

LOCAL WOMEN PAVING THE WAY



**djerriwarrh
health services**

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Djerriwarrh Health Services and Women Making it Happen acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Kulin Nations, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and future.



Acknowledgment

The Djerriwarrh Health Services (DjHS) Health Promotion Team first began implementing the Local Women Paving the Way project in partnership with the Women Making it Happen (WMIH) across the City of Melton in 2018.

The WMIH group strive to increase opportunities for women to have their voices heard and to contribute fully to society, and acknowledge that unequal opportunities, recognition and choices for women are contributing factors to violence against women.

The Local Women Paving the Way project has provided the opportunity to engage with local partners and the broader Melton community, and to set in stone the individual and collective contributions that local women have had, and continue to have, in influencing and shaping our community.

We are very thankful for the many conversations we have had in our community to find ways we can work together to raise the status of women, and as a result, help create a more equitable society to prevent violence against women. We have learnt so much about history, commitment, trailblazing and compassion from this project - we have been truly inspired.

Local Women Paving the Way aims to increase conversations about women's roles historically and currently in the City of Melton, and help us to work together to strive for a more equal, respectful and safe community for all. We acknowledge that Local Women Paving the Way is not a complete list of influential Melton women, and only highlights the tip of the iceberg of inspiring women to begin conversations and take first steps in acknowledging women's contributions to our community.

We thank all women, everywhere, for inspiring us, for influencing us, and for continuing to paving the way.

Background

DjHS acknowledges that violence in the workplace and in the community in all forms is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. A key priority for the Health Promotion Team is to challenge and change attitudes, beliefs and cultures that support violence. We believe that violence against women is best prevented by ensuring that respectful attitudes, behaviours and beliefs are shaped in the places where we live, work, learn and play.

Since 2013, the DjHS Health Promotion Team has prioritised the prevention of violence against women as one of its Integrated Health Promotion project areas. Our objective has been to increase awareness and understanding of gender equality and the primary prevention of violence against women among individuals, organisations and the community, and to redress structural and societal barriers to women's independence and full economic, social and civic participation. In partnership with the WMIH, without whom none of this would be possible, we continue to deliver initiatives that recognise and celebrate women's and girl's leadership, achievements and diversity, and in result of this, increase women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles in workplaces, community organisations, civic life and relationships.

The WMIH in partnership with DjHS have been able to deliver over 30 community driven projects with a focus on preventing violence against women and increasing gender equality since 2015 across the Melton region. Over 12,000 community members have been directly engaged in preventing violence against women initiatives in the Melton region as a result of this partnership.

In late 2017, the WMIH identified that in Australia there are more statues of animals than there are of real Australian women, and that only three per cent of public statues in Australia honour non-fictional, non-royal women. Naturally, we were determined to change this.

We began meeting regularly in 2018, working to identify local women who had and continue to pave the way for us. To ensure this project's validity and honorability, we sought expertise from: Melton City Council; Melton & District Historical Society; the Heritage Advisory Committee; the WMIH, and our community.

In result of this, the WMIH developed a key selection criteria and underwent the very challenging task that was establishing a shortlist of influential past and present women with a connection to the Melton municipality for this project. It was important to keep the criteria broad enough to be able to reach enough women, whilst ensuring not to be too restrictive that it would limit our selections. The final key selection criteria included the following:

- They must be female
- They must have achieved a first in something, or are recognised as a trailblazer
- They must have a significant contribution to industry and/ or the Melton municipality
- They must highlight women in a non-traditional role and/or they challenge stereotypes.

