



WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
COALITION STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES
THROUGH WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

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Women Matter in Local Democracies Project

Report on Part 1: Centenary of Suffrage Celebratory Events

1. Overview of Project

Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC) and eight Local Governments partnered with Victorian Government Centenary of Suffrage grants program in the Women matter in local democracies Project Part 1. The aim was to support and resource local events celebrating centenary of the Victorian women's vote and its value in 2008 and into the future .

The Victorian Local Government Women's Charter was the focus for building the capacity of women to participate in non-party political processes of local democracies. Engagement of women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in these events was a high priority.

The local governments planned and undertook these events for women in their communities. They were supported by the WPILGC consultant (Jenny Ashby from Jenny Ashby and Associates). The 8 local governments were: Latrobe; Manningham; Monash; Moreland; Shepparton; Whitehorse; Whittlesea and Yarra.

This project was undertaken from April to October 2008.

The project achieved the following:

- **Enhanced community engagement and information about the value of the women's vote**

The project promoted community awareness and discussion of the history of women's suffrage, the importance of the women's vote and the principles of equity, diversity and active citizenship. The project engaged the active participation of local governments and community organisations. The events supported local governments to pursue further initiatives to invite the civic and political participation of women of CALD backgrounds, such as a workshops program, tours of the civic facilities, meetings between women Councillors and women of CALD, seed for formation of a local network about participation, support for women of CALD in their candidacy for Local Government elections.

- **Built a stronger sense of women's non-party political capacity in the community**

The project raised awareness of the Women's Charter locally and identified current issues for women's participation. And see above.

The story of Immaculate Bihamba who stood as a candidate in the Greater Shepparton Local Government elections is symbolic of this.

2. Project learnings and outcomes

It is estimated that 600 people attended the 8 events. Each event was very different.

Where council staff used a community development approach in their events it led to stronger links being forged between CALD women and those local governments.

The outcomes from Part 1 were:

Local Government Professionals (LGPro), Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition (VIRWC), Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), Victorian Women's Trust (VWT), Women's Electoral Lobby Vic (WELVic), Women's Planning Network (WPN), YWCAVic

- the engagement of women including CALD women in celebrating women's participation
- women, through the events, learning more about the suffrage movement in Victoria
- increased knowledge about the Local Government Women's Charter
- increased awareness about women's role in democracies.

4. Events

List of Celebratory Events organised by participating local governments in partnership with WPILG Coalitions Centenary Project

Date and time and venue	Local Govt	Event
Thursday 26 June 2008 5.30pm – 7.30pm Richmond Town Hall 333 Bridge Road, Richmond	Yarra City Council	Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) launch of Centenary of Suffrage Project. The ALGWA Project produced a booklet that marks the history of past women councillors throughout Victoria The Women matter project supported an informal meeting with women from CALD communities with a number of speakers to talk about women's leadership issues in countries of origin and in Australia.
Saturday 28 June 2008 1pm - 5pm Part one: The 1891 Monster Petition (All) 1.00pm to 2.30pm Queens Gardens Welsford St, Shepparton Afternoon tea 2.30pm to 3.15pm Part two: The Global Experience of the Women's Vote (Women only session) 3.15pm to 5.00pm Eastbank Function Room Welsford St, Shepparton	City of Greater Shepparton	A celebration of the historical 1891 Monster Petition with the Shepparton Brass Band, narratives by Turaton on significant women and a display by the Shepparton Family History Group. The names of people who signed the Petition in the Shepparton area were read out by local women leaders. A women's only event on the global experience of the women's vote involving recently settled women, indigenous women and young women. A community development approach was applied to develop the content with the participating women for this part of the event.
Tuesday 1 July 2008 7.30pm – 9.00pm Brunswick Town Hall 233 Sydney Road, Brunswick	Moreland City Council	A place to call home – a community celebration of Moreland's diverse communities through performance and stories Information Stall to promote Centenary of Suffrage and encouraging migrant and refugee women to vote – used with neighbourhood houses following event.

