

Victorian Honour Roll of

women

2004

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introduction



It is with great pleasure I present to you the stories of the outstanding women who have been named on the 2004 Victorian Honour Roll of Women.

Their stories reveal more than each woman's remarkable achievements. They tell a brief story about her life: her friends, family, influences and inspirations - the people, places and things that shape us and truly make us who we are.

The common thread that binds their stories together is that each woman has worked hard not just for herself, but always for the benefit of others - their communities, patients, students, people they know and others whom their work may benefit, but whom they will never meet.

Women are the glue that binds our families, our communities, our lives. Without women's energy and zest for life our community would be poorer in so many ways.

The Victorian Honour Roll of Women tells the stories of women whose lasting contributions to the lives of women have been selected for special acknowledgement. But their stories represent those of women from all backgrounds, cultures and regions and the contributions they make in so many ways, every day of their lives.

The Victorian Government is committed to improving women's lives and each year honours women's achievements through this ongoing initiative, which began in 2001 as part of Victoria's Centenary of Federation *Women Shaping the Nation* event.

I hope you enjoy reading these short biographies, which will move you with their compassion and inspire you with their courage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mary E. Delahunty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

MARY DELAHUNTY MP
Minister for Women's Affairs

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biographies

beth allen



Rural community nurse

As the sole bush nurse at the Gelantipy District Bush Nursing Centre in Victoria's remote high country, Beth Allen worked tirelessly to support and care for her local community during the horrendous bushfires of 2003.

Born in Melbourne in 1958, Beth attended Mt Waverley High School before completing her general nursing training at the Queen Victoria Women's Hospital. She later trained as a midwife at the Mercy Maternity Hospital in Melbourne.

After working in various nursing roles at home in Victoria and overseas, including seven months as a volunteer nurse and midwife in India, Beth moved to the remote township of Gelantipy in 1997 when she became the town's only bush nurse.

The Gelantipy District Bush Nursing Centre (BNC) covers a huge catchment area of north-east Victoria, from Willis on the Snowy River to Murrindal in the south. It is the people who live in this region who appreciated Beth's outstanding work and commitment to them during the bushfires and who nominated her for inclusion in the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.

Beth forged her way through to even the remotest corners of her community, checking that those people who were affected by the fires were safe and uninjured. She also cared for and tended to the wellbeing of the many people involved in fighting the fires. With calm, compassion and professionalism, Beth was a great source of support and inspiration throughout the emergency.

The Gelantipy Bush Nursing Centre is the only public facility of any kind in the area, so it became the base for everything both during and after the fires. Beth was at the centre of it all. For people who were without power, telephones or water, the Centre was a home away from home. Beth distributed fresh drinking water, medical supplies, donated goods and food to all who needed it. She continues to help coordinate services and be the disseminator of vital information and to give support to people who are still suffering from the trauma of being under threat from the fires.

During and after the fires, Beth was a tower of strength and support to the Gelantipy district.

"We are so lucky to have a such a dedicated nurse and wonderful caring person in our community, we are so grateful to her for the incredible way she helped so many people," says Traci Wilson-Brown, a landowner in the district.

*care
compassion
strength*

associate professor **vasso apostolopoulos**



International medical researcher

Vasso Apostolopoulos is one of Australia's most accomplished young medical researchers whose work has been instrumental in developing a new cancer vaccine.

Born in Melbourne in 1970, Vasso attained a Bachelor of Science (Hons) at the University of Melbourne. She then completed her PhD at the Austin Research Institute (ARI), where she worked until 1998 before going to the USA for three years to further her research.

Vasso made some of the first research discoveries that show alterations to cancer cells and developed a method of exploiting this alteration to protect against cancers.

Clinical trials by Melbourne and Queensland oncologists have shown that the vaccine developed from this research is able to induce the 'right' sort of immune response in cancer patients, which holds great hopes for future cancer treatment.

Throughout her years of research, Vasso has often questioned the status quo of medical scientific thinking. She refuses to take "no" for an answer, despite some rejection by her peers about her reassessment of prevailing concepts in cancer treatment.

She believed in the high quality of her experimental data and thought that if the current theories did not fit, then the theories must be wrong. In her quest to prove she was right, Vasso went to the Scripps Research Institute in San Diego for three years to use X-ray crystallography to get the best quality information for her research. These studies showed that she and her colleagues had been correct in their theories that altered cancer antigens "educate" the body's immune system.

Vasso has received a number of major Australian research awards as well as international awards in recognition of her scientific and community achievements. She frequently gives her time to educating younger students and addressing community groups around Australia and overseas. She is an Associate Professor in Immunology and Cancer Research and a National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia RD Wright Fellow. Her work has been published in the best scientific journals in the world. She now heads the cancer research laboratory at ARI.

Vasso is one of the youngest and most successful researchers Australia has produced. She is able to look critically at her work and the work of others, see the bigger picture and focus on the key issues that will lead to something useful for treating cancer. She is now using the principles she learned in her cancer studies and is applying them to other areas of immunology, leading her to research serious conditions such as multiple sclerosis, diabetes and some infectious diseases.

hope
diligence
research

helen barnacle



Legal rights and social justice activist

Helen Barnacle has enormous insight and empathy into the lives and difficulties facing women and young people with drug addiction issues and serving prison terms.

She has made a huge contribution to supporting and empowering women to make their own choices and counselling women pre- and post-release from prison, based on her own experiences of the prison system and the associated personal pain.

