

President's Message May 2020

Dear Members

What a start to 2020! At the beginning of the year many people around Australia were experiencing drought, fire and floods. Then almost without warning the COVID-19 health crisis was upon us. By late March the COVID-19 restrictions were with us to protect the community from the outbreak of the extremely contagious respiratory illness.



In light of the economic ramifications of the COVID-19 outbreak in all Australian States and Territories the

Federal Government announced a suite of stimulus measures to help Australian businesses who have had to be shutdown and employees who have found themselves out of work. These actions have been put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 to save lives and livelihoods. Australia like many other countries closed its borders and some Australian states, including Western Australia, also closed borders.

Many restaurants, cafes, public facilities, retail stores, travel and hospitality businesses have either closed altogether or some have had to severely downsize for the first time in history.

Elective surgeries were cancelled in late March to free up beds amid fears COVID-19 would overwhelm the hospital system. However the decision was reversed in late April following a decline in the spread of the disease and the arrival of millions of face masks and other items of personal protective equipment. Elective surgery commenced again in a phased approach however the expansion of the surgery has now been announced by National Cabinet.



It has been reported that the COVID-19 economic crisis has left over 2.7 million Australians without work or reduced hours. However the National Cabinet (which has met over the last two months) has announced a three step process to reopen Australia. States and Territories are now moving through the reopening of the economy safely and cautiously—details regarding the easing of restrictions in Western Australia are included in this newsletter.

The Federal Government has extended the human biosecurity emergency powers under the Biosecurity Act from June 17 until September 17. The declaration gives the Minister for Health expansive powers to issue directions and set requirements in order to combat the outbreak.

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ATTACHMENT - Save the Date NCWA Triennial Conference

Under the powers in partnership with the States and Territories and indigenous community leaders in those communities a process has been agreed for managing the access to affected remote communities.



As we all know stress concerning health, the loneliness of isolation, anxiety about employment and business closures can all be problematic for some and it is great to see that the Federal Government has recognised this and worked with the States and Territories to launch a unified national pandemic mental health and wellbeing response plan. Included in the plan is support for research and data into what is happening in real time, outreach to vulnerable communities, in particular the elderly, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, indigenous Australians and those who have pre-existing mental health conditions and communication

The Federal Government also set up a COAG Women's Safety Council in late March 2020 which consists of Commonwealth State and Territory Women's Safety Ministers. The Council met in March and April and was co-chaired by the Minister for Women Senator the Hon Marise Payne and the Minister for Families and Social Services Senator the Hon Anne Ruston to discuss approaches to address the impact of COVID-19 on women and children who are experiencing or at risk of family and domestic violence. The Federal Government has also provided additional emergency funding of \$150 million to support family and domestic services for the next six months.

The boost in funding will go to help those in the following areas:

- safer housing and emergency accommodation
- counselling and outreach
- crisis and helplines
- men's behaviour change programs and other perpetrator interventions
- assisting frontline services to manage demand and explore new technology-based service delivery options and
- respond to challenges in regional, rural and remote communities.

Kate Jenkins, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, recently released [Respect@Work](#), the Australian Human Rights Commission's Report on the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces. The report contains over 50 recommendations and outlines a multifaceted and whole of community response in the report.



As President of NCWWA I was fortunate to be involved in a number of International Women's Day events in early March prior to the COVID-19 restrictions. Australia's first International Women's Day was held in 1928 in Sydney. Since those early days International Women's Day has continued to grow. It is a day to celebrate women's achievements and also highlight the work needed to address barriers that continue to challenge the advancement of women and their families.

The WA Women's Hall of Fame held its annual event at Government House on 8 March 2020 to induct a number of women into the WA Women's Hall of Fame. The WA Governor His Excellency the Hon Kim Beazley AC and the Minister for Women the Hon Simone McGurk MLA were the special guests. Congratulations to those women who were inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame in 2020.

2020 Inductees into the WA Women's Hall of Fame

- Alicia Curtis
- Lyn Farrell
- Dorothea Hansen-Knarhoi
- Dr Rachel Sheffield
- Kira Fong OAM
- Dr Debbie Ann Smith
- Sharon Wood-Kenney
- Marg Agnew
- Harriet Marshall
- Kathleen Gregory AM
- Kate Heaslip
- Margaret Cole
- Emeritus Prof. Denise Chalmers
- C Tandi Kuwana



2020 Posthumous Inductee:

- Councillor Elizabeth Clapham

I had the opportunity in early March to be guest speaker at the Karrakatta Club's General Lyceum March meeting. It was a great opportunity to promote NCWWA and talk about some of the important issues needing to be addressed by the State Government.



