



**National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Ltd**

**President: Negba Weiss-Dolev**

**Founder NCJWA 1923 Dr Fanny Reading MBE**

**An Affiliate of International Council of Jewish Women**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 24 July 2019**

**ANNUAL REPORT JULY 2018-JUNE 2019**

**“Women Working Together Can Achieve Anything”**

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## OVERVIEW

### ESTABLISHED

The organisation was founded in 1923 by visionary activist for women’s issues Dr. Fanny Reading MBE. Historical details: <http://www.ncjwa.org.au>

### WHO WE ARE

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia is an Australian Jewish women’s organisation committed to social justice and women’s issues. We are a representative voice to key national and international organisations. At national level and through our six Sections around Australia we strive to advance the status of women, counter discrimination, build a

harmonious multicultural society and support Israel. We are a federated organisation. At national (roof) level we are run by an elected Board of Directors who are all volunteers. We have six state/territory NCJWA Sections: Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, each with its own governing board or committee.

## AFFILIATIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

NCJWA at national level is affiliated with:

- **International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW)**: represents Jewish women in many international fora, including the United Nations. The Immediate Past President is Robyn Lenn OAM, the first Australian to hold this position, who stepped down after a four-year term at the Quadrennial Convention held in Sydney from 27-31 May 2018, the third time ICJW has held its convention in Australia. See [www.icjw.org](http://www.icjw.org)
- **Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ)**: peak representative body of the Australian Jewish Community, with links to the international Jewish world. See [www.ecaj.org.au](http://www.ecaj.org.au).
- **Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA)**: federal roof body for Australia's Zionist organisations, fostering connections with the State of Israel. The six NCJWA Sections – Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia- are affiliated with or liaise with their local communal roof bodies and Zionist organisations. See [www.zfa.org.au](http://www.zfa.org.au)
- **National Council of Women of Australia**: a longstanding national non-government umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives, which seeks to raise the awareness of women and girls to their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to encourage the participation of women in all aspects of community life. The NCJWA Ltd. National Board agreed in 2018 to affiliate at national level with NCWA. NCJWA Sections are already affiliated at State/Territory level. See <http://www.ncwa.org.au>
- **Equality Rights Alliance (ERA)**: largest of the six Australian national women's alliances that advocate for women's equality and rights. NCJWA is the only Jewish women's organisation affiliated with ERA. ERA is the largest of six National Women's Alliances that advocate for women's equality and rights, funded through the federal Office for Women. Through ERA we work with other NGOs and advisory committees to advocate to the federal Government on issues relating to improving the lives of women and children. See [www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au](http://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au)

NCJWA Sections affiliate or link in their own right at State/Territory level with state/territory Jewish roof bodies, State Zionist Councils and the National Council of Women of Australia.

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## PROGRAMS IN ISRAEL

Through our fundraising we support the following projects in Israel, the first three as national projects across all Sections. We have transferred funds to these projects during the year:

- **Haifa Rape Crisis Centre:** The HRCC is a non-profit organisation dedicated to opposing sexual violence. Established in 1979, it provides services to the regions of northern Israel from Hadera to the Upper Galilee - an area that includes over one million people. The HRCC supports survivors of sexual violence and their families, raises the awareness of the community and professionals to the implications of sexual violence, and works to protect and promote survivors' rights. See <http://www.ncjwa.org.au/projects/hrcc/>
- **Haifa University Ethiopian Women's Scholarship Fund (in memory of Dr Geulah Solomon OAM):** The fund assists women of Ethiopian descent with academic counselling, private tutoring, special courses, transportation costs, books, as well as equipment and ancillary expenses incurred outside their tuition fees. See <http://www.ncjwa.org.au/projects/haifa-university-ethiopian-womens-fund/>
- **Ilan Foundation for Handicapped Children and Adults (Tel Aviv):** NCJWA has contributed to ILAN, the Israel Foundation for Handicapped Children, for over 50 years. ILAN is a voluntary organisation dedicated to the rehabilitation of disabled children and adults afflicted with cerebral palsy, polio, progressive muscle dystrophy or neuro-muscular injuries and diseases. ILAN has several branches throughout Israel and NCJWA supports the Tel Aviv branch which has just moved into new premises. See <http://www.ncjwa.org.au/projects/ilan/>
- **MICHA Tel Aviv Multidisciplinary Centre for Children with Hearing Loss:** This project is supported by NCJWA Gold Coast and NCJWA Brisbane Sections. The centre is a not-for-profit organisation that provides multidisciplinary services for children with hearing impairment and their families. It cares annually for approximately 460 children from varied ethnic, socio-economic and religious backgrounds, from the critical period of infancy through first grade. MICHA serves as a regional therapeutic center for Children coming from Hadera in the North to Ashkelon in the South, and from Modi'in in the east (includes a large concentration of Arab Israeli communities) to coastal cities in the West. See <http://www.ncjwa.org.au/projects/micha/>

## SECTION COMMUNITY SERVICES AND EVENTS

Our Sections provide a variety of community services. These include MUM FOR MUM NCJWA (NCJWA NSW) and Caring Mums (NCJWA Victoria), which are non-denominational free programs providing valuable care and emotional support by trained volunteers who visit new mothers weekly during the last trimester of pregnancy and through the first year of the baby's life. Both programs receive referrals from hospitals and medical professionals and have been acknowledged by local and state levels of government.

All Sections provide a variety of community services including programs with the aged in nursing homes, a cancer support program, mentoring teenage girls, birthing kit packing days, sanitary items for girls in developing countries, Golden Age clubs, hospital visits and family support.

Our Sections also provide educational, transcultural/interfaith, social justice and advocacy events such as support for the LGBTIQI community and victims of domestic violence.

See separate Section reports below (from p.20) for details of each Section's work throughout the past year.

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### **QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS AWARDS JUNE 2019**

#### **Vivien Brass OAM**

Congratulations to Chair of the Asia-Pacific Region, ICJW and former NCJWA (Vic) President (2010-2014) and National Board Director, **Vivien Brass** on receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June 2019, for service to the community, particularly to the role of women in society.

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### **NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

2018/19 has seen a major focus on implementing key NCJWA Strategic Plan Goals. NCJWA's Strategic Plan was adopted by our Board in December 2017 as the outcome of a major Strategic Review which included wide-ranging consultation across our organisation.

The plan provides a blueprint to meet current and emerging challenges, both in terms of our work and in terms of our internal structures and operations. As we head towards our centenary in 2023 we want to ensure that we position NCJWA as a leading representative voice and advocate on key social issues affecting Jewish and non-Jewish women and girls, both here in Australia in the Jewish and general community, and in Israel.

We are tackling very major undertakings including a new modern constitution. Thanks to Governance Chair Di Hirsh OAM and Board member and constitutional lawyer, Melinda Jones and governance lawyer, Belinda Plotkin for their concerted efforts over the past year. To achieve the goals identified in the plan, the whole organisation needs to work in a collaborative, cooperative and respectful manner. This includes an understanding and acceptance by the Sections of the specific roles of the national body so that we present a strong and united voice to our members, community, potential sponsors and donors.

2018 saw the passing of Sylvia Gelman AM MBE, Life Governor of NCJWA and mentor to many and an inspiration to all who spent time with her. Two weeks before she passed, we were fortunate to be able to celebrate her life and contributions to society with her at the Launch of the NCJWA Sylvia Gelman Scholarship Fund. She really enjoyed the occasion, surrounded by family and old and young friends and admirers and made an amazing impromptu speech. Sylvia would have been 100 this year and we miss her.

The past year has also seen several world-shaping occurrences which reminded us all of how fragile civilization is. In March 2019, NCJWA stood united in grief with our Muslim sisters and brothers after the horrific mass murder in Christchurch, NZ. As Jewish women we can fully empathise with the pain and sense of injustice, of being persecuted and killed over one's race and / or religious beliefs. The world is a sadder place but together we must strive to overcome anger and destruction through solidarity and action across our wonderful multi-cultural society.

Too regularly we hear about the physical and mental violence experienced by so many women and children. Hence when we celebrated International Women's Day (also in March) we expressed our keen hope that in the near future, all human beings feel safe and be treated as equal persons, regardless of race, creed or gender.

At the NCJWA Ltd. Annual General Meeting on 28 June 2018, Sylvia Deutsch OAM and Viki Nadel OAM, National Vice Presidents and acting co-Presidents, stepped down due to ill health after serving one year of a two-year term from 2017-2018. I regret that they had to retire early and were not able to see through the transformation program they began via the Strategic Planning Review they implemented in late 2017. We miss their wisdom and experience to this day.