Born in 1953, Helen Barnacle had an unhappy adolescence, dropped out of school and became a heroin addict. In 1980 she was given the longest drug-related prison sentence ever handed down to a woman in Victoria. Facing 15 years in prison, Helen realised she was pregnant with her daughter Allie.

Thanks to extensive lobbying from Dame Phyllis Frost and others sympathetic to her situation, Helen was able to have her daughter with her in prison until Allie was four years old. She became the first woman to be allowed to keep her baby in prison beyond the age of one-year.

Helen Barnacle served eight years and kicked her heroin addiction. She completed tertiary studies and since her release has practised as a psychologist and drug counsellor.

In 2000, Helen wrote a book, *Don't Let Her See Me Cry*, about the pain of relinquishing her daughter to her brother whilst she completed her prison sentence. Helen is now an active prison reform campaigner and works with girls in juvenile justice centres.

In 1996 she started a music/drama program for young women offenders at Juvenile Justice at Parkville and has now extended this program to include other young women offenders.

Helen speaks extensively across the community sector in Victoria and nationally. She has been a keynote speaker at a conference for County Court Judges in Victoria and in 2002 she spoke at the University of Nebraska in the USA on drug addiction. In 2003, she contributed her story to the publication *What Women Want*.

Helen practices full-time as a psychologist and is currently writing a book on drug addiction issues for families. She is on the board of the First Step Program – a drug treatment service in St Kilda.

"The recidivism rate horrifies me," says Helen. "Seven out of 10 offenders end up back in prison. The cost is ongoing to society. We need to try to break the cycle. I keep hoping that I can help educate the community about the issues. Usually the reason young women offend is because they have had neglectful or abusive backgrounds. We owe it to them to help them."

insight
empathy
educate

carmel benjamin, AM



mentor
support
pioneer

Criminal justice advocate

Carmel Benjamin founded and was Executive Director of the Victorian Court Information and Welfare Network Inc. (Court Network) and designed and founded 'woman to woman', a mentoring support program for women exiting the prison system.

Throughout her career, Carmel has served on numerous correctional services councils and committees and has been instrumental in trying to make the criminal justice system more user-friendly.

Born in London 1932, Carmel's family moved to Australia when she was a child. At 19 she married and after having her children became concerned about the welfare of children, leading to her involvement with the criminal justice system.

She completed a degree in Welfare Studies at Chisholm Institute as a mature age student in the mid-1970s.

Her first contact with the criminal justice system was in 1970 when Carmel became an Honorary Probation Officer with the Children's Court.

In 1977, she started to design and plan the Court Network – a unique, non-government, court support and information service for all court users. Its first services in a suburban magistrates' court began in June 1980, starting with 15 volunteers which, by 1995 when Carmel retired, had grown to 300 trained volunteers delivering services in 40 metropolitan and regional courts across all jurisdictions.

The Court Network structured a four phase support program (before, during and after the trial plus follow-up and referrals) for all parties, including the victim, the accused and their families. It was the pioneering service of its type in Australia and has become a model for other states and is the model is used internationally.

In 1974 she was appointed to the Prison Advisory Council of Victoria and from 1980-83 she was a member of the Correctional Services Council of Victoria. Since 1977 she has been a council member of the Victorian Women's Prison Council (formerly Fairlea Women's Prison Council) and served as Vice-Chairperson 1995-99 and Chairperson in 1999. Carmel was appointed to the Women's Correctional Services Advisory Committee in 2003.

In 1988 Carmel was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and in 1993 was awarded the A.R. Whatmore Victorian Association for the Care Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) Award for Services to Corrections. In 2001, she received a Vida Goldstein Award from the Women's Electoral Lobby in the women and community category.

Carmel's work has been driven by the belief that that the community's direct contact with the justice system will lead to a more informed and enlightened society.

fay carter



Aboriginal community leader

Fay Carter has worked for more than 30 years to support and improve living conditions for indigenous men and women.

Through her work, she has encouraged members of the indigenous community to take pride in their Aboriginal heritage and re-connect with their cultural identity.

Fay is a respected elder of the Yorta Yorta - Dja Dja Wurrung clans. She was born in Echuca in 1935 and spent her early years on the Cummeragunja Mission, later living in the Aboriginal Community outside Mooroopna. She married at 18 and had two children. In 1972 she moved with her family to Melbourne where she became active in her community and an effective advocate for indigenous people's needs.

In 1973 Fay started work as a Field Officer for the Aborigines Advancement League (AAL), moving in 1982 to the Victorian Department of Social Security as an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, before returning to AAL in 1987 as the Community Development and Welfare Program Coordinator.

From 1974 -1990 she was a member of the Victorian Branch of National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) serving three years as Treasurer and five years as President.

Fay's vision for her people has been realised by playing a major part in establishing the Aboriginal Community Elders Services (ACES) in East Brunswick in 1992. ACES is the first Aboriginal-managed community corporation in Australia that provides culturally relevant aged care services. ACES is now regarded as a national model for aged care services to Aboriginal elders.

Fay's expertise and experience have been sought by the State and Federal Governments and Victorian community organisations on a wide range of issues affecting the wellbeing of indigenous people.

Fay still manages ACES, where she has continued to expand the services to incorporate residential care, home and community care and adult day care. Her focus is on the long-term future of the facility by ensuring things like training and employment opportunities exist and setting up programs to preserve Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Fay has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to developing and implementing culturally relevant programs and services for indigenous people in both paid and voluntary roles. She is a highly respected, energetic community leader, who works with determination and passion for indigenous people.

