



Victorian Honour Roll of Women 2008

*Inspirational women from all walks of life*

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## Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to recognise the achievements of 30 Victorian women who are being inducted onto the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2008.

It is a privilege to present the stories of these outstanding women as we celebrate an important milestone in Victorian women's history. It is 100 years since women won the right to vote in Victoria and it is especially important during this celebratory year that we recognise the outstanding achievements of women from the past who have paved the way for women today. It is also important to recognise that it was not until 1962 that Indigenous women received the right to vote.

The Honour Roll celebrates a remarkable group of women who share the qualities of vision, leadership, commitment and hard work to improve the lives of other women and their communities. These women have made Victoria a better place to live and in many cases the impact of their contribution extends nationally and internationally.

Since 2001 there have been 386 women inducted onto the Victorian Honour Roll. As in previous years, the inductees to the Honour Roll in 2008 have made contributions in many fields of endeavour, including the arts, education, science, medicine, engineering, Indigenous affairs, ethnic affairs, community services and health.

I am sure that the women we are honouring this year will inspire and motivate many others, particularly young women, to pursue their endeavours with passion and confidence.

*Maxine Morand*

Maxine Morand MP  
Minister for Women's Affairs

“I CAN REMEMBER ONE TIME WHEN WE HAD MORE THAN 80 DEAF WOMEN TOGETHER AT A WORKSHOP – SO MUCH PRIDE IN BEING DEAF AND AS A WOMAN. AN AWESOME EXPERIENCE WHICH PROVIDES A CONSTANT REMINDER FOR ME ABOUT WHY I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND NEW EXPERIENCES.”



## Carla Anderson

### Inspirational leadership particularly in the deafblind community

Carla entered the field of community services after graduating with a Masters Degree in Social Science (Counseling Deaf) in the early 1980s. Being Deaf, Carla’s initial interest was to work with Deaf people and to assist them with developing self confidence and independence. While taking time out to be a mother to four children, she also found time to work with organisations that supported parents of young deaf children.

Carla’s interest in deafblind people emerged as she became aware that this small group was not getting the support it required to access many services provided within their local communities.

She not only worked with community service organisations to overcome this gap but in recent years as Manager of Deafblind services, she has also provided many voluntary hours in helping to provide leadership and personal development courses for deaf and deafblind people.

The list of Carla’s achievements is extensive and it demonstrates her leading role in supporting Victoria’s Deaf and Deafblind community. She was a founding member of the Deaf Women’s Support Group and used her considerable multi-lingual, leadership and facilitation skills to organise workshops. She was also able to secure funding of Auslan interpreters to ensure that the women of her community had access to accurate and accessible information.

As an advocate and inspirational leader, Carla has earned the respect and trust of others.

THE CITATION FOR THE MILITARY MEDAL AWARDED TO MAJOR APPLEFORD IN 1949 WAS AN APT DESCRIPTION OF HER CHARACTER, “NO ONE WHO CAME IN CONTACT WITH MAJOR APPLEFORD COULD FAIL TO RECOGNISE HER AS A LEADER OF WOMEN HER SENSE OF DUTY, HER STERLING SOLIDITY OF CHARACTER, HER HUMANITY, SINCERITY AND KINDNESS OF HEART SET FOR OTHERS A VERY HIGH EXAMPLE.”

- Peter Appleford



## Major Alys (Alice) Appleford RRC, MM

1891 – 1968

### War heroine, nurse, humanitarian

Born in Ballarat (nee Ross-King), nurse and nursing administrator, Major Alice Appleford was a highly decorated war heroine who continued throughout both war and peace time to be a role model for women.

Alice enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) in 1914 as Sister, Australian Army Nursing Services. She served in a number of World War I battle fronts including the Suez, Rouen and Messines. During this time, her heroic actions when “showing great coolness and devotion to duty” during an air raid, resulted in her being awarded the Military Medal, one of only seven such awards made to Australian nurses during World War I. She was also mentioned in despatches.

On returning home, she met and married Dr Sydney Theodore Appleford and settled in South Gippsland. During this time, they established a medical practice and Major Appleford trained Volunteer Aid Detachments (V.A.D.s), who were medically trained but not fully qualified nurses. By 1940 the family had moved back to Melbourne where Major Appleford’s husband enlisted for the Army at the outbreak of World War II. Alice undertook fulltime duties with the V.A.D.s and was commissioned as a Major in 1945. Once again she was recognised for her outstanding work being awarded the Royal Red Cross and the Florence Nightingale medals.

After World War II, Alice remained devoted to community service through her commitment to the Australian Red Cross and war services charities, support for war widows and children and through her concern for the wellbeing of the Australian Army Women’s Medical Service members.

Major Appleford died on 17 August 1968 but her memory lives on in the Alice Appleford Memorial Award, presented annually to an outstanding member of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps.

“WE ARE STILL IN A MINORITY, BUT WITH THE RIGHT TYPE OF ENCOURAGEMENT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN ENGINEERING AT AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES.”



## Jean Armstrong

### Leading the way in encouraging women into the engineering profession

When Jean Armstrong began her academic studies in 1970, she was one of only a few women enrolled in engineering. Since then the number of women enrolled and qualified in engineering has increased substantially.

Jean Armstrong has remained a trail-blazer, both through her encouragement of women to see engineering as a career option and through her record of research excellence.

She is an acknowledged international expert in the field of high speed data transmission and digital communication for both wireless and optical applications. Her widely published and highly cited research has the potential to give people quicker and better access to the Internet and could eventually be used as a basis for a 'world without wires'.

In 2006 she shared the \$100,000 Peter Doherty Prize for Innovation for the best commercialisation opportunity in Australia. Her work on fundamental theory has resulted in world leading technology being commercialised in Australia

Just as importantly she has also played a major role in encouraging women to become engineers. Working as a lecturer at the University of Melbourne in 1977, she was the only woman at that level in any university engineering department in Australia.

Since then, in addition to her substantial research, teaching and supervision work, she has helped to improve curriculum planning processes, developed more gender inclusive engineering role models, worked to change policies that disadvantage female engineers doing post-graduate and academic work and helped to initiate the Australasian Women in Engineering Forum.

Her 20-year contribution in these fields was recognised in 1996 by Engineers Australia through its Personal Initiative Award.

But it is also reflected in the large numbers of young women who now begin and complete engineering qualifications, and whose research and work contributes greatly to Australia's development.

“THE PACE OF CHANGE SOMETIMES SEEMS GLACIAL, BUT THINGS ARE STARTING TO HAPPEN. WITH INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE NOW ON THE RESEARCH AND POLICY AGENDA, MORE WOMEN WILL GET SERVICES AND THE SUPPORT THEY DESERVE. WE NOW NEED MORE FUNDING AND FOCUS ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE.”



