



Affiliated with the National Council of Women of Australia Inc. Ltd and The International Council of Women

Patron: His Excellency Paul de Jersey AC Governor of Queensland

National Council of Women of Queensland Inc. December 2019 Newsletter

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**NCWQ acknowledges
and thanks Hon Jackie
Trad, MP for South
Brisbane, for the printing
of our newsletter.**

Membership Secretary Kirsty Levis in her role with the Rural Fire Brigade

The Glass House Mountains Rural Fire Brigade was formed in December 1948 and registered in June 1949, making it 70 years old – Brigade Number 1. As Secretary, Firefighter and Volunteer Community Educator for the Brigade, with assistance from QFES much organisation was accomplished to hold an event worthy of the Commissioner visiting the station in June 2019. Even ordering dress uniforms for 30 Brigade members took many hours once sizing confirmed by QFES.

My passion for being a Firefighter stems from being able in year 11 to complete my work experience at the Woodridge Fire Station and then in year 12 at Brisbane Airport with the Firefighters. With limitations out of my control (my size) I was unable to pursue my dream however living rural since 2011 my commitment is diverse with many opportunities and less restrictions.

Involvement can be a member's choice, many are Firefighters with some filling various roles e.g. our Treasurer is also the Training Officer and a Firefighter. When pregnant with my second child, I trained to be a Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) allowing me to still be active even though I wasn't on the fire ground. This role involves public presentations, being present at markets/fetes/exhibits/expos, talking to communities, fundraising, attending meetings/training/summits and representing QFES.

Due to my husband's work I am unable to accept each fire fighting opportunity and therefore can assist

before the event – education to the communities and/or after the event with other QFES Employees and Volunteers. Examples include travelling to evacuation centres, visiting areas affected for research/reporting, monitoring properties, speaking to residents and answering questions.



This can be so empowering especially when women within the community will seek out another to speak to – after recent fires when attending a breakfast, many were unaware that a bushfire could affect their lives and properties. To give them the resources and confidence to prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan meant that they are better prepared in case there is a next time; one said the only thing she took when being evacuated for two days was her wedding dress.

The best source of information is <https://www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx> or the QFES Facebook Page. Printed resources are also available and these are frequently handed out.

Teamwork regardless of age or experience is vital for Brigade members, and when working with others in the group or region. Deployment can be within the state or nation as a Firefighter or VCE. As QFES Volunteers we are supplied with PPE, differing levels of training and more recently appliances/fuel. Fundraising is still required to maintain the station and equipment e.g. replacing hoses, upgrading fridge, adding training room etc.

Since 1949 much has changed with different equipment and PPE for all Volunteers, more members at most Brigades of varying ages and methods of researched/reporting necessary so that resources can be justified. With greater resources and capabilities comes more restrictions and some confusion with differing sectors. Communication is paramount to reduce the risks for bushfires and educate communities.



NCWQ acknowledges all affected by bushfires and drought. You are in our thoughts.

We acknowledge the selfless work of all volunteers, particularly at this time, the firefighters.

We thank you!

Above: NCWQ Membership Secretary Kirsty Levis with fellow members of the Glass House Mountains Rural Fire Brigade

Right: Kirsty in the thick of it

Page 1 photograph: Kirsty at a large hazard reduction burn at a Glass House Mountains property in August 2019

Kirsty Levis has filled the role of NCWQ Membership Secretary since 2012. She also volunteers with The Girls' Brigade (she is their delegate to NCWQ), Beerburrum School of Arts Association Inc., Beerburrum State School P&C Association, Caboolture Uniting Church and Glasshouse Country War on Waste. A mother of two children, Kirsty also works five days per week as a Bookkeeper and is undertaking her Diploma of Accounting to update her qualifications.



NCWQ Annual Christmas Luncheon

Nearly 50 guests, including representatives of 17 of our affiliated organisations; associate members and friends; Honorary Life Member Dr Laurel Macintosh OBE; Claire Moore; and our newest member Stacey Wegener, changing her work shifts to be there; attended the NCWQ 2019 Christmas Luncheon, once again held in the Women's College, University of Queensland.

The long term relationship between NCWQ and the UQ was acknowledged. In 1925 Winifred – known as Freda – Freeman received a Bachelor of Science from the University. Freda was a foundation member of the Alumni Association in 1967 and was elected to the Alumni Executive at the inaugural meeting. She served on the Executive for 15 years.

She was a member of the University Senate for 8 years and was the joint convenor of the Academic Dress Hiring Service from 1976 to 1985. Freda was also the delegate from the Australian Federation of University Women – now known as Graduate Women – to the National Council of Women. Freda was the NCWQ president from 1952 to 1956.