<p>Wednesday 6 August 2008 at 6.30pm</p> <p>Clayton Theatrette, Clayton Community Centre, Cooke Street Clayton</p> <p>Banner on Saturday 31 May 2008</p>	<p>Monash City Council</p>	<p>The Sir John Monash Community Lecture celebrated the centenary of Women's Suffrage in Vic. Panel of local women – Dr Marian Quartly, The Hon Maxine Morand, Rahat Kapur discuss why women matter in democracy, why the vote counts and how the political process affects women in their day to day life. Hosted by Cr Joy Banerji, the first woman of Indian descent to become mayor.</p> <p>At the Mulgrave Family Fun Day residents had the opportunity to place their signatures on the 2008 Monster Petition</p>
<p>Saturday 9 August 2008 2.00pm to 4.00pm Fountain View Room, Council Offices Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Blvd, South Morang</p> <p>Facilitators Briefing Session to be held on Friday 25 July</p>	<p>City of Whittlesea</p>	<p>Whittlesea celebrated the centenary of women's suffrage by inviting women in the community to sit around the table to talk about:</p> <p><i>Why women matter? Why does the vote count? How does the political process affect women in their day to day lives? What are your experiences of different political processes and changes in your home country? What role do women have in the political process here and now in our community?</i></p> <p>Local women in leadership and political roles within the Whittlesea community were resourced to facilitate discussions and share their own personal experiences. A Facilitators Briefing Session to be held on Friday 25 July</p>
<p>Wednesday, 27 August 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm at Latrobe Regional Gallery, Commercial Road, Morwell</p>	<p>Latrobe City Council</p>	<p>A Living Library Evening focusing on women and democracy. This event involved key local speakers talking about their experiences in democracy/activism. Each speaker formed a chapter of a "living book" and provided an overview of their involvement and trials and tribulations.</p>
<p>Whitehorse Women's Forum Saturday 20 September Lunch, Box Hill Town Hall Complex</p> <p>Exhibition of Signature Stories 1 to 29 September 2008 Box Hill Town Hall</p>	<p>Whitehorse City Council</p>	<p>Exhibition of Signature Stories as part of the Heritage Program 1 to 29 September with display from the Public Records Office Victoria and local history material. On Saturday 20 September the Whitehorse Women's Forum focused on suffrage as its theme. Participation of women from CALD backgrounds was encouraged by specific invitation. The Women's Forum Luncheon attracted more than 100 people.</p>

Friday 17th October 1.30pm-3.00pm	Manningham City Council	A celebratory event featuring Centenary Fashion Show (historical and multicultural fashion) with commentary on women from each decade (voting etc) Event to promote the value of voting and enrolling to vote, particularly for migrant women receiving citizenship. Program included a short speech about enrolling to vote with forms available on the day. Event also acknowledged Aboriginal women could not vote until 1968. Strong community development approach in planning / design of event
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5. Contacts (more contacts can be provided if requested)

Event Date	Local Govt	Contact
Saturday 28 June 2008	City of Greater Shepparton	Councillor Jenny Houlihan M: 0418 598 033 E: jenny.houlihan@shepparton.vic.gov.au Michelle Patterson (Council officer) E: michelle.patterson@shepparton.vic.gov.au T: 58329498 Immaculate Bihamba (candidate) E: immaculate_43@hotmail.com
Saturday 9 August 2008	City of Whittlesea	Maria Callipari (Council officer) who can pass on details of participating women E: maria.callipari@whittlesea.vic.gov.au T: 217 2333
Wednesday, 27 August	Latrobe City Council	Councillor Lisa Price E: lisapr@latrobe.vic.gov.au M: 0428 526 919
Friday 17th October	Manningham City Council	Contact Amy Johnstone (Council officer, Thursdays) E: Amy.Johnstone@manningham.vic.gov.au Amy Johnstone T: 9840 9108 or Jan Loughnan (Council officer) E: jan.loughnan@manningham.vic.gov.au

END



Greater Shepparton celebration of Victorian womens suffrage: stories of the vote from the world. (above and below)



Whittlesea Celebration: 100 years, 100 women (above and below)



Latrobe Women in Democracy Living Library (below)



Insert pic from Manningham Women suffrage fashion parade

Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra, Moreland, Manningham – images not available at 12 Feb. 2009..