## Jill Astbury

### Research into violence against women

Jill Astbury has made a major contribution to the health and wellbeing of Victorian women, particularly in relation to their experience of violence and its impact on their mental health.

Her research has helped to document the real extent and impact of violence against women, which is the leading risk factor for disability amongst women aged 18-44. It has also helped to expand and improve how the community responds to violence, through changes in policies, systems and service provision.

Her position as a leading international researcher has been recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2000 she wrote the widely cited report: *Women's Mental Health: An evidence based review* and she has also been a peer reviewer for a number of major WHO documents. Jill is also co-chair of the Coordinating Committee of the Global Initiative on Sexual Violence Research.

In addition to her publications and research work, Jill Astbury has also helped to mentor a new wave of researchers in her field, having supervised approximately 50 PhD, Masters and Honours thesis students in the past 12 years.

She is also widely recognised for her willingness to use her research skills and knowledge to improve the services that respond to violence against women. These improvements have been at many levels including immediate service delivery, government policy development, and better education and training.

She has also contributed her knowledge and expertise outside Australia. She has helped train researchers in developing countries and, as Deputy Director, made major contribution to the gender and reproductive health course taught at the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society at the University of Melbourne.

Violence against women remains a major societal problem. However, the work of Jill Astbury has helped to map out ways of reducing both its causes and its effects.

“I’VE ALWAYS HAD A VISION THAT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES COULD ACHIEVE PARITY IN EVERY ASPECT OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY IF WE WERE GIVEN THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITIES, ESPECIALLY IN EDUCATION. WE ARE NOW BLESSED TO HAVE YOUNG PEOPLE COMING THROUGH WHO ARE TAKING UP THE MANTLE OF PREVIOUS GENERATIONS.”



## Geraldine Atkinson

### A career devoted to Koori education

Indigenous Australians have often struggled to gain access to education services that the wider community takes for granted. For more than 30 years Geraldine Atkinson has helped to increase Koori people’s access to these services.

Starting as an Indigenous teacher aide in 1976, she has helped education services, from early childhood through to TAFE and adult education, become better tailored towards the needs of Indigenous Victorians.

Much of her work has been achieved through her long involvement with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEA), an organisation that she now heads. Working with VAEA since its inception, she has made a significant contribution to improving early childhood services for Koori children. Early childhood education is consistently linked to better outcomes in later life. Improvements in these services therefore have the potential to reduce the disparities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians.

In 1986 Geraldine led a collaborative approach in the Shepparton community that resulted in the establishment of the Lidje MACS Centre, which now offers a range of important services including long day care, occasional care, playgroups and community education programs. She has also made a major contribution to adult education, linking Indigenous training programs with pathways into the TAFE sector and with employment opportunities. These opportunities have been particularly important in helping young mothers to enter or re-enter the workforce.

As well as contributing to innovative new services, Geraldine has also helped to shape the way Victoria’s education services work with Koori communities.

This work includes Yalca, a partnership between the Victorian Government and the VAEA, that places Koori students at the centre of education policy and decision making and that involves local communities in determining local education and training needs.

Passionate in her belief about the potential of education to improve people’s lives, Geraldine’s 30-year commitment has substantially improved the range and quality of education opportunities available to Indigenous Victorians.



“MY STRUGGLE TODAY WILL MAKE MY TOMORROW EASIER; THE JOURNEY I HAVE TAKEN TO REACH MELBOURNE HAS MADE IT EASIER FOR ME TO KEEP MY ENERGY AND COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE.”



## Samia Baho

### Social justice research and advocacy

Born in Eritrea, Samia came to Australia as a refugee, with her early settlement experiences undoubtedly helping to shape her approach to work and life. On her arrival, Samia could already speak seven languages and soon developed expertise in English.

From an early age, she learnt to overcome obstacles and to meet challenges through being determined, resourceful and visionary. Samia is considered among her peers and other ethnic communities as a champion and advocate for disadvantaged people. Having obtained a social work degree, she built on her experience and set up various organisations to support humanitarian entrants to Australia. More recently she became founding member for the Centre for African Australian Women's Issues.

Apart from her Bachelor of Social Work, Samia has a Masters Degree and Post Graduate Diploma in Women's Health from the University of Melbourne and a certificate in Cultural Practice Law and Health from La Trobe University.

A tireless, committed and passionate activist and thinker, Samia has often demonstrated leadership on racism and sexism issues. She has made an outstanding contribution to addressing the various barriers to ensuring appropriate and equitable services are available for African women.

Samia has spent the past five years working on research projects targeting pathways on sexual and reproductive health improvement for Sahel African women. She is statewide coordinator for the Family and Reproductive Rights Education Program.

Through her work, particularly in the area of violence against women, various community groups have undertaken pioneering work in challenging mainstream perceptions and understanding of African women and family violence.

“FOR THE FUTURE, IF THERE IS TO BE ONE, WE MUST LISTEN, TALK AND SHARE.  
FOR THE FUTURE.” – from *A Significant Life* by Lisa Bellear



## Lisa Bellear

1961 – 2006

### Photographer, artist and poet

Long after her death, Lisa Bellear's work as an artist, poet, photographer, radio broadcaster, activist and academic will continue to inspire change and educate others about life as an Indigenous woman.

Lisa was a strong female voice in the community, even in the male dominated areas of politics and academia. With a Bachelor of Social Work, a Masters in Women's Studies and a Masters in Creative Writing, Lisa lectured and worked as an academic at around 30 university campuses. She also began a doctorate on *Contemporary Indigenous issues through radio and photographic texts*.

In 1986, she joined two other women to start the long running radio program *Not Another Koori Show* at community radio station 3CR.

At 27, Lisa was elected as a councillor at Collingwood City Council, where she worked for a year before heading up the Koori Liaison Office at the University of Melbourne.

Dedicated to social change, she represented the stolen generation on the Victorian Stolen Generations' Taskforce and the Victorian Sorry Day Committee. She worked as a council member of Reconciliation Victoria.

Lisa was a founding member of the Illbjerri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Cooperative, Australia's longest running Indigenous theatre troupe, and was the creative inspiration for their 2006 production, *The Dirty Mile*. Lisa was also a poet and published a book of poetry, *Dreaming in Urban Areas*, with University of Queensland Press.

A passionate photographer, Lisa began exhibiting her work in 1991 and her photos were used to represent Australia at the Athens Olympic Games in 2004.

Lisa was well aware of the role photography has in connecting people, saying: "As someone who was removed from their family and subsequently given photographs of my mother and other family members, I know how important... a photograph can be."

