EMPOWER CONNECT ADVOCATE

Celebrating 111 years
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

President: Caroline Snow
Treasurer: Amy Henderson
Recording Secretary: Noela O'Donnell
Secretary: Alison Muir

A note from the NCWQ President

Dear Members and friends of NCWQ,

Welcome to the December edition of the NCWQ newsletter. I do hope that this correspondence finds you enjoying some well earned time resting with your family and friends and reflecting on the events of 2017.

Earlier this month, members and friends of NCWQ celebrated Christmas at our annual luncheon at The Womens College within the University of Queensland. As in past years, gifts were donated to our selected beneficiary, this year Access Community Services. The generosity continues to be overwhelming, and I know appreciated by all of the recipients for whom this festive season and preparation for return to school can be quite difficult.

Planning is underway for the launch of the National Council of Young Women of Queensland. We anticipate that launch material should be distributed to members during early February, and we seek your support in commending this program to any young women in your ambit as a way to ensure that their voice is heard and acknowledged and that issues which are unique to their generation are added to part of our advocacy.

We have also during the month of December farewelled Alison Muir from the Management Committee. Alison has been a dedicated member of the Committee, supporting both myself and our Immediate Past President, Lyn Buckley, and we thank her for her contribution. Erin Cunningham has been appointed the new Secretary.

2018 looks to be an exciting year, and we look forward to your support.

Kind regards
Caroline Snow

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Treasurer: Paula Ivanovic
Recording Secretary: Noela O'Donnell
State Coordinator: Marilyn Oulds

2018 NCWQ Bursary Program – watch this space!

Planning is underway for next year's bursary program. The key dates are:

Monday 16 April 2018 – Applications open
Monday 4 June 2018 – Applications close
Wednesday 25 July 2018 – Presentation

Sponsorships are being confirmed; personnel for Team Bursary 2018 brought together; and the background admin proceeding.

Please contact Kathy Cavanagh, Bursary Program Coordinator, for further information or if you would like to be involved.

E: bursaries@ncwq.org.au

M: 0407 117 378

R: 2017 Bursary Recipients

Bursary Fundraising Morning Tea and Fashion Parade

The NCWQ bursary fund-raising morning tea and fashion parade was held on 18 October. Its main objective is to raise the funds for the NCWQ sponsored bursaries – and the required target was met in grand style.

With the ambience of a silver-service morning tea and an excuse to 'play ladies', the theme was to acknowledge rural and regional women. This was demonstrated in a number of ways, including the source of a number of raffle prizes along with lucky door prizes – books written/themed on the outback etc.

Bella McDonald from a cattle property out from Cloncurry, entranced us with her cello playing. Now completing Year 12 in Brisbane, her first lessons in playing the cello were as a primary student of Mt Isa School of the Air – with the lessons conducted over the phone.

Bec Clapperton, the recipient of the 2016 South Burnett Mayor bursary, inspired the audience of nearly 200, as she spoke. She used the analogy of life being like the hand of cards we are dealt – and of making the most of what we have been given, and her own experiences in managing the cards we would not have chosen. Just graduating with her Bachelor's degree, she has already been overseas to the States twice to enhance her studies, and then to China for her next learning adventure. Her love remains with the family property – a farmer at heart.

The fashions were provided by Soubret Pink at Upper Mt Gravatt – real fashions modelled by real women. The 'buzz' in the room was tangible, the feedback positive. Bella and Bec certainly provided the WOW factor. Funds raised ensure the NCWQ-sponsored bursaries are financed for 2018. This function epitomises the value of the bursary program and reminds us of its significance to its many and varied recipients.

Featured Posts

Arts and Letters Report, November 2017

The General Assembly decided 2016-2015 will be the Decade of Action on Nutrition, Almost holiday time for some!! Wonderful wit, warmth and wisdom wait for us, this holiday season!
For the 'time-poor' there's the novella!
For the 'pocket-poor' there's the library!
For the eternally avid reader, there's a range of interesting publishing houses!
For the heart-sore, the saddened, there are songs and there is world music!
For the seekers of social, political and cultural truths – there are some welcome reprints!……[to read more, click here]

International Relations and Peace Report, December 2017

In October Australia was voted onto the Human Rights Council of the United Nations. This is a 3 year term commencing 01 January 2018. Australia joins an eclectic array of nations, many who've not been well known for upholding human rights. Perhaps the UN's strategy is that these countries participation on the council will remind their representatives as to the articles contained in the UN Charter of Human Rights and urge their governments to act accordingly. A list of countries is available at: www.un.org/en/ga/72/meetings/elections/hrc.shtml?……..
[to read more, click here]

Welcome to our new members!

