

Presidents of  
Australian Church  
Women  
1965 to 2015



1965-66	Mrs Mabel Wyllie	Methodist	NSW
1967-68	Deaconess Catherine Ritchie	Presbyterian	Victoria
1969-71	Mrs Elizabeth Ashton	Congregational	Victoria
1971-73	Mrs Jessie Dennis	Presbyterian	Q'land
1973-75	Mrs Joy Smith	Methodist	SA
1975-77	Reverend Dorothy Wacker	Congregational	WA
1977-79	Mrs Win Dougherty	Methodist	NSW
1979-81	Mrs Rachel Cocks	Anglican	Tasmania
1981-83	Deaconess Elizabeth Alfred	Anglican	Victoria
1983-85	Mrs Lena Meadows	Presbyterian	Q'land
1985-87	Mrs Dorothy Haensel	Uniting	SA
1987-89	Reverend Lee Edwards	Uniting	WA
1989-91	Mrs Marie McCann OAM	Catholic	NSW
1991-93	Mrs Lorraine Davis	Anglican	Tasmania
1993	Mrs Shirley Brooks	Salvation Army	Tasmania
1993-95	Mrs Eunice Reidy	Churches of Christ	Victoria
1995-97	Mrs Evonne Sullivan AM	Catholic	ACT
1997-99	Mrs Aileen Mortensen	Churches of Christ	Q'land
1999-2001	Mrs Marjorie Dredge	Churches of Christ	SA
2001-03	Reverend Lee Edwards	Uniting	WA
2003-05	Major Nancy McLaren	Salvation Army	NSW
2005-07	Major Elaine Johnson	Salvation Army	Victoria
2007-09	Mrs Jean Thomson OAM	Uniting	ACT
2009-11	Miss Margaret Flint OAM	Anglican	SA
2011-13	Major Laurel Pearce	Salvation Army	WA
2013-15	Major Lyn Middleton	Salvation Army	NSW

# 1965-66

# New South Wales

## MABEL WYLLIE

8.5.1907 – 12.6.1995

Mabel was a founding Mother of ACW. At the time when Australian Council of Churches Secretary, Rev Harvey Perkins was looking for someone to initiate moves to create a national body for church women, he approached Mabel Wyllie and gave her the commission to 'do something'. Unbeknown to her, NSW State Unit had already made representation to sister Units in other States asking for their reaction to the idea of a National Committee for Australian Church Women. The fortunate meeting of Mabel Wyllie and Marjory Verco resulted in the eventual forming of ACW National Committee, the first executive of which was drawn from NSW members. Mabel Wyllie was appointed the President and served her term with distinction.

With degrees and a diploma from the Universities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, Mabel lectured in Social Anthropology at Australian School of Pacific Administration.

Mabel served with her husband in Methodist Church appointments in Hobart, Hamilton (Vic), Geelong and Wesley College, University of Sydney. She was a member of Overseas Mission Board and Women's Auxiliary, and was a representative to the WCC Assembly in New Delhi in 1961.



She was on WCC Central Committee 1961-68, the Committee on Cooperation of Men & Women in Church, Family and Society, and Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

Mabel understood the importance of keeping the records of an organisation safe for future generations. She set up the beginning of the Archives of National Executive.

"My training and experience had encouraged my enthusiasm for the Ecumenical Movement – an enthusiasm shared with my husband. I heard him say many times – 'Ecumenism is not an optional extra, it is at the heart of the Gospel – that they all may be one.'

"I found the meetings of the Central Committee of WCC a great inspiration – Bible study, addresses, devotional services, business meetings, meal times, getting to know people from other Christian Churches and other countries – the Russian Orthodox, the Greek, the Armenian. I wanted more Australian women to share in this Ecumenical adventure."

Following a Central Committee meeting in Toronto Mabel visited the USA and attended a Conference of Church Women United. There she learnt about the Fellowship of the Least Coin and cooperation of Christian women of all major denominations in the States.

She was convinced that the life of women in the churches of Australia could be enriched in a similar ecumenical organisation.

**1967-68**

**Victoria**

## **CATHERINE RITCHIE**

**16.8.1909 - 15.2.2003**

Cath Ritchie was a life-long advocate for the spiritual formation and theological education of women. Growing up in the Gippsland district of Arawata, she was educated at the local one-teacher primary, then Korumburra Higher Elementary and Leongatha High School. She then graduated from Melbourne University with an Arts degree.

When she was asked to consider going as a missionary to Korea she committed herself to two years residence in Rolland House, the Presbyterian Deaconess and Missionary Training College, while she completed a Diploma of Education and studied Theology. She went to Korea in 1937. At that stage, Korea was under Japanese rule, and in 1941, as Japan entered World War II, Australian missionaries were forced to return to Australia. Later in 1945 she was appointed principal of Rolland House. She was to remain there for 23 years. And at a time when women had no place at all in the courts of the church, she obtained for the young women who entered Rolland house to train, a theological education equal to that given to the young men being formed for ordination . . . alongside those young men, in the same classrooms at Ormond College, from the same illustrious professors.

Cath dealt constantly with Presbyterian Assembly officers and staff, the Senatus of the Theological Hall of Ormond College, principals and teachers of state schools, the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union, various auxiliaries, winning the respect of all. Her efforts paved the way for the complete integration of the education of women and men called to Diaconal



ministry with that for future Ministers of the Word under the United Faculty of Theology.

