



Australian Federation
of **Medical Women**
the voice of australian medical women

afmw.org.au

Annual Report 2014

15 November 2014



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The Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW)

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Table of Contents

Statement of Purpose	3
Philosophy, Our Mission and Vision	4
President's Report	5
National Co-ordinator's Report	8
yMWIA Representative's Report	9
Secretary's Report, Communications & Media	11
Structure & History	13
Organisational Profile & Objectives	14
Council & Executive Members	16
Advocacy & Projects	17
Commemorating Medical Women	20
AFMW State Member Groups	22
Financial Statements	25

Statement of Purpose

We offer our members, colleagues and the community access to the collective knowledge and experiences of medical women and seek to ensure equity and equality for women doctors to achieve their potential throughout all stages of their professional lives.

Philosophy

The AFMW's philosophy is enshrined in these key principles:

Caring	For all persons in the Australian community, particularly women and children.
Respect	Promote respect for diversity and difference.
Service	Motivated by free will and the absence of any financial or non-financial gain.
Equity	Achieving fairness while recognising different experiences, needs, levels of power, access and expectations and ways of expressing illness.
Equality	The absence of bias, for all people, in opportunities and the allocation of resources with the purpose of achieving equitable outcomes.
Human Rights	Uphold the principles of human rights as defined by the United Nations.
Gender Competence	Promote gender competence in knowledge, education, research and health service provision, reflecting the capacity to identify where difference, on the basis of gender, is significant and act in ways that produce more equitable outcomes for women and men.
Development	Further the development of medical women through education and research, particularly in relation to the health of women and children.

The Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW) was formed in 1927 to promote and develop the formal practice of medicine among women.

It is the only national body that exclusively represents the views of female medical practitioners, and is a non-profit, non-government organisation with affiliated state member bodies.

Our Vision The voice of Australian medical women advocating for, and supporting the health and welfare of our local, national and international communities.

President's Report



AFMW PRESIDENT
Dr Desiree Yap

This year marks the end of my second triennium as President. It has been an honour to serve the Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW), which was created by Australian Medical Women in 1927. I am going to take the opportunity to reflect on not only the activities of the AFMW and where medical women have been, but also where we might be going.

In the past 12 months, we have been part of celebrating 125 years of Women in Medicine with the University of Melbourne and been involved with Dr Heather Sheard, a historian, in planning and celebrating the Australian Medical Women who served in World War I – 20 or so of them. Despite rejection by the Australian Defence Forces, they served in various positions and places, including field hospitals on the front. Some were pioneers in trauma surgery, others pathologists. What puzzles me, is why had I never heard of them?

Of course it's obvious, it is about gender bias in the telling of history. This feeling was repeated as I attended the University of Melbourne's Medical Museum and received the wonderful catalogue for 'Strength of Mind: 125 Years of Women in Medicine'. There are scores of stories about medical women and their most amazing achievements in the catalogue, and one can only wonder how it is we haven't heard of so many of them – not even those of us actively involved in our Medical Women's Societies!

Then there is the consideration of the future of Medical Women's Societies and similar, which continue in some circles to be derided and discounted, despite their obvious contribution to the advancement of not only medical women, but the health of women and children. This advancement would almost certainly not have happened had it not been for the Societies and the medical women who supported them. I don't have the space here to list their achievements, but they are many. Our much more modest achievements for this year are listed in this report.

There is the issue of where medical women are today. Clearly great strides have been made in terms of participation in the medical workforce, but we remain under-represented in senior positions – as Deans of Medical Schools, Senior Academics, senior positions in hospitals, senior positions in colleges and other medical bodies such as the Australian Medical Association (AMA). There remains issues of the invisibility of medical women (not just in history!), and medical culture, including acceptable workplace behaviour and equity.

With respect to medical curriculum, there is the issue of Gender in Medicine, including what gets included and what is excluded. In colleges there remain issues with training – part-time, breaks, transparency and so on. Some of these issues are not just about medical women but medical men as well. 'Normalisation' of the workforce – parental leave, flexible training and flexible working hours – benefit our male colleagues as well!

Associate Professors Deborah Colville and Jan Coles put together a presentation on behalf of the AFMW for MABEL (Medicine in Australia: Balancing Medicine and Life - Australia's national longitudinal survey of doctors) that is really worth reading and provides the references for my assertions above. This is available on our website. They summarize the following phases of organization culture:

- Denial: There is no problem
- The problem is Women
- Incremental adjustment: a few targeted women in prominence
- Committing to a new culture.

President's Report Continued

There is good research to show the 'Pipeline Theory' is a myth (Sinclair 1999) and that women don't have 'special needs' but few resources (Quadrio 2001).

The AFMW and your Medical Women's Societies still need your support, as there is still more work to be done both in Australia and Internationally, not only for women doctors, but for women and children globally. The Medical Women's International Association celebrates 100 years in 2019 and the AFMW in 2027. I wonder where we will be then?

AFMW achievements this year:

Ongoing:

- AFMW saw the production of the first progress report for the Australian Research Grant-funded study 'Elucidating the increasing demand for genital cosmetic surgery among girls and women in Australia', carried out in alliance with The Jean Hailes Foundation, Southern Health, Family Planning Victoria and Women's Health Victoria. (See report enclosed).
- Dr Marion Davies (WA) continuing on the Pharmaceuticals Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC). Dr Shelia Rahman, NSW nominated in the August call for nominations.
- The AFMW's quarterly newsletter and growing presence across social media.
- Expansion of the Leadership Skills Database and 'Thank You Initiative' where we thank and recognise our mentors.
- AFMW representation and consultation to various government and industry bodies.
- Involvement in gender-related issues with the medical training colleges, industrial issues for doctors in training, particularly (but not exclusively) female doctors in training and the Australian Medical Student's Association.
- Supporting the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's anti-racism campaign.
- Equal Opportunity Exemption: gives the AFMW the option to restrict attendance at meetings, seminars and events to women only (the exempt conduct) when appropriate
- Signatory to the National Compact; an agreement between the Australian Government and the not-for-profit sector to find new and better ways of working together based on mutual trust, respect and collaboration

