



women's
CLIMATE CONGRESS

Annual Report 2022–23

Women leading united action on climate change

*As the forward-facing eyes of the owl stare back at us and question our decisions,
we seek wisdom to address climate change, and protect all Earth life*



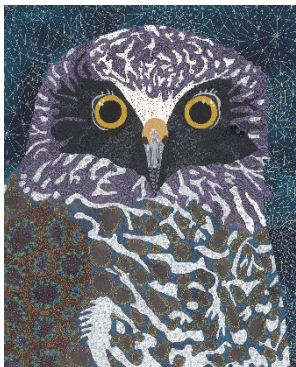
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Please note that we have used hyperlinks in this document for ease of reading as we are assuming most people will read this report online. All Womens Climate Congress (WCC) information indicated by the links is available on our website at the above address.

Cover artwork: detail from *Powerful Owl* by Sally Blake, 2022. Ink, pen and pinpricks on paper, 52 x 41 cm, from the Canberra exhibition 'Wise Parliament', September 2023.

Sally Blake is a Canberra artist and convenor of the 'Reintegrating the arts' circle of the Women's Climate Congress.

Note from the artist:



'Wise Parliament' is an exhibition of all the world's owl species in drawings. It continues my exploration of people's relationship with nature, and the impacts of human-induced environmental damage.

Owls have captured the human imagination. Their silent flight, nocturnal habits and night vision play in our psyches, creating myths and symbols of wisdom, death and renewal, intuitive vision and transformation amongst others.

In the gallery we are held in the owls' gaze, their forward-facing eyes staring back at the viewer. Nature staring back at humankind – are they questioning our decisions that put the natural world at risk?

Owls inhabit every continent except Antarctica, meaning their long-term survival is critical to every country on earth. Some are threatened, vulnerable and extinct particularly due to habitat loss and secondary poisoning from rodent control. In Australia all owl species are listed as 'not in danger', but at the state level many are threatened.

Owls' collective noun, parliament, symbolically decentres human governance that continues to put the natural world at risk. Symbolically, wisdom is meaningful as this is what humans need to address climate change and other ecological crises.

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WCC vision, values and commitment

Our vision

We share a vision to create climate security by 2030. In this future, women's leadership has helped turn the tide of political culture from polarised discord to collaboration and cooperation. Nurture of life and care for the Earth are at the centre of every government decision.

Our values and commitment

We, a web of women, seek and support wisdom for the common good.

We acknowledge the ancestral wisdom of First Peoples and accept our responsibility as custodians of a precious world that must be nurtured as it nurtures us.

Sharing a great desire to look after the young, we raise our voices, confident in the potential of women to promote positive change for all future life.

As beneficiaries of the industrial age, we acknowledge our responsibility for the present climate and environmental situations with grateful hearts and with lament.

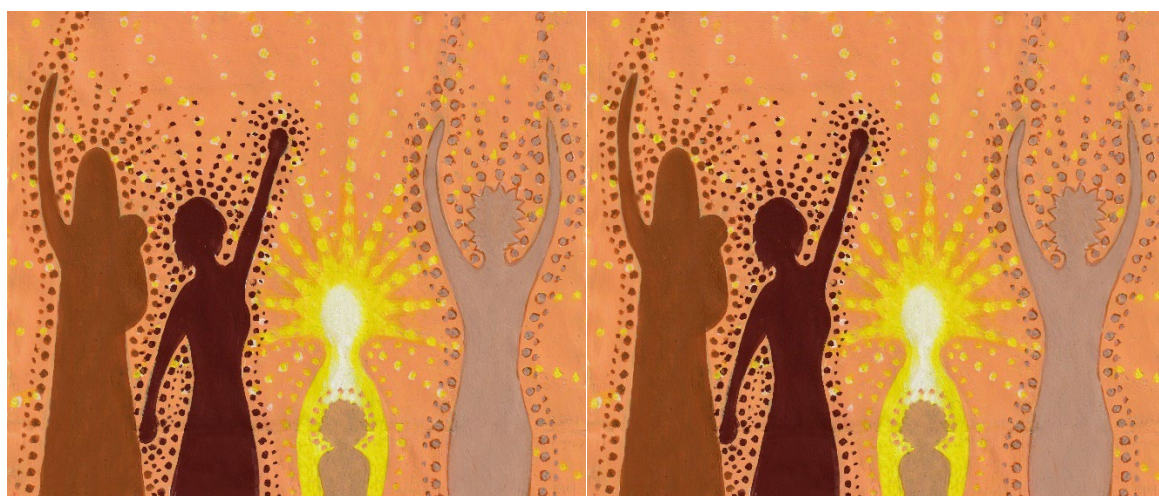
Weary of conflict and polarisation, we resist judgment and blame, embrace uncertainty and encourage mediation and collaboration for a safe passage from climate chaos to climate security.

Listening deeply to the science, we recognise the interconnectedness of all Earth's systems and human influences within those systems. With this in mind, we bring our collective imagination to uncover innovative, equitable and sustainable ways forward. Artistic vision and creativity are at the heart of imagining the necessary transformations.

Connecting head, heart and hands, we will collaborate across all genders to restore nurture of life and care for the Earth to the centre of every decision made at every level, local to national and international.

Qualities of the heart (including compassion, love, empathy, forgiveness) are the basis for true strength and must be reactivated for our survival.

Following in the footsteps of our foremothers, we seize this moment, charged with a realisation of our responsibility to respond to Earth's call and our shared aspirations.



Women Rising by Honey Nelson

About us

Founded in 2020 in the wake of the Black Summer bushfires, the Women's Climate Congress (WCC) is a network of women across all political views – women who cannot stay silent while the unfolding climate emergency threatens the future of our children and all life on Earth. With almost 700 signed-up members covering almost all federal electorates in Australia, we are linked to thousands more women, in all our diversity, through social media and our alliances with other organisations nationally and internationally.

We work with open minds to inspire mediation and collaboration across political parties and across nations to co-create a pathway to a just and sustainable future.

We accept the scientific consensus expressed in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports and incorporated into the Paris Accord. As beneficiaries of the industrial age, we suspend judgment on the leadership decisions that have brought us here. Our mission is future-focused, and we aim to be a catalyst for restoring climate security and a renewed commitment to care for life on Earth.

We welcome women in all their diversity to our organisation and aim to provide a safe space for women to explore together their own priorities and agendas in relation to the big issues of our times, including climate change, so that their voice can be heard. We are proud to be part of an ever-increasing international movement bringing women's voices and agendas to global action on climate change.

We believe that cultural change is needed to rebalance our systems towards compassion, inclusion and collaboration so that nurture of life and custodianship of the Earth are prioritised in all policy decisions. To this end we have developed a [WCC Charter for Change](#) based on conversations with many 100s of women. The Charter has 11 themed action areas: 3 immediate, urgent actions to secure the climate; and 8 actions for to promote long-term human and planetary wellbeing.

We believe it is time for women to lead and we give voice to women through local groups, workshops, national congress and international collaborations. In these gatherings, and in our advocacy with elected representatives and influential stakeholders, we aim to express and model the principles and practices needed for the cultural shifts we seek. We promote these principles across all genders and parties to build trust that collaborative processes can serve the common good.

We invite you to explore our Annual Report and to follow our progress via our website womensclimatecongress.com.



Water Goddess by Sally Blake

From WCC founder, Janet Salisbury

We, a web of women, seek and support wisdom for the common good.
[WCC Values and commitment statement]



This time last year, we were celebrating the successful conclusion of our National Congress of Women initiative, which culminated in the 2-day face-to-face event in Canberra in September 2022, and the finalisation of our WCC Charter for Change. We presented the Charter to women parliamentarians at an event in the Member's Hall of Parliament House at the end of November 2022, accompanied members of Canberra's A Chorus of Women. Ten women parliamentarians from across the parties and independents joined us and received copies of the Charter. It felt empowering to take such feminine energy into those halls of power. Read more about this event '*Launching the WCC Charter for Change*'.

After all the work associated with these activities, 2023 has been a year of consolidation. Program activities have revolved around dissemination of the Charter — through our advocacy work, outreach to local communities (the 'Roadshow'), online public events and member circles. These activities have made some significant impacts, including:

- the formation of our first local WCC Chapter in Wagga Wagga
- a close collaboration with the Compassion Council, Australia and Compassionate Ballarat to take forward Action 6 in our Charter for Change ('Elevate compassion and kindness in government')
- renewed discussion with ACT MLAs in relation to the formation of a multiparty women's caucus
- discussions with federal politicians in relation WCC hosting multiparty gatherings among women and with the Parliamentary Friends for Climate Change group
- a closer relationship with the COP28 negotiating team in the Department of Climate Change, Energy and Water, including attendance at several roundtable discussions, a personal meeting with chief negotiator Sally Box, and successful support for a young WCC member to join the government delegation to COP28 and take copies of the Charter for display in the Australian Pavilion
- ongoing collaboration with women internationally, particularly with She Changes Climate in relation to women's leadership and representation at COP.

Meanwhile, our internal organisational activities have focused on ways of engaging new voices into our governance and operational circles without losing sight of our ethos of finding new ways of working together that reflect our vision and commitment statements and the Charter. Across these external and internal facing spheres of activity, an underlying theme for 2023 seems to have been 'Seeking wisdom'. This theme is reflected in our title and cover image for this Annual Report with artist Sally Blake's evocative *Powerful Owl* artwork from her exhibition 'Wise Parliament'.

