

WELLSPRINGS FOR WOMEN

JULY 2018

CHAIRPERSON, WELLSPRINGS FOR WOMEN'S REPORT ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



It was an honour to receive an invitation to attend the CSW62; Commission on the Status of Women from the International Presentation Association (IPA). This year's theme was focused on achieving gender equality and empowerment of rural women and girls. It is the United Nations largest gathering on gender equality and women's rights, made up of UN Member States, civil society organisations and other international actors to build consensus and commitment on policy actions. More than 4,300 representatives from over 600 civil society organisations and 170 Member States attended this year's Commission.

It was exciting and emotionally impacting to be part of such a large gathering and listen to the countless stories of the plight of women and girls around the world. My own objectives for attending the Commission were to:

- Understand the UN process and how civil society can influence the processes to affect the outcome document produced by the United Nations.
- To explore funding opportunities for Wellsprings for Women.
- To highlight the inadequacy of the funding situation for small grass roots organisations and the length of terms.
- Explore network opportunities that will benefit Wellsprings.
- Establish a closer link with IPA to have input into issues that will benefit the women Wellsprings work with.

Having known very little about the UN processes and where to engage to have influence both as a civil society member and an IPA member, my observation is that having some formal link to the IPA through a reporting mechanism would be beneficial.

In the two weeks of dialogue the voices of the women were heard first hand. What they wanted ranged from the rights to own property, to the need for quality infrastructure, to the rights to make decisions about their own bodies and lives. There were many varied and widespread responses to these issues. Close to the end of the Commission there was a question as to whether there would be an outcome document with Agreed Conclusions. Fortunately, at the 11th hour the Outcome Document was announced. A broad range of concrete next steps and recommendations were outlined in the Agreed Conclusions.



79 Langhorne Street, Dandenong

Victoria 3175

Phone: (03) 9701 3740

Email:

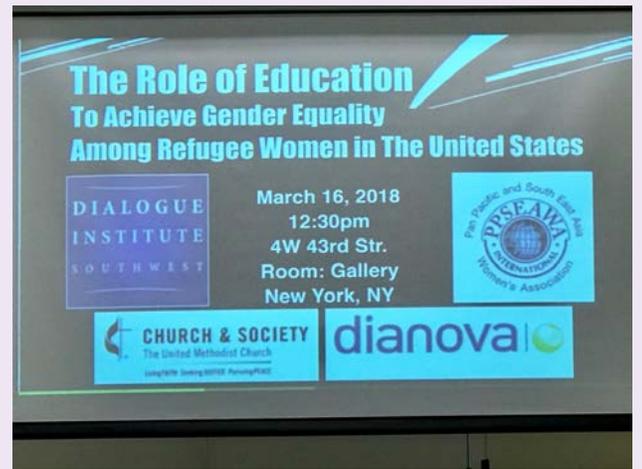
administration@wellspringsforwomen.com

www.wellspringsforwomen.com

[Like us on facebook](#)

ABN: 18 282 739 596

I didn't quite achieve highlighting the inadequacy of funding for small not for profits. It became apparent that it was not quite the right forum to raise this issue. Nonetheless, there were many relationships and connections established which hopefully will be of benefit to Wellsprings for Women in the future.



An equivalent organisation to Wellsprings for Women from Austin Texas



IPA Representatives: Rowena Pelegrino, Molly Gerke, Janet Cribbes, Amber Atkinson



NGO Representative at United Nations; International Presentation Association Elsa Mattathu pbvm



Spirit of Celebration



Janet Cribbes
Chairperson



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD



Janet Cribbes
Chairperson



Joanne Rosewall
Deputy Chair



Carmel Collins
Director



Minh Nguyen
Director



Joy Marrocco
Director



Georgia Prattis
Director



Laura Conti
Director



Neha Doshi
Board Secretary



VALE ADRIANA CICALESSE [1936-2018]

It is with much sadness that we pay tribute to our Chairperson's dear mother Adriana, who passed away on 13 June 2018.

A requiem mass was held on the Friday, 22 June at St Columba's Church in Elwood.