New Initiatives:

- AFMW members submitted a response to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recent Secretariat report entitled 'Addressing the global challenge of violence, in particular against women and girls'.
- AFMW Position Statements on Doctor's Conscience and Women's Reproductive Rights.
- AFMW members and student members presented at the 58th United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status for Women, New York.
- Involvement with the University of Melbourne's Research Project.
- AFMW was invited to present at the annual Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life's (MABEL) Research Forum: key issues facing women in their current and future role in medicine, and on policy to promote women's participation.
- The AFMW lobbied the Minister for Foreign Affairs and other MPs to lend their support to the 'Bring Back Our Girls' campaign for the release of abducted Nigerian schoolgirls.
- Continuing advocacy topics: ARTIC 30; death penalty issue; womens' and childrens' refugees; and Divestment Movement.

President's Report Continued

- AFMW partnered with historian Dr Heather Sheard to begin projects 'Commemorating Women Doctors' and teamed up with other researchers to explore 'Women in History'.
- AFMW wrote to numerous ministers objecting to the Medicare co-payment on the grounds that it will prevent those most in need from accessing health care, particularly single parents who are already financially disadvantaged.
- AFMW continues to work on the development of our new constitution - Victorian committee member Dr Kate Duncan is chairing this enormous undertaking.



Dr Desiree Yap, President, AFMW



Caption: The Medical Women's International Association Executive 2013-2016.
Front row left to right: Shelley Ross, Bettina Pfeleiderer, Kyung Ah Park, Afua Hesse
Back row left to right: Mercedes Viteri, Carole Williams, Hiroko Yamamoto (our WP MWIA Vice-President), Khatuna Kaladze, Shafika Nasser, Christiane Pouliart, Gail Beck, Bong Ok Kim, Helen Goodyear

National Co-ordinator's Report



AFMW NATIONAL CO-
ORDINATOR
Assoc Prof Deb Colville

Ongoing collaboration with our national and international colleagues.

2014 has been a very busy year on the international scene with lots of opportunities for our medical students to attend and present at overseas conferences.

- **International collaboration.** AFMW members attended the World Health Organisation's (WHO) World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland in May 2014. Also, Past AFMW President, Dr Gabrielle Casper and a number of Notre Dame medical students presented at the 58th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York. The theme was 'Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls'.

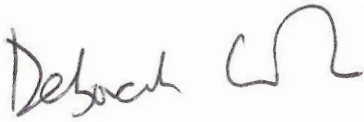
MWIA activities during the past twelve months have included:

- Distributed the Communique of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Plan, which is part of the Saving Every Woman, Every Child commitment.
- Contributed to the Unicef handbook on adolescent health.
- MWIA are looking for Testimonials of women who were in Beijing in 1995 for the European Women's Lobby, who is writing a report on Beijing +20.
- Determining what will be included in the WHO Post 2015 Agenda, which replaces the Millennium Development Goals.
- MWIA and Medical Women's Federation UK (MWF) strongly supported Amnesty International in their campaign 'Occupational Hazards', focusing on the threats that many Afghan women face just doing their jobs.
- MWIA is developing a Training Manual on Eliminating Violence Against Women and Children.
- MWIA added their name to the World Medical Association statement on violence along with WONCA (international family physicians). WMA is the global federation of National Medical Associations representing the millions of physicians worldwide.
- World Health Assembly adopted a resolution (by MWIA, WONCA and the World Medical Association) on violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children.
- MWIA spoke out strongly against the abduction of the Nigerian schoolgirls.
- The Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) MWIA representative is Dr Clarissa Fabre. CIOMS is an international, non-governmental, non-profit organization established jointly by WHO and UNESCO in 1949.
- MWIA congratulates the Kenyan Medical Women's Association (KMWA) on its 30th anniversary.
- Responded to the Lancet Article, Intimate Partner Violence and HIV: Unwelcome Accomplices.
- UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon pledged support for an international campaign to fight Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). MWIA also supported the campaign in the UK.
- MWIA official relations continues with WHO.
- MWIA webinar series 2014 - Prof. Padmini Murthy, MWIA Rep. to the UN and Director of Global Health at the New York Medical College presented a Webinar on: "Women's Health is Society's Wealth – MDGs and beyond MWIA".
- MWIA congratulates Dr Dra Bachelet on her election to the position of President of Chile. Dra Bachelet was the former Executive Director of UN women.
- **International Assemblies.** MWIA International Congresses and General Assemblies are

National Co-ordinator's Report

held every three years in various countries of the world. At the scientific meetings of Congresses papers are presented on a chosen topic. The General Assemblies decide upon administrative policy. Resolutions expressing the concerns of the members are submitted to the General Assembly for approval. The 30th MWIA Congress will be held 28-31 July 2016, Vienna, Austria.

- **Regional Meetings.** AFMW members are eligible to attend all MWIA regional meetings. The next Western Pacific Regional MWIA Meeting is due to be held 24-25 April 2015 in Taiwan. Contact the AFMW secretariat (via afmw@afmw.org.au) if you'd like to participate.
- **Young MWIA (yMWIA).** The AFMW's yMWIA Representative (Registered Medical Woman < 40 years of age) is Dr Marissa Daniels (VIC).



Associate Professor Deb Colville, National Co-ordinator, AFMW

yMWIA Representative

Just as 2013-14 marks the start of a new triennium for MWIA, so it does for the Medical Women's International Association's Special Interest Group for Young Female Doctors and Medical Students (yMWIA). It has been a busy year for young medical women in Australia, with many opportunities to engage with the global community both to gain experience and contribute to improving health for women and children internationally.

