



# 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

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the National Biennial Conference in Adelaide. Our Conferences are always very social as well as informative. It is great to catch up with old friends and to make new ones as well.

The opening Mass in St. Francis Xavier Cathedral will be remembered for a long time because the power went off in the Cathedral just before the Mass was to start. There were many comments about how the Mass had a very special feeling even with the difficulties of hearing and seeing which meant we were unable to receive communion physically but in a spiritual way as it was unsafe to be moving around too much. We were very pleased to see that there were lights in the Cathedral Hall when Mass had ended.

Each Member Organisation spoke to their reports, and I think we were all impressed with the Year of Mercy project implemented by Tasmania. They raised funds to have a sculpture done to commemorate the miscarried, aborted and stillborn babies and have placed this in the cemetery on the grounds of St. John the Evangelist Richmond. This is a beautiful statue of a little baby wrapped in a shawl.

We are hoping to have written copies of the speaker's speeches available very soon. As we approach the end of our term in office, there are many things to finalise especially in regard to the conference.

Recently Margaret Quinn and I attended the State Council Meeting of CWLA-NSW, which was very interesting and another opportunity to share the concerns of us all in attracting new members and especially someone who is willing and able to fill positions on the Executive. It was also interesting to see how their new Website is progressing; Lisa who is developing the site was able to answer many questions and to explain in a very practical way how it could be accessed.

This trip was interesting in that we were delayed 50 minutes in leaving Adelaide because of a problem with a plane, so the original plane was replaced. We arrived in Sydney in time to go to the gate for our flight to Port Macquarie and after boarding the bus we were told that this flight was delayed and we had to go back into the terminal and after about 40 minutes we were told that our flight was cancelled and if we liked they could get us a flight Sunday evening (when we were due to fly back to Adelaide) so eventually we were given rooms and had a flight early the next morning. Thank you to Peter O'Malley and Bernie O'Grady for picking us up and Ann taking us back to the airport.

When I think back over the two years and travelling I realised that I have had many delayed flights. In this day and age we are very fortunate to be able to fly, as it is much quicker, it makes you realise how lucky we are with travel generally being so safe in Australia and also that we really need to trust in those who work in this industry. The good Lord certainly looks after us.

At the Conference we heard of the death of Betty Roberts a past National Social Issues convenor from Tasmania, and shortly after that Jeanette Sheahan a former General President from Victoria/Wagga Wagga had died and that the Father of Deirdre Little died this week. We offer our sympathies to their families. May they rest in Peace.



**Anne Marie**

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# CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA INC.

48<sup>th</sup> National Biennial Conference | 11-13 September 2017 Adelaide



## SUMMARY

On **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September**, the National Council of CWLA Inc. met and the proposed motions were discussed. We didn't have any fights.

We walked across to the Cathedral for the **Opening Mass** at 5.45 pm. Welcome to Adelaide – the power went off in the Cathedral! Thanks to modern technology many of our members had torches on their mobiles but we did not have any microphones so it was impossible to hear the readings. Our Principal Celebrant, Archbishop Philip Wilson, asked us to make a Spiritual Communion as he considered it too dangerous to walk up the aisle in the dark.

We were honoured to have the Governor of South Australia and his wife, as well as the Lady Mayoress of Adelaide present at the Mass.

As we left the Cathedral to go to the Cathedral hall, we thanked God that we could see light. The Archdiocesan CWL members served beautiful food while many members were hugging and greeting old friends. It was

a very happy occasion and our thanks to all involved.

**John Lechowiak welcomed us to Karna country** and sang an aboriginal song about black and white coming together. He gave us an insight into his culture and said that when you are low in spirit the bad spirits come in.

**Morning Prayer.** Thank you to Sr Kerry Keenan rsj for preparing our Liturgies and helping in some many other ways.

Our **National President, Anne Marie Clark**, read greetings from Bishop Greg O'Kelly of the Port Pirie Diocese, a letter from the Lord Mayor of Adelaide and a letter from the National President of CWL New Zealand in which she said 'We are being challenged to walk an unknown path'.

Our **National Chaplain Fr John Herd**, spoke to us and said that one of his parishioners, a young woman, told him that she gained her faith from the example of CWL members.

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*"If you judge  
people, you have no  
time to love them."*

*- Mother Theresa*

**Keynote Speaker, Fr Richard Leonard SJ.** What a treat it was to hear him speak on the theme, 'Never see a need without doing something about it- live generously'.

He pointed out that, in the history of the Catholic church there are only two saints, both of them women, who had been excommunicated and later canonised – St Joan of Arc and St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

Ironically, it was a Jew, a Presbyterian and a non-Catholic woman who gave their own money and fought for the lifting of Mary's excommunication.

**National President Anne Marie Clark** spoke to her report and read a greeting from a former National President, Thora Regan.

**National Treasurer, Geraldine Davis,** spoke to the Financial Statements for the year ending December 2016 as printed in the Conference Book.

