

# I N F O R M

## ***Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney***

*November/December 2022*



# President's Report to 2022 AGM

Our new year 2022 began with a fresh and hopeful start. While some COVID restrictions were still in force we were looking forward to a majority of the year restrictions free, and our valued members able to attend functions for a feed and a chat. Alas we were to be disappointed because we had to cancel our very first event, our opening Mass and luncheon.

The first Council meeting of the year was held on February 8. Monica Doumit was welcomed as a full councillor, and Pat Castellan as an observer councillor.

A letter of gratitude from the Order of Malta Parramatta, our Project of the Year for 2021/22, was received acknowledging our donation of \$9,000.00 and assuring us these funds would be used to support their Community Vans.

Our prayers continued for the people of Tonga as they worked to recover from the devastation of the volcanic eruption. We donated a total of \$1,500.00 to the Tongan Volcano Victims Appeal. A special thank you to Enfield Parish and the Enfield CWL Branch for their generous donation of \$500.00.

Sadly, our St Patrick's Day was small on numbers due to heavy rain. Those present were served with a green themed lunch and a drop of Baileys.

Sandra and I travelled to Lithgow to attend the State Council meeting in March. Pat Akon OAM and a few Lithgow ladies were welcomed and their

long service to CWL was recognized with afternoon tea followed by Mass with Father Greg. We also attended the State Council meeting in Wollongong in September.

Father Terry Bell was our April guest speaker and gave an inspiring talk on Pope Francis' Easter message. Father also explained the 3rd rite of reconciliation which dates back to the early church.

As many of you know, Marian Court was sold to the Trustees of Catholic Aged Care Sydney, who took over in April. Lack of finance and retirement village rules and regulations made it impossible for CWL to continue to operate Marian Court. We negotiated for the Marian Court name to be maintained, for Anthony Watts to remain as manager, and for Harry and Maria to be retained as employees.

Our Scholarship to Delany College was gifted to twin girls, Charbella and Galia, and the scholarship was greatly appreciated by their family. We received a very grateful, gracious and faith filled letter of thanks from the girls. We are looking forward to hearing of their progress and successes in the future.

Our WUCWO Mass in May was a success and we were appreciative of Catherine McGrath, CWLA Australian Board Member for WUCWO, for attending and being our guest speaker. We were excited that Catherine was travelling to Rome to participate in a

private audience with Pope Francis.

Rebeka left for maternity leave at the beginning of June and we welcomed Jacqui Keady as our Office Manager. Rebeka and her husband Alden, welcomed Baby Remi into the world on June 20, a little sister for Millie.

At the June Branch Meeting we were entertained by the "Wivenhoe Quartet" from Cobbitty. Our special thanks to Sandra's husband, Ray, who is a member of the group and who organized here presence. The performance was energetic and entertaining, and a very special and happy treat for all.

On June 9 Michelle Pederson and Viki attended the Exhibition of Ukrainian Culture "Vyshvanka" at Sydney Town Hall hosted by the Ukrainian Women's Association. The array of folk embroidery, traditional fancywork, clothes etc. was beautiful and educational, depicting the many varied patterns representing the different areas of the country.

On May 29 all our Executive and a number of other CWL Sydney members attended a special Mass in St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Lidcombe to pray for the women and children trapped by the war in Ukraine. This was a moving and enlightening ceremony.

Viki carried our CWL Sydney banner in the annual Walk With Christ procession on 19 June, which was a great success.

On June 22 Sally and Viki, representing CWL Sydney, attended the Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association of Australia NSW Group's

Winter Luncheon. The Guest Speaker was Rabbi Mendel Kastel who spoke on homelessness, and how he had come to work with the homeless.

At the July Branch meeting Prof. Kathryn Goozee from KaRa Minds at North Ryde, spoke on Brain Training and the various forms of dementia. The KaRa Minds Centre focusses on in depth studies of the brain and the causes of dementia, and provides ongoing training programs to explain the development of the disease and of the action we can take ourselves to delay its onset.