During that time as a result of the work of the Council on the welfare of women prisoners, Mrs Freeman was appointed to the Parole Board, the first woman to be given such a position.

Freda's legacy continues – the recipient of the 2019 Freda Freeman Commemorative Award is working towards gaining her PhD in Music.

Christmas traditions in other countries were shared by Soroptimist International member, Yvonne Matta who spoke of her childhood in Lebanon and shared a precis of the book *The Slouch Hat and the Oranges*, a true story written by her daughter Melina Matta. Family German traditions were relayed by Liz Van Dohren, a member of ESA and Jacqui Valkoff recounted various experiences from her time in different parts of the world.

Avril Kent (Quota International Redcliffe) reminded us of those not as fortunate as ourselves and of the men and women fighting bushfires throughout our country.

Beata Ostapiej-Piatkowski, the CEO of the Mercy Community Services Romero Centre, spoke of the work of the centre and of the invaluable support of the community as they work with newly arrived persons to Australia. We were thrilled Kidist, Brenda, Merewair and Deepa from the Centre could join us.

The Romero Centre, an organisational member of NCWQ, is a beacon of hope and welcome to refugees and people seeking asylum who are driven to Australia's shores in search of a safer life for their families. Support includes individualised case coordination service, social inclusion groups, legal migration advice, English classes and an emergency support pantry.

Guests had been invited to bring pantry goods for the Centre to share with their clients. And goods they brought!

Beata and the Romero Centre women's team expressed feeling very inspired by the generosity of NCWQ, its active compassion and the 'sisterhood's' support and belonging experienced during the luncheon.

We really reflected the NCWQ Motto "Do unto others as they would do unto you" and left the luncheon filled with good food, friendship and good will.

Beata can be contacted at the Romero Centre on 3013 or mobile 0438 112 076 or email: beata.ostapiej-piatkowski@mercyys.org.au



Some of the happy faces at the NCWQ Christmas Luncheon

Tradition of paper crowns: Paper crowns, the tissue paper hats from the Christmas crackers, can be traced back to the ancient Romans who wore crowns to celebrate Saturnalia, a festival that took place in December.

In the early 1900's, paper crowns were first included in bon bons in the United Kingdom.

There is also the theory that the party hats look like crowns and may symbolise the crowns worn by the Wise Men or perhaps the practice commenced when ordinary people began copying the aristocracy by wearing a crown.



The very regal Brenda



WOW Australia 2020 will take place at the Brisbane Powerhouse from 3 – 5 April, with a welcoming opening night celebration on 2 April and a closing night concert at QPAC on 5 April.

Through conversations, performances, panels, exhibitions, short talks and more, the festival will feature a huge array of local and international speakers (including former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, former Governor General and WOW Australia Patron Quentin Bryce and CEO of SheEO Vicki Saunders), First Nation leaders and change-makers

tackling the big issues for women everywhere.

Individual day and 3-day passes are now on sale available through <https://wowaustralia.com.au> <https://brisbanepowerhouse.org> and <https://premier.ticketek.com.au>



National Council of Women Australia

Mid-Term Conference

Friday 15 – Saturday 16 May 2020

Rydges South Park, 1 South Terrace, Adelaide South Australia

Enquiries: NCWA President Robyn Nolan: 0417 917 294

Email robynmn@bigpond.net.au

Madison Birtchnell – a Queensland Voices Female Leader 2019

With support from the Queensland Government's Office for Women, Femeconomy is showcasing Queensland women who are striving to create gender equality.

Madison Birtchnell was named as one of twenty 2019 Female Leaders, from the Health-Wellbeing category.

An inspiring young woman, Madison passionately serves and volunteers across Queensland communities helping women and girls. Madison represents Queensland and Australia as an advocate in the Women Deliver Young Leaders Global Program.



A champion for gender equality and the health, rights and well-being of girls and women, Madison assists in shaping programs and policies that affect their lives through consultations and awareness campaigns.

Madison mentors younger and marginalised students in various roles including College of Excellence Fellow, Student leadership Conference Coach and Kickstart Facilitator at QUT. She strives for equality through QUT 180Degrees Consulting (the world's largest university-based consultancy), Enactus (**Entrepreneurial Action Us**) Social Entrepreneurship society and Women in Business society.

Madison has previously held the position of the youngest member of YWCA's Sub-Committee, advising Board members to develop National programs and support initiatives for girls and women.

