

# ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022



Since 1972

**WOMEN'S  
ELECTORAL  
LOBBY NSW**

wel.org.au  
wel@welnsw.org.au





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WEL acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners and Elders past and present across Australia, with particular acknowledgement to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. It is upon their ancestral lands that the WEL NSW office is located.





# INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period from September 2021 to November 2022 in the 50th year since WEL was established in 1972. From the time of its ground-shifting national survey of candidates for the 1972 Federal Election, WEL has remained independent, not for profit, non-party political and feminist with a base of unpaid workers across Australia. It has been a federation of state and territory groups and contacts, but only NSW, Victoria and South Australia still have a WEL association.

WEL NSW has periodically employed a part-time coordinator working at a state (NSW) and national level guided by the NSW Executive Committee and a National Coordinating Committee.

WEL has continued as a participant in a long march for women's equality culminating in the 2022 Federal Election result where women voters and candidates played an historic and decisive role. Progressive and feminist candidates were elected changing the political landscape and hopefully the culture and priorities of the new Parliament.

The issues identified by founding WEL members in the first three years included: abortion, family planning and sexual health, general discrimination against women, discrimination in employment, equal pay, childcare, women's rights and equality, education issues and women in politics and government.



*L-R Tabitha P, Jozefa S, and Jodie Harrison MP at the Emily's List Event*

This year, as the most active and well-resourced WEL group, NSW has continued to coordinate or initiate national political activity. It worked to develop national policies for the 2022 Federal Election resulting in the publication of its Policy Platform 2022.

These included support for the Australian Human Rights Commission Report and Recommendations on First Nations Women and Girls: Wiyi Yani U Thangani. It incorporated a statement on the climate and environmental crises pointing to the way gender roles, responsibilities and expectations shape human relationships with the environment. Other areas covered included: income adequacy and equality for women, affordable and safe housing, women's health and well-being, eliminating and reducing family, domestic and sexual violence against women, strengthening women's representation in the Federal Parliament, gender equality in school education, vocational education and training and early childhood education and care.



Lobbying tools and tactics have altered radically since the early days. There are also many more specialist women's organisations and WEL has worked to support their policy priorities and campaigns or collaborated in coalitions and alliances. WEL is a member of the Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) and members have undertaken work for the National Foundation of Australian Women (NFAW). WEL used a range of advocacy tools such as submissions to Parliamentary inquiries and policy proposals, deputations to Ministers, briefings of Members of Parliament, social media and on the ground campaigns.

WEL received no government funding and has relied on the unpaid efforts of its generous members and supporters to maintain its advocacy work. This has required ongoing fund-raising to cover costs such as employing our part time Coordinator and maintaining a website, Facebook and twitter account in the world of digital media.

Accordingly, we extend our thanks to Erina Finau, our Membership and Engagement Coordinator, to Bronwyn McDonald unpaid Campaign Manager for the Federal Election, to all



*Coordinator Erina Finau representing WEL at the United Nations International Women's Day Breakfast*

members of the WEL NSW Executive Committee and the National Coordinating Committee. We are delighted that Wendy McCarthy AO has agreed to be the first WEL Ambassador. We recognise her work as a founder of WEL and her ongoing involvement, most recently through the 2019 abortion decriminalisation campaign'.

We are deeply appreciative of all their efforts and the efforts of the many others who have supported WEL through their continuing membership subscriptions and donations. There have been thousands of such members over the half century of our political work. These have sustained the organisation. We hope this support will continue.

Jozefa Sobski AM

- WEL Australia National Convenor

Dr Mary O'Sullivan

- WEL NSW Convenor

For a detailed history of WEL in Australia go to **Making Women Count** by Marion Sawer with Gail Radford(2008) and various collected papers and Annual Reports of the organisation.



# CAMPAIGNS

## Federal Election 2022

WEL planned its 2022 Federal Election campaign on the premise that we could help channel women's unease and growing anger with the Federal Government and 'politics as usual' into practical, well researched policy proposals to challenge parties and candidates to commit to gender equity election platforms.

### Policy Development Work and Survey

Our aim was to develop a comprehensive policy platform to enable parties and candidates to make practical commitments to achieve women's equality. Philippa Hall led the team which laid the groundwork and completed the WEL Policy Platform by January 2022. It was soft launched on the WEL website in early February.

