



The Power of

Passion

Stories as told by the Women of Campbelltown



CAMPBELLTOWN
CITY COUNCIL

Introduction

By Mayor Jill Whittaker

The women of Campbelltown in the twenty first century are inspiring leaders and builders. As you read the stories in this volume you will see that the common theme is about women who have pursued big ambitions and found the power within to do so. Whatever the field, we find women are there creatively constructing and contributing to society. They balance many roles and responsibilities with finesse and style. More and more we see them as leaders providing new positive ideas to our community.

It hasn't been common for women to have recognition or representation in the development of modern Campbelltown. Women just got on with the job of constructing a better community in a myriad of ways, by themselves or in partnership with husbands, family or friends. The first female Campbelltown councillor, Margary Dunn, believed that women live in the community and therefore see what needs to be done. This book helps to create a new narrative.

Women doing extraordinary things is part of the Campbelltown legacy. In the very earliest days of colonial Campbelltown women were significant pioneers. Martha Campbell (née Levi), the wife of Charles James Fox Campbell; Jessie McDonald who unusually for a woman, owned Lochend House in her own right as a wealthy widow; Sarah Cresdee who had a significant landholding and who gave her name to Cresdee Road; Rebekah

Hobbs who was one of the founders of the temperance group "The Female Rechabite Tent"; the local women who petitioned parliament for the vote; and the many other women who worked incredibly hard to build community supports and institutions, played a huge role.

This booklet showcases some of the incredible women living in Campbelltown between 2020 and 2023. They have made a significant and enduring impact as individuals and this volume celebrates their achievements at that time.

As Mayor I have seen their work and the leadership of women in the community who have tirelessly worked for a better future. It is a tremendous honour to have become the first female Mayor of Campbelltown after 150 years. A strong community adopted the "The Women of Campbelltown" Project enthusiastically as a timely celebration of the tremendous achievements of those providing new ideas and lifestyles.

Please read and enjoy these fascinating stories of the power of a passionate dream, outlining the vision, the struggles and the success that follows their ambitious challenges.

Jill Whittaker OAM
Mayor
BA Dip Ed
June 2023



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Ann Whitby

It is important to have space for creatives in the community

Ann has been involved with the Campbelltown ArtHouse since its establishment in 2016. She was Secretary for four years and is the current President.

She is a regular exhibitor during South Australia Living Artists (SALA) and Adelaide Fringe Festival exhibitions.

Ann completed qualifications in painting, drawing and visual arts.

During the time the ArtHouse was being established, Ann discovered

that making a difference to other peoples lives was what she

needed to do. She has been the driving force and instrumental

in improving and developing the governance, financial

management, membership processes and the overall

marketability of the ArtHouse.

She is passionate about the ability of community art

projects to build an inclusive and creative community.

“*Listen to your heart and always believe in yourself and know you are enough just the way you are.*”

Cathy Papandrea

Always see the good in people

Cathy migrated to Campbelltown from the Marche region of Italy when she was 16 years old. From hairdressing to managing salons and a restaurant Cathy's warmth, love of people and desire to help them has shaped her career and her life. She has managed the Marche Club in Paradise for 30 years.

From the time she arrived in Campbelltown, Cathy has been involved in providing opportunities for people to meet, eat and enjoy each other's company. She set up a program for older people to socialise and this still happens monthly at the Marche Club. Cathy is heavily involved in community with the Marche Club, Radio Italia Uno program, live streaming a TV program back to Italy, a representative of her Marche region on the Council for the Marchigiani Abroad, President of Regional Clubs Australia and has previously been nominated for Woman of the Year. Cathy has been awarded the high honour of Cavaliere (Cav.) for her services to the Italian community, awarded by the Italian Government.

“Marche Club is my home and I greet everyone as though they are coming into my home.”