“RUTH LOVED WORKING WITH PEOPLE FROM ALL AGES AND BACKGROUNDS, HELPING THEM TO APPRECIATE THE COMMON THREADS THAT BIND US AND THE DIVERSITIES THAT ENRICH US ALL.” – *Philip kent*



## Ruth Crow AM

1916 – 1999

### Campaigner for a better society

Born in Ballarat, community activist Ruth Crow spent her life devoted to creating a better society. Her vision was for a society that offered strong support to women and children – a society which planned for a better quality of life, was environmentally clean, more just, democratic and peaceful.

Following the death of her husband Maurie in 1988, Ruth started establishing a living archive that could be freely accessible to all. The Crow Collection, consisting of papers, letters, community newspapers and photographs that chronicle Ruth and Maurie's work from the 1930s, is now housed in the library at Victoria University.

Ruth's passion for helping others had its origins when she was a child growing up in the Great Depression. She received a scholarship to Emily McPherson College where she graduated with distinctions. However, she was unable to finish the final year of unpaid hospital work that was required for her to qualify as a dietician. Instead Ruth found work as a waitress, cook and tearoom manager.

In 1945, as the mother of two children, she began training for social work at The University of Melbourne, later teaching domestic science and home economics in secondary schools.

Her interest in the debilitating effects of malnutrition on families was the basis for her research into the relationship between health, food and income. Ruth remained staunch to the ideals of nutrition and health until her death.

She worked tirelessly for the community, fostering the establishment of community services and advocating for public transport. Her guiding principle was the well known phrase *“think globally, act locally and then think globally again”*. Ruth was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1993 for her services to the community.

“MY MOTHER’S BATTLE WITH BREAST CANCER WAS WHAT ORIGINALLY INSPIRED MY WORK, BUT I’VE SINCE BEEN TOUCHED BY MANY, MANY OTHER AMAZING WOMEN – AND MEN AND CHILDREN – WHO HAVE DEALT WITH THE DISEASE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. HAVING THREE DAUGHTERS HAS MADE THE SEARCH FOR A CURE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO ME.”



## Louise Davidson

### Volunteer, fundraiser for breast cancer research

After losing her 52-year-old mother to breast cancer, Louise Davidson has devoted a decade of her life to raising awareness about the disease and seeking funds for research.

Louise was one of a group of volunteers working for Women In Super – a national network of women associated with the superannuation industry – who established the Mother’s Day Classic in 1998. In that first year, the fun run attracted more than 5000 entrants nationally and raised \$70,000 for the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF).

For the next seven years, Louise managed the event as a volunteer, devoting much time and energy into building its profile and increasing participation and locations.

Since 2004, Louise has been employed part-time as national organiser for the Mother’s Day Classic. She still devotes a great deal of voluntary hours to the event and to other initiatives associated with it, including the Women in Super Scholarships for breast cancer researchers, in which she has played a pivotal role.

Thanks to Louise’s continued commitment and leadership, the Mother’s Day Classic has become a key event on Australia’s fun run calendar. In 2007 it had a turnout of 50,000 entrants and raised \$850,000 for the NBCF.

Louise’s inclusive approach to running the Mother’s Day Classic has meant it has become an occasion that provides comfort to people who have lost someone to the disease, support for women who are fighting it and a rallying point for those who have beaten it.

In 2006, in recognition of her contribution, the National Breast Cancer Foundation awarded Louise the Patron’s Award for Outstanding Commitment to Breast Cancer Research.

With one in eight women diagnosed with breast cancer during their life, Louise’s work has touched the lives of thousands of women and their families.

“WE HAVE ALL BENEFITED FROM AN EXTRAORDINARILY BRAVE GROUP OF WOMEN WHO, 100 YEARS AGO, STOOD UP TO SUPPORT WOMEN’S RIGHTS. THE FACT THAT THOSE WOMEN ARE NOT AS RECOGNISED AS OTHER GREAT POLITICAL REFORMERS IS ONE EXAMPLE OF WHY WE STILL HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS.”



## Patricia Grimshaw

### Pioneering the study of women’s history

Few Victorian academics have made such a substantial contribution to their field of research as Patricia Grimshaw.

In a 30-year teaching career at the University of Melbourne, she has pioneered the study of women’s history. From the first feminist history of Australia to a collection of letters written by Indigenous women, her writings and research have allowed us to hear the voices of women who would have otherwise been left silent.

Through her studies of the impact of colonisation on the Indigenous people of New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, she has helped to explore similarities and differences in Australian history. As a lecturer, she has helped to inspire and develop new generations of researchers in women’s history and women’s studies. She has supervised more than 60 Masters and PhD students and her lectures have influenced hundreds more.

As an administrator and activist, Patricia’s leadership has helped to build the profile and position of women in academic research and administration.

For 13 years she held the Max Crawford Chair in History at the University of Melbourne and for much of that time was also deputy dean in the Faculty of Arts.

She is also the author of many books and academic research articles and sits on the editorial board of a number of international journals. Patricia is a fellow of both the Australian Academy of Social Sciences and the Academy of Humanities and from 1995 to 2000 was the president of the International Federation for Research in Women’s History.

In 2007, along with fellow Honour Roll inductee Marilyn Lake, she presented a keynote address at the Victorian Women’s Suffrage and Political Citizenship Conference.

Patricia’s extraordinary academic contribution has been described as retrieving women’s history. In undertaking this task, she has helped us to reassess and more deeply appreciate the enormous contribution made by women to Australia.

“WE CALL AUSTRALIA THE LUCKY COUNTRY – HOWEVER, FOR TOO MANY AUSTRALIANS THIS IS OFTEN NOT THE CASE. NOW, WHEN I THINK OF AUSTRALIA THE LUCKY COUNTRY I THINK WE ARE THE LUCKY COUNTRY BECAUSE WE HAVE THE RESOURCES AND THE CAPABILITY TO MAKE IT A LUCKY COUNTRY FOR ALL.”



## Kathy Hilton OAM

### Leadership, support and advocacy for disadvantaged youth

Kathy Hilton was a student counselor and teacher at Ardoch High School in 1988 when a homeless 16 year-old approached her about wanting help to stay at school. Realising that there was no government support available, Kathy decided to help the student herself. This initiative saw the beginning of the Ardoch Youth Foundation which supports disadvantaged and homeless young people to access education. The Foundation has since grown to cover four regions in Victoria and three other Australian states.

Kathy's ability to galvanise the community and individuals, and gather together a highly skilled board of directors and dedicated staff have been the cornerstones to the foundation's success. In 2001 the organisation received a Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships for its corporate program that involves 3500 volunteer interactions annually.