**The Angelus** was prayed at 12 noon.

**Motions** referring to: Laudato Si, Climate Change, Child Pornography, Better Accommodation and Services for Younger Disabled, TV Commercial Code of Practice and Homelessness were discussed at the Council Meeting and **Ratified** at the Conference with minor alterations to the wording printed in the Conference Book.

**Recommendations** concerning the Procedures for Submissions and Cocoa Production were also presented.

**Guest Speaker, Mr Bill Denny,** an ex-serviceman, spoke about the contribution of CWL members during the war years by the establishment of Cheer Up Huts for the soldiers.

**CWLA Research Officer, Sonia Di Mezza,** expanded on the matters mentioned in her report.

**Bioethics Convenor, Dr Deirdre Little,** spoke about her love for the most vulnerable and euthanasia. She emphasised that everyone should have access to a palliative care physician. She also said that marriage is between a man and a woman. Deirdre said that children from same sex unions have more emotional problems. It is a child's natural right to have a mother and a father.

Then we had a **Youth Forum**

**Alecia Curran** from **Encounter Youth** said that young



Margaret Quinn (National Vice President) with Fr. Richard Leonard

people need to know their true youth. In Schoolies Week they have 25 buses transporting youth between venues. It is a three night festival.

**The Green Team** works in Hindley Street at night until 5 am. There are two boys and two girls in each team and they assist people who are taking drugs or have had too much to drink.

**Party Safe Education** seeks to alert, inform and empower young people to bring about a safer more meaningful celebration. She said more young people are choosing NOT to drink alcohol.

**Peter Bierer,** Coordinator of the Catholic Office for Youth and Young Adults said the Catholic Church is changing and his office has a strong relationship with Parishes and school communities. There are 12 Youth Ministers in the Adelaide Archdiocese. Peter asks: 'How are young people going to pass on their faith to their children?'





National President and Member Organisation representatives Lighting Candles in memory of members who have passed away in the past two years.

**Holly Roberts**, also from the Catholic Office for Youth and Young Adults said that young people want to be involved in the future of the church. Holly works with school age kids and runs Youth groups for all children, whether Catholic or not. She is interested in Social Justice and the media.

**Social Issues Convenor**, Anne Marie Ferry, spoke to her report and mentioned that she is concerned about the care for the victims of unjust policies.

Then we said the **Closing prayer** and prepared ourselves for the **Dinner** where some of our agile members danced the night away.

### Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September

Once again, our **Morning Prayer** was prepared by Sr Kerry.

**Archbishop Philip Wilson** said it was nice to be able to see our faces after the blackout in the Cathedral. He encouraged us to read the Scriptures and relate to Jesus in the Gospels. He suggested that we read the Sunday readings before we go to Mass. We should ask ourselves 'What is Jesus saying to me today?'

### State Reports:

South Australia – we are living in challenging times

Western Australia – grandparents bringing up grandchildren

Queensland – new members in some branches but others are closing. We heard about the 'Sonia and Deirdre Road Show' and we are invited to their State conference in Ayr.

New South Wales – is targeting women over 50

Victoria/Wagga Wagga – We heard about the Mary Glowrey Museum and about the cause for Mary Glowrey's canonisation being prepared in India.

Tasmania – Once they had 40 branches, now they have 9.

Then we had **Morning Tea** and more food.

**Guest speaker Sr Patricia Keane rsj** gave a very informative talk about St Mary MacKillop's family. She had 7 brothers and sisters, none of whom married, although some of them were engaged, but died unexpectedly.

**WUCWO Board Member Australia**, Catherine McGrath, spoke about the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in Suva, Fiji. Catherine reminded us to make sure we paid our Women's Voice subscriptions on time to our Branch Treasurers and to give our correct address to which the publication should be sent. Catherine invited us to the next Assembly that will be held in Senegal from 15<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.

**National International Secretary**, Jane Munro, told us about the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW) 61 in New York in February, where gender identification, women's empowerment and protection of the family were discussed.

**Guest Speaker Sonia di Mezza** informed us about Elder Abuse in the community. We are all at risk.

**The Angelus** was prayed at 12 noon.

**Guest Speaker Gerald Brown** entertained us with excerpts from people's wills. He said we should make sure that our family members know where our Will is kept.

Anita Toner, Delegate for Victoria/Wagga Wagga, thanked **Jane Munro** for her dedicated service as National International Secretary for six years.

The **Incoming National Executive** from Western Australia was introduced.

Candles were lit while we remembered **deceased members**.

**Closing Prayers** were said and then we finished with **Afternoon Tea**.

**National Chaplain Fr John Herd** celebrated an informal **Mass to close the Conference**.

# FROM THE NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY

We might look back on 2017 as being very important year in world history. Why?

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November, Stefano Gennarini, Director of Legal Studies, C-FAM reported that “the UN Human Rights Committee has excluded unborn children from the right to life in international law.” This was the second reading of a controversial draft commentary on the right to life in what is perhaps the most important UN human rights treaty. As Stefano reported, “No expert expressed concern for children in the womb capable of feeling pain, or brought up the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which expressly requires states to protect children ‘before birth.’”

