

"I believe in the genius of women. Even in the darkest periods that genius is found, which is the leaven of human progress and history."

Blessed Pope John Paul II

The Catholic Women's League of Australia (CWLA) is the national peak body representing the League's seven Member Organisations located throughout Australia. Addressing social justice and ethical questions is one of our primary tasks. We seek to influence legislative and administrative bodies at all levels in order to preserve the dignity of the human person. We strive to be a voice for the voiceless.

We are a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) and have consultative (Roster) status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UN). We are represented by our National International Secretary at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) sessions held at the UN Headquarters in New York each year.

Our WUCWO Board Member Australia also helps ensure that we are 'heard' in international forums.

In 2011, the League established a small Research Centre in Hobart, Tasmania. Although this Centre marks a new development in our history, it is built upon the many years over which the League has pursued well informed and high quality engagement in the social and ethical issues of the day.

Inspired by the example of our founding sisters both in Australia and internationally, our mission is to transform our culture into a civilisation of life and love through prayer and action.



HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

If you are interested in joining a vital group of Catholic women trying to bring the light of the Gospel to the world, please contact the League organisation in your State or Territory. Their contact details are available on our website at www.cwla.org.au.

The League is a work of faith, an expression of the concrete love of God for all human persons. The members of the League move always, and unashamedly, from a foundation of prayer. It is prayer that empowers the League members in their attempts to be bearers of life, hope and dignity to others, and it is prayer that has enabled these attempts to continue to bear such abundant good fruit in the lives of so many.

The work of the League is dedicated to the Holy Spirit and Our Lady, Help of Christians.

If you would like to support the work of the Catholic Women's League Australia, please contact us at cwlanational@bigpond.com or at:

CWLA Research Centre
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Email: researchofficer@cwla.org.au



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**CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE
AUSTRALIA**

OUR WORK

We are dedicated to building a culture of life; advocating for the respect of human rights with a particular focus on women and children; promoting the teaching of Christ and his Church concerning the dignity, integrity and freedom of the human person; promoting and supporting the formation of women to meet contemporary challenges; upholding the dignity of women through education and encouraging their participation in social and public life; promoting and supporting the duty of Catholic women to be educated in the teachings and traditions of the Church; promoting the role of lay women in the mission of the Church; and enabling women to participate more effectively in working for and building the Kingdom of God on earth.

CWLA also liaises with other organisations and faith communities in creating awareness about social justice and ethical issues. We foster ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue.

We promote and support vocations to the priesthood, religious life, single life as well as to Christian marriage and family.

Our Bioethics and Social Issues Convenors keep members informed about the pressing issues affecting our society both locally and internationally. The League seeks to bring to all its research and involvement with bioethics and social issues, the wisdom and clarity of the Christian intellectual tradition along with the creative and healing light of the Gospel.

Branch members are the backbone of each League Member Organisation. Members throughout Australia participate in the spiritual and practical aspects of their local parishes while also supporting the works carried out by their respective State/Territory Member Organisations as well as the work of the Catholic Women's League Australia. Gospel discussions and prayers are a key element of League meetings at all levels.

WOMEN UNITED IN PRAYER AND ACTION

Each of our Member Organisations has its own unique history and charism.

The various Catholic women's organisations started to work together at the national level as early as 1928. Our Federal Conferences grew out of the International Eucharistic Congress held in Sydney that year. This first gathering of representatives of Catholic women's organisations in Australia was such a success that they agreed to hold Inter-State Conferences at regular intervals, and to combine in as many ways as possible to influence

public opinion. As a consequence, the Federal Council of Catholic Women was formed, uniting women throughout Australia in prayer and action.

At the 1961 Conference in Canberra, the name of the Federal Council of Catholic Women was changed to the Australian Council of Catholic Women. At the national conference in Canberra in 1975, the peak representative body was re-named the Catholic Women's League Australia.

WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS (WUCWO)

We are an active member of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) and work together with 5 million women in more than 60 countries to promote the presence, participation and co-responsibility of Catholic women in society and the Church, in order to enable them to fulfil their mission of evangelisation and to work for human development.

WUCWO has consultative status with the United Nations and is represented at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York and Geneva; the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in Rome; the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva; the International Labour

Organisation (ILO) in Geneva; and UNESCO in Paris. WUCWO is also present at the Council of Europe.

WUCWO was the first international Catholic organisation to receive UN recognition as an NGO. WUCWO was also a force in the creation and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In 2006, WUCWO was erected by the Holy See as a Public International Association of the Faithful. In October 2010, WUCWO celebrated a century of service by women for the Church and society at their Centenary Assembly in Jerusalem.