The Annual CWL Mass held in August was celebrated by Father Greg Morgan, and although numbers were small the day and lunch was enjoyed by all. Diahanna Senko from the Ukraine Crisis Appeal Centre was Guest speaker at the lunch and enlightened us on the situation in Ukraine, and the support her group provide including their methods of fundraising.

Our project to donate doonas to the Ukrainian CWL at Lidcombe was very successful and raised \$3,300.00 due to generous support of CWL members and others. A special thank you to Five Dock Parish for its donation of \$800.00, the Five Dock CWL Branch (\$200.00), and Dalton Gardens Retirement Village at Ryde (\$1,000.00). Eleven single doonas, covers and sheet sets, 11 Queen doonas, covers and sheets sets, along with 13 Coles and 13 Big W/Woolworths gift cards to the value of \$50 each were delivered to Olga at CWL Lidcombe for distribution to the

displaced Ukrainian families.

The project of the year, The Farm in Galong aims to provide a place of restoration for women affected by substance abuse. The aim is to reunite families and re-introduce participants to the workplace through various educational programs. We are currently busy making Christmas pamper packs for the 18 residents to present to Kate Cleary, CEO of the The Farm, at this AGM meeting.

In addition to providing the Delaney Scholarship of \$20,000.00 over 2 years, we have donated \$1000.00 to the Tongan Appeal, \$1000.00 to CWL Lismore for the flood victims, \$500.00 to St Charles Parish Ryde for the Vinnies Van, and \$500.00 to Kara Minds to assist with their on-going research into dementia.

Sincere congratulations to all the Branches who have held successful functions, fundraising activities and reflection days. This hard work does not go unnoticed and is very much appreciated.

We formally acknowledge Merle Smith, a long time member of CWL Sydney, she recently decided to give a most generous donation of \$10,000 to CWL to assist with the costs involved in moving.

As you are aware CWL Sydney has a new constitution which was formulated with Civil Legal and Canon Law advisors. This was long overdue and a painstaking task. We will be asking you to ratify and adopt the new constitution

{for legal reasons now called Statutes) later in this meeting.

We continue to pray for those dear members we lost this year, Esther Doyle AM, Marie Brady, Pat Percival, Pat Ambrose and Noeline Kelly, and also for those members who have lost treasured loved ones.

Although our membership has been diminishing, especially due to the pandemic over the past years, we look forward to the new year and are very hopeful to renew the League and increase memberships in 2023. Due to cash income accruing from the investment of funds from the sale of Marian Court we will be less reliant on Branch fundraising and can develop a more social atmosphere at Branch meetings when we can chat to one another, and consider and identify causes we will support.

Our opening meeting for 2023 will be on Tuesday 14 February when our guest speaker will be Leila Abdallah. She will be a motivational speaker not to be missed, and I encourage you all to make a special effort to be present.

A special thank you to my Executive team and to Councillors for their unfailing support during a very difficult and stressful year.

I wish all members and their families a very happy and holy Christmas filled with God's love and peace.

God bless you all.

**Margaret Blomfield**  
President

# Armistice Day

11th November



Why are they selling poppies Mother,  
Selling poppies in town today?  
The poppies, child, are flowers of love  
For the men who marched away.

But why have they chosen a poppy, Mother?  
Why not a beautiful rose?  
Because my child, men fought and died  
In the fields where poppies grow.

But why are poppies so red, Mother?  
Why are the poppies so red?  
Red is the colour of blood, my child  
The blood that our soldiers shed.

The heart of the poppy is black, Mother  
Why does it have to be black?  
Black is the symbol of grief, my child  
For men who never came back.

But why, Mother dear, are you crying so?  
Your tears are like winter rain,  
My tears are for you, my child,  
For the world is forgetting again.



# Secretary's Report to 2022 AGM

After 2 years of lockdowns and restrictions, we have enjoyed a wonderful comeback this year. Both branch and diocesan members have participated in a wide variety of activities.

Sydney Diocese currently has 175 members, which we all know is down on previous years and our monthly branch meetings here have been down this year but we are hoping that with prayer and deeds and our new location that next year will see a renewed vigour and new members.