Janet delivered Words of Remembrance about her mother who migrated to Australia from Italy after WWII

The following poem was read by Colline Cordes, Janet's sister-in-law:

'Miss Me but Let me Go'

*When I come to the end of the road; And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room; Why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little-but not too long; And not with your head bowed low
Remember the love that we once shared; Miss me – But let me go
For this is a journey that we all must take; And each must go alone
It's all part of the Master's Plan; A step on the road to home
When you are lonely and sick of heart; Go to friends we know
And bury your sorrow in doing good deeds; Miss me – But Let me go*

Adriana was Mother to Janet, Joseph and Lucy, Wife to Attitio, Mother-in-law to John, Colline and Daniel and Grandmother to Harmoni, Grace and Fabian.



CEO MUSINGS

Since our last newsletter in December 2017, a lot has happened at Wellsprings as we started 2018 with a School Holiday program that ran for 3 weeks and offered a series of activities to many women and their children.

As CEO I have thoroughly enjoyed designing and delivering one of our programs called: Learning, Living and Belonging (LLB). Women participating in this program get the opportunity to engage in discussions about a variety of topics including; what it means to belong, reflecting on their migration journey, the challenges they faced in settling in a new country. They examined the concepts of culture, gender equity, respectful relationships, human rights, women's rights, parenting and more. In the last couple of months, the women worked together to create a Harmony banner, they went on an excursion, they learnt about Ramadan, and heard a presentation on the Sudanese community.

This particular class calls on the women to be active participants, to articulate their views and opinions, express what they think and feel and the benefits are quite tangible.

We are increasing our involvement in the national efforts to prevent violence against women before it starts and to devise a number of approaches that make the education engagement on such complex issues easier to illustrate through the use of pictorials and other tools we intend to develop.

We are breaking new grounds at Wellsprings as we expand our services to Casey area where we now have seven different activities happening across the municipality, being a mixture of English classes, mothers' groups, playgroups and Art and Craft for primary school children.

We have also delivered sessions in Cardinia at Pakenham Living and Learning Centre on gender equity and human rights. Our work in this area will be documented and evaluated at a national level through the Australian National Research On Women's Safety (ANROWS).

We were delighted in April this year to hold a new fundraising dinner at a local Dandenong restaurant which specialised in Afghan cuisine. This mini-fundraiser attracted one hundred supporters and everyone had a very enjoyable evening, sharing food and stories and learning about Afghan culture.

Our pool of volunteers keeps growing and we have more than 80 active volunteers at the moment. On International Women's Day and Mother's Day, we held great events whereby the food was prepared by our Women's Cooking Program, which is proving to be a great success story.

And on a final note, I would like to acknowledge Anna Harder for donating to Wellsprings a piece of art she worked on for many, many, hours, and which now hangs in the entrance foyer of Wellsprings, as a testament to the sheer magic of this place that brings out the best in the women who come to us and enrich us by their generosity and creative talent. Thank you all.



Left to right - Vivian, Sonu, Anna Harder, Rose, Dalal, Robyn, Julie



Dalal Smiley
Chief Executive Officer



FROM THE EDUCATION COORDINATOR

The year started with a bang! seeing the Wellsprings School Holiday program engaging our participants and their pre and primary school aged children. The Holiday Program provided free and fun filled activities for families from early January to early February. We ran a range of sessions including; beading and bag making workshops; gardening classes; gentle exercise programs; activities for children such as art and craft and educational programs including financial management and parenting sessions. We also ran the ever popular Food REDi program where women learn about nutrition and healthy eating, filling our halls with delicious aromas and our bellies with healthy lunch twice a week.

The holiday program was a great success and logged attendance of over 100 women and children and 85 students and volunteers, the benefits of which will be far reaching. As always, we thank our dedicated team of volunteers (including Dingley Boomerang Bags) without whom the holiday program would not have been possible.

Term one has seen the continued growth of Wellsprings' Education programs both within Wellsprings and into wider Dandenong and the City of Casey. A number of new courses started this year including; Gardening, Introduction to Community Services, Ageless Grace, Transition to Formal Study, Citizenship Test and IELTS Test classes, After-school Art program for primary children and Additional Playgroups in Casey. We have also got two new programs starting before term 3 called Enterprising CALD Women Program and Intercultural Connections Through Art.

