

# White Ribbon Signal

WCTU  
Australia | Woman's Christian  
Temperance Union  
*Drug Free Life*



## Message from the President

Already we are half way through another year. It has gone by in a flash and what have we done for God? WCTU Australia held their 44th triennial Convention in Melbourne on March 18-20. The theme - **JESUS IS THE ANSWER**. Thanks to Victoria for being the host Union and to all who came and participated in this important meeting - it was all worthwhile.

We discussed the relevance and importance of WCTU and its message of total abstinence from the SAD (Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs) poisons. We shared ideas with New Zealand representatives and hope to work more closely with them in the future.

Our speakers were inspirational and encouraging and in this edition of WRS, we will share their messages. We left the meeting inspired to go on despite any setbacks we might encounter. We are doing the Lord's business and that is what is important. These words to Timothy are appropriate for WCTU Australia - 'Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it. Both you and those who hear you will experience salvation.' 1 Timothy 4:16b MSG

Joy Butler  
President WCTU Australia Limited

## Some Quotations From Convention

*"We live in a Post-Truth culture. Truth is always under there somewhere and we must get it out,"* said **Shane Varcoe**

*"One in 20 deaths in Australia is caused by drugs and alcohol. Alcohol kills one person every 10 seconds, worldwide,"* said **Kerryn Redpath**

*"We are concerned about humanity and God cares,"* said **Mavis Gerrish**

*"Advocacy puts our faith into action and it's central to WCTU's work,"* said **Rosemarie Honore**

*"The latest vaping wave amongst our young people is a result of confusing information or in fact limited information,"* said **Tanya Cavanagh**

*"In the past, thousands of women joined and spoke, wrote, campaigned for upgrades in society - for God Home and Humanity. Same today - societies crumbling, morals fallen, but Christians still speak up - Jesus is the Answer for the world today,"* said **Joy Butler**

## WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Kerryn Redpath, one of our Guest Speakers at the WCTU Convention, shared about her devastating experience with drugs and how it nearly cost her life... Read on to find out how she is now helping others.



Report at Convention from Rosemarie Honore, Citizen Advocate

*Jesus*  
IS THE  
ANSWER

Meet the new team for Australia WCTU appointed or the next 3 years.



Official publication of WCTU Australia - promoting a drug free lifestyle and Christian values in the home and community

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## PRAYER MATTERS

Every morning and evening at 9 am and 9 pm we met together for prayer at the convention. We continue to seek God for direction and blessing on all we do. Once a month we meet via zoom to pray together. Please join us. Just send an email to [preswctuaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:preswctuaustralia@gmail.com) and you will be part of this group of praying women. Remember that WCTU has always had a tradition to pray at 12 noon. Please do this and join the myriad of women around the world who pray for the mighty work of WCTU.

### Pray for:

- New Zealand and Australia as they find ways to work together more overtly.
- Litiana and Joy as they travel to NZ for the June 18 convention.
- Litiana as she takes up the role of Children's Department director and reaches out to children through the avenues of the internet, schools, churches, literature.
- Rosemarie as she leads our Citizen Advocate area and speaks to the government on behalf of WCTU.
- WCTU leaders throughout the world as they grapple with issues that sometimes seem overwhelming. Pray that they will see - Jesus is the Answer and that God is in control.

## News from Convention

Report at Convention from Rosemarie Honore, Citizen Advocate



On behalf of WCTU Australia, Rosemarie writes to parliamentarians at local, state and federal levels about issues relating primarily to alcohol/drug/nicotine addiction, vaping, gambling, domestic violence.

During the past year Rosemarie has significantly contributed to the discussions in parliament about Vaping - urging government to be much stricter about importation, packaging and sales; Alcohol marketing and advertising - in relation to the marketing of Hard Solo which is an alcoholic version of the popular lemon-flavoured drink, Solo; Alcohol packaging - urging the government to put warnings on all alcohol packaging just as there are mandatory pregnancy warning labels on alcohol, although this took 23 years!

Rosemarie encourages us to suggest topics for consideration. She is happy to help provide the correct wording and contact details and submit the concern to the relevant place. Her email is [rosemarie.wctu@gmail.com](mailto:rosemarie.wctu@gmail.com) or go to [www.wctu.org.au/getinvolved](http://www.wctu.org.au/getinvolved)

Rosemarie was born and raised in Mauritius and has a background in Economics and Statistics at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She has been a teacher of Economics abroad and has worked with the NSW government in various capacities. She is currently retired and is a volunteer with the NSW Corruption Prevention Network.

## Newly elected Committee - WCTU Australia Ltd



Rhona Theodore (Secretary), Sue Langberg (Vice President), Joy Butler (President), Karen Edwards (President, South Australia), Helen Palmer (Vice President), Anne Bergen (President, Victoria).

## SOME NUMBERS

- The 44th National WCTU convention in Australia was held in Melbourne, March 18-20, 2024
- First national convention was in Melbourne, Australia, May, 1891
- Our membership on the database shows 333 in Australia as at March, 2024
- WCTU Australia is part of a 5-member Taskforce - WCTU, Dalgarno, DACA, DFA, Teen Challenge
- In 6 medical centres throughout NSW and Queensland, 6000 monthly patients can see advertisements relating to FASD, from WCTU
- Donations and charitable grants from WCTU Australia totalled \$37,196 during the years 2021-2024



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## SUMMARY OF THE CONVENTION BREAK-OUT GROUPS

The participants at the convention varied from younger to older. They were happily divided into 4 groups and we discussed the following - Why we do WCTU still? Why is Jesus the answer? What is the future like? Where are we going? Here are some of the results:

Younger - WCTU is sustainable and we can show God.