Supporting NCWQ, Madison is our volunteer Social Media Manager, publicising our work to promote the empowerment of women and girls. She pursues her passion for humanitarian work by interning with Amnesty International, supporting the #bringbackourgirls campaign and creating community conferences to raise awareness about international issues. She has amplified and championed many causes across her 13 years of volunteering including organising blood bank drives, financial fundraising and donating goods to Share the Dignity and fundraising for the homeless, the Ovarian Cancer Foundation and headspace.

Singlehandedly devising an International Women's Week Conference, funded by a Queensland State Government Grant, and featuring the Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP is one of Madison's proudest achievements.

When asked her vision for Queensland, Madison replied "That one day I will be able to create a legacy which inspires the next generation of community leaders and fosters an environment that realises the potential of young people. Every person should be valued and included, and we should always show another person kindness, respect and understanding".

And Madison's advice for Queensland women "Learn and know what you are passionate about, what you want to achieve or contribute to society. Discover what drives you, what your skills, abilities, values are in order to work towards your goals. Take a first step, reach out and see what's out there.

"Everyone should volunteer and help another person. Your age or gender should not define what you can accomplish or what you want to achieve and contribute. Be bold, take a chance."

We first met Madison when she was the recipient of the 2017 NCWQ Elements Living Bursary. The following year, she became the first and only applicant to receive a second bursary when she was chosen as the NCWQ Forum Communicators Bursary recipient.

Recently Madison was one of five finalists for the Young People's Human Rights Medal in the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2019 Human Rights Awards and has also received the 2019 QUT Excellence in Student Leadership Award for her active contribution and making a positive impact to the QUT community since commencing her studies – Bachelor of Business – at QUT.



Pam Tranter (Forum Communicators), Madison Birtchnell and Noela O'Donnell (NCWQ) at the QUT Excellence in Student Leadership Awards

Congratulations Madison Birtchnell, you are an inspiring Queensland Voices Female Leader.

Queensland Women's Week, an initiative of the Department of Child Safety, Youth & Women, will be celebrated from 6 – 15 March 2020, with the theme **Celebrating our diverse community of strong women.**

The theme highlights the diversity of women in Queensland and aims to empower and inspire Queensland women and girls to embrace and celebrate their unique qualities and experiences.

Recognising and celebrating our diversity enriches and strengthens our communities and creates a more equal Queensland where everyone is valued.

International Women's Day (IWD) was established in 1975 by the United Nations (UN). The 2020 IWD theme is **Generation Equality**. The day – March 8 -is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.



Strong women aren't simply born. They are made by the storms they walk through

National Rural Women's Coalition & Network

Views expressed in the NCWQ Newsletter may not always coincide with those of the organisation.

No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of the content.

2020 Bursary Program



With the completion of the 2019 bursary program, followed by review and de-briefing, Team Bursary is now gearing up for 2020.

The significant dates are:



Applications Open



Applications Close



Presentation at Brisbane Girls Grammar School, 5:30pm

Over the next few months, we will continue to work with our sponsors to finalise the details of each bursary. We are delighted that a couple of additional bursaries are being sponsored by NCWQ affiliated organisations.

Availability of members of Team Bursary for 2020 is also being finalised, and the formulation of the panel members for each bursary. Circles continue to be completed as we welcome several more previous bursary recipients to join Team Bursary.

We know what a difference the program makes for our recipients. We look forward to the 2020 bursary program and the impact it will have on the next group of recipients. Tuesday 4 August – a date for your calendar so you can experience the bursary presentation and be introduced to the 2020 recipients.

For more information, or if you are interested in being a member of Team Bursary 2020, please contact Kathy Cavanagh, Bursary Program Coordinator at bursaries@ncwq.org.au or phone 0407 117 378.

NCWQ MISSION STATEMENT

The National Council of Women of Queensland (NCWQ) is a non-party-political, non-sectarian, not for profit, umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives.

It seeks to raise the awareness of members as to their rights and responsibilities as citizens and encourages their participation in all aspects of community life.

What are NCWQ advisers doing?

