



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2024**

*Jessie Street National Women's Library serves to:*

- *Highlight the contribution of Australian women to this country's development*
- *Preserve women's political, cultural and literary heritage*
- *Ensure that documents relating to Australian women's lives and activities are collected and made accessible*
- *Support the fields of women's history and women's studies*

*To keep women's words, women's works, alive and powerful*

*Ursula K. Le Guin*

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## CHAIR

First and foremost, I wish to record my thanks to the JSNWL Board members for their ongoing support over the past 12 months. Our achievements here in the Library are not possible without the support of our volunteers, all of them listed in the report. To each and every one, I extend my thanks.

The Board met on eight occasions. Our Board members give so generously of their time, in particular, Sherri Hilario as Secretary and Jean Burns as Treasurer. I am particularly grateful to both for their contributions to the efficient operations of the Library. Sherri continues to be my 'go to' contact. Jean Burns, our Treasurer, is meticulous and diligent in her role. Both women do so much every week to maintain the Library operations, communications, systems and day to day administration. As noted in previous reports 'they are not alone, but they are critical'. I also want to record my thanks to Jann Skinner who audits our accounts with integrity, care and professionalism.

I am pleased to report that the Library still has a strong membership base. At the end of 2024 we had 320 members.

The volunteer librarians and archivists continued with their exacting professional work in the Library as well as maintaining its high standing among libraries focused on unique specialist collections and other cultural institutions. Their work is essential to maintaining and improving access nationally and internationally to the Library's collection. The work of the archives and library team is vital in helping to build the reputation of the Library in the GLAM sector and the broader women's community.

Initiatives such as the support of internships and students undertaking research projects further enhance the reputation of the Library. Our thanks must go to Lynne Morton for her role in supervising the interns and students.

On 15-16 March 2024 the 'Elsie Conference' celebrating 50 years since the establishment of Elsie Women's Refuge, and the start of the women's refuge movement in Australia was held at the University of Technology. In collaboration with UTS, Sherri Hilario selected and curated the display of over sixty posters from the Library's collection for display in the Conference foyer.

We were very pleased to welcome over 110 visitors to the Library in 2024.

Our Newsletter continues to be the main means of communication with the broader membership and community of supporters thanks to the team of Kris Clarke, Jessica Stewart, Jan Burnswoods, Barbara Henery, Audrey Wacks and Suzanne Marks. Through their efforts we have an enduring record of the Library's achievement. The Newsletter offers readers an engaging and readable mix of news, updates and articles, many contributed by our Volunteers.

The theme of History Week 2024 was *Marking Time*. Drawing inspiration from our 'Tapestry Project', we created a series of Facebook posts, *A Tapestry of Women's Lives : warp, weft and stray strands of determination*, throughout the week, highlighting some of the extraordinary and less recognised stories of women whose lives have contributed to the political and social fabric of Australian society.

We addressed a number of organisations about the library and its collection during the past year.

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Throughout 2024 we continued to provide our usual services, events and activities. These include our very popular Lunch Hour Talks (LHT), organised by Michele Ginswick. These are held in the Customs House Library, an ideal location that is easily accessible.

Michele will be stepping down from her role as LHT Coordinator as of the end of the year. Her last talk will be on Thursday 16 October 2025. She has been involved with the Lunch Hour Talks for 19 years – around 18 years as Coordinator. This is an extraordinary contribution to the Library and on behalf of the Board and our members I wish to express my gratitude to Michele. In letting me know of her decision to step down Michele wrote:

I am very aware that age and illness have shrunk the committee of volunteers, many of whom have hung on valiantly in the face of serious challenges. Needless to say, that without their continued staunch support, the LHT would not have lasted this long. I truly value all that they have done over the years.

I too, wish to acknowledge and thank the LHT Committee for their dedication and commitment over many years.

Vice-Chair Suzanne Marks is stepping down from the Board after many years of service. Throughout her distinguished career Suzanne has long advocated for social fairness as a member of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board and Assistant Registrar for Equity at Sydney University and UTS. She also worked as an industrial mediator and on various tribunals and serves on the Sydney University Chancellor's Committee. We are delighted that Suzanne will continue in her other roles with the Library.