Overall, if I am honest, it has not been an easy year. Our National Congress of Women events and development of the Charter were well-defined and focused activities that attracted many women to join WCC and our Steering Circle (aka Board), which expanded from 5 to 10 members. It was challenging to shift from a Steering Circle of core founding members, deeply involved in operational matters, to one with an advisory and governance role while keeping momentum in the face of the increasing climate emergency, and we lost some of the new Steering Circle members by mid-year. We are learning how to draw on the expertise of our Steering Group without over-burdening this already busy lives.

Another challenge was our desire to thoughtfully respond to the Voice Referendum in the context of our main focus on climate change, our promotion of nonpartisan respectful public discourse, and our Charter Action 4 – ‘Listen and learn from First Nations knowledge’. Like many, we found the divisive nature of the political discourse distressing. We need to do so much better than this – not only to move towards a closer understanding and reconciliation with First Nations people, but also to secure the climate and bring peace and justice across the world.

And finally, it is with deep personal sadness that I share the news that my close friend, mentor and WCC founding member, Glenda Cloughley — who was a central inspiration for me to start the WCC and who brought us ‘The Singing Hill’ (see above) and other songs and artistic inputs for our National Congress of Women events, died on the 21 September 2023 after a short but intense encounter with cancer. See further details on the [Chorus of Women website](#).

Looking forward

In 2024, we will consolidate our considerable efforts and achievements to refocus our strategy towards defined goals in line with our vision to secure the climate by 2030. Our 2023 work through the ‘Roadshow’, advocacy work with Australian Governments and collaborations within Australia and with the international women’s movement, has brought several major new opportunities. To make good progress on these fronts, we will work to increase our capacity for developing our strategy and projects, communications and, importantly, fundraising. We would love to hear from members who can support us in these tasks.

Women working together

We [women, in all our diversity] claim equal and meaningful participation and action towards a climate-secure, peaceful and compassionate future

[WCC Charter for Change, Action 1]

Our structure and our practices are designed to reflect our understanding of how women like to work together. Our organisation chart is a spiral with circles of women taking on particular tasks and activities related to the organisation and to specific projects. Their work feeds in to and out of a central coordinating Hub, with a Steering Circle acting as a Board for governance of the organisation. Our people are all volunteers – although we hope one day to have the funds to employ staff – and we are grateful to everyone who has supported us in these endeavours.

Organisational circles

Steering Circle

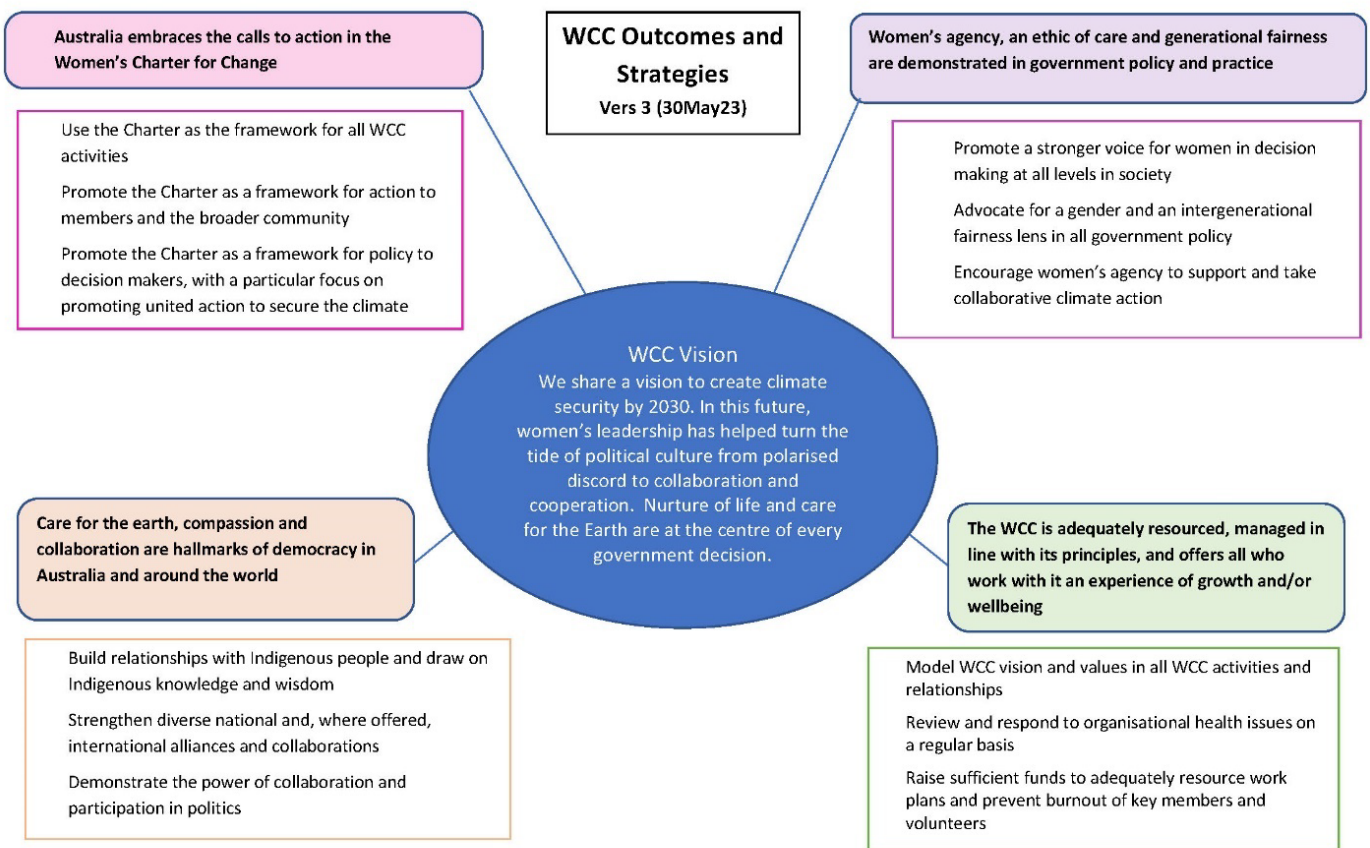
Members: Janet Salisbury, Kirsten Anker, Alison Rose, Lyn Stephens, Cheryl Durrant, Mary Picard, Kate Auty (Nov 2022-May2023), Calista Castles (Nov 2022-June 2023), Natasha Chassagne (Nov 2022-June 2023), Sarah Houseman (June 2023-ongoing)

Secretariat support: Shelley Anderson

In November 2022, we were sad to farewell Barbara Baikie OAM from the Steering Circle. As a founding member of the WCC, Barbara's contributions have been pivotal to the development of the WCC. Her input has included attending almost every Hub meeting since February 2020, providing organisational advice and practical assistance to get incorporation as a not-for-profit company and joining the first Steering Circle in mid-2020. From the outset, she proposed that we should hold a national congress and, with great energy and commitment, she brought together the hosting group to develop this vision. Despite some family setbacks and illness, she put immense energy into bringing the National Congress of Women events into being. She also generously hosted WCC planning days at her home and gardens outside Canberra, as well as a fundraising event in July 2023. We are relieved that Barbara continues to contribute her energies to the WCC through the Hub.

In November 2022, the Steering Circle welcomed 5 new Co-Directors (Cheryl Durrant, Mary Picard, Kate Auty, Calista Castles and Natasha Chassagne), as well as Sarah Houseman as an organisational adviser. After 3 of the new members had withdrawn mid-year (see below), Sarah Houseman was appointed as a Co-Director to fill the vacancy.

The group and has met monthly by Zoom throughout 2023. Building on the outcomes from the National Congress of Women events of 2021-22 and the WCC Charter for Change, we worked on a strategy for the organisation going forward, which is summarised below.



WCC Strategy Mindmap 2023

The Steering Circle spent considerable time working on a statement to respond to the Voice Referendum that captured our wholehearted support for First Nations self-determination, represented our diverse membership and promoted a respectful public discourse. See further details in 'Reaching out to First Nations wisdom', below.

We continued our practice of shared leadership by rotating the hosting of meetings and using circle practice (even on Zoom!) – and we refined protocols to facilitate this. Where possible, monthly meeting hosts also attended the Hub meeting to increase communication and participation across the two groups.

We were sad to lose three members mid-year: Professor Kate Auty (who was fully engaged working for the Yes campaign in the Referendum), and Calista Castles and Natasha Chassagne, who decided to focus on their work and other commitments. We thank them for their engagement and the valuable insights that they brought, which will guide our practice in 2024.

The Hub

Members: Janet Salisbury, Kirsten Anker, Barbara Baikie, Lyn Stephens, Barbara O-Dwyer, Honey Nelson, Margaret de Kam, with support from Supriya Perera, Padmapriya Muralidharan
Secretariat support: Nettie Hulme, Anna Antonatos, Joanne Ede

Attended by the working circle convenors and others who are actively engaged in WCC activities, the Hub is our melting pot of activities and where our strategy is brought to life. We have met monthly throughout the year and, like the Steering Circle, we practice the shared leadership through a rotating host and circle practice.

We welcome new members at any time – to the Hub, or to any of the working circles listed below. Contact womensclimatecongress@gmail.com if you would like further information or to join a circle.