*vision
support
culture*

billi clarke



Campaigner against family violence

Legal justice for women is a central theme to Billi Clarke's work. She is a powerful advocate for women and children experiencing family violence and is committed to creating meaningful practical responses to these women that improve their safety and their right to enjoy access to justice and lives free from abuse.

Born in Melbourne in 1958, Billi grew up in The Pines housing commission estate in Frankston and left school at the age of 17.

As a volunteer, Billi set up the first youth employment group for young people in Victoria based in Frankston. This group managed to gain support from local companies to provide the community's disadvantaged youth with suitable jobs and the scheme became the model for future government-funded community support programs across the state.

Billi then went on to establish three crucial services for women experiencing family violence: Safe Place for Women, The Women's Place and the Inner South Domestic Violence Outreach Services.

In 1999, Bill published her influential research publication, *Trial by Legal Aid*, which gained widespread attention and respect throughout the legal system and led to changes within Legal Aid Services.

Billi has been a member of a number of advisory groups, including, the Victorian Legal Aid Community Consultative Committee, the State Housing Council and most recently the Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence.

For almost 10 years Billi worked for the Salvation Army where her major achievement was to develop a training program for Salvation Army officers on 'domestic violence and the Christian mission', which challenged the organisation's response to family violence within a feminist framework. She has also coordinated a Victorian women's refuge and is a member of the peak body for Victorian women's refuges and associated family violence services.

Throughout her 27 years in the community sector, Billi has taken a creative approach to delivering her social justice messages. She was involved with the theatre production *The Essentials*, which drew the distinction between private and public violence and was a member of the political all-women rock band, *Nice Girls Don't Spit*.

Because of the violence in her own family and early years in a public housing estate, Billi knows how tough it can be for women from a disadvantaged background. Her passion has been to place the issue of family violence on the agenda at all levels of government and the community.

She proudly describes herself as a feminist, who works towards increasing community understanding and meaningful government participation in reducing violence against women and children.

advocate
safety
freedom

dorothy crawford



Pioneer in Australian television drama

Dorothy Crawford contributed enormously to Australian radio and television industries and was a co-founder of Crawford Productions, one of Australia's most influential and successful television production companies.

She was born in Melbourne in 1911 into a musical family; both her parents were singers. At 16, Dorothy was the youngest person in Australia to hold the Teacher's Diploma from the London College of Music. Together with her brother Hector, she started her showbusiness career in 1937 by establishing Music for the People.

However, her principal interest was drama and in 1939 she was contracted to Melbourne radio station 3UZ to play Little Audrey in the program of that name. In 1941, she became one of the first two women radio announcers with the ABC, before joining the Broadcast Exchange of Australia as a radio producer.

In 1945, Dorothy joined Hector as a partner in Hector Crawford Productions, where she produced an innovative radio drama program called *Melba* and then other popular series such as *Inspector West* and *D24*. Dorothy edited, cast and produced every script.

In anticipation of television's introduction in Australia, Dorothy travelled overseas in 1956 where she studied the new modern medium. Her long television career included landmarks of Australia's television industry, including *Wedding Day*, the first TV program screened by an Australian independent producer; *Consider Your Verdict*, a courtroom drama; *Homicide*, the top-rating police drama that ran for 12 years; as well as *Division 4*, *Matlock Police*, *The Box*, *The Sullivans*, *Cop Shop* and *Skyways*.

Dorothy Crawford not only excelled in the areas of writing, directing and acting, but she had an innate desire and ability to pass on her knowledge to others; enabling them to grow and develop and reach their full potential.

Ill health forced Dorothy to retire from Crawford Productions in the late 1970s and she died in 1988, but her name and memory live on – the Australian Writers Guild bestows the Dorothy Crawford Award each year for outstanding contribution to the profession.

Television producer David Lee, who worked closely with Dorothy, says she was a wonderful and dynamic person. "It was her drive and intellect that made Crawfords so successful in radio and then television. She bridged the gap for many actors, writers and technicians in the move from radio to TV. She was a great mentor."

mentor
creative
dynamic

ella ebery



Journalist and rural community advocate

As editor of the St Arnaud-based newspaper the North Central News since 1981 Ella Ebery has staunchly supported and fought for the on-going well being and benefit of her local community.

Born in 1915 in St Arnaud, Ella lost her mother and grandmother within the space of two weeks, devastating the close family network. Both women had instilled the need for better roles and opportunities for women, influencing the rest of Ella's life. Leaving school at 16, she kept house for her father and brother on the family farm until 1939 when she married a local shearer, who then went to serve in the Second World War. Her first born child, Anne, died suddenly aged 15 months; deeply affecting her life. After the war, Ella and her husband settled in the township of St Arnaud and had two more children. It was here that she found the lack of career opportunities for women stifling and turned to the arts – writing, drama, and painting - and to public life.

In 1969 she became the first woman councillor in St Arnaud, serving until 1995. In 1998-90 she was unanimously elected to serve two terms as mayor – the first and only woman mayor for the town.

Ella has served on many community boards and committees, including president of the Community Health Committee for East Wimmera Health Service, board member of the St Arnaud Hospital and secretary of the St Arnaud Historical Society. She has also served on numerous Northern Grampians Shire Council community committees.

In 1995, she received an award for Service to Local Government. Ella was also awarded the Australian Country Press Shakespeare Award for Excellence in Editorial Writing in 2000.

The St Arnaud community valued Ella's contributions by naming her Citizen of the Year in 1984 and in 1989 she was Victorian Senior Citizen of the Year.

Ella's editorials continually speak for the rights of the St Arnaud community and have fought many battles for survival in difficult times. She's an advocate for rural issues and social justice.

