

## President's Message October 2020

Dear Members

This year has been like no other. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has seen governments place restrictions on its citizens including border closures to keep us all safe. However, until a vaccine is developed and available there will continue to be small outbreaks of the virus. Many businesses continue to be supported by Jobkeeper and Jobseeker continues for those who do not have a job.

However, in talking to many businesses especially those outside metropolitan areas, some are struggling to find workers especially in the agricultural industry and tourism and hospitality industry. Border restrictions, still in place in some states have prevented many from being able to travel for all sorts of reasons. Many businesses and organisations have had to turn to video conferencing to continue to operate.



National Council of Women Australia (NCWA) had to reluctantly cancel its Mid-Term Conference which was scheduled to be held early in October. In its place

a two hour Zoom meeting was held with a number of speakers who had been scheduled to speak at the conference. Senator the Hon Anne Ruston Minister for Families and Social Services gave a detailed presentation and answered questions on a range

of her port-folio responsibilities. She spoke about the work being done on keeping women and families safe and free from violence, discrimination and harassment in their homes, in the workplace and in the community.



Kate Jenkins, Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner, spoke about the report launched earlier this year *Respect@work, the Australian Human Rights Commission's report of the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces 2020*. Kate also provided some excellent information to those attending the forum.

Dr James Muecke, 2020 Australian of the Year, spoke about his work and the debilitating consequences of diabetes and gave a very informative video presentation. The last presentation was from Julie Collins MP Shadow Minister for Women, who spoke about a range of matters including the Labor Women's Budget statement released during Budget week.

Together with the South Australian Government, the Federal Government is continuing to support a successful Endometriosis Awareness program in South Australia and has now, along with the Western Australian Government, expanded the program into Western Australia. The PPEP-Talk program which was developed by the Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia to enable students to learn how to

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recognise when menstruation symptoms are not normal and advise them where to go for the advice and help. One of the critical obstacles to women and girls receiving diagnosis for endometriosis is a lack of awareness and knowledge of the condition, including what is normal/abnormal period or pelvic pain. NCWWA was very instrumental in ensuring the program was expanded into Western Australia.

According to the Department of Communities Plan, *Stronger Together: WA Plan for Gender Equality*, fifty per cent of Western Australians are women and girls. However, the gender pay gap in Western Australia is 21.78%, a long way from the national average of 13.9%. The gender pay gap in Western Australia is the highest of all Australian States and Territories and has been for many years. The pay gap is caused by a number of factors, such as under-representation of women in leadership roles and the lack of business initiatives that increase women's participation in traditionally male dominated industries as well as the



undervaluing of occupations in which women have been over represented. Those businesses doing the right thing need to be acknowledged such as the Pink Ship Program introduced by Austal shipbuilders in 2019 and the Women in Engineering Program delivered by Chevron through the South

Metropolitan TAFE. As stated in the Department of Communities Plan too many women are still experiencing family and domestic violence as well as sexual violence and assault. Women continue to be under-represented in leadership roles across almost all sectors, despite being well qualified and eager to lead. The gender pay gap and time taken out of the workforce for caring responsibilities mean that women are vulnerable to poverty and homelessness. This can lead to a cycle of disadvantage across generations.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) recently released a paper *“Social isolation, time spent at home, financial stress and domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic”*. Data from a large online survey of Australia women was analysed to examine whether the increased time spent at home, social isolation and financial stress resulting from COVID-19 containment measures, were associated with a higher likelihood of physical and sexual violence

among women in current cohabiting relationships. The results reaffirm that the pandemic was associated with an increased risk of violence against women in current cohabiting relationships. This was most likely from the combination of economic stress and social isolation. The report is available on the AIC website.

The Australian Government recently announced it has committed nearly \$24 million of funding to the FASD Diagnostic and Support Services.

As we know FASD is a brain injury resulting from prenatal exposure to alcohol. It is a tragic problem—a preventable disorder that has an awful impact on mothers, their babies and families.



Another recent announcement by the Australian Government is that it is partnering with leading Australian universities to support new research projects that include addressing end of life issues for solar PV panels. Unfortunately, to date, the solar PV sector does not currently have a sustainable solution for managing damaged or used solar panels at the end of their life. The research aims to address this emerging issue by focusing on reducing the costs of sustainably managing panels at the end of life, either through better upfront design, increasing the value of recovered materials or by repurposing recycled components.

The recently released Budget announced Australians suffering from liver cancer, myopia and Parkinson's disease will soon have new treatment options, with amended PBS listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) coming into effect. Australia has also led a successful push for worldwide action to tackle two key global health issues—cervical cancer and eye health. Unfortunately, over 800 Australian women are still diagnosed with cervical cancer each year, with more than 200 deaths. However, since the start of the National Cervical Screening Program in 1991 there has been a 50 per cent reduction in cervical cancer incidence and mortality in Australia

About 700 new safe places for women and children escaping domestic and family violence will be built across the country under the Australian Government's Safe Places initiative for new and

expanded emergency accommodation. In Western Australia over three hundred and ten additional women per year will be able to receive help from Ruah Community Services and St Vincent De Paul Society (WA) Inc once the safe place projects are completed.