Keenly ecumenical, Cath encouraged her students and graduates to forge, with her, strong links with church workers in other traditions. She was supportive of the move towards the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia achieved in 1977.

She served as National President of Australian Church Women from 1967 to 1968.

On the 22 April 1994 the Melbourne College of Divinity conferred on Deaconess Ritchie the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology in recognition of her work as a theological teacher, and in particular of her contribution to the theological education of women across denominational divisions and state boundaries.

Cath Ritchie never really retired. She continued to be active in church and community to the end of her life. Just three weeks before her death she conducted a service of Holy Communion for the residents of the aged care facility into which she had recently moved. It was also in her retirement years that she researched the history of the Presbyterian Deaconess Order, published in 1998.

**1969-71**

**Victoria**

## **ELIZABETH (BETTY) ASHTON**

**12.2.11 - 28.5.71**

A graduate of the University of Melbourne, Betty was a woman of grace and charm, with a trained mind, broad sympathies and an understanding heart. She brought to her office all the rich gifts of her whole personality. Service was the keynote of her life and her influence will live on. She was a long time member of Union Church in Hong Kong, sang in the choir, and worked hard fund-raising for the Mission to Lepers. On returning to Australia Betty and Frank attended the Collins Street Independent Church, though Betty was Presbyterian.

Betty married Dr F R Ashton just prior to the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. Shortly after their marriage, both Betty and her husband were imprisoned in Stanley Prison from 1941 to 1945. Here they both worked for the welfare of the prisoners.



She had a firm faith which was thus tested in the fires of experience. Of her grim experiences through those years, Mrs Ashton spoke little. The hardships and privations did not embitter her, rather was her spirit refined and her faith intensified.

Mrs Ashton became National President of Australian Church Women when the Executive was in Melbourne in 1969.

She was also National President of the YWCA 1969-71.

She was one of a delegation of five who attended Asian Church Women's Conference at Sukahumi, Indonesia in 1970 where her participation was much appreciated.

1971-73

Queensland

## JESSIE DENNIS

11.5.1907 - 22.9.1992

Jessie led a very active life in the Presbyterian Church, being elected an Elder in 1971. She was Secretary and then President of the Presbyterian Women's Association, and was one of four Australian Delegates elected to General Assembly of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1970.

After Union, Jessie continued her work in the Uniting Church, as Vice-President of the Auxiliary to World Mission, and Home Mission Auxiliary. She was President for twenty years of the Australian Inland Mission, being a personal friend of Dr John Flynn and his successor, Rev Fred McKay.



Jessie was a member of the Queensland Unit of Women's Inter-Church Council, later named Australian Church Women, and served as Secretary, then State President.

Jessie Dennis was National President, the first woman in the Queensland Unit to hold that position, and served her term in 1971. In all, she served more than 25 years and was made a Life Member in recognition of her service and dedication to the Unit.

Jessie was fond of writing and reciting poetry; the following was found in her effects, and read at the funeral service. Jessie Dennis was a special person loved by all.

*Her body has gone to the earth, and it will become dust  
But her spirit is in the air –  
It will whisper to me on the wind,  
I shall hear it on running waters,  
It will hide in the morning music of the birds,  
And in the lonely night cry of the owl.*

**1973-75**

**South Australia**

## **JOY SMITH**

When Joy Smith filled the role of President of the Australian Church Women Working Committee she was the immediate past President of the South Australian Unit of ACW.

She had been President of the Methodist Women's Fellowships Association of SA, serving diligently at both State and General Conference levels. The high regard in which she was held was demonstrated by the fact that she was elected to the special President's Committee, the only woman accorded this honour.

At the ACW National Committee Meeting in 1974 Joy's name was put forward to attend the Asian Church Women's Conference Assembly in Bangkok in October that year. Along with three other Australian women she attended, and made an effort on her return to share reports of her experiences to State Units whenever possible.



# 1975-77

# Western Australia

## DOROTHY WACKER

Born in 1931, Dorothy Wacker grew up in Gatton in the Darling Downs region of Queensland. She was the eldest of four children born to George and Annie Wacker.

As a child she, like her siblings, was an excellent student across a range of subjects. Newspaper accounts mention her winning prizes in mapmaking and in music. In music she continued her success in adolescence, gaining 100% in the Trinity College examination.

In 1944 as top eligible student in the state she gained a bursary from the Rechabites Order to enable her to continue her studies. The following year she received a bursary from the Gatton School of Arts.

After leaving school she trained as a teacher, specializing in the teaching of deaf children, and worked at Queensland School for the Deaf in Dutton Park.

By 1953 Dorothy was experiencing a call to ordained ministry in the Congregational Church. At this time the Congregational Church was the only one in Australia to ordain women, and Dorothy was the first to be ordained in Queensland. During her training for ministry she studied both at the University of Queensland (the only woman enrolled in the divinity course) and at the Queensland



Congregational Theological College. She was ordained in 1959 and spent the next twenty years in Christian ministry, first as minister to various churches in Brisbane, then as Director of Christian Education in that state. In 1970 she came to Perth, where she served in Applecross. At the time of the inception of the Uniting Church in 1977 she was President Elect of the Congregational Union of Australia.

