

President's Message December 2025

Dear Members

It is hard to believe that it is now December 2025. The year has just flown. The National Council of Women (NCWWA) Executive has continued to advocate on a range of issues concerning women, their families and the community. The NCWWA Executive has continued to meet on a regular basis while the Council tends to meet less often. The NCWWA AGM was held on 1 December 2025 at the CWA Rooms in West Perth. Thank you to everyone who came along.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Australian Training Awards are the peak National Awards that showcase best practice in Vocational Education and Training. The 2025 Australian training Awards were held on 5 December 2025 at the Darwin Convention Centre. Winners from each State and Territory Training Awards compete for a National Title. A direct entry is also available for some award categories. This year, I understand, Western Australia only picked up two awards.

Congratulations to Arabella Poole from Western Australia, who completed a Certificate IV in Fitness at the North Metropolitan TAFE in 2024 after a thirteen-year battle with medical issues and was awarded the Vocational Student of the Year Award.



Congratulations to Taylorweir Hairdresser and Barber Training Western Australia for receiving the Small Training Provider of the Year Award.



The Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre and Valuing Children Initiative has released a very sobering report on Child Poverty in Australia 2025. The extent of Child Poverty in Australia in 2025 should be cause for concern with nearly one in six Australian children estimated to be growing up in poverty. Growing up in poverty impacts directly on physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.

Poor nutrition in childhood directly limits physical development, while hungry children struggle to pay attention in class missing out on learning opportunities. Over the last decade Western Australian poverty headcount has risen from 211,500 or 8.7 per cent in 2015 to a projected 425,500 or 14 per cent in 2025 according to the report. The report recommends an increase in the level of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) maximum payment by 30 per cent to better align CRA support with rental costs then index CRA to changes in median rental costs. It also recommends a major study should be undertaken to update equalisation rates for income support and family tax arrangements for different family types to better reflect the changing cost of family living.

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The Western Australian Government has released the States first Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Strategy which aims to keep all Western Australians safe at home, at work and in the community. The strategy calls for community-wide prevention efforts and calls for a co-ordinated framework for action across interconnected domains:

- ❖ Prevention
- ❖ Early intervention
- ❖ Response
- ❖ Recovery and Healing

Australia is also facing a looming crisis of older women entering retirement in poverty, unless urgent action is taken, new research from Super Members Council (SMC) has found.

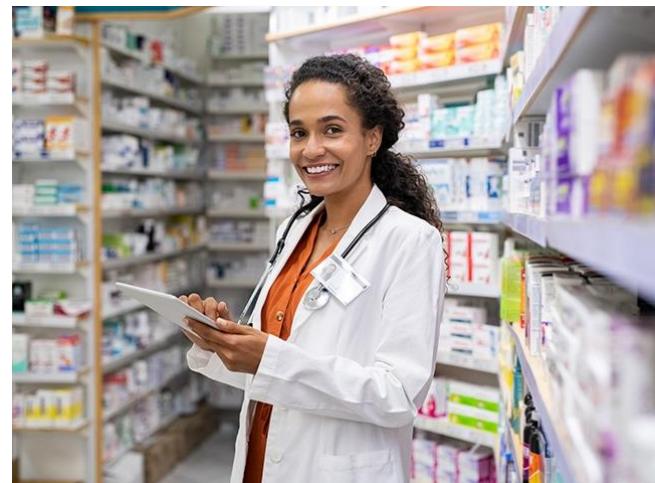
While the superannuation gender pay gap has often been blamed on having children the report finds women's superannuation balances are also disproportionately impacted by events later in life.

The report by Impact Economics and Policy commissioned by SMC also found that events such as separation, unpaid care giving for older family members and family violence affected superannuation balances worsening women's economic insecurity even after a lifetime of hard work. The superannuation system was built around uninterrupted full-time work which just is not the reality for many women.

With rising numbers of single women above the age of 45 renting, nearly 60 per cent of older female renters already live below the poverty line according to the council.

NCWWA has received a response from the Hon Mark Butler MP regarding the RSV Vaccination being available and funded by the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for adults 75 years and above and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 60 to 74.

At the July meeting of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) a positive recommendation for Abrysvo and Arexvy (RSV vaccinations) was received. However, while a positive recommendation has been received a price still needs to be agreed between the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and the pharmaceutical company. The Department



then needs to seek approval from the Government to fund a new vaccine for a particular cohort through the NIP.

In my view it is now up to the Federal Government to move quickly in the New Year so that the vaccination can be available before winter 2026. I will be following up with another letter to the Minister calling for urgent action.

A response has also been received from the Assistant Secretary Free TAFE, Skills Funding and Analysis Branch about NCWWA concerns about the completion rates of Fee-Free TAFE and the small number of building and construction apprentices in Western Australia given the urgent need to build more homes. Unfortunately, these concerns were not adequately addressed in the response received and another letter needs to be written to the Minister.

The Assisted Reproductive Technology Bill 2025 has now passed the Western Australian Parliament. The Legislation now permits an eighteen-year-old girl to be a surrogate. In my view and in the view of almost everyone I have spoken to in the community allowing an eighteen-year-old girl to be a surrogate is outrageous especially as all other states, ACT and the Northern Territory have legislation which states that a woman must be 25 years of age. My understanding is only the state of South Australia is the exception. The Legislation has also removed the requirement that a surrogate must have been a mother. Instead of strengthening protection for women the Legislation may allow a number of unintended consequences in coming years.