The Annual Fundraising Luncheon committee, convened by Kate Beringer, is our major event for the year. Kate had to step down from her role as coordinator for some of the time in 2024. Fortunately, former convenor, Michele Ginswick, seamlessly stepped in. Our speaker at the 2024 Annual Fundraising Luncheon was The Honourable Justice Virginia Bell AC who served as a Justice of the High Court of Australia for 12 years, from 2009 to 2021. Justice Virginia Bell has made an outstanding contribution to Australian law, in particular through leadership in criminal law reform and public policy development, and as an advocate for social justice.

The Equality Rights Alliance (ERA), which was auspiced and managed by YWCA Australia, came to an end on 30 November 2024. Board member, Janet Ramsay has represented the Library, participating in its online and face to face activities for a number of years. Her comprehensive reports have informed our networking with women's organisations, as well as, drawing our attention to issues of concern for feminists across Australia.

YWCA Canberra has been allocated the Federal government tender to establish the Working with Women Alliance (WWWA) to operate from 2 December 2024 and be active from 1 January 2025. The Library has joined the WWWA and Janet will provide reports on its meetings and activities.

With the assistance of an external consultant, we will be starting work on a Business Plan for the next five years in May. In addition to the input of our Board members our volunteers and members are encouraged to be part of the process of developing the Plan. We will have more information for you shortly.

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Throughout the year the City of Sydney, Ultimo Community Centre staff provided courteous assistance with our queries and requests, and we extend our thanks to them and the contractors who manage maintenance and our lease. We filled in our quarterly surveys and supplied the 2024 Annual Review required as a condition of our lease within timeframes. We received an A rating from the City of Sydney for our performance. As a recipient of the City of Sydney Accommodation Grants Program, we thank the City of Sydney for its continued support of the Library.

In conclusion, we continue to seek passionate volunteers to support the JSNWL. We invite you to join us in preserving and promoting the history and achievements of Australian women through our extensive collection of books, serials, archives, posters and other material. Your involvement will help ensure the library remains a vital resource for education and empowerment. Whether you have a few hours to spare or more time to contribute, your efforts will make a meaningful difference we invite you to become a part of this inspiring and important cause today.

**Christine Yeats**

Chair of the Board

## TREASURER

**The Council for the City of Sydney**, through its Accommodation Grants Program, provides significant rent subsidy for the premises occupied by the Library. In 2024 the rent subsidy was more than \$116,000. The ongoing financial support of the City of Sydney is acknowledged with gratitude.

187 people, including 28 students and 11 teachers from 7 high schools, attended the Library's major fundraising event, the **Annual Luncheon** at NSW Parliament House in September. Ticket sales, donations and the sale of raffle tickets resulted in a net profit for the luncheon of \$13,370.

Five **Lunch Hour Talks (LHT)** were held in 2024 at Customs House. The profit from the LHTs in 2024 was \$1,100.

The Library's annual budget is prepared on an accrual basis, after the Auditor has finalised the annual financial statements for the AGM in April.

In 2024, the Library received two further disbursements from the Estate of the Late Susan Elizabeth Wills both were used to establish additional term deposits. Overall **income** in 2024 was \$23,553 less than the approved budget. This was largely due to a significant reduction in CIF Donations and an increase in bank interest as a result of the above bequests. 2024 Donations to the Library's **Capital Investment Fund** totalled \$14,175 which was \$50,825 less than the approved budget. The balance of the fund at the end of 2024 was \$695,301.71. This account is currently held in Members Equity (ME) Bank which has been taken over by the Bank of Queensland. The current interest rate is 0.05%. The Board is investigating options to transfer these funds to an account with a more advantageous interest rate.

Overall, **expenditure** in 2024 was around \$3,000 less than the approved budget.

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## Jessie Street National Women's Library – Annual Report 2024

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The Library welcomed 18 new members in 2024, including three new life members. **Membership revenue** was \$17,000 which was \$3,000 more than budget.

At the end of 2024, the Library held the following Westpac Term Deposits:

ACCOUNT	INTEREST RATE	MATURES	Accrued interest from Jan 2024	BALANCE
Westpac Term Deposit (527513)	4.70%	5-Jun-25	Paid on Maturity	\$167,183.74
Westpac Term Deposit (506546)	4.70%	30-Jun-25	Paid on Maturity	\$1,093,433.04
Westpac Term Deposit (521842)	4.70%	30-Jun-25	Paid on Maturity	\$441,786.91
Westpac Term Deposit (012574)	4.70%	30-Jun-25	Paid on Maturity	\$22,000.00

The Library's **cash position** at the end of 2024 was \$1,740,782.37 plus \$695,301.71 in the **Capital Investment Fund**, a total of \$2,436,084.08.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Jann Skinner for her continued role as Honorary Auditor and for providing assistance and support to me throughout the year.