The MWIA triennium theme of "Prevention and Elimination of Domestic and Sexual Violence" is the focus for yMWIA. Leading by example, Dr Pam Liao (Canada, yMWIA Newsletter Editor) and Dr Charlotte Roehrborn (Germany, yMWIA Public Relations Officer) are coordinating a series of webinars on topics pertinent to this theme. The first of these, held on February 1, was presented by Dr Padmini Murthy, MWIA Representative to the United Nations and Director of Global Health at the New York Medical College. She presented "Women's Health is Society's Wealth – MDGs and beyond". Her presentation is available via the MWIA website: <http://mwia.net>. Dr Gabrielle Casper gave the second webinar on the topic of "Violence Against Women – a Pervasive Human Rights Violation of Pandemic Proportion".



AFMW's Student Representative: Allison Hemenstall, attending the WHO's 67th Assembly, Geneva, 2014

National Co-ordinator's Report

yMWIA Representative Continued

At a national level, the AFMW has provided a unique platform for young people to engage with international communities. The AFMW lobbied the Minister for Foreign Affairs to lend support for the 'Bring Back Our Girls' campaign, and against Brunei's newly enacted penal code that allows stoning to death for crimes such as falling pregnant outside of marriage. In addition, a number of inspiring young women participated in international meetings. Dr Gabrielle Casper and a group of students from the University of Notre Dame attended the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York from March 10th to 21st 2014. In May, The World Health Organisation's 67th World Health Assembly provided another opportunity to learn from, and engage with, global health leaders.

In order to facilitate increased communication among young medical women globally, the yMWIA newsletter has recommenced! This provides a regular occasion to raise issues of importance, discuss interesting projects and to share experiences. Submit articles of interest at: <http://mwia.net/young-mwia/>.

All AFMW members <40 yrs are able to join yMWIA. Sign up at <http://mwia.net/young-mwia>

Dr Marissa Daniels, AFMW yMWIA Representative



AFMW's Student Representatives Attending the 57th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, New York, 2013

From Left: Ms Caitlin Dallas, Ms Yolande Fogarty, Ms Victoria Harris; and Ms Carly Brazel

Secretary's Report



AFMW Secretary
Dr Jillian Tomlinson

The AFMW continues to be active across a range of social media, in addition to all the other activities outlined in this report. The AFMW has focussed on developing an informed position that advances ethical behaviour of the medical profession and protects provision of world class medical care to all Australian women.

The following Draft Position Statements will be ratified at the next annual general meeting:

AFMW Draft Position Statement on Doctors' Conscience

1. AFMW recognizes that medical professionals are obliged to make clinical decisions that affect and are affected by the ethical, legal, religious and personal beliefs of doctors, patients and other parties.
2. AFMW recognizes the right of doctors to hold conscientious objections.
3. Whereas AFMW respects the rights of doctors, AFMW believes doctors have a duty of care to provide unbiased information and to disclose their conscientious objections.

AFMW Draft Position Statement on Women's Reproductive Rights

- AFMW upholds that every woman in every country should have the right to decide if she wishes or not to become pregnant.
- Reliable information and safe means to prevent pregnancy should be available to all women.
- AFMW recognizes that termination of pregnancy is requested by some women.
- AFMW believes that safe and legal abortion services should be available, affordable and accessible. In worldwide promotion of women's health, access to safe abortions is seen as an important issue.
- AFMW recognizes the rights of women and girls and upholds the right of women and girls to undergo lawful medical and surgical treatments, including abortion
- AFMW recognizes the autonomy of women and upholds their right to choose to undergo lawful medical and surgical treatments, including abortion.
- AFMW upholds women and girls' right to seek and obtain unbiased information about healthcare, including abortion.

Through the AFMW's willingness to embrace new technologies and social media, our members have actively contributed to various discussions. Topics have included domestic violence, celebrating medical women's achievements; and conversations about workforce and gender.

Golden Jubilee Members

An Australian medical woman registered for over 50 years is eligible for a MWIA Golden Jubilee Certificate. The next opportunity for members to be recognised will be in 2016. Please send your nominations to the AFMW Secretariat for inclusion.

Dr Jillian Tomlinson, Secretary, AFMW

Secretary's Report Continued

Communications & Media

Website



Our website (www.afmw.org.au) continues to feature content relevant to Australian female medical students and doctors. Our website content is educational for both medical personnel and allied industries.

AFMW eNewsletter



Our quarterly electronic newsletter continues to be a major method of contact with members and stakeholders, with subscription rates climbing to record levels. Our electronic communications enable us to deliver health promotional activities not only to rural students but also to geographically challenged individuals.

Reciprocal advertising arrangements have been negotiated for a variety of conferences that are directly relevant to our members. The eNewsletter has received sponsorship from BOQ and Automotive Vehicle Brokers Australia.

Facebook



The AFMW Facebook Page continues to offer our members news and networking opportunities. The AFMW uses Facebook to communicate messages about events, activities and opportunities. The AFMW also cross-posts on state medical women's societies Facebook Pages, predominantly regarding new eNewsletter releases.

Twitter



We have embraced Twitter (@AFMWorgau) and connect with hundreds of Twitter users including large numbers of Australian not-for-profit organisations and women's organisations. A daily newsletter has been created of moderated tweets on gendered issues and from accounts that the AFMW follows.

