



GRADUATE WOMEN NSW

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

President's report

Dear Members,

We have come to the end of another year, and the Christmas-New year break is upon us. This week we will be holding our Christmas lunch at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. On 15 December, we held our Annual General Meeting in Sydney at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel.

- The result of the election of Office Bearers is as follows:

President: Dr Christine Jennett

Vice President: Susan White

Vice President: Dr Jocelyn Eskdale

Treasurer: 'Tricia Blombery

Secretary: Catherine Evans

- The following representatives and Convenors were endorsed:

Canberra Branch: Dr Jocelyn Eskdale

Central West Branch: Susan White

City Branch: Jane Baker (after the City Branch AGM on 4 December)

Membership Registrar: Merle Thompson

Scholarships Convenor: Dr Wendy Jessup

Governance/Resolutions: Dr Jocelyn Eskdale

Delegate to National Council of Women: Susan Wilson

Public Officer: Dr Jocelyn Eskdale

- The Trustees of the Education Trust were confirmed as follows:

Chairman: Jane Baker

Deputy Chair (new position): Dr Christine Jennett

Secretary: Dr Jocelyn Eskdale

Treasurer: Tricia Blombery

Trustee: Dr Hilary Yerbury



Members gathered at the GW NSW Annual General Meeting 15 November 2025

- As a result of City Branch's Annual General Meeting on 4 December, the following Office Bearers were elected:

President: Jane Baker

Vice President: Dr Hilary Yerbury

Secretary: Jennifer McGovern

Treasurer: Stuart Grigg

We have been developing our programme for 2026, and the first event is the NCW's *Celebrate Being Australian Award* for which GW NSW is sponsoring Michelle Cheung. This award will be presented at the NCW lunch at Parliament House on 28 January. Please see details of the event in this Newsletter. It would be pleasing to have a strong presence of members to support Michelle on this day. Below is some information about Michelle.

"My name is Michelle Cheung and I am in my 2nd year of my PhD in secondary mathematics education at the University of Sydney. I am investigating how Australian secondary mathematics teachers implement challenging tasks—a type of problem-solving task that fosters 21st century skills such as reasoning, critical thinking, and problem solving in students.

I was the first in my immediate family to attend university. My mother left school in Year 10 and my father did not pursue higher education. Despite financial hardship and family disruption—including my mother's final-stage cancer diagnosis which required my father to become her full-time carer—I entered university through the Educational Access Scheme. I went on to graduate with a Bachelor of Education (Secondary: Mathematics) and a Bachelor of Science with First Class Honours and the University Medal under the Dalyell Scholars program. As the eldest of three children, I continue to support my family, with my youngest brother still completing Year 12 and my father, now 65, becoming increasingly frail.

My PhD research is currently at the data collection stage, which involves an online questionnaire, online semi-structured interviews, and lesson observations at case study high schools. I focus on teachers' conceptions of and orientations toward challenging tasks—what they think they are, what they think of them, and make decisions around their use. By identifying enablers and barriers to implementation, I aim to generate recommendations at multiple system levels to improve teaching practice, strengthen student learning, and inform policy and curriculum.

This year, I have attended, presented and/or published at several conferences, including MERGA, MANSW, and the Guild Research Conference. I have one conference publication, two journal articles in progress (one accepted, one under review), and was given the rare honour of peer reviewing for a Q1 mathematics education journal as a PhD student.

I am also proud to have been named a Finalist for the 2025 7NEWS Young Achiever Award NSW/ACT (Academic Achievement category), The Teachers' Guild of NSW Research Awards (results pending), and Samsung's Solve for Tomorrow competition for my PhD research.

Looking ahead, I see limitless possibilities—whether in academia, as a Head Teacher of Mathematics, or in leadership roles within the Department of Education, NESA, or UAC. Recently, I taught Essential Mathematics to Pathway students seeking entry to university without an ATAR, an experience that deepened my commitment to supporting equity students. As someone who has lived that journey, I am passionate about bridging the secondary and tertiary sectors to expand access and opportunity for all learners."

Every best wish for Christmas, Hanukkah and 2026.

Christine

Dr Christine Jennett
President
Graduate Women NSW

GRADUATE WOMEN NSW's AWARDS

A central function of Graduate Women has always been the encouragement of education for women and girls through lectures, seminars, prizes, scholarships and awards. Funds for the awards are from bequests, fundraising, and donations from members. Further awards are given by GW NSW branches.

TISH PROCTOR MEMORIAL PRIZES

Administered by the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Sydney.

- a) Most Proficient Woman Student in First Year Government at USyd.
- b) Most Proficient Woman Student Doing Postgraduate Coursework Study in Public Policy, Administration and Affairs in Government.

