VICTORIAN WOMEN'S TRUST

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Above: Section of an artwork by Alkina Edwards about the longstanding partnership between Koorie Women Mean Business and the Victorian Women's Trust. Alkina's artwork also appears in our Together, Yes campaign. Below: 'Yes' icons for Together, Yes.

Listen and learn Together. It's time to say: Yes!

Hello friends. The sun is peeking out from behind the clouds and that blistering winter chill is beginning to ease from the air. Spring is on the horizon! And with it, comes a most important referendum.

Although an exact date is yet to be set, the referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament will be held before the year is out.

We have been heads down here at the Trust, working on Together, Yes–our "Kitchen Table Conversations" campaign in support of the Voice.

To launch the campaign back in March, Mary hosted a panel discussion with proud Yiman and Gangulu woman, Kara Keys and journalist and broadcaster, Jon Faine AM.

It was a great introduction to what the Voice is, how we got here, and actions we can all take to unite friends, family and community behind the Voice.

From March until early June, we travelled the country, holding more than twenty-five, in-person Community Information Sessions about the Voice, and how to get involved with Together, Yes.

There are now thousands of conversation hosts all around the country, bringing people together in safe and respectful discussions.

Our two Conversation Kits have been designed to help guide these conversations, and promote open, and honest engagement.

We're getting some great responses from Conversation Hosts and participants as they work their way through the learning activities.

→ Learn more at www.togetheryes.com.au

On Sunday 13 August, we were honoured to co-host our 'Women for Yes' event with Yes23 at the Athenaeum Theatre in Melbourne.

The Minister for Indigenous Australians, Hon Linda Burney MP, was joined by community leaders, Leanne Miller AM, Fiona Stanley AC, Maria Dimopoulos AM, Duré Dara OAM, Belinda Duarte, Alana Johnson AM, and our own Mary Crooks AO. All spoke with passion and conviction about why they are 'Women for Yes'. Musician Georgia Fields treated us to a moving performance.

We also launched our 'Women for Yes' open letter: by inviting leading women advocates and attendees to add their signature in front of over 800 witnesses.

We would love for you to add your signature to the letter. Doing so will not only help to further build community support for a 'Yes' vote in the referendum, but it will also honour the extraordinary leadership of Indigenous women, both past and present.

→ To sign the open letter, visit www.togetheryes.com.au

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Vic Day Awards: VWT Organisation of the Year

VWT was honoured to accept this year's Victoria Day Award for Community and Public Service.
We were nominated for our years as grant-maker and advocate for gender equality.

And we were in extremely good company, recognised alongside Victorian of the Year, Brent Sutton (outgoing Victorian Chief Health Officer, known for his hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic); the Castlemaine Art Gallery (winner of the Victoria Day Award for the Arts); and Young Victorian of the Year, Madeleine Buchner, founder and chief executive of To be included alongside such a worthy line up of citizens and institutions is a high compliment indeed.

But this award isn't about us—it's about you and everyone else who has supported the work of the Victorian Women's Trust over the decades.

So thank you to the Victoria Day Council for the recognition, and to you for your ongoing support.

Our 2023 Sub-Fund grants program is OPEN

Each year, we conduct a Sub-Fund and Targeted Impact Grants program for projects that directly benefit Victorian women, girls and gender diverse people.

If this sounds like your project, we strongly encourage you to apply.

We have seventeen Sub-Funds in total, each dedicated to alleviating specific socials issues and helping women and girls to thrive.

Every Sub-Fund honours women in some way.

Some are named after a woman or a couple, others are established in their memory, or have a giving focus that honours a woman's life, passions and contributions.

Applications are open from now until 25 August.

→ Learn more: www.vwt.org.au/grants
→ For enquiries, email grants@vwt.org.au

Top: John and Nancye Cain in their home, photographed by Urban Safari. The Nancye and John Cain Sub-Fund is one of our newest sub-funds, focusing on projects for women, girls and gender diverse peoples with disability or disabilities, including hearing loss. Left: photograph of the Victorian Women's Trust team taken at the recent Victoria Day Awards.

SHABBAT TABLE TALKS

Project Director Ilona Lee on how the Jewish community can support the Voice

Shabbat Table Talks started when Mary Crooks met Ilona Lee at the Adelaide launch of the national Yes campaign in March 2023.

Ilona Lee, who is the General Manager of Jewish Media company Plus61J, was keen to integrate the message of Together, Yes into the Jewish community via their own "Kitchen Table Conversations", thus creating Shabbat Table Talks.

We wanted to know more about what inspired Shabbat Table Talks and chatted to Ilona Lee to find out more.