According to Matt Batters, proprietor of the *North Central News*, Ella has given her heart and soul to St Arnaud and its community.

commitment
community
leader

christine forster



Conservationist and natural resource manager

Christine Forster has spent her career trying to ensure our natural resources are managed sustainably and responsibly for future generations. One of her major contributions has been towards the development of a sound knowledge base for land water management in Victoria.

Born in Melbourne in 1939, Christine completed a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Melbourne in 1959. Her first job was as an experimental officer at the CSIRO Animal Health Laboratories. In 1966, she moved to the Northern Territory to work as a bacteriologist/chemist for the Water Resources Branch of the NT Administration, where her interest in water quality and water management was sparked.

In 1971, she joined the Secretariat of the Australian Water Resources Council and worked on a national water quality assessment network. From 1974-76, she was Assistant Secretary of the Resources Management Branch of the Water and Soils Division of the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Conservation. In 1976/77 she acted as first Director of the Australian Heritage Commission, which developed the Register of the National Estate.

In 1977, Christine and her family moved back to Victoria to Castlemaine, where she was involved in a wide range of community affairs and was elected to the Castlemaine City Council.

In 1982, she moved back to the family farm at Ararat and became involved with a ram breeding program, soil and water conservation and a long-term tree propagation and planting program which saw 90,000 trees planted on her farm over 18 years.

For six years she was Chairperson of the Board of Management of the Rural Water Commission of Victoria and for five years was Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the National Irrigation Research Fund.

Christine was a member of many boards, committees and councils involved with managing Victoria's and Australia's water and natural resources throughout the 1990s.

Currently, she is Chairperson of the Victorian Catchment Management Council, the peak advisory body to the State Government on catchment management. She is a member of the Victorian Water Trust Advisory Council and a director of VicSuper Pty Ltd. She was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2003 for services to conservation of water and our environment.

Christine has effectively worked towards improved management of our natural resources for nearly 40 years with modesty and great commitment. She has been remarkably influential at getting things done at all levels from State policy through to on-farm action.

*water
conservation
resources*

jessica (bon) hull



fearless
women
strength

Social activist for women's rights

Bon Hull dedicated her time and energy to the cause of women's liberation. She was a pioneer for the rights of women in Melbourne who attended the first meeting of the Women's Action Committee in 1970; a precursor to the Victorian Women's Liberation Movement.

Bon (actual name Jessica) was born to a Melbourne working-class family in 1915 and grew up in the western suburb of Footscray. She first attended the Emily McPherson College where she learned to sew and then worked for many years as a seamstress and cutter and later as a fashion designer after training at the Working Man's College, now RMIT University.

She combined raising a young family in often difficult circumstances with a successful professional and business career.

Her public achievements came later in life. Through the Women's Action Committee, which she helped to set up, Bon was involved with a series of radical actions in the early 1970s. She also helped to establish the Women's Liberation Centre in 1972. She fought for the repeal of the anti-abortion laws and in 1973 helped to establish the Abortion Trust Fund which loaned money to women who couldn't afford to pay for an abortion. She campaigned strongly for equal rights for women, particularly equal pay.

In 1974, Bon was a founding member of the Women's Health Collective which was established in Collingwood as a self-help clinic that was to be the forerunner of today's women's health services.

Bon's most notable achievement was the publication in 1980 of *In Our Own Hands: A Women's Health Manual*, which detailed easy and accessible information on women's health issues. It helped to demystify the health-care system and provided practical information to enable women to take greater control of their health.

Bon was one of the original campaigners who lobbied to save the Queen Victoria Women's Hospital building from demolition. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre in 1996.

When Bon Hull died in June 2000, Australian women lost a forthright and fearless fighter for their rights.

Bon was known for her outspokenness and unquenchable social conscience, which led her to being the first Australian woman to go to jail for protesting against the Vietnam War. She was also well known for her strength, integrity, sincerity, generosity and compassion. Throughout her life, Bon displayed a remarkable capacity to respond to radical ideas with open enthusiasm.

the hon. **margaret (peg) lusink, AM**



Leader in law, women's health and education

Peg Lusink was the first Victorian woman appointed as a Judge to a Superior Court of Record - the Family Court of Australia - in 1976.

Born in Tocumwal in NSW in 1922, Peg's family moved to Melbourne where she went to school. She began law studies at the University of Melbourne at the age of 38, after being widowed with three sons to support. She graduated in 1965.

Peg completed her articles at law firm Corr and Corr (now Corrs Chambers Westgarth) and was made a partner in 1970, making her one of the few female partners in a major law firm at that time.

Peg Lusink was a Justice of the Family Court of Australia for 13 years during which time she was appointed as Judge Administrator of the Dandenong Registry of the Court for four years.

She resigned from the Court in 1988 and in 1990 moved to Queensland to be a Professor of Law at Bond University. Returning to Victoria in 1992, Peg and her husband settled in Euroa and she established a mediation practice in the area.

In 1996 she was appointed to be a Member of the Adult Parole Board of Victoria and served two three-year terms until 2002.

She was also President of the Commonwealth Professional Services Review Tribunal 1996-2000, which was an appeals tribunal relating to alleged Medicare fraud by members of the medical profession.

She was a Member of the Royal Women's Hospital Ethics Committee in the early 1980s.

Peg was involved in the inception of the Victorian Women's Trust and served as Foundation President in 1985.

In 1992, she convened the Friends of the Library in Euroa and subsequently became Chairperson and Honorary Life Member of the National Friends of the Libraries of Australia.