LinkedIn



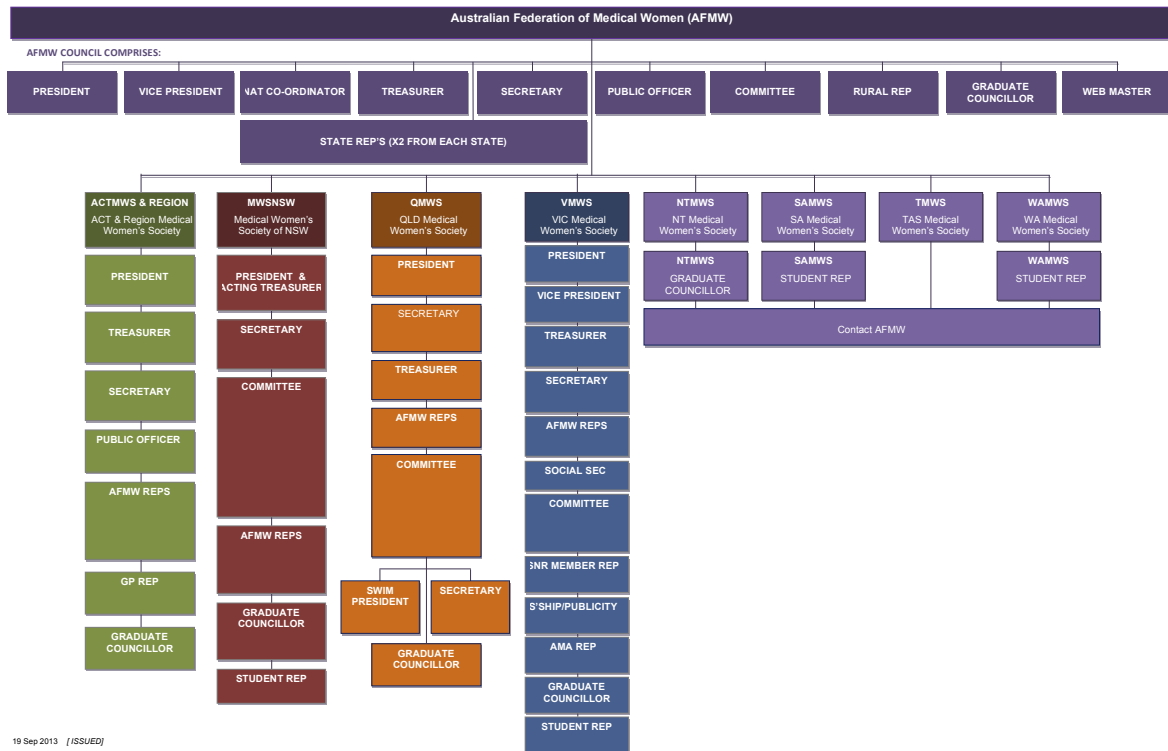
In April 2011 we launched a LinkedIn group that affords Australian medical women online professional networking opportunities. The group is 'closed', with entry limited to female Australian doctors and medical students. Women can participate in the discussion forums with their comments visible only to other Australian doctors and medical students.

Networking

The AFMW and its State Medical Women's Societies actively engage in various networking opportunities. This provides a face-to-face forum where we can share our knowledge and provide educational information not only with our medical colleagues but also with other professions.

Structure & History

AFMW Organisational Chart 2013



History

- 1895 Victorian Medical Women's Society (VMWS)
- 1919 Medical Women's International Association (MWIA)
- 1921 Medical Women's Society of New South Wales (MWSNSW)
- 1927 Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW)
- 1937 Queensland Medical Women's Society (QMWS)
- 1950+ SA, WA, ACT, Tasmania Medical Women's Societies
- 1995 Supporting Women In Medicine (SWIM), student organisation, University of Queensland

AFMW: MEMBERS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND the United Nations (UN) Dept of Public Information and Non-Governmental Organisations (DPINGO) Conferences; the World Health Assembly; regional World Health Organisation (WHO) meetings; and the Commission on the Status of Women in New York



Australian Federation of Medical Women

the voice of Australian medical women

Organisation Profile

The Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW) aims to further the professional development of medical women through education and research, and to improve the health and welfare of all Australians — especially women and children.

The AFMW participates in health-policy development and service delivery, increasing women's voices in existing national academic and health areas so that the contributions of medical women can be fully realised and their skills fittingly applied to meet the medical education and healthcare needs of all Australians.

AFMW Objectives

1. To stimulate, encourage and promote the entry of women into the medical sciences and help them to optimally use their medical training.
2. To foster friendship, respect and understanding among medical women throughout the world, without regard to race, religion or political views.
3. To afford medical women the opportunity to meet at stated times to consider problems together and foster the co-operation of medical women in matters of health.
4. To promote the interest of medical women in all matters relating to their professional work through continuing education and other means.
5. To act for and represent medical women in all matters of mutual interest at national and international levels, and, in particular, in relation to the further education of Australian medical women.

Advocacy

The AFMW's advocacy involves many and varied activities on behalf of its constituents and in the general health field, including:

- addressing sexual violence, discrimination, bullying, harassment, domestic violence and occupational violence
- informing governments about medical women's perspectives (latterly this has included meetings with policy advisors and participating in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), round-table discussions); promoting and facilitating professional mentoring and providing leadership skills training to medical women
- examining provisions for flexible training and retraining to promote workplace retention and re-entry of female doctors



Memberships and Affiliations

The MWIA

The AFMW is affiliated with the Medical Women's International Association (MWIA), the international umbrella for all the national medical women's societies, across six continents. Established in 1919, and therefore one of the oldest professional bodies at the international

Profile Continued

level, the MWIA is non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit making. The MWIA is actively involved with the United Nations (UN) as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and UNICEF. It is represented on the Board of the General Council of International Organisation of the Medical Sciences, and has NGO-observer status to the World Medical Association (WMA).

The MWIA's aims are to:

- promote co-operation between medical women from different countries and to develop friendship and understanding between medical women worldwide
- actively work against gender-related inequalities in the medical profession between female and male doctors, including career opportunities and economic aspects
- offer medical women the opportunity to meet, to confer questions concerning the health and well-being of humanity

AFMW membership confers automatic membership in the MWIA. The MWIA provides its members with the opportunity to exchange ideas, medically and personally, with colleagues from other nations.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)

The PBAC is an independent expert body appointed by the Australian Government. Members include doctors, health professionals, health economists and consumer representatives.

I was appointed to the PBAC in June 2013 after my nomination by the AFMW was accepted by the Minister for Health.

The PBAC works to provide affordable access to cost effective medicines and to promote quality use of medicines in the Australian community. The PBAC decide if a medicine should be recommended to the Minister for Health for inclusion under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Under the National Health Act 1953 the Minister cannot list an item unless it has been recommended by the PBAC.