How did Shabbat Table Talks come about?
I attended the launch of the Yes Campaign in Adelaide, both to demonstrate support but mostly to get ideas as to how the Jewish community could lend its weight to the campaign. As soon as Mary made her presentation, I was sure that this was the way to go.

So when we were asked what we were going to do moving forward, I said I wanted to introduce 'Kitchen Table Conversations' to the Jewish community but, for us, it should be Shabbat Table Talks because that's when we sit around the table with family and friends.

How does "Kitchen Table Conversations" as a form of civic engagement fit within a Jewish context?
It is very much part of our culture to discuss, question, learn and debate so this feels "just right".

Our country's history is abound with examples of Jewish-Indigenous solidarity. From your perspective, how can the Jewish community contribute to a positive outcome for Indigenous Australians in the 2023 referendum?
Our aim is to get our community to vote yes, and the best way to do this is to educate and inform. Community champion Bettina Cass AO talks about justice being one of the founding principles of Judaism.

What unique perspectives on justice can the Jewish community bring when hosting Shabbat Table Talks?
Having treated Indigenous people so badly for so long, it is only just and right to try to make amends. Additionally, an Indigenous man, William Cooper and his colleagues were the first to stand up for Jews at the beginning of WW2 by petitioning the German consulate against what was happening in Germany. It is only just that we try to pay that back in some positive way.

Dr Hilton Immerman OAM, says if we want a fairer Australia, that respects its heritage and protects its minority rights, we need to vote Yes. In your opinion, why is it important for the Jewish community to be champions of the referendum?
The Jewish people know what it means to be discriminated against and to be treated as lesser citizens. We don't want that for any other people so feel we have an obligation to stand up for other minority groups.

In 2005, I founded a scholarship program for Indigenous students at UNSW and, to date, that program has been responsible for 60 graduates including almost 30 medical doctors. Many of these students have come from very disadvantaged backgrounds and I have seen personally how much they can achieve with just a little assistance. I am hoping that many more Indigenous people get such opportunities if the Voice is heard.

Different communities coming together to support a positive outcome for Indigenous Australians in the 2023 referendum is paramount to achieving a positive result in the 2023 referendum.

With the support of Shabbat Table Talks, we can come together as a united nation and make this crucial change to our Constitution.

We are proud to be standing alongside the Jewish Community in Australia to procure a fair and just future for our country.

→ To find out how you can host a Shabbat Table Talk, visit: www.shabbattabletalks.com.au

Top: photograph of Ilona Lee, Shabbat Table Talks logo and graphics from www.shabbattabletalks.com.au

Keep Safe Online

Keep Safe Online is the latest e-safety offering from our Rural Women Online (RWO) program, funded by the US Consulate Melbourne.

Last year, we jumped on the road with RWO and spoke face-to-face with more than 600 women. They told us in no uncertain terms that scammers were one of the biggest barriers they had to being online.

They also reported password security, social media privacy, and online payments as big-ticket issues that needed to be addressed.

Keep Safe Online covers these topics and more, in ten short video tutorials, allowing viewers to play, pause, review and learn at their own pace.

→ To watch the videos, visit www.ruralwomenonline.org.au/keep-safe-online

Speaking to the House of Reps

On Wed 7 June, Bronwyn Johnson (RWO Project Manager) spoke to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, as part of their inquiry into experience, opportunities and challenges for co-investment in multi-carrier regional mobile infrastructure.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to present our findings on the importance of access to data in rural & regional Australia," says Bronwyn.

"Digital connectivity is a basic human right and must be viewed as such. Telecommunication companies and the federal government must think of new ways to provide essential services for women and their communities to thrive from any location."

→ Learn more at www.ruralwomenonline.org.au

Top: graphics from Rural Women Online. Bottom left: photograph by Georgia Ginnivan for Rural Women Online. Bottom right: Alice King (Barwon Health); Libby Coker MP (Federal MP for Corangamite); Brian Mitchell MP (Federal Member for Lyons); Bronwyn Johnson (Rural Women Online); and Leah McPherson (Victorian Women's Trust).

Staffing update

Our team at the VWT has welcomed a number of new faces recently, whilst also saying farewell to valuable project-specific members of the team.

Moa Martenson and **Ciara Kirby** worked tirelessly behind the scenes of Together, Yes. They were a marvellous addition to the team, throwing themselves into everything that such a large project entails. Thank you Moa and Ciara for helping to make the first phase of Together, Yes such a success.

Olivia Hurley has joined the Rural Women Online team as part of the work experience component of her studies. She has been conducting a number of invaluable research projects to ensure RWO is having the biggest impact in the places it is most needed.

