

AUSTRALIAN GRADUATE WOMEN Inc.



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



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OUR VISION

*Advocate for women's rights, equality and empowerment and for access to quality secondary and tertiary*

OUR MISSION

- Empower women*
- Reduce poverty*
- Improve health*
- Support human rights*
- Maintain human security*
- Build peace*

AGW Website:  
<https://www.australiangradwomen.org.au/>

GWI Website:  
<https://graduatewomen.org/>

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**Professor Jaya Dantas**  
President

## Dear Members

A very warm welcome to all members to the AGW 2024 and I hope you all have had a successful 2024, as we head into the final month of the year.

It gives me pleasure to present the AGW annual report at the AGM, on activities from July 2023 to June 2024.

Globally, it has been a challenging year for higher education with the ongoing conflicts severely impacting women and girls and higher education. Universities have been destroyed, academics and students displayed and critical impacts on research facilities.

The impacts on women are greater than ever with significant challenges due to inflation, rise in cost of living, changes in the nature of employment, and climate changes, all of which impact women.

Thus, the importance of higher education for women and girls remains paramount and uncontested.

We extend our thanks to those of you who have already committed your membership for the 2024-25 year, and to those who will renew in the near future. Your ongoing support and commitment to AGW is both appreciated and necessary.

I thank the AGW executive and the council for their support. I share some highlights of the year, and I encourage you to take a look at our website. <https://www.australiangradwomen.org.au/>

## Our ECOSOC status of the United Nations:

On 21 July 2022, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to grant special consultative status to our organisation, Australian Graduate Women Inc.

AGW's ECOSOC status allows us to attend and access meetings at the United Nations, take part in consultations, make written submissions, and present at the UN. As part of the status we will be providing Quadrennial reports to the ECOSOC.



## Travel Activities

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 also 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.



## 25 November 2023: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

One woman is killed every 10 minutes: The harrowing global reality of femicide continues. A sobering report released by UN Women reveals that in 2023, 140 women and girls died every day at the hands of their partner or a close relative, which translates to one woman killed every 10 minutes. The report coincides with the start of the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign, which runs from 25 November to 10 December each year.

The annual **16 Days – Stop Violence Against Women** campaign takes place from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to 10 December 2024, Human Rights Day. The 16 Days draws inspiration from the global movement for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.

This movement aims to drive a change in culture, behaviour and attitudes that lead to violence against women and their children. I am in the third year of a project that is examining family and domestic violence among migrant women. My research team attended many of the events in WA.

## Gender Pay Gaps

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency's annual report card reveals a 21.8% difference between men's and women's salaries in the private sector. On average, women earn \$28,425 less per year.

The federal government will this week release legislation to require companies with more than 500 employees to set gender targets for their boards and provide flexible work hours.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) published Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard 2022-23, which spotlights how more than 7,300 private sector employers are tracking in terms of the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap was at 21.7 per cent.



## REFLECTIONS FROM CSW68(2024)

The priority theme of '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' was explored.

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.



Jaya and Shirley with Hon. Senator Katy Gallagher, Minister for Women

## Attending the 68th annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) at the United Nations in New York

Professor Shirley Randell AO and myself attended the Commission on the Status of Women 68 (CSW68) at the United Nations. **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.

A please find attached a link to the agreed conclusions - <https://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2024/L.3>



Jaya and Shirley with Natasha Stott Despoja AO



With members of the Australian delegation



With members of the GWI delegation



Jaya and Shirley at the UN General Assembly



CSW68 provided glimpses of the amazing work undertaken by women around the world and the immense challenges we still face to achieve gender equality.

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, issues such childcare, gender-based violence, climate change and AI.

A brief power point report will be shared to members in a forthcoming newsletter and please find attached a link to the agreed conclusions - [Agreed Conclusions](#)

Hon. Senator Katy Gallagher at the UN General Assembly

### Make a Difference

AGW monitors the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially as related to education, health and gender (goals 3, 4 & 5) and the interconnections with the other goals and notes the UNESCO scorecard.



### Your AGW Membership has several benefits

#### International Affiliation

Your membership allows you affiliation to **Graduate Women International**, (GWI: <https://graduatewomen.org/>). GWI, with headquarters in Geneva advocates for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality secondary and tertiary education and training up to the highest levels.