The Capacity and Innovation Fund (CAIF) round 9 project was finalised and the resulting Introduction to Community Services course was launched in term 2. This dynamic course is engaging a variety of guest speakers from local Registered Training Organisations and local employers and is boosting the women's confidence to step into accredited study and entry level employment.



Living Learning & Belonging class banner



School Holiday Program

There was much excitement when the long awaited application for additional funding from the Adult Community and Further Education Board was successful! As a result, we have been able to increase our three levels of English Language



classes back to three hours each, fund the Intro to Community Services course, added two English for citizenship tests classes at Oakgrove Community Centre in the City of Casey, and have funded our ever popular English Conversation classes at Wellsprings which will give them more stability, resources and longevity.



Our ACFE Tutors have been upskilling with webinars, Intel Learn Easy Steps and a workshop by Dandenong Library on their impressive online resources. They are also undertaking training in Trauma Informed Education and Adult Education Techniques during the July school holidays.

Beginning with Staff and Wellsprings Mentor and Home Visitation Volunteers, I will be offering a number of Mental Health First Aid courses throughout 2018. If you are interested in finding out more about this valuable, evidence-based training to support the mental wellbeing of people in your community, please contact me.



Holly Gordon
Education Coordinator



WOMEN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Women's Health and Safety program is one of the new programs introduced to Wellsprings for Women in November last year. The program has added a great value to the existing work of the organisation by providing new avenues for working with women from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds to prevent domestic and family violence. The program coordinator has met with a range of different agencies and organisations working in the area of women's health, safety, domestic and family violence to establish new partnerships and to explore new opportunities for future collaboration.



A reference group has been established comprising of workers from different agencies to provide input and feedback to project planning, implementation and evaluation. The reference group will also promote and advocate for the project activities within community circles and would provide assistance in developing educational material for community awareness raising sessions.

The first Reference group meeting was held in March. The reference group members were briefed on WH&S project and progress to date. The

members endorsed a Term of Reference for the group.

An educational session for women from CALD backgrounds was delivered at the Living- Learning Centre in Pakenham. Thirty four women from different ethnic backgrounds participated in the session. Despite the fact that participants had some language barriers, most of the women were quite engaged during the session and mostly found the session content to be useful. One of the main strengths of the educational session was having bi-lingual facilitators as they were providing

simultaneous interpretation support to the participants by explaining the content in their own language. Most of the women were very satisfied with the content delivery of the session as the content was explained in simple English. Topics delivered at the session included; Introduction to Human Rights and Respectful Relationship.

Wellsprings for Women participated in a two day workshop organised by ANROWS in Sydney. This was the first ANROWS workshop that provided information about the concept of action research and the processes involved in the research. Moreover, the workshop provided an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and experiences with representatives from 26 different projects working with CALD communities on issues of domestic and family violence.



Lora Hares
Women's Health and Safety Coordinator



VOLUNTEERS COORDINATOR

This year has seen a large number of new volunteers, volunteers working in different venues and a change to our system for minding children.

The Imagination Room is now operating as a stimulating child minding area where volunteers care for children whilst their mothers are in a class. This has a number of advantages including:

- students are not disrupted by the noise of the children;
- children from all classes can be minded (rather than just those in the Gathering Room);
- allowing for creative and noisier play options for the children.

Admittedly, this does result at times in a child being distraught when separated from their mother [who is not far away] but most settle relatively quickly. We are indebted to our wonderful child minding volunteers for their dedication to the children and their enthusiasm in adjusting to this new system.

With new classes operating from venues in Casey, we have needed to find volunteers to assist with childminding or tutor support in these areas. We thank our existing volunteers who have travelled further afield and welcome new volunteers from these areas.

Wellsprings celebrated National Volunteer Week with an excursion to Fairfield Boathouse where 17 of our dedicated volunteers feasted on tea and warm scones with jam and cream. Some ventured out to explore the river's edge whilst others stayed cosy in the historic tea rooms overlooking the tranquil Yarra.

