



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA INC.

Member Organisation of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO)

NGO in consultative (Roster) status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

It is just two months until the National Biennial Conference at the Hilton Hotel in Adelaide so I would like to encourage you all to get your registrations in as soon as possible.

The last few months in particular have been very challenging to our faith with the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse and the charges laid against Cardinal George Pell and Archbishop Phillip Wilson. We pray for everyone involved and especially the victims and their families. We pray for those who have the duty to implement the necessary changes and especially that they are carried out in a way that will give us hope for the future.

The Safe Schools programme was drafted, supposedly to stop bullying in schools although there was a major focus on gender issues and was supported by the LGBTI sector but unfortunately this group is very intolerant of anyone who uses their right to freedom of speech and speaks out about same sex marriage. The recent case with Margaret Court was very bad, she was definitely bullied for expressing her opinion although they believed that

they could say whatever they wished, some of it very nasty about her simply because her views differed to theirs.

Senator Penny Wong recently asked those of us who believe in God to disregard our beliefs when we discuss same sex marriage, this is quite laughable, as I am sure she would be horrified if we suggested to her that she should not consider her lifestyle choice when she is voting or sharing her opinion. They don't seem to accept that our faith is intrinsic to who we are.

We hope to see as many of you as possible at the conference.



Anne Marie

National President:
president@cwla.org.au

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*Be eager in your
desires but humbly
patient in your
accomplishment.*

- Mary Mackillop

Recently WUCWO sent a message to all member organisations worldwide, about the Permanent Women's Consultation Group of the Pontifical Council for Culture. This was forwarded to all State International Secretaries for distribution to members. President General of WUCWO, Maria Giovanna Ruggieri, is one of the 37 women invited to join the Women's Consultation Group.

The Members of the Pontifical Council are nominated by the Holy Father for a period of five years. They normally meet every two years in a Plenary Session. Members are cardinals, bishops, priests and lay people. Their role is to help the Council identify cultural challenges facing the Church and facilitate programs of action. Australia's Archbishop Denis Hart of Melbourne was recently appointed to the Council by Pope Francis.

The Pontifical Council for Culture's president is Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, who is reported to have said, "inside of my dicastery, I didn't have any women at the management level. They were only there in an administrative sense as secretaries." Initially Cardinal Ravasi asked women to prepare papers and discussion themes, on the topic of "Feminine Culture" for the Plenary Session on the 4th to 7th February 2015. The discussion centred on four sessions.

1. Between equality and difference: the quest for an equilibrium
2. "Generativity" as a symbolic code
3. The female body: between culture and biology
4. Women and religion: flight or new forms of participation in the life of the Church?

Cardinal Ravasi was so pleased with the women's work he decided to ask them to form a Permanent Women's Consultation Group and added to their number women from various professions, including CEOs, journalists, doctors, professors, actresses and

teachers. In her role as General President of an organisation with 5 million members in 60 countries, Maria Giovanna Ruggieri's ability and contacts would make her ideal for inclusion.

The coordinator of the Group is Consuelo Coradi, who is vice rector for research and international relations at the LUMSA University of Rome. The aim of the Group is to ensure that women's points of view are acknowledged and appreciated. Consuelo hopes that the diversity of backgrounds, careers and experience will reach out to Catholics worldwide.

Plans are underway for a Youth Consultation Group. Since the United Nations has already set up a Youth Forum, which reports back to the Commission on the Status of Women, this decision could be timely.

The 2015 Plenary Session produced an outline document called, Women's Cultures: Equality and Difference, which concludes with the following interesting and thought provoking questions.



FROM THE NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY

- What spaces are proposed to women in the life of the Church? Do we welcome them bearing in mind specific and changing cultural, social and identity sensitivities? Do we, perhaps, propose ways of participation based on schemes that are of no interest to them?
- Have we ever asked ourselves what type of woman the Church needs today? Is the way they participate thought of and worked out together with them? Or are we handing them preconceived models that either do not meet their expectations or respond to questions that have already been superseded?
- Are women deserting the Church? Perhaps in some cultural areas this is true, other geographic zones could suggest invaluable elements to be proposed and new horizons towards which our eyes can be turned. Could not the pastoral debate between different experiences, in which

women are able to let their voices be heard and to offer their availability to serve, become a new “synodal” way of experiencing the faith and of living in the Church?

