

ISSUE NO. 101 | NOVEMBER 2024



Fay Marles AM. Image by Peter Casamento

Hello friends. Time has flown and there is much to catch up on.

Firstly, we pay our respects to Fay Marles, a pioneering feminist advocate, who passed away on 1 November at the age of 98.

Fay served as Victoria's first Equal Opportunity Commissioner, a role she held from 1977 to 1987. Later, she became the University of Melbourne's 18th Chancellor, serving from 2001 to 2004 as the first woman to hold this position.

Fay Marles was a devoted mother to Vic, Jen, Liz, and Richard, and a grandmother to eight. An inspiration to her family and broader community, her legacy endures through the Fay Marles Equal Opportunity Sub-Fund, established in 2013 as part of the Victorian Women's Trust Benevolent Trust. Through this fund, her dedication to equality and inclusion continues to empower future generations.

In other news, Lieu Le, our dedicated and accomplished Administration Officer, celebrated three decades at the Trust (yes, you read that right), and another round of exceptional Victorian gender equality projects have been selected to receive grants from our portfolio of Sub-Funds.

From July to September, we hit the road for two Digital Skills intensives with Rural Women Online—one in Shepparton, another in Yackandandah.

In the digital space, we've launched six episodes of Smart Plays, the Club Respect podcast, and held a World Menopause Day webinar with experts Jane Bennett and Prof Jayashri Kulkarni. And if you've had a baby in the last decade, don't miss our Maternity Care Survey—your input is vital for advocating needed changes in women's health.

As always, thank you for your support.



Rural Women Online Greater Shepparton
IMAGE BY ALLIE JAMES PHOTOGRAPHY



Rural Women Online North East Victoria
IMAGE BY JASON ROBINS

Getting Rural Women Online in Shepparton and Yackandandah

By Freya Bennett

In 2024, the Victorian Women's Trust hosted two groundbreaking Rural Women Online Intensives, bringing hands-on digital skills workshops to women in Greater Shepparton and North East Victoria. Our goal was to equip women with practical digital tools and foster a sense of community through learning.

Supported by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and Bendigo Bank, the events provided practical workshops and one-on-one tech support, empowering and connecting rural women.

Held from 5–9 August, the Greater Shepparton Intensive ran workshops on telehealth, online safety, and avoiding scams, with multicultural sessions for Shepparton's diverse community.

Keynote speaker Prof Julian Thomas from RMIT University delivered an inspiring talk on the societal impacts of digital communication, underscoring the importance of digital literacy. His work has been instrumental in making technology more accessible to communities often left behind, such as rural women.

The North East Victoria Intensive, held from 11–15 September in Yackandandah, focused on women in business, providing sessions on digital marketing, photography, and branding. Disaster preparedness was also a key theme, with workshops on using tech tools during emergencies.

Journalist and author Anna Krien delivered a keynote on resilience in rural communities, linking digital preparedness with broader empowerment. This speech has since been published in the November 2024 issue of *The Monthly* magazine.

“AND THIS IS A PROBLEM WE HAVE TO COLLECTIVELY CONFRONT, BECAUSE THE INTERNET HAS BECOME ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE. IT NOW HOSTS ALL MANNER OF NECESSARY SERVICES, AND YET SO MUCH OF IT OPERATES NOT AS A PUBLIC ENTITY BUT AS A PRIVATE COMPANY.”

– Anna Krien, *The Monthly*

These events weren’t just about digital literacy — they were about supporting women to feel confident in a world where technology can feel intimidating.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Victorian Women’s Trust will now close off this innovative project initiative by making sure that its website carries as much supportive and learning material as possible, so that rural and regional women can continue pursuing opportunities for learning and connection.

“DIGITAL INCLUSION REALLY MEANS THAT THOSE SERVICES AND PLATFORMS THAT WE RELY ON NEED TO BE DESIGNED TO BENEFIT NOT JUST THE SEVEN OR THE EIGHT OR THE NINE AUSTRALIANS WHO ARE CONNECTED, BUT ALL 10 OF THEM. ALL OF THEM, NO MATTER WHERE THEY ARE.”