Working circles

Membership and communications

Members: Lyn Stephens (Convenor), Mardi Chapman, DR Sarah Houseman, Dr Jeannie Higgins.
This circle takes responsibility for:

- **e-Member communications** (including ‘Women Rising’ e-newsletter) Lyn Stephens, Janet Salisbury, Nettie Hulme and Lynne Audsley
- **Social media** Nettie Hulme, Janet Salisbury
- **Connect.WCC intranet management** Lyn Stephens
- **Book Club** Mardi Chapman
- **Climate Earth Art Circle** waiting for new carers!
- **Coffee and Chat in the ACT** Jenny Robinson

Associated activities:

- **Annual Report** Lyn Stephens, Janet Salisbury, Kirsten Anker
- **Women’s Climate Conversation series** Janet Salisbury, Alison Rose, Cheryl Durrant, Lyn Stephens and Lynne Reeder, supported for publicity and administration by Nettie Hulme
- **Website re-design and management** Janet Salisbury, Sally Blake and Amelia Meaney
- **Internship program** Lyn Stephens (convenor), Polina Avilova (intern)

See ‘*Connecting and learning with our members*’ and ‘*Communicating our vision and ideas*’

Fundraising

Members: Kirsten Anker (convenor) with help from Sarah Stitt, Kesaya Baba, Calista Castles
See ‘*Reporting on our finances*’

Advocacy and relationships

Members: Kirsten Anker (convenor), Janet Salisbury, Barb O’Dwyer, with welcome encouragement from Toni Hassan and Philippa Rowland.

Others have joined for specific initiatives:

- Promotion of a Women’s Caucus: Alex Marsden, Laurann Yen
- Letter writing campaign: Anna Antonatos, Anne Matheson, Mardi Chapman, Wendy Watson

See ‘*Advocating for women and united action on climate change*’ and ‘*Building an international women’s movement – COP28 and beyond*’

Reintegrating the arts

Members: Sally Blake. We continued a close relationship with A Chorus of Women but sadly illness and other activities have prevented much collaboration in 2023. We would love new members to take up this important aspect of the WCC vision.

See ‘*Finding a creative and artistic voice*’

Reaching out to Indigenous wisdom

Members: Honey Nelson, Janet Salisbury, Alison Rose

See ‘*Supporting First Nations knowledge and self-determination*’

WCC Charter development (until Dec 2022)

Members: Janet Salisbury (Convenor), Honey Nelson, Kirsten Anker, Barbara O’Dwyer, Lyn Stephens, Johanna McBride

See *‘Launching the WCC Charter for Change’*

Charter Roadshow (from Jan 2023)

Members: Barbara Baikie, Janet Salisbury, Lyn Stephens, Kirsten Anker, Cheryl Durrant, Nettie Hulme

See *‘Taking the WCC Charter on the road’*.

Policy and research

Members: Calista Castles (Jan-June2023), Janet Salisbury

We are still working on a direction for this circle. Thanks for support from Anna Antonatos and Wendy Watson

Organisational alliances and networking

Members: Janet Salisbury, Kirsten Anker, Nettie Hulme, Wendy Watson

See *‘Connecting with other organisations’* and *‘Building an international women’s movement for urgent climate action – COP28 and beyond’*

Launching the WCC Charter for Change

'The chanting is beginning, the humming has begun'

These words are from 'The Singing Hill', a poem by Dorothy Cameron (1917-2002), brought to the Women's Climate Congress by Glenda Cloughley in her video presentation of the same name first shown at our online National Congress event in November 2021 and again in person to open out face-to-face Congress last September 2022.

On 29 November 2022, in the last sitting week of the Australian Parliament, we presented the WCC Charter for Change to women MPs and senators at the Pool of Reflection in the Members' Hall of Parliament House.

After an acknowledgement of country and welcome by Janet Salisbury, the event started with a recital by Glenda Cloughley of the prophetic 'Singing Hill' poem written by Australian artist and anthropologist Dorothy Cameron in 1991 when a group of Canberra women regularly met at the Pool of Reflection in support of then WA senator Jo Vallentine who was one of only a few women in the parliament at that time. The poem refers to the 'men in dark suits shouting their abuse' and to the 'chanting and humming' of the 'women returning'.

Glenda's recital was accompanied with chanting and humming by members of Canberra's A Chorus of Women.

See the full story of Dorothy Cameron and Jo Vallentine and the inspiring words of the poem here:

[The Singing Hill](#)

This was followed by presentation of the Charter to the women MPs and senator from across parties and independents. We were delighted to be joined by Alicia Payne (Member for Canberra), Senator Janet Rice (Vic), Helen Haines (Member for Indi), Zali Steggall (Member for Warringah), Allegra Spender (Member for Wentworth), Bridget Archer (Member for Bass), Louise Miller-Frost (Member for Boothby) and Senator Dorinda Cox (WA).

Read about this event:

[How women collaborated to bring a 'Charter for Change' to Parliament House](#), by Janet Salisbury, Women's Agenda, 6 December 2022



Left image: WCC members with A Chorus of Women and women parliamentarians at the fountain in the Member's Hall, Parliament House, Nov 2023.

Right image: Left to Right – Senator Janet Rice (AG), Alicia Payne MP (ALP), Helen Haines MP (Ind), Bridget Archer MP (Lib), Zali Steggall OAM MP (Ind), Janet Salisbury (WCC), Louise Millar Frost (ALP).

The Charter calls for *immediate* action for climate security in three areas:

- Embrace gender-balanced, inclusive governance
- Take responsibility
- Create a unified national plan

It also outlines actions for *long-term* human and planetary wellbeing:

- Listen and learn from First Nations knowledge
- Uphold intergenerational equity and rights of all Earth life
- Elevate compassion and kindness in government
- Support artistic imagination and creative thinking at the centre of society
- Create paths and policies for respect, nonviolence and peace
- Adopt life-sustaining economic models and values
- Encourage citizen participation in governance
- Support education fit for purpose into the future

The target audience is government, business, nongovernment organisations, communities and individuals. By working together across diverse interests and following scientific advice we are better prepared for the existential challenges we face.



A call to climate action

Charter for change

Opening statements

We women of the Women's Climate Congress and others despair that Earth is hurtling towards catastrophic climate change that humanity is failing to mitigate.

We grieve the unfolding and potentially irreversible impacts on all current and future life unless immediate and effective action is taken.

This Charter is a call to action from the hearts of women, *in all our diversity*, to urgently secure the climate and build ongoing human and planetary wellbeing. To this end, we urge collaboration and cooperation in governance to build inclusive, fair and united policy approaches.

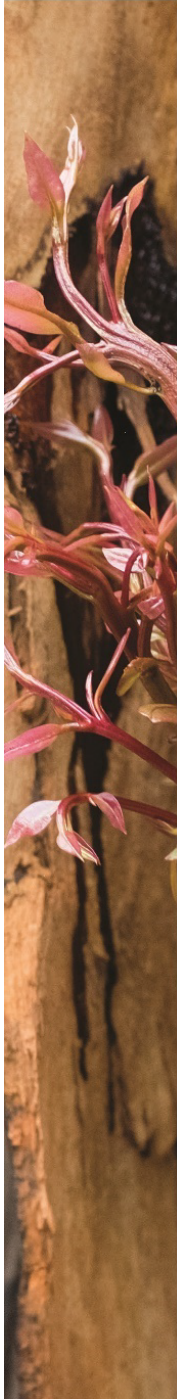


This flyer shows the key themes. See the full text of the Charter with 'Calls for action' here:

womensclimatecongress.com/charter

womensclimatecongress@gmail.com

WCC Charter | Version 1 | November 2022



Immediate actions to secure the climate

ACTION 1 Embrace gender-balanced, inclusive governance

We claim full, equal and meaningful participation in decision making and action towards a climate-secure, peaceful and compassionate future. In this future, all human lives are valued and the diversity of life experiences (such as age, culture, sexuality, ability) are seen as vital for good decision making.

ACTION 2 Take responsibility

We take collective responsibility for our role in the current climate emergency through the privileges of modern lifestyles. We acknowledge that these benefits have not been shared by all.

ACTION 3 Create a unified national plan

We call on political parties, businesses, industries and community leaders to work together to comply with scientific advice to secure the climate, and to transition our economy and lifestyles sustainably and justly.

Actions for long-term human and planetary wellbeing

ACTION 4 Listen to and learn from First Nations knowledge

We affirm that First Nations peoples hold a deep connection to the Earth. Their First Law teaches how to live in reciprocal relationship with the land, and describes our human duty of care for the Earth, which gives life, love and provision to all life.

ACTION 5 Uphold intergenerational equity and the rights of all Earth life

We commit to the wellbeing of future human generations and all of Earth's biodiversity. We call for human and planetary wellbeing to be considered in the development and implementation of all policies.

ACTION 6 Elevate compassion and kindness in government

We propose that qualities of the heart (such as compassion, love, kindness, empathy, forgiveness) are the basis of true strength and decision making. These qualities can be respected, elevated and applied in government.

ACTION 7 Support artistic imagination and creative thinking at the centre of society

We recognise that the symbolic thinking and prophetic imagination of artists and storytellers conveys knowledge about the right ways to live with Earth and each other. In many ancient and Indigenous cultures this remains central.

ACTION 8 Create paths and policies for respect, nonviolence and peace

We recognise that peace is made by building relationships of trust and understanding among peoples and cultures, and with the Earth and all living things.

