



# ALGWA NSW Newsletter

## November/December 2010– Issue 21

# 2010 YEAR OF WOMEN

## IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CREATIVE | STRONG | INCLUSIVE | DIVERSE

### Message from Cr. Karen McKeown– President of ALGWA NSW

*Wishing all ALGWA NSW members a very Happy Christmas and a productive year in Local Government for 2011– which is the Centenary Year of International Women’s Day. Make it a very special celebration in your community! The year of Women in Local Government 2010 has been an exciting year for both elected representatives and women working in the sector.*

**ALGWA is the peak body representing women in Local Government– both councillors and staff members. Support ALGWA’s important work by joining– best before December 30th 2010 to be eligible to vote at the ALGWA NSW Conference at Blacktown in May 2011.**  
[www.algwa.org.au](http://www.algwa.org.au)

ALGWA NSW has made significant progress in 2010 promoting women’s issues and in supporting women in Local Government.

Paid Parental Leave has been the focus of a campaign by ALGWA NSW. A motion put to the LGA Conference in 2008 was passed unanimously. Since then, ALGWA’s campaign has resulted in at least 15 Councils improving paid parental leave conditions for employees.

Whilst ALGWA [NSW] recognises the LGSA proposed parental leave “top up” in the NSW Local Government Employees Award, it does not go far enough. There are caveats with potentially significant financial trade-offs involved.

The reality is that under this scheme, many of the lower paid workers in local Government [who are predominantly women] could be financially disadvantaged if they take the wage “top up.”

Full press release ;  
[algwa.org.au](http://algwa.org.au)

There needs to be a rigorous communication and education strategy accompanying this proposal, otherwise many lower paid Local Government employees risk being unwittingly and unfairly short changed.

As a legacy of the Year of Women in local Government, ALGWA [NSW] is calling on all NSW Councils to honour the 2008 LGA Conference commitment to implement 18 weeks paid maternity and 2 weeks paid paternity leave as a standard working condition for their Council staff before the end of 2010.

On a national level, a highlight for ALGWA was the launch of the “50:50 Vision”– a national programme for gender equity in Local Government.

The programme is designed to be accessed by all councils, which can apply for accreditation at 3 levels, bronze, silver and gold, which must be acquired sequentially. Identification of councils as 50:50 Vision employers of choice will make it easier for councils to attract and retain strong women candidates and officers.

Information/application:  
[www.5050vision.com.au](http://www.5050vision.com.au)



**Karen McKeown**

**President ALGWA NSW**  
**Ambassador YOW in Local Government**  
**Member JMAC [Joint Ministerial Advisory Board for Women]**  
**Member Executive NSW LGA**

#### Did You Know That?

Norway first introduced some form of paid parental leave in 1936? Australia has been one of only two OECD countries that did not have a national scheme of paid parental leave?

*Australian Human Rights Commission*

#### Inside this issue:

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**Celebrate the YOW in Local Government at the ALGWA National Conference. Breast feeding mothers, babies and prams very welcome.**

**The ALGWA National Biennial Conference will be hosted by the City of Ryde, NSW November 25-27 2010 to conclude the celebrations for the Year of Women in Local Government. Bookings still open!!**



**STRICTLY NO ADMITTANCE**

**Cr. Nicole Campbell and Francoise Excluded from the LGA Conference in Albany.**

old baby were made to feel unwelcome. Despite the fact that the baby was quiet in her pram, the councillor was moved 4 times by Conference officials, and by one who forcibly demanded that she remove her pram immediately, during the address to delegates by the Premier, ignoring her pleas to be able stay.

As Cr. Campbell told the local newspaper, "I had several motions on women's issues and I was thrilled to be going to the Conference."

"It reinforces how inflexible Local Government is, and shows that if we really want to modernise Local Government, we need to be flexible and support

women."

Cr. Campbell had informed the LGSA months before that she would be accompanied by her infant daughter.

With only 27% of women councillors in NSW, many of those older or retired, how can young women in the workforce and those with children be encouraged and supported to stand for council with attitudes like this still around?

No parent should feel embarrassed and intimidated at a Conference or Forum as happened in this instance.

**Councillors should insist that prospective hosts of Conferences and Forums include family friendly criteria as a core component of their bid.**

**Parents are very welcome to bring babies and prams to any ALGWA Conference or Forum.**

Unfortunately, Councillor Nicole Campbell of Ryde City Council, found that, despite the theme of the NSW Local Government Conference in Albany in October being "Modernising Local Government" - that she and her 6 month

**ALGWA NSW supports family violence leave entitlement**

ALGWA [NSW] executive have agreed to support legislation in NSW to provide family violence leave entitlement.