AGW is one of the 50 national affiliates of GWI and has representatives in UN deliberations in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

#### Stay Informed as part of Australian National Women's Alliances

AGW is a member of **Equality Rights Alliance (ERA)** and **Harmony Alliance** which are two of the six Australian Women's Alliances of the Australian Federal Government Office of Women.

The National Women's Alliances play a key role in understanding the experiences and issues affecting women in Australia and ensuring their voices are central in the policy development process. Further information is available via ([click here](#)).

Your membership allows AGW to be part of the Alliances.

AGW's ECOSOC status allows us to attend and access meetings at the United Nations, take part in consultations, make written submissions, and present at the UN. We participate in CSW each year.



## AGW FELLOWSHIPS

The AGW Fellowship funds are intended to facilitate a research project that will extend the nature and/ or scope of the currently approved PhD program and the specialised knowledge and skills of the applicant. The Fellowships are open to women who are Australian citizens (or permanent residents of Australia).

### The scholarships granted included:

- Two Barbara Hale Fellowships (valued \$8,000 each and open to women enrolled in any PhD degree by research)
- One Jennifer Strauss Fellowship (valued \$8,000 and open to women enrolled in a PhD degree by research in the area of Humanities)

### Congratulations to our 2024 AGW Fellowships awardees:

#### Amanda Wilkins - Barbara Hale Fellowship

Amanda's research at the University of Melbourne is focusing on improving vancomycin use in young infants, an antibiotic used to treat life-threatening infections in babies



#### Laura Dowling - Barbara Hale Fellowship

Laura's research at the University of Newcastle is investigating gut metabolites and inflammatory responses in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), with the aim to identify potential therapeutic targets for COP

#### Mia-Francesca McAuslan (Jones) - Jennifer Strauss Fellowship

Amy's research at James Cook University is looking at the impact of climate crisis on representations of the self in women's auto-biographical writing to extend the qualitative understanding of the impact of climate change.



AGW thanks **Professor Jane Scott** our fellowships facilitator for her work. Please see our current fellowships on the link - <https://www.australiangradwomen.org.au/fellowships/>

## COORDINATOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS REPORT

**Dr Zeny Edwards OAM**

Coordinator of International Relations

This year has been a year of collaboration and concerted efforts in broadening our reach to the wider community both locally, nationally and internationally. I acknowledged AGW during my participation in dialogues, conferences and commemorations including marking the International Day of Peace, International Women's Day and Human Rights Day. I did regular postings on AGW's LinkedIn. I will continue to maintain AGW's connections with the Australia Human Rights Commission, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Lowy Institute, the Institute for Economics and Peace, the Climate Council, SARS, Rotary, Graduate Women International, and other government bodies.

**Australian-Korea Higher Education Forum, 24 May 2024**

The Education Forum aimed to promote cooperation between the Australian and Korean higher education systems, strengthen institutional cooperation between Korea and Australia, and seek innovative reforms that enhance educational outcomes. The event was held jointly by the Korean Ministry of Education and the Australian Embassy for the Republic of Korea.



I attended the forum and was interested in the possibility of opening collaborative relationships with the Korean universities. The forum was very publicity focused and the universities and agencies that participated were not able to broaden their programs to involve international student exchanges between Australia and Korea.

**Free and Equal Conference, 6-7 June 2024**

The two-day Free and Equal Conference held at the Hyatt Regency Sydney, was 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. More than 1300 people from across Australia and around the world participated live and online in this landmark event for advancing human rights in Australia. Leaders, experts and advocates gathered to help pave the way.

Delegates learned about the positive change and opportunities a Human Rights Act will deliver as well as how to activate community support and engagement for this landmark reform.

Sessions also focused on a range of key human rights related issues including enhancing Australia's anti-discrimination laws, preventing racism, improving children's rights and youth justice, exploring the intersection of business, technology and human rights, and marking 40 years of Australia's Sex Discrimination Act.



Although a few sessions were thought provoking, overall, the conference dealt with the same issues but lacked commitment to action. The standout speakers were Jennifer Robinson | Int. human rights lawyer (represents Julian Assange) and Human Rights Act advocate; Michael Kirby | Int. jurist, human rights advocate and former Australian High Court judge; and Sisonke Msimang | Leading Australian anti-racism and women's rights advocate, writer and commentator.