Welcome to NCWQ Anna Dwyer!

To view the updated list of Honorary Life Members, click HERE.

Tribute to Alison Armstrong OAM, 1921-2017

Some of us remember Alison Armstrong as the NCWQ Treasurer and member of the Executive Committee; others will instantly think of the War Widows Association and her contribution to that organisation. In this the Centenary year of the landing at Gallipoli and seventy years since the end of World War 11, I thought it appropriate to honour Alison and her service to our country - **Noela O'Donnell**

Alison Armstrong was born Alison Laura Francis in Mudgee, New South Wales in 1921. Her parents were Egbert Dunkerton and Laura Louise Francis. She was the only child of older parents, and spent most of her early childhood in Fiji where her father was manager of a CSR sugar estate. Thanks to an Indian amah, she had an early fluency in both English and Hindi. On occasions this quiet little child playing in her father's office cutting out doll's dresses – which always fitted – would later tell her father exactly what the Indian speakers were saying to each other, thus giving him the upper hand in negotiations.

She was sent to boarding school – her first experience of school - in Leura at the age of 8, where she was called Pip / Pippa / Pippy, being short for pipsqueak, as she was the youngest and smallest of the boarders. This was followed by 3 years at Kambala School. Sadly, her mother died suddenly when she was 12, however she spent much time with a cousin, whose Mum virtually adopted her.

She completed her secondary schooling at Abbotsleigh, and achieved an excellent matriculation result. She excelled in maths and music. Alison's daughter, Sue, was told many years later by one of her cousins that their maths teacher had commented that Alison was probably the most able maths student that she had ever had the pleasure of teaching. Unfortunately she was actively discouraged by her school in following a maths/science curriculum as such was not considered suitable for girls. Alison has told me how much she loved maths.

In 1939 Florence Violet McKenzie established and directed the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps (WESC) which was a civilian voluntary organisation which offered free training in telegraphic and visual signaling to recruits wishing to enter the defence forces and the Merchant Navy. The trainers were fully trained female telegraphists. The first fourteen women in the Women's Royal Australia Naval Service (WRANS) came from the ranks of the WESC. Florence Violet McKenzie was affectionately referred to as "Mrs Mac" and she is often referred to as the "Mother of the WRANS". These women were recruited for wireless telegraphy work at the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) wireless/transmitting station in Canberra, as part of a trial to free up men for service aboard ships. Although the RAN and the Australian government were initially reluctant to support the idea, the demand for seagoing personnel imposed by the Pacific War saw the WRANS formally established as a women's auxillary service in 1942. Over the course of World War II over 3,000 women served in the WRANS. Women recruited into the WRANS were not permitted to serve at sea, but were able to fill most shore-based positions.

Tribute to Alison Armstrong

About the time of the start of World War II, Alison joined Mrs Mac's Signalling Corp, and became proficient with Morse code. This was also the time when her interest started in community service, as she was a volunteer at the Sydney Children's Hospital. One of tasks there was to carefully remove all the fish bones (she worked there on Fridays) from the meals, then assist children unable to feed themselves. On 29 December 1942 Alison enlisted in the WRANS, the women's branch of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). Her role in the WRANS was a telegraphist and she was initially based at HMAS Harman. Just after arriving in Harman Alison was invited to go to the sick bay, lie in a bed with blankets pulled right up around her and photographs were taken. She was unsure of what this was all about but a photograph appeared in PIX magazine. Her next posting was to Townsville. Here she was in a team receiving Morse code messages from Japanese ships. Her work hours were from midday to 4:00pm; then a change of watch from 4 to 8:00pm or 4 to 6:00 or 6 to 8:00; then from 8:00pm to 2:00am. This was the heavy week. The light week entailed only 2 x 24 hours with 12 hour watch. Three girls worked every watch plus a tele-printer operator. There was an armed guard outside their door. Radio mechanics also worked in this area as they serviced the ships when they came into port.