My role on the PBAC as a Rural Generalist is to represent rural and remote Australians, and to consider the unique challenges of access to healthcare in these environments. Members of PBAC consider not only the clinical effectiveness, value for money and safety of a medicine, but also how best to achieve convenient and equitable access. This includes deciding who can prescribe the item (for example: Nurse Practitioners, optometrists) and access under different schemes such as the National Immunisation Program or Section 100.

I am finding my role on the PBAC highly challenging and rewarding. I thank the AFMW for supporting my nomination and I encourage all AFMW members to nominate for Boards and Committees of organisations that they have an interest in.

[Dr Marion Davies, AFMW - PBAC Representative](#)

Other Memberships & Affiliations

The AFMW is also a member of the Australian Women's Coalition (AWC) (a group of women's organisations that works collaboratively to advance the status of women, by presenting the views of Australian women to Government) and the Equality Rights Alliance (formerly WomenSpeak) Network, a non-government secretariat that provides representative advice on policy issues affecting women, including childcare, women's health, women's leadership, young women, the role of men and boys in gender equity and violence against women.

Executive and Council Members



AFMW PRESIDENT
Dr Desiree Yap
Committee,
Victorian Medical
Women's Society



**AFMW Vice President,
VMWS AFMW Rep**
Dr Raie Goodwach
Past President,
Victorian Medical
Women's Society



AFMW TREASURER
Dr Sharon Tivey
President & Acting
Treasurer Medical
Women's Society
of NSW



AFMW SECRETARY
Dr Jillian Tomlinson
Committee, Victorian
Medical Women's
Society



**AFMW Immed.
Past President
MWIA REP**
Dr Susanne
(Susie) Close
Committee
Medical
Women's Society
ACT & Region



**AFMW REG. CO-
ORDINATOR**
Assoc Prof Deborah
(Deb) Colville
President, Victorian
Medical Women's
Society



**AFMW RURAL CO-
ORDINATOR**
Dr Marjorie Cross
Committee Member
Medical Women's
Society ACT &
Region



ACT & REGION
Dr Suzanne (Sue)
Packer
President, MWS ACT
& Region



**MWS ACT &
REGION AFMW
REP**
Dr Jane Twin
Publications
Secretary, Medical
Women's Society
ACT & Region



**AFMW Committee
Professor Gabrielle
Casper**
Past President,
AFMW
+ MWIA
Committee Member
MWS NSW



**MWS NSW AFMW
REP**
Dr Elizabeth (Liz)
Rickman
Committee Member,
Medical Women's
Society of NSW
Image © Torunn Momtazi



QMWS
Dr Janet Huang
President, QLD
Medical Women's
Society



QMWS AFMW REP
Dr Lidia Koval
Committee, QLD
Medical Women's
Society



**AFMW Junior
Doctor Rep**
Dr Namiko
Kobayashi
South Australian
Medical Women's
Society



**SA MWS AFMW
Student Rep**
Ms Lisa Raven
South Australian
Medical
Women's Society



VMWS AFMW Rep
Dr Magdalena
Simonis
VMWS Immediate
Past President,
Victorian Medical
Women's Society



VMWS AFMW REP
Dr Catherine (Kate)
Duncan
Committee Member,
Victorian Medical
Women's Society



**WA MWS AFMW
Rep**
Ms Sophie McCarthy
Student Rep.,
Western Australian
Medical Women's
Society

Advocacy + Projects

Advocacy

The AFMW progresses many projects of importance to medical women, both alone and in conjunction with other groups such as the Australian Women's Coalition (AWC), the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and community groups.

The projects that the AFMW is involved in can be classed into three main areas:

1. Advocacy

The AFMW progresses a variety of advocacy issues in line with its philosophy and goals as listed on page four.

2. Humanitarian

Humanitarian projects include relocating medical goods or services to areas of need both locally and internationally. It includes raising funds for projects such as the Medical Student Aid Project and other causes.

3. Socialising and Networking

One of the AFMW's important goals is to provide support for women in medicine. This is mostly achieved by socialising and networking events at the local level. These often combine education in a social situation and afford medical women the opportunity to socialise with their peers within this environment. The AFMW is particularly interested in supporting medical women in regional, rural and remote areas.

Advocacy is an important part of the work that the AFMW does.

The AFMW has been advocating over the last year in the following areas:

- For the release of the ARTIC 30, including 2 Australians who were held in Russia for protesting against the continued expansion of fossil fuel projects, in this case the drilling for oil in the Arctic. Their detention was contrary to the United Nations declaration of Human Rights. We received letters back from both Hon T Plibersek and Hon J Bishop.
- For the Government to respond to the reinstatement of the death penalty for a number of "crimes" including homosexuality. We received replies back from Hon T Plibersek and Hon J Bishop.
- For the Government to urge for an effective response to the plight of the 200 Nigerian schoolgirls who were abducted. We received replies back from Hon T Plibersek and Hon J Bishop.
- For the Government to maintain Medicare as an accessible service for all without introduction of co-payment. The Prime Minister has responded confirming a no chance stance.
- For the NSW state government to reconsider withdrawal of funding to womens' and childrens' refuges. We insisted that these were essential services and their current closure would impact heavily on the women and children in vulnerable situations.
- Our advocacy work is also through keeping members informed on relevant issues through our Facebook site, including how to support the Divestment Movement to reduce the looming threat of increased health and population issues through Climate Change.
- The 60 Minutes Television Program, telephone interview – Medical Professional Opinion on Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery.