The ASU and Victoria's Surf Coast Shire have agreed on a groundbreaking clause which recognises that employees sometimes face situations of violence or abuse in their personal life that may affect their attendance or performance at work. This clause will entitle victims of domestic violence to 20 days paid leave each year.

The clause will require approval of any reasonable request from an employee suffering domestic violence for:

- Changes to their span of hours and/ or shift patterns
- Job redesign or changes to duties
- Relocation to suitable employment
- Change of contact details to avoid harassment
- Other appropriate measures including those available under existing provisions for family friendly and flexible workplace arrangements.

ASU Victorian Branch assistant Lisa Darmanin said the clause will help victims of violence hold down a stable job and maintain a career path.

"Family violence can interrupt women's lives, including their work. Escaping such a situation requires leave to secure safety for themselves and their children as well as dealing with legal, accommodation and financial matters, to name a few.

Keeping your income at this time is paramount to a victim's well-being and future in the workplace."

**The Line** is a website set up by the Australian government as a blog designed for young people to access. It combines intelligent analysis and insight on issues facing teenage relationships today, including the influence of friends, family, media, technology and popular culture. "The Line" is drawn to show when someone has stepped over it in such issues as harassment, violence, bullying or invasion of privacy.

[www.theline.gov.au](http://www.theline.gov.au)



**Did you know that?**

1 in 3 Australian women experiences physical violence in their lifetime?  
 Nearly 1 in 5 Australian women experiences sexual assault in their lifetime?  
 In 2009, violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy an estimated \$13.6 billion?

**International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women November 25**

*Statistics from Australian Human Rights Commission*

**Women, Poverty and Economics-**

Women bear a disproportionate burden of the world's poverty. Statistics show that women are more likely than men to be poor and at risk of hunger because of the systematic discrimination they face in education, health care, employment and control of assets. Poverty implications are widespread for women. Leaving many without even basic rights such as access to clean drinking water, sanitation, medical care and decent employment. Being poor can also mean they have little protection from violence and have no role in decision making.

Information: UNIFEM [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

**Remember the International Women's Day pledge of 2010- Empowering Women to end Poverty by 2015**





**Jenny Dowell- Mayor of Lismore, City Council-** hosted a forum in Lismore to encourage more women to stand for the Local Government elections in 2012

Jenny is a former ALGWA executive member and a very keen advocate of ALGWA principle of promoting gender equity in Local Government.

Jenny welcomed 30 women to the forum, which was held in September. Jenny reported that:

“No-one glamorised the role. The time commitment, challenges and the responsibility was clearly enunciated”, said Jenny, “but equally the fulfilment provided by being a Councillor was expressed too.”

Jenny was reported in the local press as saying, “NSW has a really low level of women on council. It’s just over 26 percent.

Most women I know don’t believe they have the skills to be a councillors and it’s only when you come and watch the council meetings you realise women are in fact very well equipped to become councillors.”

Jenny herself says that this is exactly how she became interested in standing for council. She went to her first council meeting and in her words, she “became hooked.”

She has been on council since 2004, becoming popularly elected mayor in 2008 and often says how much she loves her job.

Jenny says: “2010 is the Year of Women in Local Government. If we work together now we can boost women’s representation on council in 2012. All sorts of doors open if you open your mind to opportunities.”

Following questions and discussion, most women expressed their desire to keep in touch and attend future forums.

*Quotes/photo: Northern Rivers Echo*

Thanks to the Australian Local Government Association and Darriea Turley (ALGWA National President), each attendee received a copy of the new publication ‘Women in Politics’ published to mark 2010 as the Year of Women in Local Government.”

Jenny will host another forum on Thursday September 8, 2011.

If other Councils would like to consider a similar forum, please feel welcome to contact Jenny Dowell at

[Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au)

**ALGWA NSW has an informative and helpful kit for women intending to stand for Local Government. Details available on the website, or contact any of the ALGWA executive for encouragement and advice from those who have been there and done that! [www.algwa.org.au](http://www.algwa.org.au)**

**Congratulations Cr. Gwen Griffen– Inspirational Woman– Aboriginal Elder–Councillor of Gunnedah Shire Council** who has been named **Councillor of the Year** at the annual awards for the NSW Local Government Aboriginal Network.

The LGAN has been established over 20 years to provide for information exchange and discussion on Local Government issues relating to Aboriginal communities, businesses and the wider community.

Cr. Griffen also was honoured with a Public Education Giyanha Murri Award, recognising her significant contribution to Aboriginal education over many years. The Award, in the Gomeroi language, means “future outstanding Aboriginal,” a title for which Gwen Griffen has been eligible for many years for her hard work and for the esteem in which she is held by her community and the schools and educational establishments in the New England Region.



