

WCTU Australia President Joy Butler - 2018 - 2023

Come alive - our theme - the women of the 19th century CAME ALIVE. My question this to you is - are we going to STAY ALIVE??

There have always been women who spoke up for the good of humanity. But in the late 1700s women were beginning to stir to help society be better for women - the industrial revolution had changed society (1712 - first steam engine) and evil was afoot as it always is and we were on the move at the same time. **The first temperance society was formed in USA in 1808. In 1832 eight men in England formed the Total Abstinence movement. In 1838 Total Abstinence societies formed in Perth, Sydney, and Hobart and then Adelaide and Melbourne came later in 1842. They had already formed a Temperance group. Brisbane came later.**

The first wave of feminism was afoot - 1848-1920 and women were involved - women concerned about their families and the huge amounts of alcohol being consumed and money being wasted.

In 1874 the USA National WCTU organised in Ohio - thanks to Doctor Dio Lewis who urged women to pray for their men.

1882 first WCTU in Australia formed in Sydney

1883 world WCTU formed - Frances Willard became a prominent force

1884 Mary Clement Leavitt of US - first round the world missionary visited Victoria

1887 First organising conference of Vic WCTU held in the YMCA and a deputation to government. Women medical students admitted to Melbourne University for the first time!

1892 - First Convention National WCTU Australia - in Melbourne, 25 May

1892 - First White Ribbon Signal published 7 November - we are in our 130th year!!

1893 - Women's franchise in NZ - first in the world - Kate Sheppard led this - she was an officer/leader in the WCTU there.

So many firsts and WCTU was right there praying all the way - on their knees. **Thousands of women joined the organisation and huge strides for women, for people, were made. Whippings ceased, homes for prisoners and prostitutes were set up, working girls cared for, kindergartens started, food for the poor distributed, clothes for sailors were provided, education on temperance in schools, tea rooms set up, street marches held, votes for women campaigned for, Domestic Violence addressed, laws were changed, politicians were hassled, camps for children conducted, booths and displays at shows, literature - brochures, books and pamphlets - all this done by WCTU!**

Now we're still **alive and still going 130 years later in Australia**. I love history and love reading about the past - the glorious days. When there were 100s of members - some of you were even alive then and attended conventions. But we're still here and in some places, flourishing, in others, languishing. That's what happens throughout history - ebb and flow - but we are faithful. Now we are past the 2nd and 3rd waves of feminism and into a 4th! We have believed in the 3 Ps - we have been persistent, persevering, persuasive. Up until the 1970s there were departments in the WCTU and some were Status of Women, Prisoner's Aid, Native Races, Promotion of Fruit Juice Drinks, Health

and Nutrition, Anti-gambling and many others. In the early days of WCTU there were over 40 departments.

We continue because we feel socially responsible - as Christians, as people of Australia. In the book 'Post God Nation' - by Roy Williams, published in 2015, he says - this nation was built on Christian principles by people who were versed in the Bible but, he says, religion has fallen off the radar for this country and he suggests what might be done to get it back on and he implores Christians to be more active.

Because religion has gone off the radar, our society is riddled with issues surrounding the **SAD (Smoking Alcohol, Drugs)** poisons - alcohol is ruining lives everywhere and is the biggest cause for violence/accidents/death. Drugs are easy to come by and ruin thousands of lives every year. We still have work to do and I'm glad we have joined forces with other groups in Australia recently - Taskforce 4 Drug Prevention.

Key findings from Aust Govt - Aust Institute of Health and Welfare - 2021

- **The non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs is an ongoing concern internationally**
- **There is a strong link between problematic alcohol or other drug use and experiences of homelessness**
- **Tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable health burden in Australia**
- **People with mental health conditions are more likely to use tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs**

Billion of dollars are spent on issues relating to all these concerns - the burden of disease related to these matters is 'over the top'. Drugs is an enormous concern in rural areas, more than cities and 40+ yr olds suffer the most. Homelessness and break-ups of homes and marriages contribute as a top cause to the raging alcohol and drug consumption. We feel compelled to help

Our Motto is - For God, Home, and Humanity OR Every Land - it fits well.