She has also been a board member of a number of local hospitals and was the representative of the Euroa Bush Nursing Hospital on the Victoria Bush Nursing Hospitals Association.

Peg Lusink has lived in both rural and urban Victoria and has made significant contributions to the communities in which she has lived. She has made a difference to the lives of many Victorian women, both directly and indirectly through her role as a Justice in the Family Court and her wide-ranging involvement in many organisations.

Peg has a strong belief in the importance of justice for women and of improving women's health services and regional hospitals.

*justice
family
pioneer*

lorna mcconchie



Physical educator and netball administrator

Lorna McConchie was an inspirational leader in physical education and the popular sport of netball.

She was born in Melbourne in 1914 and after early school years at East Kew Primary School, Lorna attended University High School. She did a stint of teacher training at Foster in south Gippsland which then led her to take up the study of physical education at the University of Melbourne.

After just her first year at university, she was invited to lecture in dance and movement and teaching practice.

On graduation, Lorna contributed to establishing the most prestigious physical education course in Australia at the University of Melbourne. The course attracted considerable interest, with graduates coming from around the world, producing some of the best teachers, lecturers and coaches in sport, recreation, dance and movement.

Through 1931 to 1940 Lorna was a member of either, or both, the Victorian and Australian netball teams. She was vice-captain of the Australian team in 1939 which was set to tour New Zealand, until it was cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II. After this, Lorna then reduced her competitive participation in the sport and devoted much of the remainder of her life to the administration of netball.

In 1949, she represented the Australian Physical Education Association at the first women's conference in Denmark. The year 1956 was Lorna take on the role of Australian coach and manager of the first women's touring netball team to visit England and then in 1963, she coached the undefeated Australian team at the first netball World Tournament, also in England.

In 1959, Lorna was the Australian delegate at the Inaugural Conference of netball's International Federation, where an international constitution was accepted and international rules clarified.

Being a member of the Australian Council of Physical Education and promoting a healthy lifestyle was paramount to Lorna. She was a strong advocate for retaining and extending physical education in schools.

Lorna died in 2001, but this was not before she was nominated as a member of the Netball Victoria Team of the Century in 2000 and inducted into the Netball Hall of Fame in 2001. Netball Victoria has named the State League Umpire Award in her honour.

Lorna McConchie led by example, perfecting the art and science of caring for her athletes, her students, fellow lecturers and friends from all walks of life. Behind a gently-measured manner was a woman of resolute mind and a determined spirit.

*athletic
determined
active*

leanne miller



Indigenous affairs activist

At the age of 40 Leanne Miller has already made significant contributions to the welfare of aboriginal communities in Victoria. Her work centres on community development, eco-tourism and promoting indigenous women in business.

Born in Mooroopna in 1963, Leanne Miller is a Yorta Yorta woman of the Dhulanyagen Ulupna clan.

Leanne's family has a strong and long-standing commitment to indigenous affairs. Her grandmother, Geraldine Briggs and her mother Frances Mathysen are both highly respected Aboriginal leaders.

Leanne began her career at SBS Radio as its first Koori trainee in 1982, followed by roles at Radio Australia and Radio National in 1985. She then worked in the public sector with the Public Service Board and the Department of Employment Education and Training.

In 1995 Leanne became involved with Koorie Women Mean Business Incorporated (KWMB), which works to foster independence, capability and entrepreneurial spirit in indigenous women. She developed a video and training packaging for Aboriginal women starting their own business and has been Chairperson of KWMB since 1997.

In 1996 she was Chairperson of the Equal Opportunity Committee Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Advisory Group.

From 1996 to 2003, she was the National Project Manager for Aboriginal Tourism Australia Limited (ATA), the country's peak body for indigenous tourism.

In 2000, she was a member of the Tourism Accreditation Board of Victoria's Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program. She was on the steering committee and patron of the Eco-tourism Association of Australia's International Year of Eco-Tourism in 2002.

Also in 2002, Leanne became a member of the Cooperative Research Centre for Regional Tourism, Indigenous Tourism Research.

She is President of Worawa Aboriginal College, the only independent indigenous secondary school in Victoria.

She is also a board member of the Victorian Women's Trust, Victorian Women's Legal Service, the National Network of Indigenous Women's Legal Service Incorporated and the State Government's Indigenous Women Going Places Ministerial Advisory Committee.

Leanne's work has contributed to indigenous women having a voice about many issues that affect their families and themselves.

"I have been privileged to be a part of a strong matriarchal clan whose values and social responsibility was instilled from an early age," says Leanne. "To describe the areas I have worked in: employment, training, tourism and women's issues, it is best summed up by Nelson Mandela who said 'there is no greater service than to liberate a community itself.'"

*independent
community
support*

joan montgomery, AM. OBE.



Leading educator

Joan Montgomery was principal of two of Victoria's leading independent girls' schools and a board or council member of numerous educational organisations and schools.

Born in Melbourne in 1925, Joan attended Presbyterian Ladies College (PLC) and then graduated from the University of Melbourne with an Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education.

Joan's early teaching was at Frensham School at Mittagong in NSW and at Tintern Church of England Girls Grammar School in Melbourne. She also taught in the United Kingdom for a short time.

Her first chance to take on a leadership role was at Clyde School at Woodend, where she was headmistress from 1960-68. From there she went to her alma mater PLC where she was principal from 1969-1985.

Joan Montgomery also influenced the wider educational community, both in Victoria and nationally. She was President of the Association of Independent Girls' Schools of Victoria from 1978-80 and President of the national body from 1979-81. She was also a member of the National Council of Independent Schools of Australia at this time. Joan was also elected a Fellow of the Australian College of Education in 1971.