– Prof Julian Thomas

Prof Julian Thomas.
Image supplied



Anna Krien. IMAGE BY JASON ROBINS

The Rural Women Online Digital Intensives in Greater Shepparton and North East Victoria was made possible thanks to support from Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and Bendigo Bank. Both keynotes were proudly supported by NBN Local. Thank you to everyone who supported this pioneering initiative.

Learn more about Rural Women Online
→ www.ruralwomenonline.org.au

Smart Plays Podcast enters its second season

After a successful first season, Club Respect's podcast, Smart Plays, was back with an additional 6 episodes:

1: Combatting online abuse with AI

Featuring Matt Von don Der Muhll

2: Changing club culture – Pemulwuy Shield

Featuring Daniel Bourke

3: The scourge of match official abuse

Featuring Patrick Skene

4: Walking in two worlds – First Nations inclusion in sport

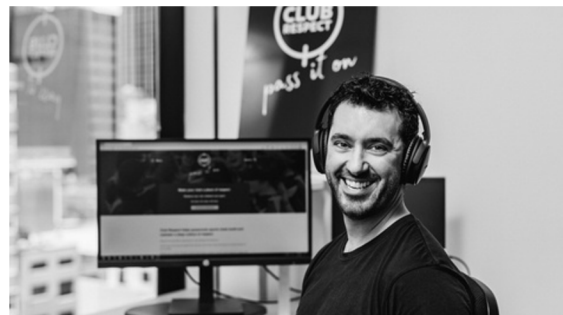
(Part A): Featuring Tahlia Taylor-Kickett

5: Walking in two worlds – First Nations inclusion in sport

(Part B): Featuring Jacara Egan

6: Revolutionising sports uniforms for women and girls

Featuring Prof Claire Hanlon



Tarik Bayrakli. IMAGE BY BREANNA DUNBAR

Smart Plays has been made possible thanks to the support of donors. Special thanks to Spicers Australia and the Wood Foundation.

Listen to Smart Plays

→ www.clubrespect.org.au/podcast/

Celebrating our interns

We love our Internship program – the chance for young people to research and write on issues which assist our advocacy and for us to create a special personal and professional experience for each.

Thanks to each and every one of you:

Allie Villalon – University of Melbourne, *Social Media, Democracy and Youth: A Maelstrom of Our Making*

Yi-Ping Lin – Deakin University, *Race Relations under the Spotlight: Covid-19's heightening of racism towards Asian Australians*

Kiri Bain – University of Melbourne, *The State of Play: Gender Equality, Society and Sport*

Manolattida (Diamond) Litthiboulom – Victorian University, *VWT's Kitchen Table Conversation Model and its relevance to community development in Laos*

Natalie Smith – University of Melbourne, *Issues around AI and its role in sexual abuse of women*

Devini Raj Kumar – University of Melbourne, *The Quality of Maternity Care in Australia*

Monae Scott-Coutts – Australian Catholic University, *The Quality of Maternity Care in Australia*



MATERNITY CARE SURVEY

Help shape the future of Maternity Care in Australia

Everybody deserves quality maternity care. But as recent studies show, we aren't always given the care we need. It's time to speak out, and change the system for the better.

- Have you had a baby in Australia the past 10 years?
- What was your experience of the care you received during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period?

We have prepared a Maternal Care Survey to gain a deeper understanding of people's birth experiences in Australia (including non-binary and trans parents).

If you are comfortable sharing your story, we would love to hear from you.

START NOW

WWW.REDCAPVWT.COM

Grants update

In the July–August 2024 grant round, we received over 100 grant applications. On October 15, 2024, the Trustees approved 19 grants that encompassed all of our Sub-Funds.

These grants contribute to advancing gender equality by addressing issues such as family violence, mental health, financial abuse, strategic leadership, social participation, and more.