These prizes were established from donations from members, family, and friends in memory of Letitia Proctor (née Shannon) BEc (USyd) (d. 1993), who died in office as President.

Tish worked in banking, as a reporter for the "Financial Review", and as a tutor in Government for the Department of Adult Education at the University of Sydney. She was active in AFUW as a founding member of the Southern Suburbs group, Chairman of the North Shore group and NSW President (1992-93). Tish married Gerald Proctor in 1958.

GW NSW Gladys Marks Bursary USYD for a mature-aged woman student in financial distress completing a degree at USYD.

Created in 1970 from contributions from members to honour Gladys Marks BA (USyd), MA (Sorbonne) (1884–1970). Gladys joined the French Department at Sydney University as its first female academic and rose to Acting Professor—the first woman in Australia to do so.

She had a long career promoting women's education as President SU Women's Council (1918-19), Vice-President SUWGA 1920, founding committee AFUW NSW 1922, National President AFUW 1930-32. Her portrait by Norman Carter was a finalist in the Archibald Prize 1925.

Administered by Office of Student Life.

GINA SAVAGE PRIZE UOW for top woman honours graduate in Science or Environmental Science at UOW.

*Established by the Illawarra Branch and named for **Georgina Savage BSc (USyd) (d. 1972)**. Head of Science SCEGGS "Gleniffer Brae" Wollongong 1956-72. Founding member Illawarra Branch.*

Administered by the Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health.

GW NSW CENTENARY MATHS PRIZE USYD for top woman graduating with Honours in Applied Mathematics, Pure Mathematics or Mathematical Statistics.

Established in 1982 to mark the centenary of the admission of women to the University of Sydney.

Administered by the School of Mathematics and Statistics.

GW NSW Prize in English II Essays USYD.

Established 1918. Administered by the School of Literature, Art and Media.

GW NSW Prize in English Macquarie Uni

Administered by office of Philanthropy and Alumni, Vice Chancellor's Department.

GW NSW UNE Awards:

Science (Biology) and **Arts (English)** previously donated by Armidale Branch.

Established 2006. Administered by the UNE Foundation.

GW-NSW PRIZES & SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, Graduate Women-NSW Inc gives prizes and scholarships from its Education Trust, its State funds, and its branches to women students. About \$60,000 is given to women in NSW and ACT. A further \$30,000 is given Australia-wide.

Details of these awards, and the process of applying for them, can be found on our website <gwnew.org.au> .

GW-NSW Inc Education Trust Scholarships and Awards

GW NSW Tempe Mann Travelling Scholarship For Post Graduate study.

GW NSW Joan Bielski Scholarship (support provided for 3 years) For a mature aged student in first year of Undergraduate Study.

GW NSW Central West Dr Barbara Wright Scholarship (Biennial Award) For Post Graduate study.

GW NSW Joan Ritchie Award For a woman student in her second year of her first undergraduate degree.

GW NSW Education Trust Award For a woman student in her third year of her first degree.

GW NSW Jamieson Award (judged on completed degree).

State Awards and Prizes

GW NSW Award as part of National Council of Women NSW Celebrate Being Australian.

GW NSW University of New England Award: Science (BSc).

GW NSW University of New England Award: Arts (English) (BA).

GW NSW Gina Savage Prize: Outstanding woman graduating in Science at University of Wollongong.

GW NSW Prize in 2000-level English Literature Macquarie University For academic excellence in at least two units at 2000-level English.

GW NSW Prize in English II Essays University of Sydney For outstanding achievement for essays in English.

GW NSW Gladys Marks Bursaries For mature-aged woman student completing a degree at USYD.

GW NSW Prize in Mathematics USYD For top woman Honours graduate.

GW NSW Inc Tish Proctor Memorial Prize USYD Most proficient woman student in First Year Government.

GW NSW Inc Tish Proctor P/G Prize Most proficient woman student doing postgraduate coursework study in public policy, administration and affairs in Government – USYD.

Branch Awards

CANBERRA BRANCH—prizes at the Australian National University:

Mavis Prater prize for Mathematics

GW Canberra prize for Asian Studies

Computer Science and Engineering

Climate Science

Chemistry

CENTRAL WEST

Cowra-Canowindra HSC Scholarship For women completing HSC at a local Secondary school and proceeding to University.

CITY BRANCH

City Branch TAFE Tertiary Preparation Course Award For Academic Merit and Proceeding to University Studies.

Indigenous Students Award

National Awards

Awarded by Australian Graduate Women for Post-graduate Study.

Barbara Hale Fellowships

Georgina Sweet Fellowship For STEM study.

Jennifer Strauss fellowship For study in Humanities.

MEMBER RECOGNITION



Congratulations to **Beverly Baker**, President of the National Older Women's Network and past Chair of the Older Women's Network NSW for her **Lifetime Achievement Award** for her voluntary work.