- What are the characteristic ways in which women are present in different societies and cultures, from which we can take inspiration for a pastoral renewal so that women may play a more active part in the life of the Church?



Jane Munro

National International Secretary



To defend human life, above all when it is wounded by illness, is a duty of love that God entrusts to all.

30 June 2017

Pope Francis @Pontifex

“He who knows how to forgive prepares for himself many graces from God. As often as I look upon the cross, so often will I forgive with all my heart.”

St Faustina (390, page 175)

EASTER REFLECTION

Dianne Bergant CSS Liturgy Help, wrote: "The best way to enter Holy Week with Jesus is in the company of those with whom he has identified himself: the poor and the broken; the humiliated and the marginalised; those who suffer the abuse of others; those who never use rank to force their will. If we are to be saved, we must go where salvation takes place..." So let us look at some of those with whom Jesus may identify himself, and follow his example of selfless service.

CYCLONE DEBBIE

Thank you to all who have assisted the victims of Cyclone Debbie. On the other hand, there are reports of tradesmen charging homeowners inflated prices for repairing the damage. The question is, what would Jesus (a carpenter himself) do in this situation?

LABOUR DAY

On 1 May, the feast of St Joseph the Worker, there were celebrations by workers, but also messages about the dignity of work and the need for fair wages. In Australia (as in overseas countries) there are concerns about underemployment, and unemployment being underreported. Many people have only a few hours work, not nearly enough to support themselves, but they are counted in the statistics as employed. Others have given up trying so are not counted as seeking work. Some estimate that the true rate of unemployment here may be close to 20%, with the social impact on young people who cannot move out of home or start families likely to have ongoing effects.

CARING FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

Reports of shots being fired within the offshore detention facility on Good Friday are concerning, since these people came seeking a safe place to live. Instead, under our care, they may be being retraumatised. Debate continues about whether up to 800 people will

be relocated to the United States, and whether others who have either not claimed protection or have had their claims rejected will be deported. (It is now 25 years since Australia introduced the system of mandatory detention in 1992. Maybe this is a good time to review it?)

CARING FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

50 years after the referendum which gave the federal government constitutional authority for aboriginal affairs and saw aboriginal people counted in the census, Indigenous leaders have been meeting at Uluru. It seems that representative groups will be formed to press for treaties and meaningful change, which would go further than just recognition in the constitution.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

There has been a lot of commentary about the increasing costs of housing. Saving the deposit for a house is more difficult than ever, prices particularly in the cities are really high, and rents take a huge proportion of people's income. Indeed, some people cannot afford city rents and KPMG recently did a survey which showed about 15% of people regularly cannot afford to pay their household bills. Some people thought the recent Federal Budget might contain initiatives to address the housing issue. Investors on the other hand did not want to lose negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions. In the end they lost some income tax deductions, eg for costs incurred inspecting their investment properties. Whether it is helpful to have people providing private rental accommodation or whether this pushes up prices so first home buyers cannot enter the market remains debateable. There are calls for more affordable housing or social housing projects. Another approach is to free up housing by encouraging people to share, rather than having disincentives through the Welfare system so people do not cohabit for fear of affecting their benefits.

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES REPORT

CARING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

There was bipartisan support for the plan to care for all Australians under 65 with disabilities by means of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The argument is over funding, with Labor saying the NDIS was fully funded while the Coalition is seeking to raise the Medicare levy .5% to help pay for it. In reality, costs have blown out because funding is uncapped and increasing numbers of people are qualifying for support now the services are becoming available. New service providers are joining, so one hopes the staff will be well trained and that administrative costs will be kept to a minimum.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

In the lead up to World environment day, there are calls from Caritas and others for more action on climate change.