**Jean Burns**  
Treasurer

## SECRETARY

2024 proved to be the first year clear of disruption and loss since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, and like many organisations Australia wide with volunteers, the Library continues to experience the impact of the changing nature of volunteering. However, on a bright note, the Library welcomed seven new volunteers across a range of our activities. The Library turned a corner as we began rebuilding an Admin team with the arrival of two new admin volunteers, Alison Rees-Oliviere and Brenda Padgett.

We were thrilled and inspired to start the new year with an enquiry from Professor Anne Summers AO about the possibility of creating an exhibition of our posters to accompany the Elsie Conference in March at the University of Technology, Sydney. The Conference marked 50 years of the women's refuge movement, celebrating the past and discussing emerging challenges. With 65 posters from the Library's collection and one from the National Library of Australia, covering the 1970's-1990's, and in collaboration with UTS curators, The Women's Political Poster Exhibition placed the women's refuge movement in the wider historical context of feminist and women's liberation activism and campaigns. Not only did the posters

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reflect the collective and sustained efforts of women to advocate for their rights and needs, they were also a stark reminder of how much work is still ahead.

There were 8 Board Meetings in 2024. The attendance record was:

Chair	Christine Yeats	7/8
Vice Chair	Suzanne Marks	5/8
Treasurer	Jean Burns	7/8
Secretary	Sherri Hilario	8/8
Members	Michele Ginswick	6/8
	Robyn Harriott	6/8
	Barbara Henery	5/8
	Christine Kibble	5/8
	Janet Ramsay PSM	8/8
	Beverley Sodbinow	4/8

All quarterly surveys and the Annual Self-Assessment required by the City of Sydney's Accommodation Grants program were completed.

The 2023 Annual Information Statement required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) was submitted.

**Sherri Hilario**  
Secretary

## LIBRARIANS

### **Review of Collection**

Continuing on from the completion of the comprehensive review of our Serials holdings and spurred on by growing issues of shelf capacity, the Librarians have embarked on a review of our monograph holdings. Monographs include books, reports, conference proceedings and exhibition catalogues. This project will be ongoing and involve much discussion!

We have also been reviewing our audio/visual holdings, working through relevance and copyright issues, formats and checking cataloguing status. We are steadily working towards ensuring that our audio and A/V material is digitised using industry standard formats. A significant goal is to enable online access to our Lunch Hour Talks recordings.

### **Inter Library Loan, Reference and Research Enquiries**

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The Library continues to receive enquiries and visits from researchers both from within Australia and internationally. Researchers can be informal, academic, or independent scholars. From a volunteer gardener at May Gibbs' house 'Nutcote' researching May Gibbs as part of planned changes to plantings in the gardens; to a filmmaker researching for a miniseries about the story of the riots at Parramatta Girls Home in 1961 and subsequent closure in 1971 who commented "I am so grateful to be able to draw on their important historical records to keep our history alive".

Intriguingly, we appear to be one of two institutions in the public domain to hold the autobiography of Scottish Suffragette Arabella Charlotte Scott (1887-1980), "My murky past: a suffragette's sacrifice in the struggle for votes for women" edited and compiled by Francis Wheelhouse and Anne Woodin. Starting in 2022 and continuing into 2024 we have received several requests for this title, most from Scotland and England and were able to provide scans of selected pages. We have already been contacted by a researcher, from the University of Glasgow, planning her research trip to Australia in 2025, about accessing the book.

### **Artist collaboration - Poster Paste up project**

A project begun in 2021 finally came to fruition in 2024. The project was inspired by a serendipitous discovery of an image of Jessie Street and Murray's "Equality" series of street posters. We worked with contemporary poster artist and screen printer Wendy Murray to make a poster to be "pasted up" on the communications cupboard at the front of the Library. Wendy Murray is a visual artist and arts educator whose works address social and political issues through drawings, poster making and public art works.

The result, a collage that incorporates an image with Jessie Street in front of the Equal Rights Campaign Headquarters in Geneva, ca 1930, a rich mash up of text from previous posters and elements of the "Equality" posters, speaks to the heart of our poster collection highlighting women's activism and the ongoing fight against the erosion of civil and human rights.