She served as National President of Australian Church Women from 1975 to 1977. She is remembered as an inspiring preacher and leader, able to connect with people from a variety of backgrounds through her strong Christian faith and sensitive and caring nature. She was also noted for her strong commitment to ecumenism at both national and international level.

From Western Australia she went to Pilgrim Church in Adelaide, and subsequently (1981) made the difficult decision to leave formal church ministry to focus on the wider field of women's spirituality. She is considered as a pioneer in this field within Australia, and is deeply respected as a teacher, researcher and mentor. She currently (2015) resides in Canberra.

# 1977-79

# New South Wales

## WIN DOUGHERTY

14.7.1919 - 26.12.1994

Win Dougherty was appointed as a delegate to Australian Church Women (NSW Unit) by the Methodist Church, through the Federation of Methodist Women, NSW.

She was elected State Secretary of ACW and served in that position from 1967 to 1970.

When it came the turn of the Methodist Federation to nominate a State President for ACW, the Federation chose Win Dougherty, who was installed in that position in 1973 at Chatswood Central Church. She served for one year.

In 1977 she was appointed to the position of National President of ACW and led a team of NSW women for two years. She chaired the National Conference in Sydney in 1979.

It was at this Conference that a delegation from Church Women United (USA) came on a "Causeway Visit". Win later returned this visit leading a team of Australian women to the United States.



In 1977 the NSW Unit made Win Dougherty a Life Member.

During 1978 she was the Australian representative to the Asian Church Women's Conference in Japan. Win served both as a Methodist and a Uniting Church delegate to ACW with great distinction. Her knowledge of and interest in ACW was profound. She was a tireless worker for all organisations in which she served. NSW members of ACW are grateful for all the association we have had with this great lady.

**1979-81**

**Tasmania**

## **RACHEL COCKS**

**1919 - 1995**

Rachel attended Hobart schools before undertaking Nursing Education at Royal Hobart Hospital from 1938-1944. This included Certificates for General Nursing 1942, Child Health Care & Obstetric Nursing 1943, and Tuberculosis Nursing 1960.

She worked as a District Nurse West Coast Tasmania 1944-1946, followed by a term as Medical Missionary Nurse with London Missionary Society Gemo Island Hospital and Gulf District, Papua 1946-1960. Rachel then became a Charge Sister and Assistant Matron Royal Hobart Hospital 1960-1971.

In 1970 she married the Rev Norman Cocks.



Rachel's involvement with Australian Church Women included Secretary Tasmanian State Unit 1970, National Representative Asian Church Women's Conference 1974-1978, and National Representative ACWC and Member of Executive 1978-1982 National President Australian Church Women 1979 -1981.

**1981-83**

**Victoria**

## **ELIZABETH ALFRED**

**10.1.1914 – 2.2.2015**

Mary Elizabeth Alfred was born in Yarrawonga, one of seven children of Jessie and William Alfred. Educated in Bairnsdale and Bendigo, she was awarded a scholarship to Girton CEGGS. In 1924 she joined Brownies which led to a life-long involvement in the Guiding movement. At the age of 17 Elizabeth felt the call to ministry and, not long after that, left the public service to test her vocation. After professional training at Deaconess House, and classes at Ridley and Trinity Colleges with men, she was ordained as a Deaconess on St Thomas Day 1944.

Elizabeth worked at Brighton Children's Home, St Mark's Fitzroy, the Mission of St James and St John, Kedesh home for Unmarried Mothers, Fairhaven STD Hospital, and St Agnes' Girls Home Glenroy. Christ Church South Yarra and St James' Dandenong followed, the latter being a vibrant and exciting parish with a diverse community.



In 1957-58 she travelled to Britain, working as a tutor at an ecumenical College in Selly Oak. On her return to Australia she taught at Girton CEGGS, and then became Principal of Deaconess House in 1961. The Girls' Friendly Society, Mothers' Union Councils and Chaplaincy at Fairfield and the Royal Women's Hospital all benefited from Elizabeth's contribution.

In ACW Elizabeth became President of the Victorian Unit in 1971-1972 and again in 1980-1981. From 1981-1983 she was National President of ACW.

She later joined the Soroptimists and the Lyceum Club. With a renewed interest in Guides she served on their State Council, representing them at ACW.

Elizabeth supported the Ordination of women to the Anglican Priesthood, and was a member of General Synod which, in 1985, finally voted for this to happen. She travelled straight from Sydney to Hobart to attend the ACW Conference, arriving during a session. "I entered the room, the women looked at me and I shouted 'We won! We won!'" There was much loud cheering and clapping. Elizabeth was ordained Deacon in 1986, and Priest in December 1992.

She loved travel and led Pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Retiring to Carrum Downs Settlement, she became involved in the life of the community, assisting with services both there and at St James' Dandenong, until 1995. On 10 January 2014, the Reverend Elizabeth Alfred presided at the Eucharist at St James' Dandenong, on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday – a little frail in body, but strong in voice. She died on 2 February 2015, and as she says in her autobiography *Called to Serve* – "I've had a wonderful life!"

**1983-85**

**Queensland**

## **LENA MEADOWS**

**3.3.1910 - 26.3.2004**

Lena was a member of the Coorparoo Presbyterian Church. She was a member of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union and the Presbyterian Women's Association. She was also a member of a National Committee of PWA. Lena spent time travelling Queensland country areas, speaking at rallies and conferences and leading Bible study groups.