EDUCATION

Education is a social justice issue, because education can lead to qualifications, jobs, and opportunities to improve our communities. We cannot have a system which advantages some sectors of our community, while excluding other groups so they end up with low socio-economic status (SES). Using SES, the Gonski model gave extra funding to some of the groups which had historically been disadvantaged. It was due to run

for another two years, but do the funds need to be redistributed NOW so the system is fairer? Parents and schools are understandably worried that their share may be reduced, but other children may be in desperate need of extra resources. The search for a just funding model is difficult. If only the education budget could be increased to meet all the needs!

Anne-Marie Ferry

The spirit of
humility is
sweeter than
honey, and
those who
nourish
themselves
with this
honey
produce
sweet fruit.



- St Anthony of Padua

EDITORIAL PANEL

National Executive
PO Box 894
Salisbury SA 5108

Email: publicrelations@cwla.org.au
Website: www.cwla.org.au

CWLA E-NEWSLETTER

If you would like a free subscription to the CWLA e-Newsletter please contact us at publicrelations@cwla.org.au

The CWLA e-newsletter is published quarterly.

WOMEN'S VOICE

Women's Voice is the Official Magazine of World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO). An annual subscription is \$22.00

League Members should contact their State International Secretaries if they would like to subscribe to Women's Voice.

FROM THE BIOETHICS CONVENOR

Behold I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.

Matthew 28:20

ANOTHER EUTHANASIA BILL - LIKE OTHERS AROUND AUSTRALIA.

A mixed group of NSW politicians have spent two years putting together their Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017. A woman with motor neuron disease is championing the bill to justify and sanction its despairing content. In displaying her photo central to the discussion of the bill, the Sydney Morning Herald presented the drafting hope that it would ease 'also the distress experienced by friends, families and loved ones'. Euthanasia is to solve everyone's problems.

This 2017 Bill calls for persons as young as 25 and expected to die within 12 months from their illness to be able to request their doctor provide them with a lethal drug. Another doctor (a specialist) will have to sign off on the poison decision and a psychologist or psychiatrist will have to declare they are of sound mind. The person requesting death doesn't have to be in pain.

The demographic and medical profile of persons seeking to self poison, however, requires consideration. The Medical Journal of Australia, March 2017, published research building the profile of the self poisoning person. The MJA introductory editorial states 'despite the size of the problem it has received relatively little public attention, with almost an unspoken suggestion that suicide is a life choice or a consequence of ageing. Yet, as the authors acknowledge, most older patients admitted to hospital after self poisoning have a history of mental illness'.



WHERE IS THE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF OLDER PEOPLE

Malcolm Hopwood's editorial in the Medical Journal of Australia also observes that while the older population in Australia is growing, and there is an abundance of mental health campaigns and suicide awareness raising promotions, very little attention and awareness is paid to the older group of persons at significant risk of self harm. The current 'Better Access to Mental Health Care Scheme' is designed to improve mental health and reduce suicidality, however only 8% of its funding finds its way to those over

60 years of age. Pirkis J. Ftanou M et al. Evaluation of the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and GPs through the Medicare Benefits Schedule Initiative. S Study of Consumers and Evaluation University of Melbourne 2010 ([click here](#) to visit the website).



The findings of a 26 year evaluation of self poisoning in a population of half million people in the Hunter Newcastle region gives a patient profile.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATES HUMAN LIFE AND THE FAMILY MORE THAN PERHAPS ANY OTHER INSTITUTION IN TODAY'S WORLD.

CATHOLICSCOMEHOME.ORG

Research suggests the desire to self poison should be viewed from a mental and social health perspective.

Research findings:

- The length of hospital stay for older persons who have deliberately or otherwise poisoned themselves but survived decreased from 46 hrs to 26 hrs. for older persons.

