State President's Email Letter (16) to Branches 29 May 2020

Dear Members

You are either all enjoying yourselves, keeping busy or have 'run out of steam' as I only have one response this week.

What a wonderful letter from Scotland. I will be writing my 5th newsletter to my members this week and will add this. Two of my members live in a retirement village and one member has given everyone 2 cardboard squares, one green and one yellow. She walks around the village every morning and if the green square is the in window she knows that the occupant is o.k. and if there is a yellow square in the window she goes in to see how she can help. I thought this was wonderful. My members tell me they are looking forward so much to getting back to CWA for the social gatherings as quite a few are on their own and elderly and CWA is their lifeline.

However, I have some photos to share with you. The first six are *Umina* gardens in Autumn sunshine. The next one is of the Archives Dungeon. You can see the new archive boxes in grey at the bottom centre of the photo. Soon all the Minute books will be housed in the boxes and the database will include the number of each box. This photo shows less than half of the shelving. How many boxes do you think will finish the job? The next photo is of some colourful veggie bag covers. A *Umina* member brought them to the last Pop Up Shop for me to put away for the showbags. Then you can see Marie and me at the first Pop Up Shop. The final photo is a panoramic shot (sorry about the bend...) of the tapestries in situ. I hope you are suitably impressed about the positioning of the two ladies.

Kind Regards

Marion























The Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc.

A 0004857F ABN 55 584 949 677

Patron - Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria

Letter 17 Email Letter to Branches 05/06/2020

Dear Members

Just a couple of reminders before you read about some of our Branches and Members:

- 1) Veggie Bags: The Catering Committee Members hope you will give an indication about how many you are making for the Showbags. The bags need to arrive at Head Office by the end of August. There may be someone near you attending a meeting in person. If not, you may have to post them. More of the terylene bags are needed.
- 2) COVID-19 Regulations: Please check the current regulations regularly https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus Please read all the pages to get the information you need—even pages that may seem not to be relevant—a number of them are, once you begin to read them.
- 3) Information Sharing: The website and Facebook, as well as bulk emails, are used to bring information to members between magazines. Thank you to Branch Secretaries and others who forward information to Members and bring copies to Members who prefer a print copy.
- 4) Printing: It has been pointed out that printing in colour is expensive so this week I have put all the photos on the last pages so that you may choose to print only the print pages.

 Kind Regards

Marion

I hope you and everyone working at Umina these days are well!

I didn't get a message off to you last week but you were in our thoughts and prayers!

The Group has settled into a routine of caring for each other and those in our communities! Members have been busy sewing caps, gowns, scrubs and scrub bags for nurses, gathering warm clothing for those farmers in the fire regions, and helping a GP from another group trying to help several children in her area living in poverty! I am so proud of the way in which my branches responded and together we supported some 30 children with new and pre loved clothing and toiletries! I was reduced to tears on more than one occasion when items were dropped at my home!

Other members have been cooking meals or baking for disadvantaged families in their communities! All in all I feel that the Group has been busier in our communities during isolation than at other times! It's great to feel and know this common touch of CWA is there when needed! While not fundraising we have done much more!

I have handed on the baton and this morning I am feeling rather sad that my term has ended but have made some everlasting friendships through State Council!

If there is anything I can help with at the State level please let me know!

Thank you for all you do as State President for all our branches and members!

I am writing on behalf of the Branch to thank you for your weekly letter and all the information which you have sent to the branches to keep us all in touch. It is much appreciated.

The members over the state have responded to the challenges presented by social distancing very well. I'm happy to say that our Branch is resuming meetings under strict Social Distancing guidelines on Wednesday 17th June. Once again. thank you for your concern and care for your members.

Thank you Marion for emailing your letters from the branches and great to have some news from Scotland. What a wonderful effort in raising \$1,220 to help the bushfire victims here.

Our branch is keeping in touch via email and mail out and phone calls. Members have also shared photos by email of our children when they were babies etc.

In late April a call for help came from East Gippsland for knitted items, jumpers and rugs etc. Our members got busy and donated a very large number of items and two of our members sorted them, labelled them and packed them in twenty five large bags. They borrowed a truck and drove to Sale to deliver them. I have attached a photo** of the truck loaded with the bags.

