

# AUSTRALIAN GRADUATE WOMEN



## JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER



Dear Members,

Welcome to the latest addition of our newsletter. It has been a while since I communicated with you and the last few months have been a period of intense activity and work for me.

I share a few of the events that I have been part of.

In early February 2024, I attended the meeting of Women in Global Health, Australia in Melbourne and we had a panel session with women health leaders from the Mekong region (Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia).

I had the privilege of traveling to India in late February with the West Australian Minister for Health, the Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson on a Health Skilling Delegation representing my university.

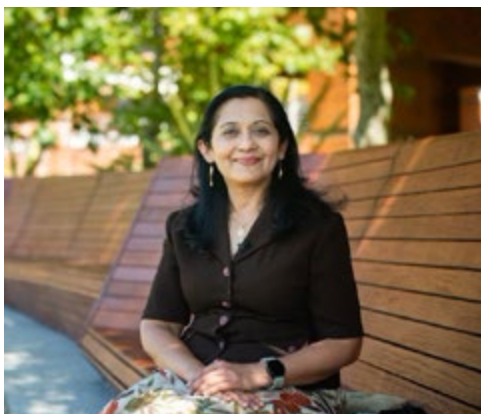
In March, Prof Shirley Randell, AO and myself, traveled to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) and had a wonderful 10 days, meeting with Graduate Women International delegates, Australian and other women participants from around the world. We attach our power point report to this newsletter, and it has an overview of our time at CSW68.

In April, I launched my research on Ukrainian displaced people in Perth and you can find more about the project at Project Launch – [Fleeing the war across oceans \(photovoiceproject.com.au\)](http://photovoiceproject.com.au). The report was launched by Federal Member of Parliament for Swan, WA – Zaneta Mascarenhas and highlights the challenges faced by displaced people during an ongoing war in its third year. The project was funded by Healthway and Lotterywest.

My ongoing research on Family and Domestic Violence, also funded by Healthway, is having an impact and in May and June, I have presented to community, media, the police and two Parliamentary Enquiries on Children and Youth with a focus on refugee youth and Financial Abuse.

During May 2024, we also awarded AGW fellowships to three outstanding PhD scholars, we share details further in the newsletter.

In the last few weeks as a nation, we have reflected on Refugee week (June 16 - 23) and celebrated NAIDOC week (July 7 -14) . During Refugee week we recognise the difficult and perilous journeys of those who flee war and seek a new life in Australia. During Naidoc week we celebrate Indigenous people and their Elders as the oldest culture on the planet.



I encourage all our members to read a few more of our updates, renew their membership and invite friends and family to join too. Thank you all for your ongoing support and I wish you a healthy winter season.

With warm wishes

**Professor Jaya Dantas**

President – Australian Graduate Women

# RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Renew your membership with Australian Graduate Women (AGW), the voice of graduate women in Australia. The contribution of members is valued and greatly appreciated.

Check out our website - <https://www.australiangradwomen.org.au/>

We are on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/89498891/admin/dashboard/>

Twitter [@AusGradWomen](https://twitter.com/AusGradWomen) – so do follow us

Please find attached a **membership** form for renewal of your AGW membership.

The membership allows us to:

- be part of the GWI – Graduate Women International family that has 47 NFA (National Associations) and 9000 members across the world.
- have ECOSOC status with the UN, where we have representation with the UN in New York, Geneva and Vienna.
- contribute to projects in developing countries through GWI.
- provide fellowships for female PhD students each year to extend their PhD worthwhile projects that make a difference.
- advocate on issues that impact higher education for women in Australia and around the world.
- be part of Women's Alliances in Australia – ERA (Equality Rights Alliance), eS4W (Economic Security for Women) and Harmony Alliance.
- attend the Commission on the Status of Women at the UN in March of each year. Our ECOSOC status allows 20 AGW members to attend.
- participate in other international UN and related organisation events in Australia and overseas.
- contribute to International and National submissions of interest to AGW especially higher education of women, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health), 4 (Quality Education), and 5 (Gender Equality).



We hope you will all renew your membership and also invite a family member or friend or colleague to join AGW. I will be sharing this newsletter and membership form with many of my colleagues, friends and community members.

## REFLECTIONS ON CSW68

We, AGW President, Professor Jaya Dantas and Professor Shirley Randell, AO, had the privilege of attending the Commission on the Status of Women 68 (CSW68) at the United Nations. CSW68 provided glimpses of the amazing work undertaken by women around the world and the immense challenges we still face to achieve gender equality.

We had the chance to meet with and speak to our Federal Minister for Women, Katy Gallagher, who led the Australian delegation and presented Australia's statement.

Whilst there has been progress, there are sobering global realities that impede progress on gender equality – ongoing wars and conflicts, the push back against gender equality, and issues such as childcare, gender-based violence, climate change and AI.



*Shirley (left) with Hon Katy Gallagher (middle) and Jaya (right)*

[From UN Women website](#)



The priority theme was **'Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective'**.

CSW68 brought together activists, experts, organisations, civil society, and governments from across the globe to set specific goals and actions to end women's poverty and advance gender equality.