All of the women selected and now featured in this project have been connected to the Melton municipality throughout their lifetime and met one or more of the key selection criteria. These women are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| - The Women Making it Happen Group | - Kathy Rudkins |
| - Vera Carew | - Lois And Annie Raleigh |
| - Margaret Wood | - Antoinette Braybrook |
| - Joan Richmond | - Catherine Williams |
| - Lydia Lassila | - Moyra And Nora Smith |
| - Louisa Dodd | |

In order to set in stone the individual and collective contributions that these women have had in influencing and shaping our community, we decided to name this project 'Local Women Paving the Way' and proposed to incorporate a pathway within a Melton re-development area. Our proposal was to name a small part of the newly developed area 'Local Women Paving the Way' and replace 12 existing pavers in exchange for pavers engraved with the names of these women. After a period of identifying the best location in line with Council redevelopments and being impacted by the delays of the pandemic, we were able to install the engraved pavers.

The Local Women Paving the Way path is located in front entrance of the Melton Library and Learning Hub, 31 McKenzie Street, Melton, Victoria, Australia, and publicly acknowledges and highlights the various contributions these women have made and continue to make in our community.

We thank the Local Women Paving the Way for their support and participation in this project and we look forward to sharing their stories with you throughout this booklet. Melton women have made and continue to make significant contributions to our local community. We would like to acknowledge again that Local Women Paving the Way is not a complete list of influential Melton women, and that this is a small selection of inspiring local women who have and continue to pave the way.

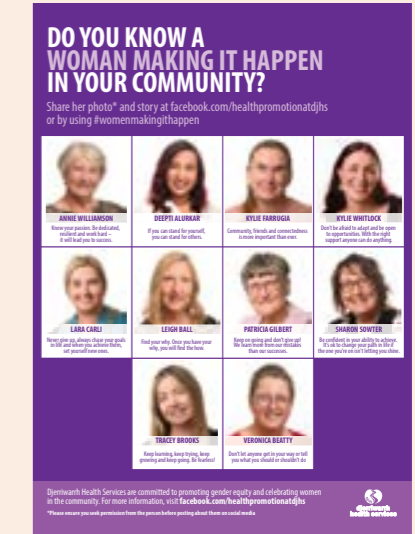
Women Making it Happen

In 2015 the DjHS Health Promotion Team delivered the 'Women Making it Happen' campaign, a partnership project with Melton City Council to celebrate International Women's Day.

The stories and achievements of 12 Melton women were celebrated throughout the campaign. This marked the first step in exploring how Djerriwarrh Health Services could approach community-based action to prevent violence against women in our community. For six years, local women were celebrated in this way and across the years this campaign has helped to highlight and celebrate the important roles women play in our community, while recognising their leadership in all aspects of community life.

Since its inception, the award recipients have been invited to come together to discuss issues that were most important for women in the community, particularly the prevalence and seriousness of violence against women. Collectively, the Women Making it Happen group consists of over 70 members and they have continued to

identify and support projects that raise awareness of the issue. Together with DjHS, they have delivered over 30 community driven projects with a focus on preventing violence against women and striving for gender equality since 2015, directly engaging with over 12,000 community members through these efforts.¹



¹ Djerriwarrh Health Services

IRENE RICHARDS

Melton's First Female Councillor

Irene arrived in Australia from London in January 1965 and moved to Melton in 1967. Coming from London she was taken aback on her first visit to Melton at the almost complete lack of facilities: few constructed roads with lots of signs pointing along empty streets, no sewerage, no public transport, not many shops, although there were two Primary schools and two Pubs – Macs and The Golden Fleece.



After graduating from University, she joined the newly formed Melton Ratepayers Association which had become very active with the growth of the town. They campaigned for a change in the three Ridings to four to give equal representation to the town. This was successful and following the elections to the new Council in 1969, she became Melton's first female Councillor and served Melton North for seven years. Historically, it should be noted that she was the first female councillor to be elected in the Shire since Victorian women gained the right to vote in State elections in 1908. It wasn't easy for a lone woman in a Council of 12 – and there were quite a few sexist comments and attempts to put her down. However, she gained the respect of her fellow councillors and forged some firm friendships among them. Irene enthusiastically took on the challenge of paving the way for other women to join the local council. She insisted her full name was printed on the Shire President Honour Board, rather than her initials, 'so they could see it was a woman!'