As an influential educator with a wealth of experience and knowledge, Joan was sought after by many schools as a member of their governing councils.

The University of Melbourne and some of its residential colleges have also benefited from Joan's services. She was a council member of Ormond College and Medley Hall and was a member of several University committees.

Other organisations or institutions to which Joan has contributed to as a board or committee member include, the Alfred Hospital, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, the Baker Institute, the Lyceum Club and the Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee.

Joan is now retired yet remains a board member of The Daffyd Lewis Trust Scholarship Fund and The Order of the British Empire and Scholarship Fund. In recognition of her great contributions to Australian education, she was awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1975 and made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1986.

Many of Joan's students speak warmly of her extraordinary ability to inspire them to 'reach for the stars'. She always encouraged girls to give their best, strive for excellence, acknowledge and accept responsibility and to develop assurance in their abilities both academically and as a contributing member of the community.

educate
influence
lead

belinda morieson



Nursing leader and unionist

Belinda Morieson was Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) from 1989-2001. The ANF under her leadership was able to give members a sense of stability, strength, direction and vision to advance nurses industrially and professionally.

Born in Melbourne in 1942, Belinda trained as a nurse at Prince Henry's Hospital and then worked at various public and private hospitals in Melbourne and the La Trobe Valley.

After 20 years working as a clinical nurse, Belinda joined the ANF (Victorian Branch) as a Professional Officer just after the tumultuous nurses' strike of 1986. Just three years later she was elected Secretary.

Belinda strongly believes in the value of nursing, protection of the weak and the vulnerable and the value of trade unionism. She proved to be one of the movement's most courageous unionists. Giving up or conceding defeat were not familiar terms to Belinda. This was vitally important for Victorian nurses, who needed strong leadership to rebuild their union and to face the challenges of the 1990s.

The health system changed dramatically in Victoria in that decade, with budget cuts, redundancies, hospital mergers, closures and privatisation.

One of the biggest successes of the ANF was the world-first nurse-patient ratio system introduced into Victorian public hospitals in 1999. This, combined with a range of additional benefits, has meant that there are many nurses who have returned to the public health system because they can now control their workload and better care for their patients.

Under Belinda's leadership, the "no lift" policy was introduced in Victoria in 1998 in response to the unacceptably high level of on-the-job injuries to nurses caused by lifting or moving patients. In July 2001, the Victorian Branch of the ANF won the Victorian WorkCover Authority Outstanding Leadership in Health and Safety Award for its no-lifting campaign, designed to prevent and reduce nurses' injuries.

Since retiring from the ANF in 2001, Belinda has returned to nursing in the coronary care unit at the Western Hospital in Melbourne and she still does some project work for the ANF.

Belinda Morieson believes in the value of nurses and nursing and made the Victorian Branch of the ANF one of the most powerful and respected unions in the country, and in doing so, empowered nurses immeasurably. Nurses' wages and working conditions of nurses in Victoria improved vastly thanks to her commitment and strong leadership.

*stability
strength
courage*

nilgun olcayoz



support
advocate
inspire

Turkish community leader

Nilgun Olcayoz has played a pivotal role in working with Turkish immigrants in Melbourne and the Shepparton area and helping them to settle in Australia. She is one of few women leaders in the Turkish community.

Born in Turkey in 1951, at 18 years of age Nilgun and her family arrived in Australia with no knowledge of the English language. They moved to Shepparton in 1975. Nilgun had sole responsibility for looking after her disabled parents and four younger siblings. She did shift work in a chicken factory and at nights concentrated on reading English literature using a Turkish/English dictionary to develop her English language skills.

Because she was one of the few people in the Turkish community in Shepparton who spoke English, she was frequently called upon to advocate for individuals to gain access to information and services.

In 1987 Nilgun enrolled as a mature age student in a Bachelor of Arts degree in multicultural studies at RMIT and after successfully completing her undergraduate studies, she went on to do a Masters Degree in Social Policy.

Her studies enabled her to formally qualify to be a community development worker and she has been working since in both a voluntary and paid capacity to help Turkish people in Victoria.

Nilgun was a founding member of the Shepparton Ethnic Community Council and the Goulburn Valley Community Radio station which were established in the late 1970s.

She has served three terms as President of the Turkish Cultural Association (1988-90). Her achievements have focussed on working with both government and non-government organisations to pursue policies and programs for non-English speaking background communities in the justice arena.

For 10 years Nilgun has been a broadcaster with the SBS Radio Turkish program and has developed programs on family violence and women's issues which challenged the traditional perceptions of family violence in the Turkish speaking community.

She is currently a member of the management committee of the Department of Justice Cultural Diversity Project, which involves identifying barriers to non-English speaking background communities' access to the justice system and she continues her investigative journalism on SBS Radio.

Nilgun has dedicated most of her life to improving the plight of Turkish women immigrants and working to enhance the social, economic and cultural capital of the Turkish community in Melbourne. She has had a direct and positive impact on the lives of many culturally and linguistically diverse women.

sheila o'sullivan



Leading public relations professional

Sheila has been a leader in Australian public relations for the past 20 years and much of her work has focussed on encouraging local communities, including women in particular, to participate in political life.

Most recently Sheila received the 2004 United Nations Communication Award for her work in guiding the campaign that was successful in securing support for East Timorese refugees who wanted to become permanent residents in Australia.

Sheila O'Sullivan was born in Melbourne in 1944 and completed a Bachelor of Arts at Monash University and a Primary Teacher's Certificate. She taught in state high schools in Melbourne and was a researcher in geography at Monash University.