Hope you are staying fit and healthy. Just thought I would let you know our Branch had their first meeting last Wednesday night via Zoom connection .We had 15 members involved all in five different homes. Sure proved an interesting evening, although technology did fail one group later in evening. Many of our members were new to this media. I hope it never replaces face to face meetings. Luckily some of our members knew the system.

Our great new Secretary sends your letters on to our members, but I am emailing you to let you know I really enjoy your letters, especially this last one showing the "Umina" gardens, they look amazing. Take care.

The town is basking in sunshine today. Your garden photos are lovely and give us hope of a more 'normal' life returning soon. Members here are keeping warm with knitting and crocheting for Emergency Relief and for a Gippsland group called A Better Life for Foster Kids, but stretches across Victoria. The name is self explanatory, but with no Government support it is hard to keep going. The statistics for out of home care are awful, as you would guess. We are making rugs, beanies, jumpers, toys etc. The foster child loves to find something in their case that is hand made with love. The Group havschosen this group as our 2020 project. If you are interested in having a speaker for State Conference, I can forward you the contact details.

Our area has only had one case of COVID19. We are lucky to live in this beautiful part of Victoria. Thank you for these email updates which are forwarded to others.

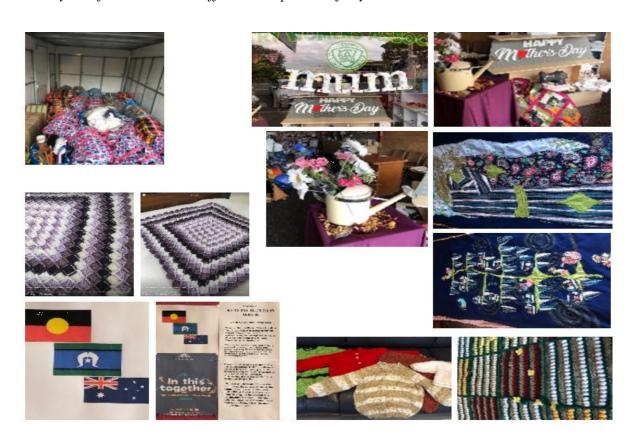
Branch Lockdown Antics: Greetings from our members. As restrictions ease we are hoping to have a face to face meeting next week with of course social distancing. We have managed a couple of "Zoom" meetings over these last weeks. Our members have been very busy with their "lockdown" projects. Beautiful crotched and patchwork quilts, knitted jumpers to keep kiddies warm, celebrating Mother's Day and acknowledging Reconciliation Week. Our branch president & another CWA member have been very active preparing and cooking meals for distribution by our local community learning centre. These amazing women are preparing up to 400 meals each week for those in need locally. And our junior member has been cooking up a storm, an Anzac Day dessert and beef cheeks with her Dad. We had to laugh when her Mum told us it wasn't unusual for her to disappear under the house or into the chook pen while home schooling and bring a chicken into her lessons!! The garden behind our shop is looking wonderful, lush with silver beet, parsley, spinach, zucchini & rhubarb all planted by a very green fingered member. We do wish you and all other members throughout the State our very best wishes. As we ease our way back to normality, let's hope that virus is stopped in its tracks and we all remain well & safe.

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We do wish you and all other members throughout the State our very best wishes. As we ease our way back to normality, let's hope that virus is stopped in its tracks and we all remain well & safe.

One of our Branches forwarded Country of Study information, including a crossword invented by two members. Unfortunately, the format made it difficult to reproduce for you.