During the policy development process we surveyed members and supporters to seek their input on the relative importance of the issues and their salience to voting intentions. Survey results indicated that climate change policy was a vitally important issue for our members and supporters.



*WEL National Convenor Jozefa Sobski interviewed for the Sunday Morning Herald - Putting politicians and parties to the test on Women's Issues Feb 27, 2022*

In addition, respondents identified women's job security as essential for gender equality, wanted welfare payments indexed more fairly, and considered housing security and homelessness to be amongst the most important issues. The vast majority of respondents wanted action to immediately address health access barriers for women.

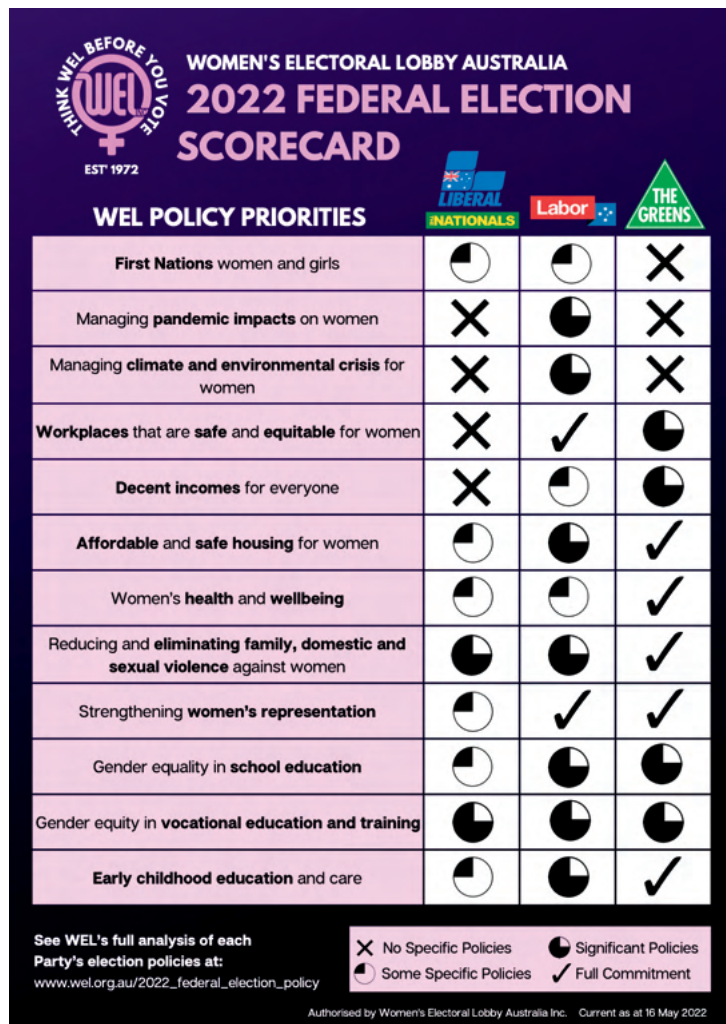
Ending violence against women was ranked as the one of the biggest challenges for Australia, with most respondents demanding adequate and sustainable funding for the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. Respondents were deeply concerned about women's underrepresentation in politics.

Detailed policies were developed in the following areas:

- A pandemic recovery that works for women
- Decent incomes for everyone: income adequacy and equality
- Workplaces that are safe and adequate for women
- Early childhood education and care
- Housing and homelessness
- Women's wealth and well-being
- Reducing and eliminating family and domestic violence against women
- Strengthening women's representation
- Gender equality in school education
- Gender equity in vocational education and training







2022 WEL Federal Election Scorecard

## WEL Election Scorecard

In the fortnight before the election, WEL finalised a summary, 3 point priority version of each policy in the Platform which became the basis for the WEL Election Scorecard. The scorecard was designed to empower women to make their votes count by assessing the main parties' election commitments against WEL's top priorities.

The final scorecard was designed with the help of a WEL member from South Australia. It was launched a week before the election with a special release to journalists and an exclusive for the Daily Telegraph and News Limited.

## Management of the WEL Campaign

Our volunteer Campaign Manager, Bronwyn McDonald worked with the WEL Executive to develop a comprehensive campaign strategy. The ongoing campaign was managed by a WEL Election Action Group which met fortnightly until the election.