The conference featured a diverse line-up of more than 60 eminent experts, thought leaders, social justice advocates and community heroes over 12 engaging sessions and events. The Free and Equal Human Rights Conference was held over 6 and 7 June 2024 and was part of the 2024 Vivid Sydney festival.





### Australia-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue, 11-25 June 2024

I made a submission on behalf of AGW and attended the dialogue with DFAT to discuss Australia-Vietnam Human Rights.

I 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. I also highlighted the need for more opportunities to support Vietnamese international students in ensuring that their academic and mental well-being are well supported.

There were over 31,600 Vietnamese students in Australia (October 2023), ranking them in 6th place among the foreign student community in the country, behind China, India, Nepal, Colombia and the Philippines, according to the Australian Department of Education.

Many international students experience homesickness, language problems, unemployment, underpayment, harassment and racism.

Current media reports mention the reports of some agencies engaged in modern slavery sponsoring applications via international student visas. I also brought into the attention of the dialogue the effect of latest visa requirements of government regarding entry of international students to Australia.



### Women in Leadership in Higher Learning Forum, 30 May 2024

Organised by AGW NSW, the presentation discussed where women's leadership in higher Education is in the mid-2020s. The keynote speaker was Eileen Baldry AO FASSA FRSN FANZSOC who is Professor Emerita of Criminology at UNSW Sydney, where she was appointed the first female DVC and the inaugural Deputy Vice-Chancellor Equity Diversity and Inclusion in 2017, re-tiring in 2023. Her continuing research, publications and advocacy over 35 years focus on equity and social justice and include mental health and cognitive disability in criminal legal systems; decolonised social development, policy, and social work; criminalised women, First Nations' women and youth; education, training and employment for criminalised people; homelessness and social housing; and disability services.

### Reports on the Human Rights Council 56 Session, 18 June - 12 July 2024

This session is ongoing and will discuss the human rights of women concerning economic violence, domestic violence and inclusion through sport, as well as the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights. The Report will cover the human rights of women concerning economic violence, domestic violence and inclusion in sport, as well as the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights.



### Ku-Ring-Gai Council's International Women's Day Forum, 6 March 2024

The forum aligned with the 2024 IWD theme: "Accelerating Gender Equality Through Economic Empowerment" and seeks to celebrate women's achievements and address challenges hindering their equal participation in the economy. The forum featured a dynamic roundtable discussion where attendees actively engaged in exploring and contributing ideas. Topics included overcoming structural barriers, addressing the carer economy and enhancing women's access to economic education. The interactive event encouraged open dialogue to challenge the status quo and empower women at the local level.

### Scanlon Institute Mapping Social Cohesion Report

<https://scanloninstitute.org.au/mapping-social-cohesion-2023>

The Mapping Social Cohesion 2023 Report by the Scanlon Institute was released in November 2023 and outlined the issues concerning difficult national and global circumstances, global conflict, economic pressures and uncertainty and division over issues such as the Voice referendum. The results of Mapping Social Cohesion 2023 reinforced these concerns and underlined the precarious and uncertain social environment of Australia in 2023.







### Academic Freedom Media Review

In July 2023, a Joint Statement on Academic Freedom signed by 74 countries was delivered.

Students at Risk (SAR) added that there had been progress on support for academic freedom in recent years, reflect-ed in the UN special rapporteur's 2020 report on academic freedom and UNESCO's parallel advancement of the con-versation on science and scientific freedom. At the event in early July, the latest from the Principles for Implementing the Right of Academic Freedom, which has been developed by an international working group, was detailed.