Lena was very involved in Aged Care within the Presbyterian Church, especially the Hopetoun Aged Care Centre in Corinda. She was also chairperson of the Aged Care Committee, Queensland Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Lena was involved in the building and maintenance of the Presbyterian camp property at North Tamborine.



Lena joined Australian Church Women in 1973, and was Fellowship of the Least Coin Convener 1974-90. From 1983-85 Lena was National President of ACW. She was an observer to Queensland Council of Churches for several years.

Lena had a great love for her family, for her church, for the Fellowship of the Least Coin movement and wearing large hats, especially large black ones. She had a very strong faith, was a leader, excellent chairperson, and was greatly respected by all with whom she worked. She and her husband would take their holidays when the biennial Australian Church Women's Conferences were held, and share time together as they travelled.

# 1985-87

# South Australia

## DOROTHY HAENSEL

Dorothy grew up in the Presbyterian Church - a daughter of the manse. From 1955-1971 she was a member of the United Church of North Australia - although the United Church was Congregational - Methodist - Presbyterian, because the only other churches in Darwin at that time were the Anglican, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Salvation Army, the membership of the United Church included the rest! Baptist, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Plymouth Brethren to name a few that come to mind.

Moving to Adelaide in 1971, she joined the local Congregational Church which was part of a United Parish with three Methodist congregations. She also had association with the Presbyterian Church through the Australian Inland Mission Support group (now Frontier Services). Dorothy was involved on the Interim Fellowships committee leading up to the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977.

Currently a member of the Mansfield (Vic) Uniting Church, Dorothy is an active Lay Preacher and is authorised to preside at the Sacraments.

Her interests include travelling - mainly to visit scattered family; reading and craft - patchwork and knitting.



Dorothy was introduced to ACW by Lillian Wells (NSW) when she visited Darwin in about 1968. Her aunt, Grace Faichney (Vic), was on the interim committee that worked to establish ACW in 1965, and Dorothy's mother was probably a member of the Queensland Unit between 1969-1972. She certainly attended meetings.

Dorothy joined the SA Unit in 1974, going straight on to Executive as WKS Convener - so was never a denominational representative. She did a five year term as WKS Convener, and for part of that time was also FLC Convener - for about two years. There was no Special Days Convener so she was also responsible for Fellowship Day Services, and for the time also World Community Day.

She became Vice-President in 1980, as Incoming President for the biennium 1981-83 and then again VP as Past President in 1984. From 1985-87 Dorothy was National President, and from 1987-1991 a Trustee for WKS Trust. She was made a Life member SA Unit. She attended a number of National Conferences, the first in 1975 and also two ACWC Assemblies.

Dorothy served as ACWC Assembly Secretary 1987-1990. Bonmee Julkiree (Thailand) was appointed Assembly Secretary at the 1986 ACWC Assembly, but then resigned after a few months, and as the next one in the vote Dorothy was appointed.

**1987-89**

**Western Australia**

**2001-03**

## **LEE EDWARDS**

Lee was born in Kalgoorlie, but the family moved to Tuart Hill when she was two. After attending the local school she then went to Girdlestone Girls High where she completed a commercial course. Lee started work at 15, and had 6 months as a governess, before starting nursing. She was happily settled in this profession when her minister at Perth Wesley challenged her to become a deaconess. She candidated in late 1954, studying for 2 years at Barker Theological College. Work as a deaconess took Lee to Midland, and to a City Mission in Melbourne. In WA she was at Mullewa, before a post as assistant to the Director of Home Mission in Perth, which included part time in a new congregation at Belmont. Serving as assistant at Bunbury, Fremantle and Mt Hawthorn followed.

Following her marriage to Ray Edwards in 1968 she had to resign from the Order of Deaconesses. They lived at Burekup and then Bunbury, both being involved in the local circuit. Lee was received back into the Deaconess Order at the first WA Uniting Church Synod in 1977. She completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1980, and also Licentiate of Theology studies.



From 1979 Lee served for six years at Harvey-Waroona, where she was ordained as a Minister, and at Yarloop. Her next call was Gosnells Parish, and while there Ray died in 1985. She then had a three year term in Rotherham Circuit, South Yorkshire before her return to Victoria Park, to unite four congregations into one. Lee retired at the end of 1996.

Within ACW Lee has served two terms as National President of Australian Church Women. At State level she has held various leadership positions over many years.

Uniting Church Adult Fellowship also benefitted from Lee's leadership as National President. During her three year term she travelled widely in Australia, and to conferences in Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Malaysia.

Lee has been involved in Guiding, as a Guide, Ranger, Guide leader, and WA Chaplain. She has also belonged to Soroptimists and to Business and Professional Women. She still enjoys the Trefoil Guild meetings and friendships.

Travel within Australia and many other countries has been a great love for Lee, and she has valued every opportunity to see God's wonderful world and people.

Her retirement years have included family time, many friends, taking occasional Services at Perth Wesley and other churches, reading, TV programs, membership of the Wellspring Community, movies, and being free to say no on occasion. She continually thanks God for a long worthwhile life with challenge and enrichment.

**1989-91**

**New South Wales**

## **MARIE McCANN OAM**

Born 1925 in Melbourne, Marie McCann was educated at Presentation College to Matriculation, a BA at the University of Melbourne and M.Theol, BD at the University of Sydney. Marie is the mother of five children, and a grandmother.