Wellsprings has been fortunate to have ten tertiary students on placement over the first half of the year, for varying periods, to gain experience and contribute their skills to Wellsprings. They have undertaken a variety of roles including:

- Conducting research, surveys and planning
- Assisting with classes and supported playgroups
- Mentoring and home visitation roles
- Assisting with child activities, administrative duties and events





Wellsprings is now also participating in the Work for the Dole program, hosting women on unemployment benefits to provide them valuable workplace experience. Placements value their time at Wellsprings and the experience they gain working here. We are particularly pleased that one placement was successful in gaining a paid position as a receptionist.

Our sincere thanks to Di Pullin, Rosemary Gibson, Patricia Whittle, Moira Petrie, Katarina Nikolic, Joan Smith, Sam Hodges, Samah Taha, Amira Zaki, Kanthi Hewavitharama, Mursheda Jahan, Jagrutt Patal, and Shabhana Baktani who we farewelled last term.

Wellsprings for Women conducted a Volunteers Satisfaction Survey in 2018 and a summary of the findings indicate that:

- 59.68 % of our volunteers indicated that their contribution is having a lot of impact
- 64 % found the volunteers’ training very useful
- 90% commented that Wellsprings staff were very friendly
- 78% felt very appreciated by staff
- 94% were satisfied with their volunteer experience.



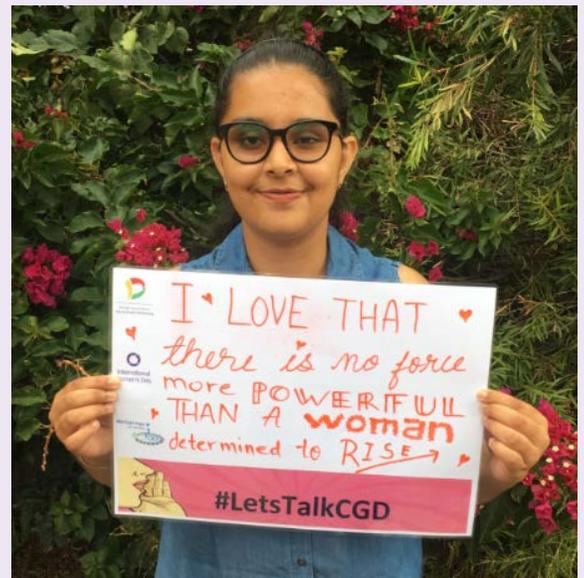
Robyn Erwin
Volunteers Coordinator



‘LET’S TALK’

City of Greater Dandenong Youth Services Team in partnership with Wellsprings for Women, held weekly leadership sessions with a group of 11 young women.

The sessions were designed to create dialogue and discussion on issues of importance to the young women. Topics included gender identity, body image, racism, sexuality, sexual harassment, plus the young women worked on a project together which involved creating message posters for International Women’s Day. It was a great program which provided the opportunity for Wellsprings to engage with young women.



WELLSPRINGS HOME VISITATION AND MENTOR PROGRAM



Malika

The Mentor Social Group started 2018 with much enthusiasm, each participant creating goals and dreams through a vision board activity.

Participants and their Volunteers were very interested to socialise and share their goals and dreams with each other, and they used some images and quotes that represent the things they want to do, be and achieve in the future.

Our Mentors provide constant support to many participants

who have complex needs through One on One support program.

Regarding the Home Visitation Program, our well-trained volunteers are able to reach out, to the socially isolated women in Cities of Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia. The program has empowered two new participants who are now successfully attending Wellsprings programs for the first time, and some have been empowered and able to access information and other service providers in their local areas.



Aza



Right to left - Sr Felicity, Niluka & little Jeremiah



Molook



Left to right - Mary & Anam



Rose Elias
Community Development Coordinator



ART FOR THE LOVE OF IT



The art group manages to stay cheerful even though several are 'dogged' with ill health. My challenge for them has been to paint a copy of a picture of ladies dancing, I did want each participant to study the picture and mix the colours they saw as none were colours direct from the tube. One of our 'artists' has recently produced her painting almost finished. Once I get to see that one, I intend to have a little exhibition to show everyone how 'challenged' they were!!

