

# Women

*victorian honour roll of women 2005*

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## Foreword



The Victorian *Honour Roll of Women* recognises the outstanding contributions made by individual women to our community.

I am delighted to present the stories of the women who join the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2005.

It is fitting that we pay tribute to their many achievements.

Their stories reveal the way in which each of these women has used their unique skills, experiences and insights to enrich their world.

Whether they have worked behind the scenes in support of local communities or on the international stage, each of these women have created better opportunities for women in Victoria, in Australia and beyond.

They have provided leadership, they have touched the lives of those around them, they have helped improve the lives of women and their families and they have helped produce long term change for the better.

But these stories will do more than describe achievements.

They will remind you, as they remind me, of the strength that resides within women to achieve extraordinary things. They also represent the effort and determination of women across Victoria from diverse cultures and backgrounds who work to strengthen our community everyday.

The Victorian Government is committed to improving women's lives and honouring their achievements each year in this way as an important part of fostering women's leadership.

I hope you enjoy learning about the lives of these women. They continue a great tradition of Victorian women who have inspired and motivated others to make a difference in their own way.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mary Delahunty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M'.

**Mary Delahunty MP**  
Minister for Women's Affairs

## Isabel Joy Bear AM

### Scientific research, education and the smell of rain...



The smell of rain after a long period of warm dry weather is one we all recognise. Identifying the chemistry behind that smell is just one of the many achievements of Isabel Joy Bear's fifty year career in science.

Starting as a Junior Laboratory Assistant in 1944, Isabel rose to the position of Senior Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO. Isabel's contribution to Australian science and, in particular, the field of mineral chemistry was recognised in her appointment as Member of the Order of Australia in 1986.

In addition to a distinguished research career, which includes publishing more than seventy research papers and completing a senior doctoral degree, she has shown a passion for encouraging young women to pursue careers in science.

A number of young Australian scientists have paid tribute to her guidance in furthering their scientific careers. Isabel sees it as providing a kind of support that was not available to her.

"Women are still under-represented in science and for a long time it was hard to move from junior experimental positions, under someone else's supervision, to the more senior research positions" she says.

Isabel's commitment to supporting women in science made her a founding member, and subsequent chair, of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute's (RACI) Women in Chemistry Network. In 1988 she became the first woman to receive the RACI's prestigious Leighton medal for services to chemistry in Australia.

Isabel has also written extensively about science ranging from the foreword of the Australian Science in Schools Week Resource Book to co-authoring *Alumina to Zirconia – the History of the CSIRO Division of Mineral Chemistry*.

An interest in the place of science in education led Isabel to take on other responsibilities including work with the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission and the Advisory Committee on Technological Research and Development in Colleges of Advanced Education. She is currently helping to prepare the history of the CSIRO's Chemical Engineering division.

A relative of Annette Bear-Crawford, one of the founders of the Queen Victoria Hospital and a prominent Victorian suffragette, Isabel has continued a family tradition through her involvement in the Heritage Team of the new Queen Victoria Women's Centre.

## Penny Blazey

From the gardens of the Mornington Peninsula to the women of East Timor...



Running a successful nursery and tourism venture based at a National Trust property is a major achievement in itself. But for Penny Blazey, this work has been just a part of a much bigger set of achievements that have supported and linked women in Victoria and East Timorese women, and preserved and extended the environmental heritage and sustainability of the Mornington Peninsula.

As one of the first few women councillors on the Peninsula, she championed initiatives that provided new and practical services for some of the most vulnerable members of the community, including the victims of domestic violence and people with disabilities.

Her role as an honorary probation officer made her an important local support person for many young people and their families. This was a particularly vital role given the minimal of support services available on the Peninsula at the time. Her advocacy and her representations to governments have been widely cited as contributing to the increased levels of services now available in the area.

In addition to the successful Diggers Seeds business she has helped to develop at Herronswood, she has used open days at the historic property to raise more than \$200,000. These funds have been donated to women's support organisations in Victoria and to assist in the purchase of sewing machines, fabric and motorbikes for women's groups and small businesses in the eastern regional centre of Los Palos in East Timor.