The Board welcomed new directors Melinda Jones, Robyn Lenn OAM and Ester Steingesser, who were appointed by the Board under the casual vacancy provisions and bring a breadth of experience to the Board. Unfortunately Robyn will be leaving the Board on July 24 due to conflicting work requirements and we will miss her insight and international perspective. Also finishing her National Board stint is our Treasurer, Sharlene Lustig who's been a strong mainstay since 2015. I want to acknowledge and thank Sharlene, who has been a collegiate Board member and very effective Treasurer and will continue to support the Board while we select and bring on board a new Treasurer.

I would like to thank our six NCJWA Sections' leaders for their support and investment of many hours through the quarterly Leaders Forums, constitution discussions and my phone and face to face conversations with them. The Sections are doing an amazing job and making a real difference to Australian Society.

My gratitude to my wonderful Board, especially Vice Presidents Di Hirsh OAM and Shirley Glance OAM, and thanks to all who worked with the Board and me – you give volunteering its true meaning. A special thank you to Debby Kloot, our part-time Office Administrator, who contributes over and above the call of duty and has put us on the social media map.

My sincere thanks for their continued assistance go to our Honorary Solicitor Anton Block of KCL Law Level 4, 555 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000, and our Honorary Auditor David Jaffe CA of Jaffe Lee & Associates, Suite 9ABC, Level 9, 443 Toorak Road, Toorak, Vic 3142.

Definitely a year to remember, but no time to reminisce, we're all focused on the forthcoming NCJWA Quadrennial National Conference, "Women Unlimited" being held on September 8 – 9, 2019, in Melbourne. The Conference organising committee (Ros Gunn, Annette Sweet, Shirley Glance OAM, Di Hirsh OAM and myself with Fundraising assistance from Rysia Rozen OAM ) has an exciting program lined up with high profile keynote speakers and panellists. We have reached out to some amazing women's networks and are getting a lot of interest from the younger women in our community. Not to forget our stalwart members of many years without whom all this would be impossible.

*Negba Weiss-Dolev*  
*National President*  
*June 2019*

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## **STRATEGIC REVIEW AND PLAN: PROGRESS TO DATE**

A major strategic review was held in 2017 to position NCJWA as a thought leader and representative voice to key national and international organisations, advocating on strategic issues affecting Jewish and non-Jewish women and girls. Implementation of the resulting strategic plan and recommendations is in progress, as detailed below. The review and the plan were overseen by the NCJWA Strategic Review Steering Committee, reporting to the Board. The Strategic Plan was formally adopted on 5 December 2017. This will be a long-term project that will take several years to bring to fruition.

Strategic Goals 2017-2021 are as follows:

1. **Strategic Goal One - Advocacy:** Advocate on strategic issues affecting Jewish and non-Jewish women and girls, across Australia.
2. **Strategic Goal Two – Section Relationships:** Build strong and effective relationships and communication with Sections.
3. **Strategic Goal Three - Profile:** Develop a profile and image that reflect our future direction, especially for its relevance to the younger generation.
4. **Strategic Goal Four – Finances and Infrastructure:** Ensure financial sustainability and build an effective organisational infrastructure.
5. **Strategic Goal Five – Staffing and Leadership:** Ensure adequate staffing and promote volunteer leadership and development.

6. **Strategic Goal Six – Partnerships:** Strengthen partnerships with key organisations, including in Israel.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

### 1. Advocacy

A number of advocacy statements and press releases have been made. These were **team efforts**, with input by a number of people including **NCJWA Victoria and the Victorian Section’s Advocacy Group, NCJWA’ ERA representatives;** and **the National Board.**

See **Appendix** for details re submissions, statements and action taken.

- NCJWA Statement on **QLD Parliamentary vote to decriminalise abortion**
- **Gender Inequality in the NDIS** - NCJWA endorsed the joint letter to the CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) regarding gender inequality in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) from Women with Disabilities Australia in collaboration with sister organisations
- NCJWA endorsed Equality Rights Alliance (ERA)’s pre-Budget submission on the **Prosecute don’t Perpetrate campaign**
- NCJWA endorsed ERA’s submission to the **ParentsNext**, including its trial and subsequent broader rollout Senate inquiry.
- NCJWA endorsed ERA’s submission of **CSW priorities** to the Federal Office for Women. This submission aimed to inform the Australian Government’s negotiation priorities at the **63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63).**
- **Extraditing Malka Leifer** - NCJWA sent letter to HE Mr Mark Sofer, Ambassador of Israel, expressing much regretting and dismay at the delays in the Israeli Justice system in regard to Malka Leifer and requesting urgent action. An appropriately diplomatic response was received later in the year assuring us that this matter was brought to the attention of the appropriate instances.
- NCJWA issued a statement on **Christchurch terror attack** expressing grief and solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers after the horrific mass murder in Christchurch, NZ.
- NCJWA participated in Australian Human Rights Commission Round Table on Freedom of Religion

### 2. Section Relationships

**Leaders Forum** (initially known as Presidents’ Forum): As recommended in the Strategic Plan, we set up a new consultative body between the National body and its six Members, which are the six Sections of NCJWA (Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia). Following the initial two meetings in 2018, four further Forums were held in June and November 2018 and March and June 2019.



The National President has progressively travelled around Australia to meet, in person, key NCJWA leaders and their Boards/ Committees. This has clearly enhance our mutual understandings and relationships.

**Newsletter:** In December 2018 we produced a NCJWA Newsletter which was sent to Sections and posted on the website to update members on issues and events over the previous six months. In the absence of a current Bulletin this was a means of keeping members informed of our activities. Another newsletter was sent out in May 2019, again to all sections and posted on our website.

**Website:** The National website includes links to the websites of the NSW and Victorian Sections, as they specifically requested, and serves the other Sections that do not have their own website. There is an events calendar that is used by national and the sections too, allowing them to easily promote their events. It also provides links to organisations to which we are affiliated. The new website provides an events calendar that both national and the sections are able to utilise.

### **3. Profile**

#### **Media and communications:**

**Website:** The website was reconstructed and relaunched in January 2019. This complete overhaul means that the website now uses current technological infrastructure and is optimised for mobile phones and other devices. Online donations have also been implemented. These improvements specifically address the need for relevance to the younger generation, as stated in the strategic goals.

**Social media:** Di Hirsh OAM, Shirley Glance OAM and the Office Administrator have maintained NCJWA Facebook posts. Our Facebook statistics always return a high engagement rate with our audience when we post.

An Instagram account was created at the start of the year and is being regularly updated. This needs to be maintained as a priority to engage with a younger audience. Many of our advocacy statements are being released simultaneously on Facebook and the website. Expanded use of social media is one of the goals identified in the strategic plan.

#### **Representation:**

- Executive Council of Australian Jewry Committee of Management meetings: attended by Negba Weiss Dolev
- Zionist Federation of Australia Executive Meetings: attended by Negba Weiss-Dolev
- NAJEX ANZAC day Commemoration held on April 28<sup>th</sup>: represented by Viki Nadel OAM
- VAJEX ANZAC day Commemoration held on April 28<sup>th</sup>: represented by Shirley Glance OAM and Rysia Rozen OAM.
- Human Rights Commission Round Table on Freedom of Religion, 11 June 2019, attended by Viki Nadel OAM.
- ZFA Biennial Conference on Sunday 11th November 2018: NCJWA was represented by Negba Weiss-Dolev

- Visit to ILAN Tel Aviv newly opened building on April 9, 2019 by Di Hirsh OAM and Negba Weiss-Dolev
- ICJW Executive Meeting in Toronto May 27-28 2019: NCJWA represented by Di Hirsh OAM, also Vivien Brass (OAM) and Sandy Abrahams attended.
- Equality Rights Alliance representatives for NCJWA (two positions): Di Hirsh OAM (voting representative) and Negba Weiss-Dolev. Both are current directors on the National Board. Negba participated in the ERA Member Meeting in Sydney on 22-23 May 2019.
- National Council of Women of Australia Conference dinner 18 October 2018, attended by Dr Anita Shroot on behalf of NCJWA.
- Interfaith and communal events were attended on behalf of NCJWA National by several members.

#### **4. Finances and Infrastructure**

##### **Proposed NCJWA Sylvia Gelman Foundation:**

Work continues on the full business case to support this Scholarship Fund. An amended constitution is required for this to be set up. We are currently finalising an extended round of consultations with our member sections and this amendment will be incorporated into it.

##### **Board Committees:**

The strategic plan recommends the establishment or continuation of the following committees, reporting to the National Board. They replace the former Portfolio and National Executive structure. Some committees already have terms of reference; others still need these to be developed. Members, particularly with appropriate skills, are needed for most of these committees.