We have members involved in all parish ministries and in parish fund raising activities, plus working bees, bingo and church cleaning

Collectively members have participated in:-

- Walk with Christ Procession, including ladies up to 95 years of age.
- Reflections days 2.
- Countless rosaries.
- Pilgrimage to Penrose Park.
- The Mass at the Ukrainian Church at Lidcombe was well attended by not only Sydney Archdiocese but also Wollongong, Parramatta & Broken Bay.
- World Day of Prayer.
- Stations of the Cross and Stations of Light at Rookwood Cemetery.
- Knitting for Wrap with Love and for cancer patients in hospital.
- Fashion Parades 3
- Silver Circles 8
- Raffles 4
- Stalls 2

Money raised has gone to our POY, both 21/22 and 22/23. Donate a Doona appeal for the Ukrainian refugees arriving in Australia, Flood relief to the Lismore Diocese, St VDP, Fr Chris Riley's YOTS, the vans helping the homeless, Catechists for materials and various places in need:- Fiji, Tonga, Lebanon, Ukraine and the Josephite Counter Trafficking.

While we might be an ageing population our faith and love and knowing that the Holy Spirit is always with us to guide and carry and strengthen us.

So together with our patroness, Our Lady Help of Christians we shall continue and we shall continue and grow.

We also have our own Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop who taught us to never see a need without doing something about it.

Next year we have some excellent speakers lined up and some fun and entertainment in store so we hope to see you all and more - lets have a "bring a friend day" next year too.

Have a lovely happy and holy Christmas Season and a good rest and time with family. We look forward to seeing you again for our opening Mass on 14th February 2023.

God Bless and keep you.

**Sandra Skarsky**  
Secretary



## Dear Members and Friends of CWL, Sydney,

I have been reflecting recently on Margaret Fletcher's vision of "balanced common-sense"! As simple and straightforward as this might sound, we live in an age where 'balanced discussion' and 'common-sense reasoning' are often no longer considered valuable or desirable. Sadly, this absence has quickly translated into the increased levels of societal instability and inter-personal hostility that we witness today.

The absence of "balanced common-sense" reflects a deeper spiritual predicament, which, perhaps, bespeaks of another absence in our world, namely, the experience of mercy. For, we live in a merciless society. We saw a pertinent example of this not that long ago when the new CEO of Essendon football club was ousted within 24 hours because it was discovered he was a man of Christian faith. There was no balanced conversation here; no room for common-sense reasoning; and certainly, no mercy-only anti-religious bigotry. Sad!

Living in such times is undoubtedly a challenge. It is a challenge particularly in terms of staying true to Christ's call to still proclaim the "good news" of our Catholic faith - even when it is unwelcome; even when we face hostility; suffering; persecution; and injustice. But this points to a powerful reason as to why a network of Catholic women like the CWL is so important for the future. When we gather, we realise that, truly, we are all in this together! And, as a 'Catholic collective', we can reach out to women who might be facing societal pressure or religious discrimination for holding firm to what is actually a "balanced common-sense position". For instance, we see the attack on the integrity of women's sport with trans-gender males being allowed to compete. When women have raised concerns on this score they are often shouted down and are excluded from public discourse. Certainly no "balanced common-sense" there! And, yet, it can be hard to speak-up and defend the dignity of women.

As we approach Christmas, we might all remember the importance of experiencing God's mercy in our lives. It is mercy that restores the vision of Christ; the vision of "common-sense"; the very vision Margaret Fletcher hoped and prayed would be embodied within the CWL movement. For nothing society offers us - no matter how regal or rich - will ever have the power to say "I absolve you of your sin"; "I unburden you of your pain"; "I will cleanse you of your guilt." Why? Because such words are the words of Christ and they are Christ's words alone. So let us all commit to praying consistently, proclaiming the truth insistently, in the knowledge that divine justice will always be done.

God bless you all!