The only support for the unborn came from the UN committee on disabilities, which asked that the draft be changed to avoid expressions that demean the disabled. The Chair of the disabilities committee implied they would approve of referring to abortion for “non-viable” pregnancies as opposed to abortion for fatally “impaired” fetuses.

The Safe Schools Coalition program uses resources, such as Minus 18 material, which recommend oral and manual sex, polyamory, pornography and sadomasochism. It is compulsory in Victorian State Schools. *The Australian*, 31<sup>st</sup> October, reports that, “Mastectomies will be recommended for the treatment of some transgender adolescents, alongside puberty blockers and hormone injections, according to new guidelines for managing gender dysphoria in young people.”

Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Religion have taken a battering in Australia recently ie.

- Health professionals with a conscientious objection to abortion are compelled to refer clients to a doctor who has not, thereby being complicit in the procedure.
- Archbishop Porteous of Tasmania was accused of discrimination for circulating the booklet, “Don’t Mess with Marriage”.
- Several venues were either forced to cancel meetings of campaigners keen to retain the current meaning of marriage, or faced a barrage of intimidation.

Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights freedom of religion is an inviolable right, that

can never be contravened. Australia has a commitment to this International Covenant.

We were warned 100 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1917, at Fatima, “that Russia would spread its errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecutions of the Church.”

The Communist ideology (an extreme form of socialism) can be observed in the issues of our day. The fundamental principle of socialism is metaphysical egalitarianism (absolute equality). From this fundamental principle flows atheism (a God who is superior to creatures just cannot be!) and contempt for religion. Without God, socialism’s world view is totally secular and materialistic. Mankind will improve the world and his place in it, but this will involve the abolition of all private property, social hierarchy and the family. Monogamous and indissoluble marriage would cease to be, after all sexual intercourse is only a biological function and need not be restricted to marriage.

Does this sound familiar? It should, it is all around us.

Russia was the first country, in history, to introduce legalised abortion. It happened in 1919, just two years after the Fatima apparitions.

Socialist hatred for motherhood, family and marriage goes back to Karl Marx himself. The father of communism said marriage is an artificial invention, a “*bourgeois claptrap*”. Friedrich Engels, co-founder with Marx of so-called ‘Scientific Socialism, claimed that “the three greatest obstacles to socialism were “private property, religion and this present form of marriage.”

Roz Ward, leading light in the Safe Schools Coalition, makes no secret of her Communist leanings.

***Warnings are given for a reason. Increased awareness and action need to follow.***

My heartfelt thanks to all who have helped me during the last six years as NIS. Prayers please for Madeleine.



**Jane Munro**

National International Secretary

# NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to continue in the Role of Social Issues Convenor. It was embarrassing to discover at the National Conference that there had been communication breakdowns. I am not sure whether you received the items I submitted for the newsletter but I found out my bi-monthly reports had ended up in the ether, not in the appropriate hands of the Member Organisations. No doubt people concluded I was not doing anything! Worst of all was that I did not receive any input or feedback, and in my mind communication is a two way process and I had invited any member to contact me via email – amjferry@gmail.com. I soldiered on despite the lack of any response but I am not sure whether I addressed the issues which were of concern to members – the topics I addressed were from the news, the Catholic News sources and the ACSJC monthly briefings ie I sourced them. Hopefully this problem will not recur and I will be able to research and act on any topics you wish to bring to my/CWLA's attention.

As well as reacting to current social issues, we can inform ourselves about the Church's social teaching and that is why I have tried to include some of the theory. You can expect more of this in future reports.

Western Australia has proposed an exciting initiative (and this was passed at the Conference). The proposal is for members to study Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si". The Pope called on everyone to start a dialogue about the issues, and there is a global campaign to raise awareness and to encourage Catholics to act on climate change. There is a Laudato Si Pledge campaign, endorsed by the Pope. It is wonderful that we will be all involved simultaneously. There are excellent resources available. Maybe we should report all the positive outcomes from this, and collate the responses over the two years. Certainly that could be a huge job but the bigger the better don't you think? So often we don't realise the cumulative benefit of all the work done in branches and dioceses, and we fail to acknowledge the contribution of each member to the big picture.

So I thank you for your confidence in me, I wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas and I look forward to working with you in the New Year.

Anne-Marie Ferry  
**Social Issues Convenor**

\*\*\*Firstly, read the poem. Next, when finished, begin with the last line then read the second last line and continue to read the poem backwards line by line.\*\*\*

## REFUGEES

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt them a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
they are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back where they came from.  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It's not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way.

# FROM THE BIOETHICS CONVENOR

## RE: NSW VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL 2017

How well a society cares for its weak and sick members is a measure of the loving capacity and resourcefulness of that society. When the quality of its care is guaranteed and safeguarded by society its members are able to trust and have confidence in its provision.

In contrast to the medical, nursing and community support which a good society wraps around its sick and dying members, is the despairing suggestion that its sick members may be better off dead.