June O'Doherty
Tutor





CRAFT

On Tuesday 8th May some of the Craft Groups participants attended the Australian Textile Exhibition at the Royal Australian Botanical Gardens in Cranbourne. The group saw the beautiful Australian fabrics at the Leesa Chandler Pop Up Shop, participated in voting for the Bag Challenge and admired the beautiful three dimensional embroidery and quilts created by local artists.

The outing concluded with the group having

afternoon tea and lots of chatter at the Boon Wurrung Cafe. Everyone had an enjoyable outing and were inspired to extend their own craft skills. For some it was the first time they visited the gardens and most are keen to return to the garden in spring to see the bush in flower.



Rita Poole
Tutor



FOODREDI - THE HEALTHY EATING PROGRAM AT ST MARY'S

I wish to thank the participating women for their enthusiasm, curiosity and dedication during the six weeks while we worked through the many interesting and useful facets of the FoodREDi program. During the program, which has jointly been developed by Red Cross and Aldi, we had many opportunities to discuss ideas, issues and practicalities. Our constant focus was most certainly, our families' health. We no doubt also took into consideration our time and finances. Many challenges are faced when modifying old practices to improve the eating habits of our own and those of our family members. Our discussions were open, honest and we provided support for each other. Change is never a simple process and it takes time. My hope for each woman is that they took away something new and



beneficial from the program. This could be perhaps a new recipe, more awareness of the food labels or how to add more vegetables to each meal. We truly embraced the latter and created some fabulous meals! This included the home made crusty vegetable and chicken pizza and the veggie packed fried rice. Yumm...

Well done everyone! And please keep sharing ideas and involve your families in the healthy eating journey. It is for everyone's sake. A colourful, nutrition packed and fun way of having pizza on the menu! The FoodREDi program is delivered over six weeks and it always includes cooking and of

course, eating. I look forward to presenting the program, at St Mary's PS, to a new group of enthusiasts in Term 4. More details will be provided at a later date.



Eva Silverstein
Tutor



EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2018

This event was attended by over 70 women and organised by Wellsprings for Women Cooking Group funded by the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Scanlon Foundation.

Star Journal
DANDENONG | SPRINGVALE | NOBLE PARK

Celebrating solidarity

08 March 2018 11:22 AM .

[f](#) [t](#) [p](#) [e](#) [+](#) 21

Wellsprings for Women hosted an Afghan experience to mark International Women's Day. The Wednesday 7 March event at the Dandenong support service aimed to foster intercultural understanding and connections between women. Attendees shared what they enjoyed most about their cultural heritage and traditions.

"The event involved women of many different cultural backgrounds who worked together on creating an Afghan experience through cooking Afghani food, researching Afghan culture and customs, preparing a presentation to be delivered on the day and wearing traditional Afghan clothes to showcase on the day," Wellsprings for Women CEO Dalal Smiley said.

Greater Dandenong Citizen of the Year Trish Keilty from Avocare shared her story of migration as the guest speaker. "We are grateful to funding from the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Scanlon Foundation which enabled us to organize the event and make it a real celebration of women's tenacity, resilience and sense of solidarity," Ms Smiley said.



Sharifa and Kobra with Afghan eggplant and tomato dish bourani banjan. 178344 Picture: GARY SISSONS

 Purchase this photo from Star Photos: 178344 [View Gallery](#)



Star Journal
DANDENONG | SPRINGVALE | NOBLE PARK

Celebrating mums through culture

10 May 2018 12:04 PM .

[Like](#) 6 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

A Dandenong event honoured motherhood with an immersive Pakistani experience. Wellsprings for Women celebrated Mother's Day on Wednesday 9 May.

"Amongst so many things we learnt from our mothers, cooking tops the list," CEO Dalal Smiley said.

She said participants reflected on what their mother's taught them and "and thanking them for the sacrifices they have made to give us a better a life".

"The event aimed at generating intercultural understanding and connections between women by sharing what their mothers and grandmothers passed on to them," she said.

"Is there a secret recipe that is handed down from one generation to the next?"