WEL's Policy Platform can be accessed via the WEL website: [wel.org.au](http://wel.org.au)

The final Policy Platform also included recommended measures supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls and gender specific climate change policies. WEL policy advocated for Government implementation of all seven recommendations of the Australian Human Rights Commission's Wiyi Yani U Thangani Report.

WEL was the only feminist organisation to enter the campaign with such a comprehensive and thorough economic, social and political plan for women's equality.



Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) - Implementation Framework (2022)

WEL undertook a refreshment of our website to support our online campaign. Our Coordinator Erina Finau worked closely with the Campaign Manager to coordinate strategic messaging via social media and the WEL website and to provide support for the Executive in producing campaign materials.

On 10 May, we organised an online election webinar. Dr Anne Summers, Associate Professor Nareen Young, Professor Helen Hodgson as facilitator and Dr Cassandra Goldie addressed the question 'How Will Women Vote?'. Panellists addressed themes in the WEL policy platform. One hundred members and followers participated in this hour-long event including a number of journalists.





**Anne Summers AO**

Australian writer and columnist, best known as a leading feminist, editor and publisher

**Nareen Young**

Industry Professor for Indigenous Policy at the UTS Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research

**Cassandra Goldie**

Cassandra Goldie is CEO of ACOSS and Adjunct Professor with UNSW Sydney.

### 2022 WEL Federal Election Forum Panel - How will women vote?

The Forum heightened interest in the WEL Scorecard with some News Limited outlets and the ABC's PM providing stories leading up to election day.

WEL issued media releases and election updates at key moments during the campaign. We communicated regularly with members and supporters through our regular newsletter WEL Informed, our social media platforms and press releases. In person events were hampered by the persistence of covid infections.

### Unfinished Business: Lobbying the New Labor Government

With the election of the Albanese Government, WEL wrote to 12 Ministers responsible for key portfolios relevant to WEL's policy priorities.

With the appointment of Senator Gallagher as Minister for Women, we expressed our hope that the Office for Women would be re-energised and resourced appropriately to undertake its important national and international work. We recognised that Justine Elliot would be assisting Amanda Rishworth to bring the ten year National Plan to End (Family, Domestic and Sexual) Violence against Women to fruition with adequate funding for its ambitious goals.

In our letter to Minister Gallagher, WEL also emphasised its support for the National



*Albanese Ministers: Treasurer Dr Jim Chalmers  
Finance Minister Katy Gallagher contacted by WEL*

Women's Alliances playing a key role in advising government on the concerns and work of women's advocacy organisations and urged improvements in the targeting and quantum of funding for a range of programs.

In August, WEL wrote to the Treasurer, Dr Jim Chalmers as Finance Minister, stating our concerns about the legislated Stage 3 tax cuts. We asked for its reconsideration or repeal.

WEL participated in the Jobs and Skills Summit held in September 2022 indirectly through our membership of the Equality Rights Alliance and we contributed to ERA's Summit submission and pre-Summit meetings. WEL wrote to relevant Ministers including Senator Gallagher about the importance of women in all their diversity being well represented. WEL was pleased that women's leadership on issues and their participation in the Summit was considerable.



## Ending Violence against Women

WEL participated online at the National Summit on Women's Safety and made an online submission in mid-September 2021 which supported ERA's Submission and the need for a separate plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. We welcomed the release of the final Plan on 17 October 2022 noting that the Plan puts safe, affordable and accessible housing as a key to ending violence and places housing as central to a holistic approach. This has been a core message of WEL's campaigns since 2014.



*Coercive Control and NSW Legislation Forum Co-Hosted by: DV NSW & Wirringa Baiya at Customs House*

In NSW, WEL monitored the proposed Consent Legislation as well as that on Coercive Control seeking to ensure that the issues we raised in submissions to the NSW Law Reform Commission on Consent in June 2018 and the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control in January 2021 were taken into account in proposed Bills.

We worked in consultation with the Full Stop Foundation, Domestic Violence NSW and DV West, key organisations delivering services or coordinating policy and implementing programs funded by the NSW Government to reduce or end domestic, family and sexual violence.