Introduction of euthanasia legalization by its many names, including the proposed NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill (and also the Victorian Bill of similar name being currently debated) proclaims this across the country. Legislation to enable assisting a person to kill themselves says to society as a whole:

*'when you have a terminal illness your symptoms may be unbearable; yes, you may be a burden, you may be abandoned; palliative care won't be good enough; we lose our dignity when we are sick and a death with dignity requires a purchased, pharmaceutically controlled time and place in which to happen. Take poison instead of dying naturally and your doctor will assist you to do it.'*

This will undermine people's confidence to seek appropriate palliative care and may itself cause despair. Society's efforts to provide good end-of-life care need to focus on what is required to relieve suffering. Ready access to good palliative care and, if necessary, to well-resourced and supported hospice care is vital to relieving anxiety, dispelling fear, preventing despair and managing the symptoms which may attend the dying. The governance of a caring community should be mindful that the suffering of a dying patient can be great and arise from many sources other than pain and nausea. There may be anguish and regret over lost relationships, anxiety and depression, feelings of hopelessness and despair, a sense of lost dignity – that one's natural dignity is somehow lost in the eyes of others. To address these concerns and these times with validation of suicide and provision of poison is a superficial response, not worthy of any caring community.

We should eschew any form of suicide as a solution in society and our suicide rates across the country should tell us that. Indeed, where doctors have been permitted by law to assist patients to end their own lives there has been a 6% increase in suicides, of which 85% were under 65 years of age.

[Jones DA, Paton D. How does legalization of physician-assisted suicide affect rates of suicide? South Med J. 2015 108 599 604;]; [Kheriaty A. Social contagion effects of physician-assisted suicide: commentary on "How Does Legalization of Physician-Assisted Suicide Affect Rates of Suicide?" South Med J. 2015 108 605 6].

Aside from the duty of society to rise in supportive care of its sickest members, there are significant issues to be considered in assisting a person to self-destruct:

1. The difference between withdrawal of treatment and the act of deliberately ending life.
2. The goal of treating pain and nausea in this context is not limited.
3. Definitions and meanings are unclear within the terms used.
4. The medical profession's role in society is one of care and comfort
5. To obtain or be given a lethal drug is claimed to be a patient's right.
6. Disability rights advocates oppose doctors aiding self-destruction.

### **The difference between withdrawal of treatment and the act of deliberately ending life.**

Some confusion exists between refusal or withdrawal of treatment and interventions performed specifically to end life. Forgoing treatment when it is no longer of benefit is everyone's right. Patients have a right to be free of unwanted treatment, and a right to their own bodily integrity. Omitting mechanistic assistance and futile treatments or deciding against chemotherapy or radiotherapy is merely allowing a disease to run its course. Prescribing a lethal medication intending to kill is wholly different in its intent and an extrinsic deliberate. As the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care states:'



"With-holding or withdrawing ineffective, futile, burdensome and unnecessary life-prolonging procedures or treatments does not constitute euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide because it is not intended to hasten death, but rather indicate the acceptance of death as a natural consequence of the underlying disease progression."

### **The goal of treating pain and nausea in this context is not limited**

In caring for patients, doctors have an ethical responsibility and indeed a duty to relieve symptoms in a competent manner. Appropriate pain relief rarely causes death and the patient's pain and distress must be managed and prevented. If this competent management of pain or breathlessness etc shortens life, even foreseeably, it is unintentional. Good palliative care aims to relieve pain and symptom control. If this perchance hastens death that is not the goal of treatment. This rule of care is often known as 'double effect'. Claims that patients who are dying will otherwise be left to die in intolerable pain without this legislation are false. These claims demonstrate an absence of knowledge of palliative care. Indeed, euthanasia protagonist Andrew Denton describes his own father's death without reference to palliative care resources, and also states his breathlessness was treated with sedation, which is not the treatment for breathlessness.

### **Definitions and meanings are unclear within the terms used**

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill is providing for legalized assistance to end a person's life. This assistance is to be provided by prescription for deadly medication. This prescribed medication will cause death when ingested. The participation of the doctor is anticipated in this legislation. This is doctor-assisted suicide. The wording of this bill clouds what is at stake.

### **The medical profession's role in society is one of care and comfort**

Intentionally assisting suicide alters the role of the family doctor in society fundamentally and forever. Doctors have duties to patients and to the community. They must act in the patient's best interests, avoid or minimize harm to the patient, respect the patient's autonomy and act justly as they provide care based on clinical judgment and evidence. The patient's

autonomy and right to refuse treatment is already catered for legally.

To intentionally either prescribe or administer a deadly medication is currently prohibited. To do away with this Australian legal prohibition is to also rupture the profession's own prohibitions on maleficence. The duty to comfort, care and heal is contaminated. Assigning doctors to control and book death is to assign doctors power they ought not have and should never use. The doctor patient relationship is not necessarily one of equal power. To legalize doctors having ultimate power can jeopardize their role by removing the boundaries which are the foundations of the trust society places in them. The prohibitions and boundaries around doctors keep patients safe from aberration.

### **To be given a lethal drug is claimed to be a patient's right.**

It has been argued in this bill that patients have a right to access lethal drugs.