I believe that the WCTU has always been and is and can still be part of that remedy for Australia. There are too many atheists and agnostics in this nation and we have let that happen. **We are responsible. I plead with you to support, to join, be part of WCTU - don't let it die - help it COME ALIVE.** And the wonderful thing is - we are women from all the churches - united in our efforts to make a difference. Some of us have children and grandchildren who have been ruined because of these SAD poisons - we know the deep sorrow.

We are/were well known in Australia. Most older people still know the name, many politicians know the name and it is said - Ellen Chandler quote "politicians looked with dread if they saw an appointment made in the name of the WCTU".

Now we realise and are facing some hard facts - we have fewer members than ever before. Some predicted this long ago and saw the demise of WCTU. **We also realise that we need younger more modern thinks and 'do-ers'. Some of us are getting older.** This was always the case of course and some old cartoons show us as 'wowsers' and angry looking women with captions which talk about our lips never touching yours. "The lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine." The last line of an anonymous poem from the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) became a popular mantra in the efforts by prohibitionists to stop all sales of alcoholic beverages in the United States: It seemingly was a threat by young women to their young men to stay away from the booze or skip the kissing routine. But - we are few and want help - we are about 166 members in Australia. We have active Unions or groups in Victoria (as has always been the case) and Tasmania joins them. There is a small group in NSW and a very active group in South Australia - that's why we're here and that's it.

We want direction and help in knowing how to face the future - a future in a messy world filled with troubles of every kind - including alcohol and drugs which cause most of the messiness, if the truth be told. We have money, we have faith, we have hope and we want your help. God has led us thus far and we are trusting Him for the future.

Now let me tell you what we have done in the last three years - since we met in Newcastle in 2018. We have not been sitting idle and commiserating - we have continued to work despite our dwindling membership and lack of meetings (meetings we are famous for) because of Covid and all its repercussions.

Connector - new innovative online newsletter and thanks to Victoria for the name. We send this out by the 10th of every month and it includes letter from the president, news of each state, educational items and prayer requests. We believe it is a good way to keep in touch with members.

WRS - White Ribbon Signal. We produce this quarterly - since 1892. It is now in its 130th year although it says Vol 127. In this magazine we share news, history, important items regarding what I call the SAD poisons - smoking, alcohol, drugs. Much thanks is attributed to Ellen Chandler, previous editor to me. She relinquished that responsibility in 2019 after 20 years.

Drug Free Kids - magazine - quarterly and online - huge thanks to Glenda Amos who has cared for this for 20 years. Glenda has done this for long enough and has gone past her due date. This is magazine that is interactive, online and excellent for children. But the distribution has dwindled.

Internet/Social Media - Connector via Mailchimp, WRS - printed and online. Websitethanks to Michelle Ward for those two. I have groups on Facebook Instagram Pinterest Youtube

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Public communications campaigns targeting drug and substance abuse - Alex Antic a member of this committee - May 2021

The committee was informed that social media can be an effective tool in public communications campaigns, noting that social media is a medium like television or radio, as opposed to a type of campaign such as social marketing. Social media usage has increased significantly in recent years, with current statistics showing that worldwide, 2271 million people use Facebook, 326 million people use Twitter, 1000 million people use Instagram, and

287 million people use Snapchat. In Australia, 60 per cent of the population are active Facebook users and 50 per cent of Australians log onto Facebook at least once a day.

Social Media is so important and we need to use these tools - we need more and more expertise to put it together.

Sober movement out there - I would like to believe it's part of our success. I've found myself on a Sober group to encourage young people. It is now called the Sober House. It was titled 'The Unexpected Joy of Being Sober.' Another group is SOBER IN THE COUNTRY or its acronym SITC - It's Ok to say no to alcohol - Alcohol in the Bush - Shanna Whan. She says she was 'bubbly by day/raging drunkard at night.'