As NCWWA President I had the opportunity to attend the BPW Joonadulup-Wanneroo annual 'Equal Pay Day' event held in early September. This year a virtual event was held. The symbolic day (this year 28 August 2020) is dedicated to raising awareness of the gender pay gap.



This year I was invited to again be a member of the judging panel for the UN Gender Equality Awards. Last year a diverse number of very talented women applied to be

recognised by receiving an award. Shelter WA recently held a City of Perth -Lord Mayor Forum, Ending Homelessness with the Lord Mayoral candidates- it was a great opportunity to raise the very serious issue of homelessness in Perth city and I am glad I had the opportunity to participate- attendees had the opportunity to attend in person (limited numbers) or attend by Zoom.

The NCWWA Executive has continued to meet by Zoom – at its last meeting it was agreed that the NCWWA AGM will be held on Monday 30 November 2020 at the Rod Evans Community Centre. A notice of the AGM will go out shortly with an RSVP required to attend the meeting.

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## RENEWAL of NCWWA MEMBERSHIP FEES

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There are only a small number of members who have yet to renew the NCWWA 2020-2021 membership fee. If you are one of those people please make your payment as soon as possible. Payment may be made by Bank transfer or by cheque.

**Payment by direct transfer:**

Account name: National Council of Women of WA Inc  
 BSB: 066 110  
 Account number: 1015 7530

Please ensure you identify your name in the “comments” field

**Payment by cheque:**

National Council of Women of WA Inc  
 P O Box 6224 East Perth WA 6892

If your details have changed in any way please complete

- 2020-2021 Associate Members Renewal Form on the NCWWA website
- 2020-2021 Affiliate Members Renewal Form on the NCWWA website

**NCWWA Annual General Meeting**  
**Monday 30 November**  
**1.00pm 160 Hay St East Perth**

**WEB PAGE**  
[www.ncwwa.org.au](http://www.ncwwa.org.au)

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## WOMENS ECONOMIC SECURITY STATEMENT 2020

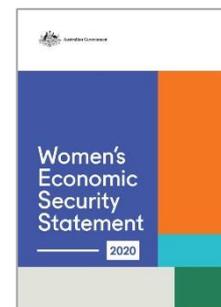
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### Women's Economic Security Statement 2020

- Repair and rebuild women's workforce participation and further close the gender pay gap
- Greater choice and flexibility for families to manage work and care
- Support women as leaders and positive role models
- Respond to the diverse needs of women
- Supporting women to be safe at work and home

To view the statement document follow the link below

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/economic-security/wess>




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## UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY for the ELIMINATION of VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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### 25 November 2020



The United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is an occasion for all governments, international and community organisations to raise public awareness of violence against women and their families.

Domestic and Family Violence continues to have a devastating effect on individuals, families and communities in Western Australia. It is a complex and persistent social problem that has no easy solution.

One of the aims of the day is to highlight that the scale of the issue is often hidden.

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## AFFILIATE NEWS

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### Australian Church Women

World Community Day Service for Perth Metropolitan

Friday 30 October 2020

10.00 am for 10.30 am

Maylands/Mount Lawley Uniting Church

165 Railway Parade Maylands.

Contact Bev Macri email: [muir@inet.net.au](mailto:muir@inet.net.au)



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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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### Western Australia State Budget 2020-2021

#### **Supporting Initiatives to Prevent Family and Domestic Violence:**

A \$9 million investment is being made to implement the State Government's Family Violence Reform Legislation to protect survivors of family and domestic violence and support them through the justice system. This program of work is on top of the package of initiatives included in the WA Recovery Plan which committed to employ twenty three additional outreach workers, boost family violence response teams that support victims, following police call-outs, an expansion to the Peel and Kwinana refuges and counselling advocacy and support services.

There is also funding to establish new Family and Domestic Violence One Stop Hubs in Mirrabooka and Kalgoorlie to make it easier for family and domestic violence victims to access services.

#### **Supporting Initiatives to Strengthen Mental Health Services:**

The 2020-2021 State Budget allocates \$1.013 billion to the Mental Health Commissioner to support services for all Western Australians. This includes \$46.9 million for suicide prevention programs and initiatives and 25.1 million for a new 16-bed youth mental health, alcohol and other drug homelessness services in the Perth Metropolitan area. There is also a proposal to establish a 20 bed adult community care unit.

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#### **Western Australian Housing Strategy:**

The WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030 was launched in mid-October 2020. According to the Strategy it sets clear targets to create a more agile housing system that can respond to current and future need. Included in its commitments are:

- a 6% net increase in social homes over the next 10 years (2600 homes)
- diversifying the rental sector
- continuing to support home ownership opportunities for people on low to moderate incomes.
- improving the availability of liveable designed housing
- building liveable inclusive and connected communities that improve social and economic participation.



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#### **107 TAFE Course Fees Slashed:**

Under the new JobTrainer Agreement with the Commonwealth Government the WA Government will slash fees on 107 TAFE courses. Under the successful Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative the WA Government has now slashed fees by up to 72 per cent for 180 courses in total, to make training more affordable for Western Australians.

People under 25 or eligible people of all ages looking for work will pay no more than \$400 in annual course fees. The 107 additional reduced-fee courses will deliver training in sectors including building and construction, manufacturing, information technology, mining, engineering, aquaculture, agriculture, horticulture and logistics. Reduced course fees for the additional 107 courses will be available from January 2021.

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