Her commitment to sustainability has helped develop an innovative nursery business based on heritage, non-hybridized, plant varieties. Plants that not only form an important part of our environmental heritage, but produce viable seeds are of particular significance in areas using subsistence agriculture.

Through her work in the National Trust and with other community groups, she has contributed significantly to the preservation of sites of historic and environmental significance on the Peninsula. This has included the elevation of Point Nepean to National Park status, the recognition of indigenous heritage in the many walking tracks of Arthur's Seat, and the successful nomination of the Mornington Peninsula as the first UNESCO recognised urban biosphere in Australia.

She draws on her huge admiration for women who battle overwhelming and hostile environments and attitudes "...whether it's someone in Australia like Beatrice Faust speaking out about feminism and abortion, or the women of Los Palos in Timor suffering under occupation".

## Carolyn Briggs

### Elder of the Boonwurrung people



Carolyn Briggs is a respected Elder of the Boonwurrung people, a clan of the greater Kulin nations – the traditional owners of the land around Melbourne.

The “Elder” title that carries with it a respect for her knowledge compassion, contribution, negotiation skills and dignity.

In the challenges that face indigenous and non-indigenous communities today, Carolyn Briggs has described how she draws inspiration from her great grandmother, Louisa Briggs, as both a model of strength and as someone who acted as a cultural link helping to keep alive her people’s heritage. She also acknowledges the role that noted activist, educator and community leader Hyllus Maris played as a mentor in her life.

Through her work she has continued this tradition of strength and heritage preservation. She helped establish the first Aboriginal child care centre in Dandenong in the 1970s, the Dja Dja Wrung Aboriginal Cooperative in Bendigo, and a large number of other community organisations.

She has played a significant role in the struggle for recognition and rights for the Boonwurrung people, which culminated in the first indigenous land use agreement for the Melbourne area. She has also made substantial contribution to indigenous arts through her involvement with the Ilbijerri ATSI Theatre Cooperative and as a patron of the innovative Somebody’s Daughter Theatre Company.

She has also made a very personal contribution to the welfare of indigenous people in Victoria. She was one of three Victorian Investigators into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and, as well as raising her own family, has acted as a foster parent for older indigenous children. She has also worked to provide culturally appropriate services at the Royal Women’s Hospital.

As a role model for younger generations of indigenous women, she has shown that they can be brokers of change, not only as mothers and nurturers, but also as political and cultural advocates.

Underpinning all this work has been her cultural knowledge and her willingness to pass this knowledge on to others. “When you take young people out into the bush and they see what concepts like sharing and family really mean, it’s always inspirational. It makes you think ‘yes we are going to get there’.”

# Janice Margaret Dale

## Mentoring women in local government



In the mid-1970s Jenny Dale was a well respected nurse in Victoria's rural north-east with a growing family. She was a fixture in the canteen on match days at Yackandandah Football Club and was on the swimming pool committee, all vital assets in a township of 700 people.

However, frustrated by the red tape involved in establishing a local aged care service in the early 1990s, she decided to run for election to her local council.

Jenny quickly developed skills in local government and when the Indigo Shire Council was formed in 1997, she was elected as the first Mayor. It is a role she has filled twice since then. As Mayor she instigated the first meeting of the North Eastern Women in Local Government Group in 1998, recognising the need for a support network for the few women councillors in a region covering 12 municipalities.

As a member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association, Jenny has supported and mentored candidates for local government across the State. She has been Rural Vice President of ALGWA since 2002.

Current Indigo Shire Mayor Bill Hotson offered glowing praise. "Jenny is a true leader of people, and she particularly champions the cause of women in taking equal roles and breaking through glass ceilings," he said. Mayor of Alpine Shire, Cr Julie Carroll, believes north east Victoria is a better place to live and work thanks to Jenny's contribution, initiative and "her belief in the power of the community and her ideal of helping one another".

Jenny is a lead figure within the Municipal Association of Victoria and in her ongoing role on the board has always sought to represent the interests of women, the aged and rural communities.