However, the doctor providing this prescription is not merely a broker or a retailer. Clinicians know from research that the drivers for seeking a deadly drug are commonly:

*fear and concern of perceived loss of dignity and control or of being a burden.*

- [Oregon Health Authority. Death with Dignity Act. 2017. Accessed at [Death With Dignity Act](#) (click to open)
- Loggers ET Starks H et al Implementing a Death with Dignity program at a comprehensive cancer center. N Engl J Med 2013;368:1417-24.]

### *mental health problems*

- [Wilson KG, Dalgleish TL et al Mental disorders and the desire for death in patients receiving palliative care for cancer. BMJ Support Palliat Care 2016;6:70-7]
- Monforte-Royo C, Villavicencio-Chávez C et al What lies behind the wish to hasten death? A systematic review and meta-ethnography from the perspective of patients. PLoS One 2012;7:e37117.]

*sometimes sheer loneliness, preventing medical symptom help access.*

- [Gerst-Emerson K, Jayawardhana J. Loneliness as a public health issue: the impact of loneliness on health care utilization among older adults. Am J Public Health 2015;105:1013.]



- Snijdewind MCWillems DL et al. A study of the first year of the end-of-life clinic for physician-assisted dying in the Netherlands. JAMA Intern Med 2015 175 1633 40.]

*and symptom management requiring better quality palliative care.*

- [Kelley AS, Morrison RSet al. Palliative care for the seriously ill. N Engl J Med 2015 373 747 55]

Each of these factors affect a stable, mindful decision, and may also affect the capacity of the patient to make a stable mindful decision. This is further evidenced by the fact that the desire for death fluctuates with the ups and downs of symptoms and mood. The skilled doctor recognizes this day to day affect. If the decision to swallow poison is made on a 'down' day there will be no return to baseline and a different outlook the next day. Family doctors deal with every day changes. They cannot subscribe to every patient's wish on the grounds of patient autonomy eg Doctors cannot sign a driver's licence just because the patient wants it; cannot write inappropriate prescriptions; cannot be pressured to provide futile care, or wrong treatment, and cannot issue incorrect certificates, regardless of patient demand.

### **Disability rights advocates around the world oppose doctors aiding self-destruction**

Doctors helping suicide happens proclaims to all the world that some lives are not worth living. Some of life's afflictions ought not be lived through. Persons with disabilities feel threatened and vulnerable by this attitude. This was evidenced at Oregon's Death with Dignity Act:

[Golden M, Zoanni T. Killing us softly: the dangers of legalizing assisted suicide. Disabil Health J 2010, 3, 16,30.

National disability organizations that oppose the legalization of assisted suicide. 2017. Accessed at [National Disability Organizations That Oppose The Legalization Of Assisted Suicide](#) (click to open) on 24 February 2017.

Drum CE, White G et al. The Oregon Death with Dignity Act: results of a literature review and naturalistic inquiry. Disabil Health J 2010 3 3 15.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Those regions around the globe which have enacted the different forms of euthanasia/physician assisted dying/ medical aid in dying/death-with-dignity legislation tend to be those without adequate palliative and hospice care facilities and resources. There is not the drive or will to invest in these resources after approving and legalizing lethal prescriptions for the terminally ill, or for others more in need of mental health support services. The Netherlands now approves euthanasia requests on the basis of "tired of living" and "psychological suffering". Of the 105 deaths in Oregon in 2014, more than 30% did not have cancer.

The USA's health system is notoriously below our own. States like Oregon and Washington etc have enacted this much cheaper shift in care to suicide assistance to substitute for a wholly inadequate health care system in which good palliative care could generate unreachable expense for the individual.

Australia has an excellent health care system. Palliative and hospice care, however, can be developed much more within state health frameworks. Bellingen Hospital, a small district hospital, opened a palliative care wing in 2014 serving the region. Good terminal illness care will validate the lives of individuals on this journey. Competent palliative care assures patients and their loved ones that they will not be abandoned or left alone, that they will be provided with the best pain control and symptom management, and that palliative care doctors and nurses will never give up and walk away.



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*CWLA Inc. National Bioethics Convenor*

## NEW SOUTH WALES

During recent months, in my travels around various Dioceses, I have had the pleasure to meet many wonderful women. The grass roots of our organisation! Those who provide the cups of tea, the goods for the trading table, who buy the raffle tickets and support our organisation in many different ways. I have had the pleasure to bestow Life Membership to worthy recipients and acknowledge their commitment and dedication to our organisation.

Whilst we are attracting new members we are losing more than we are gaining. Several branches have closed stating it is due to age, health and lack of someone to take on executive positions. What are we doing to assist? There are many ways we can keep a branch functioning if we are prepared to take a different approach. In different Dioceses we are looking at alternative structure, types of membership, and social, business and spiritual sessions in lieu of general meetings.

By making greater use of technology we are able to communicate more quickly thereby ensuring the information is up to date and relevant. However there is a down side to this in that not everyone has the technology or that they are uncomfortable using it. We are looking into "training" for those of us not familiar with email/facebook etc and the need to learn a new language!



It was wonderful to see so many members from New South Wales attend the National Conference

in Adelaide. We were certainly noticeable with our red scarf!. The Conference speakers were diverse and most interesting and entertaining. A good time was had by all.