- **Advocacy/Policy/Platform Committee:** Committee has been formed and preliminary discussions have taken place. We note that NCJWA Victoria has its own Advocacy Group, which has worked very successfully with the national body this year on joint statements and submissions at national level, on behalf of the whole organisation.
- **Finance Committee:** existing committee that meets regularly but needs additional skilled members
- **Foundation Working Group:** in progress
- **Governance Committee:** has been focussed on the creation of a modern new Constitution for NCJWA, based on the ACNC model. Chaired by Di Hirsh OAM and comprising constitutional lawyer and National Board member, Melinda Jones and governance lawyer Belinda Plotkin. This committee has invested vast, concerted efforts on drafting the proposed new Constitution and has been engaged in active consultation with the Sections' leaders to achieve a final draft that will be voted on as soon as feasible.
- **NCJWA Quadrennial Conference** - The Conference (September 8-9, 2019) "Women Unlimited", organising committee (Roslyn Gunn, Annette Sweet, Shirley Glance, Di Hirsh and Negba Weiss-Dolev) have an exciting program lined up with high profile

keynote speakers and panellists. We are starting to attract significant interest from the younger women in our community.

- The remaining Committees, **Israel Projects Review, Mission /Vision Statement Working Group** and **Communications/Marketing/IT** have not made much progress due to lack of resources.

## **5. Staffing and Leadership**

The move from Melbourne to Sydney and back again has been a major challenge for our organisation. It has, however, also provided an opportunity to streamline our processes and supply chain, thereby saving much needed money. The unavailability of space at the Victorian section offices, has significantly impacted on the management of the National Office and has many flow-on implications. Our media-savvy part-time Office Administrator, Debby Kloot has wrought 'miracles' for the National Office but at only twelve hours per week, we are far short of the support required by the leadership.

## **6. Partnerships**

Affiliations are listed above. We worked cooperatively with other communal organisations both in the Jewish Community and in the broader one. We are currently investigating possible future partnerships in the context of reviewing our current Israel projects.

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## **EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL 2019**

- **Relocation to Melbourne:** Upon the appointment of Negba Weiss-Dolev as National President, the National Office relocated to Melbourne. NCJWA (Vic) were unable to accommodate an office for National, and having costed multiple possible office locations, including Beth Weizmann and co-sharing spaces, the decision was made to temporarily work and meet in the homes of Board Members.
- **New NCJWA website:** In January 2019 the new NCJWA website was launched. This new site brings the online presence up-to-date, allowing for easy viewing on mobile and other devices. The new website has an events calendar, with sections invited to use this for their own promotions. Some of the smaller sections have begun to use this, and the hope is this will provide these sections with the ability to maintain a web presence with little effort and no expense to them.
- **Sylvia Gelman Foundation Launch:** In August 2018 an evening was held at the home of Nina and Bob Bassat to launch the Sylvia Gelman Foundation. The decision to hold this event at such an early stage of the Foundation's creation proved fortuitous, as Sylvia Gelman (z"l) passed away within 2 weeks of attending the launch.
- **Constitutional Reform:** Over the last year there has been a great deal of work done on bringing about constitutional reform, with the Governance Committee working tirelessly along with lawyers in an attempt to facilitate this change.
- **Representation:** see above.

## CURRENT BOARD OF NCJWA LTD. 2018-2019

The National Board consists of eight elected Directors plus the Immediate Past President *ipso facto*. Term of office is two years from the Annual General Meeting when elections were held. The following directors were elected unopposed at the Annual General Meeting on 25 June 2017, to hold office until the 2019 AGM when the next Board election is due.

### PRESIDENT

#### NEGBA WEISS-DOLEV (Victoria)

Negba's involvement with NCJWA commenced with long-term membership of the Tarbut Group, NCJWA Victoria, and on the special Women Assisting Refugees and Migrants (WARM) project. In 2017, she was elected to the NCJWA National Board and is pleased to be part of its change agenda. Negba took on the mantle of National President after the much regretted resignation of acting co-presidents; Sylvia Deutsch OAM and Viki Nadel OAM.



In championing women's rights, Negba has created and progressed a number of major initiatives in the sphere of Women's Leadership. These initiatives helped many organisations to change their approach to encouraging and supporting women's career aspirations and to achieve senior leadership roles in organisations including NAB, ANZ, AXA, TAC, Telstra, Medibank Private, Victorian Government departments, local councils and more.

As President of the Jewish Museum of Australia, Negba led and oversaw the selection of the new CEO and the strategic rethinking / rebranding of this award-winning community museum and adult education leader.

A keen supporter of education; Negba has served as a member of Swinburne University of Technology's Council and various Council sub-committees.

Negba has a proven track record as a Senior Executive and Board Director. She has worked in leading-edge senior executive roles for Telstra, Adacel Technologies and co-founded and led the innovative Leadership and Change Management company; Resurgence P/L. Negba's qualifications include FAICD, BSc Architecture and Town Planning, Dip ICT.

**HONORARY TREASURER  
SHARLENE LUSTIG (Victoria)**

Sharlene is a chartered accountant and tax agent with experience working in different sized accounting firms at various stages of her career. She is currently operating her own accounting and bookkeeping practice with an emphasis on assisting older people manage their affairs working in conjunction with their tax accountant and also assisting younger people with record keeping in relation to the start up of new businesses. Her community involvement includes:



- Mt Scopus College Parents Association Treasurer of Gandel Besen House Campus from November 2009-November 2012.
- Mt Scopus College Parents Association Executive Treasurer of all three campuses from November 2012-November 2014
- NCJWA Honorary Treasurer from July 2015
- Member of NCJWA Finance Committee.

**VICE PRESIDENT and COMPANY SECRETARY  
SHIRLEY GLANCE OAM (Victoria)**

Shirley has been a member of NCJWA (Victoria) for over 30 years and has held numerous positions on its Board. She has held several positions at national level in NCJWA: current director on the Board (since 2015); Honorary Secretary 2011-2015; current Chair of the Finance Committee; member of the Strategic Review Steering Committee 2017; Chair of the Ilan Foundation portfolio and Israel Projects portfolio 2011-2014; co-Chair of the national Israel Projects Review Committee in 2017. She was Vice-President of NCJWA (Vic) from 2012-2014, and President from 2014-2016, unfortunately having to step down due to illness.



Shirley was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in June 2018, for service to the community. She has received Honorary Life membership in recognition of past services to NCJWA (Vic). In 2015 she received the NCJWA National Presidents Award. In 1994 she was honoured to receive the Dr Fanny Reading Scholarship. She was a founding member of Kulanu, a social group of young women, in 1991. In 2016 she invited Jeanne Pratt AO, AC to be Patron for NCJWA (Vic)'s 90th Anniversary year. Also in 2016 she was responsible for bringing to Australia Dr Elana Sztokman as NCJWA Scholar in Residence. In 2013 she assisted Di Hirsh OAM in planning the NCJWA tour to Israel. She was instrumental in bringing the Director of ILAN Tel Aviv Silvina Freund to Australia for a visit to NCJWA Sections in 2013.

She has been involved in both the Jewish and secular communities for many years. In 2008 she helped to successfully re-establish the Bayside Polio Support Group and continues to serve as its Co-Convenor. She has spoken at many events promoting awareness of polio and its late effects. She is currently also on the Board of Post-Polio Victoria, advocating for people living with the late effects of polio, meeting with local Government and hospitals to promote awareness of the LEOP.

She has attended Jewish Christian Muslim (JCMA) conferences and participated in various multicultural events held by the Jewish Community Council of Victoria. In 2015 she completed a Fast Track Leadership Program run by Leadership Victoria.

Professionally she worked for over fifteen years for the Jewish National Fund as office manager, including all aspects of fundraising and personal member communications (1997-2009).

## **VICE PRESIDENT**

### **DI HIRSH OAM (Victoria)**

Di joined NCJWA Victoria 20 years ago, becoming President of the Victorian section from 2002 for four years. In this position she convened a conference for women of many different cultural backgrounds and she also introduced the WARM program to welcome immigrant Jewish women and their families to Melbourne. At national level Di was Vice-President NCJWA and Chair of the Interfaith and Intercultural Portfolio from 2007 to 2011 and National President of NCJWA from 2011 to 2015.



Di continues to serve as a Member of the NCJWA Board, as Immediate Past President (2015-2017) and currently as director. She chaired the Strategic Review Steering Committee in 2017 and is currently Chair of the Governance Committee. In 2014 Di became Chair of the Interfaith and Intercultural portfolio of the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW). In May 2018 Di was co-convenor of the ICJW Convention held in Sydney and is now a Vice-President of ICJW representing NCJWA.

Di has organised a women's interfaith celebration of Passover at NCJWA Victoria for the past 11 years and also interfaith celebrations of Chanukah. In the Jewish Christian Muslim Association (JCMA) Di has been actively involved for over 10 years, organising women's interfaith live-in conferences and other events.

In 2009 Di was awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia for service to the community through contributions to interfaith dialogue and to NCJWA. In 2007 Di received the NCJWA Miriam Stein Award in recognition of promotion of interfaith relations. In 2006 Di received a Victorian Government Meritorious Service Award for Excellence in Multicultural Affairs. She was also a Dr. Fanny Reading Scholar in 2000.