**Cr. Gwen Griffen** received two awards for her outstanding contribution to Local Government and Aboriginal education.

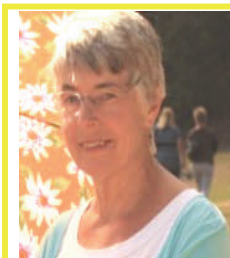
**Penrith City Council Hosted ALGWA Executive Meeting**



Penrith City Council hosted the NSW ALGWA executive meeting in September. Penrith has six female elected councillors and a strong track record of supporting female staff through initiatives such as paid parental leave, flexible working arrangements and professional development training.

At the meeting, the executive discussed the need to urge the Local Government Association to honour the 2008 decision to implement 18 weeks maternity leave and 2 weeks paid paternity leave for all NSW Local Government employees.

Organisation of the National ALGWA Conference in Ryde November 25-27 was finalised. The executive also saw a presentation from Blacktown City Council as part of on going planning for the NSW ALGWA Conference to be held there in May 2011. This year is also the 60th anniversary of the founding of ALGWA and much cause for celebration. Details to be advised.



**Congratulations to Cr. Alwyn Friedersdorff**, Acting National Secretary of ALGWA, who has been named as one of Tasmania’s most inspirational women. The local media reported that Alwyn “has been a social trainer for the Wynyard St. Vincent de Paul Society for 21 years, assisting young people who have intellectual disabilities. She is also an active councillor and is the state secretary of the Local Government Women’s association. She presided over the Wynyard Tulip Festival for several years and has been involved with other community organisations. Known for her no-nonsense attitude and positive outlook, she is always ready to provide community assistance when it is needed.”

### Congratulations to the Councils who have increased paid parental leave provisions for their staff-

#### 18 weeks maternity/ 2 weeks paternity leave:

Ryde Ashfield Gosford Waverley City of Sydney  
Leichhardt Bankstown

#### 14 weeks maternity/ 2 weeks paternity leave

Orange Blacktown Marrickville Penrith

#### 12 weeks maternity leave

Port Stephens Wollongong Hawkesbury

At the 2008 ALGA Conference delegates unanimously agreed :  
“That the Conference supports the provision of 18 weeks paid maternity leave and 2 weeks paid paternity leave as a standard condition for all NSW Local Government employees.”

As a legacy of the Year of Women in Local Government 2010 ALGWA [NSW] is calling on all NSW Councils to honour the 2008 ALGA Conference commitment by implementing it at your council before the end of 2010



### Is your Council Breast-feeding friendly organisation?

It is hard to believe that in 2010 there are breastfeeding women working all over Australia who are forced to express their milk in their cars, public lunchroom or the toilet.....

### No Dignity... No Privacy.... No Respect

Your Council can support women in the workforce by:

**Implementing HR policies that encourage continuation of breastfeeding with lactation breaks**  
**Providing a private space for women and refrigeration facilities.**



**Colleen Fuller.**  
**Deputy Mayor of Gunnedah Shire Council-**

reports the success of a Notice of Motion she moved to unanimous

support in Gunnedah Council, which resulted in negotiations with Police and the Liquor Accord that licensed premises in Gunnedah serve only low alcohol drinks after midnight.

### Gunnedah Shire Council leads the Way to prevent violence against women

Since its introduction, it has resulted in almost half the incidence of violence and street fighting in the town. Colleen says that a number of NSW towns are following Gunnedah's lead and she urges councillors to take similar action in communities where alcohol related violence is a social problem.

Work together to eliminate violence against women support **White Ribbon Day-**  
[www.whiteribbonday.org.au](http://www.whiteribbonday.org.au)

Did you know that in Australia-  
Women account for 62% of people using homelessness assistance services?

Domestic violence is the most common reason why women with children access homelessness services? Single women with children are the biggest group people reliant on Commonwealth Rent Assistance? There will be a significant increase in the number of women entering the homeless population over the next two decades?

*Australian Human Rights Commission*

My nomination for the Ernies next year will be the male councillor who approached a female councillor at the NSW LGA Conference in Albury in October. She was accompanied by her 6 month old baby.

He [sneering]: “Well, you are really making your point, aren’t you?”

She, introducing herself by name and council, “What do you mean?”

He: “Well, ..you’re here with your baby... and your pram.”

She: “Yes, and....?”

He: “And I even saw you breast feeding!”

*[Denise Wilton, Editor.]*



The Ernies 2010— awards for the most sexist remarks over the last 12 months— was held for the 18th year in September.

Tony Abbott was awarded the Clinton for repeat offenders with eight nominations, Barnaby Joyce was noted for his remark on being dumped from a portfolio, that “you lose one girlfriend, you find another one.”