ACTION 9 Adopt life-sustaining economic models and values

We value the life-sustaining gifts of nature, and the gifts of homemaking, caring and nurture of life, as having complementary economic value with industrial and commercial services.

ACTION 10 Encourage citizen participation in governance

We recognise that, at the heart of democracy, citizens' concerns are the basis for change. Participatory processes allow citizens to take part in decision making and create change.

ACTION 11 Support education fit for purpose into the future

We support the valuable work of educators to ensure all children and citizens in Australia are educated in the full story of colonial settlement and the subsequent impacts upon First Nations peoples, biodiversity and environments.

Taking the Charter on the road

Our proposed actions are offered as a starting point for waves of action that can be supported by women everywhere through individual, collective, organisational and government-level activities.

[from 'The Charter as a call to action', WCC Charter for Change]

Following the warm reception for the **Charter for Change**, after it emerged from the National Congress of Women and was presented to federal women parliamentarians in November 2022, we decided that the next step would be to take the Charter on the road, into communities, to hear from women about the issues they saw affecting their area and the actions they would like to take within the framework of the Charter to address them. This seemed like an excellent opportunity to bring the Charter to the attention of as many people as possible, to provide a catalyst for change and to build a web of actions and connections throughout the country.

The form of the Roadshow, first developed by Cheryl Durrant and Nettie Hulme in events in Penguin and Wyndham in Tasmania, calls on women present firstly to respond to the images of the Charter and then to its text, to stimulate conversations about the actions of the Charter and how they resonate in the context of the community. To date, we have held 7 Roadshow events in Tasmania, Victoria, NSW and the ACT, with some very pleasing results.

At each event, women have spoken of the relief they experience in being able to meet in a circle and speak about what's in their hearts about climate change. Many ideas flow, for actions at personal and community and national level. Since the event in Canberra, the meeting is followed up by a letter to local politicians, informing them of the results of the Roadshow and requesting a meeting.

We have been able to arrange for a key decision-maker to be present at most events, and the Roadshow in Ballarat was co-hosted with Compassionate Ballarat. It is important that there is a sense that the communities have ownership of the events, to achieve the results we are hoping for. A WCC group has been established in Wagga, to continue the work from the Roadshow there, and the connection between Compassionate Ballarat and WCC has strengthened, with Compassionate Ballarat relating their work in the region around the Charter for Compassion with WCC's Charter for Change. Following the Canberra event, we have had fruitful discussions with local and Federal representatives especially around a Parliamentary Women's Climate Caucus, work that is being continued by the Advocacy Circle.

In the New Year, we plan to take Roadshows to Western Sydney and Moruya and perhaps into Queensland. Currently, the expenses of travel and accommodation are mainly borne by members.

If you would be interested in having the Roadshow come to you, we'd love to work with you to bring an event to your area: womensclimatecongress@gmail.com

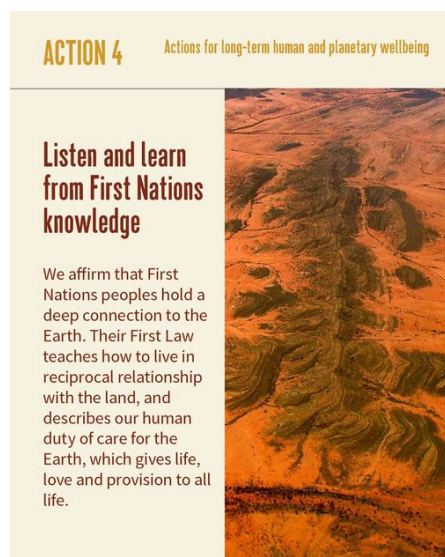


Clockwise from top left: Canberra, Newcastle, Wyndham, Ballarat, Moonee Ponds

Learning from First Nations knowledge

We acknowledge the ancestral wisdom of First Peoples and accept our responsibility as custodians of a precious world that must be nurtured as it nurtures us.

[WCC Values and commitment statement]



The WCC Charter for Change, Action 4 calls us to ‘Listen and learn from First Nations knowledge.’

In 2023, we have continued to invite First Nations women as guest conversationalists at our online events and to build connections and relationships.

In March 2023, we were excited to welcome 2 First Nations women as guests on our Women’s Climate Conversation event, *The case of the Waratah Coal Mine, climate change and human rights*, February 2023: Lala Gutchen, an Erub Meuram woman from Erub Island, Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait), and Murrawah Johnson, a Wiridi woman from North and Central Queensland. With them were Alison Rose, lead solicitor on the court case from the EDO, and Patricia Julien from The Bimblebox Alliance, which was seeking to protect the Bimblebox Nature Reserve where the proposed mine was to be located.

Lala was a witness in the case and spoke very movingly about how she gave evidence to the court on Country. She told us that she was ‘sworn in’ on the driveway of her house and travelled by boat with the judge and other court officials to a sandbar where the court members took part in a traditional ceremony to honour that place. She was able to describe how rising sea is eating away at her villages and sacred sites, and show them how it is affecting their traditional fishing grounds and livelihoods.

Murrawah has worked on Aboriginal rights litigation in the Federal Court and Supreme Court of Queensland and was the program lead for Youth Verdict (a litigant in the case against the coal mine). She also spoke very movingly of her cultural connection to Country and responsibility to future generations, and the intergenerational impacts of climate change the young people.

We learnt in this conversation that the court’s decision to recommend against the mine was influenced by the contribution that the mine would make to climate change, which would in turn limit the rights to life, the cultural rights of First Nations people, the rights of children, the right to property and to privacy and home and the right to enjoy human rights equally. After this recommendation was handed down the proponents of the coal mine withdrew their application.

See links to the recording and podcasts of this event in ‘*Communicating our vision and ideas*’ below.

We have plans to bring a number of First Nations members, and other women who we have got to know, together for a yarn about how we can take forward WCC Charter Action 4, but unfortunately time spent on preparing our statement for the referendum (below) and other activities meant we have not been able to take this forward to date. We will continue this initiative in 2024.

Statement on the Voice Referendum

The Women's Climate Congress (WCC) Steering Circle considered deeply how to publicly address the referendum on altering the Constitution to "recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice."

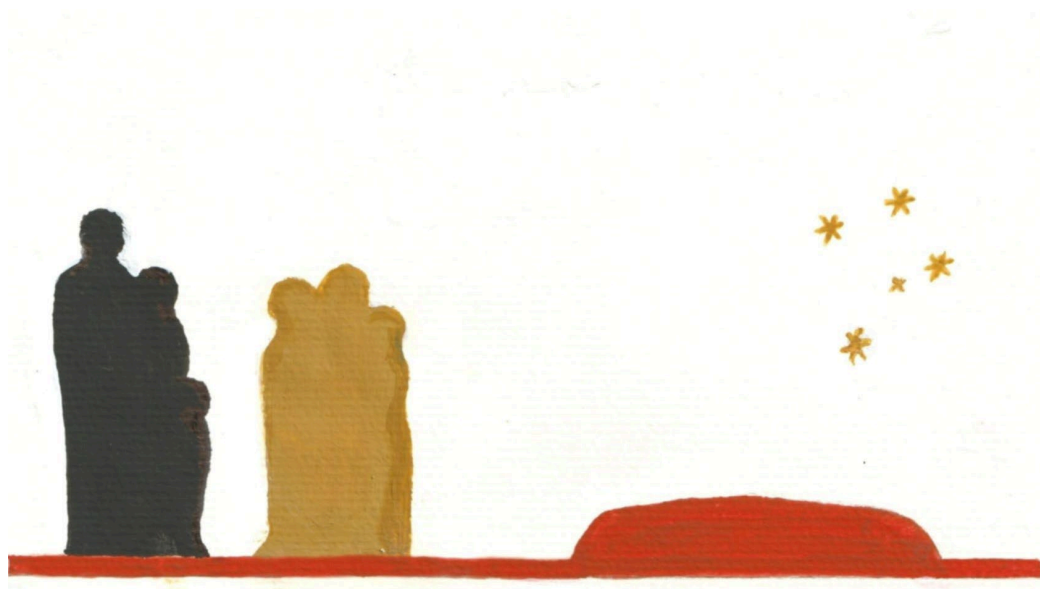
We are committed to the WCC Charter for Change, which urges us to seek unity and inclusion, and to listen to and learn from First Nations' voices. The text of the Charter also acknowledges that these actions can only flourish after a 'coming together' for truth telling., justice and fairness in relationships together, and acceptance of a First Nations 'Voice'.

Hence, there was strong support for the Voice to Parliament Referendum in the WCC Steering Circle and among our members. However, as a nonpartisan organisation with diverse members whose perspectives we respect, we did not feel we could make a statement on behalf of all our members (also acknowledging that some First Nations people thought that the referendum proposals did not go far enough to achieve self-determination and might even be a barrier).

The approach we adopted was to provide resources and encourage our members to do their own research and have respectful conversations to inform themselves of the issues involved. We also developed a statement to express WCC's commitment to walk alongside our First Nations sisters and brothers, and to continue to bring women together for two-ways national conversations towards a future of inclusion, abundance and togetherness.

We pay respects to all Elders, past and present, and acknowledge that this land always was, and always will be, First Nations' land.

Read the statement on the [WCC website/Statement on the Voice Referendum](#).