After serving Council and personal changes, she made the decision to return to the UK with her children in 1977. She found getting work in London difficult but eventually ended up with the Inner London Education Authority as a school librarian eventually becoming Librarian of Tower Hamlets College in east London.

Irene continues her community activities as a Founder and Trustee of Enfield's largest voluntary organisation (5,000 + members); serves on the Safeguarding Adults Board (chairing their Community Awareness Raising Group) and on Safeguarding Children Arrangements. In 2012 she took time out to be an Ambassador for the London Olympics meeting and greeting visitors from all over the world. Although now living in the UK, she follows with interest the fortunes of what is now the City of Melton and has visited it twice since her departure. Amazed at its size and diversity now, she is proud of having made a significant contribution to its development.²

² Information supplied by Irene Richards



VERA CAREW

Female Opera Singer

Minnie Veronica Carew (1891-1958) commonly identified by her stage name as Vera Carew is well known as the 'International Lyric Soprano' of Melton. As Minnie grew up she developed her craft as an actress and entertainer. She changed her name to "Vera" for concerts from 1914 where she performed across Melbourne, regional Victoria and South Australia. She toured with Page Lang Entertainers alongside a ventriloquist, a magician and other

performers. Vera met her husband to be, Jim – a musician, in 1924. The two toured together for a number of years in Australia before performing in England and America in mid-1930. They continued to perform together until late 1939.³

³ Australian Variety Theatre Archive, Popular Culture Entertainment: 1850-1930



Vera Carew, James Foran and daughter Moira



MARGARET WOOD

Significant Contribution to the Melton Community

Margaret Fogarty grew up in Toolern Vale and went to the local school. She learnt to fly at Fogarty Field. Margaret married Roger Wood in 1970 and continued to live in Toolern Vale and raise their four children. She worked with the community to establish the Country Fair, Pre-School, Girl Guides, and CFA Ladies Auxiliary. Margaret was also an active member of the CFA and the State School Council. Margaret was elected to Melton Shire Council in 1982 and served until 1994 including three terms as Shire President/Mayor.

Education was a focus of her endeavours and she was a Director of the Western Institute which merged to become Victoria University. She was a Director of the University Foundation and chaired the Melton Campus Advisory Committee and the University Alumni Committee. She was also a member of Mowbray College Council.

Margaret was a director of Western Region Water Authority.

The Premier's Drug Advisory Council was established following the work of the Westgate Police Community Consultative Committee Drug Taskforce which she chaired whilst also Chairman of the Melton PCCC. She was awarded the Chief Commissioner's Community Policing Award in 1998.

Margaret was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2003. Red Cross Emergency Services occupied much of her time, co-ordinating local and regional response to emergencies such as fires and floods. Margaret received the National Emergency Medal for her work during the Black Saturday 2009 fires. Margaret is Secretary of Melton Rotary Club and is a Paul Harris Fellow.⁴

⁴ Information supplied by Margaret Wood

JOAN RICHMOND

Racing Car Driver

Joan Richmond (1905-1999) was a successful racing car driver at a time when women racing drivers were not only a rarity, but competed in the same events as men. Joan grew up on a farm near Melton, the granddaughter of Harry Staughton of Exford (and great-granddaughter of prominent pastoral landowner Simon Staughton). She was a keen horse rider, training and riding her own racehorses at Warrawong, a property on the Exford estate. Joan's first major event was the 1931 Australian Grand Prix at Phillip Island in which she drove a Riley and placed a creditable fifth. Shortly after, Richmond and four friends embarked on an overland journey from Australia to Europe in order to compete in the Monte Carlo rally. This journey is credited as the first international overland tour to have originated

from Australia. Following the group's successful completion of the rally, Victor Riley offered to sponsor Richmond and in 1932, she supported the English racing car driver, Elsie Wisdom, to win the 1000 Mile Race at Brooklands. Throughout the 1930s, Richmond stayed in England and competed in more motor racing events, including several Monte Carlo rallies and the Le Mans 24 Hour race. She returned to Australia in the 1940s but was unable to continue her motor racing career due to a lack of money and sponsorship. Joan Richmond died in Melbourne in 1999 and her personal collection is now held by the National Museum of Australia.⁵