For many years Jenny has worked tirelessly as a volunteer to strengthen the health service available to her local community. She was State President of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association (VBNA) when it amalgamated with Aged Care Victoria.

Jenny is also on the board of the Victorian Association of Health and Extended Care and continues to support many community groups ranging from the Lions Club to various sports and the Red Cross.

Her philosophy is simple. "I never expect or ask anything of others if I am not prepared to do it myself," she said.

## Anne Davie

### Rallying for rural women, communities and landcare



Lives do not come much fuller than that lived by Anne Davie. For almost half a century, her work ethic and civic-mindedness have contributed markedly to the quality of life for women of all ages and backgrounds across south west Gippsland. From the moment she arrived, fresh from university in 1956, Anne has been a dynamic, positive influence on many lives.

On top of working with her husband, Bob, to run a 170 ha cattle property and raise four children, Anne established a physiotherapy practice on Phillip Island that led to new services for local women, including ante-natal classes and support groups.

In the 1970s and 80s Anne championed community causes from employment and education to Landcare and support of the arts. Her vision and leadership helped mobilise women from Leongatha to Wonthaggi and contributed to the creation of local community houses that enabled women of all ages to share their creative and business skills, build networks, learn and expand their interests.

Single mothers and schoolgirls in particular, were supported through the establishment of the South West Gippsland Community Welfare Group that prospered over more than 20 years through her support and influence.

In 1989, Anne was elected to the Phillip Island Council and became Deputy Shire President. With her support, an arts and cultural committee was established and Anne was its inaugural chairperson. She led a successful push for a permanent gallery space in the municipal building to be devoted to works of local artists.

Environmental issues have always been important to Anne and her husband's life. They have led by example, planting 20,000 trees on their cattle farm and mentoring new landholders on dealing with salinity and sustainable land management practices. In 2004 their 'Bimbadeen' property was selected by their peers to receive a Landcare award – Primary Producers Caring For Land. Anne also represented Victoria at a salinity conference in Queensland in late 2003.

In all, Anne has held more than 30 unpaid roles since 1980. "I want to show by example that women can continue throughout their lifetime to contribute in a meaningful way to society," she says.



# Rhonda Louise Galbally AO

## Imagining and creating an alternative...



For more than thirty years, Rhonda Galbally has been working to find new ways of understanding and supporting communities.

As a woman CEO for 23 years in the business, public, philanthropy and community sectors, Rhonda has led the creation of a number of cutting edge organisations. These include the Australian International Health Institute at the University of Melbourne, the Australian Commission for the Future, and VicHealth – the world’s first organisation to use a dedicated tobacco tax for health promotion. Her contribution to public health was recognised by an award from the World Health Organisation Award for Tobacco and Health in 1996.

Rhonda was Chair of the first stage of the Australian Women’s Longitudinal Health Study and as a result of her involvement, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has funded a major Asia Pacific hub for child vaccination at the University of Melbourne.

A defining feature of Rhonda’s work has been to look beyond just concentrating on individual behaviour change for health and wellbeing. As Executive Director of the Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Foundation, Chair of Philanthropy Australia and a trustee of the Reichstein Foundation, she has helped direct large amounts of philanthropic funding into grass roots community organisations.

For the past five years, as Founding CEO of Our Community Pty. Ltd. Rhonda has built a national gateway to resources, networks and support for Australia’s 700,000 community organisations. Rhonda has been a passionate advocate for a ‘rights’ based approach to social justice and her stories from decades of campaigning are recorded in her recently published book by Pluto Press – Just Passions.

She was awarded an Order of Australia in 1990, the Award of the Degree Doctor of Science (honoris causa) in 1998 and the Centenary Medal in 2003 in recognition of her service to the community.

As Chair of the Disability Advisory Council, Rhonda believes that rights campaigns are now more important than ever. Presenting the 2004 Victorian Human Rights Oration, Rhonda argued that “a fundamentally good and moral society overcomes its resistance to change when confronted with a notion that it considers true, just and universal. In the area of disability, however, there are unfortunately many people who regard rights simply as a list of social and legal concessions that they are required to make”.