Email Letter (18) to Branches 13 June 2020

Good Morning Members

Thank you for the 'mail' this week. I hope you enjoy reading about the activities of your fellow Members. Branches and Groups may be considering returning to face-to-face meetings. Measures should be put in place to adhere to current government regulations and guidelines:

https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

The Theme of the 2020 CWA of VIC Showbag is Sustainability. It is important that the vegetable bags are see-through. This size bag (see measurements in May magazine) should cope with approx. 1kg of produce. More veggie bags over storage ones are needed. ***

Kind Regards

Marion

Thanks for the weekly letters, they are a wonderful way to stay in contact and pickup great ideas for future activities. Hoping you are keeping well and enjoying the lessening of restrictions. I am happy to advise that our branch has held its first face to face meeting since March. We are small group so fitted into the meeting requirements for COVID restrictions and as our council owned meeting place was made available we decided to take the leap back to reality – real time meeting. It was wonderful to have the chance to come together and all but one regular attendee braved the cold night to do so. We took the opportunity to cast our votes in person for the 2020 Resolutions and enjoyed setting some dates for future events. As we have missed the opportunity of guest speakers and supporting other community groups during restrictions our branch president shared news pieces she had collected during restrictions. Upon this information we moved a motion to make a donation to our local Foodshare operation, which has seen a growth in demand in contrast to a decrease for fundraising opportunities. Our group had a monthly challenge for May 'make something new from something old' so there was time for show and tell and a good catch-up after the business meeting.

We are asking branches and members to participate in a project for our archives! We asked members to record how they have spent time during isolation and then we will collate their memories into a book to keep in our club building! Perhaps we could extend this to a state project so others could also participate!

On behalf of Members, I wish to thank you for your weekly email messages since COVID-19 'isolation' was thrust upon us.

It has been a difficult time for many, including me, with all the volunteering activities I love to participate in being denied to people of my ilk.

Nevertheless we forge on and with the lifting of some restrictions, our Branch met for the first time since March last week, with 13 ladies keen to get together for coffee/tea and a chat. Tomorrow night we will have a craft meeting, where we intend making some produce bags, which we have sold successfully at street stalls for some time now.

Our International Officer presented a detailed report, together with artefacts and photos from Botswana. I will send some photos of Anzac Day and Botswana.***

The ladies of our CWA have been keeping in touch via emails and handwritten letters during the Covid-19 isolation. In this way nobody is feeling left out. We have awaited the arrival of emails and letters and enjoyed reading about what others have been doing during lockdown. There has been a lot of baking, learning how to order groceries on line, lending a hand to rat catching (in fluffy slippers), plumbing repairs, laying pebbles in gardens and sorting out our stashes of fabrics so there will be renewed supplies in the CWA cupboard when we can all start back with our activities.

The 'piece de resistance' is our Spoonville – Connecting Our Community. There have been Rainbow and Teddy Bear Trails around town, but now we have introduced Spoonville. This is an international initiative intended to spread joy and inspire creativity while uniting communities during COVID-19. There is considerable foot traffic passing our clubroom as people get out and about for their exercise. Members are making a spoon person, using a new or preloved wooden spoon, and individually visiting the grass area out the front under our flagpole and inserting them in a village like setting. Of course our Spoons are being

placed at a suitable social distance, which is one and half spoons apart. We are encouraging others to add to our ever increasing Spoon community. Our grandchildren are creating their own Spoons and are excited to have them included in our Spoonie Community.

We were fortunate to have our March meeting prior to the lockdown and have attracted a new member since, as well as a further Prospective Member. Currently our membership stands at 33. We miss the CWA life we loved, and look forward with great anticipation to recommencing, reconnecting and rejoicing.***

Finally, we have been able to distribute all the wonderful winter goodies Groups have sent to us for the drought and fire farmers and their families in East Gippsland.

We had 4 distribution hubs:

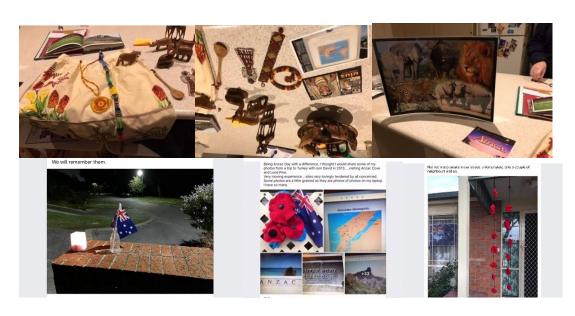
Nooimbee: West of Cann River, Club Terrace lost 12 of 18 houses. Some families have left the area, but some remain in containers or caravans. To the north, Buldah was savaged, no loss of homes, but a lot of fencing and pasture, so farmers are doing it tough. To the east of us Genoa was hit badly. A little further away from Genoa are a few farming communities that were devastated. These include Wroxham, Wallagaraugh and Wangarabelle. These families have been left isolated and alone.