Women from many different cultural backgrounds worked together to create a Pakistani experience through cooking Pakistani food, researching Pakistani culture and customs, preparing and delivering a presentation on the day, and wearing traditional clothes.

"We are grateful for funding from the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Scanlon Foundation which enabled us to organise the event and make it a real celebration of women's tenacity, resilience and sense of solidarity," Ms Smiley said.



Mum and daughter Ayesha Awan and Fatima Noor. 180352 Picture: GARY SISSONS

 Purchase this photo from Star Photos: 180352

MOTHER'S DAY

This event was also attended by more than 70 women.

CATERING FOR SHIRE OF CARDINIA HARMONY DAY

Wellsprings for Women's Cooking Group was proud to be invited to cater for 100 people attending the Harmony Festival at Pakenham Community Centre in March this year.

This was the women's first experience of catering for an event outside of Wellsprings. The Women's Cooking Group currently involves about 11 women who have completed their food handling training and are regularly getting together to cook various dishes for several events being held at Wellsprings, which include Volunteers luncheons and other celebrations. So far the women have cooked: Afghan, Pakistani and Sudanese banquets. This project is funded by The Scanlon Foundation and aims at creating cross-cultural connections and understanding between women and communities.



Dalal Smiley & Jane O'Callaghan

DONATIONS

Wellsprings for Women is grateful for the ongoing support we receive from our partner agencies and individual donors.

St Michael's Primary School in Ashburton invited our CEO to speak at their Mother's day event on 6 May. The invitation was organised by Olivia Mannix whose children attend St Michael's. Our CEO was pleasantly surprised when she was presented with a basket of Kitchen ware for our Cooking Group plus over \$650 donation raised on the spot during the event. Our CEO met up with Jane O'Callaghan, niece of the late Sr Ann Halpin whose children also attend this School.

Recently a group of students from Killester College attended Wellsprings for Women to present over 60 toiletry packs to Wellsprings participants; a project they had worked on for months to collect the items and nicely package them as individual gifts.



Kilbreda College refurbished 16 Computers which were then donated to Wellsprings participants' who were quite thrilled to receive them. Many other participants have now put their names on a waiting list for future donated computers. Star of the Sea College went on a Nano Walk fundraising for Presentation Ministry as part of their foundation day celebrations and of the funds they raised \$5,774.80 was donated to Wellsprings for Women.

CHOIR

The Choir has had a great year so far, adding a number of new songs to our repertoire, and we look forward to sharing them with you all at the Fundraising Dinner in October. The group performed at the local nursing home in May, a commitment that we hope to repeat each term as it brings joy to the residents and staff at Southern Cross. **Libby Price**

SEWING

The Thursday sewing program has continued to be one of Wellsprings most popular and vibrant programs. The machines have been whizzing away and the team of dedicated and talented Volunteers run off their feet each week to keep up with the wide variety of projects being undertaken by the women. Not only do they create quality, wearable products, they also build vital skills like English and employability skills as well as lasting friendships. If you are a highly skilled sewer with some time on your hands to give back to the community, we are always looking for more helpers to keep up!

Caroline Mellington & Eva Silverstein



FUNDRAISING DINNER

On the 24th of April 2018, Wellsprings held a very successful mini fundraiser at Afghan Rahimi Restaurant in Dandenong. 100 people enjoyed the delicious food which included Mantu, Borani Banjan, Chatni, Gulab Jaman and Afghani traditional Rice. The welcoming ambience of Rahimi provided the ideal setting for Monira Tahery, our Project Officer, to deliver an inspiring presentation on Afghan Culture, history and customs. Monira gave a personal account of her life in Afghanistan, under the Taliban regime and the reasons that led her to make the decision to migrate to Australia, searching for a better future for her family. A quiz was used to test the guests' knowledge of Afghanistan. The Raffle and Sale of the participants handcrafts were well supported by all the friends and colleagues of Wellsprings who attended this entertaining event.



Joanne Rosewall
Chairperson Volunteer Fundraising Committee



PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

Wellsprings Annual Fundraising Dinner

Friday, 26th October 2018, 6:30pm at St Mary's Community Centre, Dandenong

We gratefully look forward to your support.