⁵ Joan Richmond Collection, National Museum of Australia



Joan Richmond Collection, National Museum of Australia

LYDIA LASSILA

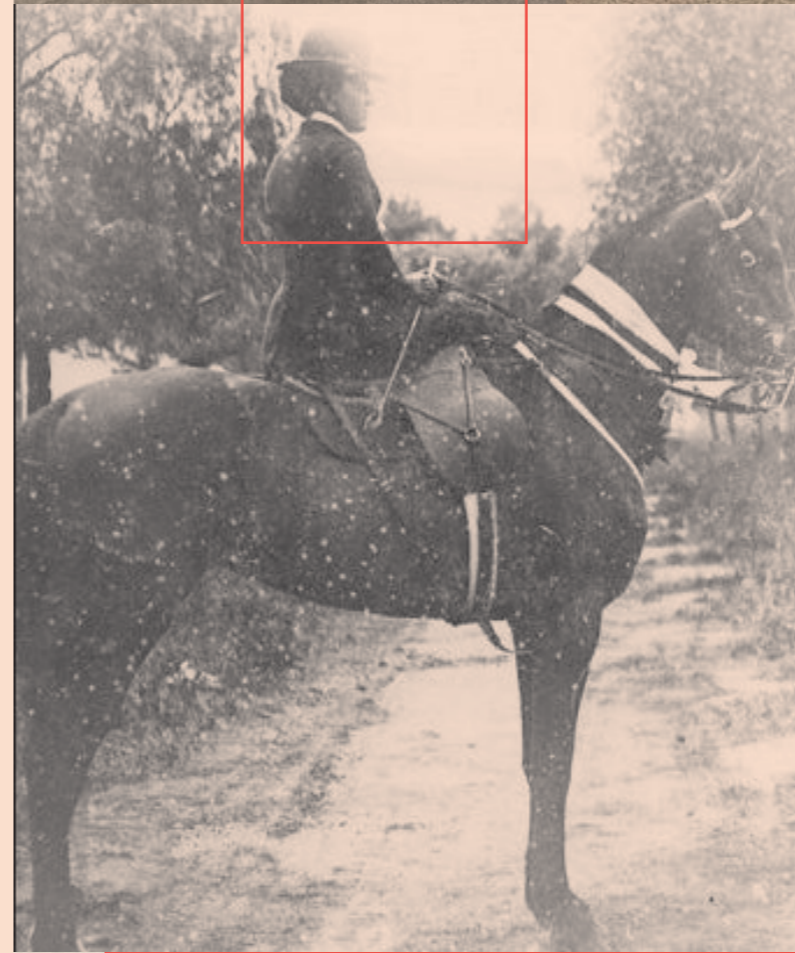
Olympian



Lydia Lassila is the first woman from Melton to compete in the Winter Olympics. Lydia is an Australian Olympic freestyle skier gold medallist who has competed in a number of Winter Olympics. She is the 2010 Olympic champion and was also a 2014 bronze medallist. On 20 October 2010, Lydia was awarded the prestigious 'The Don' award by the Sport Australia Hall of Fame, which recognised her ability to inspire as well as her achievements during 2010, including her gold medal performance at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. A world record holder and the first woman ever to execute a quad-twisting

triple somersault, Lydia is a woman on a mission. Raising the bar and pushing boundaries in an already high-risk sport is what sets Lydia apart from the rest in Freestyle aerial skiing. It is what attracted filmmakers to create a full feature documentary about her life and professional achievements – The Will To Fly (2016). This film had a special screening at Reading Cinemas, Woodgrove Shopping Centre in Melton. As a mum, professional athlete, business woman, public speaker and mentor, Lydia continues to push for greatness in all aspects of her life and pave the way for generations to come.⁶