## Sandra George

### Opening doors to careers through support and empowerment



In the early 1990's the south east region of Melbourne faced its share of challenges, including job opportunities and community safety yet in this environment Sandra George has earned broad acclaim for successfully tackling these hard issues.

Recognised as a leader in her community, Sandra has helped to reshape the job market for women through training and mentoring, innovative job skills and networking programs, some of which have been adopted across Victoria.

Sandra puts the success down to an inclusive approach that has drawn on the support of wide community networks. In 1992, in response to high unemployment she organised a regional job summit and led a team which created nearly 3000 employment opportunities in the region in the following six years.

As an experienced educator and administrator, Sandra pioneered a regional Women in Business Network in the late 1990's, which became a forerunner to a range of activities offering local working and business women encouragement, support and mentoring.

Sandra has chaired the Greater Dandenong Community Safety Committee since 1995, overseeing numerous safety promotion and crime and injury prevention programs. The national award-winning 'Hand Brake Turn' program helped 500 young people find work opportunities and has been replicated across Australia.

Sandra was a driving force on the Dandenong Westernport Regional Youth Committee, which began innovative outreach services for disadvantaged young people. The vision for a local youth services complex was realised when the Dandenong Visy Cares Centre was completed.

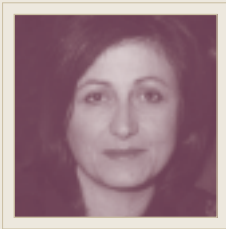
Over the years, Sandra has also found time to get involved in successful charity and community events. Sandra is also a Life Governor of the Dandenong and District Hospital and a life member of a local little athletics club.

Her philosophy is one of action and empowerment. "I have tried very much to be a role model by getting in and doing what's needed and giving women the actual 'tools' and confidence – not just theory – to implement what they've learned," she said.

As a community leader, Sandra has always been there to support and empower women, young people and marginalised communities – in business, in learning and in life.

## Carmel Guerra

### Women's strength and our future



One in seven young Australians speak a language other than English at home. An even larger number are born in Australia to parents who either migrated here or came as refugees.

Twenty years ago, one of those young people was youth worker Carmel Guerra's first client. "She was fifteen years old, a recently arrived migrant, with no mother, and she was pregnant. And what she still reminds me is that not only are women the strength behind migration, but that strength is part of our future."

That experience helped fire her interest in finding better ways of designing and providing services for young people from multicultural backgrounds.

Carmel has led the development of innovative ways of meeting this challenge through her influence as an educator, her work in establishing the Ethnic Youth Issues Network, and her role in the creation of the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues [CMYI].

CMYI is a state wide community-based organisation that aims to improve opportunities for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Recognising their very specific needs, the Centre puts a priority on working with young people from refugee and newly-arrived communities. It is now recognised as a model of best practice nationally and internationally.

Over fifteen years, a recurring feature of Carmel's approach has been her ability to build and maintain partnerships between young people, support services and local communities across Victoria.

She has encouraged young people, particularly young women, to question and challenge the types of institutional arrangements that exclude them from participation. She has developed new programs and activities that specifically give a voice to young women on issues that affect their lives, including transport, education, police and sport.

But she is "looking forward to a time when the issues of young people, gender and migration aren't just the work of CMYI, but are considered by governments generally as a matter of course".

In the mean time, the effect of Carmel Guerra's work has been to help create communities that offer young Victorians better opportunities, increased choice, and that provide a greater sense of inclusion. It is a contribution that has enriched Victoria.

## *Ann Jarvis*

### Farm management and rural education advocate



Running a farm typically takes a combined effort of all family members. But traditionally it has been men who have taken lead roles on farming's industry bodies.

So it was quite a breakthrough in 1997 when the 11th International Farm Management Conference in Canada listed Ann Jarvis and her husband Lindsay, from a dairy farm in the Kiewa Valley of north east Victoria, as joint presenters of a paper on issues they faced heading into the 21st century.

Two years later, after presenting a paper on how Australian farm women share their management skills in South Africa, Ann became the first woman appointed to the International Farm Management Association Council.