### **Arts Librarians Society of Australia and New Zealand Conference 2024**

In response to a request from Arlis ANZ, the Library hosted a tour of its collections for conference attendees. The Archivists and Librarians joined together to create a special range of displays throughout the Library, highlighting material relating to women in the arts. We also included a display showcasing our own exhibitions and collaborations with artists. We talked about the Library, its history and collections, and how they are documented, maintained, and made accessible. We also talked about our connections with other cultural institutions. Attendees included archivists, librarians, arts workers and artists. Serendipitously, the paste up project, mentioned above, was installed just in time!

### **Student visits, placements and volunteers**

The Library is immensely proud of our relationships with Charles Sturt University and TAFE NSW, again hosting student tours and placements. One student from 2023, Sinead Azar chose to return in 2024 as a volunteer to complete the project she started, cataloguing our Badge collection. We were also pleased to welcome two more student volunteers, Jane Khoo and Laura Morigan, later in the year.

### **Book Club**

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The Jessie Street Book Club numbers have fallen a little during 2024, due to illness and other unavoidable absences, which resulted in meetings being postponed. Members voted to meet bi-monthly in order to allow extra time for reading the selected books, which in some cases are hard to obtain, especially current popular choices (long reserve lists) or classics (no longer in print).

This year's readings included fiction and non-fiction: *The Lucky Ones: stories of Australian refugees' journeys* - Melinda Ham; *Not Now, Not Ever* - Julia Gillard; *Time Without Clocks* - Joan Lindsay; *One Another* – Gail Jones; *Salonika Burning* - Gail Jones; *Hello Beautiful* – Hannie Rayson; *The Complete Book of Great Australian Women* – Susanna de Vries (featuring Jessie Street on the cover).

**Barbara Henery, Sherri Hilario**

Librarians

## ARCHIVES

The Archivists continued to refine internal processes to address the issue of material delivered to the Archives office without consultation. This included clarifying what archives are. The first half of the year was spent accessioning a backlog of material including the papers of Sue Wills, Ann Curthoys, Helen Prendergast, and Women Against Violence and Exploitation (WAVE).

Koha completions include the Barbara Finch collection and Frances Phoenix collection. The very extensive Helen Leonard collection, entered incorrectly into Koha as eight separate collections, has been consolidated.

Our new volunteer, Gail Davis, has been familiarising herself with the Archives collections, making a useful contribution and learning our systems.

There has been a steady stream of email enquiries, particularly from students enquiring about research topics, as well as possible donors. We have been in discussions with a project researcher from the Pregnancy Advisory Centre and agreed to take their files at the completion of the project.

Our Pine Gap materials continue to be a rich resource for researchers. Researchers included an artist/scholar on a Fulbright Fellowship from the US researching feminist anti-nuclear groups and peace camps; another for the purposes of writing a novel.

Meetings were held in relation to the possible acquisition of Robyn Kemmis' papers and Ann Symonds' papers.

A tour group of participants of the Arts Librarians Society of Australia and New Zealand Conference in November visited the Library and viewed a range of items, including Pam Pemberton's tea towel *Women and Arts Festival October 1982*; Merry Cooper's 'A History of Knitting in Great Britain'; Molly Kennealy's collection of 3 books of poetry, notebooks, drawings and watercolours; as well as a couple of interesting Pine Gap items of jewelry and clothing.

**Bev Sodbinow**

Archivist

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## ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Luncheon was held in the Strangers' Room at NSW Parliament House on 16 September 2024. Our hosts for the Luncheon were the Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC and the Hon Leslie Williams MP. We acknowledge and thank them for their interest and support.

We were most fortunate to have The Hon. Justice Virginia Bell AC as our most entertaining and realistic guest speaker this year. A long-standing advocate of law reform, her address focused on changes to the judicial system in the area of gender-based violence. Virginia came to the Law as an answer to solving the social problems she encountered in her local suburb, Redfern. From work in the fledgling Redfern Legal Centre, to the High Court, Virginia described her early experiences of the horrific situations women found themselves in as they battled the justice system and explored the significant progress which has been made in recent times, never pulling any punches but never indicating the role she personally played over many years of law reform. Her speaking about the nature of consent, her support of the rallies against male violence and her raising of the issue of toxic masculinity very much resounded with the students present.