By Dr Pat Pepper, NCWQ State Coordinator

The NCWQ Advisers' November Reports are briefly summarised below. The full reports are available on the NCWQ website – <https://ncwq.org.au/advisers>

COMMUNICATIONS:

ARTS, LETTERS and MUSIC:

Jennifer Ann Davies, NCWQ Arts, Letters and Music Adviser

- Shared with us her delightful literary and art experiences on her recent trip to Canada such as the 2019 Vancouver Writers' Festival and a display of a number of Leonardo da Vinci's inventions, implements, musical instruments and paintings,
- critiqued interesting books such as
 1. Rules of the Road, an uplifting tale of two friends on a life changing journey by Irish author, Ciara Geraghty;
 2. Purge (a gripping tale of two women both carrying explosive secrets, the elder a communist sympathizer and a blood traitor who endured a life of abuse in Estonia during the brutal Soviet years, and the younger, a murderer and a victim of sex-trafficking on the run from brutal captors) by Finnish-Estonian writer Sofi Oksanen. A rare glimpse of how and why Estonians feel the way they do about life and freedom.
 3. See What You Made Me Do - a book about love, abuse and power by investigative journalist, Jess Hill. A review of this soundly researched and important book has been sent to NCWQ, NCWA and ICW.

[NCWQ Arts, Letters and Music Adviser's Report, November/December 2019. See What you made me do Oct2019.docx](#)

EDUCATION:

Deslyn Taylor, NCWQ Education Adviser, reported on the initiatives of State Authorities on

- Early childhood education noting this needed improvement in remote areas.
- Catering for children with disabilities. The national definition of a student with disability should allow funding to be targeted more fairly.
- Equal access to all forms of training and higher education. Women are beginning to be recognised for their contribution in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) areas as demonstrated by Mathematician Cheryl Praeger receiving the 2019 Prime Minister's Science award and being praised for her 'outstanding contribution to mathematics'. However, women are under represented in areas such as Engineering.
- Teaching Quality. A government strategy has been developed to achieve this.
- Everyday Life Skills for Young Women. Questions have been raised if this has a place in an already crowded curriculum

[NCWQ Education Adviser's Report, November 2019.](#)

SOCIAL ISSUES:

CHILD, YOUTH and FAMILY:

Leanne Francia, Child, Youth and Family Adviser, reported on the following issues:-

- Urgent need for the family law system to provide better support to women and children in family violence including that experienced post separation. She expressed disappointment that findings from the Australian Law Reform Commissions inquiry into the family law system had not been implemented but another inquiry, Andrews-Hanson

Family Law Inquiry set up, the legitimacy of which is being questioned by over 100 peak bodies and practitioners.

- Sexual Violence "Start By Believing" Campaign aimed at improving responses to sexual violence.
- Black & Write! Writing Fellowships aimed at improving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander writing and editing.
- Art Therapy Supporting LGBTIQ Youth.

[NCWQ Child, Youth and Family Adviser's Report, November 2019.](#)

GENERAL WELL BEING:

HABITAT:

Donnell Davis, NCWQ Habitat Adviser reported on Australia's performance on Sustainable Development Goals 11; Sustainable Cities and Communities. Concerns for the future include

- water supply and carrying capacity for food,
- social infrastructure like schools, hospitals and essential transport hubs,
- adequate and appropriate housing for vulnerable people,
- social justice for ageing populations, and
- human health from climate change impacts.

She alerted us about

- ongoing homelessness e.g. 5000 homeless people (living in cars) in the Gold Coast despite charities collecting, feeding and clothing many people every night.
- Homes are being approved in inappropriate locations e.g. flood prone, fire risk areas and within intact ecosystems in the hot tropics; and some being built which are not compliant with building standards. However 1980s and 1990s built housing is recommended and those by owner builders.
- facial recognition technology was introduced in Queen Street Mall, without permission, of people including children -a breach of civil liberties?

[NCWQ Environment Adviser's Report, November 2019.](#)

ENVIRONMENT:

Pat Pepper, NCWQ Environment Adviser investigated

- the perennial problem and consequences of many billions of megalitres (ML) of water flooding out to sea with other parts of the country suffering extreme drought.
- solutions to better use the water to produce food and fibre, create renewable hydroelectric power, relieve and invigorate the outback towns and preserve the environment, in particular the Great Barrier Reef and the Murray Darling Basin. An expanded and updated Bradfield Scheme is considered.

[NCWQ Environment Adviser's Report, November 2019.](#)

Pat Pepper, NCWQ State Coordinator

Welcome to our new members!

Sarah Fleming

Leah Lever

Ramona McGregor

Mercy Community Romero Centre

Stacey Wegener



20 May 2020 Annual Dinner with guest speaker
Queensland Police Service Commissioner Katarina
Carroll APM, United Service Club

4 August 2020 Bursaries Presentations, Brisbane Girls
Grammar School

1 October 2020 Bursaries fund-raising Morning
Tea, acknowledging Queensland nurses, Tattersall's
Club

3 December 2020 Christmas Luncheon, Women's
College, University of Queensland