We continue dialogue with National Office for the Participation of Women, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, for the mentoring program. I recently had the opportunity to meet with two ladies from different groups of Catholic Women Connecting who were very interested in some of the things we are doing. We have nominated a young lady for the National Council of Women (NCW) "Celebrate Being Australian" Award.

New South Wales has some very talented ladies, some of whom have taken on positions in our organisation and provide information on a range of topics to help the members make informed decisions. We are actively involved in State and Federal issues and are prepared to write or email politicians expressing our concerns.

May the Joy and Peace of Christmas be with you during this holiday season.

Ann Pereira

President—New South Wales

## QUEENSLAND

Sixteen members, representing three dioceses in Queensland, attended the National Conference in Adelaide. Congratulations to South Australia for hosting such an interesting conference. All attendees from Queensland described it as very thought provoking, spiritual and enjoyable when they reported back to their Diocesan and State Councils and their branches. Keynote speaker Father Richard Leonard SJ made a lasting impression.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

At this time of year, all branches will be having their final meetings for 2017 and celebrating another year of good work in their parishes. As editor of our State newsletter, Take Time, I receive reports from branches all around the state, and it is obvious that Catholic Women's League plays a major part in the life of parishes and local communities, enriches the lives of its members, and educates them through the wonderful reports by our Research Officer Sonia Di Mezza and our Bioethics Coordinator Dr Deirdre Little.

The State Conference in 2018 will be held in the Townsville Diocese, in the North Queensland town of Ayr, which really "fights above its weight" where CWL is concerned. It has already been documented how proactive the members have been in encouraging new members.

With a membership of at least 125, I believe it is the largest branch in Australia. Planning for the conference is on schedule, and it will be a conference with a real North Queensland flavour, as the next generation, full of enthusiasm, encourage participants to come to and enjoy the Burdekin.

Noting the success of the northern ladies, the Redcliffe Branch President Helen Dowling and the Archdiocesan President Sandy O'Donohue have spoken at many Masses in their parish, in the Brisbane Archdiocese, following up with evening gatherings of interested women, and are confident that their efforts will bear fruit.

At this very busy time of year many branch members make an extra effort as they visit the aged and infirm in their homes and nursing homes, helping them to celebrate this lovely time of Advent and Christmas. Also, many branches cooperate with their St Vincent de Paul conferences bringing Christmas cheer and love to those in need. We are constantly reminding ourselves of the advice of St Mary of the Cross Mackillop, to "never see a need without doing something about it". Our members do live generously.

May I take this opportunity to wish all members throughout the country a very joyful and peaceful Christmas, and may our Blessed Lord bring all of us many blessings in 2018.

Veronica Box  
State President.

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the National Executive on the successful National Biennial Conference that was held in Adelaide in September. The Opening Mass in 'the dark' was very humbling and well supported by our interstate guests and our local CWL members and some husbands. The light refreshments after in the Cathedral Hall were great. Thanks to the Adelaide Archdiocesan CWL members for their serving, chatting and clean up! A job well done. The guest speakers during the next two days and the morning teas, lunches and afternoon teas were amazing! As I have attended a few CWL meetings since then, the positive comments have confirmed my thoughts that it was a great show!

The Adelaide Archdiocese CWL held their AGM in September and has filled all their available positions. Carol Ganley and Denise McCabe need to be congratulated on their outstanding leadership and creative monthly meetings. Many interesting guest speakers and outings have been organised and I'm sure this format will continue into 2018.

I attended with three other CWL members a very confronting but worthwhile seminar prepared by the Status of Women committee. The topic was Creating positive mental Health awareness (not sure that is the correct title!). It provided a very real portrayal of how mental health issues affect so many people. The speakers were from Beyond Blue, Bereaved through Suicide and a psychologist who works from Bower Place. All of these guest speakers have had or continue to have direct contact with a person who suffers with mental health issues. The long lasting affect is so sad – they need our prayers. I attended the 50th Anniversary of the Henley Beach CWL branch. It commenced with Sunday Mass followed by morning tea in the Parish Hall. President Margaret Pedder spoke during Mass about the wonderful work that all members of the branch had done for many people in this time. There are still four original members active in the branch today – a feat in itself!

I also attended the Port Pirie Diocese AGM where it is ably led by Anne Redden and Philomena Jeffrey. All positions were filled once again – a good sign that all is going well in this diocese!



I have become the Catholic member on the Winifred Kiek Trust Board for 2018 and beyond. This trust provides scholarships for women in pursuing further studies connected with Christian learning. There is a cycle of three years for students from Australia, The Pacific Islands and Asia. 2018 sees two SA students receiving grants and 2019 will be students from The Pacific Islands. A very worthwhile award.

Our State CWL AGM was held in October and unfortunately was not as successful as the Archdiocesan and Port Pirie AGM's. We are two members short on our executive with the position of Secretary not filled. This is a significant problem for me as I believe we have some important work to do in the coming year. It takes a team to enable this to happen as we all need to be active in our voluntary roles and lighten the load of the leaders. I think the time is now here to speak with the WA Leaders to hear about their new leadership model and how we might begin to make decisions with this direction in mind.