Through community partnerships, strategic alliances and advocacy, Kathy is helping to change community attitudes on youth homelessness, disadvantage and education. Her commitment to innovation has seen Ardoch's support projects and programs adopted widely.

It is entirely appropriate that Kathy Hilton's contribution to Australia's young people has been widely recognised. Kathy has been made an Honorary Member of the Golden Key National Honour Society by Monash University. She has also received a number of awards including an Australian Humanitarian Award, a Commonwealth Government Centenary Medal for Services to the Community, the Stonnington Council Citizen of the Year Award and an Order of Australia Medal.

“MARGARET KEATS’ LEGACY AS A ROLE MODEL FOR WOMEN IN THE VETERINARY PROFESSION IS EVIDENT TODAY, AS ALMOST HALF THE REGISTERED VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS IN VICTORIA ARE WOMEN AND THE VETERINARY PRACTICE SHE ESTABLISHED IN 1922 IS STILL RUN BY WOMEN.” – Leigh Coghlan



## Margaret Keats MBE

1893 – 1970

### Pioneered women’s involvement in veterinary science

The second female registered veterinarian in Australia, Margaret Keats was also the first qualified veterinarian to work in north-west Victoria. Her veterinary practice based in Kerang served an area of 28,000 square kilometres from the South Australian border to Bendigo.

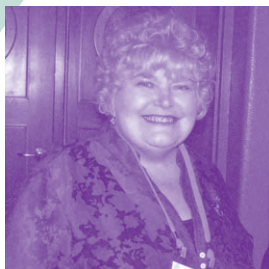
In a male dominated environment Margaret had the distinction of being appointed a stock border inspector to maintain the health of stock crossing the Murray River. This position filled a major gap, as there were no government veterinary services in the area until the late 1950s. In this role Margaret was also a commissioner of the High Court, one of the first women to be appointed to this position in Victoria and New South Wales.

In 1926 Margaret joined the Victorian branch of the Australian Veterinarian Association, established the year before she completed her veterinarian exams in 1922. She was a very keen member, taking part in nearly every association meeting, and was a strong supporter of the re-establishment of Melbourne Veterinary School in the 1960s.

Through her professional practice extending more than 45 years, Margaret was held in great respect by her clients and was utterly devoted to the local community. Her contribution is well recorded in the collection of Keats memorabilia at the Kerang Historical Society. In 1959 Margaret was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List.

Margaret had a love of thoroughbred horses which culminated in the success of an aptly named horse, *Fight On*, that she successfully bred. *Fight On* was a three-time winner of the Kerang Cup.

“AT MY FIRST COUNCIL MEETING THERE WERE ARGUMENTS ABOUT WHERE I WAS GOING TO SIT AND WHICH TOILETS I WOULD USE. ONE JOURNALIST EVEN ASKED ME IF I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE HEATED LANGUAGE THAT MIGHT BE USED AT MEETINGS. I POINTED OUT THAT I COULD SWEAR AS WELL AS ANYONE ELSE AND THAT I COULD DO IT IN FOUR LANGUAGES!”



## Sika Kerry OAM

### Leadership in women’s participation in local government

In 1972 Sika Kerry was elected as the first female councillor in the 113-year history of the Footscray City Council. This achievement is magnified by the fact that English was not one of the many languages she spoke when she arrived in Australia 25 years earlier.

Her election marked the beginning of more than 30 years of community service to people living in the western suburbs of Melbourne, particularly women and migrants, helping them to straddle two cultures. She pioneered the development of many local government services that are now mainstream, including the provision of information in community languages.

Her innovative and passionate approach is exemplified in a photo taken in 1975 that shows her in a local shop whose owner she had persuaded to act as a temporary library for new books published in community languages. Her success helped pave the way for other women, and migrant women in particular, to enter local government and she has made a major contribution to the Australian Local Government Women’s Association.

In addition to her involvement in local government, the full scope of her work for people living in the west of Melbourne is impressive.

Amongst many other achievements, she helped establish the first Footscray Migrant Resource Centre in 1981, worked at Keilor City Council in aged care services, became a life governor of the Western General Hospital, spent many years on the ethics committee of Victoria University, was the first woman on the Western Region Council of Technical Education and a counsellor at the Western Centre Against Sexual Assault.

In 1991 she received the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of her contribution to local government and multiculturalism. She has also made a major contribution to the welfare of the local Russian community through the Russian Ethnic Representative Council and numerous aged care, welfare and education services.

Underpinning all this work has been a passionate belief in the principle of equality and a “fair go”.



“OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS I HAVE SEEN IMMIGRANT WOMEN OF VARIED CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS ENCOURAGE THEIR DAUGHTERS TO GRASP EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTICIPATE IN MAINSTREAM SOCIETY. THESE SECOND GENERATION, WELL INTEGRATED WOMEN, HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF MULTICULTURAL SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THEY HAVE SHOWN THAT DIVERSITY TOGETHER WITH CULTURAL EXCHANGE ENRICHES ALL VICTORIANS.”

## Morag Loh



### Giving immigrants, particularly women and girls, a voice

While Morag Loh's working life as a writer, oral historian, curator of photography, teacher and advocate has been extensive; she's always had one main focus, to give immigrants, particularly women and girls, a voice.

Morag was one of the first writers to portray the diversity of Australia's people and the variety of their life experience. Many of her books and stories are now reference works at every level of education and have inspired radio programs, cassettes and even a documentary film, *Chinese Diggers*.

She is perhaps best known for her picture books *The Kinder Hat* and *Tucking Mummy In*, which regularly appear on ABC's *Playschool* and are widely read in kindergartens and primary schools. Illustrated by Donna Rawlins, the stories feature confident little girls who take the initiative and show responsibility within loving families.

At the request of teachers lamenting the lack of female role models in school history texts, Morag wrote *The Changemakers*, which highlighted the challenges and achievements of 10 Australian women, spanning 200 years in history.

In the 1960s and '70s, Morag campaigned for permanent employment, equal pay and opportunities for career advancement for female teachers in Victoria. Much of this work was on a voluntary basis.

Her work as curator of photography – including a travelling photographic exhibition called *Nothing on a Plate: Celebrating Women's Journey Towards Equity in Victoria 1901-2001* – has inspired seminars, lectures, discussions and articles about gender equity and recognition of the contribution made by Australian women and girls.

Through her impressive list of books, stories, scripts and exhibitions, she represents women and girls from diverse backgrounds as interesting, resilient and valuable members of society. Morag has made a lasting contribution to the understanding and advancement of women.

“I CONSIDER A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT TO BE THE ABILITY TO MOVE SEAMLESSLY BETWEEN EDUCATION, PUBLIC POLICY AND COMMUNITY SPHERES AND BE MET WITH EQUAL RESPECT IN EACH.”