Di has also worked in different professional areas: as a computer programmer, as a Mathematics and Computer Studies teacher, and as a Linguistics tutor and lecturer. Her academic qualifications include B Sc, Dip Ed, B A (Hons) and M A. She is married with three adult children and three gorgeous granddaughters.

## **DIRECTOR**

### **CAROLYN GOLDSMITH OAM (Brisbane)**

Carolyn first joined NCJW in 1958 as a teenager when there was a Juniors Group in Brisbane. After marrying and living overseas she was a member of NCJW USA for two years. On returning to Brisbane she again became involved in the Brisbane Section, first as secretary and then as President. She has been President for over 20 years. She has always been very proud that NCJWA supports the local non-Jewish community as well as the local Jewish community and Israel. She has been a director of the National Board since 2007 (2007-2011; 2001-2015; 2015-2017 following constitutional revisions with two-year instead of four-year terms; and currently for the 2017-2019 term).



Brisbane is a small section and being involved with NCJWA means being involved with the whole Community. Many joint functions are held especially with WIZO and JNF and the Section also participates in functions held by SZC and UIA. Over the years Brisbane members have also been involved with Sinai College and Gan Gani Kindergarten. They are also involved in the general community participating in a Pamper Day for women who were affected by the Brisbane floods, and also in some interfaith functions. Brisbane members also sew shrouds for the Chevra Kadisha.

Carolyn enjoys her work with NCJWA and has made many friends both here in Brisbane and throughout Australia by attending Conferences, and of course with Internet connections it is easy to stay in touch. Carolyn was awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia in June 2009 for service to the community, particularly through the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia.

## **DIRECTOR**

### **ROBYN LENN OAM (New South Wales)**

Robyn's membership of NCJWA dates from 1975 when NCJWA NSW Northsiders Group was formed.

Robyn was NCJWA NSW State President from 1989 – 1995.

She was awarded NCJWA NSW Life Membership and the NCJWA Honour Badge during her term of office and the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2005.

NCJWA National President from 2003 – 2007

After 4 years as an ICJW Vice President Robyn was elected ICJW President from 2014 – 2018

Robyn's professional life is as a music educator, currently in her 25th year as a piano examiner for Australian Music Examination Board.



## **DIRECTOR**

### **ESTER STEINGIESSER (Western Australia)**

Following the completion of her B.A. in Mathematics & Physics (Mackenzie University Sao Paulo) and Jewish Studies & Hebrew at the Machon Lemorim in Israel, Ester worked as a Primary and High School Teacher in Brazil.

Ester then joined IBM Brazil where she specialised in Systems Analysis. She then moved to Israel where she worked in research projects in the Agri-Business Industry.

In 1993 Ester migrated to Australia working in business analysis at the University of WA and Wesfarmers Insurance.

Ester Joined **NCJWA (WA)** in 1995 and has been a NCJWA WA board member since 2006.

Ester has also held the following positions at NCJWA: Honorary Secretary (2008-2011), Steering Committee (2011-2014), President (2014-2017), Chair Interfaith & Intercultural Project 2012-2017, recipient of Miriam Stein Interfaith Award 2015 at the NCJWA Conference and a Director of NCJWA 2014-2015. Ester was also an Executive member of **JCCWA** from 2007-2013.



Through NCJWA WA, Ester got involved with the UN Association of Australia WA, where she was an Executive member 2010-2013 and Honorary Secretary 2011-2012. Through UNAABA, Ester initiated and organised NCJWA /UNAABA /Holocaust Institute Holocaust Remembrance Commemoration in WA for the past 10 years, and also established NCJWA/UNAABA Peace Day yearly celebrations that later evolved into UNAABA Peace Day that is celebrated every year. Ester also helped to establish the Yolande Frank Art Award in 2010 (a Holocaust survivor, that represented NCJWA WA at the UNAABA). This Award is for School children, to promote the aims and ideals of the UN through education and awareness and is active and developing.



As part of the Brazilian Community of WA and as wife of the Honorary Consul of Brazil in WA, Ester was a foundation member of the Brazilian Association of WA (**BrazilWA**) and Executive member from 2009-2013. Ester is the Honorary Vice-Consul of Brazil in WA since 2014.

## **DIRECTOR**

### **MELINDA JONES (Victoria)**

Melinda joined the NCJWA National Board on June 28, 2018. As the editor of NCJWA journal, *The Bulletin* (2011-2016), Melinda totally revitalised this publication. She raised the quality of the articles to an outstanding level, bringing issues of importance to women, especially Jewish women, around the world.

Melinda Jones is an independent scholar, feminist human rights lawyer and disability advocate.

She has published 11 books and authored 20+ chapters in books.

She has over 50 peer-reviewed articles covering topics such as racism, freedom of speech and racial hatred; the rights of people with disabilities; the rights of the child; inclusive education; and freedom of religion. Her current projects include the health rights of LGBTI children, the inclusion and human rights of people with disabilities and a study of the multifarious relationships between Judaism and disability.

The question Melinda has addressed consistently throughout her working life is how societies and communities address the position of vulnerable people and what best practices we can share and replicate to provide stronger more resilient inclusive communities.

Melinda previously taught Political Science and Politics at Latrobe and Melbourne Universities, Law at Monash University and Legal Studies at Latrobe University. For the greatest part of her career, she taught Law at the University of New South Wales, was the Editor-in- Chief of the *Australian Journal of Human Rights* and the Director of the Australian Human Rights Centre.



## **IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

### **RYSIA ROZEN OAM**

Rysia joined NCJWA Victoria in 1986 as an employee.

Subsequently she became a volunteer, becoming involved with the Dimona Group, and was its co-chair for many years. Dimona group held many fundraising functions and attracted many new members. One of the most successful projects was the '*Cooking Without Tears*' cook book in 1992, and 21 annual Duplicate Bridge sessions.



Rysia was invited to join Victoria's Executive, and served as President of NCJWA Victoria from 1996-2002. She initiated the position of Fundraising Chair at national level.

Rysia became a Manager of the Albert Park NCJWA Opportunity Shop for five years. She formed a young professional group, 'Women in Decision Making', advocating on women's issues. She also established an Outreach Program for elderly migrants from the former Soviet Union, who were residents of public housing in St. Kilda, Prahran and South Melbourne, and is still involved after 15 years. Rysia obtained tax deductibility for NCJWA Victoria Community Services in 2003. She raised funds to purchase the NCJWA Opportunity Shop in Caulfield in 2005.

Rysia served as NCJWA National President from 2007-2011 and again from 2015-2017. She instigated many initiatives including the Fundraising Portfolio, which she chaired; obtained a major sponsorship for the Council *Bulletin* and for the National Conference and was involved in organising the visits of NCJWA Scholars in Residence Dr. Sharon Shenhav, from Bar Ilan University in 2010 and Dr. Elana Sztokman, Jewish feminist, researcher and educator, in 2016. She is currently Immediate National Past President, and serves on the Finance Committee.

Rysia was President of the National Council of Women of Victoria from 2004-2007. She initiated the Dame Phyllis Frost Award, enhancing the organisation's financial standing. She was the third Jewish woman President in over 100 years. She was vice-president of the Australian Women's Coalition from 2008-2010.

Rysia was one of the founders and a director of the Caulfield Park Community Bank, Bendigo Bank, since 2003. She is still involved as 'Ambassador'. A committed member of Temple Beth Israel (TBI), Rysia has served as Honours & Awards Committee chair since 2014, a member of the TBI Board of Governance (2013-2016) and as a member of the Fundraising Committee. She has been Honorary Secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews since 2017. During Christmas holidays she works as a volunteer at the Sacred Heart Mission in St. Kilda.

Rysia was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2004 for service to the Jewish community of Victoria, particularly through the National Council of Jewish Women. On 1 January 2001 she was awarded a Centenary medal for service to the community as President of the National Council of Jewish Women, Victoria.

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## NATIONAL BOARD 2018-2019

At the national Board meeting on 8 May 2018 three new directors were appointed unanimously under the casual vacancy provisions of the national constitution (clauses 175 and 176). This followed the resignation of Acting Co-National Presidents Sylvia Deutsch OAM and Viki Nadel OAM effective from the AGM on 28 June 2018. Melinda Jones, Robyn Lenn OAM and Ester Steingiesser joined the national Board, effective from the AGM on 28 June 2018. The national office moved to Melbourne after the AGM.