Sheila began her career as an advocate for local communities when as a young mother she became passionately involved in local issues in her neighbourhood. This early interest sparked a 30-year career as a highly successful strategist, issues manager, community advocate and lobbyist at all levels of government.

She worked for a number of prestigious firms as a public relations consultant before starting her own consultancy in 1994.

Sheila has worked with a wide range of government and community groups, including the Municipal Association of Victoria and individual councils, designing programs to encourage women's participation in local government.

Much of her work has focussed on developing new models of community engagement.

As a highly-awarded public relations practitioner, she has been instrumental in raising the standing and professionalism of the industry. She was involved in the development of the Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA) course accreditation program for universities and since 1994 has been Chairman of the Examination Board of the PRIA nationally.

Sheila is chairman of Socom public relations consultancy and is a Fellow of the PRIA. In 2003 she was awarded a Centenary Medal for outstanding services to local government. She holds a number of directorships and Board positions of both public and private organisations, including the Museum of Victoria and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Victoria.

Sheila has a firm belief that building the capacity of communities improves the quality of decisions made at all levels of government. Her commitment to community engagement has enabled many communities to convert their abilities into direct participation in the political arena.

Sheila's work has helped to build a pathway for energising civic capacity in women as well as encouraging more female public relations practitioners to recognise their strategic abilities and take on senior management roles.

*encourage
lead
promote*

the hon. **margaret ray** MLA



Social justice advocate

*support
commitment
passion*

Margaret Ray is a passionate advocate for social justice and has worked determinedly for equal rights for women.

Born in Melbourne in 1933, Margaret completed an Honours Degree in Arts and a Diploma of Education and began her working career teaching at Wangaratta High School in 1956. She married in 1957 and had four children.

In 1982 she successfully stood for State Parliament for the Lower House seat of Box Hill and served her electorate for the next 10 years.

Margaret recognised Neighbourhood Houses as a way of supporting women by providing opportunities to build on their formal education. As an MP she successfully secured funding for Neighbourhood Houses through two ongoing Government programs. Her advocacy over 10 years saw the number of funded houses increase from 30 to 280.

Margaret advocated protections for the In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) program under ground-breaking legislation and for the extension of the program to help more infertile couples. She has also played an important role in improving and modernising care for people with mental and physical disabilities.

As Chair of the Victorian All Party Parliamentary Social Development Committee, Margaret led the way on numerous difficult social and health matters, resulting in many landmark achievements. These included increasing palliative care in Victoria and the formation of the Mid-Eastern Palliative Care Association in 1998, which became a model for palliative care Australia-wide.

She also headed a review of music education in State Government Schools that led to the extension of the primary classroom program.

Since retiring from Parliament, Margaret has been involved with the Melbourne City Mission and has been a Board member since 1993. She has also been a hard-working member of the Board of the YWCA and a mentor for younger women on the Board. Through her local Uniting Church in Canterbury, Margaret has been supporting and assisting an asylum-seeking family.

Margaret Ray is a woman of vision, courage and spirit, with a strongly-developed sense of duty of care for others in her community. She has been able to motivate and support others while working whole-heartedly towards improving life standards for women and families, particularly the vulnerable and voiceless.

fleur spitzer, OAM



Philanthropist and feminist

Fleur Spitzer has actively contributed to the community and worked to improve the lives of Australian women for over 30 years. She was an early member of the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) and worked for the establishment of the Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE).

Her vision and funding led to the establishment of the Alma Unit for Women & Ageing and her funding of an archive of well-known Melbourne activist Mary Owen's papers led to the Australian Women's Archives project.

In 1972 Beatrice Faust invited 10 women to discuss the forthcoming Federal election and to conduct a survey of election candidates on issues of special interest to women. This meeting was the embryonic Women's Electoral Lobby of which Fleur was an early member (1974).

In 1984, she helped to form the Women's Information group in recognition that women had many questions concerning major life choices, their basic human rights and were seeking complex support and information to help find solutions. This later became WIRE, which has evolved into a comprehensive information, support and referral service for Victorian women.

In the early 1990s Fleur identified the importance of addressing the non-medical needs of our ageing female population and personally provided seven-years of funding to establish the Alma Unit in 1993. This unique multi-disciplinary

academic research and teaching centre focuses on the wellbeing of older women and has been pivotal – including internationally - in recognising gender issues in ageing.

In 1996, Fleur was recognised for innovative and invaluable work for the well-being of older women when she was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM).

She has taken her passion for improving the lives of older women and older people further into the philanthropic world and acted as a guide for other benefactors, educating them about the important role that their financial contribution can play in developing research, teaching, knowledge and social justice.

For more than 30 years, Fleur Spitzer has established and participated in organisations that address issues of inequality and provide services that are appropriate and responsive to the needs of all Victorian women. Without her support, both financial and intellectual, broad understanding of the key factors impacting on the wellbeing of Victorian and Australian older women and men would have remained largely ignored.

"I am fortunate to be able to 'go public' about my efforts for social justice," says Fleur. "It is an uncomfortable position, but the rewards are satisfying."

*guide
inform
participate*

associate professor **lilian (lily) stojanovska**



Macedonian community leader and international educator

Dr Lily Stojanovska is a well regarded scientist and educator in women's health and wellbeing and a leader in the local Macedonian community.

Born in Skopje, Macedonia in 1952, Lily arrived in Melbourne as a teenager with her family in 1969. She completed an undergraduate degree in Applied Science in Melbourne and Belgrade, then went on to achieve a Masters degree in Science at De Paul University, Chicago. She returned to Melbourne in 1985 to further her studies.