## Helen Macrae

### Significant contributor to adult and community education

Every year more than 100,000 Victorians enrol in adult and community education courses. In a world where life long education is increasingly seen to be the norm, adult and community education helps many women to take their first steps back into education.

For more than 30 years Helen has helped to build and develop the sector that provides these learning opportunities.

From the Diamond Valley Learning Centre and the Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre to the Council of Adult Education and the Adult Community and Further Education Board, Helen has been a teacher, trainer, policy innovator, manager, volunteer and leader.

As foundation President of the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Association, she recognised the power of literacy training to substantially improve workplace productivity. Her work helped to increase political recognition of this important area of learning. In turn, this led to improved pay and development opportunities for the many women teachers working in adult education.

She continued to support women working in the sector as the Founder and Editor of *Converse and Company*, the online newspaper for women in adult and vocational education, and by jointly founding and leading the Network of Women in Adult and Vocational Education.

Her work with the Queen Victoria Women's Centre has also meant that one of this state's most significant historical buildings has maintained its role as a service provider and information centre for Victorian women.

A passionate believer in the potential of community governance to create opportunities for “second chance” learners and to manage and develop community infrastructure, Helen spent five years as chair of the Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre. During this period she led a successful partnership with the City of Moreland that secured state and local government funds for new premises for the centre.

In all these achievements she is widely recognised for the mentoring and support she has provided to students and work colleagues.

“READING THE SUBMISSION FOR MY NOMINATION FOR THE VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN WAS LIKE HAVING MY PORTRAIT PAINTED BY, SAY, DRYSDALE. WE RARELY SEE THE RESULTS OF OUR WORK FOR WE RARELY LOOK BACKWARDS; WE LOOK OUTWARDS AND FORWARD...”



## Carol McDonough

### Tireless community contributor

Carol's contribution to the Victorian community has been long standing and wide-ranging. In 1982 her influential work led to the Commonwealth Government redefining legislation on disability to include people with mental and emotional disability. This enabled Commonwealth funding to become more available for mental health programs including community based programs.

Her contributions offer particular inspiration against a backdrop of a life long story of struggle and determination with hidden disabilities, little understood illness and impacts of accidents including endless pain. Being also dyslexic, dyspraxic and left handed, Carol found school and the attitude of some 1950s educators quite challenging. Through all these challenges, she commenced a university degree in agriculture, completed a youth leadership diploma and a postgraduate Arts degree in Social Sciences at Monash University.

A catalyst and early initiator, her considerable achievements also include involvement in Indigenous affairs, initiating summer schools at Monash University and initiating strategies to retain nurses in Victorian hospitals. More recently, as a rural woman working in Victoria and Tasmania on sustainable food production, Carol has been working on designing processes to understand the importance of public health safety and community engagement in toxic environment management. She is currently involved in similar processes for drought management and water issues.

Carol led a visionary community empowerment campaign in the clean up of a contaminated former gasworks site in Castlemaine which was celebrated by all parties for its non-adversarial approach and was profiled at an international conference (CleanUp07) on contaminated site remediation.

“THE SOMALI WOMEN I WORK WITH ARE NO LONGER ISOLATED – THEY NOW HAVE SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE UP WORK AND STUDY AND THE CONFIDENCE TO TRY NEW THINGS. I’M LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HOW THIS BENEFITS FUTURE GENERATIONS.”



## Halima Mohamud

### Leadership and commitment to Somali women

Back home in Somalia, Halima Mohamud worked as a Member of Parliament for 21 years and was well known and respected in the community. People trusted her to deliver on her promises.

Now in Melbourne, Halima’s work continues to touch the lives of Somalis, particularly women.

After arriving in Australia four years ago, Halima volunteered her time to establish an exercise program for 10 Somali women in Melbourne’s west. In 2006, she set up another activity and support group for Somali woman in the area, and what started as a program for eight women has now grown to include a range of activities for more than 40 participants.

Thanks to Halima’s leadership and commitment, these women are gradually leaving the troubles of Somalia behind and focusing on a brighter future.

As well as sharing her sewing, knitting and cooking skills with the women, Halima is providing opportunities for them to make friends and get involved in the broader community. The program has also helped to break down barriers between women from different regions in Somalia.

The program now has links to Victoria University and Halima has helped 17 of the women take up study in the areas of hospitality, hairdressing, child care and aged care.

Her work has successfully united a group of women from different regions, providing them with skills, networks and opportunities to help them make the most of their new community.

“ELEANOR MOORE WAS A TIRELESS AND COURAGEOUS ADVOCATE FOR PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION, DEVOTING HER LIFE TO THIS CAUSE FOR OVER THREE DECADES, INCLUDING THE TWO WORLD WARS.” – *Judith Smart*



## Eleanor Moore

1875 – 1949

### Pacifist and advocator of women’s rights

A leading pacifist, Eleanor Moore was in 1915 a founding member and International Secretary of the Sisterhood for International Peace, which later became the Australian section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

She was also an Executive Member of the Australian Peace Alliance, which advocated a negotiated peace during World War 1 and campaigned against conscription in 1916 and 1917.

As secretary of WILPF Australia from 1928, Eleanor remained its leading spokeswoman until her death in 1949. She represented WILPF at many international conferences and helped organise the Australian contribution to the Women’s International Disarmament Petition in 1932. Eleanor was also a key figure in the Australian movement against the manufacture and use of atomic bombs following the use of these weapons against Japan in 1945.

An accomplished speaker, Eleanor was in much demand throughout Australia traveling all over the country to represent the views of various peace and disarmament organisations. She was also an accomplished writer, publishing *The Quest for Peace as I have Known It in Australia*, a key source for the history of the Australian Peace movement, and *What Shall We Do with the Japanese?*

“I’VE SEEN THE PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS INVOLVED IN LIFESAVING GROW ENORMOUSLY. FIFTY PER CENT OF LIFESAVERS IN VICTORIA ARE NOW WOMEN, AND THEY ARE GENERALLY SEEN AS EQUAL TO THEIR MALE COLLEAGUES. I’M VERY PROUD THAT MY WORK HAS ENCOURAGED OTHER WOMEN TO GET INVOLVED AND HELPED TO CHANGE ATTITUDES ABOUT WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED OF THEM.”



## Barbara Morgan

### Leadership in the “boy’s club” of surf lifesaving

Barbara Morgan has shown incredible leadership in a world that is often referred to as a “boy’s club”.

Barbara’s journey within lifesaving in Victoria started 50 years ago, when she joined the Altona Life Saving Club as a 10-year-old wanting to gain self-confidence.