Whilst on leave in Townsville Alison and a couple of others were invited onto a decrepit looking 'fishing' boat. Alison said there was no refrigeration and they were served gin with orange juice with ants floating on the top in a vegemite glass. When the 'captain' returned they were speedily told they were not wanted on board. The boat was the *Krait*.

Alison met her husband Stuart Elliott Armstrong when based at Townsville. After a brief courtship they married and honeymooned on Daydream Island. As a married women she could no longer serve. She returned to Sydney and worked in her uncle's solicitor's office. Stuart flew a Mustang to Manila, then onto Okinawa and then onto Japan with extra fuel under the wings. Following the three day flight he was a part of the occupational force in Japan.

After Stuart's return and demobilization in the late 1940's they bought a mixed farm "Burbank" at Kooralgin near Cooyar, in southeast Queensland together with Stuart's brother Euan. After a couple of disastrous drought seasons and the death of both his father and father in law, Euan left, as the farm was not supporting the three adults plus a growing number of ankle biters (Alison & Stuart's children John and Sue). The drought must have been a shock to someone who had never lived out of sight of the sea, or experienced the suffering involved with starving stock.

It was at this stage her interest was entrenched in community service, becoming involved in the CWA at Cooyar where she filled the roles of secretary and treasurer. Alison was also involved with the local RSL again as secretary/treasurer.

Once her first two children, John and Sue, were at boarding school and the second two, Ian and Peter, were attending Yarraman Primary School, she found herself with some time on her hands and enrolled in a correspondence course in accountancy, which she completed in a little over 7 years – it would have been in record time except for requiring some time off after surgery.

During the later years of this course, she commenced working in Dalby with the accounting firm Stevenson and Gadaloff. Stuart was concerned about her traveling the lonely country roads so persuaded her to enroll in the local pistol club and purchase a pistol. Sue recalls she had a pistol-packing Momma! True to form, in next to no time she was involved in the running of the club and became treasurer.

Tribute to Alison Armstrong

After qualifying as a Public Accountant in the early 1970's, Alison commenced her own accountancy practice when Mr Stevenson left for Brisbane, continuing to practice in Dalby, but also doing a lot of taxation work for the local farmers around Kooralgin and district on the weekends. She also qualified as an auditor and became an honorary Justice of the Peace. She was the honorary auditor for a large number of organizations including the War Widows Guild, Naval Association Australia, National Party, Ashgrove Historical Association and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.
Her interest in the welfare of "the man on the land" and the small country townsfolk who depended on the farming community continued to be a great concern for her, leading her to become heavily involved with at first the Country Party, and later the National Party. She was at times on the Central Council, Divisional President of the South West Region, President of Cunningham branch and a member/ president of the Women's Electoral Lobby. She was made a Life Member of the Young Nationals in appreciation of her long hours auditing, as well as the involvement in key positions within the senior party.

At this time she also developed a desire to improve her ability at public speaking and joined the Toastmistresses organisation, quickly becoming an executive member, but this time she was the president. She continued to maintain links with the CWA and RSL.

In 1980 her dearly beloved husband and best friend Stuart died an untimely death from lung cancer. She subsequently devoted herself to her very large accountancy practice, which at one stage was considered by the tax office to have the largest number of taxation returns for a single practitioner in Queensland. She "retired" to Brisbane about 20 years ago, although her continued rural interest saw her for some time a member of the Cannon Hill Abattoir Board. She also worked as a volunteer for the Cancer Fund, where she used to meet and greet country people arriving by plane or train in Brisbane for Cancer treatment, then drive them to their appointments as well as doing office work and speaking to children in schools – spreading the SunSmart Message.