⁶ Australian Institute of Sport and Melton & District Historical Society



LOUISA DODD

Cab Driver

Louisa Josephine Dodd (Shebler) was born in 1869, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Augusta Schebler, the owners of the Golden Fleece Hotel at Melton. She was a vivacious tomboyish girl who was the pride and joy of her father. As a young girl Louisa was one of the best horsewomen in the district winning at one show the first prize for the best horsewoman, astride and side saddle, for driving the best two-in hand and four in hand, and for the jumping event.

Louisa met young Englishman, George Henry Dodd, whom she married in 1901 when she was thirty-two. Louisa's father set the married couple up with a cab business in Chelsea. George drove the cab while Louisa stayed home and looked after their daughter Ethel, however the marriage was not successful and the couple separated. George returned to Melton and eventually ran the Golden Fleece Hotel while Louisa stayed in Chelsea running the cab business. For a while she employed drivers but found them unsatisfactory, so she decided to drive the cab herself. Louisa was known as one of the first 'Lady Cabbies' in Victoria, and the story goes that Louisa never actually had any driving lessons, and that she was completely self-taught.⁷

The Chelsea & District Historical Society

⁷ Melton & District Historical Society and Kingston Local History



KATHY RUDKINS

Police Officer

Kathy joined Victoria Police in 1983 and performed general duties in the north and western suburbs of Melbourne before moving into a specialist role dealing with child abuse and sex offences. As a result she was seconded to a Task Force that led to the establishment of the Sexual Offences Squad; a number of serial sex offenders were also successfully prosecuted as a result of the Task Force work. She was appointed to a Detective's position in 1989 where she remained until transferring to the Prosecutions Unit in 1994.

In 1998, Kathy took promotion to Sergeant in a general duties role. She was promoted to Senior Sergeant in 2004 and worked in various general duties stations. During this time she was awarded a Regional Commendation for work relating to the Black Saturday Bushfires. She also received a Regional Commendation as a result of work conducted on an internal enquiry regarding predatory behaviour.

In 2010 Kathy was promoted to Inspector at Recruiting Services Branch and led the recruitment of 1,700 additional police and the introduction of 940 PSOs. In 2015 she transferred to the Melton Local Area Commander's position where she was recognised by the community as one of the 12 most influential female leaders in the Melton Local Government Area, she was also nominated for the most outstanding female leader in the Australasian Council for Woman and Policing Excellence Awards 2015. Kathy worked closely with the Melton Community and supported a number of local programmes including the U Turn 193; L2P and other initiatives to assist and benefit the Melton Community. Kathy received a Divisional commendation for her role at the Bourke Street incident that resulted in the deaths of 6 people and 30 seriously injured. She received the Australian Police Medal in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honour list.

Kathy holds a Graduate Certificate in Applied Management and an Advanced Diploma of Police Management.⁸

⁸ Information supplied by Kathy Rudkins

LOIS & ANNIE RALEIGH

Dress Makers

In the early 1920's Lois and Annie Raleigh opened a dressmaking shop in High Street, Melton. The site of that shop stood adjacent to where the Staughton Memorial Lamp now stands in High Street. Every working day for thirty years Lois and Annie made the trip in their jinker from their home in Bulmans Road to their place of business in High Street. They would stable their jinker at the back of the premises. Their shop was divided into two sections and a gathered curtain covered the front of the shop window. The front section of the shop contained a counter, covered with fashion books of the time and served as a receiving area. The back area of the shop was where all the measuring and sewing was done. Memories are recalled of the limey smell of new cloth enveloping one's senses. Lois and Annie never married and, apart from their business, their life was the Presbyterian Church. They were very reserved and were well respected and loved within the community. After they closed their business, the premises was used for some time as a second hand bookshop. Both Lois and Annie are buried in Melton Cemetery.⁹

⁹ Melton & District Historical Society



Lois (left) and Annie Raleigh

ANTOINETTE BRAYBROOK

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention



Antoinette Braybrook is an Aboriginal woman who was born in Victoria on Wurundjeri country. Antoinette's grandfather and mother's line is through the Kuku Yalanji, North Queensland.