It worked, and while Barbara’s confidence grew so did her love for the sport. She took on leading roles for many lifesaving committees and quickly gained recognition within the Royal Life Saving Society and the Surf Life Saving Association of Victoria.

In 1987, Barbara became one of the first female members of the South Melbourne Life Saving Club to gain her Surf Bronze, an achievement which encouraged many other women to take up the challenge. She now holds numerous qualifications in lifesaving and the wider aquatics industry.

Barbara has dedicated a great deal of personal time to lifesaving, volunteering as a patrolling member, instructor, examiner, official, coach, committee member and mentor to young lifesavers. Her commitment has helped advance lifesaving around Australia, and she has been presented with countless awards in recognition of her contribution.

During the past decade she has taken her expertise to the pools and beaches of Vietnam, Taipei, Singapore and Hong Kong, where she has helped establish lifesaving training programs.

As the leading female referee within the International Lifesaving Federation, her international influence also extends to officiating. In fact, it is only since Barbara blazed in as the first female chief referee at the World Lifesaving Championships that women are starting to be considered for these roles at high profile events.

Thanks to Barbara’s passion and leadership, girls and women around the world have been inspired to get involved in lifesaving and to take on roles traditionally not held by women.

“MAY MOSS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS. SHE WAS A COMMITTED SUFFRAGIST AND WORKED EFFECTIVELY TO BRING GROUPS ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND BEYOND TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE.” - *Rysia Rozen OAM*



## Alice Frances Mabel (May) Moss CBE

1869 – 1948

### Key figure in securing the right to vote for Victorian women

Alice Frances Mabel Moss, better known as May, was a key figure in Victoria’s campaign that culminated in women’s right to vote.

During much of her life, May worked with various education, child welfare and women’s organisations. May was appointed vice president of the Australian Women’s National League in 1906, two years before the legislation to permit Victorian women to vote in state elections was passed. She stayed in this role for eight years.

Later, May set off to Europe where she was the Australian delegate for various conferences and committees. This included the League of Nations Assembly in Geneva, where she was the first female member of the finance committee.

Back home, she became President of the National Council of Women of Victoria, and in 1931 became the first president of the National Council of Women of Australia. Two years later she became the only female member of the Victorian Centenary Celebrations executive committee.

At the same time, May chaired the Women’s Centenary Council, which established the Pioneer Women’s Memorial Garden in Melbourne’s Domain Gardens – perhaps her greatest legacy. Opened in 1935, the garden remains a place of recognition for significant women in Victoria’s history.

While May was Chair the Council also produced a Book of Remembrance containing records of around 1,200 early women settlers. A copy of the limited edition publication is now held in the State Library of Victoria.

In 1934 she was appointed Commander of the British Empire and on her retirement she was awarded a gold badge by the National Council of Women of Victoria for distinguished service.

May is remembered for her significant contribution to the community, and for the dignity, charm and grace with which she went about her work.

“IN THE PAST, MEDICAL TRAINING OFTEN ENCOURAGED DOCTORS TO TREAT THE DISEASE RATHER THAN THE PERSON. I TRY TO REMEMBER THAT THE WOMEN I SEE AREN'T JUST PATIENTS; THEY'RE ALSO WOMEN WITH PARTNERS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS.”



## Deborah Neesham

Major contribution to the treatment, patient support, research, public education in gynaecological oncology

Ovarian cancer is a disease that claims the lives of more than 800 women each year, making it the sixth largest cause of death for Australian women.

Deborah Neesham is one of just four Australian women specialising in the field of gynaecological oncology, which includes ovarian cancer.

In a career of more than 20 years, she has played a leading role in treating women with gynaecological cancers, educating new researchers and doctors, developing patient support services and raising public awareness about gynaecological cancers.

She is a fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and a member of numerous international medical associations.

Through the Royal Women's Hospital, she has been closely involved in a large number of clinical trials of drugs that aim to control or reduce cancer.

She has led the development of new surgical techniques, contributed to developing new treatment protocols and has been instrumental in evaluating the potential of alternative radiation treatments as a way of reducing the impact of treatment on sexual functioning.

In addition to these achievements, Deborah is widely recognised for her extraordinary dedication to her patients, many of whom are diagnosed when they are in an advanced stage of the disease.

She has contributed substantially to the awareness and education campaigns run by OvCA – the National Ovarian Cancer Network. In addition, she has also developed specialised clinics that provide reassurance to women whose family backgrounds increase their risk of developing ovarian cancer.

Through Deborah's work as a teacher and trainer, she has helped to inspire new generations of doctors and health workers who continue her commitment to developing better support services and new treatment options for more women affected by cancer.



“LADY GLADYS NICHOLLS WAS AN INSPIRATION TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, BEING A ROLE MODEL FOR YOUNG WOMEN, A LEADER IN ADVOCACY FOR THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AS WELL AS A TIRELESS CONTRIBUTOR TO THE COMMUNITY.”

– Richard Broome



## Lady Gladys Nicholls

1908 – 1961

### A significant contribution to enriching the lives of Indigenous women

A constant inspiration to Indigenous women, Lady Gladys Nicholls was one of the most prominent Victorian Indigenous women of her era.

From the 1940s through to the 1970s, Gladys was very active in public life with her contribution enriching the lives of many Indigenous women. As the mother of six children, her achievements were considerable.

In the Melbourne community these achievements included being the Sunday School teacher at Fitzroy's Gore Street Aboriginal Church (run by her husband, Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls), Founder and Coordinator of the Aboriginal Children's Christmas Giving Tree. She was Founder and Matron of the first Indigenous girls' hostel in Northcote, which was in 1956, named after her.

On a national level, Gladys is remembered for her leadership in advocating for the rights of Indigenous people throughout Australia. In 1957 she was Co-Founder and Coordinator of the Women's Auxiliary of the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League, the oldest Indigenous organisation in Australia. During the 1960s, Gladys was a worker for the Federal Council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Other notable positions held by Gladys, included Secretary of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Council and President of the Council's Victorian branch.

A role model for other Indigenous women, Gladys was also the stalwart in a very successful partnership with her husband throughout his contribution to public life. The latter included his term as Governor of South Australia. The Victorian Government has acknowledged their legacy through the commissioning of a sculpture of Lady Gladys and Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls, the first memorial to Indigenous people in Melbourne.

“THE GREATEST LEGACY A PERSON CAN HAVE IS TO BE REMEMBERED AS A PERSON WHO TOUCHED OTHERS’ LIVES IN A POSITIVE WAY. I HOPE THAT IS THE WAY I AM REMEMBERED WHEN PEOPLE LOOK BACK OVER MY LIFE BOTH IN VICTORIA POLICE AND IN THE COMMUNITY.”