Marie's many church activities include National Catholic Girls Movement, Parish of Chatswood, convener and organiser Meals on Wheels, President Parish Ball Committee, Secretary Chatswood Catechists for five schools and 29 catechists. President Loreto Parents and Friends Committee, Member Catholic Women's League. Organist East Roseville Church and Star of the Sea Milson's Point. Committee Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults Association – to welcome newcomers who wish to join the church.

In 1977 Marie became a Catholic representative to ACW NSW State Unit and held office as *Newsette* distributor, Secretary, State President in 1979, and Convener for Special Days. From 1989-91 Marie was National President.



For over 30 years she has been actively involved in ACW in many ways. She has given her time, abilities and gifts generously, and has been a great influence and encouragement to many along the way.

Marie attended the 1982 ACWC Assembly in Bali, and was a delegate to the 1990 ACWC meeting in Bombay. She toured China with nine theologically trained Asian women, and was a speaker on the position of Australian Children and their concerns in Sri Lanka, Colombo. She also attended the FLC Silver Jubilee in Manila Philippines, and the 2006 ACWC Assembly in Kuala Lumpur.

Marie was made a NSW State Life Member in 1997 in recognition of her leadership and friendship in Christian Service.

Part of Marie's motivation is revealed in her comment: "ACW transforms Christ's 'Love' into tolerance, listening to other Christians, and using the bond, which comes from knowing someone and their aims, to unite with diversity. Then we have union and peace amongst Christians."

# 1991-92

# Tasmania

## LORRAINE DAVIS

Born in 1939, Lorraine Davis was educated in Tasmania at Cooe Primary School and Broadland House Church of England Girls' Grammar, before studying at the Victorian College of Pharmacy.

During her College years Lorraine was a Sunday School teacher at Oakleigh. During four years in Auckland she was a youth group leader and in the young wives group. In Burnie she was in Anglican Women's Guild and Anglican Women's Fellowship.

When she lived in the Aboriginal Community of Yirrkala Lorraine was in the Yulna church ladies group, and helped with religious education in the school. She also attended the Uniting Church in the mining town of Nhulunbuy and was involved with women's bible study there.



Transferring to the Ballarat area, she joined the Church of Christ and helped with religious education at Haddon school for a number of years, as well as the usual involvement with ladies group, though not leading.

Anglican Women's Fellowship elected Lorraine as their representative to ACW to be Anglican President-elect for the Tasmanian State Unit in 1987 for 2 years.

In 1991 when Tasmania became National Executive Lorraine became National President. She was unable to complete her term as her husband joined Mission Aviation Fellowship and they were sent to the Northern Territory in 1993. Shirley Brooks, the Vice-President, completed the term for Tasmania.

Lorraine attended the 1993 National Conference in Tasmania and brought the Rev. Liyapidiny Marika, the first aboriginal women to be ordained in the Uniting Church, from Yirrkala church.

Lorraine and her husband were transferred to Mission Aviation Fellowship in Ballarat in 1998 and joined Haddon Church of Christ. At the 2005 ACW conference in Sydney she met up with the Victorian representatives who invited her to attend Council meetings in Melbourne. She now represents Churches of Christ in Victoria and was Victoria Unit President for one year in 2011, has served 2 years as Newsletter editor, and a representative at National Council of Women Victoria.

# 1993

# Tasmania

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

1932 - 2015

Born at Scottsdale in north eastern Tasmania, Shirley attended school until the age of 14. She then trained as a corsetiere in retail trade. Shirley married to Don in 1954 and had two children. She was a very proud grandmother of all her grandchildren

Shirley was a fourth generation Salvation Army member who worked tirelessly in the city Corps in Launceston. She held many positions over the years including Assistant Home League Secretary (women's ministries) and Home League Secretary.

Shirley became a member of the Launceston Branch of ACW in 1975 and shortly afterwards represented the Branch at the State Unit where she held many executive positions. At State level she was convener for FLC for some years, State President, National President 1993 and for many years convener for Winifred Kiek Scholarship.



Shirley attended every National Conference since her first in 1981 which was held in Hobart, to 2011 which was held in Adelaide. Of great joy to Shirley were her attendances at the ACWC Assemblies in both Djakarta and Taiwan.

Shirley brought fine representation from World Day of Prayer to ACW. Her seven year presence on the Tasmanian State Executive included two years as President and two years as Vice-President.

Shirley excelled in the area of catering for fund raising luncheons and entertaining her League members as well as groups of visiting league members. Her specialty extended to entertaining on the holiday 'house boat' she and husband Don enjoyed at picturesque West Arm, Beauty Point near the mouth of the Tamar River. She enjoyed her catering skills as a partner in the catering business for 22 years.

Shirley regularly encouraged a small group of friends to accompany her weekly for the enjoyment of painting. The art form also extends to china painting, which was her love for some years.

In recognition of her contribution to Australian Church Women, Shirley was both a Tasmanian State Life Member and a National Life Member.

**1993-95**

**Victoria**

## **EUNICE REIDY**

Eunice Reidy was born 1931 in Ivanhoe, Victoria. At the age of three, she moved to Kilsyth where her father became a dairy farmer and she enjoyed living just a stone's throw across the paddocks from her grandparents. She attended Mooroolbark State School, Box Hill Girls Technical School, and enjoyed every aspect of her school life. At the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy she did a 3-year needlework course. Whilst working in the city, she studied at night school to obtain her Trained Teachers Certificate and then began her teaching career.