From 28 June 2018 until the election at the 2019 AGM the composition of the Board was as follows:

President:	Negba Weiss-Dolev
Vice-Presidents:	Shirley Glance OAM Di Hirsh OAM
Honorary Treasurer:	Sharlene Lustig
Immediate Past President:	Rysia Rozen OAM
Directors:	Carolyn Goldsmith OAM Melinda Jones Robyn Lenn OAM Ester Steingiesser

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## HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

### ***In memoriam:***

*We are deeply saddened at the passing of Sylvia Gelman AM MBE, our mentor and wise woman.*

*Sylvia was National President from 1973 to 1979, Life Governor from 1988, Honorary Life member of ICJW and NCJWA Victoria. She was also President of the National Council of Women Victoria for 3 years.*

*Sylvia made a significant contribution to the Jewish and general communities for over 6 decades, particularly in the areas of education and women's rights. Her wide-ranging achievements were acknowledged in being awarded an MBE, an AM, the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal, induction into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women and the JCCV Sir John Monash Award.*

*Sylvia was deeply loved and a great inspiration to all who knew her.*

### **Honorary Life Governor**

Malvina Malinek OAM

### **Honorary Life Vice-Presidents**

Carolyn Goldsmith OAM

Barbara Stewart-Kann OAM

Zara Young OAM

### **Honorary Life Members National Executive**

Judith Benjamin

Danielle Charak OAM

Dinah Danon OAM

Ruth Dunn

Phyll Glasser

Carolyn Goldsmith OAM

Susie Ivany OAM

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## SECTION REPORTS JULY 2018-JUNE 2019

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### **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA – BRISBANE SECTION INC.**

As one of the younger members of NCJWA Brisbane Section committee, it fell to me to step up and take over from Carolyn Goldsmith OAM who had headed up the section for 21 years. It is quite difficult taking over the reins from someone who is so knowledgeable about the running of the organisation, both at local and National levels. However, with the support of my committee and the continued support of Carolyn who has been there for me whenever I have needed some advice, I've made it through the first of what will more than likely be another 21 years of leadership.

Our meetings have continued to run from our homes, mostly at night as it ties in with my commitments during the day. This does mean that some of our older members are unable to attend and the venues with stairs will also be an issue. We continue to work with venues to try and resolve these minor problems. There are some men who regularly attend now with their spouses and we hope this continues to grow. The presenters at our meetings are well aware that we have a mixed gender group and the topics are more general anyway.

Authors Lauren Daniels and Yvonne Fein each presented at different meetings and we find these get together with writers intriguing as we discover the thought processes that go in to developing a story.

We had the Head of the Renal Unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital talk to us on kidney health and how to try keep ourselves out of trouble.

It was interesting and enjoyable to hear of Rochy's experiences on the Queensland Variety Bash, the fun they have while raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for disadvantaged children.

Thought provoking information was delivered by Ehud, a lecturer in Fashion at QUT as he spoke about the history, ethics and dilemmas regarding fashion. There is so much more that we can learn from this knowledgeable speaker and we will definitely have to ask him back again.

Melanie from Share the Dignity gave us insight in to the plight of homelessness among women in Australia, the huge numbers involved and the charity work that is done to assist these women to remain dignified when it comes to personal hygiene. Our group donated a boot load of bags and personal hygiene items and will continue to support this charity at their annual drives.

Our annual Melbourne Cup lunch was enjoyed as we ate, sipped and hollered for our horses to get a move on. Always fun, this event continues to remain on our calendar.

We thank Lee for again giving up time to lead us through the Queensland Art Gallery, this time featuring Women and Art and Women in Art. Fascinating to learn about the artists, the treatment of the subjects and even the new ways of curating exhibits.

The start of 2019 was heralded in with a Progressive Dinner, a blast from the past. While responsible driving was of utmost importance and emphasised through all the advertising, it was fun to move from home to home for hors d'oeuvres, mains and dessert.

As an extra and different event, we joined a group of the general public at a Ghost Tour of Toowong Cemetery. While there is a Jewish Section, this is only mentioned in passing as the tour has been asked to not tell stories about the people buried in this section. The stories from that cemetery though are of historical importance to Brisbane and we found this to be a rewarding outing.

Author and historian Michael Komesaroff presented Reds Under the Bed, after which we were able to chat with our guest speaker at a shared afternoon tea. Michael had been a speaker at Limmud Oz in Sydney so we were very fortunate to have him come to Brisbane to talk to us. It does help that he knows many in the community as a past member here.

Every year we are involved with SZC in the Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations at the Communal Centre by holding an afternoon tea stall. The afternoon is very enjoyable with a large crowd and a joyous atmosphere of Israeli music and dancing.

Local organisations benefitting from our fund raising this year have been Council for Jewish Community Security, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Angel Flight, Hummingbird House, Motor Neuron Disease Qld and the Australian Numeracy and Literacy Foundation.

We have also met our commitments for our Israeli projects, Ilan, Haifa Rape Crisis Centre and Haifa University Scholarship. We have done extra fundraising for our special Queensland project MICHA, the centre for Hearing Impaired Children in Israel. This year we had a goodies basket with some of the objects donated by Tova Blumberg and this was won by Terry Groen. We also have a crystal vase, donated by Helen Senecka, which will be drawn at the Melbourne Cup Function. With two large events affecting human lives, we decided to make a one-off donation to the Muslim Charitable Foundation to support those affected by the Christchurch Massacre and also to the Drought Relief Fund to assist farmers so severely affected by the drought.

Our Jeanette Lesnie Scholarship this year went to help a child attend Maccabi Junior Carnival. We have decided to continue this tradition as this stage. Our yearly donation to Gan Gani Kindergarten was also made.

We are affiliated with State Zionist Council, Jewish National Fund and the Qld Jewish Board of Deputies and also National Council of Women. Gail continues in her role as a selector on the Bursary Committee of the National Council of Women. This is a large and important task and keeps us connected with the organisation.

Gail Paratz continues to keep us informed and involved with interfaith inter-cultural events. This maintains our connection with other faiths and in particular with women of other faiths.

Our Community Service includes sewing shrouds for the Chevra Kadisha, which in Brisbane is a totally voluntary organisation, and some of our members are involved in a monthly lunch for seniors held at the South Brisbane Synagogue. Carolyn plays an integral role in both these services and we thank her for this. Shirley has been a staunch collector of cash for bottles, and every week our coffers are the richer for it as Shirley collects from a local café and takes them off to the bottle bank.

Our connection with JNF continues on a local level, by supporting their functions and combining with them for joint functions. JNF also has the services of a very able graphics person and we benefit from his talents. Our advertising is so much more colourful.

We are working closely with WIZO by supporting their events and meetings and vice versa. With so small a community, it is good to have this cross over with organisations.

Mavis Rudd does a sterling job of updating our Facebook page with all the local NCJWA and National news.

This year saw our logo being updated and we now have a very modern logo. It would be wonderful for the other sections to adopt this logo, given that it has a modern appeal and each section could have their own colour.

Our Membership is currently 54 which is a small increase on last year and we look forward to that increase continuing over the next year. Sadly we did have a member pass away during the latter part of the year.

No President can run a group efficiently without the support of a committee. I thank Carolyn, past president, for always being there to inform, support, advise and help me. Gail is a phenomenal vice president and knows how to say the right thing at the right time and give me a boost when my energy is failing. Mavis, the treasurer extraordinaire who also looks after the Facebook page and reminds me when administrative issues need to be addressed, is another willing and able assistant. Lorraine has efficiently kept minutes for us at the executive meetings. Judy continues, between health issues, to be our social letter writer even though living miles away from us now. Shirley, Leah and Mira, thank you for your continued support. I look forward to the new year and some new blood on the committee too.

*Sheila Levine*  
*President*  
*NCJWA Brisbane Section*

## **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA – CANBERRA SECTION INC.**

### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

We continue to run the Canberra section with a steering committee of seven women. The current committee consists of Anita Shroot, Barbara Butow, Judith Eisner, Deb Sims, Debra Hurwitz, Tracy Massil, and Karen Tatz. This year we lost a long-term member, Sarit Cohen, who has always provided great support and energy, and we welcomed Debra and Tracy. We hold committee meetings in each other's homes approximately every two months (always with tea and lovely things to eat). While we get through our agenda, our gatherings are also an excuse to catch-up and enjoy each other's company. There is great camaraderie on the committee and we are keen to find one or two more women in the community to join us.

### **NATIONAL REPRESENTATION**

At national level, Anita Shroot is responsible for liaison with the NCJWA National Board. Anita is a former director on the NCJWA Board and has always been active at the National level and representing our small section. Anita attends local NCW meetings and attended the National NCW conference in Canberra

### **MEMBERSHIP**

We currently have around 30 financial members. Our membership function will be combined with a social event sometime this year.

### **PROJECTS**

NCJWA's national projects, to which we contribute, include the ILAN foundation, a daycare centre in Tel Aviv for young adults with profound disabilities; the Haifa Rape Crisis Centre, a non-profit organisation dedicated to opposing sexual violence; The Haifa University Ethiopian Women's Fund, which provides assistance to female Ethiopian students at the University; and a multidisciplinary centre for children with hearing loss. We always make donations to local recipients such as Breast Cancer Network Australia, the Toora House women's refuge in Canberra, Roundabout Canberra (a local charity that provides essential baby items and equipment to families in need, as well as the ACT Jewish Community.