Finding our nation's heart, by Honey Nelson

Advocating for women and united action on climate change

This Charter is a call to action from the hearts of women, in all our diversity, to urgently secure the climate and build ongoing human and planetary wellbeing. To this end we urge collaboration and cooperation in governance to build inclusive, fair and united policy approaches,
[WCC Charter for Change, Opening statements]

In 2022, for many months, the work of the Advocacy Group was subsumed in that of organising the National Conference of Women, which included conversations with parliamentarians and other business and community leaders, First Nations women, artists and others. Since the successful completion of that event, there have been advances in several areas, including meeting with politicians, revival of the work around a Parliamentary Women's Caucus, and international networking especially around the 2023 United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP28).

Early in 2023, we sent 20 letters to women federal parliamentarians who had either attended the National Congress of Women or our Charter launch event in Nov 2022, or otherwise engaged with the WCC. We also wrote to the Minister for Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek, in response to her decision to deny approval of the central Queensland coal mine development to thank her for the decision and reinforce Action 5 in the Charter 'Uphold intergenerational equity and the rights of all Earth life'. See below for our discussion with Alicia Payne MP about subsequent decisions to allow fossil fuel projects. Also based on the Charter Action 5, we wrote to Senator David Pocock to support his Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Equity) Bill 2023.

[Read our letter to Tanya Plibersek](#)

Since the Canberra Roadshow event (see '*Taking the Charter on the Road*'), we have written to ACT local and federal politicians, advising them of the results of the Roadshow and requesting a meeting. We had positive responses from three ACT MLAs – one Liberal Party and two ACT Greens Party. They were interested to hear about the Roadshow and WCC's work more generally. Following those conversations, we are exploring the opportunity to begin conversations with MLAs about the possibility of creating a multi-party women's group to create better, longer-term management and mitigation of climate change impacts in the ACT, drawing on women's perspectives and approaches. Many thanks to Laurann Yenn and Alex Marsden for the intellectual rigour and skilful policy experience they're bringing to this project.

We also met with Alicia Payne MP (Canberra), who has been interested in WCC's work since we began. She expressed willingness to continue the group of women parliamentarians who attended the Charter presentation at Parliament House in November 2022, raising the possibility of discussions of a Parliamentary Women's Group also at the federal level. Alicia will also write to Tanya Plibersek about greater transparency around approvals for fossil fuel developments. These approvals concern our members greatly, and WCC would like the reasoning behind them at the centre of policy discussions, which is currently not the case.

Following the advice and example of Women for Election, WCC has approached the Parliamentary Friends for Climate Action co-chairs, Bridget Archer MP, Zali Steggall MP and Josh Burns MP to offer support in promoting their work. Josh Burns met with us and supported WCC hosting an event in early 2024. In this meeting we particularly emphasised our proposal for stakeholder dialogue towards a unified national plan for action on climate change.

As part of our ongoing interaction with the Department of Climate Change, Energy and Water (see Building an international women's movement for urgent climate action – COP28 and beyond', below), we have attended several stakeholder roundtable events to hear updates on the COP agenda and negotiations process and contribute to a workshops on the National Climate Risk Assessment and National Climate Adaption Plans. These have provided (albeit limited) opportunities to advocate for gender inclusive processes, multistakeholder dialogue and listening to First Nations knowledge.

A group of women have undertaken to promote more letter-writing on behalf of members. They are keen to bring women's stories to the attention of politicians, and to highlight the strength of feeling in the community around the need for urgent climate action. If you would be interested in joining the group, please get in contact: womensclimatecongress@gmail.com. Thanks to Anna Antonatos, Mardi Chapman and Anne Matheson for their initiative in envisioning and taking on this project.

Building an international women's movement for urgent climate action – COP28 and beyond

We [women of the WCC and others] grieve the unfolding and potentially irreversible impacts on all current and future life unless immediate and effective action is taken.

[WCC Charter for Change, Opening statements]

International collaborations

In 2023, we have continued to collaborate internationally with [She Changes Climate](#) (SCC). Janet Salisbury is a member of the collaborators network and has attended most of the monthly collaborators Zoom meetings (when the time zone allows!), and was a guest speaker at the September meeting.

WCC has been supporting a number of initiatives by SCC in relation to COP28 to be held in the UAE in early December 2023, including:

- a letter to all country government negotiators to pledge a 50:50 representation in their team for COP28, and to also support SCC's call for the COP Presidency to have two Co-Chairs – one woman and one man.
- a proposal for a multistakeholder dialogue to be co-hosted by Australia and others – and possibly held in the Australian Pavilion
- proposals to the Australia to include SCC Ambassador and Torres Strait Islander, Tishiko King, in the Australian delegation.

SCC met with members of the Australian Government COP negotiating team at the [name of event] meeting in Berlin in June.

Kirsten Anker and Janet Salisbury met via Zoom with SCC Co-Founder and Co-Director, Elise Buckle, in July to discuss how WCC could assist with these initiatives.

In another initiative, She Changes Climate hosted a global online women-led summit ' on 21 November. This was the second pre-COP online summit they have hosted (see our 2022 annual report for news of the Nov 2022 summit). This year, the summit was co-hosted with [Project Dandelion](#), a new international women-led collaboration for action on climate change, with Mary Robinson as one of the co-founders. Janet Salisbury has been actively engaging with this initiative on behalf of WCC. Watch this space.

Advocacy with Department of Climate Change, Energy and Water (DCCEW)

Building on the meeting of SCC with the Australian Government delegation in Berlin, Janet Salisbury and Kirsten Anker met with members of the DCCEW Climate Negotiations & Engagement Branch:

- Sally Box (Australia's Head of Delegation to the UNFCCC)
- Jared Huntley - Climate Inclusion & Intersectionality Section
- Elise Murphy - Australian Pavilion Manager

In a lengthy and frank exchange we share the WCC Charter for change, including the need for a gender-inclusive COP negotiation process. The Australian delegation does have equal representation of women but we stressed the need for women's voices at all levels of the negotiations (as it is more common for

women to be in less influential roles), and we requested the Australian Government to sign the SCC pledge, which included support for a woman and man as co-presidents of COP. We also described our proposal for mediated multistakeholder dialogue to resolve the 'climate wars' across different perspectives and party lines within Australian, and advocated for the SCC proposal for Australia to co-host a multistakeholder dialogue at the Australian Pavilion at COP28. Sally Box agreed to take these proposals forward.

Sally Box followed up with this message:

"Thanks again for meeting with us to share information about the Women's Climate Congress and its Charter for Change. We found the discussion very fruitful and look forward to further engagement with you and the WCC in the lead up to and at COP28."

"We remain committed to driving action on gender equality and climate action, through our participation in both the negotiations and the action agenda at COP28. We continue to actively contribute to the COP28 Presidency's actions to ensure gender equality is promoted across the conference, including in Australia's engagements in our National Pavilion."

We have subsequently heard that the 50:50 pledge and multistakeholder dialogue proposal, while informally considered, were not formally supported. The SCC multistakeholder dialogue event will be held in the Women's Pavilion. Tishiko King received a government 'overflow badge' (essentially an entry ticket) to the Blue Zone at COP28 (the zone where the national Pavilions are).

Support for a WCC youth representative to attend COP28



In mid-2023, we were pleased when youth climate activist, Angelica Mantikas joined the WCC and was keen to engage with the WCC and our Charter, in particular in relation to building WCC's engagement with young people and strengthening our connections with existing networks, including by promoting the Charter for Change.

In addition to her WCC membership, Angelica is a Board Member and project officer for Australian Youth for International Climate Engagement (AYFICE) and has led several international initiatives for youth representation in climate change negotiations. She also served as a youth representative at COP27 (November 2022, Egypt). This year, she has led the [Oceania Climate Stories](#) project to collect stories of the reality of climate change from young people across Oceania and take the project to COP28 to promote greater inclusion of young people in negotiations.

We had previously investigated the possibility of a WCC member attending COP but did not have the capacity to support the full cost of attendance, so it was a better course was to offer support to a member who was already attending.

To support Angelica to attend COP28, WCC initially made a representation to the Australian Government to support her application to receive a badge for admission as part of the Australian delegation. This application was successful. We then ran a successful fundraising campaign to raise \$3900 for her flight and on-ground costs in Dubai. We are most grateful to members for your swift response to our appeal.

Read more about Angelica and why this is important for the WCC at [Connect.WCC here](#).

Taking the WCC Charter for Change at COP28

WCC applied to have a display of the WCC Charter for Change in the Australian Pavilion at COP28 but this application was declined. However, Angelica Mantikas has sought and received permission from the Department to display copies of the Charter in the Australian Pavilion and will promote the WCC and Charter as much as possible, including in the Women's Pavilion.

Another WCC member, Sarah Ransom (General Manager, Australian Water Partnership) is attending COP28 with a team from AWP and will also promote WCC and the Charter.

COP31 Base Camp

Looking forward, COP29 will be hosted by Brazil, a host country for COP30 has not yet been announced and Australia is planning a bid to co-host COP31 with Pacific Nations. In preparation for the quite strong likelihood that this bid will be successful, Impact X (hosts of Australia's largest global summit for climate and nature) called a 1-day workshop of NGOs and community groups to make plans for how to engage with an Australian-Pacific COP. Janet Salisbury attended this event in 1 November. Representation of women/gender-inclusive processes was not one of the topics for inclusion in planning for this event and Janet advocated for its inclusion at further planning events.