This was recognition for the decades of hands-on involvement. Farm management has been at the heart of her activities since becoming a foundation member of the Albury / Wodonga branch of the Australian Farm Management Society in 1972. From the early 1980's Ann ran succession planning workshops for farmers and she became the Society's first female national president in 1990.

But rural life involves many facets and Ann has always been willing to pitch in. Examples include the Country Fire Authority (communications role since 1967), scouts and guides, as the relieving church organist and church secretary, and as a branch delegate to the Victorian Farmer's Federation state conference.

Another passion has been Ann's involvement in education which has stretched from 1973 to the present. Her contributions have been valued locally, as well as more widely in roles such as vice president of the Victorian Federation of State Schools Parents' Clubs and her involvement in the Dookie Agricultural College and Goulburn Ovens Murray Adult Community and Further Education Council. In a valuable union of her interests, Ann was acknowledged in 2000 with a successful travelling tutor program to improve the literacy of adult farmers.

She remains a vocal and visible advocate for women on the land – and rural women in general – and urges them “to take a greater interest in issues outside their homes and to speak up about those subjects that affect their communities”.

With her willingness to provide advice and support across the community, Ann will continue to rally rural women to remain a force in Australia.

# Gertrude Johnson

## Arts educator and Australia's first arts administrator



Few people could claim to have founded a ballet school, an opera school, a drama school, all of which have operated for more than sixty years.

But they are only just a few entries in the list of accomplishments of Gertrude Johnson, a woman who quite literally created the field of professional arts administration in Australia.

Born in Melbourne in 1894, Gertrude's first career was as an opera singer and included more than ten years performing in England at Covent Garden and the Old Vic. She sang with Dame Nellie Melba in *La Boheme* in 1926 and in the first ever live broadcast of an opera by the BBC on 8 January 1923.

Returning to Australia in 1935, she recognised the lack of opportunities for Australian performers and immediately founded the National Theatre Movement. In the space of just four years, she dramatically increased arts training in Australia, founding the National Theatre, the National Theatre Drama School, the National Theatre Opera School and the National Theatre Ballet School. She expanded these opportunities through the creation of ballet, drama and opera companies in 1949, all of which staged many successful productions.

In 1951, Gertrude received an OBE in recognition of her work as Director of the National Theatre movement. She constantly championed new Australian composers, playwrights and performers and was instrumental in increasing public, private and business support for the arts.

Gertrude was asked by the Victorian and Federal Governments in 1954 to stage *Tales of Hoffman* at the Princess Theatre before Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip. This led to the formation of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and in turn The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia and the State Theatre Companies.

Her personal support provided many Victorian women with opportunities either as performers or arts administrators. She transformed arts administration from an amateur hobby activity to a professional occupation.

Gertrude Johnson died in 1973. Her legacy lives on not only in the training provided by the National Theatre in St Kilda, or in the graduates of the schools she founded, but also in the many talented women who now hold senior roles in the Australian arts industry.

## Susan Lockwood

### Putting the “us” into breast cancer treatment



Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Australian women. Each year 10,000 new cases are diagnosed and seven women die of the disease each day.

These figures describe part of the need for more medical research and better clinical treatments. But they also describe the size of the community of women who have a very personal experience of breast cancer.

Sue Lockwood’s life was changed forever when she was diagnosed with breast cancer 13 years ago. She will always remember the wonderful women, some of whom died of their disease, who gave voice to their passions and worked to make the difficult journey of easier for others.

Supporting these women is her passion and for more than eight years, Sue Lockwood has been a tireless advocate on their behalf. As Chair of the Breast Cancer Action Group, the first advocacy group for women with breast cancer in Australia, she has argued for the involvement of patients in the development of research, improved treatment, evaluation of medical services, and practical support.

She has been a member of large number of state and commonwealth advisory committees, review groups and task forces.

Sue’s contribution has been recognised internationally and she has been invited to address a number of conferences and been published in some of the world’s most respected medical journals including the British Medical Journal and The Lancet.

Her work has seen the growing expectation that women will be actively involved in all stages of collecting data, medical trials and planning of services. Sue is particularly proud of this change.