Cheryl Axleby

Connecting to families and community

Cheryl Axleby, a proud Narungga woman, has dedicated her career to promoting social justice and inclusion for Aboriginal people. As CEO of the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement since 2012, Cheryl has been a strong advocate for Aboriginal rights and perspectives in the community and government.

Cheryl joined the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM) at 17 and has worked extensively in justice, social inclusion, child protection, and training, eventually becoming a paralegal before becoming CEO.

Cheryl has actively supported community sports and served on the Campbelltown Council Reconciliation Advisory Committee. Her ongoing advocacy work includes chairing the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and national co-chair of the Change the Record Coalition.

“We need to support Aboriginal people with further training and development in management to run their own organisations.”

Di Booker

Build networks and connections

Di worked extensively nationally and internationally on educational quality standards. As a librarian, Di is passionate about providing information in accessible ways. She is an active volunteer in Council's local history and Women of Campbelltown programs. She is also an ambassador at the South Australian State Library. Born in Mount Gambier, Di's first position was at the State Library of South Australia in the children's library, and then in the youth lending service. It was here that Di forged strong networks with colleagues that continue today. Since Di retired in 2014, she has held a continuing role on UNESCO working parties for Vocational Education and Training, travelling to Europe to provide advice as a private citizen.



“*Success is not the ‘headline events’ and career achievements but rather finding satisfaction with your own life’s choices.*”

Giovanna (Jill) De Cianni (née Russo)

Find a solution and courageously change problems

Jill started the Heart Foundation Walking Group in 2009 which meets weekly at Thorndon Park and actively fosters community engagement.

Arriving in Australia with her family as a young girl, Jill initially faced language barriers but overcame them with determination, completing two school years in one. After school, Jill's career path led her to Myer, undertaking various roles and breaking barriers. Even after retiring, Jill continued to make an impact working for her accountant, supporting local organisations and starting her own successful business.

She actively participated in community initiatives, establishing a thriving walking group, raising funds for charitable causes and joining the Campbelltown Ageing Well Committee to make a positive difference in her community.

“Encourage young women to study hard as knowledge opens your opportunities and choices.”



Giovanna Marmorale

Immerse yourself fully, mind, body and soul into what you do

Giovanna grew up as the fifth of seven children on the family farm in Paduli in the Campagna region of Italy. Giovanna married Pino, a local boy, when they were 17. Pino came from a generation of cheese makers, but with Italy suffering from work shortages they had to stop making cheese. This spurred on his dream to go to Australia. Giovanna, as a patriotic Italian and being very close to her family, was not keen to migrate but her husband was adamant. In April 1974 the young family arrived in Adelaide.

The ambitious couple decided to look for a business and decided on a delicatessen on the Parade. Over the 2 years they had the delicatessen, they realised that there was a shortage of cheese makers locally and it was hard to fill customer orders for things like fresh ricotta. A born and bred cheese maker, Pino was keen to sell the business and start a cheese factory.

Giovanna and her husband Pino established and have run the La Vera Cheese Company for the past 38 years. La Vera is an award-winning company making 33 cheese varieties located in Newton. Giovanna and Pino have brought their generations of cheese making from Italy to establish a strong cheese making history in Australia.



“Nothing comes from the sky,
make opportunities for yourself.”

Gul Zehra

I trust in myself and the person I am

Gul migrated as a child with her family to Australia from Pakistan, where they were a targeted minority group. She has embraced all of the opportunities this move provided and has been a keen community participant and active volunteer on the Campbelltown Youth Advisory Committee.

Gul and her experiences featured in the multicultural 'This is my Campbelltown' video project.