Proceedings began with Margret Campbell performing a very personal *Acknowledgement of Country*. Our Board Chair, Christine Yeates, as MC, then conducted us through the rest of the program. Our speaker was introduced by Suzanne Marks and thanked most sincerely by Jess Weatherall, a Year 10 student at SCEGGS, Darlinghurst, Virginia's old school.

Among 187 people at the Lunch were Foundation Library patron, Elizabeth Evatt, Professor Emerita was joined by our Parliamentary Hosts: The Hon Penny Sharp and The Hon. Leslie Williams, as well State Members of Parliament Helen Dalton, MP, The Hon. Jo Haylen, The Hon. Jodie Harrison, and The Hon. Meredith Burgmann. Other groups included our staunch supporters, the NSW Teachers Federation (a member organisation), Women's Action and Information Group (WAIG) and the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL). We welcomed 28 students from Arthur Phillip HS, Auburn Girls, Birrong Girls, Inner Sydney High, SCEGGS, Darlinghurst and Wenona, with 11 teachers. This included 10 sponsored students with 2 sponsored teachers. The Chair gave special thanks to our generous sponsors the City of Sydney and Teachers' Mutual Bank, both of which have contributed to our continuing growth. A profit of \$13,370.40 was achieved.

Again, we would very much like to thank the staff of the Strangers' Dining Room, without whose efforts a successful lunch would not have been possible. Above all, it is important to acknowledge the long months of organisation and planning carried out by the tireless Annual Lunch Committee, and to extend our warmest thanks for their cheerful teamwork and dedication.

**Michele Ginswick**

Annual Luncheon Convenor

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## LUNCH HOUR TALKS

Everyone is aware of the impact COVID has had on the many functions of public life. Items provided by venues have disappeared for good, such as absences need to be met by volunteers carrying in needed projectors, laptops and amplifiers, making provision for urns and cold water, as well as organising sandwiches, tea and coffee. It is thanks to our wonderful speakers and our indefatigable volunteers that ensures that each LHT remains a gathering not to be missed. My enormous thanks to all.

**Thursday 22 February - Belina Ham: *The Lucky Ones: Stories of Australian refugee journeys.***

Melinda Ham told of the stories of Australian refugee journeys she recorded in her moving and meticulously researched new book. Though they are from different generations, countries and cultures, the families in this book all share one thing in common: they have escaped persecution in their homelands to find safety in Australia. Spanning 70 years, and tracking journeys from Iraq, Afghanistan, Poland, Tibet, Vietnam and Zaire, *The Lucky Ones* offers a window into the complex history of Australian refugee experiences. Jozefa Sobski, who Melinda interviewed about the experiences of her mother and father, spoke of her first-hand knowledge of migrant life.

Beginning her journalism career in southern Africa, Melinda later lived and worked in India and Singapore. On coming to Australia, she wrote for *The Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Sun Herald* for more than twelve years, covering a diverse range of subjects. She edited 'Explore', the Australian Museum's twice-yearly magazine and has produced dozens of publications through her media company, Narrate Media, for charities, universities and companies.

**Thursday 18 April - Rose Ellis: *Bee Miles: Australia's famous bohemian rebel, and the untold story behind the legend***

This is the untold story of the uncompromising and fearless woman who captivated mid-20th century Australia with her spectacular acts of defiance. Bee was famous for being outrageous in public, or, as she said, 'living recklessly'. She shocked and intrigued cities and towns across Australia, hitchhiking across remote Australia and drawing large city crowds with her Shakespeare recitations, but she was no ordinary wanderer. Rose told about Bee's wealthy and privileged background and how she ended up on the streets, repeatedly incarcerated in prisons, confined to mental hospitals and treated brutally by a succession of authority figures, starting with her father. Rose's meticulous research had uncovered the real story and the darker side of the colourful legend.

Rose Ellis is a writer, editor, researcher and experienced project director in rural and remote Indigenous health.

