2013 winner, Marie Downie, of Baw Baw Shire. Marie wrote:

I wanted to share with ALGWA that I have now officially completed my studies – having graduated in 2014 with a Graduate Certificate Employment Relations, and will graduate shortly with a Masters Employment Relations. Again, I'd sincerely like to thank ALGWA for the bursary award that helped me realise my dream to pursue my first (and second) university degree. Your support and recognition helped spur me on, and I continue to try and 'pay it forward' in my position with Council by encouraging, supporting and facilitating others in their professional development. Please extend my thanks to the Committee, I am so wrapped to be able to share this achievement with you.

Marie has been extremely pro-active regarding gender equity issues, and provided the following details of a programme she initiated:

Paving the Way is a workplace prevention of men's violence against women project implemented by Baw Baw Shire Council, in partnership with Gippsland Women's Health, as part of a larger regional PMVAW Strategy. Baw Baw Shire Council was the first Council in the Gippsland region to undertake *Paving the Way*, with the project commencing in October 2013, and Wellington Shire Council following suit six months later.

Since implementation, Baw Baw Shire Council has raised awareness and knowledge of prevention of men's violence against women issues, both internally and with the wider community. Through various activities and training including active bystander workshops and community conversations participants have come away educated, equipped and empowered to make a difference in violence prevention.

With **Paving the Way** concluding in December 2015, a lasting outcome of the project has been the development of a strategic Equity Action Plan, aimed at promoting gender respectful relationships and equitable outcomes for all employees at Baw Baw Shire Council.

A gender equity audit was conducted within the organisation in 2015, with the results informing the development of a biennial gender action plan, which will lead the way for increased gender equity within the workplace.

The audit focused on gender representation within Council, equitable remuneration, access to employment opportunities and staff perceptions around gender equity. The audit findings were aligned with the seven quality standards of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* to allow Council to benchmark its performance against employers across Australia.

The resulting Equity Action Plan will sit within Council's internal functions to be overseen and delivered on by council employees. This will help to ensure that equity and the prevention of gender based violence is an enduring feature of workplace culture at Baw Baw Shire Council.

Baw Baw Shire Council has recently been recognised for its work towards gender equity, receiving the ALGWA National 50/50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity, Bronze Accreditation and Award.



The display panels prepared for the centenary function and book launch have been loaned to the Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation for a display at Doncaster, Whitehorse Council for a display during International Women's Day, Coburg Historical Society for a meeting and display and Footscray Historical Society for a display at their AGM, where our Secretary Helen Harris OAM was the guest speaker. She spoke on the topic of the history of women councillors, with an emphasis on local Footscray women. Any member wishing to borrow them is asked to please contact Helen on helen.harris@whitehorse.vic.gov.au

Networking luncheons

Our north-east region group held a luncheon at Rutherglen on 21 August. A great initiative was to invite women Councillors from the NSW side of the Murray to share in the networking opportunity.



The first of our proposed new Networking lunches was held at Ararat on 4 September. Organised by our Rural Vice President Barbara Abley AM and local member Glenda McLean, the lunch attracted more than 30 participants from across the region. Other ALGWA members in attendance were committee members Jill Parker and Meghan Hopper, former treasurer and life member Jean Wise OAM, and long-term member Rose Hodge. Further networking lunches are planned for early 2016.



Among those at the event were: (L–R) Cr Meghan Hopper; Kathy Prior, Manager Intergovernmental Relations, LGV; Jean Wise OAM; Cr Glenda McLean; Annette Jones, Mayor West Wimmera; Barbara Abley AM; and Cr Jill Parker.

In October committee members held a *Thank you* lunch for long time committee member Helen Relph, who retired at the last Annual General Meeting; President Coral presented her with a small gift in appreciation of all her efforts. Helen was the organiser of the 60th anniversary function, a reception and dinner held at Old Parliament House in Canberra in 2011, at which the Governor General Quentin Bryce paid tribute to past and present members. Helen also organised the historic photo shoot at the Melbourne Town Hall earlier this year and has been a quiet achiever in a number of other functions that we have conducted over the years.

From the Archives

Newsletter March 1985.

Interesting exchange at a recent meeting of Mansfield Shire Council, as reported in the *Mansfield Courier*:

Cr Anne Bell: Women are disadvantaged on the absentee voting roll because the husband's name appears first on the register and only he votes.

Cr Hec Stewart: That's because they're superior.

Cr Bell: Haven't you heard that women who aspire to equality with men have no ambition?

From the Archives (continued)

Members 1995/1996

Using old receipt books, we have been able to reconstruct a membership list of twenty years ago, and thought it might stir some memories among present-day readers of this *newsletter*. Those women marked with an * are known to have served on the committee at various times.

ANDERSON, Sandy*	LOFTUS, Elizabeth*
BASIC, T.*	LYONS, Victoria*
BLYTHE-BAILEY, Beverley *	McGRATH, Jenny
BROWN, Pat*	McGURGAN, Lesley*
BRYANT, Gwenda*	MURPHY, Anne*
BURRETT, Anne	NICHOLLS, Margaret*
COGDON, T.C.	NICHOLS, Susan
CRAWFORD, Cherie*	PEARSON, Melissa
FRIEDMANN, Helen*	PERRY, Dawn*
GILISPIE, Miriam	PLANTINGA, Andrea
GUILFOYLE, Helen*	PHELAN, Patricia
HARTIGAN, Ann	POWELL, Jeannette*
HOFFMAN, Audrey	RYAN, Susan
HORGERS, Helen	SMITH, Pamela
KERBY, Margo*	STOCKMAN, A.
KIERNAN, Liz	WALLACE, Marie*
KLEESH, Heather*	WARE, J.R.
LEE, F.	WELSH, Heather*
LEWIS, G.	

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