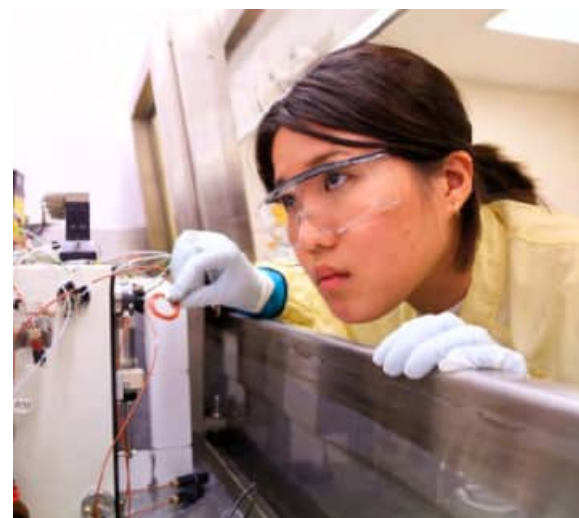
"Academic freedom is essential for any healthy democratic society," said Eamon Gilmore, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights. "Without it, critical thinking cannot be cultivated, and critical thinking is key to freedom, prosperity, progress, and innovation.

"People need to be able to share and access information to develop new ideas and the freedom to research, teacher, debate and disseminate is central to the advancement of knowledge.

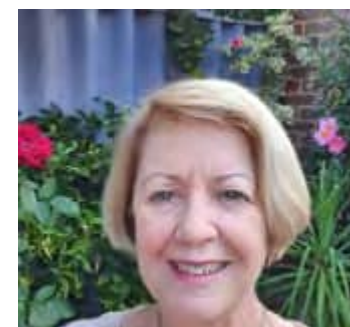
### NSW Government Gender Equality Budget Statement 2023-2024

The NSW Government's Gender Equality Budget Statement (released in November 2023) is the first step towards a broader set of wellbeing and performance measures. It lays the foundation for a better and more secure future for women and girls in New South Wales. By removing bar-riers that prevent women from realising their full potential we are paving the way for a happier and healthier society and a more resilient economy.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/working-and-business/gender-equality-statement>



## FINANCE REPORT



**Alison Hayden**  
Treasurer

### Report on financial statement for 2023/2024 financial year

- ING General Investment Account, ING Term Deposit \$11,000, ING Term Deposit \$50,000 have all been closed and transferred to the ANZ bank. Currently with ANZ we have an Online saver (1.15% interest) and Business Notice Term Deposit (4.60% interest).
- Paid \$6,000 to NSW Graduate Women Education Trust to supplement scholarships paid in 2024.
- Total cash funds \$76,361. An operating loss of \$3,708 was recorded for the financial year.
- 51 financial members



**Australian Graduate Women Inc Profit and Loss  
for period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024**

	2023	2024
Donations	\$90.00	\$0.00
Membership Subscriptions	\$3,300.00	\$3,705.00
ING General Interest	\$508.36	\$622.59
ANZ Account Interest	\$0.00	\$1,029.83
Donation to Trust	\$30.00	\$30.00
Write back GWI membership fee 2023 accrued exp	\$206.19	\$0.00
Sundry Receipts	\$0.00	\$0.02
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$4,134.55</b>	<b>\$5,387.44</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Accounting fees	\$300.00	\$300.00
GWI fees	\$2,297.23	\$2,200.00
Admin fees sundry expenses	\$277.07	\$0.00
NSW GW Education Trust	\$6,500.00	\$6,030.00
Web page	\$17.00	\$438.00
ANZ bank fees	\$0.00	\$70.00
Meeting costs including Zoom fees	\$230.89	\$0.00
Service NSW fees	\$0.00	\$38.00
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$9,622.19</b>	<b>\$9,096.00</b>
<b>Operating Loss:</b>	<b>-\$5,487.64</b>	<b>-\$3,708.56</b>

Although the AGW Profit and Loss for the period 2023-2024 indicates a loss, AGW has sufficient cash in its account to deliver its activities.