**Thursday 20 June - Nadia Wheatley: *The End of the Morning***

Nadia Wheatley spoke about her latest book, publishing of which marks the finale of the Charmian Clift Anniversary Year. One half is the first section of Clift's unfinished autobiographical novel, which Nadia believes can be read independently as a novella, describing as it does Clift's childhood and adolescence

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in the quarry community near Bombo Beach, north of Kiama. As Nadia spoke about visiting Bombo, her absolute sense of place and its impact on people throughout their lives was made clear. Those present all felt as if we knew the headland, the quarry and its whistle, the cottages by the sea and the young Charmian, here reflected in Cressida. Nadia briefly commented on the thirty essays from the 225 columns that Clift wrote for the *Sydney Morning Herald* between 1964 and her death in 1969 which make up the rest of the book, as a reflection of Clift's suburban life on return from Greece. There was some sensitive discussion of the reasons for Clift's suicide, 'an unheard cry for help'.

Nadia Wheatley's work includes picture books, novels, histories and biographies. She is acknowledged as the authoritative biographer of Charmian Clift with *The Life and Myth of Charmian Clift* winning the Age Non-Fiction Book of the year (2001) and the NSW Premier's Award for Australian History (2002). She has also been the mover and shaker behind the events of the Charmian Clift Anniversary Year.

**Thursday 22 August: Helen Topor, *Neither King nor Saint***

Helen Topor spoke most movingly of her father and how his experiences impacted on her and her mother's lives. As Dr Katarzyna Kwapisz Williams, Deputy Director of the Centre for European Studies, ANU, described it 'Trying to understand who her father was and what he went through, she provides fascinating insights into the culture and climate of post-war Australia, the failure of Australia's settlement policies and the consequences these have had, not only on migrants but also on their descendants. Australian readers need this book to understand their own country.

Helen is an award-winning Canberra author, editor, mentor and Voluntary Guide at the National Gallery of Australia. Her publications include *Outdoor Games for Today's Kids* (2017), *Discovering Vermeer* (2018) and *Neither King nor Saint* (2022), which won a MARION ACT Notable Book Award for nonfiction in 2023.

**Thursday 17 October: Kate Ramsay, *Smashing the glass for women at work***

Kate described her reasons for taking on this writing project with fellow authors Dr Anne Hartican, Lindsay Mackay and Megan Young, how she went about it, by drawing on her mother's loss of career on marriage, Janet's own career experience, her research in the area and the experiences of other women she interviewed. Kate spoke on Lindsay Mackay's chapter covering the history of anti-discrimination law, and specifically the ongoing gender pay gap in Australian organisations and why some women are still having to navigate not just glass ceilings but class cliffs and glass labyrinths at work. She also shared her recommendations for what else is needed to achieve the goal of fully diverse gender workplaces in Australia before having a few words to say about Feminism!

Kate is the managing director of AnD Leadership Consulting and has had over 35 years' experience working as a consultant specialising in gender-based equal employment opportunity and in leadership coaching and mentoring. She is the author of *Go with Love - a memoir about love, loss and learning*, the co-author of *Barriers to Women in Corporate Management*. She is also a mother, a sister, an aunt, a friend, a great aunt and the proud grandmother of 5 granddaughters to whom she dedicates this latest book.

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**Michele Ginswick**  
Lunch Hour Talks Convenor

## **Equality Rights Alliance (ERA)/Working With Women Alliance (WWWA)**

Towards the end of 2024, ERA came to an end and was replaced, though tender by the Federal Government, by the WWWA.

Over the past year, and before those changes, ERA continued advocacy work for Australian women, with the support of over 70 member organisations, including the Jessie Street National Women's Library.

That work included:

- Preparation and support for participation of civil society organisation (CSO) women in the 68<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. At that meeting it was recognised that the Australian CSO delegation was the most engaged and effective such group at the meeting.
- Coordination of preparation of the Shadow (ie NGO) reports to accompany the Government report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- Presentation of representations, with support of member organisations including the JSNWL, on:
  - Support for a Law Reform commission recommendation for a blanket removal of Section 38 of the Sex Discrimination Act allowing religious organisations to discriminate against students and staff based on their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status or pregnancy.
  - Pre-Budget submission and Post-Budget briefings.

### **ERA Member Representatives Meeting, Melbourne 3-5**

I attended on behalf of JSNWL what turned out to be the last face-to-face meeting of member representatives of ERA member organisations. A Gender Equality Symposium was provided along with positive information sharing between member organisations.