After her marriage Eunice and her husband moved to Croydon where their 3 children were born. Jack died suddenly in 1984 two weeks before their first grandchild was born. Eunice has always taken leadership roles within the life of the Church of Christ at Montrose.

She has been a Sunday School teacher and church organist. Very early in her married life she became involved with the Ladies Fellowship, which led to wider involvement in women's work through Eastern District Conference and Christian Women's Fellowship. She was actively involved in Chaplaincy at Croydon High School for many years.



She has been an Elder at Montrose since 1983 with only a year sabbatical. She has held the position of both State and National President of CWF and a Church of Christ delegate to Australian Church Women.

Eunice has served as both State and National President of ACW, was FLC Convener in Victoria for many years and has the honour of being a National Life Member.

Eunice is much sought after as an advisor on ACW procedures and has historical knowledge of the Victorian Unit which she willingly shares with the Unit. She shows understanding and gentle guidance to any new President.

As an ACW National Life Member she has attended many of the biennial national conferences and is often called upon to serve on the reference committee.

# 1995-97 Australian Capital Territory

## EVONNE SULLIVAN AM

31.1.1923 - 23.4.2011

Born in Bathurst NSW, Evonne's education was through Blackfriars Correspondence School Sydney, and Bathurst High School. In 1943 she married an AIF Staff Sergeant and they had two daughters and three sons, and have 12 grandchildren.

Evonne has long been involved as an executive member of Catholic Women's League at branch, regional, archdiocesan and national levels. During ten years residence in Darwin, NT and while on the Catholic Women's League Executive, she promoted enthusiastically the concept of ecumenism by participating in the preparation and presentation of the Special Days Services hosted by the various churchwomen's embryo organisations in the Territory.

Shortly after returning to Canberra in 1974 Evonne was appointed the Catholic Women's League delegate to the ACT Unit of Australian Church Women. She has served terms as Unit Honorary Secretary, Vice President and President.

In 1995, the first occasion when the ACW National Executive was located in the ACT, Evonne accepted the position of National President.

Other honours conferred include 1991, Honorary Life Vice President of NCWA, 1995 Life Member NCW ACT Inc, and 1997 Archdiocesan Honorary Life Member Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn.

Having represented ACW, CWL and NCW at National Conferences, Forums and Consultations throughout Australia on numerous occasions, Evonne is grateful to those organisations for allowing her the privilege.



She was recognized as a Member of the Order of Australia for Community service in NT and ACT.

Evonne regards her term as National President of Australian Church Women as the highlight of her many years of voluntary service. She was honoured as an ACT Unit Life Member in 1995, and an ACW National Life Member in 2003.

**1997-99**

**Queensland**

## **AILEEN MORTENSEN**

Born 1931 in Bundaberg, Queensland, Aileen Mortensen attended school there until Year 10, then at Brisbane until Year 12, following which she attended Teachers' Training College.

Married in 1954, Aileen had three sons and seven grandchildren.

Aileen taught Home Economics and Science at High School level. She was also involved in coaching school sport teams, and in musicals, as well as co-ordinating Religious Education in Schools.

Aileen was very involved in the Church of Christ. She was a Deacon, Secretary, Sunday School Superintendent and church organist. She became State President of Women's Ministries in the Church and represented the Church of Christ at the National Council of Women.



She has always been interested in the Arts and in all types of Hand Crafts. Aileen will always be remembered for her beautiful hand work in preparing presentation gifts and especially for her dedication to Australian Church Women.

Aileen was the National President of Australian Church Women from 1997-99.

She joined the Queensland Unit of Australian Church Women around 1995 as a delegate from the Church of Christ. She was Unit Secretary in 1997, Queensland Unit President 2003-05 and FLC Convener 2006-07.

Aileen resigned from the Unit in early 2008 because of health reasons and to look after her very ill husband.

# 1999-2001

# South Australia

## MARJ DREDGE

Marj was born in Brisbane to Royston and Marjory Rayment Chapman. Marj had a lengthy involvement in Girls' Brigade. She trained as a Domestic Science teacher. In 1965 Marj married Colin Dredge, and they moved to South Australia the following year. Colin served as a Minister within the Churches of Christ and Marj supported him in his ministries in various places in South Australia, Canberra, and Queensland. She filled this role as well during his time as Administrator of the then Churches of Christ Retirement Services in South Australia. Marj and Colin have three sons and one daughter, and a number of grandchildren.

Marj served as President of the Churches of Christ Women's Conference in South Australia. She was the first woman to be President of Conference of Churches of Christ in the state. In addition, Marj served several terms as a member of the State Board of Churches of Christ.



She was a member of Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board, served a term as President of Australian Christian Women's Fellowship and was Co-ordinator of Women's Ministries 2006-12.

At international level, Marj served as President of Disciples of Christ World Christian Women's Fellowship and Vice President of World Convention of Churches of Christ for four years at the same time. She served several terms as a Board Member of World Convention of Churches of Christ. From 2008-2012 Marj represented Australia at Disciples of Christ Global Women Connecting and at their meetings in Nashville 2008 and Goiania, Brazil in 2012.