Bev has been, and remains, a lifelong advocate for public education, equity, and the rights of older women. In both roles, she modernised the organisation and expanded its advocacy to include homelessness, aged care, employment discrimination, and abuse. A truly well-deserved award!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ruth Newman (Dudley)

Dr Margaret Torode (Cowra)

Dr Elyssebeth Leigh (Tempe)

Amelie Skelton (Leichardt)

SOPHIA HOLLAND LECTURE 2026

The Sophia Holland lecture will take place on 22 May at 11 am at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel when Jozefa Sobski will speak on the life and work of Joan Bielski, in whose honour

GW NSW's Award continues to provide opportunities to women who missed out on going to university after leaving school and is 35 years and over.



Jozefa Sobski AM

Jozefa has been active in feminist, women's and community organisations for many years. She started her activism in Sydney Women's Liberation in the 1970s. She was the Chair of the Board of Jessie Street National Women's Library for 17 years. She was Convenor of WEL NSW for periods from 2006-2017. She was Convenor of WEL Australia from 2018-2019 and Convenor again from 2021 to 2024. She was a member of the Board of Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia for ten years, and an inaugural member of the NSW Women in Education Group and the Australian Women's Education Coalition. She worked in the NSW Ministry of Education as a policy adviser on sexism, and in TAFE as a College Principal and Director of the South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, and for three years as Deputy Director-General of NSW Education. She retired from paid employment in 2003. She is a member of the National Foundation of Australian Women, Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, Full Stop Australia, and Emily's List.



Joan Bielski

Joan Bielski was an indefatigable feminist of her time. She was an activist who used her prodigious intellect, charm and ready wit to disarm critics and opponents and to win supporters to her many causes. She was energetic, feisty, very focussed and politically pragmatic - an inspiration to many who rallied to the causes she espoused and relentlessly pursued. Joan was quoted as once saying: *My life's work has convinced me that in a democratic society those without power, but with the will and the skill and, with a case presented with reasoned advocacy, can affect reform.*

BENEFITS OF SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS

Recently, SCEGGS Principal Jenny Allum retired after 30 years in that role. She is a strong advocate of single sex schooling so that girls learn how to “fight back” when they are ‘spoken down to at university or in the workforce’. She ‘wanted SCEGGS girls to understand that they are empowered and they’re strong, and they can fight for equality and justice and stand up for themselves’.



Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC, KC Governor of New South Wales

NCWNSW Executive Invites YOU to join us at:

CELEBRATE BEING AUSTRALIAN 2026

In the presence of our Parliamentary Host

The Hon Jodie Harrison MP

Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors and

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Wednesday, 28 January 2026

11.45am for 12.00pm—2.00pm

Strangers Room

Parliament House Macquarie St SYDNEY.

Awards will be presented to early postgraduate or late undergraduate women university students in recognition of their achievements in their chosen fields of study.

Please provide the following contact details:

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Mobile:

Cost Per Person: \$130.00

Group Table Booking: Name & Number

Payment for Persons

Total Payment

Dietary Requirements:

List Name of Person and their specific Dietary Requirements

Name

Gluten Free ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Vegan ☐ Other (specify) ☐

Email your Booking advice to: Treasurer@ncwnsw.org.au

Payment Options:

☐ EFT: National Council of Women of NSW Inc.

BSB: 032 135 Account No: 680054 Ref: CBA Name; OR

☐ Online with Humanitix - <https://events.humanitix.com/celebrate-being-australian-2026>

Payment and Booking advice MUST be received no later than 12 January 2026.

WWW.NCWNSW.ORG.AU



You're warmly invited to



**GW-NSW
ANNUAL AWARDS PRESENTATION**

Celebrating Our Scholars

**FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2026
11AM-12:30PM**



Castlereagh Room

169 Castlereagh St, Sydney NSW 2000

**Cost: Members \$35 (Includes Morning
Tea)**

RSVP: 30th January 2026

Contact: admin@gwnsw.org.au



Online Payment: GW-NSW, BSB:012 670, Acc:300 706 398
Cheque payment: GW-NSW, LG Floor, 280 Pitt St, Sydney 2000
(If paying by cheque - please add \$5.00 for processing fees)



Name:.....

Ph/Email:.....

Guest Name:.....

Fee Enclosed:.....



Empowering women and girls through education for over 120 years

Calendar of Events

28 January NCW ***Celebrate Being Australian Awards***, Parliament House lunch.

30 January Central West Branch's Awards event, Cowra Services Club.

6 February GW NSW ***Celebrate Our Scholars Ceremony***, 11 -12.30 pm Castlereagh Boutique Hotel.

22 May Sophia Holland Lecture by Jozefa Sobski OAM, Castlereagh Boutique Hotel.