**Fr Greg Morgan**

# Treasurer's Report to 2022 AGM

Financially it has been a very eventful year. As a result of the sale of Marian Court, we now have \$9.8 million dollars invested with Escala which should soon begin to pay dividends. Our eventual severance from Marian Court has been relatively seamless due to the diligence and constant efforts of Anthony Watts, Manager of Marian Court, our President, Margaret Blomfield. A huge undertaking from the outset, with many problems to overcome.

We have had a busy year with our Project of the Year, the Order of the Knights of Malta Van, where we raised \$16,680 which was heavily subsidised by the generosity of Invocare (\$9,080.) A great result considering the difficulties due to the restrictions imposed because of Covid.

Our donation of \$1,000 to flood relief in the Lismore area was gratefully received and disbursed to those in need in the Parish.

Your generosity enabled us to donate 22 doonas and sheet sets as well as a number of \$50 gift cards in support of the Ukrainian refugees. Your response was overwhelming and helped achieve an amazing result. Thank you for your constant and generous support of Catholic Women's League.

Our Project of the Year for 2022-

3 is The Farm, a facility for disadvantaged women who need shelter and guidance in life skills to help them turn their lives around. We hope to send Pamper Packs to the Residents as an opening gesture of goodwill and encouragement.

We gave a donation of \$500 to David's Place, which ran a close second in the Ballot for our Project of the Year for this year.

In addition to our annual contribution to the School of St. Jude, where we sponsor a student each year, this year we provided a \$20,000 Scholarship for twin girls (\$10,000 each) at Delany College and received a lovely and appreciative letter in response.

Catholic Women's League Sydney Archdiocese has 175 financial members this year, 2022. Membership Fees will be due and payable in February/March for 2023 Membership. \$35 for Branch Members, and \$40 for Diocesan Members.

I am hopeful 2023 will be more stable and more straightforward than this year has been

and look forward to your company and ongoing support as we go forward into 2023.

**Tex Quirk**  
Hon. Treasurer



# WUCWO Report to 2022 AGM

WUCWO's International President General Maria Lia Zervino, was appointed to the Dicastery of Bishops in the Roman Curia - the first women ever to be involved in the process of identifying and electing new diocesan bishops.

Pope Francis invited our Asia-Pacific representative, Catherine McGrath, to attend the World Family Meeting of Families in Rome in June and to a private audience with other WUCWO members. Catherine was the Guest Speaker at the WUCWO Day Mass and luncheon in Polding House in May, which raised \$350.

WUCWO responded to the survey on the obstacles and possible solutions towards the establishment of a synodal church, which will be considered at the Bishops Synod on Synodality in Rome in October 2023.

Monthly Messages and Art for medication from President General Maria Lia were circulated to all Branch presidents.

WUCWO members joined 120 participants from various other religions, to attend services in Uniting and Anglican churches across the Archdiocese at the World Day of Prayer, on 4th March, The Australian Church Women NSW State Unit, which was responsible for the celebration of the World Day of Prayer, Fellowship Day and World Community Day, has been disbanded.

The World Day of Prayer will continue to be celebrated and there will be an internationally prepared Order of Service available on [www.acw.org.au](http://www.acw.org.au)  
The responsibility for the organisation of

the service however, will devolve on the Church/Parishes who agree to host the celebration.

Printed Orders of Services will also be available for Fellowship Day and World Community Day and there'll be information on [www.acw.org.au](http://www.acw.org.au) about managing the money collected for the Winifred Keik Scholarship and the Fellowship of the Least Coin on that day. Churches will make their own arrangements, to host services.

During the year, WUCWO was involved in The Service of Thanksgiving at St. Stephens Presbyterian Church Sydney in May, to mark the end of the Australian Church Women NSW State Unit.

The farewell luncheon to celebrate the sale of Marian Court in June.

The Australia Day luncheon with the Governor, in the Queen Victoria building in January.

An Anzac Day luncheon organised by the Jewish National Council of Women.

A special Mass called a Divine Liturgy, according to the Byzantine Rite, in St. Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Lidcombe, to pray for the women and children of Ukraine.