## Sandra Nicholson APM

### A role model and mentor for both women and men in Victoria Police

Throughout her career, Sandra Nicholson has sought to increase the number of women in specialist positions and in the senior ranks of Victoria Police.

Since joining Victoria Police in 1975, Sandra has progressively worked through to senior management roles many of them involving demanding operational areas traditionally held by men. Sandra is the Assistant Commissioner for Victoria Police's largest region. She is also the State's sole female Assistant Commissioner.

Sandra has found time during her busy career to support both men and women in Victoria Police through after-hours tuition and formal mentoring to a number of employees. Her mentoring and guidance has benefited many current senior police.

Providing both leadership and practical support within Victoria Police and the wider community, Sandra has encouraged and supported future women leaders through her involvement in programs such as the Geelong Leadership Program.

Her contribution to Victoria Police has been recognised by a number of awards including the Most Outstanding Female Police Leader award, the Australian Police Medal and Victoria Police Medal and the National Medal, which “recognises long and diligent service by members of recognised organisations that help the community during times of crisis”.

Despite her heavy workload Sandra has found time to contribute to the community through volunteer work at the Royal Children's Hospital, as well as being a trainee volunteer guide at the National Gallery of Victoria and a committee member of the Melbourne West Area Consultative Committee.

“ETHEL OSBORNE WAS A KEY FIGURE IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN’S HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN INDUSTRY AND WAS AN INTERNATIONAL PIONEER IN THIS FIELD AND IN DIETETICS, WHILE ALSO FINDING TIME TO PARTICIPATE IN ORGANISATIONS FIGHTING FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS. AND SHE DID MUCH OF THIS, INCLUDING STUDYING FOR HER MEDICAL DEGREE, WHILE RAISING FOUR CHILDREN.” – *Judith Smart*



## Dr Ethel Osborne

1882 – 1968

### Advocacy for better working conditions for women, leadership in industrial hygiene

Born in England, Ethel Osborne had obtained a science degree before coming to live in Melbourne with her husband after their marriage in 1903. Here she was to become a leader in industrial hygiene, particularly in the areas of the health of female workers and in women’s education on health issues.

Back in England during World War 1, Ethel served with the British Ministry of Munitions of War. Her wartime research into the health of women munitions’ workers resulted in two published reports that had a long term influence on policy.

On returning to Melbourne following the war, Ethel was invited to report to the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration on the conditions of employment for women workers in the clothing industry for a case which won some workers a forty-four hour week.

Ethel studied medicine at the University of Melbourne and shared the Fulton prize for obstetrics and gynaecology. After graduating, she practised at the Queen Victoria and Royal Melbourne hospitals. She published her report on the health of female workers in the printing and allied trades industry which was commissioned by the union. Ethel was also a Commonwealth delegate to the fourth and fifth international congresses on industrial accidents and diseases.

Serving on the council of the College of Domestic Economy (later the Emily McPherson College) from its foundation in 1912, Ethel held the senior positions of treasurer, vice president and president. The College later recognised Ethel’s contribution by naming the assembly hall in its new building after her.

With her husband, Ethel pioneered the Australian study of dietetics, which helped to lay the foundation for the subsequent work of the dietary department of St Vincent’s Hospital.

Ethel’s dedication to education provided the inspiration and direction for much of the curriculum and teaching in the fields of domestic economy and medical dietetics in Australia and internationally.

“I LONG FOR THE DAY WHEN YOU CAN SPEAK OF A LOVED ONE WHO IS HIV POSITIVE IN THE SAME MANNER YOU WOULD TALK ABOUT A CANCER OR ANY OTHER CHRONIC ILLNESS. FREE OF STIGMA AND PREJUDICE.”



## Anne Phelan OAM

### Leading actress, advocacy for the rights of women living with the HIV virus

For 40 years Anne Phelan has been involved in the Australian film, theatre and television industry and for many of those years has worked to ease the burden of social stigma and isolation faced by HIV positive women and men.

One of Australia's best known actresses, Anne has used her talent and passion for the arts to help educate and inform people about the impact of HIV and to advocate for the rights of women living with the HIV virus.

Since 2000 Anne has been the patron of Positive Women (Vic), a support and advocacy group for women living with the HIV virus. Positive Women use, the creative arts as a vehicle for health promotion.

She was one of the driving forces behind the development and production of the play *In the Family* which highlighted through the women's own stories the impact HIV has on women and their families and the community. The play also stressed the importance of practicing safe sex.

In 2002 Anne received the "02 Showbiz Cares/Equity Fights Aids" activist award for her outstanding contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Her interest in people's wellbeing includes support for asylum seekers and refugees. She is a member of Actors for Refugees.

As an actress Anne's achievements are considerable, having eight best actress awards. In 2007 she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her work in the arts and the community.

“A CAREER HIGHLIGHT WAS BEING ABLE TO ORGANISE SUCH EVENTS AS THE RURAL WOMEN ON FARMS GATHERING IN SHEPPARTON LAST YEAR, WITH OTHER LIKE MINDED RURAL WOMEN, AND THE RESULTING MOTIVATION THAT THIS HAS BROUGHT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOSE WOMEN INVOLVED.”



## Rien Silverstein

### Supporter of rural women and major contributor to rural issues, policy and programs

An advocate for rural women's issues, Rien has made a significant contribution to raising the profile of these issues, not only in her own Goulburn Valley region but also throughout Victoria.

The fruit industry in the Goulburn Valley has a diverse cultural mix of growers with 85% coming from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Many women, particularly from CALD backgrounds, look to Rien for guidance and support and she has been a wonderful mentor to them.

As Founder and Coordinator of Goulburn Valley Women in Horticulture (GV WIN HORT), Rien has given her time to organising training sessions on business management, mentoring, promotion and negotiating funding for the many training and other activities conducted throughout the year.

Rien worked tirelessly as Chair of the highly successful 2007 Shepparton Women on Farms Gathering that attracted more than 200 delegates. Through their fundraising for the event, scholarships were provided to enable families to attend whose income had been severely affected by drought.

Apart from her contribution to rural women, Rien served for extensive periods on primary and secondary school councils and parents' clubs and soccer club. She also served as the State district coordinator for the Victorian State Schools Parents Club.

Over a number of years, in her role on the Fruit Growers' Victoria Board, Rien has been involved in helping to develop Victorian Farmers Federation horticultural policy. She has also contributed to government committees including an advisory panel on drought response and irrigation planning. From 2002 to 2007 she participated in the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority's environment and farm working group.