WEL representatives attended the launch of Anne Summers' report: 'The Choice: Violence or Poverty' held in July 2022 and the NSW Women's Alliance launch of Seven Calls to Action to End Gendered Violence held on 11 August at Parliament House, Sydney.

WEL NSW Executive Committee members met with Shani Murphy, Policy Adviser to the Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Natalie Ward and raised a range of issues of concern to the Domestic Violence Services Sector including: staffing, prevention programs, survivor programs, the Helpline and critically, crisis and specialist DV accommodation.

## Domestic Violence Vigil, NSW

WEL attended the DV Vigil at Customs House on 25 November 2022 where a member of the WEL NSW Executive, Menaka Cooke was one of the guest speakers. Present at the Vigil was Attorney-General Mark Speakman, Penny Sharpe and Jodie Harrison from the ALP and Abigail Boyd from the Greens. Menaka delivered a speech of hope as a survivor of domestic violence. It was a moving occasion with pairs of women's shoes on display, marking the death of women victims this year at the hands of perpetrators.



*Menaka Cooke reading the names of women and children lost this year to Domestic Violence at the 2022 Sydney DV Vigil*



## 6th Annual DV Conference, NSW

WEL also attended the 6th Annual DV Conference held at Warwick Farm on 23 November 2022 at which Jess Hill was the keynote speaker. There was an audience of 300 or more of majority CALD women who were also workers in the sector. Some common challenges expressed were understanding of the law, accessibility of services and assistance and a plea for educating men about the law in Australia.



6th Annual Domestic Violence Conference NSW - Trauma Informed Practice



UNSEEN collaborative arts project returns for 2022

At Commonwealth level, WEL supported the Everybody's Home Campaign. We also responded to the Productivity Commission review of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, which is due to expire in mid-2023. WEL and other organisations have highlighted poor outcomes under current arrangements, both for women and other groups. WEL has written to the Hon Julie Collins MP, Minister for Housing and Minister for Homelessness to convey our support for the overall direction of the recommendations of the Review and to emphasise the need for a greatly expanded stock of social housing.

WEL also continued to work with the Ageing on the Edge Coalition, which is including women with lived experience in its contacts with key Ministers and MPs.

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## Housing and Homelessness

A major WEL priority continues to be advocating for affordable housing for women. WEL has focused our work on the needs of women and their children who have experienced domestic violence, who are the largest group of people needing assistance because of homelessness, and older single women, who are the fastest growing group.

WEL is extremely pleased that UNSEEN, a collaborative multi-media arts project, has continued to generate greater awareness of women's homelessness into 2022, following WEL's auspice of an initial grant in 2021 from the City of Sydney and partnership with photographer and social documentarian, Belinda Mason of BLUR Projects. With support from other organisations, there have been activations of the project in 2022 in Canberra, Parramatta and other locations.

### We are calling on the NSW government to:

- Fund a specialist older person's housing information and support service similar to the 'Home at Last' model in Victoria;
- Lower the priority age for social housing eligibility from 80 years;
- Build an extra 5,000 social and affordable homes per year for 10 years, 20% dedicated to older people.

In November 2021 Ageing on the Edge published an economic appraisal of the 'Home at Last' service model that shows every dollar spent on the service generates at least \$2.30 in societal value. In December 2021 Ageing on the Edge launched a report Home at Last: solutions to end homelessness of older people in NSW. The launch was held at the final UNSEEN event for 2021. Ageing on the Edge also produced a video, using material from the launch.

A positive in 2022 was the establishment of a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into homelessness amongst people aged over 55. WEL endorsed the submission by Ageing on the Edge and welcomed the findings, released in October 2022 which was supportive of Ageing on the Edge's key recommendations.

While WEL was heartened that the new Federal government has committed to building additional social housing, we are also aware that the commitment at both levels of government falls far short of what will be needed to address women's housing disadvantage.