### **ACT JEWISH COMMUNITY INC.**

Our Section relies heavily on the ACT Jewish Community for support. This is a mutually beneficial relationship as we often help out with community activities, including Kiddushes. We advertise our functions through the community and use the building for many of our functions. We often plan events for the whole community which are an important part of the community's calendar of events. In such a small Jewish community, many of us wear a number of hats and there is a lot of overlap in our roles.

### **FUNCTIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR**

As our committee has shrunk, we decided to offer fewer events in the hope that our members and the community will be more likely to attend. It can be challenging in the colder months of winter, when Canberrans can be reluctant to venture out, especially at night.

### **AGM 2018**

Last year's AGM was held on 29 July at the home of Sarit Cohen. After a short meeting, the group was entertained by Estelle Blackburn (OAM), a Walkley Award-winning investigative journalist, who spoke about her book, "Kaddish for mother, 50 years on: A true Tikkun olam story". The book is about Tel Aviv resident Mark Berkman, who was in his 50s before he managed to get to Perth to say Kaddish for his mother, Pnina, who died when he was eight. All Mark knew of her was his late father telling him she was 'killed by a madman'. Mark said Kaddish for his mother at last, reciting the prayer solemnly at her grave. To his bewilderment, it was brand new, starkly different from all the others in this part of the cemetery's Jewish Orthodox sector. Estelle took on the justice system and, through her research, courage and self-sacrifice, overturned two wrongful convictions against all odds, demonstrating the power of an individual to alter history and improve society at a fundamental level.

### ***Show and Tell / afternoon tea***

We came together on a cold winter afternoon (26 August) in my home to talk about "holidays" and show / tell something about a significant holiday we had experienced. Our members had been to all sorts of places – Japan, Israel, India, Eastern Europe, and many more interesting places. Some people brought photos and other mementos. It was a lovely afternoon sharing and eating (of course).

### ***Supper and movie night***

We held one movie in the second half of last year, which was held at the Centre and open to the whole community. We all enjoyed the film, with our usual tasty supper.

### ***Women's Kabbalat Shabbat***

Every year we hold our 'Council Shabbat' to coincide with Purim. This year we combined forces with the Community to host a Women's Kabbalat Shabbat on 15 March. The service was very well attended by both men and women – the women outnumbering the men for once! We enjoyed a delicious supper after the service, which was also well attended. The following day, Yvette Goode gave the drosha which, as always, was insightful and made relevant to today's society and women's issues, followed by a Shabbat Kiddush.

### ***Women's Health Event***

This year's women's health event was held on 2 June at the lovely home of Tracy Massil. Tracy organised three excellent health professionals: pharmacist Jaylee Lewis spoke on the importance of bone health; physiotherapist Kylie Cook talked about muscle strength; dietician Romy Doherty gave a detailed talk on nutrition. The talks all dovetailed, and the speakers were adept at tying the different health areas together. We had an excellent turnout of 20+ women. It was an informative and engaging afternoon with useful explanations about age-related changes in bone, muscle and nutrition, followed by many questions and a delicious afternoon tea. Raffle prizes were kindly donated by a committee member, Debra Hurwitz, and Kylie Cook from SportsCare and Physiotherapy in Weston. All proceeds were donated to a local women's charity, Toora House (Canberra Women's refuge). Due to the popularity and considerable interest in women's health issues we will try and incorporate health topics into our yearly events.

*Karen Tatz*



**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA – GOLD COAST SECTION INC.**

I present this brief report on behalf of the Executive of the Gold Coast Section – for the year in review 2018 – 2019.

**Israel Projects:**

Gold Coast Section has honoured its National Project commitments to - Haifa Rape Crisis Centre and Ethiopian Women's Fund

Our Section donates annually to Micha (Deaf Children-Israel) and Magen David Adom.

**Local Jewish Causes:**

Donations are annually presented to the Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation Inc, Temple Shalom, and Gold Coast Jewish Community Services –

Yom Ha Shoah annual event is financially supported by several Communal Organisations including NCJWA Gold Coast.

**Local Wider Community:**

Over the past year we have supported/donated funds to: -

Project for Homeless Youth

Autism Qld

Volunteer Marine Rescue

Hear and Say Qld

Asthma Foundation

Canteen Qld (Kids with Cancer)

**Fundraising:**

We have hosted 2 main events over the past year....50th Anniversary Gala Dinner Dance and Joint Gala Dinner Dance with the Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation. Both very successful.

Bunnings Charity BBQ (3 per year) is a great fund raiser for the Section...minimal cost, excellent returns.

**Membership:**

Over the past year we have dropped slightly in numbers, however Gold Coast is very much a transient community as well as an ageing community and increasing membership remains our biggest problem.

However, we have welcomed 5 new members during the past year.

*Barbara Stewart-Kann OAM*

*President*

*NCJWA Gold Coast*

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**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA NEW SOUTH WALES DIVISION**

International Council of Jewish Women Quadrennial Convention Sydney May 2018 was held at Fanny Reading Council House from Sunday 27th May (opening dinner) to Wednesday 30th May. NCJWA NSW welcomed delegates and friends to the Sydney ICJW Convention “Evolving Beyond Tradition” highlighting the importance of women’s rights. Hospitality was provided by NCJWA NSW. Many on our board generously billeted ICJW guests from overseas. On Thursday 31 May various meetings were attended by delegates, also held at Council House. The feedback from international and local attendees was that this ICJW conference was a resounding success.

24<sup>th</sup> June NCJWA NSW hosted a successful Birthing Kit afternoon. There was a successful follow up Birthing Kit afternoon on the 8<sup>th</sup> July supported by students from Moriah College. We were very pleased to have packed 1200 Birthing Kits that were sent to women in developing countries where access to clean birthing conditions are limited.

A MUM FOR MUM NCJWA Mother’s Group, with excerpts from “Motherhood The Musical”, morning tea was held at Council House on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July.

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> August a Jana Gottshall Memorial Library event was held. Gael Hammer interviewed Janet Merkur about her mother RAF Sergeant Regina Morgenstern’s life in the UK and her contribution to the Enigma Project during WWII. Janet donated her book, *Sunflowers* to the library. After there was a Q & A session.

On Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> August the Shifra group held a movie afternoon, and screened the music documentary, “*Bang! The Bert Berns Story*”. Rachel Segal, the new Shifra chair, was unable to be present at this event as her mother Sadie Grant recently passed away. Sadie was long time member of NCJWA NSW and started the Young Marrieds’ Group many decades ago which later became the Progressive Group. We are extremely thankful to outgoing Chairperson Karen Fried for her many years of commitment to the Shifra group.

An event “*The Women’s Brain*” with speaker Dr Sarah McKay was held on Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> August at 10 am. This event was supported by many MUM FOR MUM NCJWA volunteers. Dr McKay is an Oxford educated neuroscientist and author of the book, *The Women’s Brain*.

3rd September 2018, Natalie Narunsky, manager NCJWA BOOK OUT LOUD program spoke about “Exercising Your Brain and Cognitive Stimulation”. Natalie is an Aged Care Psychiatry Occupational Therapist. Despite it being a cold and very rainy afternoon, about 30 guests attended.

NCJWA NSW hosted an afternoon tea on Sunday 14 October, to celebrate The Medal of The Order of Australia awarded to Immediate Past President Victoria Nadel in the Queen’s Birthday Honours 2018 for service to the community, particularly to women. Over 80 people attended this wonderful event highlighting Viki’s work and dedication to NCJWA NSW over many years. A substantial amount of money was donated by those in attendance to the Charity Fund and Mum for Mum NCJWA.

Maxine Bachmayer, through the Australian Feldenkrais Guild NSW Division, brought the US based internationally acclaimed author and Feldenkrais practitioner Lavinia Plonka to Australia. We were fortunate to host an event with Lavinia on the 5 November 2018, "Falls Prevention: And Getting Up". Much good information was imparted, the event was well attended and NCJWA NSW made a profit. The message ~ The more we fear falling, the harder we fall.

Zonta Sydney Breakfast Club held a Birthing Kit Assembly Day Sunday 18 November 2018 at NCJWA NSW Fanny Reading Council House packing 1,000 kits. Many NCJWA NSW members helped pack the kits and the organiser Lisa Doran and the members of Zonta very much appreciated our support.