Advocacy + Projects Cont'd

Projects

AFMW Thank You Initiative

The AFMW recognises the many physicians who help our members through outstanding teaching, mentoring or instruction. We established the AFMW Thank You Initiative to give our members a way to formally recognise and express their gratitude for the invaluable contributions of their mentors and teachers. The following individuals have been nominated to date as part of the AFMW Thank You Initiative:

Dr Gabrielle Medley

Dr Gabrielle Casper

Dr Annette Carless (VIC)

Dr Sally Cockburn (VIC)

Dr Kate Duncan (VIC)

Dr Elizabeth Farrell AM (VIC)

Dr Alice Killen (NSW)

Dr Elsie Koadlow OAM (VIC) (dec')

Dr David Leonard (VIC)

Associate Prof Stephen Lew

Dr Merrilyn Murnane AM (VIC)

John Vallance Owen (deceased)

Dr Suchitra Paramaesvaran (NSW)

Dr Gillian Rothwell (NSW)

Dr Emily Teo (NSW)

Dr Desiree Yap (VIC)

Dr Karen Fuller (VIC)

*Thank
You*

Leadership Skills Database, 2008-ongoing

Elucidating the increasing demand for genital cosmetic surgery among girls and women in Australia (Nov 2013 - current)

Currently partnering with Family Planning Victoria Inc, The Jean Hailes Foundation, Southern Health Victoria, Women's Health Victoria, on this project.

This project will identify the psychosocial context of, and public communication about the dramatic rise in female genital cosmetic surgery in Australia. Results will contribute to programs for sexuality and body image education, public health campaigns about normal genital diversity and professional development for doctors and beauty therapists. (ARC Linkage Grant FGCS – LP130100025)

- Dr Karalyn McDonald has been appointed to the position of Research Fellow
- PhD scholarship awarded to Hayley Mowat
- Interviews with Women have commenced
- Key informants interviews have also started
- Call for assistance with recruitment of women and key informants

Australian Human Rights Commission – Anti Racism it Stops with Me Campaign August 2012 - 30 June 2015)

The AFMW is an official supporter of the Australian Human Rights Commission's Anti Racism Campaign.

Advocacy + Projects Cont'd

2014 Presentations

Mabel Presentation, 10 April 2014

The Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life (MABEL) is a longitudinal survey of doctors funded by the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Medical Workforce Dynamics. The AFMW has been invited to deliver a 15 minute presentation on key issues facing women in their current and future role in medicine, and key policy issues that would promote women's participation given their current social roles in our community, at the MABEL's second annual Research Forum to be held in Melbourne. Associate Professor Jan Coles delivered the presentation.

Conference Participation

International:

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW 58) "Elims" New York, March 2014.

Past AFMW projects include:

- Happy Healthy Women Not Just Survivors (HHWNJS), 2010-2013 (This project was funded by the Australian Women's Coalition Inc, from funding received from the Australian Government, Office for Women)
- Bridging Leadership Barriers (BLB) Project, 2008-09 (\$89,000 grant Australian Government, Office for Women's 2007-08 Leadership and Development Programme Grants)
- AFMW Author, Dr Jillian Tomlinson received the Australian Virtual Centre for Leadership for Women (CL W)'s 2009 "National Leadership Achievement for Women Award" for her work on the BLB project.
- The AFMW Website, 2008-09 (The AFMW gratefully acknowledges the Commonwealth Government Office for Women Leadership and Development Programme as a source of website funding in 2008-09)
- The Nigeria Widows Project (MWIA)
- Support for Rural and Remote Female Doctors in Australia and Developing CPD & Mentoring For Rural & Remote Women Doctors, 2004-2005 (\$50,000 grant Australian Government, Office for Women's Grants Programme)
- Achieving Gender & Cultural Competence by Australia's Medical Workforce, 2004-05 (\$50,000 grant Australian Government, Office for Women's Grants Programme)
- Women Talk Cancer, 2003-04 (\$50,000 grant Australian Government, Office for Women's Grants Programme)
- Gender Based Medical Education, 2003-2004 (\$50,000 grant Australian Government, Office for Women's Grants Programme)



Commemorating Medical Women

The AFMW is partnering with a number of organisations and individuals, both locally and internationally, to commemorate medical women. We are in discussions with Faircount Media and the American Medical Women's Association with a focus on World War One (WWI) and the 125th anniversary of the first woman doctor in Australia.

Commemoration of the World War 1 (WWI) service of Australia's Women Doctors

By the outbreak of WWI, small numbers of women had been graduating from medical schools at the Universities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney since 1891. By 1914, there were almost 130 women registered as medical practitioners in Australia.

Between 1914 and 1919, more than twenty Australian women doctors overcame official military policy and the social conventions of the times to provide their medical skills to wounded and sick soldiers, prisoners of war and non-combatants. Women doctors from around Australia circumvented the official prohibition of the enlistment of women doctors by paying their own way to join organisations such as the Scottish Women's Hospital, the Women's Hospital Corps with its Endell Street Military Hospital and the British, French and Belgian Red Cross. The women worked primarily as surgeons, but also as anaesthetists, pathologists, radiologists and medical officers. Amongst the places where they served were England, France, Serbia, Galicia, Salonika, Belgium, Montenegro, and Egypt.

In Australia there has been little written about these women, their determination, their courage and their outstanding war service. The rules that prevented them from official enlistment in the Australian Army Medical Corps mean that they do not officially exist and their history has become invisible.

There is no physical memorial which recognises the contribution of these women and therefore no public place for commemoration. To begin to address this, the AFMW has three projects underway with the assistance of historian Dr Heather Sheard.

Commemorative Plaque for World War One Service of Victoria's female doctors through the 2013-2014 Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program

The Federal Government Centenary Local Grants program provided electorate based funding for a twelve month period. The proposal is now with the Department of Veteran Affairs for approval.

The Melbourne women were:

- Dr Hilda Bull (Esson, Dale), Medical Officer, QMAAC, England, 1917-1919
- Dr Rachel Champion (Shaw), Surgeon, Endell St Military Hospital, London, 1916-1917
- Dr Mary de Garis, Surgeon, Scottish Women's Hospital Field Hospital, Serbia, 1917-1918, Medals: Serbian Order of St Sava III, French Red Cross
- Dr Vera Scantlebury (Brown), Surgeon, Endell St Military Hospital, London, 1917-1919
- Dr Helen Sexton, Surgeon, established her own Hôpital Australien, Auteuil near Paris, then Surgeon Val de Grace Military Hospital, Paris, 1916-1917
- Dr Isabella Younger-Ross, Surgeon/Medical Officer, Glasgow & Kent, 1916

Commemorating Medical Women cont'

Commemorative Plaque for the World War One Service of Australia's female doctors through the Saluting Their Service Grants Program

This funding program will recommence shortly and an application will be made by the AFMW for a national memorial to include all Australian women doctors who served in WWI.