**Australian Graduate Women Inc  
Balance Sheet  
30-Jun-24**

	2023	2024
General account ANZ	\$5,010.47	\$2,307.85
ING Business Optimiser	\$14,482.05	\$0.00
ING Term Deposit A	\$11,000.00	\$0.00
ING Term Deposit B	\$50,000.00	\$0.00
ANZ Term Business Notice Term Deposit	\$0.00	\$64,000.00
ANZ Online Saver	\$0.00	\$10,053.88
<b>Total Assets:</b>	<b>\$80,492.52</b>	<b>\$76,361.73</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Accrued expense (GWI liability for membership at 30 June 2024)	\$2,297.23	\$2,200.00
Prepaid Income - membership paid in advance	\$345.00	\$0.00
<b>Total liabilities:</b>	<b>\$2,642.23</b>	<b>\$2,200.00</b>
<b>Net assets:</b>	<b>\$77,850.29</b>	<b>\$74,141.73</b>
Members' Equity	\$97,079.35	\$97,079.35
<b>Total members' equity</b>	<b>\$97,079.35</b>	<b>\$97,079.35</b>
Retained Earnings	-\$13,741.42	-\$19,229.06
Current earnings	-\$5,487.64	-\$3,708.56
<b>Total equity:</b>	<b>\$77,850.29</b>	<b>\$74,141.73</b>



PROPOSED 2025 BUDGET

Australian Graduate Women has funding in an education trust to fund future fellowships. We also hope to increase our membership each year.

Australian Graduate Australia Inc

ABN: 93 656 106 863

DRAFT BUDGET 2025

July 2024 through June 2025

Membership subscriptions	\$3,500.00	Estimated 50 members x \$70.
Interest on ANZ Business Notice Term Deposit	\$2,830.00	Calculated at an average 4% per annum
Interest on ANZ Online Saver	\$115.00	Paying 1.15% at present
Total budgeted income:	\$6,445.00	
Budgeted Expenses		
Accounting fees	\$300.00	Review of financial reports for 2023 and 2024
Centenary online history booklet	\$5000.00	Payment for time of person to complete the booklet
GWI capitation fees	\$2,175.00	Estimated 50 members x 25 Swiss Francs x AUD1.74 = \$2,175.
Meeting expenses	\$243.00	Zoom costs
Bank Fees	\$120.00	\$10 per month
Web page	\$400.00	Website hosting, domain name renewal and website maintenance costs
Total budgeted expenses:	\$8,238.00	
Budgeted profit (loss) for year:	(\$1,793.00)	

ERA REPORT

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) is the peak network in Australia advocating for women's equality as well as greater women's leadership and better recognition of women's diversity. The ERA is made up of over 65 organisations with interests in women's equality and it is funded by the Commonwealth Office for Women. AGW is just one of these organisations contributing to the ERA's advocacy efforts.

The ERA was involved in a range of activities during the 2023-2024 period:

- Working with the Australian delegation in preparation for CSW68 and discussed topics such as finance, poverty, climate change, women and girls' human rights and global conflict impacts
- Submitting a letter to the Office of Women regarding menopause and its impact on employment for older women
- A submission to the Federal government on the importance of recognising women's and worker's rights in global trade agreements
- Submission to government around concerns that certain organisations are undermining the Anti-Discrimination Act around equal employment

Through these activities the ERA continued to highlight its priorities around increased and long-term government investment in education in order to advance women's equality. The ERA believes that supporting women's access to education and employment will help women achieve their full economic potential in Australia.

Sincere thanks to all the members who provided their expertise and support in these activities, we simply cannot do this work without you, especially to Kay Bretreger ad Annette Walker, who have been the AGW representatives on the ERA committee. We would also like to extend our thanks to Helen Dalley-Fisher who has been the Convenor of ERA for many years and has played a very active role that is greatly appreciated.



<https://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au/>

#### eS4W REPORT TO AGW AGM 30 November 2024

##### AFGW Representatives

Dalma Jacobs and Shirley Randell represented AGW on the eS4W Council for the last 12 months.

We can only prepare a very short report but attach the Agenda and a Report that eS4W Chair (Sandy Cook) presented at the AGM/Special Meeting held last Saturday. Very sadly, Sandy's Report foreshadowed the winding up of eS4W as an Incorporated Assoc. in NSW due to not being successful in the recent National Womens' Alliance tender process. The relevant motions were ratified at those meetings.

Sandy will remain in the Chair throughout the voluntary cancellation process. She has foreshadowed that hopefully, eS4W will be fully wound up early next year (2025). The eS4W Website will remain active until November 2025.

Dalma Jacobs and Shirley Randell

Thank you to Dalma and Shirley for your time and efforts that are invaluable in the fight for women's equality and economic security.

economic  
S4W

<https://www.security4women.org.au/>



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

Australian Graduate Women  
NSW 2790  
ABN 93 656 106 863