See [COP31 Base Camp](#) for further details of this event



Fire and storms by Honey Nelson

Developing a creative and artistic voice

Support artistic imagination and creative thinking at the centre of society
[WCC Charter for Change, Action 7]

Action 7 of the Charter recognises the symbolic thinking and prophetic imagination of artists and storytellers, which conveys knowledge about the right ways to live with Earth and each other. In many ancient and Indigenous cultures this remains central and we can learn to reintegrate this way of knowing into our public discourse, decision making, businesses and communities.

In 2023, WCC has continued to integrate artistic expression in all our activities. This has ranged from the design of the Charter and the Roadshow workshops where participants are invited to respond to the Charter images, to events such as the launch of our Charter at Parliament House, the opening and grounding times at our Steering Circle, Hub and other events, and artistic interpretations in documents such as this Annual Report.

Early in 2023 we started conversations towards a national artistic response to the Charter, hopefully in collaboration with a regional art gallery and/or national institution. Sadly, our capacities have not run to developing this project in 2023. We would welcome input and advice from members on how to develop and fund this project. Contact womensclimatecongress@gmail.com

With many members in common, Canberra's A Chorus of Women has been our companion in many of our most important events. They sang during our National Congress in September 2022, chanted and hummed around the fountain in the Member's Hall at Parliament House when the Charter for Change was formally presented and were an important part of a fundraising event Barbara Baikie hosted at her property outside Canberra. We have also played their music at the beginning of meetings and online events, to ground ourselves and bring us into the space for contemplating care for the Earth and collaboration with each other. Particular thanks to Joahna McBride and Glenda Cloughley for their contributions and inspiration.

In March, Chorus marked their 20th anniversary with a powerful event at Parliament House. See www.chorusofwomen.org/news for further background about this event, including ABC news coverage. This [Facebook post from SA Senator Barbara Pocock](#) is a moving response about the power of the arts from one of the several politicians who attended.



A Chorus of Women and friends at Parliament House, March 2023
In loving memory of Dr Glenda Cloughley (Jan 1952–Sept 2023)

This Annual Report has once again drawn on the artwork of Sally Blake to take us into the heart of our purpose to protect Earth life. See the reverse title page for Sally's artist statement about her Wise Parliament exhibition – which displayed Sally's astonishing 249 drawings depicting the owl species of the world. We also thank our other members who have contributed artistic interpretations of our work together, particularly Honey Nelson and Nettie Hulme.

Connecting and learning with our members

Sharing a great desire to look after the young, we raise our voices, confident in the potential of women to help positive change for all future life. [WCC Values and commitment statement]

Without the input and support of members, the WCC could not exist. We would particularly like to thank everyone who has connected with us over the past year through our Women's Climate Conversations series, Book Club our Members' Circles, through volunteering and via other feedback and contact. Knowing that you are out there supporting what the WCC is aiming to do gives encouragement and energy to all of the core working circles at the WCC. We thank all of the hundreds of women from all over Australia who have attended and enriched our work through their reflections, ideas and energy.

Since our last report, we have increased our signed-up membership to around 700 women, ranging from those in their 20s to their 80s and covering more than two-thirds of all federal electorates. We have been pleased to also welcome some women from overseas. Beyond that, our contacts and social media followers bring our numbers well into the thousands.

This year our major connecting and learning activity with members has revolved around the WCC Book Club (see below).Volunteers

All of our work is done by volunteers – sadly we don't yet have operational funding – and we are grateful for this generous contribution of time, creativity, intellect and wisdom. However we would like to particularly acknowledge the work of these volunteers who have fulfilled particular functions for the WCC over a consistent period.

- Nettie Hulme for office administration and social media
- Shelley Anderson for secretariat support to the Steering Circle
- Anna Antonatos and Joanne Ede for secretariat support to the Hub
- Amelia Meaney for support in managing the website
- Polina Avilova for her work on instagram and writing opinion pieces
- Supriya Perera for help with strategic planning

WCC Zoom Book Club

This year our major connecting and learning activity with members has revolved around the WCC Book Club. This initiative encourages members to read and learn from climate-related books they may not have discovered otherwise. The meetings generate rich discussion and highlight the amazing depth of knowledge and experience within our membership. They provide an opportunity to strengthen relationships, share related resources and foster engagement between far-flung WCC members. WCC book club has hosted seven zoom meetings from March through to November 2023.

Our books have included those authored by climate scientists, activists, a writer and an inventor. Five of the seven books have been by female authors; four of the seven books have been Australian authors.

- *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* (2021) by Dr Katharine Hayhoe
- *The Climate Book* (2022) by Greta Thunberg
- *The Big Switch* (2022) by Australian inventor Saul Griffith
- *Fen, Bog & Swamp* (2022) by writer Annie Proulx
- *Together We Can: Everyday Australians Doing Amazing Things To Give Our Planet a Future*, (2023) by Claire O'Rourke

- *Humanity's Moment: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope* (2022) by Dr Joëlle Gergis
- *Living Democracy: An ecological manifesto for the end of the world as we know it* (2022) by Tim Hollo (2022)

Read reports on these conversations on [Connect.WCC](#) here.



Attendance has been variable at meetings with bookings ranging from as low as 6 or 7 at the low points in March and July. However the last three meetings have had 39, 23 and 34 bookings, suggesting a surge in interest in the second half of the year, perhaps the focus on Australian authors, and likely the influence of having authors Claire O'Rourke and Tim Hollo join us to discuss their respective books.

Many thanks to Mardi Chapman for her expert curating and convening of this increasingly popular book club in 2023.

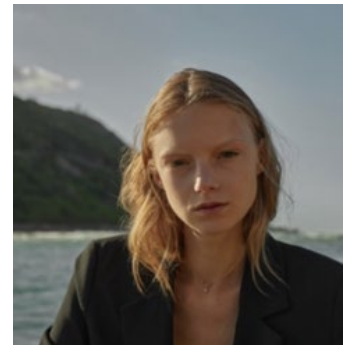
Members' circles

We held Members' Circles in June and October this year and attracted around 60 registrations from across Australia. The purpose of these gatherings is to give new members information about the WCC and how they can be involved and to offer all members the chance to connect and talk about the issues that matter to them. They are also a great way for the core group to hear what issues are resonating with members.



Internship program with Griffith University, Gold Coast

This year we greatly valued the contribution of our young internee and WCC member, Griffith University student in Environment and Sustainable Management, Polina Avilova. Polina's three-month internship comprised an Instagram campaign built around the WCC Charter for Change. (See *Communicating our Vision* and on our WCC Instagram page); a series of interviews with WCC members and three opinion pieces published on *BroadAgenda* and drawn from the most recent WCC online conversations. Here is what Polina said about her time with us:



'The internship truly exceeded all my expectations and gave me a wealth of knowledge and inspiration to continue on my professional journey. Learning about the Charter for Change, attending Climate Conversations and engaging with WCC members was an invaluable experience that helped me to understand myself, other people, Australia and the Earth deeper. It was an incredible experience to curate an Instagram campaign and connect to all the brilliant members I got to do interviews with! I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be published in *BroadAgenda* with my reflections on women's leadership. It was mind boggling to realise that my passion for writing and design can be used for connecting with other people and spreading my passion for climate action!

WCC is a truly unique organization that combines my interests that I thought were completely unrelated - climate action, women's empowerment and mindfulness. It showed me that I can belong in an organisation wholeheartedly and be seen, heard and appreciated. This internship also helped me refine my future career goals as I discovered that I'm most interested in writing, art, design and communication for the cause of climate change and gender inequalities. It showed me that it is in fact possible, and there are people and organisations who are already doing it and I can learn from them and count on their support! I am Immensely grateful for all the connections I've made and the wisdom I've learnt.'

A WCC Chapter for Wagga Wagga

A highlight of our Roadshow project this year was the decision by Wagga women to set up a local chapter of the WCC. Convened within a framework of mutually agreed guidelines and supported by the Hub, this group has now met twice. It is convened by Wagga City Councillor, Jenny McKinnon. We are very appreciative of Jenny's leadership on this and are excited to see what emerges from this WCC group of wonderful Wagga women.



Coffee and Chat in the ACT

This initiative from ACT members Jenny Robinson and Lynne Audsley has been a great opportunity to meet informally and to talk with other local women passionate about collaborative action for climate change – and quite a few other things. This year we gathered in autumn for Coffee and Chatr in the home of Jenny Robinson and at Honey Nelson’s place for a winter event.

We’d love it if members in other areas took up this idea and set up similar informal gatherings.

Contact us on womensclimatecongress@gmail.com if you would like to connect with others in your local area.



Communicating our vision and ideas

As beneficiaries of the industrial age, we acknowledge our responsibility for the present climate and environmental situation with grateful hearts and with lament.

Hosting the ongoing Women's Climate Conversations series

Our popular Women's Climate Conversation online series continued in 2023 with four conversations curated and moderated by members of our Steering Circle with a range of inspiring conversationalists and enriched by comments and questions from our audiences which comprised over 600 registrations.

Two of the events were published as podcasts on Community Radio 3 CR 'Earth Matters' program and three were reported in media articles, thus greatly increasing their reach and impact (see further information under 'Media', below).

Our 2023 events were:

Women Speaking Out: The case of the Waratah Coal Mine, climate change and human rights, February 2023.