Alison became an active member of the War Widows Guild as well as the Retired Naval Officers Association. Her daughter Sue s*aid "I like to think it was a comment of mine that sparked her interest in the Guild as I said to her when she was worrying about retiring 'You know Mum, the War Widows could do with someone with your ability and expertise being involved in their organisation".*

It was as a delegate of the War Widow's Guild that Alison became involved in the National Council of Women of Queensland serving as the treasurer, a role from which she resigned for health reasons. Alison was in Hawaii and was about to board a submarine when she suffered a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm, which has a survival rate of approximately 1%.

Alison's work has been acknowledged over the years including being granted a Centenary Medal on 1 January 2001 for service to Queensland veterans, especially war widows. In 2003, on her retirement as State President, she was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation in grateful recognition of loyal and dedicated service to the War Widow's Guild. In that same year she received an award for 25 years of distinguished service as Justice of the Peace (Qual) for the State of Queensland. In 2004 Alison received a Certificate of Appreciation for services as Director of the Returned Services League (Qld) War Veterans Homes Ltd and in 2006 received the Premiers Award for Queensland Seniors for volunteering in local communities. And in June 2007 Alison received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to the community, particularly through organisations supporting war widows, veterans and their families.

After retirement Alison lived at Ashgrove from about 1994-1995; then moved to Aveo (Albion) in late 2005. Her last home was Erowal at Maleny where she played her last bridge game the week before she died.

Tribute to Alison Armstrong

She had 4 children, 13 grandchildren, and an ever increasing crew of great-grandchildren. During her life time she saw and experienced much including seeing Anna Pavlova dance in Sydney (one of Alison's cousins was in the Corp de Ballet); she saw Don Bradman bat in the infamous bodyline series when an uncle took her to the test and she saw the cutting of the ribbon by the interloper Francis de Groot at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Sadly Alison passed away peacefully on Wednesday 29 November 2017 after a life well-lived. We acknowledge Alison's many contributions to our community and wish to say 'Thank you' for your service to our country.

May she rest in peace.

Said Alison's daughter….

It would be closer to 20 years rather than 30 years when Mum" retired": After retirement she lived at Ashgrove from about 1994-1995; then moved to Aveo (Albion) in late 2005.

Increasing back trouble necessitated a stay in St Andrew's in February, by now she was very handicapped with activities of daily life so needed 24/7care. The move to Erowal was traumatic at first, but she soon settled in, meeting lots of new friends and catching up with some old ones. A couple of the residents expressed a desire to play bridge, so Mum and some others oined the group. Her last bridge game would have been a week before she died.

She had a severe stroke early Monday morning November 27th, and was transferred to Erowal's palliative care unit..As Mum had documented her wishes in both an AHD and a Statement of Choices this could be speedily accomplished in spite of the stroke causing total aphasia. *(I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to have this kind of documentation..... and someone who knows where it is kept).* She was kept comfortable, and pain free until she passed in the early hours of Wednesday morning with 3 of us at her bedside.

The care provided at Erowal was extraordinary; when I arrived at her bedside at 3am one of the carers was with her, holding her hand, and quietly, gently talking to her. After the stroke she was never alone, with staff frequently dropping in for a few reassuring words and a cuddle for Mum.

Dr Laurel Macintosh OBE

Quota International Brisbane City Club Inc., an organisation affiliated with the National Council of Women of Queensland Inc. (NCWQ) hosted a High Tea at the United Service Club, Brisbane to celebrate the 60 years Quota International (QI) membership of Dr Laurel Macintosh OBE.

Over these years, Laurel's contribution to Quota includes spent two terms as President (from 1959-61 and 1988-89) and one as Secretary. She held various Board roles for most of the first 30 years.
Although a nonagenarian, Laurel recently chaired the portfolio of Community Service (the most diverse and time-consuming of the areas of service). Laurel freely gives of her knowledge and expertise to the Club and its members on the many and varied projects undertaken.

She was awarded Quota Woman of the Year in 1984 and again in 1997 for her work to improve the status of women as she worked tirelessly for women's rights. During her second term as President of Quota Brisbane Laurel became the Quota Delegate to the NCWQ, taking up the positon of state convenor for women and employment.

Dr Laurel Macintosh was the first President of the National Council of Women of Queensland who also held a full time job and she remarked at the time that she felt she "*should attempt this second full-time job, for so it is described by former Presidents, because this is a likely pattern for the future. With more women working for a longer period of their lives, the Council will have to adapt to the changing order*." This was in 1977!