In spite of reduced numbers due to Covid extreme weather conditions, cancellations and transport difficulties, WUCWO had a successful year and in 2023, look forward to positive changes in the role of women, foreshadowed in Pope Francis's vision of a Synodal Church.

**Jay Turner**

WUCWO Intl/ Sec.

## Summer Hill CWL has morning tea at Eileen O'Connor Catholic College

Summer Hill CWL regularly runs activities such as raffles and silver circles raising funds to support local organisations. We recently donated \$460 to the Eileen O'Connor Catholic College in Lewisham, which provides holistic educational services for young people with a moderate intellectual disability and other complex learning needs. They provide students with an education that caters for their diverse range of needs and provides opportunities and experiences that will enable them to lead lives full of promise and meaning. They focus on inclusion and creating an environment that is both welcoming and nurturing for students and all people with disabilities.

As a thank you for our donation, we were invited to have morning tea at the college. It was a lovely sunny day and we sat outside the beautifully

restored St Thomas Presbytery. Reflecting a "real world" situation, students took our orders and made lovely coffee which they served with scones. The students were happy to engage in conversation with us and the teachers were generous with their time and explained to us the ethos of the college and how learning is encouraged. Their support and nurturing style of teaching was evident in the passion with which they spoke about their students.

Our donation was used to purchase books for younger students who are learning to read. We were told that with these books, the college has implemented a reading at home program to supplement reading at school.

**Jean Burns**  
**Secretary Summer Hill CWL**



# CWL St Patrick's Day Celebrations



# Snapshots of CWL in 2022



April  
Branch  
Day



Summer Hill celebrated a successful Fashion Parade



Pray for Ukraine, a special Mass was held at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church



Enfield branch celebrated Sr Kath's 93rd Birthday



CWL Executive with some of the Doonas and bedding donated to Ukrainian Refugee families



CWL attended the Walk with Christ Procession



Above: Lisa Buxton, Director of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry with Marlene Wallace



Left: Viki Pompor with Diahanna Senko, Ukraine Crisis Appeal



Some of CWL Executive with Gift bags made for The Farm at Galong recipients

# A CHRISTMAS SONG

Why is the baby crying  
On this, his special day,  
When we have brought him lovely gifts  
And laid them on the hay?

He's crying for the people  
Who greet this day with dread  
Because somebody dear to them  
Is far away or dead,

For all the men and women  
Whose love affairs went wrong,  
Who try their best at merriment  
When Christmas comes along,

For separated parents  
Whose turn it is to grieve  
While children hang their stockings up  
Elsewhere on Christmas Eve,

For everyone whose burden  
Carried through the year  
Is heavier at Christmastime,  
The season of good cheer.

That's why the baby's crying  
There in the cattle stall:  
He's crying for those people.  
He's crying for them all.

*Become a Diocesan Member of the Catholic Women's  
League Archdiocese of Sydney Today!*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to receive information by email: YES/NO  
Please return with remittance of \$40 to:

Catholic Women's League Level 8, 133 Liverpool St, Sydney 2000

**Ph: 9307 8383    Email: [cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org)**

*If you wish to join a Branch as a branch member please contact the CWL Sydney.*

# WOMEN'S ADVENT RETREAT DAY (GYMEA)

Saturday 26 November, 10 am to 4.30 pm

## *The Feminine Genius* A GIFT TO BE SHARED

Talk 1

***Dignity***

Talk 2

***Model***

Talk 3

***Encounter***

*A Day Retreat for  
Every Woman at St  
Catherine Labouré,  
GyMEA.*



*"What you are is God's Gift to you  
What you become is your gift to God"*

*Hans Urs von Balthasar*



Organised by the Catholic Women's League, GyMEA

Register by emailing [admin@stcaths.org.au](mailto:admin@stcaths.org.au)

A \$10 cash donation on the day will be appreciated

**REGISTRATIONS CLOSE 19 NOVEMBER**

*“A little child,  
A shining star,  
A stable rude,  
The door ajar.  
Yet in that place,  
So crude, forlorn,  
The Hope of all  
The world was born.”*

—ANONYMOUS