Curated and moderated by WCC Steering Circle members, Janet Salisbury and Alison Rose, with guest conversationalists:

- Patricia Julien, Secretary for The Bimblebox Alliance and part of the legal communications team for TBA (a litigant in the case).
- Lala Gutchen, an Erub Meuram woman from Erub Island, Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait) where the rising sea is eating away at her villages and sacred sites. She was one of the witnesses in the case and, in an historic first, gave evidence on Country.
- Murrawah Johnson, a Wirdi woman from North and Central Queensland who has worked on Aboriginal rights litigation in the Federal Court and Supreme Court of Queensland and was the program lead for Youth Verdict (the other litigant in the case).

For the second year, this event was also included in the online program of the National Sustainable Living Festival.

The old world and the new: Women's leadership journeys, July 2023. Curated and moderated by WCC Steering Circle member and climate emergency strategist, Cheryl Durrant, with guest conversationalists:

- Dr Gabrielle Kuiper, an energy sustainability and climate change professional and former adviser to Julia Gillard
- Willow Berzin, Chief Assembler, the Coalition of Everyone

Women bringing new agendas to COP28, August 2023. Curated and moderated by Janet Salisbury with guest conversationalists:

- Katrin Geyer, Environmental Advisor, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (based in London)
- Anna Reynolds, Lord Mayor of Hobart, member of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM), and the first Mayor in the world to pledge support for the Mayors Declaration for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

- Natalie Sifuma , Head of Communications, SHE Changes Climate and based in Nairobi.

Meeting the climate challenge inside out, Sept 2023. Co-hosted with Charter for Compassion, Australia and others. Curated and moderated by National Director of the Australian Compassion Council and, Professor Lynne Reeder, and WCC Steering Circle member, Lyn Stephens with guest speakers:

- Jamie Bristow, leader of policy & advocacy for the Inner Development Goals (IDGs), supporter of the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Mindfulness, former Director of The Mindfulness Initiative Institute.
- Professor Christine Wamsler, researcher interested in sustainable urban development, climate change.

Further details and links to the recordings are on the [WCC website/Women's Climate Conversations](#).

WOMEN'S CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS
Women Speaking Out: The Case of the Waratah Coal mine, climate change and human rights
Tues 21 February 2023
7.30pm -8.30 pm AEDT



Alison Rose
Environmental Defenders
Office lead solicitor
Director WCC

Lala Gutchen
Erub Meuram Women
Erub Island, Zenadh Kes
(Torres Strait)

Patricia Julien
Secretary for The
Bimblebox Alliance

WOMEN'S CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS
Women bringing new agendas to COP28
Tues 29 August 6 - 7.00pm AEST



Natalie Sifuma
Head of Communications
SHE Changes Climate

Anna Reynolds
Lord Mayor of Hobart
Global Covenant of Mayors for
Climate and Energy (GCCM)

Katrin Geyer
Environmental Advisor
Women's International League for
Peace and Freedom

in conversation with: WCC Founder, Dr Janet Salisbury

Meeting the Climate Crisis Inside Out
TUESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2023 5-6.00PM AEST



Jamie Bristow and Professor Christine Wamsler, authors of the recent UK report "Reconnection: Meeting the Climate Crisis Inside Out" will be in conversation on the relevance of mindfulness and compassion in policy and practice approaches to the climate crisis



WOMEN'S CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS
The old world and the new: Women's leadership journeys in a changing climate
Weds 26 July 6 - 7.00pm AEST *in conversation with:*



Dr Gabrielle Kuiper
Former adviser to Julia Gillard

Willow Berzin
Chief Assembler the Coalition of
Everyone

Cheryl Durrant
Climate Emergency Strategist

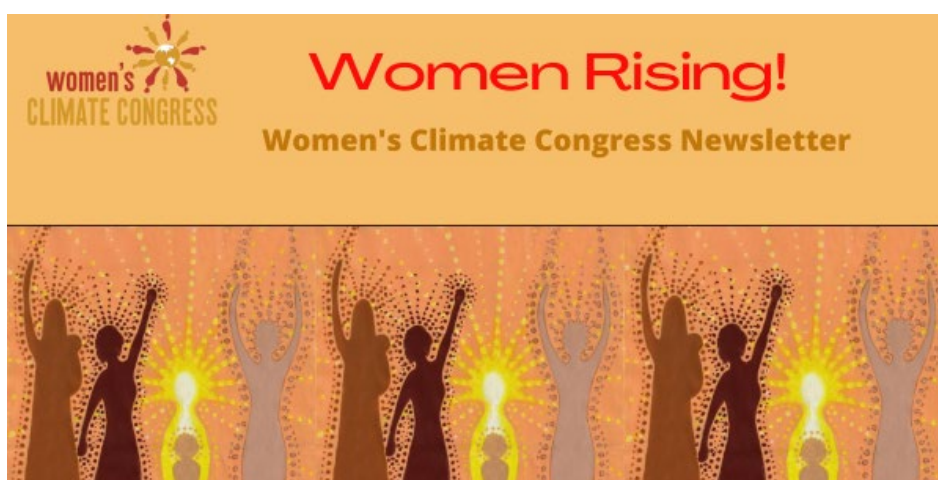
Our monthly newsletter – *Women Rising!*

This year we published 7 editions of our monthly e-newsletter *Women Rising* (from Feb-August).

User data showed that open and engagement rates remained high (above average for an organisational newsletter). Many thanks to Lyn Stephens for ongoing production and distribution of these editions of the e-newsletter. [Read back copies of 'Women Rising!' here.](#)

The work involved in producing the e-news each month is substantial for our small team and questions arose around whether members could get an ongoing account of activities via the email digests from our Connect.WCC member's intranet. Hence, the e-newsletter was given a break in Sept-Dec, pending further review and assessment of member preferences.

Advice or assistance from members would be welcome. Contact womensclimatecongress@gmail.com



Website

www.womensclimatecongress.com

The website is the gateway to our work and the repository of our history. This year we have consolidated previous design work and transfer to the Squarespace platform, and continued to update with news of events and other activities. Many thanks to Janet Salisbury and Amelia Meaney for this work.

As with other areas of communication, maintaining a quality website is a large and specialised task. The Squarespace platform has some limitations that would be overcome with transfer to a more high-end WordPress or similar platform.

Advice or assistance from members would be welcome. Contact womensclimatecongress@gmail.com

Media

We have increased our traditional media exposure over the past year with help from our intern Polina Avilova and we have continued to provide regular engaging images and lively text on social media.

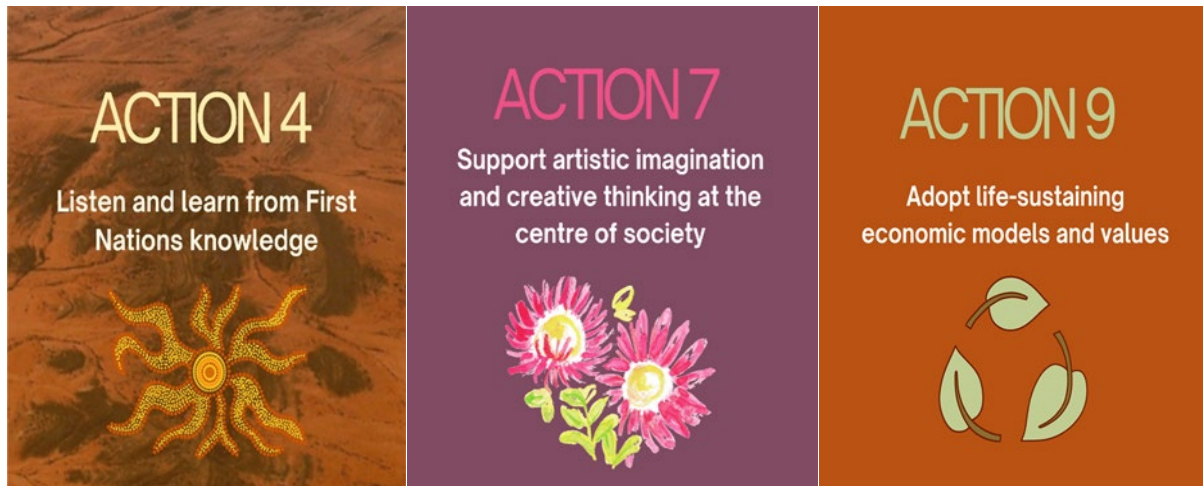
Social media

We have continued to post regularly on Facebook and LinkedIn, and we have particularly increased our presence on Instagram this year via the project of our intern Polina Avilova to post images and short text items for each of the 11 action areas in the WCC Charter for Change. Over the period 12 July-9 October.

the Instagram project increased WCC reach by 430%; with engagement up 568% and it increased our followers by 7%.

These results demonstrated that with sustained effort the WCC could increase its social media presence on Instagram and other platforms. Our issue is the resources to do this in a consistent and skilled way – and this will no doubt be an item for our strategic planning going forward into 2024.

Here is a small selection of Polina’s Instagram posts. See the [WCC Instagram page](#) for the full campaign.



Radio

Community Radio 3CR podcasts

Canberra Radio 3CR ‘Earth Matters’ program with Bec Horridge:

- Podcast of WCC’s August 2023 Women’s Climate Conversation - ‘Women bringing new agendas to COP28’, 1 October 2023
- Podcasts of WCC’s February 2023 Women’s Climate Conversation - ‘The case of the Waratah Coal mine, climate and human rights’:
 - Part 1, broadcast 26 March 2023.
 - Part 2, broadcast 2 April 2023.