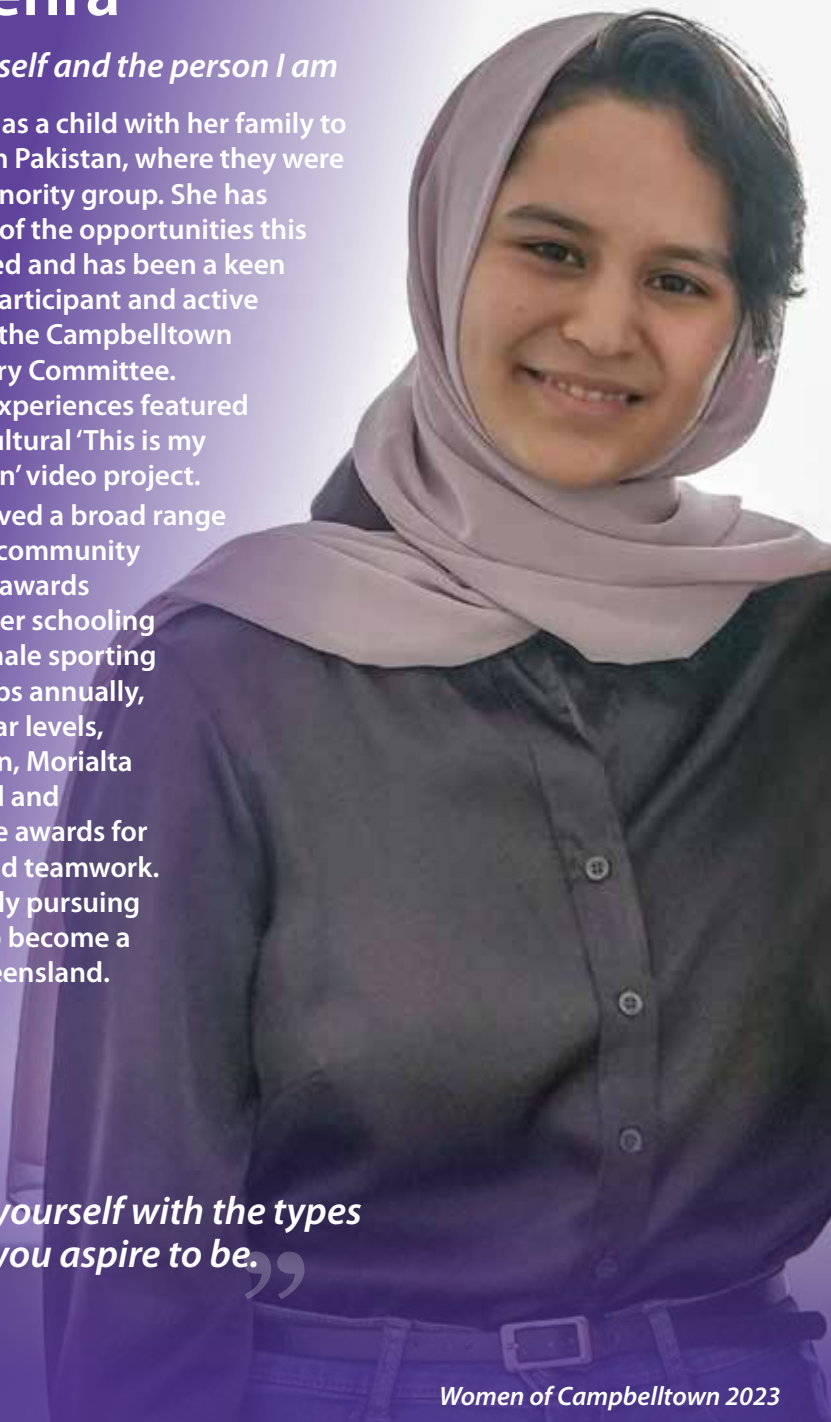
Gul has achieved a broad range of academic, community and sporting awards

throughout her schooling including female sporting championships annually, dux of her year levels, school captain, Morialta Citizen Award and

Defence Force awards for leadership and teamwork.

Gul is currently pursuing her studies to become a doctor in Queensland.

“Surround yourself with the types of people you aspire to be.”