Buchan: Through the Bush Nurses at Buchan goods were dispersed through the region and up through Gelantipy. Everyone was very grateful for this donation and we did this in conjunction with the Red Cross. I have met the Victorian Bushfire Hub Relief Officer of the area and we are going to work together to do a Drop in and have a Cuppa when COVID-19 restrictions ease a little.

Orbost: The branch has distributed the goods. These girls really have their 'fingers on the pulse' as far as knowing everyone who is in need all the way down to Mallacoota. They will be distributing them next week. **Bengworden:** Local farmers have been invited to our hall on the 06 July to come and collect whatever they need.

Would you please thank your members profusely for their amazing effort in sourcing and putting together this much needed donation.***









State President's (19) Email Letter to Branches Saturday 20 June 2020

Dear Members

This is letter 19. I am writing it after doing general office work yesterday and then preparing for the Pop Up Shop yesterday afternoon and into today. On sale today are plain and cheese scones as well as Anzac biscuits and yoyos. The pre-order sales are quite good. Pam has been busy in the kitchen most of yesterday. I hope she is going to bed shortly as she is starting the scone baking at 6.30am.

Kind Regards

Marion



The branch has also been busy during our lockdown and we have made pamper packs which the south west healthcare asked if they could be sent to NSW to the fire victims. We of course said yes, and we just received this wonderful thankyou: Showing appreciation for the time and effort from CWA Victoria. A win-win situation and great promotion.

Re scone recipe for Royal Melbourne Show. Thought you might get a smile from this. Our daughter has three adult children aged from 18 to 22. She volunteered at the Primary School Canteen that they attended. Though I enjoy baking, I haven't baked scones for quite some time. Two weeks ago I took out my recipe book and decided to try the Show scone recipe for the first time. I found it amazing. I rang my daughter to tell her about it and she said, "Oh I know, it is marvellous. I always used that recipe whenever the teachers were having a meeting, and I made scones for their Morning Tea. I couldn't believe it! Trust all is well with you. Warmest wishes.



I love the Spoonies! We are hoping to get together for our July meeting. Our meeting hall has enough space for social distancing. Members are working on vegie bags and other projects.

I was amused to see that we were all awake in the wee hours of the morning! The city is slowly awakening but it is still a long way to go before we are "normal" and of course the winter chill keeps people indoors. Just a few members have been sewing Gowns for Doctors. One branch is catering for a birthday party tomorrow. Another branch will be able to meet again, in their very large community hall. the members are younger so are not still being asked to remain at home. One branch is being kept together via email and FB and have a weekly Covid inspired nursery rhyme circulated by the secretary. Two other branches have met on Zoom.

Thank you for your regular emails with messages from the other CWA Branches around the State. They are lovely to read and a good way of hearing about how everyone is dealing with this strange new reality. I am attaching a letter from our Branch where some members have shared what they've been doing during the lockdown, for you to include in your email should you wish.

The following contains some of the ways our Branch members have been keeping busy and sane throughout the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

Our President believes that this time we've all been obliged to spend in isolation has slowed a lot of us down and made us appreciate what we have. Seeing we have been blessed with some beautiful weather over the last 8 weeks she has been catching up on a lot of activities such as gardening and walking. Also, she has been teaching herself to crochet, and has continued on with her knitting, and patchwork.

Our branch has been catching up for morning coffee in the park once a week and at local cafés, (since restrictions have been eased) remembering of course to social distance ourselves.

Just as the COVID-19 restrictions hit, one of our Branch members finally lost her long battle with cancer. Despite being in ill health for the past few years she was still actively involved and always keen to help out. Sadly, due to the limits on the number of attendees, fellow members were unable to attend her funeral in person but those of us who could, managed to watch it online. We will honour her memory properly once we can all get back together.