Publication

In the light of the impending centenary of MWIA in 2019, there has been international interest in a Melbourne museum exhibit about women in medicine. A book has been published on this. It is entitled '**Strength of Mind: 125 years of Women in Medicine**' at the University of Melbourne. Many of the early pioneers mentioned in the book were also founders of the Victorian Medical Women's Society in 1895, and also were founders of the Queen Victoria Hospital, 'by women doctors, for women'. Established in 1896 as the Victoria Hospital for Women and Children, the 'Queen Vic' was one of only three hospitals worldwide founded, managed and staffed by women.

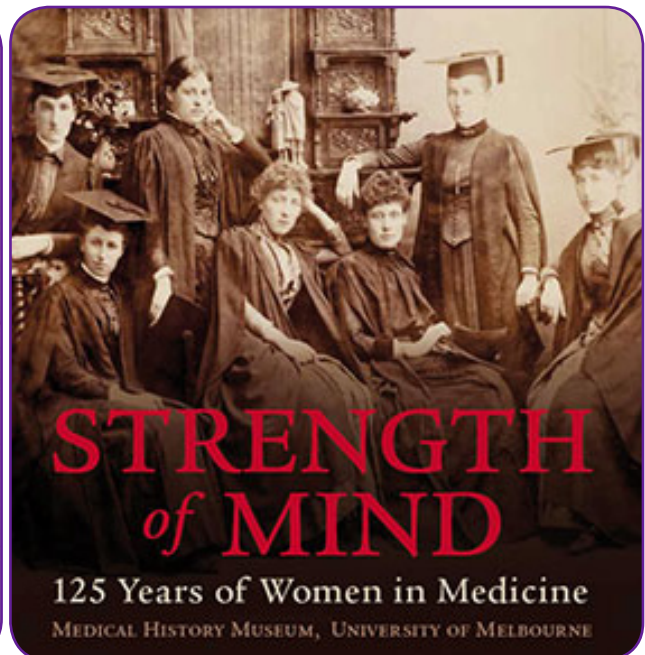
Also, Heather Sheard is currently researching widely, gathering materials for a book which will chronicle the remarkable stories of Australia's women doctors across the more than four years of the First World War.

Future Projects

The AFMW has been approached to consider undertaking joint projects with the American Medical Women's Association and the MWIA.



Lieutenant Dr Vera Scantlebury in London March 1918 wearing the uniform of the Women's Hospital Corps, with her brother Clifford (RAMC). Source: With the kind permission of Catherine James Bassett



Strength of Mind Publication, University of Melbourne: Edited by Dr Jacqueline Healy

AFMW State Member Groups

ACT & Region Medical Women's Society (MWS ACT & Region)

The MWS of ACT and Region continues to function very effectively, with an active membership including a range of members from senior retired medical women, current practitioners and a large group of medical students from the ACT Medical School.

Interest in our membership continues to grow. We've had a lot of interest from interns this year, due in part to our sponsorship of their "Medfest" (see below) at the beginning of the year.

During the past twelve months the events we organised were:

- Annual welcoming cocktail party, at which we presented the student essay prize, awarded each year for an essay on a topic related to women's and children's health.
- The juggle event, again held predominantly for medical students to help in their consideration of career choices by hearing from a number of doctors speaking of their lives and careers and how they have managed.
- Last year our fundraising event was Christmas in July and it was both successful as a fundraiser and very enjoyable and fun. It was organised to support our women's and children's charities - the Fiji Village Project; Women and the environment Congo, Newpin and Mummy's Wish.
- The education evening focused on the Stolen Generation and Forgotten Australians and included a guided tour by the CEO Julie Tongs of Winnunga Nimmityjah, the ACT Aboriginal Health Centre, which many of the doctors had not previously visited.
- Our flagship event each year is the Presentation Evening and again this was an excellent evening. On this occasion we were celebrating the success of MWS in ACT over the last 20 years, with presentations from foundation members.
- A new event this year was a morning tea organised for the interns at The Canberra Hospital during their orientation week on Monday 20 January. The intention was to let the female interns learn about MWS of ACT & Region.
- A new event we sponsored was Medfest - a short film festival exploring medicine by means of short films. It was organised by junior doctors for the students and held at ANU.
- After a break of several years, MWS ACT & Region again had a team of runners and walkers for the Mothers' Day Classic Fun Run - and won the award for the biggest team!
- We have held our education event for 2014- a dinner discussing the advances in genetics and pre-natal testing.
- Fundraising events - supporting our established charities.

This varied range of activities is only possible because of the reliability and enthusiasm of the excellent committee.

The AFMW embraces social media as a communication tool - for communicating with our members, our patients, the wider community and government and non-government organisations.

AFMW State Member Groups

NSW Medical Women's Society (MWS NSW)

The MWS of NSW saw over 30 medical women, mainly doctors with some enthusiastic students, meet and make connections over a warm winter dinner at our meeting at AMA House on 21st May. Dr Nesrin Varol, Senior Medical Advisor at the University of Sydney and gynaecological surgeon, spoke on "The Power of Collaboration - Violence against women, a marker of social, political and ethical disintegration".



Nesrin Varol has been involved in establishing the African Coordinating Centre for abandonment of female genital mutilation (ACCAF) in Kenya for the last five years and is currently working with the Australian Ministry of Health to improve healthcare of migrant women with female genital mutilation (FGM), establish education programs for healthcare professionals and research on FGM for government policy reform. She is also an Expert Member of the WHO Global Initiative for Emergency & Essential Surgical Care.