“Women with breast cancer now have a voice. It’s a voice that is used and, just as importantly, a voice that is heard. What we need to do now is extend that voice so that women with advanced breast cancer are heard just as clearly as those who are newly diagnosed”.

Producing long term change of this magnitude is a tribute to her ability to work with other women to build for the future. It means that in the future more women with breast cancer will have better information about the disease, with improved treatment options and a larger range of economic, social and emotional supports.

## *Ivy Marks, Josie Mullet & Lorraine Sellings*

### The Aunts of Lake Tyers



The Lake Tyers Aboriginal Community is one of only two discrete indigenous communities in Victoria. As a community, it has high levels of disadvantage including rates of unemployment, inadequate community facilities, poor housing and a lack of key services.

But it is also a community that has a group of strong women – the Aunts of Lake Tyers.

Over many years, the Aunts have made an outstanding contribution to improving the lives of Lake Tyers women and their families.



They have been instrumental in the construction of a community health centre and in helping Lake Tyers residents access more complex or emergency health services at the Bairnsdale Hospital.

The Aunts have played a major role in providing children's services and are developing a Breakfast and After School Activities Program for primary and secondary students to reduce absenteeism rates.

They have worked to build links with Victoria Police and have initiated the development of a community safety committee in response to local people's concerns about safety and community violence.



Most importantly, they have played a critical role in stabilising a local community under extraordinary pressure, and they are cited as the single most important factor in the development of the Lake Tyers 10-year Community Renewal Plan.

The Aunts are respected and acknowledged for both their individual and group leadership, and the way they personify the principle of indigenous people developing and delivering services to their own communities.

The people of the Lake Tyers community want to enjoy the same levels of opportunities that other Victorians enjoy in employment, education and community safety.

The very practical work of the Aunts in community leadership and support, has laid the groundwork that will help the Lake Tyers community reach this goal.

## *Edith Joyce Morgan OAM*

*“Social justice and economic justice cannot be separated – they are intertwined”*



Edith Morgan was born in 1919. Many of the issues that she pursued over 85 years are still at the centre of how to create a fairer and more equitable society.

Having left school at the age of thirteen, Edith returned to study in her thirties and completed her matriculation. As Collingwood's first social worker in 1972, she led the development of community services provided on the basis of rights not charity. It reflected her view that “if you give a service for ‘poor’ people, you’ll give a poor service. You’ve got to be saying – ‘This service will be for all people, including the poor.’”

Edith trail blazed a number of services that improved the lives of women and the families of inner city Melbourne. The development of the Collingwood Children’s Farm, a childcare centre, a local foster care program, a community health centre, rental housing associations and emergency accommodation services are some of her achievements.

She continued her community work in retirement, serving on the Victorian Guardianship and Administration Board and the Victorian Consumer Forum on the Aged Ministerial Advisory Committee. Edith was also a long time member of the Union of Australian Women, co-founded the Older Person’s Action Centre and was President of the Australian Pensioners and Superannuants Association.

Edith was awarded the medal of the Order of Australia in 1989 for services to the community. Her contribution to older people was recognised through the creation of the Edith Morgan Chair in Aged Care at the Australian Catholic University in 2004.

Edith was a passionate, vociferous and effective activist who always believed that social and political actions were essential ingredients in producing change right up until her death in February 2004. At the age of 79, she stood in front of a train at the Melbourne Docks during the height of the MUA- Patrick’s dispute.

She always stressed the need for women to speak out about the issues that affected them. In the diverse activities she undertook, Edith had a very clear view about how to direct her efforts. “I have a strong belief that unless you look politically at what you are doing, and understand the power structures; you are not going to get anywhere,” she said.



## Elizabeth O'Brien

### Educating women prisoners, giving hope for a different life



The classroom for teacher Beth O'Brien is unlike any other. For sixteen years her classroom has been inside a maximum security women's prison.

Whilst some might believe that her students should be doing their time 'tough', Beth believes bigger gains come from respecting her students and nurturing their minds and spirits. In her classroom, graduating successfully takes on a whole new meaning.