Thanks to lockdown, well ... another member was able to lockdown her Farmer Husband after promising that he would help her in the garden after 5 years. With the Autumn weather over the last few months, they have been getting the vegie garden in order, making new raised vegie boxes. She has put some winter plants in now and they are looking great. They've also moved the fence in their house yard closer to the house, so less garden to look after. And the bonus is that the cows are very happy with more grass for them to eat now.

She's also found herself spending a lot of time on the phone, ringing and talking to lots of family and friends.

It's been actually really nice to stop, take a breath and reflect on life in general. With schools in lockdown as well, she had to home school her grandsons at times, due to family matters. All she can say is that it was not that easy at times thank goodness for "Google". All in all the time went very fast. She thinks we are lucky to live where we do, with fresh air, in a farming area and a great town.

Another long-time member's ISO therapy has seen her generating 12 ute loads of pruning, working on her nature journal, making cards for our members and exercising, along with all the regular bits and pieces that still have to be done.

One of our member's is going to be a Grandmother soon so she has been busy sewing and knitting lovely garments in preparation for the new bub. She is also a very accomplished quilter and has found the lockdown a good time to work on some of her projects. She maintains that her house has never been so clean and tidy, now having plenty of time to keep on top of things, with no excuses to go out elsewhere.

I have taken time during this enforced isolation period to finally go through the boxes that we brought with us when we moved to this area about 3 years ago. It was like a lucky dip at a fair I found all sorts of 'treasures' that I had either forgotten about or had not been able to find previously. Of course, the downside to this activity was that I then had to find somewhere to put them all or think very seriously about what to keep and what to pass along. Suffice it to say that when the local Op Shop opens again, they will reap the benefits, especially as one of the main goals of this move was to downsize. Yeah, not too sure either myself or my husband met that brief very well at all!!! I have also finally bought some lovely Bendigo Woollen Mills wool and am knitting a jumper for myself – again something I've been planning to do for ages but have never managed to get around to.

I think we all agree, there's nothing like being obliged to remain at home to galvanise domestic activity but I must say that I have missed the social interaction with friends and family. Hopefully, clever minds can halt this Coronavirus and we can all get back to some sense of normality in the coming months.

Once again thank you for all your help - am now attaching photos of the commemorative plaques installed today. We planted the friendships roses a few months ago and now the accompanying plaques have been installed to finish off this little project - they are of course to remember members of our branch who have served in military conflicts (planted at Ripon Beaufort RSL) and Mrs RG Beggs our first president and an early state president (planted on the site of the original CWA Hall Beaufort). We hope you can find room in your next newsletter for these photos.





State President's Email Letter (20) to Branches 27/06/2020

Good Morning Members

I am writing this letter from home on Saturday evening although you may not receive it until Monday morning. Being at home gave me the opportunity to see my garden breaking into spring flowers, chat to the neighbours, mow the lawn, see some friends from a suitably social distance and catch up with personal paperwork.

We have had the good fortune to receive recent media attention over the last few days. At my request Deputy State President Pam Mawson made scones for Gender Equity Victoria https://www.genvic.org.au/ on Wednesday afternoon, during a day titled Safe & Strong: Selfcare is a Political Act with State Treasurer Marie Vassallo holding the mobile phone to record the video. You may like to watch and listen to Pam and Marie in action https://www.facebook.com/GenderEquityVic/

Yesterday, Friday, Marie also agreed to speak with Matt Christie Journalist and Presenter on Plenty Valley FM 88.6, the local Community Radio Station for the Shire of Nillumbik and the Cities of Banyule and Whittlesea, This is now available as a podcast http://www.pvfm.org.au/podcasts/111/2020-06-25-23-50-21.mp3

On Wednesday afternoon I signed the Deed of Further Variation of the Funding Agreement Farmers Drought Fund Household Financial Relief Program between the State of Victoria as represented by its Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and The Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. This Deed allows the Association to pay out grants from State Government funds to even more farming households affected by the drought.

I hope you have been visiting our website regularly and checking out our **Grow Connect Improve** Project https://cwaofvic.org.au/grow-connect-improve/ each week and clicking on the six discs to see what each category is offering. Thank you to those members who share website and Facebook pages on their own sites.