For Australian Church Women SA Unit Inc Marj served as Community Concern Convener from 1986-1990 and Unit President for the period 1990-1991. She was National President of Australian Church Women from 1999-2001. Marj has served as SA Unit representative on The Future of Australian Church Women committee 2014-15.

She has been the ACW SA Unit delegate to World Day of Prayer South Australia State Committee from 2007. Marj was President of World Day of Prayer SA Committee 2008-09 and served as National Liaison Officer for World Day of Prayer Australia from 2011-2013.

## 2003-2005

## New South Wales

### NANCY McLAREN

Nancy McLaren was born in Taree, NSW and Educated at Newcastle. She attended The Salvation Army Training College at Marrickville. Married to Phillip, they have three sons and seven grandchildren.

January 1975 after Ordination as a Minister of the Gospel and appointment as a Salvation Army Officer Nancy and Phillip were appointed to Clermont, western Queensland as the Commanding Officers for two years.

After a further two years at Aitkenvale, Townsville and then three years at Gladstone, the family moved to Sydney. A three year appointment as Divisional League of Mercy Secretary (Chaplain to Hospitals and Homes) was followed by further Church work in Lismore (NSW), Rockhampton, Albion and Carina (Qld), and then a short Community Care Ministries appointment.



Nancy served three years as Silver Star Secretary, overseeing the care of parents of Officers, and from 2002 she coordinated the work (NSW, Qld, ACT) of the Salvation Army's Child Sponsorship Program, an appointment which brought a lot of satisfaction and joy. During the years as a Corps Officer Nancy was heavily involved in Women's Ministries and children's work.

In 2001 after moving to Sydney Nancy was appointed to the ACW NSW Council and became the Fellowship of the Least Coin Convener, and then Publicity Convener. Involvement in ACW has meant meeting and joining with lovely Christian women from different denominations and has brought much joy and fulfillment.

At the 19<sup>th</sup> National Conference held in Perth Nancy became National President from 2003 -2005. This was a very rewarding, although sometimes frustrating time. She was able to travel and meet with the Units in ACT, South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and Queensland, as well as in an official capacity, NSW. This term culminated with the 20<sup>th</sup> National Conference held in Sydney 2005.

**2005-07**

**Victoria**

## **ELAINE JOHNSON**

Born and educated in Coburg Victoria, Elaine worked as a bank officer before entering The Salvation Army Training College.

Elaine was commissioned and ordained as a Salvation Army Officer in 1966 and served in a variety of appointments, in South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand as well as a special assignment for 3 months in Ghana West Africa.

Following retirement in 2004, for a few years she co-ordinated the pastoral care programme at the Camberwell Corps where she worships. She sings in the choir and is a member of the prayer chain team and also the hospitality team. She finds great delight in serving the Lord.



Elaine has always enjoyed her involvement and leadership in women's ministries in The Salvation Army. She has been a representative of Salvation Army on World Day of Prayer Committee South Australia (President 1996), Church Women United Aotearoa New Zealand.

As a valued member of Australian Church Women Victoria Unit, Elaine was President 2003/2004, and Special Days Convener 2009-2014.

Elaine was National President Australian Church Women 2005-2007.

She is married to Ern who she visits each day at the nursing home. They have 4 married children, 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren, 3 in Dallas Texas USA, 1 with 2 little boys in Florida USA, 3 in Nelson New Zealand, 2 in China, and 2 in Bendigo Victoria. She loves being with family and friends.

**2007-09**

## **Australian Capital Territory**

### **JEAN THOMSON OAM**

Jean is a widow with four adult children, seven grandchildren and a great granddaughter. She is a member of Yarralumla Uniting Church and has been an elder since Union in 1977 with a couple of breaks as required by the laws of the church. She has also served as Church Councillor, Member of Synod and local Presbytery, and member of Presbytery Standing Committee.

She was the Presbytery person in charge of Uniting Church Adult Fellowship for a few years. In addition she has conducted worship at local aged persons homes over the years, and assisted at the church playgroup for parents and preschool children.

For almost 20 years Jean was convener of the Yarralumla Midwinter Arts and Crafts committee which has raised a substantial amount of money for local charities, as well as encouraging many first-time exhibitors – a real outreach to the community.

Jean is a life member of the National Council of Women of the ACT and has fulfilled the roles of President, Secretary, Vice-President and Editor of the newsletter over the years. She is still an active member of NCW.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours list 2009, Jean was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for her work in women's organisations over many years.



One of her other interests is Floral Art and she has been a member of the ACT Floral Art Guild for a number of years, and also served a three year term as National Secretary of the Floral Art Association of Australia. Jean has represented Australia at two international gatherings. She regularly competes at local flower shows.

In ACW, Jean has held office twice on National Executive, once as National Secretary, the other as National President of ACW. During her term as National President she represented ACW National at the meetings of Australian Women's Coalition which received some government funding then. She also attended Parliamentary prayer breakfasts, as well as the service before the opening of Parliament each year. She was able to visit Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia as President.

She has been privileged to represent Australia as a voting delegate to two ACWC Assemblies, in Chiang Mai and Seoul, and was pleased to attend 2006 in Kuala Lumpur and 2010 in Bangor as a member of the Australian delegation.