Hospitalization duration for younger persons self poisoning remained constant over the same 26 years of the study from 1987 to 2012. It is difficult to see how 26 hours of hospital admission, spanning acute unwellness due to toxic effects and recovery could delve into the background causes of the self poisoning. Loneliness, isolation, depression, cognitive decline and even external pressures could not be effectively diagnosed referred and managed all in the same 26 hours.

- 500 admissions in the older >65s cohort (80%) had involved deliberate self poisoning, and 24 hospital deaths. The number who overdosed and perished without hospital admission were not visible in this study .
- 38% of older patients in this study had a history of psychiatric illness. One third of those over 65 years had a history of past suicide attempts and 25% reported past alcohol or drug misuse. The authors observe loneliness, social isolation, family friction and financial worries are also risk factors for suicide.
- Suicidal intent and a lethal outcome were more common in the older cohort of over 65 year old.

Penny Wong says

'Separation of Church and State' supports her claim that Christians should not debate moral issues in society. Christians should remove from such discussions to maintain equity.

This is not Separation of Church and State but separation of Christians from the State.

God of Life, At the beginning of creation your Spirit hovered over the waters, to sanctify the seas and the land. Through the resurrection of Jesus you have filled us with the same light. May we always walk as radiant witnesses to your love, your mercy, your tender care and justice.

SELF POISONING PREVENTION EFFORTS MAY BE BETTER DIRECTED TO PROTECTING OUR EXPANDING POPULATION OF OLDER CITIZENS

Pillans P, Page C et al. Self poisoning by older Australians: a cohort study. MJA 2017; 206: 164-169

A 'NSW Parliamentary Working Group' comprised of proeuthanasia identities is overseeing consultation regarding this new "Assisted Dying" bill. Submissions will be kept secret and not published. The wider society will be informed but not consulted. What are they afraid of? Catholics?

The processes outlined in the draft bill take no account of the demographic profile of the person seeking poison. The evidence based medicine of poison seeking disease in a half million population group bears respect. The messages sent to those with a terminal diagnosis are: alleviate the suffering of relatives and friends who may have to go with you through this illness; you have a right to get poison from your doctor; a small percentage of mental health care is spent on over 65 year olds; we'll give you one day in hospital if you survive self poisoning.

Beyond Blue and Black Dog messages are now discarded.

NIKKI GEMMELL: 'WAS THIS VERY MODERN DEATH EMPOWERMENT OR DESPAIR?'

Weekend Australian 18/3/2017

The Bill's terminology is vague and imprecise, falling over itself to dress up poison and scrub clean both murder and suicide: 'The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017 is a Bill that provides for physician assisted dying, not voluntary euthanasia'. I have no idea what this means:



With my whole heart I seek thee; let me not wander from thy commandments. I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed be thou Oh Lord, teach me thy statutes! With my lips I declare all the ordinances of thy mouth

Psalm 119 vs 10-13

The rate of euthanasia in Belgium increased significantly from 2007 to 2013, when tallies are taken., from 1.9 % of total deaths in that country to 4.6% of total Belgian deaths. Over 1 out of every 25 persons' deaths are from deliberate poisoning. Also, more than one in 10 'hastened deaths' are without an explicit request from the patient. New Eng Jour Med correspondence 19/3 15

While we need facts when faced with untruths before parliament, let us not forget we need relationship with God first.

Pope Francis inspirations for 2017:

Take care of you spiritual life, your relationship with God , because this is the backbone of everything we do and everything we are.

Take care of your family life, giving your children and loved ones your time attention and love.

Take care of your relationship with others, transforming your faith into life and your words into good works.

Watch out for laziness that leads to existential euthanasia and for complaining which leads to desperation.

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception pray for us.



Time and again Jesus bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this bound-less and unfailing love.

Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onward.