Harshani Jayasinghe

There is no goal too big

Harshani was a finalist in the Channel 9 Young Achievers Award and the Australia Day Awards Young Citizen of the Year in 2016. She is actively pursuing a career in health and policy, aiming to improve the lives of people through health initiatives.

Harshani was born in Sri Lanka and migrated to Australia with her mother and two brothers. The family settled in Rostrevor and she was awarded a scholarship to attend St Peter's Girls' School in 2004 where she developed her passion for science.

Her qualifications include a Degree of Biomedical Science, an Honours Degree (Health Science) and a Master of Public Health. She was the youngest ever research scientist coordinating two large randomised multi-site trials in the Respiratory Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

“Campbelltown has a lovely and generous community, and my family has been very fortunate to call it home.”

Imma Caporaso

Work with passion and commitment

Imma has established a number of local businesses including the renowned Mercato, which provides quality local and imported fine foods and hosts annual events to celebrate the best in food.

Imma and Mario have provided friendly, personalised service and quality produce, for over 37 years, in their succession of six businesses throughout the local area. In 1988 their son, John joined the family business and in June 2005 they moved to a larger, purpose-built store to open Mercato, a gourmet food emporium. Three generations of the family now cater to the community and Imma can still be found at the store four days a week.

“*Follow your passion
and do what you
believe in with
all your heart
whatever you do.*”



Janet Durden

Have a try, you might surprise yourself

Janet is the designer of the Links Wall Hanging you can see at the Campbelltown Library; funded by the City of Campbelltown to celebrate the Centenary of Federation in 2001. Janet's design incorporates many features unique to the area, its history and its future. 'The magic that could be worked with just a needle and thread was astounding but the interesting times were when beads, buttons, plumber's hardware, oven-baked clay... and anything else we could source were used.'

Janet continues to complete many different craft activities, believing that there is a direct relationship between keeping the mind and body active. Sewing remains her main interest and 'Dream big' remains her motto!

“Never say I can't do it.”

Jenny Bates

Collaboration leads to the best outcome

Jenny was elected as the inaugural President of the Lochiel Park Community Garden, a role she has now held for more than 10 years. Jenny's enthusiasm, leadership and commitment has been an inspiration to the membership to meet their aims of growing fruit and vegetables in a sustainable way, sharing knowledge with the community and ensuring the garden becomes a focal point in the community. In 2023, Jenny was nominated for her valuable contribution to the community as part of Campbelltown City Council's Australia Day Awards.

“The wisdom of crowds is critical to achieving successful community activities, no one person has all the answers.”



Jenny Paradiso

Find your tribe

Jenny heads up Suntrix, an award-winning solar and battery storage business she grew from her kitchen table to a multi-million dollar company.

Jenny worked in public libraries and a library software company when, researching solar panels for their home, Jenny and her husband decided to start their own business by importing the products themselves. Within a short time, Jenny was working part-time in the software company, raising her daughter and running a business. Jenny runs Suntrix as a 'family unit' with clear values and purpose to make a positive difference through a cleaner energy future.

Jenny is a member of the Premier's Climate Change Council, the National Board for the Clean Energy Council, the South Australian Entrepreneurship Advisory Board and the Victorian Women's Water Leadership Committee.

“Don't judge yourself on your current abilities and even if you are, show no fear. Be brave and bold.”



Jill Whittaker OAM

Think globally, act locally

Jill is a long-standing member of the Campbelltown community.

She settled in the area as she appreciated its affordability, greenery and natural surroundings.

She commenced her work with the Campbelltown Council initially as a ratepayer seeking to get greater access, inclusion and connection for her family.

In 2003, Jill was first elected to Council and in 2018

made history by being elected as the first female Mayor of Campbelltown.

Jill's commitment lies in fostering a strong local community and leveraging the positive impact of local government on the lives of friends, neighbours and family.

“Be kind to others as we all have our own journey and stories; a conversation often shows us that we have more in common than what separates us.”