**2009-11**

**South Australia**

## **MARGARET FLINT OAM**

Margaret was born at North Kensington, South Australia and educated at East Adelaide Primary School, Girton Girls' School, Wattle Park Teachers' College and the University of Adelaide. She was a primary school teacher with the Education Department of SA for over thirty years. She took leave 1972-74 and served through Australian Volunteers' Abroad at Balob Teachers' College, Lae, PNG, as a lecturer, Anglican staff member and Dean of Women.

Margaret's involvement in the Anglican Church has been extensive and is summed up in the citation for her OAM awarded in 2007 "for service to the Anglican Church of Australia in a range of committee roles, and to the community through women's organisations". She has served at parish level as People's' Warden, Lay Assistant, Parish Councillor and Synod Representative.



At Diocesan and National level Margaret has been a member of General Synod, Anglican Board of Missions Australia, Anglican Board of Christian Education, Provincial Council, Ecumenical Affairs Commission, and an Anglican representative to South Australian Council of Churches. She is a graduate of the *Education for Ministry* programme.

Margaret has been committed and active in women's affairs in the community beyond the church through National Council of Women SA Inc. where she served two terms as State President and NCWA Board member, Graduate Women SA Inc. (formerly AFUW Inc.), Women's Information Service Support Group, NCW War Memorial Fund and UNAA Status of Women Committee.

Margaret is an Associate Member of ACW SA Unit Inc. She was President 2004-06 and Promotions Officer 2007-13. From 2009-2011 Margaret was National President of Australian Church Women Inc. when the National Executive was based in South Australia. She has attended a number of ACW Inc. National Conferences.

For relaxation Margaret enjoys her home and garden, time with family and friends, opera, movies, reading, computer and current affairs, gym, and her cat.

# 2011-13

# Western Australia

## LAUREL PEARCE

Laurel was born in Victoria to Salvation Army Officer parents and grew up in Victoria and Western Australia. She worked in a bank for six years before entering training for ministry as a Salvation Army officer. Commissioned as a Salvation Army officer in 1961 she served in a variety of appointments in Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia until retirement in 2000. These appointments have included corps (church) ministry, training of Salvation Army officers, aged care, residential child care, youth hostels, work with unmarried mothers, women's refuges, emergency relief and disability services. Many of these appointments were in management roles.

Laurel has Bachelor degrees in Arts and Social Work from the University of Melbourne. She had the privilege of attending a course in middle management in Melbourne in 1980, and a course at the International College for Officers in London in 1983 and the joy of being a participant in an Israel study tour in 1994.



Service on committees includes residential child care, women's refuges and emergency relief groups in Victoria, and Disability services and Women's refuge groups in Western Australia. Laurel served terms as assistant co-ordinator and co-ordinator of the Women's Refuge group in Western Australia. She is honorary chaplain of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps Association.

In 2000 Laurel joined Australian Church Women. She has served two terms as WA Unit President and is in her second term as Unit Secretary. She assists with Social Justice and represents WA Unit on the Council of Churches WA. On a National level she was Social Justice Convener from 2001-2003 and President from 2011 to 2013, also representing ACW on the Australian Women's Coalition.

Laurel has been a delegate to ACWC Assemblies in 2006 and 2010. In 2013 when WA Unit was National Executive we had the joy of hosting a meeting of the ACWC Executive in Perth.

In 2001 Laurel joined the National Council of Women WA as the Salvation Army representative. She has served twelve years on NCW WA Executive, four as Vice President and two as Chairman of Standing Committees and is State Advisor for Habitat. She served two terms as National Advisor for Habitat.

In her local congregation Laurel sings in the choir, leads a home fellowship group and belongs to one of the book clubs. Her interests include reading, music, social and family history. She values her ACW friends right across Australia and enjoys the opportunities ACW affords to learn from and share in the different ways members express their faith.

# 2013-15

# New South Wales

## LYN MIDDLETON

Lynette is a lifelong member of The Salvation Army, her journey of faith beginning as a small child in the Sunday School, deepening and developing as she progressed through the structures of the church. She became a Sunday School teacher during her early teens and subsequently took on various roles and leadership positions in the church, particularly with the Youth Group and Junior Soldiers before responding to the call of God to full time service as an officer in The Salvation Army.

After her commissioning as a Salvation Army Officer Lynette served on the Training College staff as a Training Officer, then as teacher in charge of the school within a Vocational Training [Detention] Centre for Girls.

Following her marriage in January 1972, Lynette served with Ken in a number of corps in Qld and NSW.



They were then appointed to The Salvation Army's work in Pakistan where they served for four years and subsequently served four years in Seoul, South Korea and three years at International Headquarters in London, plus short periods relieving in Chisinau, Moldova and in Taiwan.

Lynette also held a number of appointments at Territorial Headquarters in Sydney. These included Employee Training Co-ordinator, Community Services Consultant and Chairman of the Moral and Social Issues Council.

Her first involvement with Australian Church Women was with the Southport, Qld branch between 1973 and 1975. She was a member of ACT Unit 1979-1981.

Lyn served as President ACW NSW State Unit 2004-2006 after being President Elect in 2003, later Immediate Past President, and then Asian Church Women's Conference Convener. More recently she has been Special Days Convener.

From 2013-15 Lyn has been the National President of ACW, and while in office visited Western Australia and Queensland Units.

Lyn served as The Salvation Army's representative on National Council of Women NSW and ACT, and the NSW Council of Churches.