Lily Stojanovska's professional work has been in science and technology and she has held a number of medical research and lecturing positions in Melbourne, Yugoslavia and America.

She is a leading educator in the area of public health, prevention of chronic diseases and the early detection and treatment of health disorders.

Parallel to her studies and paid work, she has been involved in community work on a voluntary basis. In the 1970s, she taught English to women in the Macedonian community and Macedonian to Australian-born teenagers.

She then became a well known program producer and radio broadcaster in the 1970s, '80s and '90s, which increased her profile in the Macedonian community.

She contributed to the establishment of the Yugoslav Welfare Association and has been involved in developing a wide range of services for newly arrived migrants.

Lily is a prominent scientist and academic, informing, educating, publishing, advising and encouraging women on health related issues and the need for healthy lifestyles.

In the past few years she has given annual seminars in Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as in Australia on women's health issues both to professional forums and the general public.

As Director of the International Program for the Faculty of Engineering and Science at Victoria University of Technology, she contributed significantly to internationalising education.

Lily is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Biomedical Sciences, Victoria University. She is a member of a number of community and professional committees such as Medical Research Week.

Lily has been an inspiration to thousands of Australian women and not only to those of Macedonian/Yugoslav cultural background. She has educated, inspired and empowered woman and through her work has helped to narrow the gap between the Macedonian and Australian communities.

*educate
research
inspire*

cecile storey, OAM



Feminist, human rights and equal opportunity campaigner

Cecile Storey was a committed feminist and worked throughout her life to improve the rights of women, particularly through her work with the United Nations and its agencies.

Born in Ballarat in 1933, Cecile went to school at Methodist Ladies College (MLC) in Melbourne and then went on to complete a commerce degree at the University of Melbourne, graduating in 1955.

After her marriage in 1958 and the birth of her three children, she began teaching part-time in 1968 and then full-time in 1973.

As a teacher, Cecile was regarded as an outstanding and innovative educator. She did a lot of work in curriculum development and designed social science subjects for the Higher School Certificate in Victoria.

Her awareness of the challenges faced by women as part-time teachers led to her involvement with the Victorian Association of Teachers in Independent Schools, becoming president in 1981-82.

Cecile was a member of the Premier's Committee on Equal Opportunity in Schools (1975-77) and the National Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation (1975-1982)

From 1981 - 83 she served as president of the Council of the Family Planning Association in Victoria.

For 12 years from 1976, she was a member of the La Trobe University Council and was Deputy Chancellor from 1981-85.

Cecile was an active member of the UN Association in Australia and was Australian president from 1979-1983. She represented Australia as a member of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) delegation at the UN Women's Conferences in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995).

She is widely regarded as having played a significant role in persuading the State Government at the time to introduce the *Equal Opportunity Act* in 1977.

In 1984, Cecile's work in international affairs and education was recognised with the award of OAM. She died in 1997. Her commitment to human rights education, especially with young people, was recognised with the establishment of the annual Cecile Storey Award by the United Nations Youth Association (UNYA) for outstanding women delegates at the UNYA Annual Conference.

As a teacher, feminist and internationalist, Cecile Storey was always ahead of her time, challenging orthodoxy and complacency. She knew the dilemmas of balancing work and family and she gladly acknowledged the role played by women who support other women. This made her a memorable force in the organisations in which she chose to be involved.

inspire
enrich
challenge

bronwyn (bron) taylor



Pre-school teacher and community volunteer

Bron Taylor's life and work has been filled with serving her local community.

Born in 1962, Bron Taylor was the first Australian to be born in the Indonesian province of Aceh, where her parents were teaching at a university. The family returned to live in rural Victoria in 1963. At the age of 15, Bron began teaching Sunday School. She became a Brownie and Girl Guide leader and later helped start the Tallangatta Music Group. Her community involvement started at an early age.

In 1983 Bron completed a Diploma in Early Childhood Development and went on to teach at the pre-school in Bunyip and then Buninyong Kindergarten.

When Bron arrived in the northern Victorian township of Yarrawonga in 1989, pregnant with her first child, her first thoughts were 'how can I turn Yarrawonga into a better place to live?' She started a playgroup that connected isolated and lonely young mothers.

Bron never hesitated to take up a cause: establishing a toy library; raising funds for women in from Addis Ababa; or saving the beautiful lakeside environment of Chinaman's Island, Bron unhesitatingly offered her services and followed through with action.

Bron has been involved with many organisations in the Yarrawonga district, including the Friends of Chinaman's Island (Environmental Group), the Mulwala Preschool Committee, Yarrawonga Special Needs Playgroup, Moira Shire Action Group, Yarrawonga Mulwala Toy Library, Yarrawonga Community Volunteers Support Group, Lake Mulwala Eastern Foreshore Committee and Friends in Common (Yarrawonga Cancer Support Group).

Beyond her extensive voluntary work, Bron is a mother of three young children, an emergency pre-school teacher, company director and spouse of a busy country doctor. In 2002, the Moira Shire Council awarded her Citizen of the Year. She has been battling cancer since 1997, but has continued her work and support for women and the Yarrawonga community.

Bron's life has been a case of leading by example. She has shown that nothing succeeds like persistence. She has shown women that you do not need to sacrifice your interests or beliefs for others. Bron is the epitome of the all-Australian country girl; tenacious, robust and full of compassion - a shining example for women all around her.

service
compassion
action

messages

Victorian Honour Roll of
women
2004



*Department for
Victorian Communities*