World Kindertransport Day 24 November 2018. The mission of the Kindertransport Association is to reunite and bring together Kinder, Child Survivors and their descendants, and the public to commemorate the story of the Kindertransport Scheme as an important part of Holocaust History. This year The Kindertransport Association, NCJWA NSW and The Great Synagogue co-hosted the 80th Anniversary of World Kindertransport Day. Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton led the Shabbat service at The Great Synagogue dedicated to blessing and remembering the parents of Kinder and Child survivors. Janet Merkur, co-President of NCJWA NSW and Chairman of the Australian Chapter of the Kindertransport Association, was invited up to the Bimah by Rabbi Elton and addressed the congregation. Rabbi Elton then blessed the memory of parents and grandparents of Kinder and child survivors. The Hon. Justice Stephen Rothman AM, President of The Great Synagogue, included notes about this event in his message to members in The Great newsletter and the support of NCJWA NSW for this event was mentioned by Rabbi Elton in his address at the service.

Celebrating Israel 2018 29 November 2018. This event marks the historic November 29, 1947 vote by The United Nations General Assembly to adopt the Partition Plan, Resolution 181, providing for the termination of the Mandate, the progressive withdrawal of British armed forces and the delineation of boundaries between a Jewish and an Arab state. This year our theme was YOUTH Celebrating Israel. We were treated to a lively, joyous Celebrating Israel event held at NCJWA NSW. Miriam Levy, together with her family led the agenda for this wonderful night. The evening was MC'd by her grandson Adam Levy and featured singing by the Mount Sinai College Choir, presentations by Sydney's Jewish Youth Groups, speeches by representatives of JNF and the Zionist Council of NSW, Israeli dancing and the singing of the "Prayer for the State of Israel" by Ari Naar. NCJWA NSW recognise the importance of this date and will endeavor to continue to commemorate this day. Dalia Ayalon Sinclair OAM, President NCJWA NSW 2007 – 2011 and initiator of Celebrating Israel in 2015, received an award in appreciation of her outstanding dedication and commitment to NCJWA NSW over many decades.

NCJWA Founder's Day/Rebbetzin Jana Gottshall Memorial Library event, 3 December 2018, featured Dr Anne Sarzin speaking on Dr FANNY READING: A VISIONARY FOR ALL TIMES. Gael

Hammer chaired this historical event with two of Fanny's nephews, Dr Ian Burman and Leigh Reading, and her niece Jenny Burman attending. Anne lit a Yahrzeit candle in memory of Dr Fanny and Gael lit the second candle of Chanukah. It was also the first time Dr Burman had stepped into Fanny Reading Council House. The event was very well attended, and the feedback was that the evening was enlightening and exceptionally enjoyable. Anne is at the moment working on a doctorate on Dr Fanny Reading.

NCJWA Council Shabbat (Shabbat Zachor) was held at the Emanuel Synagogue, Progressive Service, on Saturday the 16th of March 2019. Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio invited Maxine, Miri, Janet and Ruth Shteinman to the bimah and Janet was asked to read a prayer before the parsha was read by Rabbi Ninio. Rabbi Ninio then called all NCJWA NSW members present to the bimah to be blessed. Rabbi Ninio spoke glowingly and at length of the work of NCJWA NSW within the Jewish and wider community as well as reading excerpts of the speech Victoria Nadel OAM presented at the NCJWA NSW 90th Anniversary. Ruth's daughter Lena was invited to carry the Torah and there was agreement by those there that this was a very moving Shabbat service.

First library event of 2019 - We were thrilled the library committee presented the award-winning foreign correspondent and author Irris Makler's pre-launch of her book JUST ADD LOVE with star ABC presenter Geraldine Doogue interviewing Irris. This event was enormously successful; over 130 guests attended, with Australian Jewish News journalist Sophie Deutsch promoting the event with a double page editorial in the Australia Jewish News. Feedback from Irris:

*Good morning dear NCJWA!*

*I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the most wonderful event. It was a room full of love and to be honest I still feel overwhelmed by it. And isn't Geraldine a gem? Thanks for all your hard work and for your faith in me. It was the most beautiful afternoon. I am truly grateful.*

*Best,*

*Irris*

A huge thanks to Ruth Shteinman for suggesting we host this event.

A DAYS FOR GIRLS afternoon was organised by Ruth Shteinman and took place on April 7, 2019. The day was supported by DAYS FOR GIRLS Ryde team and was attended by 70 women and girls. It was wonderful to see so many mothers and daughters, many from Moriah College, supporting this event.

Sunday evening 2 June, NCJWA NSW were privileged to hear Emmy award winning Gayle Kirschenbaum. She took more than 100 people at NCJWA NSW along on a brave mother-daughter journey with her documentary film "Look At Us Now, Mother". The sought to present the issue whether emotional abuse can ultimately be forgiven. A Q&A with Gayle followed.

17 June 2019 ~ Jana Gottshall Memorial Library event ~ Gael Hammer facilitated conversation with internationally renowned theatre producer and director Moira Blumenthal and co-producer Lyndi Adler. They spoke about their experiences working on smaller independent productions and Lyndi shared her experiences working in large musical theatre and about the upcoming production “The God of Isaac’.

Friendship Circle Education Committee & NCJWA NSW co-hosted “The Disorganised Child” with keynote speaker internationally acclaimed consultant in child, adolescent and family psychiatry, Professor Samuel Stein. Prof. Stein was joined by panel members Assoc. Prof. Natalie Silove, Dr Sharon Greenberg & Caroline Basckin. More than 100 parents and professionals attended this exceptionally informative evening. We very much appreciated their support for Friendship Circle & NCJWA NSW.

### **Programs**

#### **MUM FOR MUM NCJWA**

We are indebted to our director of MUM FOR MUM NCJWA Nadene Alhadeff and the MUM FOR MUM NCJWA Board. There are now 65 Mums volunteering in the Eastern Suburbs and 35 on the North Shore and the excellent reputation of MUM FOR MUM NCJWA program continues to grow.

#### **JWBCN/CANCER SUPPORT NETWORK**

We are exceptionally fortunate Isabelle Shapiro OAM is the chair of our JWBCN and NCJWA Cancer Support Network programs. Facilitator Dr Mandy Goldman Strous, President Cancer Counselling Professionals, continues to support this program.

#### **GENE CIRCLE**

Our new program was launched at NCJWA NSW on Wednesday 6 March 2019 with the support of cancer genetics specialist Dr Lesley Andrews and Isabelle Shapiro OAM as Chair of this program.

With JeneScreen now enabling any Jewish woman to have genetic testing, the NCJWA Gene Circle will provide Sydney Jewish women who carry a BRCA gene fault with a safe, confidential environment to deal with their results.

The aims are to -

- Provide a supportive environment for women who have been found to carry a mutation
- Facilitate the sharing of experiences to help women as they face new challenges related to their BRCA status.
- Respond to the group’s needs for current BRCA related information

#### **BOOKS OUT LOUD NCJWA**

Natalie Narunsky continues to manage this program. Various ideas are being touted re expansion of this program and tackling the growing problem of social isolation.

#### **REBBETZIN JANA GOTTSBALL MEMORIAL LIBRARY EVENTS**

Gael Hammer, library chair, formed a new library committee with Ruth Shteinman and Di Singer.

CUDDLE BUNDLES –is an initiative started by Nadene together with volunteer Michelle Brandenburger and Ella Lazor as an offshoot of MUM FOR MUM NCJWA and NCJWA to provide gifts of babywear to mums in any disadvantaged community of babies and mothers in need. Cuddle Bundles began as a desire to fill the needs for babywear of the more than 100 recipient mothers in the MUM FOR MUM NCJWA program. It has now been extended to refuges in the Sydney community and beyond.

NCJWA NSW's AGM was held on Monday 2nd July with many guests including leaders of other organisations in attendance. Violinist Leo Kaminov played at the beginning of the meeting, adding to the ambience of the AGM. Anne Reid stepped down from the Board and we thank Anne for her many years of support and service to NCJWA NSW. Maxine Bachmayer, Miri Orden and Janet Merkur were elected as Acting Co-Presidents and Karen Schwartz and Ruth Shteinman were elected as incoming board members. All other board members kept their positions on the board. Karen Schwartz has agreed to be our new Hon. Secretary.

The Charity Trust Fund continues to support worthy causes within the Jewish and wider community in Australia. Trustees are Zara Young OAM, Phyllis Glasser and Victoria Nadel OAM.

NCJWA NSW continues to be represented at the National Council of Women NSW and NCJWA NSW delegates are represented at PPSEAWA and at the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

NCJWA NSW is no longer represented on the Wolper Jewish Hospital Board but continues to have a representative on the Wolper Community Services Committee.

Sadly Sylvia (Langer) Weissenberg, Past Acting Co-President 2004 – 2007 and Vicki Steigrad, Hon. Life Member, passed away. Other members who have passed away during this time are Katalyn Lawan and Rachel Levine.