Pope Francis



(Dr) Deirdre Therese Little
MBBS DRANZCOG FACRRM
grad cert Bioeth (LUC)

CWLA Inc. National Bioethics Convenor

Ref: Photos from Pexels

RESEARCH OFFICER'S REPORT

It has been an extremely busy yet productive year for the Research Officer. There have been so many human rights and social justice issues that I have worked on in collaboration with many members of the CWLA. Below are the submissions that have been prepared, in alignment with our core values and objectives:

a. I prepared a submission to the NSW Parliamentary inquiry into Childhood Overweight and Obesity. We argued that more action needed to be taken to ensure that our children stay healthy, do more exercise and have better access to healthy food. The best way to do this is via adopting a whole of family approach to educating people into making positive and healthy choices for the benefit of their children;

b. I travelled with Deirdre Little, the CWLA Bio-ethics Officer, where we gave a talk in Townsville to encourage a wider membership of CWL Townsville to ensure that the branch does not close down. The focus of my talk was to encourage women to work together, and to highlight how being in the CWLA can make a difference in the lives of so many people in this country;

c. We provided a submission to a parliamentary bill introduced by the Queensland government, the Abortion Amendment Bill, attempting to legalise abortion in Queensland. Our arguments focused on the importance of supporting pregnant women so that they do not see abortion as the only option available to them, but to provide more support and funding for other options such as pregnancy counselling, support services etcetera;

d. I wrote a submission to the NSW human trafficking inquiry, stating that we believed that more support should be provided to victims and survivors of human trafficking;

e. I assisted the new Fiona Basile and the outgoing secretary Jane Munro to register for CSW 61 in New

York, which they both attended in March 2017 and represented CWLA;

f. I wrote a submission to the Northern Territory Law Reform "Termination of Law Reform: Improving Access for Northern Territory Women to Safe Termination of Pregnancy Services". Once again, we reiterated our opposition to decriminalizing abortion in the Northern Territory, and how we believe that life begins at conception;

g. In March 2017 we responded to the Department of Foreign Affairs white paper submission relating to the priorities for the Australian government in spending aid money. We emphasised that we did not believe that aid money should be used by the government to support or fund abortion practices, and that such funds could be better used in supporting more traditional humanitarian and development work;

h. In April 2017 I wrote a submission on Veteran and Ex Service suicides, emphasising that we believed that more funding and support should be provided to veteran and ex service personnel so as to decrease the number of suicides that people in these categories are experiencing as well as to increase support to family members. We emphasised the importance of the role of spiritual advisors to provide support to people in the defence forces;

i. In April 2017 I provided assistance with a motion that was written about pornography amongst children. With the increased use and access of the Internet by children, the exposure of children to pornography is rapidly increasing, warranting better protection measures to ensure that children are properly protected from exposure to pornography;

j. In May 2017 I contributed a human rights focus to a paragraph written by Deirdre Little about Maureen Farqui's abortion bill. This submission prepared by Deirdre was sent to the RANZCOG;

RESEARCH OFFICER'S REPORT

k. I wrote a submission for CWL QLD in relation to the Child Protection and Education Legislation (Reporting of Abuse) Amendment Bill 2017. The purpose of the bill was to mandate religious clergy to report people who informed them that they had committed sexual crimes against children, even where such information was provided to a priest in the confessional. Our submission argued that the confessional provided a safe place, whereby an abuser would feel safe to reveal such information, thereby providing an opportunity for a priest to compel a penitent to reveal this to the authorities or otherwise not receive absolution. This would assist abusers to be brought to the attention of the authorities;

l. I am currently working on a submission to a NSW parliamentary inquiry into youth suicide.

It has been a productive year and I know that the blessings of our Lord will continue on us as we continue our important advocacy and lobbying work, preparing research and writing submissions for the benefit of some of the most vulnerable people in society.

Sonia Di Mezza
Research Officer

There is nothing
impossible to God

~ St Rita



The good God does not
need years to accomplish
His work of love in a soul;
one ray from His Heart can,
in an instant, make His
flower bloom for eternity...