“JESSIE VASEY WAS A TRUE HUMANITARIAN WITH A COMPELLING CHARACTER THAT COMMANDED RESPECT.” – *War Widows Guild of Victoria*



## Jessie Vasey OBE, CBE

1897 – 1966

Campaigner for aged person’s housing,  
support for war widows

An important year for Jessie Vasey was 1921 when she graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Arts degree and married George Vasey. George was to provide inspiration and support for Jessie’s later work in helping war widows.

After returning to Australia from India in 1937, Jessie became a foundation member and secretary of the Australian Imperial Women’s Association. Her attention was drawn to the plight of war widows by her husband who had visited a war widow living in appalling conditions.

When her husband, Major General Vasey, returned to the Middle East in December 1939, Jessie became a leading figure in the war effort serving as secretary of the Australian Imperial Force Women’s Association which provided financial and other support to the families of soldiers’ wives and widows.

Tragically Jessie’s husband was killed in an aeroplane crash in 1945 aged 49 years. On their last evening together he told her to remain committed to the war widows and that he would continue to support her on his return.

Jessie was an inspiring role model for many war widows. When she initiated a craft guild in 1946, about 300 war widows responded to her letter about its first meeting. The guild grew in strength becoming a national association and became known as the War Widows Guild of Australia. Jessie was elected president and continued to draw inspiration from the efforts of war widows throughout Australia.

In the 1950s she embarked upon her most ambitious project, to raise funds for self-contained flats for war widows, especially the elderly and sick who were unable to find affordable accommodation. The Vasey Housing Auxiliary, with Jessie as Managing Director, campaigned successfully for the passing of the Aged Persons Homes Act in 1954 which saw the Commonwealth Government matching funds raised by voluntary organisations.

Jessie was awarded an OBE in 1950 and a CBE in 1963 for her services to war widows.

“I BELIEVE WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND ACHIEVING JUST, VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES”



## Jennifer Wills

### Pioneering social planning in local government, sustainable communities

Jenny Wills has pushed the boundaries for change in local government and the community to make services more accessible for women and increasing opportunities for women’s participation.

After joining Fitzroy City Council in 1973, Jenny’s creative leadership influenced many initiatives undertaken by federal, state and local governments.

While with the council, she led the introduction of a community development/social planning approach to council’s broad planning and decision making. This initiative resulted in the establishment of the Social Planning Office as a unique one-stop shop housing government, non government organisations and community agencies, together with council staff.

These and other Fitzroy initiatives are explored in the 1985 publication, *Local Government and Community Services, Fitzroy - A Study in Social Planning*, co-authored and coordinated by Jenny.

From 1985 to 2000, Jenny was Social Policy Director for the Municipal Association of Victoria. Since 1985 she has been actively championing women’s representation in local government both locally and globally, through membership of the gender equity taskforce of the International Union of Local Authorities. Her major achievements from this time include the formation of the Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition and the development of the Victorian Local Government Women’s Charter.

In her retirement, Jenny wrote the pocket guide *Just, Vibrant & Sustainable Communities, A Framework for Progressing & Measuring Community Wellbeing*. She is also a driving force behind the Just Communities Network, which comprises 15 councils across Australia seeking better ways to enhance local participatory democracy and community wellbeing.

“THERE IS NO PART OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE WHICH CANNOT BE THE SUBJECT OF HUMOUR, SO LONG AS WE LAUGH WITH PEOPLE, NOT AT THEM, AND WE CAN LAUGH AT OURSELVES AS MUCH AS WE LIKE.”



## Bethia (Beth) Wilson

### Leadership in women's and health issues

In her ten years as Victoria's Health Services Commissioner, Beth has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of health services for everyone. She is nationally recognised for her excellence in promoting health law reform and, in particular, for her work in promoting and protecting the interests of health system users.

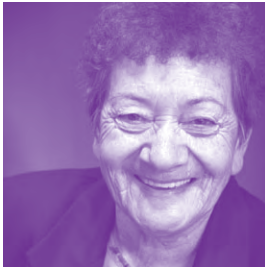
Trained as a lawyer, Beth worked mainly in administrative law, before becoming Victoria's first Health Services Commissioner in 1997. She has had a long standing interest in medical, legal and ethical issues and regularly conducts seminars, lectures and classes for consumers, health service providers and others. She is past president of the Victorian Branch of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Psychiatry, Psychology and Law (ANZAPP).

In October 2002, Beth was awarded Monash University's Distinguished Alumni Award for her outstanding professional achievements and inspirational leadership.

Further recognition came in 2003 and 2004 when she was awarded the Centenary Medal for her services to health and an Honorary Doctorate from RMIT for her contribution to health education.

She has taken a keen interest in women's issues throughout her career. The 17 memberships of professional bodies that Beth holds, include membership of the Feminist Lawyers, the Australian Women's Research Centre at Deakin University and Women's Health Victoria.





## Bessie Yarram

### A substantial contribution to the Gippsland community

Bessie Yarram is a Noongar woman, born in Western Australia and is recognised and acknowledged as a respected Indigenous elder at local, regional, state and national levels.

Widely known as Aunty Bessie, she was a foundation member of the Raramhyuck District Aboriginal Corporation and was Gippsland’s first Indigenous Home and Community Care Development Officer, a position she held for 10 years. In this role Bessie has been pivotal in increasing access to HACC services by Indigenous people within the Gippsland region and across Eastern Victoria.

Reflecting both her status and her record of contribution, Aunty Bessie has held many positions on boards, committees and working groups at a local, regional, state and national level representing Indigenous people.

Just a few of these positions include being the respected elder at the Koorie courts in Morwell and Bairnsdale, being a member of the Police Community Consultative Council in the Wellington Shire, and being chairperson of the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative.

Through these positions Aunty Bessie has helped to make a substantial improvement to the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians. Her work with the Koorie Court in Morwell and Bairnsdale has helped contribute to the success of these new institutions in reducing re-offending rates.

For six years, she also convened Mixed Blessings, a camp for elders and seniors that brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians to Gippsland as part of Senior Citizens Week.

In addition to her many formal positions, Aunty Bessie is also widely recognised for her role as an advocate, role model, mentor and supporter of Indigenous elders and for women generally in her community and across Gippsland. Through her long community commitment, her passion for her culture and her belief in the importance of working together, Aunty Bessie Yarram has helped to make substantial improvement to the lives of both women and men living in Gippsland and beyond.

# Messages

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“I BELIEVE WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND ACHIEVING JUST, VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES”

JENNIFER WILLS PAGE 29

“FOR THE FUTURE, IF THERE IS TO BE ONE, WE MUST LISTEN, TALK AND SHARE.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE  
BILL BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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FUTURE." LISA BELLEAR PAGE 8

WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

KNOWING OUR PAST, TRANSFORMING OUR FUTURE



Department of Planning  
and Community Development