And Laurel's working life mirrors her full-on commitment. Graduating from medicine in 1946, she represented the very small number of women to do so. She held consultant positions at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, The Repatriation Hospital Greenslopes, and the Royal Brisbane Hospital. At the Royal Children's Hospital, she held the position of Paediatric Ophthalmologist for almost three decades, from 1958 until 1985.

During this time, she established the multidisciplinary Queensland Paediatric Low Vision Clinic, with outreach clinics for rural communities, working with amongst others, Dr Fred Hollows.

Dr Laurel Macintosh OBE

She was President of the Queensland Branch of Royal College of Ophthalmologists in 1972-73, Federal councillor of the College until 1974, and a founding member of the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologist in 1975. Within the Queensland Medical Women's Society (QMWS), Laurel held executive positions, including secretary (1985-1987) and president (1988-1990). Dr Macintosh received honorary life membership of the AMAQ in 1996 after 50 years in the profession, and of the QMWS in 2004. Combining her 'two full-time job's Laurel completed her first term of NCWQ presidency in 1979.

She was instrumental in obtaining late night shopping for Brisbane and Ipswich in December 1978, having made many appearances before the Industrial Court. How we working women appreciated that and how many of our children started their part-time working life on Thursday night and Saturday in the local supermarket. When asked about how she overcome the strong male dominated opposition to extended shopping hours in the Industrial Court in 1978 she responded "I did a *Perry Mason* on them"

During a personal meeting with the Prime Minister of Australia the Honourable Malcom Fraser Laurel sought information on action to be taken by the Australian Government on the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW.
An extract from the NCWQ news reads "*Members of NCW honour Laurel for the manner in which she addressed herself to the important task, not sparing herself physically or mentally, giving every item of business meticulous attention.*
"*The committee included women from all walks of life with widely varying opinions, but at all times Dr Macintosh preserved a cool, calm, gentle approach conducive to harmony and the efficient despatch of business."*

Laurel was also the first person to be re-elected to the position of NCWQ president, this time filling the role from 1995 to 1998.
In her Final Presidents report to the Council in 1998 Laurel stated "*The appointment of Women's Advisers and Advisory Councils to Governments has changed our role to some extent. However I believe very strongly that there is a place for a body of women, representing many diverse interests, to put the views of thinking women to Government and other bodies. It is not enough to have people from bureaucracy and the exceptional women, who make up Advisory Councils, deciding what suits ordinary women in their everyday family, employment and community life.*"

For 15 consecutive years, Laurel was the Queensland Convenor of the Women and Employment Standing Committee and for 6 consecutive years the Health Adviser. Laurel didn't just contribute to the State body. She filled various role with our national body, including the Australian Board International Secretary, Australian Convenor Standing Committee on Women and Employment and National President. On the international stage of the Women's Council, in 1973 Laurel held her first international position of Vice-Convenor Standing Committee for Women and Employment. Laurel attended International Triennial Conferences in Nairobi, Seoul, London, Washington, Bangkok and Paris.

Dr Laurel Macintosh OBE

In July 1980 Laurel was one of 4 women from voluntary organisations funded federally to represent Australia at the United Nations Decade for Women world conference in Copenhagen. Laurel enjoyed good relations with politicians, state and federal, and with the federal Office of the Status of Women. She chaired the United Nations Association of Australia's Status of Women committee in Queensland in the run up to the 1975 International Women's Year and when the Queensland government established an Advisory council of Queensland women in that year she was a founding member.

Laurel was appointed to the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1980. In 1984 Laurel was appointed an Honorary Life Member of the National Council of Women of Queensland and in 1988, Honorary Life Vice-President of the National Council of Women of Australia.

The rest of her involvement with the NCWQ and ANW, ICW, UNAA QLD, IWY and so on are a matter of public record* and leave you in no doubt of her achievements.

Prepared by Quota International Brisbane City; Dr Lydia Pitcher, President Queensland Medical Women's Society and Noela O'Donnell AM (NCWQ).
*http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ncwa/presidents-15.html