As of the 30 June 2025 there were 2,656,469 small businesses in Australia employing just over five million people. The key findings in the 2025 COSBOA Small Business Perspectives Report include the following:

Profits have fallen, owners are carrying the financial burden, taxes, wages, insurance, compliance and energy top the impacts on financial situations. High operating costs are the biggest barrier to growth, compliance is costly in both money and time, skills and workforce pressures remain persistent, mental health impacts are at alarming levels and rising costs will continue to squeeze margins. Female entrepreneurship continues to grow across many industries, the gender split in small business ownership still leans male.

President's Award- Congratulations to Daphne Thacker a NCWWA Life member and Member of the NCWWA Executive who received the President's award this year.

As Christmas is almost upon us, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year and a year filled with opportunities!

Robyn Nolan



DR. DAWN BUTTERWORTH AO PhD LIFE MEMBER AND MEMBER NCWWA



Sadly, Dr. Dawn Butterworth AO, PhD passed away recently quite suddenly. Graduating as a Kindergarten Teacher, Dawn never ceased working for children in Western Australia. Her many academic achievements culminated in a PhD from the University of Western Australia.

In the 1970s, Dawn and a colleague pioneered the first full-time preschool education program for five-year-old children in Western Australia. Dawn lectured at the Edith Cowan University and held senior positions in the Early Childhood program at the University, while also fulfilling teaching fellowships in a number of overseas countries.

In 2013 Dawn was awarded the WA Volunteer of the Year. In 2014 Dawn was inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame. In 2016 Dawn received an Order of Australia for her work supporting early childhood education and women's rights.

Dawn's leadership extended beyond OMEP WA, where she served as President and National Director of OMEP Australia. Dawn was also a President of the National Council of Women WA and a Life Member, a member of the Association for the Wellbeing of Children in Healthcare and involved in many community organisations.

On behalf of NCWWA Executive and Members our deepest condolences go to her husband Bryce and family and friends.

Robyn Nolan

NCWWA MEMBERSHIP FEES

NCWWA membership fees for the 2025-2026 year are now overdue as fees become due 1 July each year. If you would like to remain a member please pay your membership fee which remains the same as last year.

Payment may be made by Bank Transfer or by Cheque:

Associate (Individual) Memberships:	\$55.00
Affiliate Memberships (Not-For -Profit Organisation)	\$66.00

Payment by Direct Transfer:

Account Name: National Council of Women of WA Inc

BSB: 036 034
Account Number: 559 683

Payment by Cheque:

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

Please ensure you identify your name in the 'comments' field.

STEM BURSARY

Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Bursary 2026

Applications are open for the NCWWA 2026 STEM Bursary. The Bursary is available to a female student studying a STEM Course in Western Australia at a TAFE or University level. Applicants must be Australian citizens.

Applications close 12 Noon Friday 20 March 2026

Each application must be on the Nomination Form and address the following criteria:

- Academic Excellence
- Financial need
- Study in a non-traditional area for women
- How studies will benefit women, families and the wider community

An application form for the STEM Bursary is provided in this Newsletter



NATIONAL COUNCIL of WOMEN WA Inc.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS BURSARY 2026

CLOSING DATE: 12 NOON on Friday 20 March 2026

Nominations are called for the 2026 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Bursary available to a female student studying a STEM course in Western Australia at TAFE or University level. Applicants must be Australian Citizens. One Bursary will be awarded.

The cash amount of:

- \$1,200.00 will be presented to the successful applicant.

And may be used to support further study:

- Course fees including summer school courses
- Study aids/text books
- Attendance at seminars and/or conferences
- Other – Please outline

Complimentary membership of NCWWA will be provided to the Bursary winner for one year.

The Bursary winner will be announced April 2026.

Applicants will be notified of the results by email after that date.

The decision of the award panel will be final.

The Bursary Recipient is required to report to NCWWA on how the bursary has assisted their study.

The National Council of Women WA is a voluntary organisation formed in 1911 to advance the cause of women and families. In awarding this Bursary, NCWWA aims to:

- Recognise academic excellence
- Address financial need
- Encourage study in areas non-traditional for women
- Recognise the extent to which studies will benefit women, families and the wider community.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN WA Inc.
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS BURSARY
NOMINATION FORM 2026**

Name of Student: _____

Postal Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Nominator: _____ **Position:** _____

Postal Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email Address:** _____

(Note: The Nominator may be a teacher, lecturer, family member, NGO Organisation)

Study Institution in 2025: _____

Course/Level: _____

Proposed Study Institution/Course of Study in 2026: _____

Bursary will be used to finance: Please tick:

Course fees Study Aids Conference/Seminar Attendance Other

Reason for nomination: *Add extra pages as needed. Nominators are required to address the selection criteria of:*

- Academic Excellence
- Financial Need
- Study in a non-traditional area for women
- How studies will benefit women, families and the wider community

Application must be accompanied by a current Curriculum Vitae.

(Supporting documentation including 2 referees and academic results, including 2025 results is also required).

Completed form and CV should be sent to:

**Bursary Panel
National Council of Women WA
P.O. Box 6224
East Perth WA 6892**

Closing date for nominations: 12 Noon on Friday 20 March 2026

For further information: Contact: Robyn Nolan

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