Antoinette is the CEO of Djirra (formerly the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria – FVPLS Victoria), a position she has held since the service was established in 2002. Djirra is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation which provides holistic, culturally safe and specialist legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who experience family violence – predominantly women. Djirra also designs and delivers important, community-based early intervention and prevention programs and undertakes policy and law reform work to improve access to justice, strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's resilience and reduce vulnerability to violence.

In addition to Antoinette's leadership in Victoria, she has held the elected position of National Convenor of the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum) since 2012. The National FVPLS Forum is the peak body for the 14 FVPLSs throughout Australia.

From 2016 to 2018, Antoinette was the Co-Chair of the Change the Record Campaign. Change the Record is an unprecedented national coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, human rights, legal and community organisations that was established to end the disproportionate rates of imprisonment and violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Antoinette was awarded the 2015 Law Institute of Victoria: Access to Justice/Pro Bono Award, the 2017 Inspirational Women of Yarra Award, and a 2015 Australian Centre for Leadership for Women award for Sustaining Women's Empowerment. In 2018, Antoinette was a finalist for the Australian Human Rights Commission's Human Rights Medal.¹⁰

¹⁰ Information supplied by Antoinette Braybrook

CATHERINE WILLIAMS

Pound Keeper

Catherine Williams (1821-1894) mother of five children, sadly lost her husband, Charles in 1862 at the age of 50. With a young family to support, Catherine applied for the position of the pound keeper that her husband had held since 1855. Catherine was appointed pound keeper on 2nd of September 1863 and held this position until she decided to move to inner

Melbourne in 1864. Catherine died at the age of 73 in Elsternwick, Victoria. The pound was moved near the boundary of the Braybrook Roads Board on Toolern Creek. During the 1860s, The Willows homestead was built to the west of the pound, and it remained part of The Willows homestead site until 1885, when the pound was moved once again.¹¹



¹¹ Melton & District Historical Society and the Shire of Melton Heritage Study Volume 3

MOYRA AND NORA SMITH



Melton Red Cross

Maud Honora (1895-1976) better known as Nora, and Mary Josephine (1896-1990) better known as Moyra were both soon recognised as the inseparable Smith sisters. The sisters grew up on the Strahtulloch property on the banks of Toolern Creek in Melton South. During early 1915, a meeting was called in Melton to form a branch of the Red Cross to help raise funds for men fighting in conflict (First World War). It was then that the two sisters stepped up the task of initiating and developing the Melton Red Cross Branch. The sisters' shared the roles of Secretary and Treasurer, and Moyra held the position of President for over forty years. Moyra also decided to run in the Melton Council election in 1941, making her the first female candidate to stand in the Melton municipal elections. Moyra was unfortunately defeated by 58 votes to her opponent being Mr T.L. Barrie. The community conscious sisters were members of the Red Cross until they sold their property in late 1960 and moved out of the municipality in 1961.¹²

¹² Melton & District Historical Society Archives



COMMITTEE: MELTON RED CROSS SOCIETY.

Partnership Acknowledgements

Djerriwarrh Health Services and Women Making it Happen would like to thank the following partners for their contributions, support and commitment to the Local Women Paving the Way project:

Melton City Council

Department of Health
and Human Services

Melton Library
and Learning Hub

Melton & District
Historical Society

Melton Heritage
Advisory Committee

Harness Racing
Victoria and
Tabcorp Park

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