NSW MP Adrian Piccoli was nominated for telling premier Kristina Kenneally that her hair spray was contributing to global warming.

But the Gold Ernie was for a serious one- the students of St. Paul’s College at Sydney University who set up a Facebook page encouraging the rape of women.

Founder and organise of the Ernies is Cr. Meredith Burgmann of Sydney City Council. Send nominations to her for 2011: [mburgmann@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mburgmann@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

## Power to the Women in the NSW Local Government Association



### Some of the women elected to the LGA Executive [L to R]

Cr. Kate Lamb [Willoughby], Cr. Tracey Carpenter [Bathurst], Cr. Julie Heggarty [Pittwater], Cr. Julie Griffiths [Blacktown], Cr. Leigh Vaughan [Great Lakes] Cr. Alice Glachan, [mayor Albury] Cr. Genia McCaffrey [mayor North Sydney, Immediate Past President] Cr. Fiona Byrne [mayor Marrickville]

The elections at the Albury LGA Conference resulted in possibly a record number of women becoming members of the executive.

Cr. Keith Rhoades [Independent] is the new LGA President following the stepping down of Cr. Genia McCaffrey [Independent] who has dedicated six years to the role-years in which Local Government has had some significant issues including further cost shifting from other levels of government, increased demands on services to communities, rate pegging and the lack of constitutional recognition for the tier of government closest to the people.

One of the biggest fights has been with the present NSW state Government over the takeover of local council planning powers, and Genia McCaffrey has led the fight, heading numerous campaigns.

Genia has never resiled from her core values and beliefs and in her strength and wisdom as President has been an inspiration to women in Local Government.

For a full list of all LGA Executive members:  
[www.lgsa.org.au](http://www.lgsa.org.au)

## Applications Open for Woman of the Year Award 2011



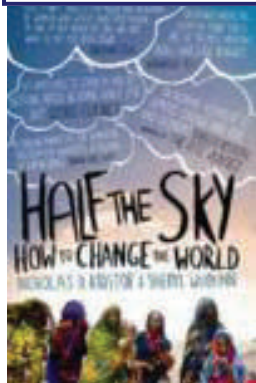
The NSW Woman of the Year Award is held as part of the celebrations for International Women's Day. The year 2011 is a very special year as it is the Centenary of IWD.

Nominations are open for the 2011 award and each Member of Parliament has the opportunity to nominate one woman. Members of the community are also invited to submit a nomination for the award.

Nominations forms- Office for Women's Policy website: [www.women.nsw.gov.au](http://www.women.nsw.gov.au)

Closing Date: Monday December 6 by 5 pm

## ALGWA Book Corner



*This book, written by a husband and wife team, aims to change the world in the way cruelty, death and deprivation are meted out to many*

*women. They say that perhaps 100 million women are missing today because of "murder, violence, rape, sex trafficking, hunger, but most of all, sheer lack of interest in*

*whether females of any age survive." They were working in China, when they discovered that the number of Chinese baby girls dying each week of neglect or infanticide was more than the number of protestors who died in the Tiananmen Square massacre. Which had worldwide media coverage? In India, a boy often gets vaccination before his sister. A Congolese soldier says that raping women is his right. "Many more women and girls are now shipped into brothels each year than African slaves were transported to the plantations annually." There are gruelling personal stories and data to back them up.*

*They write of women dying unnecessarily in childbirth, of the agony and social stigma of untreated fistulas in childbirth. The writers argue that the mistreatment of women is the moral challenge of our times and that countries that educate and look after girls do better than those based on misogyny such as Pakistan and Yemen which are kept in poverty. In line with the theme of International Women's Day 2010, they say that "If women are helped, world poverty can be beaten."*

*This important book leads the reader to a number of organisations and actions which can lead to positive help for the suffering women of the world.*



**WOMEN AREN'T THE PROBLEM,  
THEY'RE THE SOLUTION  
ALONG WITH MEN.**

[www.halfttheskymovement.org](http://www.halfttheskymovement.org)

The best way to fight poverty and extremism is to educate and empower women and girls.

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.

### Need legal advice?

Visit Law Access NSW a free government service providing help to people with legal problems or a query.

[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au)

Councils can become members of ALGWA NSW for \$200 per annum, entitling them to discounts for Conferences, forums and courses run by ALGWA NSW



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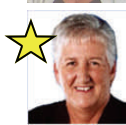
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What are you up to? Send stories and photos from your council and community to your Newsletter. [deewill@zip.com.au](mailto:deewill@zip.com.au)

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

Merry  
Christmas



ALGWA  
members  
Everywhere-  
From your  
ALGWA NSW  
Executive



Happy  
New  
Year