Joan Stone AM

There is always something you can do for somebody else

Joan has flourished in her 'third age career' working as a volunteer, board member and chair on a range of age advocacy and rights groups. Joan received a Member of the Order of Australia for her volunteer work with retirement villages in 2020.

From life as an evacuee in the London Blitz, being a new migrant to Australia and living in a rural community, Joan has always contributed to her community. She has been an influential voice for the development of the policies and design of retirement villages. Joan fully retired from her volunteering at 90. At that time, she had been the chair for 15 years of Aged Rights Advocacy Service and was still on the Council of the Ageing Board and SA Retirement Association Residents Board.

“You get more out of volunteering than you give.”

Judith Black

Often the only woman in a man's world

Judith was a City of Campbelltown Councillor from 1997 to 2010 and was Deputy Mayor from 2003 to 2005. Her community involvement has been wide reaching and her passion remains encouraging women to be involved in all levels of management and government.

Judith found that in many of the public service and other positions she held during her career that she was often the only woman in the workplace. She was a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Committee following Cyclone Tracy in 1974 and remembers that 'everyone did everything' to rebuild the community. Judith has been involved in Neighbourhood Watch since 1989 and volunteering with Helping Hand, Meals on Wheels, the Waste Warrior project and Campbelltown Public Library Local History room.



“Our experiences and the people we meet provide the strength, resilience and courage to start anew.”

Kathy Lilis

Be passionate about your work and make a difference

Kathy has dedicated her life to supporting women and their children find safety and support during and after experiencing domestic and family violence. She is the program manager of the Eastern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service, a program of Women's Safety Services SA.

Kathy has worked in this service for the past 24 years as a case manager, team leader and program manager.

The service provides 11 on-site units, 15 supported and 18 transitional housing locations and continued support for women and their children if required. They support 60-70 families daily and up to 250 families per year. Kathy provides support for the day-to-day work as well as supervising a community development manager, property/administration manager and 7 specialist domestic violence case managers.



“Learn from what has happened in your life, build confidence in yourself and your abilities and keep moving forward.”

Kathy Pfeiffer

Do what needs to be done

Kathy is an active volunteer across a broad range of community activities. It is her 'can do' attitude that makes her a popular community member to volunteer alongside.

After schooling, Kathy joined the public service, before working in the family mechanic business.

Kathy started volunteering to meet government requirements when she was her husband's carer, prior to him entering a nursing home.

Kathy supports the Council's Home Support Program, Fruit Crew, Community Orchard, Makerspace, Give an Hour initiatives and the community led Repair Café. As a volunteer, Kathy enjoys the purposeful tasks, relaxed atmosphere, meeting community members and the fact that she can fit tasks that benefit the community, around her availability.

“Don't take life too seriously or worry about tomorrow; run with today as nothing stays the same forever or starts perfectly.”



Katrina Spencer

Create the community in which you want to live

Katrina is the founding chair of the Athelstone Community Garden and involved in a range of community activities. In her career as a teacher, school principal, and education director, she championed continuous learning, inclusion and community. She continues to foster these values at the Athelstone Community Garden.

She joined the Campbelltown Council Active Ageing Advisory Committee in 2020 and has been an interviewer for the Council's Market Garden History and Women of Campbelltown projects. She has led community arts projects, teaches Tai Chi and is on the board of the Campbelltown U3A (University of the Third Age). She believes that if you want to live in a great community you need to be an active part of creating it.

“There is no such thing as can't, you mightn't do it as well as others, but you can give it a jolly good crack and believe in your own abilities.”

Kerrie Smith

Be confident, take advantage of your opportunities and do your best

Kerrie has been a teacher throughout her career and following retirement from the paid workforce has remained committed to providing

learning opportunities for all ages, particularly through her involvement with U3A (University of the Third Age) locally and at a state level.