As already indicated above, Wednesday was a very busy day. State Council was held via Zoom videoconferencing and 54 Members of Honour, Senior Office Bearers and Group Presidents dealt with the business at hand.

The next CWA of VIC Pop Up Shop is on Saturday 4 July 10am-2pm at 3 Lansell Road. Pam is preparing to cook plain and date scones, sausage rolls and mini quiches. Our friends in Toorak and surrounds are very generous and great supporters of our endeavours.

I enjoy reading of the many ways you continue to keep in touch with your members. It is pleasing to hear that some of you have been able to meet. Please continue to be aware of the day to day changes regarding the restrictions and abide by the meeting and cleaning requirements. Keep checking the website https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus for the latest information.

Kind Regards Marion

Marion E Dewar State President



Hi All

On Friday 12th of June I spotted an article in the Tarrangower Times about the competition and contacted the editor to enquire as to who to contact to use an empty window with intention of promoting all the Branches in our Group as well as the many activities of CWA.

On Monday 15/6 I had the offer of a small window in the centre of the town. I then rang a small number of members to gauge interest and abilities to help. 6 of us met in Maldon on Thursday 18th to look at the site and discuss possibilities over BYO lunch in the Park. The sun was out but the wind was very fresh.

I put our entry in that day and organized the requirements for using the shop through the agent.

Tuesday 23/6 members came to Newstead with boxes of decorations and ideas for our display. The widow is only a little bigger than a trestle table and we had enough to fill about 4 windows.

Our concept came together and chosen items went into boxes to be taken back on Friday where we needed to set up and be finished by noon.

Thankfully all went to plan and we all agreed that the result was worth it.

The Window can be taken down on Sunday 12/7 so be quick and take a look at our WINNING entry. Thank you to my willing helpers and a special thank you to Helen Johnstone for not only loaning some of her special treasures but also for cleaning the windows beforehand. Great Job all.

PS the attached is a little blurry but I had to be quick as the crowd was gathering.

State President's Email Letter 21 to Branches 04072020

Dear Members

I am writing this week's letter while taking a break from serving at the Pop Up Shop. My job was to bag the quiches and sausage rolls. Today we sold plain and date scones, mini quiche Lorraine and mini vegetarian quiches, and sausage rolls. Pam has been very busy. Thank you to members of Umina Branch for assistance in the kitchen and on the day. Thank you to all helpers! You may have heard me speaking with Matt Preston on ABC radio 774 earlier this week. The subject was how recipes have and have not changed over the years. You may remember Matt was a guest judge at a Christmas Fare some years ago. Thank you for sharing your news, both here and in the Magazine.

Kind Regards

Marion



Some lovely items in your newsletter. Wow, that gem of a window display!! But mostly I have wanted to say how impressed I am with the *Grow Connect Improve Project* https://cwaofvic.org.au/grow-connect-improve/ each week. Who made this series??? Stunning for being absolutely appropriate for Covid Daze. Great concept, great presentation, very professional. I have made 3 scarves...shared scones with neighbours...love it!



The Branch had their first meeting on Tuesday 30th June. It was held at Rose Cottage Restaurant, one of our Best. Deb, the owner, let us have the run of the house cappuccino machine and all. We were very respectful of distances and hygiene and cleaning up afterwards. I think the girls were happy to see each other after being confined. Such a surprise for me – birthday card, flowers and card for my 50th wedding anniversary. Gluten free pavlova and a red bean chocolate cake – wow how spoilt. Some of us girls knitted beanies and head bands for the Laverton community in Western Australia, a large indigenous community. Some lovely Bright colours was made. Also, ladies busy with orders for jams, preserves and nut loaves.



We congratulate our new member Jess Hodder on her success in the photography competition. Jess is a young mum with three little children and a great new member. She is the daughter in law of longtime member Kerrie. The branch is keeping in contact via phone and also craft days We are making knee rugs for the Goodwin Homes. We also have conducted one meeting. Hope everyone is keeping safe.

3 Lansell Road Toorak Victoria 3142 Australia (03) 9827 8971

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'For Country and City Women'