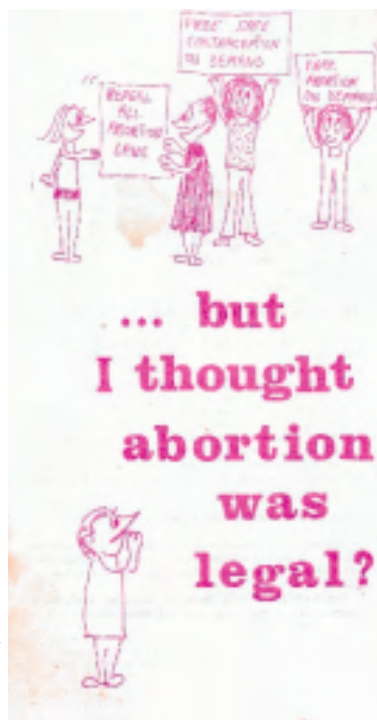
## Reproductive Health

WEL led the 2018-19 abortion law reform campaign in NSW which resulted in the decriminalisation of abortion. Following the NSW Abortion Law Reform Act (2 October 2019), women in NSW have legal access to the full range of pregnancy options.

Since then South Australia has legislated to extend the possibility of abortion access across the state.

WEL is conscious that there is much to be done on the ground before we can claim full reproductive rights for women in NSW. In particular, regional reproductive health hubs and better use of local public hospitals and trained and supported GPs could help ease the very limited access for women in rural and regional NSW, including to contraception support, and the continuing failure of public hospitals to provide abortion services other than for emergency late abortions.

We are especially conscious of the need for Aboriginal controlled and managed reproductive and maternal health services to be better funded and supported.



LEFT - Early WEL pamphlet on abortion rights in NSW  
RIGHT - Coordinator Erina Finau representing WEL at the Roe v Wade Solidarity March Newcastle  
BOTTOM: SA Abortion Alliance at the decriminalisation of abortion in South Australia





**We are calling on the Federal government to lead by establishing a National Women's Health Council and to implement and fund a reproductive health access strategy. WEL policy asks at both Federal and State levels are:**



*ABOVE: Early WEL Poster in support for National Abortion Access*

*BELOW: 2019 Decriminalisation of Abortion Rally - Sydney*



WEL continues to work with our expert allies and other feminist organisations such as Family Planning NSW and Women's Health NSW to ensure that women's right to decide when and if they have children is protected and enhanced in Australian law and through strengthened universal public health provision.

In November 2021 we worked closely with expert allies to provide cautionary advice to NSW MPs on the Government's Crimes Legislation Amendment (Loss of a Foetus) Bill 2021. Our aim was to ensure the Bill did not threaten the gains of the Abortion

- “
- Universal access to reproductive health care regardless of your income, resources and where you live
  - Reproductive health services designed, managed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
  - Free contraceptives and contraceptive consultations and procedures, with some contraceptives available through pharmacists without prescriptions
  - Community information to promote consent based sexual and reproductive health and counter menstruation shame and disadvantage.
- ”

Law Reform Act. We also worked with expert allies to provide advice to MPs to pre-empt and prevent a Bill which would have attempted to revive prohibitions on sex selection, when these are already in the Abortion Law Reform Act.

## **Religious Discrimination Bills**

WEL recognises that the absence of protections for individuals against religious discrimination is a significant flaw in the Australia's national anti-discrimination legislative framework. In purporting to deal with this issue, the previous Federal Government sought to introduce legislation which in effect gave greater protections to religious groups and institutions to discriminate against others.



Since the Bill's first draft in 2019 WEL made a total of four submissions on the various versions of the Federal Bill, with the final two made in December 2021 and January 2022, assisted by Equality Australia. In February 2022, the Morrison Government was forced to abandon its Religious Discrimination Bill.

In the first sitting week of the NSW Parliament in 2022, a Religious Discrimination Bill drafted and sponsored by One Nation's Mark Latham was defeated. WEL had made a submission and appeared at a Parliamentary Inquiry on this Bill. The One Nation Bill mirrored the worst features of the Federal Bill in its potentially negative impacts on women in workplaces, reproductive rights and the rights of LGBTI people.

We pay special tribute to Equality Australia's Anna Brown and Ghassan Kassieh for their expert and generous leadership of the broad coalition against both Bills. Like most Australians WEL supports religious discrimination legislation which protects people of faith along the same lines as other protections and does not privilege religious protections at the expense of others.

*L-R: Anna Brown, Equality Australia, Ghassan Kassieh*



## WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

### Equality Rights Alliance (ERA)

WEL has continued its membership of ERA composed of 64 member organisations. The focus of ERA's work has had to shift as a consequence of the de-funding of Economic Security for Women and the incorporation of its work into a reconstituted ERA. Priority areas set at a members' meeting in February 2021 are: International engagement, Economic Security and Gendered Poverty, Leadership and Participation, and Health and Wellbeing.