As we prepare for our State CWL members laying a wreath on Remembrance Day on North Terrace, we remember all those who have gone before us representing our country in time of war. May their families know that we care and remember.

My blessings to you all for a holy and happy Christmas and a joyous New Year.



Cecilia Quigley  
State President

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

On 3 November 50 members and guests attended the CWLWA annual conference at St Catherine's House of Hospitality in Tuart Hill. After serving 3 years as State President, I will conclude this term and hand over to Bev Macri who has been elected State President for 2018. Bev has been active on state council for many years and this together with her many roles in Parishes and communities made her a well-deserved

recipient of Life Membership which was awarded to her following Mass at the conference. Bev was overwhelmed to be acknowledged for her many efforts and was brought to tears at seeing her family members there to witness the occasion. We are very proud of Bev – she is a doer and a wonderful loving person - it was my absolute privilege to present Bev with her badge.

Guest speaker at the conference was Anita Parker the Director of Catholic Youth Ministry in the Perth Archdiocese. Anita spoke of the many issues of concern with the youth of today and from a recent survey noted that Mental Health rated as their main issue followed by Drug and Alcohol, Body Image and School and Study. Anita, when asked as to what we, as parents and grandparents can do in support of teenagers she suggested that we read about the lives of St Monica and St Augustine and pray for their guidance as their mothers never stopped praying for them. It may take time! And, never stop listening to our young people!

Amelia Gal, the 2017 recipient of the CWLWA Notre Dame Scholarship gave of her busy study/exam time to be present at the conference and impressed the membership when speaking and sharing an insight into her current study load – she expects to complete 5 years at university, is currently in her third year studying for two degrees in Commerce and Human Resources and has to date achieved distinctions and high distinctions in all her subjects. We are justly proud of Amelia who will undoubtedly achieve the many goals she has set herself. CWLWA is affirmed in its decision to continue to award this scholarship which will extend into its 6th year in 2018.



Valma Ivory incoming National President with Anita Parker Director of Catholic Youth Ministry Perth Archdiocese

Delegates presented reports outlining some of the interesting and amazing aspects of branch activities from the past twelve months and it is noteworthy that our membership number has crept up slightly particularly in a couple of branches which some time ago were considering closure. The Nedlands branch celebrated its 80th year, Bunbury will celebrate 50 years in 2018 and Geraldton will commemorate its 20th year in November. Where possible delegates visited branches and they have maintained telephone and email contact and subsequently reported back to state council meetings.



Jan Bowen President of the Geraldton branch with Amelia Gal, CWLWA Notre Dame scholarship recipient 2018

At the CWLA National Conference in September, Valma Ivory as President elect presented the incoming National Executive team for 2018/19. Joining Valma will be National Secretary Maria Parkinson, National Treasurer Fran Mulcahy and Vice Presidents Adele Parsons and Karyn Kammann. This group has met regularly over the past twelve months and with Valma at the helm is very confident that CWLA will be well served for the next two years. Dates and places to note are the Installation Mass to take place at St Benedict's Church Applecross on Sunday 4th February 2018, the mid-term conference in Perth in August 2018 and the National Conference in Bunbury from the 9th-12th September 2019.

As our theme for 2017 we chose "Bringing His Light into Our world". We have done our best and I give thanks for the light our members have shone on the league, at state and branch levels and in the wider community.

I extend my sincere thanks and best wishes to National President Anne Marie and the outgoing National Executive from SA and on behalf of the incoming State council offer the full support of CWLWA to the CWLA National Executive team for 2018/19.

In Charity, Work and Loyalty

Maria Parkinson  
State President Catholic Women's League WA

## TASMANIA

### We are not quantity but quality!

Our numbers decreased dramatically last year, when there were many deaths of long time serving members, a lot of whom had been in the League almost as long as its introduction. Their enthusiasm and efforts have gone, changes have evolved to suit the times and new ideas are being introduced. We pray that the Lord will inspire us to influence others to join with us to create a strong, livelier and welcoming face. One with renewed vision, for CWL Tas. We pray for unity. We pray for an increase of numbers. Our theme is "Keeping our organisation relevant and sustainable for the future."

Seven of our nine branches were represented at the recent state AGM. Two branches are struggling to get members. On a happier note three groups are slowly growing in numbers. These are making a concerted effort to include social activities. North Eastern groups have been merging together for lunches and fellowship. As these groups are small and somewhat isolated it has been valuable socialising time. The Midlands group held a Reflection/Prayer morning with two retired nuns presenting "The thread". This was basically a stitching, planned exercise with concentration and quiet times, thinking of the thread of our lives to God and others. Twelve ladies attended and two new members were gained from this!

We have a new dynamic young priest for our chaplain, who attended our AGM and told us that we must not lose hope, but instead pray. He offered his prayers and help in exchanging ideas about increasing numbers.