St Therese of Lisieu
VI letter to her sister Celine



NEW SOUTH WALES

At the Australia Day Luncheon 15 women doing post graduate work were honoured with a Certificate & Scholarship sponsored by affiliated NCW NSW organisations. CWLA-NSW sponsored Bridget Haywood on the suggestion of CWL Wollongong. Bridget has commenced her Bachelor of Medical Biotechnology Honour's year after sitting and achieving well in her Graduate Medical School Admissions Test. She hopes to study medicine in 2018 with ambitions to work overseas. Bridget has always been an active member of the parish community. She has worked at St Vincent De Paul shop, Unanderra, visited the elderly at Villa Maria Nursing Home Unanderra, distributed food to the disadvantaged with 'Vinnies Van' and participated in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience. She has demonstrated leadership at school and in a regional youth group including running weekend conferences, weekly meetings, and community building. She is the Event Founder and coordinator of the leadership team 'Pub Theology' which has monthly catechesis and discussions in a public forum at Dicey Riley's Irish Hotel. Bridget's proud and delighted grandparents attended the luncheon, they had raised Bridget from the age of six. Eleven CWLA-NSW also attended the luncheon.



The 25th Annual Jean Arnot Memorial Luncheon, honouring ladies in their 90th year and older, was another delightful occasion. Four CWLA-NSW ladies were honoured: Sr Judith Clark RSC (CWL Sydney) Pat Garnsey & Lesley Gorbach (CWL Broken Bay) and Carmel Keys (co-nominated by CWL Broken Bay and Australian Church Women). Guest Speaker Judy Nunn AM, Actor and Author, presented certificates of appreciation to the

nonagenarians and spoke of her experiences in the acting world.



Pictured L to R Carmel Keys Helen Cook (Nominator of Sr Judith) Sr Judith Pat Garnsey Jacqueline Kemp (Nominator of Broken Bay members)



Pictured at left a very happy group of CWL members from Sydney and Broken Bay following lunch honouring the nonagenarians.

One of the projects of last year's 120th Anniversary Committee (chaired by Michelle Pedersen) was to arrange assistance for Syrian refugees arriving in NSW. A pamphlet, providing information on services available in NSW, was suggested but this information is already provided from Settlement Services International. A Community Day will be organised this year where NCW NSW members can meet with the Syrian women.

Madeline Bannister, 2016 NCW Australia Day Awardee, sponsored by CWLA-NSW, has been appointed as an NCW NSW Adviser on Human Rights.

Sally Fennell

CWLA-NSW Inc Delegate to NCW NSW Inc

QUEENSLAND

In April, I attended Brisbane Archdiocese CWL Annual General meeting and in June the Rockhampton Diocese Annual General Meeting. Both were very joyful occasions which were well attended, both beginning with beautiful Masses.

The Brisbane AGM and lunch was held in the Cathedral Coffee Shop and afforded members the opportunity to bid farewell to Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Oudeman who has been of great assistance to us over the 15 years of his term. His parting words to us were to be true to the objects of our organisation, and to remember that Jesus was always with us. Members welcomed our friends from other Christian women's organisations. President Sandy O'Donohue will serve another year as Archdiocesan President, and we welcome Sue Bierman as Archdiocesan Secretary. In April five members of the Brisbane Archdiocesan Executive travelled to our far flung country branches, where they were the recipients of the usual country welcome and hospitality. Mundubbera, the furthestmost branch, is 400 km from Brisbane.

The Rockhampton Diocese AGM and Conference was held at Farleigh, near Mackay. The Thanksgiving Mass, held in Saint Brigid's Church, was concelebrated by six priests, showing how highly these women are regarded in the parishes where they work. Most Rockhampton branches are centred around Mackay, with Bundaberg being over 600 km south. Yes, our dioceses cover vast areas! Delegates of all branches were present and presented their reports. The State Project for 2017-18 is for each diocese to choose an organisation which gives shelter to women and children in crisis. The Mackay Region has already raised \$2000 for Lowanna House, and Bundaberg \$900 for Edon House. The guest speaker was Sister Lila Galvin rsm who was involved in the early setting up of Lowanna House in 1992 in a disused Uniting Church manse. For the first ten years they existed on fund raising from the community as there was no government funding. Sister Lila kept lobbying the local Members of Parliament, until the refuge was finally given some assistance.