A fundraising lunch for BIGhART was held on Wednesday 11 March 2020. The BIGhART lunch was organised to raise funds to assist the Project O program currently running in Roebourne. Project O supports young women in Roebourne to build strong futures, and become agents of change in their community. Attending the lunch I had the opportunity to catch up with two young aboriginal women from Roebourne who are involved in the Project O program.

As we all emerge from the COVID-19 restrictions, there is a sense that a number of things have changed. For many working from home has been the new normal. Spending more time at home has changed some household dynamics, however it is once again women doing most of the caring. The economic impact on women from COVID-19 restrictions is one of the big issues for the recovery. Retail, hospitality and education have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 restrictions and added to this are the additional caring responsibilities the restrictions have generated, from children to parents see many women working more but being paid less.

While we are now beginning the long road to recovery, NCWWA Council meetings remain postponed until further notice. In the meantime the NCWWA Executive has continued to meet by Zoom and we all hope that things will return to the new normal in the not too distant future. Social distancing will undoubtedly be with us for sometime to come.

Please contact me if I can help in any way.

Robyn Nolan

President NCWWA

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COVID-19 UPDATE on RESTRICTIONS in WA - 19 MAY 2020

With thanks to Dean Nalder MLA

RESTAURANTS, PUBS, CAFES, BARS

- Indoor and outdoor non-work gatherings lifted to a maximum of 20 people, up from the current limit of 10 people.
- Western Australians will now be encouraged to return to work, unless they are unwell or fall into a vulnerable category.
- Cafés and restaurants can reopen for dine-in service, limited to 20 patrons and with the 4 square metre rule applied.
- This also includes dine-in meal service within pubs, bars, community clubs, hotels and the casino.

WEDDINGS, FUNERALS, RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, LIBRARIES, COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- As part of Phase 2 the limit on people attending weddings and funerals has been lifted to 20 attendees indoors and up to 30 attendees will be allowed for outdoor.
- Places of worship, community facilities and libraries can re-open, limited to 20 patrons.
- Outdoor or indoor fitness classes with minimal shared equipment can take place, limited to 20 participants.
- Public swimming pools can open under strict rules, limited to 20 patrons per pool.
- All businesses and premises seeking to reopen, will need to complete an official COVID Safety Plan.

REGIONAL TRAVEL

- As part of Phase 2, regional travel restrictions will now be eased, again from Monday, the 18th of May.
- The number of regional borders within WA will reduce from the 13 we currently have, down to four.
- The new regional borders will allow travel between the South West, Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Perth and Peel regions.
- Travel between the Mid-West, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions.
- Travel within the entire Goldfields-Esperance region.
- Travel will be permitted within the Kimberley Local Government areas.
- This does not include the Commonwealth Biosecurity zone and restrictions on our remote communities, which will remain.

see over..

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WHAT'S NEXT – PHASE 3 AND ONWARDS

- Phase 3 of the roadmap will be finalised in the coming weeks, based on the advice from the Chief Health Officer.
- It will take into account the infection rates across WA.
- It's expected Phase 3 will be implemented around four weeks from the commencement of Phase 2.

Further information can be found here:

- **All COVID related enquires should be referred to the hotline 13 COVID or 132 68 43**
- WA Department of Health information – www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus
- Coronavirus information hotline – 1800 020 080
- G2G Pass App (for inter and intrastate travel exemptions) - <https://g2gpass.com.au/>
- Small business advice – Phone 133 140 (8.30am - 4.30pm weekdays) or visit <https://www.smallbusiness.wa.gov.au/coronavirus>
- Jobseekers Contact Line - 132 850
- Federal government mental health - <https://headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/covid-19>
- Visit Wageline website at www.dmirs.wa.gov.au/wageline or call 1300 655 266.

NCWWA STEM BURSARY 2020

Congratulations to the 2020 NCWWA STEM Bursary recipient, Shannon Calitz.

Shannon is in second year at Edith Cowan University studying a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Chemistry and Biology. After completing her degree she plans to continue her studies with a Master of Teaching. Shannon's ambition is to become a high school teacher specialising in STEM subjects. She is keen to motivate students especially young women to consider pathways in the fields of mathematics and science.