Kerrie was born in Victor Harbor, moving to Port Elliot where her parents were actively involved in community activities and received national and community awards for their services to the community. She graduated from Adelaide University and Adelaide Teachers College in 1967 with Education and Arts degrees.

Her first teaching position was at Campbelltown High School in 1968. Kerrie appreciates the value of being involved in sporting activities. She was a member of the SA State hockey squad, trained an extensive range of school sporting teams and is a life member of Kindergym Association of SA.

“From house mistress at Woodlands to U3A Curriculum Manager, I’m always learning something new, and providing opportunities for others to do the same.”

Reverend Linda Driver

Be the best version of you

Linda is the Minister of the Athelstone Uniting Church and has a long history of involvement in community events, managing stage and musical activities and opportunities for youth.

In 2017, Linda was called to a placement at Athelstone Uniting Church and moved into the manse in early 2018. Linda has helped to facilitate greater outreach with church groups now meeting in the local cafes, including a craft group, supporting AKWAK, (Aussies Knitting for War Affected Kids), the Council Christmas event and running CommuniTEA events. As Minister, her focus is to build connections between the church and its members and the wider community, having a presence and positive impact in the community.



“Have faith that your paths will lead you to the place you were uniquely made for.”

Lisa De Vizio

Working hard at what you love

Lisa and her husband have been operating Panini Brothers for over 18 years with all of their products made on premises. They have come to be known as a neighbourhood legend, a family-operated business who passionately believe in supporting other local businesses by sourcing ingredients locally. Panini Brothers bake all of their own bread and pastries using traditional Italian recipes that were passed on to them by their parents and grandparents. Lisa's day to day role is marketing the business, and managing the front of house and the more than 30 staff who are essential to the success of the business.



“*Believe in yourself, be strong, be resilient.*”

Liz Milner

Everyone needs a wild place

Liz has travelled the world developing a passion for protecting native flora and fauna. She was awarded the Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award in 2021 for South Australia which acknowledged her as 'one of the most highly regarded volunteers in the region producing remarkable bush care work that spans over 1,464 ha of high quality native bushland, all the while engaging, encouraging and inspiring the community'. She has mentored, educated and provided inspiration to other volunteers and community members including school groups working with environmental professionals to improve habitat areas which are critical refuges for threatened flora and fauna.

*“Being in nature
nourishes my soul.”*

Luci Blackborough

Plant the seeds for progress

Luci, at 18, became Campbelltown Council and South Australia's youngest elected member at the 2018 local elections. Luci's interest in politics was supported by her leadership opportunities at school and her involvement in the Campbelltown YAC (Youth Advisory Committee).

Luci balances her role on Council with university studies and part time work. Luci has appreciated the opportunity to give back and enable positive change as a local councillor and is proud to be part of a progressive, positive, forward thinking Council. She would like to see more unique events locally and issues like affordable housing and local actions to address climate change as future focus areas.

Luci encourages women of all backgrounds to get involved, take on leadership roles and step up to be a change maker. She would tell her younger self or other women, to trust your instinct, your own abilities and be brave.

“It is important to take stock, be realistic, seek feedback and input so that you balance self-doubts with a good dose of reality.”



Lyn Lovegrove-Niemz

Respect is a two-way process

Lyn is a talented artist and proud Ngarrindjeri woman, she has won the Campbelltown art exhibition over 8 times, with two paintings on display at Council.

Born to a Ngarrindjeri father and a white mother, Lyn faced the consequences of the Aboriginal Protection Act before its abolition. She has strong memories of spending time on her grandmother's homeland, Murrangoong and of her father's encouragement of her artistic pursuits. Overcoming personal tragedies, Lyn dedicated herself to raising her children while juggling multiple jobs. She studied TAFE qualifications to work in schools, Aboriginal Family Support Services and at Centacare until she retired. Lyn has achieved notable success, winning exhibitions and selling her paintings. Lyn now seeks to express her culture through unique sculptures, blending traditional designs and cultural weaving.