"Beth supported me to study, as much as a way to do my jail time, as to assist my educational needs," said one graduate. "These studies have assisted me to gain employment and most of all to ensure that I never ever face the blackness and depression that leads to jail."

A current inmate said Beth is extremely well liked and respected, with the patience of a saint, despite facing occasional 'difficult situations'. Learning computer skills in Beth's prison education centre, the inmate said she feels human again and not a number as she is elsewhere in the prison. "Beth is one in a million" she said.

One senior prison officer described Beth as "a beacon of hope who inspires and contributes to long-term behavioural change".

Alongside like-minded teachers from Kangan Batman TAFE, Beth provides extraordinary leadership in the field of prisoner education and is hailed as a role model within the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre.

"Her moral standards and deep commitment is a constant motivating factor together with her 'nothing is impossible' philosophy," said an unabashed fan within the prison.

Beth enables post-prison pathways by involving groups, including Somebody's Daughter Theatre and Swinburne University, to give inmates the chance to take their newly-acquired skills into the community. These skills range from literacy, creative writing and numeracy to art, computer, woodwork and horticulture.

In providing hope, opportunities, and the possibility of change, Beth is credited with returning many women to the community as useful contributors, not only to society, but to themselves and their families.

"I love this job because it's all about being a mentor and empowering women so they can aspire to anything," said Beth.

## Anne Robina Sgro

### Never give up...



One tribute to Anne Sgro's 40 years of community activism stands at 45 May Street Coburg. Established in 1984, the Anne Sgro Child Care Centre was Victoria's first work-related, whole-day, child care centre that involved workers, unions, a community group and government.

The Centre's name is recognition of her role in the nine year struggle by the Women's Group of the Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and their Families to create work-related child care opportunities, as another choice of child care.

"It is hard to believe now that work-based childcare could be seen as 'unwelcome'. The thing I'm most proud of is that we not only built a child care centre that is still running twenty years later, but that we changed people's ideas about providing childcare and showed that by working together you could create change," Anne said.

Her volunteer work also helped the establishment of new language teaching programs at Coburg Primary School in the early 1980s. The program gave young people from non-English speaking backgrounds the chance to learn their native language at school. Until government funding was secured for the program, Anne taught as a volunteer.

Anne has also volunteered with the Union of Australian Women, campaigning for women's equity and well-being in a peaceful and environmentally-safe world. She has represented the views of women to all levels of Australian government on areas including pay equity, violence against women, women's health and abortion law reform.

Her interests also include the historical achievements of Australian women. Anne was involved in the Nothing on a Plate project, a travelling photographic exhibition celebrating women's journey toward equity in Victoria. More recently she has been a member of the Ministerial Advisory Council of Senior Victorians.

For forty years Anne has worked as an activist, at both the local and national level, to promote women's rights and social justice. In addition to the Anne Sgro Child Care Centre, her many achievements are reflected in the improved lives that Victorian women now experience.

She personifies the women she says she admires. "Whether they are doing something groundbreaking or providing a basic level of community support, they're dogged, committed women who never give up," she said.

## Trang Thomas AM

### Opening minds, advocating for migrant health



Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds and recently-arrived families, face unique challenges. Improving the ability of the community and governments to understand these challenges has been the life work of health scientist and tertiary educator, Professor Trang Thomas.

As one of eight children in a family that fled from war-torn Vietnam in the 1960s, Trang knows what marginalisation feels like. Her determination to improve the mental and physical health of migrants has seen her become both a campaigner for improved social services and a respected advocate for tolerance.

Despite her limited English, Trang achieved a degree in psychology in 1969. As with many women, she has had to balance family commitments with her academic career. She gave up lecturing when her first child was born, but returned to study after a 12-year break, doing her PhD while working and raising two children.

Her prolific research career has focused on improving migrant health. Testament to this is more than 100 articles, keynote presentations and conference papers on ageing and migration.

As the chief investigator for many major research projects she has passed on her passion for migrant health issues to students and fellow staff. Trang was the first woman professor at RMIT University and was appointed to the National Health and Medical Research Council in 2001.

She was also the first woman to chair the Victorian Multicultural Commission in 1993 where she played a lead role in an inquiry into the adequacy of Victorian Government services for non-English speaking people.