Her talk was deeply engaging as she addressed the issue of Violence against Women (VAW) as a major global and local issue. The recent abduction of the Nigerian schoolgirls was all very present in our minds, as she spoke on the situations in Africa that lead to such outrageous acts of violence to women. In particular, she provided a social understanding of the blocks to preventing FGM.

What was clear from her talk, was that in each case, higher education, and more integration both reduced acts of violence. Interesting studies showed, eg that most Somali men in Sweden did not want their wives or their daughters to go through FGM, and yet many women continue the practice as they are unaware of this change in cultural attitudes. Communication and education, it was clear, could assist in a change here. The MWS NSW aims to continue to work with Dr Varol on assisting to address issues of VAW through education programmes.

Back in May, one of our student members, Sarah Rockefeller, travelled to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York. She did a poster presentation on her research. It aims to develop recommendations for sexual violence education in undergraduate medical schools based on the professional opinions of doctors and experts that she will interview over the coming months. As a medical student at Monash University, she is currently undertaking a research study on educating medical students about sexual violence under the supervision of Prof. Gabrielle Casper and A/prof Jan Coles, both from AFMW.

QLD Medical Women's Society (QMWS)

The Queensland Medical Women's Society had a productive year, with a number of events organized for its members.



Dr Catherine Yelland is a respected geriatrician and a past QMWS President, was awarded the Public Service Medal in the Australia Day Honours List, for her outstanding public service, excellence and leadership in Older Persons Medical Services in 2014.

Nov 2013: Last dinner of the year. Dr Nick Earls "Being an author in the Internet age". Dr Nick Earls is author of 12 novels, including The Fox, Zigzag Street, Bachelor Kisses and The True Story of The Butterfish. His novels are often based on local life in Brisbane, and his success allowed him to hang up his stethoscope and become a full-time writer.

AFMW State Member Groups

Also, thanks to the immediate past secretary Dr Melinda Stanton, 2013 also saw the launch of the QMWS website (<http://www.qmws.com.au/>).

The QMWS AGM was held on 25 June 2014. The speaker was Rosemary Vilgan, CEO of Q-Super and Telstra Australian Business Woman of the Year, 2013. She gave us a very insightful talk on “Balancing your financial future”, a topic we pay little attention to in our all consuming medical careers.

South Australian Medical Women’s Society (SA MWS)



Traditionally, the membership base in South Australia has been quite small. There is a saturation of medical student groups in

Adelaide, with a strong focus on women in medicine, such as the AdeLadies Society and other student groups running special workshops for women in medicine. There is scope for collaborating with such groups and events in the future. The AFMW looks forward to continuing to grow its base in South Australia.

Victorian Medical Women’s Society (VMWS)



The VMWS is very active on Facebook and the other social media platforms. We’ve embraced technology to enable members to participate in meetings electronically. We have seen another busy year with some of our activities including:

- The VMWS became ‘officially incorporated’ in 2014.
- Ms Allison Hempenstall, VMWS student representative, attended the MWIA World Health Assembly in Geneva in May. The focus of the meeting was on gender based violence.
- Representatives attended the United Nations (UN) 58th Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York March 2014.
- VMWS members contributed to the University of Melbourne’s book: ‘Strength of Mind’.
- VMWS representatives attended the 125th Anniversary of Medical Women at the University of Melbourne; and the Governor General’s farewell event and presented her with a copy of the ‘Strength of Mind’ book.
- On behalf of the VMWS, Dr Magdalena Simonis was an event champion at the Breast Care Network Australia ‘Field of Women’ event; she was also awarded The University of Melbourne’s General Practice and Primary Health Care Academic Centre Award for her excellent contribution to supporting research.
- The VMWS hosted Heather Sheard’s presentation - Honour The Work: Australia’s Women Surgeons of WWI presentation.
- How We Do, What We Do annual seminar which discusses how to achieve positive work/life balance, with speakers sharing from personal and professional experiences. The speakers were from General Practice, Surgery, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

AFMW members presented papers at the 58th United Nations Commission on the Status for Women, held in New York

AFMW State Member Groups

- Hosted the Junior Doctor Interview and CV Workshop for VMWS student members.
- Lyceum luncheon presentation by Dr Heather Sheard as she discussed the work of a small number of determined women who enlisted and worked as surgeons and medical officers on the battlefields of France, Serbia and Galacia and in the military hospitals of Britain during the First World War.
- Women's Health Victoria - Dr Desiree Yap (past VMWS President) is Deputy Chair and Dr Magdalena Simonis (Immediate Past VMWS President) has been appointed to their board.

Annual Constance Stone Oration

The Constance Stone Oration is awarded by the VMWS annually. The Oration is named in honour of the first woman to be registered with the Medical Board of Victoria and therefore the first woman registered as a medical practitioner in Australia. Recipients of this award are recognised for their significant contribution to the health of women and children. We thank Dr Marilyn Murnane AM for endowing this prestigious award.

The 2014 Constance Stone Oration has been awarded to Dr Margaret Henderson.

Western Australian Medical Women's Society (WA MWS)



Dr Marion Davies (WA) is continuing on the Pharmaceuticals Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) as the AFMW Representative.

Sophie McCarthy continued as the Western Australian Student Representative for WA MWS in 2013. She was joined by Sarah Opie (3rd year medical student at Notre Dame Fremantle) and Jemma Hogan (2nd year medical student at Notre Dame Fremantle).

There is continued interest in the WA AFMW Facebook group, with over 110 members. We continue to see interesting posts from student representatives, doctors and medical students.

Financial Statements

Audited Financial Accounts

The financial records of the Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW) are audited annually by Widdup Barilla Accountants.

The audited reports are appended to this Annual Report. Refer to Attachment A: 2014 Audited Financial Statements of the AFMW.

Dr Sharon Tivey, Treasurer, AFMW

AFMW: Acting for and representing medical women in all matters of mutual interest at national and international levels and, in particular, in relation to the further education of Australian medical women