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WEL continued to contribute to submissions prepared by ERA on behalf of member organisations. These included: Religious Discrimination Bill, December 2021; Workplace Gender Equity Agency Review, September 2021; Pre-Budget Submission, January 2022; Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act Review to the Australian Public Service Commissioner, February 2022; Productivity Commission Review of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, mid-2022; Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards, August 2022 and Jobs and Skills Summit, September 2022.



WEL attended ERA's post-Election briefing on 25 May discussing the implications for ERA. WEL also attended the ERA face to face meeting in Sydney on 2 - 3 June where the topics of economic security for women and girls, future of feminism and intersectionality, quotas in Parliament and business and key policy areas for the next 2 years were discussed.

WEL is now represented on the Steering Committee by Menaka Cooke elected in July 2022. The Committee is composed of 6 member organisation representatives and 1 Youth Australia representative and advises the ERA Secretariat on matters of strategic direction and member issues as they arise. It is currently working on a submission into the National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality for public release in the first half of 2023.

## National Foundation of Australian Women (NFAW)

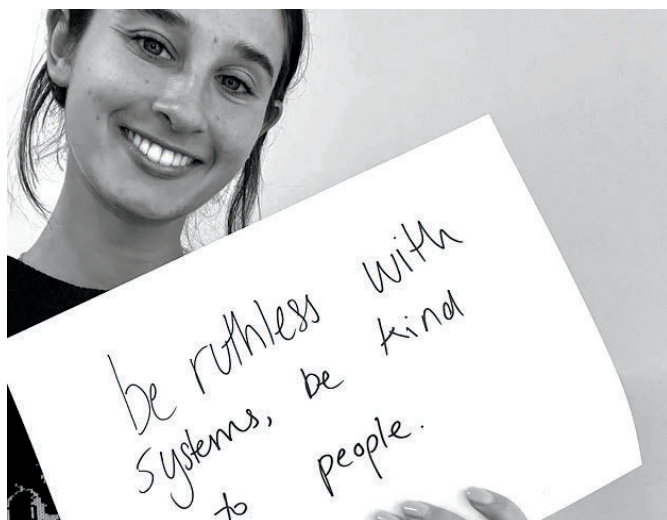
WEL cooperates with NFAW on its budget and policy work as issues arise. WEL's National Convenor, Jozefa Sobski contributed to NFAW's Gender Lens on the Budget 2022/2023 on vocational education and training and ending violence against women initiatives.



## Older Women's Network (OWN)

WEL continues to support OWN in its work and advocacy on behalf of older women on issues such as homelessness, aged care, aged pension, unemployment benefits, violence and poverty. WEL NSW Executive members Lorraine Slade and Menaka Cooke are on the Board of OWN NSW, with Lorraine in the role of Secretary to the Board.

In the past year, OWN NSW hosted the Edna Awards for 'Women Making a Feminist Difference' to celebrate the achievements of women who are serving their communities and Australian society as a whole. Additionally, OWN NSW partnered with Celebrate Ageing and OPAN which researched the issue of sexual abuse in Aged Care and advocated to protect the safety and autonomy of older women.



## CHANEL CONTOS | GRAND STIRRER

*2022 Edna Award Recipient Chanel Contos*

OWN NSW advocated for the removal of the Cashless Debit Card (which quarantines 80% of income of welfare recipients) and its removal by early 2023 has been announced by the new Federal government.

OWN NSW worked with Dying with Dignity to ensure autonomy over our end-of-life

journey and this helped to get the legislation passed through NSW Parliament.

OWN Australia held its national conference in October 2022 attended by Menaka Cooke as WEL member. It was an excellent conference with well-known figures in media, journalism, academic and public life; topics discussed included: why older women's experiences and perspectives matter; ageism ambition and authenticity, and women ageing in the 21st century.



## NSW Aged Care Roundtable

WEL is a member of the NSW Aged Care Roundtable through NSW Executive member Tabitha Ponnambalam. It consists of medical, nursing, carer advocacy and consumer advocacy organisations and represents frontline healthcare workforce and those accessing aged care services. The Aged Care Roundtable has been meeting virtually once a month.