The new executive is working hard to keep up the morale of the groups by attending all AGM's, functions - and now Christmas lunches.. New Handbooks have been updated and printed, new badges have been made and purchased and new scarves for National Conferences are being designed. The Holy Spirit is at work.

A sub-committee which was instrumental in having erected the Mercy Memorial, a statue in memory of aborted babies, has suggested that an annual remembrance and prayer day be appointed for a pilgrimage to Richmond, the site of the statue. A possible suitable feast day for this, is being explored, perhaps a procession could be included with this for the younger feet. On 19th Of January, George Town branch is driving a bus from the north of our island to join with southerners, for a togetherness day and Mass.

The newly formed Anima group meet monthly , on a Saturday morning and have invited other catholic ladies to join them in morning tea and conversation. They were active in the door knocking campaign for the "No" vote , brave girls. They are also helping with the production of our bi-monthly magazine. As they work and have small children, an evening Hobart CWL meeting hopefully can be organised so that they could attend. Prayers and more energy in this direction could be the plan!

Blessings , peace love and joy to all for the Blessed Christmas season.

Judy Gibbens and Deirdre Reid

## VICTORIA & WAGGA WAGGA

In May our museum was opened by Archbishop Hart. This museum is to promote the life and legacy of Dr Sr Mary Glowrey JMJ Servant of God, who served as our very first president in 1916. In the last few months visitor numbers have been very pleasing, school groups, tertiary students and members of the public. Dr Anto Maliekal, from India ,who is involved with CHAI (Catholic Health

Association of India) was recently participating in a program at Melbourne University, in the Mary Glowrey Scholars Program. Dr Anto made time to visit the museum, and was most enthusiastic about the museum's content and presentation.

Our General Conference was in Ballarat in August. Speakers were well received by members and friends attending. A rep from Seniors' Rights Victoria, enlightened all about the many different ways elder abuse occurs. Victims are able to seek financial, emotional and psychological advice/ support through Seniors' Rights Vic. Paul Russell from HOPE : Preventing Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, presented via Skype. In spite of people endeavouring to enlighten all MP's about the grave dangers of this proposed legislation, the Bill is before our Legislative Council at present.

Sr Elispetta, Sister of Nazareth in Ballarat, gave an insight into the compassionate care their residents receive, in their time of need. Many of us were thinking how beautiful it would be if all MP's who advocate for Euthanasia and Assisted Dying would listen to Sr Elispetta!

Jane Munro and Fiona Basile, gave interesting information on Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March '17 Father Salvano, our Spiritual Director, presented our theme for next year,

"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" 1 John 4: 16

Some of our Branches are being "challenged" due to difficulty in gaining new members.

I know this is a problem faced by other volunteer groups Our Social Questions Committee, continues to keep members and friends informed about state and national situations and suggests action that can be followed. This is often contacting MP's by visits , e/mails , and using parish bulletins to reach more people.

My term as president is almost finished and Jane Munro will be our new president in 2018

Thankyou and every blessing for a happy and holy Christmas.

Anita Toner  
Victoria & Wagga Wagga



# FROM THE WUCWO BOARD MEMBER AUSTRALIA

The bi-monthly electronic Executive was held on 9 November in preparation for the WUCWO Board Meeting to be held in November.

The time is really frantic at the moment as I prepare to leave for Rome this weekend. The meeting will be held as previously at Casa La Salle. It is a Salesian Brothers Boarding School. Accommodation and Meeting is held at this venue and that is really convenient. The gardens are usually very beautiful but I have not been there in November as the Board Meetings as usually held in October. So I dare say it will be late autumn and could be rather cool and not like we have in most parts of Australia in November.

There will be a lot of discussion at this meeting regarding the General Assembly 2018. This is what we know already:

**DATE:**

15-22 OCTOBER 2018

**WHERE:**

DAKAR - SENEGAL – Continent of AFRICA

**THEME:**

WUCWO Women – Carriers of 'Living Water' to a world which thirsts for Peace

**LOGO:**

In the process of being produced

Study Days; Guest Speakers; Registration Costs and Information regarding Accommodation are still to be determined. These are just some things for discussion while at the Board Meeting.

I will advise information about the General Assembly as soon as I receive it. I ask you not to book flights at this

time as I think it might be advisable if we endeavour to have some group booking and if anything comes from the Government regarding travel to this part of the world we would all know at the same time and must be guided by the governments in this important issue but I am sure this will not be a problem and we will all be able to attend the General Assembly in Dakar, Senegal.

A reminder that Asia Pacific Region is responsible for the preparation of WUCWO Day Service for 13 May. Some work on this service already, as it has to be with the WUCWO Secretariat very soon for translation and distribution. If any member has some prayer they wish to add send it to me as soon as possible.

WUCWO has been working consistently on the Resolutions passed at GA Fatima. One resolution, in particular, the right for all to have clean water and sanitation and wells have been set up in Senegal, Argentina and are in the process of getting another well in a very poor village in India.

I thank you all for your prayerful support during this past year.

I wish you and your families the Peace of the Child Jesus this Christmas time



**Catherine V McGrath**

WUCWO V/P Asia Pacific Region

WUCWO Board Member Australia

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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.