Trang has also served on the board of SBS and more recently, as Assistant Human Rights Commissioner, helping to conduct an inquiry into children in immigration detention centres. In 1997 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her research in the areas of aged care and ethnic affairs.

Trang was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of Canberra in 1998, where she argued for a republic where all citizens, Australian or foreign born, have equal rights. She also served on the National Council for the Centenary of Federation for five years, coordinating events for the celebration.

Her aim is “to be a source of inspiration to young women, especially those of non-English speaking backgrounds”.

## Claire Vickery

### A butterfly flapping its wings produces a change...



Having two daughters with eating disorders was the starting point of Claire Vickery's journey to improve the services and resources available to those who suffer from these illnesses.

Motivated by her personal experience of the gaps and variable practices in the health system, together with the general stigma and lack of understanding of eating disorders, she formed the Butterfly Foundation.

But the Foundation is not a service provider or a referral service. With corporate and philanthropic support, the Foundation provides financial assistance to eating disorder sufferers to help them access to specialist support and services they would otherwise be unable to afford. This is of particular value for people who live in rural and regional areas where fewer services are available.

In addition to direct assistance, the Foundation has also helped develop regional, state and national networks. In seeking new and innovative pathways for prevention and treatment Claire's aim has been to make treatments more holistic by joining health service providers together. Through this effort the Foundation has influenced national and international eating disorder programs and initiatives.

Claire has been leading the Foundation in a number of other developments such the establishment of the first publicly-funded Adolescent Eating Disorders Day Centre; and the annual Butterfly Ball for 18 to 25 year olds and the Butterfly Art Award to raise awareness about body image and eating disorders with young people.

Her work with the Foundation has made a unique contribution by bringing together hospitals, mental health services, dietitians, GPs, psychologists, schools, teachers and student wellbeing coordinators.

Claire has shared her personal experience of eating disorders with courage and honesty as a way of promoting the message that eating disorders are about "feelings not food". Her approach is based on her belief that if the causes of eating disorders lie within the community, then treatment should also be community-based and not only 'medicalised'.

"I realised we needed to reach out to the sufferers of eating disorders and the people around them. People need to feel they are surrounded by empathy, compassion and a sense of belonging to a community." she said.

Her outstanding contribution to those who have suffered and to those who care for sufferers of eating disorders, has meant that more young people and their families are now able to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

## Assoc Prof. Wendy Weeks

A great part of a long tradition...



Wendy Weeks made an outstanding contribution to improving the lives of Australian women through putting women's rights on the agendas of both governments and service agencies.

As Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Melbourne, and as founding member of the Australian Association for Social Work and Welfare Education, she played an important role as an educator, supervisor and mentor for many students and practitioners.

Wendy was the author of five books covering social and welfare work, gender studies, public and social policy, and community development. All her books are still used in studies around the world. During a thirty year academic career at McMaster's university in Canada, at Phillip Institute of Technology [now RMIT] and the University of Melbourne, she produced and published numerous articles, research reports and submissions, which testify to her intellectual stature.

She placed a particular emphasis on combining critical analysis, practical research and activism. Her most recent work was as the principal investigator with Deborah Walsh for a study of 400 pregnant women at the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne and their experience of income, social support, and safety during their pregnancy.

Wendy was a founding member of Women Against Violence – an Australian Feminist Journal, which linked services and community groups with academic researchers. In the first edition of the Journal she summarised its style as “socially useful, rigorous in its analysis while accessible to the reader”. She is warmly remembered for her policy of encouraging students and practitioners to submit articles even when they were not confident in their writing abilities.

Wendy's intellectual leadership in the areas of feminism, community development, and women's experience of citizenship, was recognised across Australia and in internationally. She worked closely with Indigenous communities recognising their exclusion from equal citizenship and, therefore, equal participation in work and a range of other spheres of life.

For Wendy, who died in July 2004, the description 'feminist' was one to be celebrated. She once described it as being part of “the long tradition of Australian women working for social change, and putting the everyday lived experience of Australian women on the public agenda”.

# *Messages*

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