Mid Age - Everything looks good with Christ. We are providers of truth.

Older mid-age - We have authority but we can do it in a new way. Prayer for schools is important.

Older ones - We are concerned about humanity but we know God cares. Jesus is the only way. Good to use modern technology but the personal touch is still needed.

## Convention Guest Speakers



Tanya Cavanagh - CEO of Teen Challenge Tasmania  
[www.teenchallenge.tasmania.org](http://www.teenchallenge.tasmania.org)

Teen Challenge commenced in 1958 in New York by Rev David Wilkerson in response to his exposure to the significant drug addiction

to heroin at the time of the city's teenage gangs. Today it has over 1400 residential rehab centres around the world for people from teens to adults with life controlling addictions. Teen Challenge was established in Australia in Queensland in 1981 and has residential programmes in most states.

Tanya founded Teen Challenge in Tasmania in 2014 and works solidly in the prevention space, to turn young people away from pathways that can lead to life destroying pathways of drug use to mask or deal with life's challenges. She is highly driven and motivated in this space and together with her team, work with at-risk youth in mentoring, art therapy, workplace mentoring/training, Arrowsmith programme overcoming learning difficulties through the science of neuroplasticity of the brain. NotEvenOnce Projects are delivered around Australia, since 2015 and she has now spoken to over 107,000 young people. She also works regularly with people with addiction and helps facilitate their entry into rehabilitation. She operates support groups for loved ones of someone in addiction, through the Solutions Programme.

Tanya says "it's a very challenging world for our young people and for schools and parents. There is already so much pressure in many areas to stay abreast of the latest issues and trends. Nothing is more true than in the Alcohol & Other Drug (AOD) space. It changes constantly and the latest Vaping wave amongst our young people is a perfect example of confusing misinformation or in fact limited information."



Shane Varcoe - Director of Dalgarno Institute  
[www.dalgarno.org.au](http://www.dalgarno.org.au)

Shane is the energetic, passionate manager of this institute and shared his knowledge, expertise on all things related to drugs and alcohol

with dynamism and kept our attention. His website is a wealth of information and teaching.

The Dalgarno Institute is one of the longest standing Not-for-Profit community-based, public interest, health education charities in Australia. Demand Reduction, Primary Prevention & Recovery Alumni are the Focus. As an Alcohol & Other Drug (AOD) Education - Advocacy and Resourcing Coalition, they are consistently working to make communities and their families, safer, healthier, stronger, and subsequently more resilient.

The Dalgarno Institute was named after a woman who was a key figure in the early reformation movements of the mid 19th Century. Isabella Dalgarno personified the spirit of a large and growing movement of socially responsible people who had a heart for both social justice and social responsibility. These other's focused people took on the prevailing culture blighted by alcohol abuse, the marginalising of women and children, corruption and bigotry. They stood up against it and said 'enough is enough.' They were ridiculed, belittled and seemed powerless against corrupt attitudes and officials, but they cared enough about the community and nation to make a difference. They sought to change the landscape, and they did. In fact it took the concerted effort of these altruistic folk to 'nudge' the Government of the day to start making changes.





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## Guest Speaker

Kerryn Redpath,  
Director of DAESY  
(Drug & Alcohol  
Education Supporting  
Youth & Adults)  
[www.daesy.com.au](http://www.daesy.com.au)

There's a perception out there that people battling substance use issues must have a background of trauma or brokenness. "It's my body, I can do what I choose with it", is a common attitude. As a consequence, millions

of people, just wanting to 'have a bit of fun', have naively fallen down the slippery slope from 'a bit of fun', to dependence and addiction. This was my story.

I grew up in a loving family, was sporty, had good friends, and went to good schools. But in my teenage years, I began to follow my friends into the party scene; drinking, smoking, and all of that legal stuff, and then one day I was introduced to marijuana. Feeling the need to 'fit in', I said, "Yes", and for me, that's where it all began.

.....I must add that I am not proud of any of this. If I could turn back the clock and take away the heartache and pain this later brought to me and my loved ones, I would do that in a heartbeat. But of course, we can't change the past, so I am doing my best to use my knowledge, experience and wisdom to warn and educate others. Over the past 12 years, I have been delivering compelling drug & alcohol awareness presentations.

At the age of 25, I developed drug-related heart and kidney failure and was rushed to the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, where I almost died several times. At one point, I was given less than 2 hours to live! In fact, I had to be resuscitated at one time as I had massive Grand Mal seizures, fell out of bed unconscious and my heart stopped.

On the 1st of December 2021, further consequences of my past drug-related health issues arose and I was rushed to hospital for emergency open-heart surgery. I survived.

The regret that I carry for the naïve choices I made in my youth, at times overwhelms me, but the fact, that my message to others may save lives, helps me to live with that heartache. Never forget, no matter what you may think about yourself, or what anyone else may have said about you, you are valuable and your life is important.

**Choose Life!**

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