Taskforce 4 Drug Prevention - 5 groups. We are one. Drug Free Australia, Dalgarno Institute, Drug Advisory Council of Australia, Teen Challenge Tasmania, and WCTU

We have left literature all over Australia - in remote places

We have Spoken at many churches and events

Sharon Bird and others in the outback focus on the First Nation people of our land. There is so much more to be done in this area.

Buses - signs on in **Newcastle, Blacktown, Tamworth, Kempsey and Port Macquarie - NSW** at a cost of **\$23,000**

Doctor's surgeries - advertising clips regarding FASD in NSW, Queensland, and West Australia at a cost of \$12,000 - currently in 7 venues. Have been in 15 altogether.

FASD - We've continued our promotion of no alcohol for pregnant mothers with literature and handouts.

Petitions and Votergrams to politicians - thanks to Anne Bergen who led the way

We give donations to various entities - there is a strict protocol and application procedure. Glenda's work with our treasury is exemplary. Read her report carefully. We are so grateful to our most efficient treasurer. She does far more than just treasury. Total of what we've given away in the last 3 years - \$30,600.

Support for international groups - Kenya and PNG are a focus \$13,000 to Kenya - some for a Drug Rehabilitation Centre called WCTU Turning Point Solutions.

Book we produced - Women of Purpose - available for purchase - after last convention - inspirational to read

Youtube - 10 parts Connie Hain and I produced this series available online. It is about all things pertaining to WCTU - take a look on our website and share. We need much more on Youtube

South Australia has been a light (long history).... tea rooms yet to see for me -... would love to repeat this in every state

(Resolutions and Pledge)

Finally - I should mention our Tuesday morning Zoom Prayer Group - we have persevered - a diligent and faithful group of 6-10 women meet every week.

In closing I wish to quote from the Parliamentary Inquiry into Communication Campaigns Targeting Drug & Substance Abuse from Dalgarno Institute, January 2020

'Awareness and re-shaping public perceptions is not a one-off pitch but an ongoing commitment to purposefully, insistently, creatively and credibly, informing every successive generation.

In alcohol and drug education it is roughly estimated that for each person to change knowledge required roughly 15 hours, to change attitudes needed 30 hours and to change behaviour required 50 hours. But in Australian schools it was estimated that only 44 per cent of students aged between 12-17 received more than one lesson on illicit drugs in the past year.

'Australia is revealed as a not a sleepy, remote backwater but a key criminal base with pre-existing established longstanding and high-level ties to international networks that have not only continued to flourish but laid the foundation for the virtually unabated manufacture, supply and distribution of illicit drugs.

'The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates the harm-related economic impacts of the use of alcohol and other drugs as:

• **\$17.76 billion Opioid use (illegal and off-prescription)**

• **\$14.35 billion Alcohol**

ÿ \$4.5 billion Cannabis

ÿ \$5 billion Methamphetamine (2013–14)⁷

1.8 The above \$5 billion cost estimate of methamphetamine use is for costs such as harm reduction and treatment, health care, crime, premature mortality, road accidents, workplace accidents and productivity. This \$5 billion does not include the estimated cost of up to \$12.2 billion in harms to partners and children of people who use methamphetamine.⁸

‘Since 2004, Courageous Mothers [in Dutch language Moedige Moeders] has been actively making it clear to members of parliament that drug tolerance has serious consequences for families and society.’

We have not been idle - we have been alive - although I might add - it has been hard going - and with some discouragement. We are not organised in the way the organisation was in the past with various departments - we wish we could be but we don't have and can't find the expertise. So we have done what we could. But you can see and hear what has been accomplished and can catch a vision of what can be accomplished if we COME ALIVE even more. We crave and want your support. We want good leadership, we want more people, more young people and we want YOU.

There is much more to be done.

I was encouraged by the Scripture reading and emphasis for World Day of Prayer this year - Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

God bless you and thank you for coming - thank you for listening. Thank you for your support.

Joy Butler
President - WCTU Australia