Townsville Diocese will hold their AGM in October. Meanwhile, as always, they are very proactive,

always encouraging local women to join them, and realising that the way CWL functions has to change with the times. They recently held their annual Mass and luncheon to honour our Patron, Mary Help of Christians. It was a chance for members to get to know their new bishop, Bishop Tim Harris. Girls from the local Catholic High Schools are always included in this event, the Hospitality students of St Margaret Mary's College providing and serving the luncheon.

Some branches have made generous donations to Whitsunday and Bowen, the two branches most affected by Cyclone Debbie. All of our grassroots members work unceasingly, in many different ways, to improve the spiritual and temporal lives of others. One of our Associate Branches, Roma, has donated a beautiful Holy Oils Cabinet to their local church, to celebrate 50 years of Catholic Women's League in their town, and as a tribute to those past members whose memories they cherish.

CWLA Research Officer Sonia di Mezza has been writing a submission for Queensland CWL, for the Committee of Enquiry into the proposed Child Protection and Education Legislation (reporting of Abuse) Amendment 2017 Bill. Of particular concern with this bill is that priests may have the obligation to break the Seal of Confession. Many thanks to Sonia, Bioethics Convenor Deirdre Little and National President Anne Marie for enabling this.

Love and blessings to members everywhere as we continue to work together For the Honour and Glory of God.

Veronica Box
State President.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Catholic Women's League WA celebrated its 80th Anniversary on 20th May 2017 with more than 60 members from throughout the state in attendance. As the Nedlands branch was the first branch established in WA and is still in existence today it was fitting that the celebration be hosted in that Parish. The day commenced with the Mass of "Our Lady Help of Christians" concelebrated by State Chaplain, Fr Laurence Murphy SDS together with

former State Chaplain, Fr Greg Donovan and Fr Michael Moore from the Redemptoris Mater Seminary with the Nedlands Parish choir and musical accompanists leading the congregation with hymns to honour our patronage to Our Lady.



Following Mass, members viewed an archival display, photos, and a PowerPoint presentation whilst renewing old friendships and greeting newer members. A beautiful light lunch was served with the help of parishioners from the Holy Rosary Parish in Nedlands and a magnificent cake was cut and shared.



It was a very enjoyable occasion and especially significant considering that it was only a few years ago that there were two members left in the Nedlands branch. We give thanks to branch President Betty Ryan for her continued resilience, recruitment and commitment to keeping the Nedlands branch alive.

TASMANIA

Mercy Memorial for Babies Lost to Abortion.

Richmond Tasmania is the home to a special permanent memorial of Mercy for unborn babies. It

has been established in the cemetery behind St John's church, Richmond . Having been built on church grounds it is accessible to the public, regardless of religious status.

The centrepiece of the memorial is a marble sculpture of a baby wrapped safely in a shawl and set on a granite base. The setting is amid a small copse of trees, where two seats have been placed strategically...a quiet place of peace and reflection. This was an initiative of the Catholic Women's League of Tasmania, who organised a local sculptor to craft the beautiful monument. It was a major project and although expensive, it was so generously supported by varied sectors of the public that there is a surplus of money that can be held for ongoing maintenance. About one hundred Tasmanians from all parts of the state, gathered under the afternoon sunshine, at an official Mass , held prior to the blessing . Some tears and comforting words, but also many smiles and kind faces, all there with a deep sense of Jesus presencethinking of the little souls, having received an



Original Blessing and being taken into the loving embrace of Heaven "Blessed was the fruit of her womb".

Judy Gibbens
State Secretary

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

As I sit and write my report for the national CWL Newsletter, I am aware that I always leave things and writing to the last deadline for completion! I am rueing this habit as I now need to respond to the news that Cardinal George Pell has been asked to stand trial for sex offences allegedly committed four decades ago in Ballarat. The publication of documents that arose from the previous Commission has had a distinct impact on our Church and its members. Now what will happen? Our own Archbishop has been summoned to appear before the NSW Supreme Court for failing to report information to the police some 28 to 30 years after an alleged conversation that took place in 1976. Regardless of the result of court proceedings of these two very high profile priests in the Catholic Church in Australia, the damage is already done.