Listen to these podcasts on the [WCC website/Media](#).

Data collected by Radio 3CR show that WCC podcasts are among their most frequently downloaded podcasts with downloads running into the 1000s.

Published articles

‘Reflections on heart, head and climate action’, blog article by Polina Avilova about WCC’s September 2023, Women’s Climate Conversation, *BroadAgenda*, November 2023.

‘Women call out military emissions reporting’, blog article by Polina Avilova about WCC’s August 2023 Women’s Climate Conversation, *BroadAgenda*, 6 October 2023.

‘Women bringing greater ambition and new agendas to COP28’, by Janet Salisbury, *Women’s Agenda*, 28 August 2023 <https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/women-bringing-greater-ambition-and-new-agendas-to-cop28/>

'We need women's leadership based on power, love', blog article by Polina Avilova about WCC's July 2023 Women's Climate Conversation, *BroadAgenda*, 25 August 2023.

'Why gender matters when it comes to climate interventions', blog article by Mary Delahunty about WCC's July 2023 Women's Climate Conversation, *BroadAgenda*, 11 August 2023.

'The 'Chorus of women' regrouping on 20th anniversary of Iraq war', by Kirsten Anker, *Women's Agenda*, 21 March 2023.

'Anger at climate activists ignores real disruptor', by Kirsten Anker, *The Canberra Times*, 24 December 2022.

'How women collaborated to bring a 'Charter for Change' to Parliament House', by Janet Salisbury, *Women's Agenda*, 6 December 2022.

Read these articles on the [WCC website/Media](#).

Connecting with other organisations

Connecting head, heart and hands, we will collaborate across all genders to restore nurture of life and care for the Earth to the centre of every decision made at every level, local to national and international.

In 2023, the WCC has continued to work closely with organisations who share our goals and aspirations to raise women's voices for urgent and united action on climate change. We actively look for opportunities to cross-promote each other's messages and events in newsletters and across our 'socials'. However, we are careful to also maintain our own principles of nonpartisan collaboration and creating a safe space for women to develop and promote their policy agenda.

Highlights from our connections with other organisations

Equality Rights Alliance

Kirsten Anker represented us in person at the Annual Member Meeting of the ERA, held in Melbourne in July 2023, attended representatives of the over 60 member organisations. ERA is the largest of six national women's alliances funded by the Australian Government and advocates for women's equality, women's leadership and recognition of women's diversity.

The meeting began with a vote on an important structural change proposed for the organisation. The change, which shifted formal responsibilities between ERA and YWCA, its long-time auspicer, was considered necessary to protect volunteer Board members from possible liability. This change had been so attentively shepherded through by ERA Convenor, Helen Daley-Fisher, that the formal part of the meeting was dealt with promptly and the rest of the time was spent identifying work priorities and a new Theory of Change. ERA's new vision is a feminist future for all which has succeeded in removing patriarchal bias from our systems and communities. Stage 1 of the work involves identifying and removing patriarchal bias from government and public policy.

Kirsten writes: 'It was a privilege to be interacting at the meeting with a group of experienced and knowledgeable women. I had the opportunity to introduce WCC, and to request that all organisations consider in their policy development the interests of future generations and the planet (WCC Charter Action 5).'

A consequence of the ERA's structural change noted above is that member organisations have more opportunities to contribute to its work. WCC is pleased to be involved. Since the meeting, we have made contributions to ERA submissions on housing and on Climate.

New Economy Network Australia (NENA)

Workshop for the Women in the New Economy Hub

After our Newcastle Roadshow event in April, Janet Salisbury met with Professor Sara C. Motta at the University of Newcastle, who previously facilitated a session for us at the National Congress of Women Day Two online event in April 2023. Sara is the convenor of the **Women in the New Economy Hub** of NENA and invited Janet to present an online workshop about the Charter at the May gathering of this group.

NENA National Conference

Janet Salisbury and Lyn Stephens presented a circle workshop session on the Charter at the **recent NENA Conference in Canberra (November 2023) – ‘Life After Capitalism’**. The session was well-attended and the discussion revealed some interesting responses to WCC and the Charter from the wider environmental community.

Compassion Council, Australia and Compassionate Ballarat

Following our successful collaboration on the online conversation ‘Meeting the climate crisis inside out’ the WCC and Charter for Compassion, Australia are working together to promote this approach to federal politicians in relation to the WCC Charter Action 6 – ‘Elevate kindness and compassion in governance’. Many thanks to Professor Lynne Reeder for leading this exciting initiative to bring our Charter to life for this crucial action.

Other meetings and initiatives (examples of the many)

Organisation	Activity
She Changes Climate (international)	See ‘Building an international women’s movement for urgent climate action – COP28 and beyond’ above for a report about our ongoing collaboration with SCC.
1 Million Women	Janet Salisbury moderated for a launch of 1 Million Women Founder, Natalie Issac’s book ‘Right Here Right Now’ at Harry Hartog’s bookshop, Canberra, August 2023
Australian Women in Emergencies	Meetings and liaison with Amanda Lamont, including in relation to the AWE Climate Change chapter
Women’s Agenda	Janet Salisbury, Kirsten Anker and Barbara Baikie attended Press Club event to launch the Report ‘The Climate Load’ See also ‘Communicating our vision and ideas/Media’ above
Women’s Environmental Leadership Australia (WELA)	Meetings, liaison, cross promotion of events and activities
National Foundation for Australian Women	Meetings with Board members; Vice President Sally Moyle is guest speaker for the WCC AGM. Janet Salisbury attended the NFAW annual dinner at the Press Club
Women for Election	Meeting with CEO, Licia Heath
Australian Earth Laws Alliance	Liaison and cross-promotion. AELA is auspicing our Nature Fund for receipt of tax deductible donations
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom	Ongoing liaison and cross promotion. Former WILPF President, Barbara O’Dwyer is a member of the WCC Hub; increased collaboration with the WILPF climate change initiative. International WILPF Climate Change Convenor, Katrin Geyer was guest speaker at our August Women’s Climate Conversation online
Australasian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition	Liaison, meeting

Reporting on our finances

Fundraising

WCC's application to be listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations is still in the hands of the Department. So that we can offer members the ability to claim a tax deduction for their contributions, we've entered into an auspicing arrangement with AELA (Australian Earth Laws Alliance), an organisation whose work seeks to spread understanding and the practical application of earth-centred laws. As is usual in these situations, AELA receives 10% of donations in return for this benefit to cover their added costs. We hope that departmental approval comes through soon!

WCC has been shortlisted for 2 funding applications this year, both seeking funding to cover travel, accommodation, and costs of Roadshow events. Unfortunately, we haven't made it across the line, but we're getting closer.

In the meantime, our longtime member and former Director, Barbara Baikie, generously organised and hosted an event on her beautiful property Terroux outside Canberra, and donated the proceeds of almost \$1,200 to WCC. We are most grateful to Barbara for welcoming us for a delightful afternoon with the theme 'Peace with Earth – Pathways and Possibilities'. Local members and friends enjoyed the opportunity to come together for music and a discussion around the theme of Peace with Earth – how we can centre nurture of life and care for the Earth in policy decision-making.

A Chorus of Women sang and told stories at this lovely event, starting with an Acknowledgement of Country in song, followed by the always moving 'Dear Earth' by Johanna McBride and, after a panel conversation and afternoon tea, 'A Recipe for Peace' and 'Hymn to Gaia', both by Glenda Cloughley. Our heartfelt thanks to our host, Barbara Baikie, and to arts journalist Barbie Robinson who moderated the conversation with Dr Robert Glasser, Dr Janet Salisbury and Hilary Waudhaugh.



We also thank members for the recent very successful fundraising effort, of raising \$3,900 to support Angelica Manikas' attendance at COP 28. See further details in '*Building an International Community - support for Youth Representative to COP 28*', above.

We are deeply grateful to all our members who have donated over the past year to advance the work of WCC. Although Circle members offer thousands of hours of their time without charge, your contributions enable us to cover essential costs and maintain a digital presence to stay in contact with you and communicate our activities more broadly – essential matters for running an organisation. We continue to seek funding for a paid administrative position.

Finance

The Budget Report from our Auditor is attached to this Report. Our funds are down over the 12-month period by \$3563.

Our main source of funding is the generosity of you, our members. We have a small number of donors who make monthly contributions, an important resource for some level of financial certainty. Building on this will enable us to stick to our policy of not charging membership fees. Members have also responded generously at online events or when we've made requests to support specific activities.

The main financial activity of FY 22-23 was the National Congress of Women (NCW). We received registrations of just over \$25,000, which covered the costs of the 2-day event. In setting registration fees, we were mindful that no-one should be excluded because of their financial situation. Many participants benefitted from discounts for paying early or inaugural membership. Some members were able to pay the generosity contribution, supporting women who would otherwise have been unable to attend.

Other running costs over the year include for IT, membership of other organisations, printing of the Charter and Comms in the lead-up to NCW. As well as benefitting from the connection with the work of other organisations, we purchase insurance at advantageous rates from the National Conservation Council.

During the FY 22-23, we paid off the last of the foundational Director's loan, made in 2020. CC would like to be able to pay for a staff position. We continue to look for funding opportunities.

Audited financial reports

[Read the audited financial statements here](#)