*Maxine Bachmayer, Janet Merkur, Miri Orden,  
NCJWA NSW Acting Co-Presidents*

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## **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA (VIC) INC.**

### **Support for NCJWA Vic**

Support for NCJWA Vic continues to grow despite the fact that there is a slow but steady decline in membership. At the time of writing we have 423 members in all categories. At the same time we have 200 volunteer roles which are all filled and overall we have around 1000 supporters, including donors and regular event attendees. Our Next Gen group has a

data base in excess of 450 and they regularly attract more than 100 people to their key events. Our social media presence also continues to grow with our reach extending into the 1000's through Face Book and Instagram and an emerging presence on Twitter.

### **Program Highlights**

Caring Mums has now trained over 160 volunteers and received 500 referrals since the start of the program in 2012. The program runs in 6 municipalities across Melbourne from Alphington in the north to the outskirts of Frankston in the south. This year we are piloting a 'Drop In Session' in the City of Port Phillip alongside the drop in session at a Maternal and Child Health Centre. Our trained volunteers are available one afternoon a week with a cup of tea and a ready ear to listen to those mums who need a safe place to talk and share. In 2018 the City of Port Phillip included Caring Mums in their budget for the following three years. The program attracts support from a wide range of philanthropic organisations and other donors all of whom are recognised on our website.

The Jam (Teenage Buddy) Project is in its third year and we have 17 girls and 17 buddies involved this year. The girls and their buddies come together fortnightly for a catch up and 8 times a year for group sessions on issues such as self confidence, mental health, body image and other matters to support the transition through adolescence. We are grateful to Gandel Philanthropy and the Spotlight Foundation for their support of this program.

This year we have commissioned an evaluation of our suite of Seniors programs, including a needs analysis for future programs.

### **Advocacy**

The NCJWA Vic Board established an Advocacy Committee in 2017. During 2018-2019 the Advocacy Committee has been working on the issue of gender equality in communal organisations and on speaker panels. NCJWA Vic will shortly launch a campaign for a gender equality pledge together with a database of board ready women and also other eminent women for panels and speaking engagements.

### **Connecting with the Community**

NCJWA Vic has a regular calendar of events including our Brainfood series, annual lunch, annual lectures and special friends' events to thank our donors and key supporters as well as biannual volunteer thank you for volunteers.

### **Support for Israel**

Our support for Israel is expressed in a variety of ways. We provide a platform for visiting Israelis to connect with our local community and for those in the not for profit sector to discuss their work. In 2018 Professor Daphna Hacker, Chair of Gender Studies and Professor of Law and Gender Studies at Tel Aviv University presented the Mina Fink Lecture and Professor Neta Ziv, Professor of Law at Tel Aviv University presented the Fanny Reading Human Rights Lecture. We also hosted Advocate Sharon Abraham Weiss, Executive Director of ACRI (the Association for Civil Rights in Israel). Donations were sent to Ilan and the Haifa Rape Crisis Center.

*Miriam Bass*  
*President*  
*NCJWA (Vic)*

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**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA (WA SECTION) INC.**

Our monthly Shalom and Natanya meetings continue with excellent speakers and good attendance.

The Reading Out Loud Program at the Maurice Zeffert Home is working well. At the moment there are more readers than needed, so we have a waiting list.

We commemorated International Holocaust Remembrance Day in conjunction with the UNAA, the Holocaust Institute of WA and Courage to Care WA. The theme was "Escape to Shanghai".

We have had some very enjoyable functions: a Jewish Musical afternoon, an International Women's Day Lunch, a Mother's Day Brunch and a movie night. Each of these were very well attended fund raisers. These functions were so popular they may be repeated next year.

Our housewarming baskets were very well received by the women of Orana House (a women's refuge) on Mitzvah Day.

A very productive year!

*Jenny Faigenbaum*

*President*

*NCJWA WA*

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## APPENDIX

### NCJWA NATIONAL ADVOCACY JULY 2018-JUNE 2019

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22 October 2018

#### **NCJWA Statement on QLD Parliamentary vote to decriminalise abortion** *Jewish Women Support the Queensland Abortion Vote*

The National Council of Jewish Women of Australia congratulates the Queensland Parliament on its historic vote on 17 October 2018 to decriminalise abortion in that state.

With the passage of the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018, abortion will become legal until 22 weeks gestation, and after that with the approval of two doctors. Safe access zones will restrict protesters and people who harass women from coming within 150 metres of abortion clinics. The rights of choice based on religious beliefs are also protected.

NCJWA applauds that termination will be treated in Queensland as a health issue and not a criminal matter and that women can safely and legally access full reproductive healthcare, without being harassed or intimidated.

NCJWA is committed to advocating for human rights, including women's reproductive rights and the freedom of women to have control over their bodies and their lives.

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26 November 2018

#### **Gender Inequality in the NDIS**

NCJWA endorsed the joint letter from Women with Disabilities Australia in collaboration with sister organisations, Women With Disabilities Australian Capital Territory (WWDACT); Women With Disabilities South Australia (WWDSA); and Women With Disabilities Victoria (WDV) to the CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) regarding gender inequality in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

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5 February 2019

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) Prosecute don't Perpetrate Campaign

#### **NCJWA endorsed ERA's pre-Budget submission on the Prosecute don't Perpetrate campaign**

"This submission provides five proposals that will help the government end impunity for conflict related sexual violence by supporting the investigation and prosecution of sexual

violence perpetrated as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide by members of Da'esh while fighting in Syria and Iraq. Such activities would support Australia's implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and can be written into the forthcoming second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Both houses of Federal Parliament have condemned these crimes and called for the government to investigate and prosecute. As a state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Australia is in fact obliged to investigate and prosecute these crimes which are outlined in Chapter 8 of the Commonwealth Criminal Code."

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5 February 2019

### **Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) Parents Next submission**

NCJWA endorsed ERA's submission to the **ParentsNext, including its trial and subsequent broader rollout** Senate inquiry. *"Single mothers are at the nexus of unpaid work and care responsibilities disproportionately shouldered by women and the systemic devaluing of this work. Child care forms the vast majority of the unpaid care economy in Australia and PWC has quantified its worth to the economy at \$345 billion (in 2011 terms). Further, recent research from Austen, Mavisakalyan, Sharp and Costa has found that parenthood impacts women's long-term earnings significantly while not having a discernible impact on men's. A much greater understanding and appreciation for this unpaid work is essential in policies that impact single parents."*

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13 February 2019

### **UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 63 Submission**

NCJWA endorsed ERA's submission of CSW priorities to the Federal Office for Women. This submission aimed to inform the Australian Government's negotiation priorities at the **63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63)**. The Priority Themes of CSW63 were: *social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.*

*"The Commission should affirm that women and girls' access to social protections is a human right. Accessible and affordable service provision by public or private actors is critical for the realisation of many human rights, particularly social and economic rights such as the right to housing, health, education and food."*

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19 March 2019

### **Malka Leifer Extradition**

NCJWA sent letter to HE Mr Mark Sofer, Ambassador of Israel, expressing much regret and dismay at the delays in the Israeli Justice system in regard to Malka Leifer and

requesting urgent action. An appropriately diplomatic response was received much later in the year assuring us that this matter was brought to the attention of the appropriate instances.

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27 March 2019

### **Statement on Christchurch terror attack**

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia stands united in grief with our Muslim sisters and brothers after the horrific mass murder in Christchurch, NZ. As Jewish women we can fully empathise with the pain and sense of injustice, of being persecuted and killed over one's race and / or religious beliefs. The world is a sadder place today but together we must strive to overcome anger and destruction through solidarity and action across our wonderful multi-cultural society. Hate has no place in our democratic society and perhaps this shocking event will bring about a fundamental wellspring of good will and positive action.

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11 June 11 2019

NCJWA participated in **Australian Human Rights Commission Round Table on Freedom of Religion** where the discussion focussed on communities' experiences of "serious harms" on the basis of religion, existing research and possible solutions.

Freedom of religion was seen as a fundamental right and that it was necessary to find ways to accommodate these rights when they came into friction with others' rights. The Human Rights Commission saw its role to provide practical solutions when this arose.

There was a general acknowledgement that there is a lack of data on "serious harms" and a downgrading in resources to deal with serious harm incidents, often not seen as a priority.

ECAJ spoke about the increase in antisemitic incidents by 59% increase over the last year, not including online incidents. It was noted that many incidents went unreported.

**NCJWA** made the point that there can be no real freedom of religion if a community has to always provide security for its schools, institutions and social events and that this was something that the Jewish Community faced and unfortunately took for granted. Reference was also made to antisemitism embedded in language and antisemitic stereotypes, often accepted or not acknowledged by the wider community.

**In Summary**, there was an understanding:

That the Jewish and Muslim Communities felt somewhat under siege.

That there was a need to have a clear picture of "serious harms" and who are affected. A national register was a suggestion. ECAJ suggested a matrix, listing "serious harms" be composed and any accompanying legislation be listed. The matrix would highlight where legislative remedies existed and expose gaps.

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**SEE SEPARATE AUDITED ANNUAL (FINANCIAL) REPORT**

**END**