



Australian Local Government Women's Association NSW

October 2007

Issue 5

Tell Us Your Story

There are some amazing stories from women councilors. Let us put them all together to record history and to inform and inspire others.

ALGWA (NSW) is compiling a book of stories of women in local government and we would love to hear yours!

All you need to do is put fingers to keyboard and tell us about your journey in Council. It could be about why you decided to stand for election, your first impressions, some experience you've had and how you dealt with it...in fact whatever you think you'd like to share.

We hope the book will inspire other women to consider



Darriea Turley, ALGWA Immediate Past President, Cr. Karen McKeown and Cr. Norma Thomas at the ALGWA Executive meeting in Broken Hill.

standing for election and support and encourage those already in Council to continue to represent their communities.

So send your story in 500 words or less to Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au by November 30.

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These are stories of two women in local government—one from the past and one from now...

Marjorie Propsting Scholarship

ALGWA offers an annual scholarship of \$1000 to a female student whose tertiary studies relate to an area of local government. It is currently awarded to an eligible student of Armidale University.

The aim is to encourage women to become involved in local government and to perpetuate the memory of Marjorie Propsting, a woman who was definitely a leader and role model for women making a career in local government, or becoming an elected member of council.

Marjorie Propsting was one of those women active in the community, who realise that it is important to become elected to local government to really make a

change. After being involved in numerous local organisations, she was elected to Lane Cove Council in 1949 and retained her position for 22 years, becoming Mayor in 1960.

Importantly, she was a founder in 1952 of the Australian Local Government Women's association and President of both the NSW and the ACT branches. [1952-1972] and the national board 1966-70]. She was active in the National Council of Women of NSW, the National Council of Women in Australia and the League of Women Voters and a Justice of the Peace. In 1974 she was appointed MBE.

She also raised a family.



Marjorie Propsting MBE., BA., ALAA., JP. 1905-1972

She believed that women played a very important part in decision making in local government because they brought “that necessary woman’s point of view.”

She is truly one of those women who blazed the trail for female representation in local government.

Member Profile—Fiona Rossiter



Fiona Rossiter is a Councillor with Orange City Council after being elected in 2004. She was elected under extraor-

dinary circumstances seeing as she was third on the ticket in her group and number two was knocked out. But that is a story for another day!

Since being elected Fiona has been an advocate for Youth, Families and Multi cultural people. She has a keen interest in the environment and believes we as Councillors can be active in working towards and campaigning for environmentally friendly

issues.

Fiona has a passion to see more women in Local Government and in fact CEO and Director roles. Public speaking is another area Fiona has been working in of late and reiterates and shares information about how she manages the balance of work, family and Council. Not only that but the new roles and responsibilities that must be learnt as a Councillor.

Member Profile—Fiona Rossiter

Fiona works as a Theatre nurse and In Charge of Shift on roster with Orange Base Hospital. She says she enjoys this role and this was when she first felt she could help people in another way which lead to the decision to run for Council. Fiona has been working as a Registered Theatre Nurse since 2000 when she graduated. She says she is a late Bloomer and believes her nursing role has given her a great foundation in her capacity as a Councillor.

Fiona's real passion though is the job she shares with her husband Paul caring for and bringing up their 6 children. Their children range in age from 2 years to 20 years and they have 2 girls and 4 boys. As if that wasn't enough they have also taken on the role as Foster Care Parents. This was a decision they put a lot of thought into and believe they have enough love to share with other children and families in need.

Fiona and Paul also own a web-site called Australian Family Matters which is in the process of growing with information for children, youth and parents. The web address is

www.australianfamilymatters.com.au

Fiona said that she welcomes contact and is willing to mentor and share information that she has learnt with others especially now that she has this new role as an executive member with the Australian Local Government Women's Association.

Election for Darriea Turley

Congratulations to Darriea Turley, Immediate Past President of ALGWA who has been elected Chair of the National Rural Women's Coalition.

Kaele Way, National President of ALGWA, said that "ALGWA will be well represented by Darriea in the coming term."



Lismore Local Government Forum for Women

Cr. Jenny Dowell, Cr. Ros Irwin and Cr. Vanessa Ekins in Lismore, have arranged a forum to invite women in the area to apply for councillor positions on local government.

ALGWA wants to encourage women in all local government positions to arrange their own local forums to help to increase the numbers of interested, enthusiastic women on local council.

'We desperately need more women in local government as only 26% of councillors and 10% of mayors in NSW are women'

said Cr. Ros Irwin. 'Only eight women have ever been councillors on Lismore Council and the most at any one time was four – now there are only three.'

'Local government is the epitome of community involvement' said Cr. Jenny Dowell. 'Many women are already engaged in their communities and come to the Council table with a wealth of experience. We are delighted that so many women have responded to the call to find out more about the Council experience'

'We especially need more young women' said Cr. Vanessa Ekins. 'It can be difficult juggling the demands of family, work,

study and Council but we need to ensure Council is more representative of our community' she said.