Learn more about our Sub-Fund grants
→ www.vwt.org.au/grants/sub-funds/



IMAGES COURTESY OF CONSCIOUS COMBAT CLUB
AND WEENTHUNGA HEALTH NETWORK

Finding Hope in Grief Podcast

Hope Bereavement Care

Granted \$5,000 by the Loula Rodopoulos Sub-Fund

Trauma-informed Kickboxing Scholarships

Conscious Combat Club

Granted \$10,000 by the Con Irwin Sub-Fund

The Missing Middle Women: A Burning Issue

Women's Property Initiatives

Granted \$6,600 by the Jean McCaughey Sub-Fund

Calmbirth Educators for Public Patients

Barwon Health

Granted \$9,600 by the Joan Hudson Sub-Fund

The Girls' Circle Project

Banksia Gardens Community Services

Granted \$10,000 by the Prue Myer Sub-Fund

Raise Youth Mentoring Program

Raise Foundation

Granted \$10,000 by the Prue Myer Sub-Fund

You can't be what you can't see

Tradeswomen Australia Community Foundation

Granted \$7,000 by the Fay Marles Sub-Fund

Women in Recovery

Prison Network Ltd

Granted \$7,600 by the Jan Webster & Sue Peterson Sub-Fund

Financial Wellbeing for Ageing Women in Victoria

WIRE (Women's Information and Referral Exchange)

Granted \$6,500 by the Fleur Spitzer Sub-Fund

Access to Women's Circus Program for Girls

Women's Circus

Granted \$3,600 by the Alma & Albert Tivendale Sub-Fund

Multicultural Women Fashion

Multicultural Women Victoria

Granted \$8,300 by the Essie Burbridge Sub-Fund

The Emerge Program Expansion

Fitted for Work Ltd

Granted \$7,400 by the Ruth Owens and Kevin Lynch Sub-Fund

Zero Tolerance for FGM

East African Women's Foundation

Granted \$9,200 by the Humanitas Sub-Fund

Bush Nursery Pathways

Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association

Granted \$4,200 by the Union of Australian Women Sub-Fund

Yarning Up Strong Lil Sis Retreat

Weenthunga Health Network

Granted \$8,200 by the Christine Friday & Kathleen Pooley Sub-Fund

Culturally Informed Solutions

Wellsprings for Women

Granted \$7,700 by the Supriya Singh Sub-Fund

Tech Skills for Women with Intellectual Disability

Wavlink Community House (Wavlink Inc)

Granted \$5,900 by the Nancye & John Cain Sub-Fund

Strategy Planning Summit

Early Pregnancy Loss Coalition Ltd

Granted \$9,700 by the Deborah Ganderton & John Henry Sub-Fund

Identifying Gendered Loopholes and Gaps

WIRE (Women's Information and Referral Exchange)

Granted \$7,000 by the Fay Marles Equal Opportunity Sub-Fund

News & Events

Advisory appointment

Congratulations go out to Leanne Miller AM, Executive Director of Koorie Women Mean Business and longstanding Trust partner, for her appointment to the Victorian Government's *Our Equal State reference group* in early October.

The group will provide strategic advice on the implementation of the state government's gender equality strategy, with each of the 10 members bringing their own perspectives and unique experience to the role.

30 years at the Trust

On Monday 8 August 1994, Lieu Le began her role as Administrative Assistant at the Victorian Women's Trust. Thirty years later, as Administrative Officer and Personal Assistant to the Executive Director, Lieu continues to be a truly fantastic support to staff, board and donors – in ways that are often unknown or unseen.



Lieu Le and Queenie the VWT pup
IMAGE BY ALLY OLIVER-PERHAM

People like Lieu don't come by very often. Dedicated. Loyal. Good-humoured. Constructive. Honest. Ethical. A lifelong learner. A team player. Congratulations Lieu, and thank you for everything!

The Second Spring

Navigating Perimenopause and Menopause

On 18 October, the Victorian Women's Trust marked World Menopause Day with an expert panel discussing perimenopause and menopause. Jane Bennett, Menopause Educator, and Prof Jayashri Kulkarni explored societal perceptions, economic impacts, and medical support during these life stages.



Jane Bennett. IMAGE SUPPLIED



Prof Jayashri Kulkarni. IMAGE SUPPLIED

Moderated by journalist Gina Rushton, the speakers offered realistic, practical insights into this not often talked about phase of life.

Watch the webinar recording

→ www.vwt.org.au/webinar-the-second-spring-navigating-perimenopause-and-menopause/

3 for 2

At the VWT Shop → www.vwt.org.au/shop/

\$30



Three A2 posters by local artist
Michelle Pereira. Unframed.

Have yourself a very feminist Christmas