Grace Hill-Smith took a deep dive into our marketing approaches, finding new opportunities and ways to become more efficient. It's the kind of work that will continue to add value to our communications. Thank you so much to Grace for her efforts.

With **Rachael Imam** returning from parental leave, we have had to say goodbye to our Communications Officer, **Sala Goma**. As Rachael's leave replacement, Sala was thrown into some of the biggest projects we have ever taken on.

Sala was a warm and welcome addition to our communications team, and we wish her all the best for her upcoming adventures.

Annabelle Pearson volunteered her time to research and report on the VWT Menstruation and Menopause Policy. She has produced the most thorough history and analysis of the policy to date, and we are eternally grateful.

Saskia de Leeuw Kyle recently completed her Year 10 work experience at VWT, working alongside the communications team to create digital content for our feminist youth platform, Rosie.

"I've published some articles with Rosie in the past (and have a few more coming out soon...) so I love being involved with the Trust in any way that I can.

You can find me typing away behind a desk in the Clifton Hill office, working on an article or a social media post. A massive thank you to the Trust for having me here, I'm having the best time!"

Our work at the Trust simply would not be possible without the efforts of our incredible volunteers. We believe in creating shared value, and work with each and every one of our volunteers to find a position or project that they are passionate about.

→ To learn more about our volunteering opportunities, email: women@vwt.org.au

Top right: Year 10 work experience student, Saskia de Leeuw Kyle.

CLUB RESPECT

SMART PLAYS WITH TARIK BAYRAKLI

SEASON TWO

The Club Respect sports and culture podcast, Smart Plays, is gearing up for its second season.

With episodes focusing on online abuse, how to make Indigenous players feel welcome, and managing menstruation–no topic will be out of bounds.

Building on the success of the first season, host Tarik Bayrakli will chat with six new special guests to unpack sports' most pressing issues.

Season one guests included Australian Boomerangs coach, Julia Walsh, inclusion and belonging leader, Rana Hussain, and University of Sydney lecturer, Dr. Victoria Rawlings, to name just a few.

Stay tuned for even more Smart Plays.

→ To catch up on the first season of Smart Plays, visit www.clubrespect.org.au/podcast/

Book Launches

The Voice to Parliament Handbook

By Thomas Mayo & Kerry O'Brien

Catch up on a conversation between renowned Indigenous leader Thomas Mayo and journalist Kerry O'Brien, hosted by the Readings Foundation at the Church of All Nations on 25 May 2023.

Co-authors of The Voice to Parliament Handbook, Thomas and Kerry unpacked their reasons for writing the guide. They explained why this book is essential reading for all Australians as we move closer towards the 2023 referendum for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our "Kitchen Table Conversations" Yes campaign, Together, Yes is featured in the Handbook as an action people can take in the lead up to the referendum to help grow community support for the Voice.

The Voice to Parliament Handbook is published by Hardie Grant.

→ To watch the recording, visit www.vwt.org.au/watch-recording-of-authors-thomas-mayo-and-kerry-obrien-on-the-voice-to-parliament-handbook

Hard to Bear

By Isabelle Oderberg

On 4 April 2023, author Isy Oderberg joined with Nyadol Nyuon at the Corner Hotel in Richmond to talk about her honest, thought-provoking and incredible first book - Hard to Bear: Investigating the science and silence of miscarriage.

It was a rich discussion about the world's most common pregnancy complication, from the origins of the silence that engulfs it, to the role played by medical misogyny in treatment, and why Reproductive Justice must be at the heart of every solution.

The book was made possible by the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust through a grant to the Jean Hailes Foundation. Hard to Bear is published by Ultimo Press.

WOMEN FOR YES

Add your name to our open letter in support of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to parliament.

SIGNATORIES

HON LINDA BURNEY MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians

LEANNE MILLER AM
Executive Director, Koorie Women Mean Business

FIONA STANLEY AC
Epidemiologist, Child and Family Health Specialist

MARIA DIMOPOULOS AM
Chair, Safe + Equal

BELINDA DUARTE
CEO, Culture is Life

ALANA JOHNSON AM
Co-founder, Voices for Indi

MARY CROOKS AO
Project Director, Together, Yes

ILONA LEE AM
Project Director, Shabbat Table Talks

DURÉ DARA OAM
Chair, Global Reconciliation Australia

SIGN NOW

Scan the QR code to read and sign the letter

Or visit: togetheryes.com.au/open-letter

yes23

TOGETHER, YES

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S TRUST

Together, Yes is a harm prevention campaign by the Victorian Women's Trust as Trustee of the Dugdale Trust for Women & Girls.
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