The three Councillors all reflect the busy roles of women in the broader community. Cr. Irwin is a lecturer in Social Science at SCU. Cr. Dowell is President of Northern Rivers Social Development Council and Cr. Ekins, who has two young sons, is training to be a teacher at SCU.

Crs. Irwin, Ekins and Dowell will meet with at least 15 other women from Lismore, Ballina and Richmond Valley who are interested in either standing for next year's local government elections or in supporting others to stand.

Clare Burton Memorial Lecture 2007

This year Dr. Sara Charlesworth will be delivering the keynote speech at the Clare Burton Memorial Lecture— Understandings of sex discrimination in the Workplace: Limits and Possibilities. She will examine the effectiveness of

Australian sex discrimination laws in the workplace, in particular, the contradictory ways in which sex discrimination is understood at an organisational level and the influence of policy and political context.

Details: Wednesday 7 November, 5.30-7.30pm, The Chancellery, Level 4, UTS Tower Building 1, Broadway. For more information or to RSVP contact Joanna.leonard@uts.edu.au or call 9514 1274.

Premier's Council for Women—Call for Applications for Membership

People with expertise, experience and interest in current issues affecting women in NSW are invited to apply for membership of the Premier's Council for Women. Appointments are for a two year term.

The Council has worked with the Department for Women, and now the Office for Women, NSW

Department of Premier and Cabinet as the lead agency in influencing whole of government policy on issues affecting women, to promote justice and equity for women in NSW since its establishment in 1995.

Your application should include a completed expression of interest form and a resume.. Ap-

plications close at 5pm on Friday 2 November 2007.

For further information

Christine Unicomb, Office for Women, Department of Premier and Cabinet 02 9228 3141

christine.unicomb@dpc.nsw.gov.au

Gwen Griffen 'Local Hero'



The Member for Tamworth Peter Draper congratulated Gunnedah resident, shire councillor and ALGWA Executive member Gwen Griffen as a 'Local Hero' within the Gunnedah community.

Under the State Government's 'Local Hero' scheme, Aboriginal people are recognised for the voluntary contributions they make to their community, to improve health, education or social outcomes for their fellow residents.

Mr Draper said Mrs Griffen's name was among the first put forward when nominations were opened for the Local Hero scheme earlier this year because of her contributions to the Gunnedah community over the

past 40 years.

"When one asks for the name of somebody involved in a community initiative, whether it be for Aboriginal people or for the general community, the name Gwen Griffen often pops up in Gunnedah," Mr Draper said. "Gwen has helped develop the Min Min Aboriginal Corporation, and also a local program helping women victims of domestic violence. She is a member of many community organizations, being the chair of both the

Women's Crisis and Family Support Centre, and the Aboriginal Hospital Advisory Committee.

"Gwen was instrumental in attracting \$20,000 in Government funding for a program highlighting bullying, teenage pregnancy and intimidation at Gunnedah High School, and also has worked to increase the availability of public housing.

"Amid her busy schedule Gwen is also a councillor serving on the Gunnedah Shire."

Mr Draper said Mrs Griffen now has the opportunity to apply for a share of \$250,000 for a project special to the Gunnedah community.

"The Local Hero scheme is an excellent initiative that recognises the unsung heroes in our community, and allows them to

identify a project within their community that may benefit from State Government funding support," he said. "Gwen is an excellent example of someone who puts the interests and needs of the community first, so I congratulate her on the many achievements through the years, and I would encourage others in the community to follow her example," Mr Draper concluded.



**Australian Local Government Women's Association
ALGWA NSW**

55th Annual Conference

ROCKDALE NSW

3-5 April 2008

The NSW Branch of ALGWA holding its 55th annual conference in April 2008 at Rockdale

The executive would like to extend an invitation to all who are interested in raising the profile and success of women in local government, councillors and employees.

Limited spaces will be kept available for each council with early bird discount rates available.

Further detail available by contacting Executive Secretary: Cr Christine Jeffreys 0431 501 615 or email: christinejeffreys@yahoo.com.au

Australian Local
Government Women's
Association NSW

ALGWA NSW is the State's peak representative body for women who are in any way involved or interested in local government.

ALGWA NSW

Aims and Objectives

- To assist in furthering women's knowledge and understanding of the function of local government;
- To protect and enhance the interests and rights of women in local government;
- To take action in relation to any subject or activity of particular interest to women affecting local governing bodies and/or local government legislation;
- To act in an advisory capacity to intending women candidates for local government elections;
- To encourage women into professional careers in local government.

Visit our website:
www.algwa.org.au



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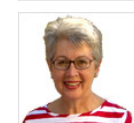
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