Yesterday I had lunch with a group of friends, one as I knew him, a practising Catholic. Now as a result of the findings of some Christian Brothers from his school in Queensland, he has said I am now a non-practising Catholic. He spoke about his disbelief and anger of learning from two of his good friends from school days about the abuse they had been subjected to at school, at sporting events and as altar boys. Why it did happen to so many young people and no one had the courage to tell until the last couple for years?

What does this mean for Catholic Women's League in South Australia and Australia? We are in troubling times. In an article in *The Vine*, a publication of CWLA – New South Wales, the editor Michelle Pedersen at a Catalyst for Renewal Dinner summarises a presentation from Frances Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer of the Trust, Justice and Healing Council. He reported that no one was prepared for the extent of the sexual abuse within the Church, and the shame is the depth of the Church official's involvement, and that we must push for change.

I believe now as never before that women must play a much more vital role in the leadership of the Church. I believe that we, as members of the Catholic Women's League, more than ever need to

stand tall, use our collective voice, be prepared to challenge where necessary, and be participants in the transformation needed to rebuild of our Catholic Church.

The title of the winter edition of the Australian Catholics magazine is "Extraordinary Women – Inspiring our Faith and Love." I believe we have extraordinary women in our organisation who have enabled women to participate more effectively in working for and building Christianity by prompting the spiritual, cultural, intellectual and social development of women. Who are the extraordinary women in your community? Find them, affirm them, help them to be better known to other members of your community, and in your parishes, and celebrate with them in their continued work in our church.

Where to now once again? We are preparing for the National Biennial Conference in Adelaide in September. I hope that you will support this important meeting by attending the three days of speakers and reports. As you would know, much work and organisation has gone into this conference and it needs people to attend, so mark your diary, get in touch with some of your 'old' friends and join us as we move forward from our troubled Catholic Church with hope, peace and a renewed visioning of being a Catholic.



Cecilia Quigley
State President

When you
seek truth,
you seek
God
whether you
know it or
not.

Edith Stein



FROM THE WUCWO BOARD MEMBER AUSTRALIA

I did not ever think I would be reliant on internet/ NBN but being without it for ten weeks I am afraid to say “Yes – I cannot work without access to internet!” It felt as if I lived in a country that was not able, through no fault of theirs, to have internet. I was unable to fulfil my role as Vice President Asia Pacific Region and for that of Board Member Australia. So, I was not doing my work for WUCWO or CWLA Inc during this period. Fortunately, I missed only one electronic Executive Meeting. It is difficult to go to the town library at the time of the Executive Meeting, usually 10pm, and remain there for the whole meeting which lasts for up to two hours. Friends offered for me to use their internet but I would not abuse their generosity.

I would like to remind you all of the WUCWO web address: www.wucwo.org if you look on that site you will find up-to-date information about WUCWO. You can see President General’s Monthly Message: Art Meditation; E-newsletter; Regional Information and Prayers. WUCWO General Assembly will be held in Dakar, Senegal on the continent of Africa. The dates are 15-22 October, 2018. The theme for this Assembly is “WUCWO women carriers of ‘living water’ to a world which thirsts for Peace”. Registration will be handled by WUCWO costs have not been settled at this stage, for either accommodation or registration. I will advise as soon as I become aware. I hope some of you will

join me at this General Assembly. Australia has always been well represented at all WUCWO Assemblies. I look forward to seeing you at the CWLA Inc National Conference in Adelaide in September, 2017.



Catherine V McGrath

WUCWO V/P Asia Pacific Region

WUCWO Board Member Australia



Our Lady, Help of Christians, Pray For Us



Watch over me, Father, so that everything I do may be with the intention of pleasing Jesus.

- St Bernadette