In general, we are encouraged by the changes being made to the sector by the new Federal government such as the legislated requirement for registered nurses at facilities 24 hours of the day.

More recently, we welcomed the long overdue decision by the Fair Work Commission to increase wages by 15% for staff working in aged care. It

was a good start but has further to go to rectify the underpayment of previous years. It was also disappointing that the decision did not extend to all staff in aged care such as the catering or administrative staff but at least the decision should enable the sector to increase staff recruitment. The decision was supported by the Albanese government that has provided for the increased wages cost in the October budget.

## New South Wales Council of Social Services (NCOSS)

Menaka Cooke and Jozefa Sobski attended the two day NCOSS Conference 'Vision, Voice and Value: Charting a new course for the social services sector' held on 17 - 18 October. It was an opportunity to meet and network with a broad range of service providers to come to a better understanding of the problems and challenges they face in delivering services to the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and disenfranchised in NSW.





# SUBMISSIONS

## **WEL analysis of the NSW 2022-3 Budget 'Women's Opportunity Statement'**

The NSW Government made significant social policy commitments in their 21 June 2022-2023 Budget with a focus on extending access to early childhood education and care and providing opportunities for childcare affordable and quality childcare provision in so called childcare deserts.

WEL was delighted to see the NSW Coalition Government undertake a major women and children centred social policy initiative, following a decade of 'bloke focused' employment creating infrastructure projects. Our analysis of the budget papers indicated that much of the additional childcare provision would come from incentives offered to private providers- in contrast to commitments made in the Victorian budget to extending publicly provided early childhood education and care.

The NSW Government yet again ignored any substantial additional investment in social housing, with waiting lists of 50,000 people, including many single parent families headed by women and older women suffering a rent and cost of living crisis.

## **WEL's Submission to NSW Women's Strategy 2023-2033**

WEL made a submission on the Discussion Paper for the new NSW Women's Strategy.

The NSW Minister for Women Bronnie Taylor released the final 2023-26 Strategy



on 8 November 2022. The Strategy includes reporting and monitoring mechanisms to measure and assess commitments and identifies many commendable initiatives. It is an inclusive document which attempts to acknowledge and plan for the diverse needs of NSW women.

The Strategy however makes no commitments to addressing limited access to reproductive health services. It also fails to propose any substantial additional investment in social housing, in a situation where many single parent families headed by women and older women face homelessness.

WEL's NSW State Election policy platform will include a focus on reproductive health access and overcoming women's housing insecurity and homelessness.

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## **Review of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency**

WEL made a submission in November 2021 to the Review of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency conducted by the Federal Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. WEL has always supported the work of the WGEA, but the WEL submission recommended improved powers by WGEA to require action on reported gender issues, stronger contract compliance provisions,



and better diversity reporting. Those recommendations were not accepted. Some improvements were made following the Review.

## Employment White Paper - Federal Treasury

WEL made submissions prior to and after the Jobs and Skills Summit. Following the Summit, we responded to the Employment White Paper issued by Treasury, with stated aims of achieving productivity growth and more opportunity for workers, along with women's economic participation and equality.

We urged that the Summit process should lead to a 'fine-grained' understanding of the complexity and value of the skills in service occupations (especially Care Industries), which are often female dominated, in order to improve recruitment, retention, education, training and development of workers. The proper evaluation of work (and pay-setting), and effective skills development rely on the adequacy of that skills analysis. We stressed that under-evaluation and underpayment of workers in service occupations has resulted in workforce shortages.



## EVENTS

WEL is regularly represented at a range of events and activities and participated in many forums and discussion sessions, mostly still online, throughout the year. Our own face to face events continued to be curtailed by the threat of COVID outbreaks, but we plan to increase activity in the coming year.

### International Women's Day

WEL is a member of the Sydney IWD Committee, supported by Unions NSW. The IWD march has been curtailed over the past two years in response to Covid and other external factors. We are anticipating the IWD march going ahead in 2023.

### 50th Anniversary Celebration - cancellation and rescheduling

We were very excited about organising WEL's 50th Anniversary celebration at Parliament House on 5 October 2022. A diverse and interesting panel had been organised to discuss 'Where to from Here?'. Celebratory drinks and canapés had been arranged! We had planned to highlight many of the campaigns WEL has been involved in over the last 50 years. However due to the clash of dates with the Julia Gillard 'Not Now Not Ever' event in Sydney in recognition of the 10th Anniversary of her Misogyny Speech we sadly had to cancel our event as many people wanted to attend both functions.