The Australian delegation also included:

1. **Natasha Scott Despoja** AO, Australia's representative on CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women)
2. **Hon Mary Woolridge**, CEO of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency
3. **Padma Raman** PSM, Executive Director, Office of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
4. **Dr Anna Cody**, Sex Discrimination Commissioner on the Australian Human Rights Commission
5. **Stephanie Copus-Campbell** AM, Ambassador for Gender Equality, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
6. **Joslyn Eades-Tass**, Chair, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
7. **Khayshie Tilak Ramesh**, non-executive Director of YWCA Australia and former Victorian Multicultural Youth Commissioner



*Shirley (left) with Natasha Scott Despoja (middle) and Jaya (right)*



The priority theme was on “Educating Outside the Classroom: women’s museums empowering girls and women”.

Shirley participated with representatives from national associations of graduate women from Mexico, Turkiye, South Africa, Brazil, Gambia, and New Zealand in a parallel event. More on this in the attached report



Jaya had her moment when she was able to ask the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, how we should push back against the world-wide pushback on women’s rights; how to hold those to account for sexual violence against women especially in conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and Haiti; and how to fund gender initiatives in a world where inflation impacts women, girls and children disproportionately.

President Jaya Dantas, with Graduate Women International (GWI) President Patrice Wellesley-Coles, Graduate Women -USA (GW-USA) President Sally Chamberlain and Canadian Federation of University (CFUW) Women President, Joy Hurst at CSW68 in New York.



## MEET OUR OUTSTANDING AGW 2024 FELLOWSHIP WINNERS



**Mia-Francesca Jones** is a PhD candidate at James Cook University studying the impact of the climate crisis on representations of the self in women's auto-biographical writing. Mia brings her background in literary publishing and as an award-nominated writer to identify emerging trends in contemporary creative non-fiction in a time of ecological upheaval.

Mia's fellowship project includes research

in Iceland. Mia will present at the Centre for Studies in Memory and Literature, connect with volcanologists at the University of Iceland, and access archival material at the Library of Water in Stykkishólmur. Mia will study the Library of Water's unique collection of 24 cylinders containing Icelandic glacial water, building upon her recent research trip to the Haupapa/Tasman Glacier in New Zealand. Mia aims to obtain a vital intercultural perspective on the northern hemisphere's cultural response to the way weather shapes lives, giving her PhD research global relevance.

**Dr Amanda Wilkins** is a clinician scientist, trained as a general paediatrician and clinical pharmacologist. She is completing her PhD at University of Melbourne and her PhD research focuses on improving vancomycin use in young infants, an antibiotic used to treat life-threatening infections in babies. Amanda is currently employed as a consultant paediatrician at Royal



Children's Hospital Melbourne. The Barbara Hale fellowship will help fund a multicentre clinical trial to evaluate novel methods for therapeutic drug monitoring and dose adjustment of vancomycin, an antibiotic used to treat life-threatening infections in babies.



**Laura Dowling** is a PhD candidate at the University of Newcastle in the School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy. Laura's PhD project investigates gut metabolites and inflammatory responses in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). COPD is the third leading cause of death worldwide and 1 in 7 Australians over 40 years old are affected. Current

treatment strategies alleviate symptoms and reduce exacerbations, but do not cure the disease. The AGW Barbara Hale Fellowship will assist Laura to characterise the metabolomics phenotype of COPD. This work will strengthen Laura's doctoral thesis and teach her important research skills for future research in the precision and personalised medicine.



## CO-ORDINATOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – DR ZENY EDWARDS’S UPDATE

In May: Zeny attended the Korea Australia Education Foundation meeting to discuss further education opportunities for Korean international students and enhance the cultural and language engagement between students from both countries.



*Dr Zeny Edwards, AGW CIR with Leanne Smith, CEO of Human Rights Commission and Parviz Deamer, CEO of Bahai International*

On 6-7 June: Zeny attended the two-day Free and Equal Conference held at the Hyatt Regency Sydney, on behalf of AGW, for a historic national forum to help pave the way for an overhaul of Australia’s human rights framework, including the introduction of an Australian Human Rights Act.

On 11 and 25 June, Zeny made a submission and attended the dialogue with DFAT to discuss Australia-Vietnam Human Rights and highlighted the need for more opportunities for higher learning programs for ethnic minorities, particularly women and also discussed introducing mentoring programs for Vietnamese scholars and post graduate students.

## ON A LIGHTER, MUSICAL NOTE FROM ALISON HAYDEN – AGW TREASURER



Alison Hayden (second from the left, front row) and treasurer of AGW is also treasurer of the Churchlands Choral Society in Western Australia. The choir, made up of local community members who simply enjoy singing, recently presented its mid-year concert ‘Let There be Light’.

Alison has been busy with preparations for the concert and end of financial year work for the choir, but also for AGW and GWWA.

## WE CONTRIBUTED TO THE GWI 105-YEAR CELEBRATION

On 11 July, GWI completed 105 years, AGW created a 4-minute video for the GWI 105- year celebration, where I focussed on our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and our fellowships, listen to our YouTube video:

[https://youtu.be/D9FLQyWjNQA?si=e-kdTKrdS4FJK\\_Iq](https://youtu.be/D9FLQyWjNQA?si=e-kdTKrdS4FJK_Iq)

And AGW also supported a GWI Virtual Heritage Fundraising brick through a contribution.

See [Graduate Woman International \(gwi105.com\)](http://gwi105.com)



*AGW would like to acknowledge the Indigenous Australians as the traditional custodians of the land and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We pass on our thanks for their custodianship of the land, water, and air through which we travel. During Naidoc Week – July 2024, we acknowledge that it is a time for all Australians to understand our shared histories, and to reflect how we can contribute to achieving reconciliation.*



*Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University*

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