Shannon is responsible for funding her own university studies and as well as working part-time in customer service she has initiated her own tutoring business tutoring high school mathematics students for a very reasonable fee. The NCWWA STEM Bursary will go towards purchasing text books and other resources.



Well done Shannon!

NEW FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Inquiry into Litigation Funders by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Corporations and Financial Services

There are concerns litigation funders are fueling the volume of class actions and restricting the payouts to ordinary Australians caught in situations such as the summer's bushfires.

The Federal Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services will conduct the inquiry. NCWA will discuss at its next NCWA Executive meeting whether to make a submission to the committee.

The recent class action over toxic firefighting foam at three defense bases which was meant to compensate communities for extensive property value losses is a welcome result for the communities concerned. However, the proposal is to take more than \$50 million in commissions and the lawyers propose \$30 million in fees. That equates to over 40 per cent of the settlement being swallowed up in legal fees and commissions. As one of the class members stated "We are looking at a pittance but the funder has made a fortune."

The class action against Pharmaceutical company Johnson and Johnson and two other companies, ordered in March 2020 by the Federal Court to pay \$2.6 million in damages to the women at the centre of a landmark class action on faulty pelvic mesh implants, is a welcome one. In the Johnson and Johnson case the companies certainly tried to conceal the true extent of complications and taking to market the nine mesh products without rigorous critical clinical trials. Over 1300 women registered for the class action.

Currently litigation funders are exempt from any form of regulation oversight and are certainly earning very large returns. The Australian Law Reform Commission found that the median return to members of litigation-funding backed class actions was only 51 per cent.

NCWWA PADDY FIRSTENBERG MEMORIAL AWARD



The 2020 NCWWA Paddy Firstenberg Memorial Award is now being run in conjunction with Girl Guides Australia Western Australia. From this year the award is for a young woman in Girl Guides Western Australia who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to the empowerment of young women. Applications are now open and close on **12 Noon 6 October 2020**.

The awardee will be recognised and presented with their award at the Girl Guides WA Awards Ceremony, Saturday 16 January 2021

Let's mark this moment in history – a message from Australia Post



The last few months have had an extraordinary impact on families, communities and our way of life. There have been highs and lows, moments of joy and learnings for all of us.

At Australia Post, we think it's important that we mark this moment in our nation's history, so we've created a national letterbox where from now until 18 August 2020, you can write a letter to share your experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. We're working with the **National Archives of Australia**, where eligible *Dear Australia* letters will be kept for future generations. This will enable all Australians to record their impressions of this remarkable time.

Your letter could contain a message of hope, a story of community spirit or how this event has changed your life; it could even incorporate a piece of your child's artwork.

Your letters are an important reflection on this point in time, so we'll also share some of your letters on our [website](#) and social channels.

It's easy to participate and anyone can get involved (kids, please get your parent or guardian to help!).

Simply write your letter and place it in a stamped envelope to:

**Dear Australia
Locked Bag
Australia, 9999**

We're looking forward to hearing from you.

Your team at Australia Post

**NCWWA General Meetings
are postponed until further notice
due to the COVID-19 restrictions.**

WEB PAGE
www.ncwwa.org.au

National Council of Women Australia
Mid-Term Conference

“Women 2020 and Beyond”

Rescheduled
conference date

Friday 16 – Saturday 17 October 2020



Rydges South Park, 1 South Terrace, Adelaide South Australia

Friday 16 October 2020 morning	-NCWA Business – Resolutions
Friday 16 October 2020 afternoon	-Public Conference
Friday 16 October late afternoon (tbc)	-Civic Reception – 5.30pm-6.30pm
Hosted by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Adelaide Sandy Verschoor	
Friday 16 October 2020 evening	-Dinner (own arrangements)
Saturday 17 October 2020 morning and afternoon	-Public Conference (Conference to conclude by 4.00pm)
Sunday 18 October 2020 free day	-a number of optional tours are available.

Conference program will be available closer to October 2020

A NCWA Board Meeting will be held on Thursday afternoon 15 October 2020 at 3.00pm - 5.00pm for Board members, at Rydges.

Hotel Accommodation rate is \$129 per night if booked 30 days prior to the NCWA conference date. For bookings contact 08 8216 0300 and quote 'NCWA'.

Adelaide has a large selection of hotels and accommodation.

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