WEL's 50th Anniversary Celebration is now scheduled to take place at the conclusion of the WEL AGM on 10 December 2022 where our guest speaker will be the Honourable Linda Burney, Minister for Indigenous Australians, introduced by WEL Ambassador and founding member of WEL, Wendy McCarthy. We look forward to celebrating 50 years of women's advocacy with members and friends of WEL.

*Cartoon by John Shakespeare for SMH article on the postponement of WEL's Anniversary Celebration - 30 August 2022*



## COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Over the last 12 months, WEL has prioritised the promotion of everyday activism and community political awareness through its regular newsletter WEL Informed and social media engagement.

We published seven WEL informed issues which saw an average 21% open rate. This open rate, which represents reader engagement, has decreased from 30% in 2021, though it is still considerably higher than the standard 17% open rate of most businesses and organisations, according to Nationbuilder statistics. The newsletter has maintained a steady reach of over 4000 individuals and organisations, including sitting members of parliament and media networks.

WEL issued a number of press releases through the year, which can be accessed on the WEL website. These commented on matters such as

the 2022 NSW State and Federal Budgets, the Jenkins Report 'Set the Standard' in relation to the culture of the Federal Parliament, WEL's Federal Election campaign and the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children.

Social media has been WEL's most active form of community dialogue, with conscious efforts to engage with a broader audience. Through the use of art, feminist quotes/reflections, and the promotion of allied organisations posts and events, reach has increased by 65% and new visits to WEL platforms on facebook and twitter have increased by 80% over the year. Our current facebook reach is around 13,000 followers.

Still in its early stages, WEL's presence on professional network forum LinkedIn takes a strategic approach to engagement, aiming to utilise this corporate forum as a tool to establish new professional networks and develop current political connections.

A focus for our communication efforts this year was WEL's 2022 Federal Election campaign. This is discussed in more detail in the relevant section of this Annual Report. In preparation for the 2022 Federal Election, invited Campaign Manager Dr Bronwyn McDonald, guided WEL communications through a strategic election campaign which aimed to ensure that WEL's platform contributed to making women's issues and the votes of women central to the election.

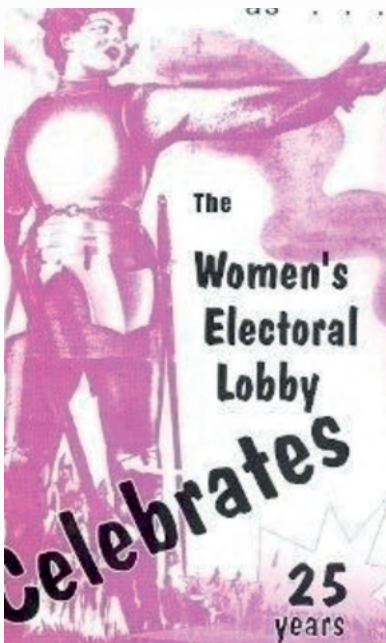






# 50 Years WEL Done

For 50 years, WEL has been advocating for equality and justice for all women. We carry out important research and campaign to knock down the barriers that hold women back from a life of dignity, safety and independence.







# 2022 NSW EXECUTIVE




<b>Dr Mary O'Sullivan</b>	Convenor
<b>Dr Jane Bullen</b>	Deputy Convenor
<b>Terrie Roberts</b>	Secretary
<b>Margaret Mackie</b>	Treasurer
<b>Jane Sharkey</b>	
<b>Josefa Green</b>	
<b>Jozefa Sobski AM</b>	
<b>Lorraine Slade</b>	
<b>Menaka Cooke</b>	
<b>Philippa Hall</b>	
<b>Tabitha Ponnambalam</b>	

## 2022 WEL STAFF

**Erina Finau**  
WEL Coordinator - Membership & Engagement



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[www.wel.org.au](http://www.wel.org.au)

 @womenselectorallobby  
 @welobby  
 @welaust

*WEL acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation  
and traditional custodians of the lands where we live.  
learn, and work*