At the meeting we were told that the long-term Convenor of ERA, highly valued Helen Dalley Fisher, would resign from the end of August and that ERA would come to an end in November 2024. That followed from the funding offered in the tender for the next five years being not sufficient to enable the work of ERA to continue without requiring the existing unpaid over-work by ERA staff. We also learned that the tender would no longer cover preparation and participation in international work or face to face meetings by members and member representatives.

### **Ongoing arrangements for National Women's Alliances**

As a result of the national tender, five specialist organisations were selected to improve outcomes for women in Australia and to support the Government in

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implementing its Strategy for Gender Equality. They are the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance, the National Rural Women's Coalition, Women with Disabilities Australia, the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, leading a new migrant, refugee and culturally and linguistically diverse women's Alliance (replacing the earlier Harmony Alliance) and the Working with Women Alliance (WWWA).

WWWA includes the existing National Women's Safety Alliance (NWSA) and the National Women's Equality Alliance (NWEA). They are assisted in advisory and representational work by two Policy Advisory and Advocacy Committees (PAACs) with up to 15 members, including representatives of each of the Women's Alliances, 8 subject matter specialists and representatives of working groups they will establish. YWCA Canberra holds the auspice for the WWWA, replacing the YWCA Australia which formerly held the auspice for the ERA.

Individual women and women's organisations may seek membership of the WWWA. The JSNWL has joined both the NWSA and the NWEA. I will continue as the contact person between JSNWL and the WWWA.

The NWEA is issuing a monthly Newsletter and WWWA distributed a 2025 Election Platform and a March 2025 Post Budget Briefing.

A significant difference between operation of the ERA and the WWWA is that while excellent information is being provided about policy developments and issues, apart from those within the executive teams, PAACs and their working groups, neither advice nor registered support for WWWA representations are invited from the membership community.

### **ERA Archive**

The JSNWL has been invited by YWCA Australia, with support from the Office for Women, to become the repository for the ERA archive. Plans and negotiations are underway for that eventuality. The ERA archive is predominantly a digital archive.

### **Dr Janet Ramsay PSM**

Contact for JSNWL to WWWA

## **NEWSLETTER**

The Library's quarterly Newsletter was produced by Kris Clarke, Jessica Stewart, Jan Burnswoods and proofread by new volunteer Margaret Knowlden, with regular input from Librarian Barbara Henery. The editors use Adobe InDesign Cloud and have licenses for two devices at minimal cost as the Library is registered charity. This allows work at the Library and remotely.

Each issue – three 8-page editions and a 12-page November issue, highlighted events and publications relevant to the Library's mission – to preserve women's

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works and women's words. The May and November issues focussed on publicising the Annual Luncheon, the Library's major fundraising event.

Newsletters were distributed to all members via post and email. The mailout was coordinated by Suzanne Marks. Notably, over half of members are now receiving their Newsletters by email.

In February, the Newsletter featured our banner collection; 50 years of the Elsie refuge and the upcoming anniversary conference; and an update on the Parramatta Female Factory UNESCO World Heritage Listing.

The May Newsletter introduced Annual Luncheon speaker Virginia Bell, a report on the Elsie Women's Conference and Sue Wills' Library legacy.

The July issue featured the Library's badges collection and the Sydney Writers Festival.

The report on Annual Luncheon speaker Virginia Bell's speech was featured in the November issue while a visual extravaganza of members and guests at the function filled the Newsletter's centre pages. There were also details of the Library's marking of History week with a feature adapted from the Library's Facebook posts, about seven extraordinary, less recognised stories of Australian women.

Regular features included the Lunch Hour Talks programs and reports; Book Club meetings and selected book reviews; financial donations to the Library and donations of items to the various collections; volunteer profiles; and an annual ERA report.

The Newsletter has called for volunteers to assist the team in tasks of reporting on Lunch Hour Talks, proofreading and production but so far without success.

The Newsletter continues to provide valuable material for researchers, accessible through our website and through Trove, reflecting the Library's growing resource collection and role in preserving the history of women's contributions to society.

**Kris Clarke**

Newsletter Committee

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## BOARD 2024

Chair	Christine Yeats
Vice Chair	Suzanne Marks
Secretary	Sherri Hilario
Treasurer	Jean Burns
Members	Michele Ginswick
	Robyn Harriott
	Barbara Henery
	Kristine Kibble
	Janet Ramsay PSM
	Beverley Sodbinow

Public Officer: Sherri Hilario

Hon. Auditor: Jann Skinner

## VOLUNTEERS 2024

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