“Do not be intimidated by the world, be brave and daring despite what life brings to your door.”



Lyn Robins

FRSSA BD (Jewellery)

Life is made up of the people you meet along the way

A multi-award winning artist and jeweller, Lyn has participated in many exhibitions and 25 solo shows. She is a versatile artist, working with a wide range of subjects and mediums. For nearly 50 years Lyn taught at secondary and tertiary levels, the last 30 years conducting popular classes in her Tranmere studio. She has a strong love of the Australian landscape which is reflected in her paintings – her aim is to share this passion with her audience. Her work is represented in private and corporate collections in Australia and overseas. She is a Fellow of the Royal South Australian Society of Art.

*“Painting is my work;
making jewellery is
my knitting.”*

Dr Madeline Melrose

Making music accessible

Madeline is a talented violinist and music educator who has achieved success in establishing music schools and supporting students to pursue their musical aspirations.

Madeline's passion for the violin started at a young age, with formal lessons from seven years old. Excelling academically, Madeline pursued her music degree at the Elder Conservatorium, completing it by age 18. She moved to Sydney for her Master's degree while teaching at music schools. On returning to Adelaide, she established her own violin academy and completed her PhD with distinction.

Madeline still teaches a select group of dedicated students, teaches at The University of Adelaide's Open Music Academy and is involved with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Australian Music Examinations Board and The University's Senior College Committee.

“Music has been my safe place, my contentment and confidence in troubled times.”

Dr. Margaret Bakker

Science, music and the law – a very full life

Dr. Margaret Bakker is Principal Barrister and Solicitor, Bakker Vagnarelli Lawyers, and for more than 30 years has been Organist and Musical Director of Italian Mass at the Church of the Annunciation, Hectorville. She is equally passionate about all her professions, as a research chemist followed by doctoral research in musicology and finally as a barrister and solicitor. Margaret finds a lot of satisfaction in mentoring many younger female lawyers and providing them the opportunity to attend court proceedings where she has been the instructed Counsel. Her qualifications include Ph.D., Master of Laws, Graduate Diploma in Corporate Law, Diploma in Legal Practice and a Bachelor of Music (Hons).

“It is important for females to take advantage of every opportunity; stay focused and be positive; look forward not backward in surmounting hurdles.”

Marie Skrodzki

You can do anything, but you can't do everything

From an early age, Marie had an interest in politics with an ambition to be Prime Minister. Marie was elected to Campbelltown Council at the age of 21 after having been a member of the Campbelltown YAC (Youth Advisory Committee) for several years.

As a younger member of Council she was able to bring a fresh perspective and challenge the status quo and during her time learnt the importance of asking questions, trusting the right people and listening to the community.

After completing her Council term Marie planned to step back, but was invited to join the Norwood Football Club Board, becoming the first female director in the club's history. Marie believes it is important to focus on your own journey rather than comparing yourself to others. She advises setting clear boundaries and committing only to causes you truly believe in.

“*It is either 'Hell Yes' or it is a 'No'.*”

Mary Centofanti

Never too busy to put back into the community

Mary commenced her working life at Dresslief when she was 15 years old, the same hair products company, founded in 1930, that she and her husband now own and manage as a thriving international business.

Mary's parents migrated from Greece during the 1960s and she has fond memories of growing up in Parkside and playing with the many cousins who lived close by. The close knit family is still important to her with many involved in the business.

She has lived and worked in Campbelltown for more than 20 years, where she and her husband believe in putting back into the community, supporting 'grass roots' activities.

“Believe in yourself and be prepared to work hard, remembering that there will be many ups and downs and unexpected external factors that may impact on what you want to do.”

Meredith Burgess

Dream bigger, go harder

Meredith is the President of the Magill RSL. She has challenged traditional stereotypes to pursue her passions. From being the only woman in her TAFE class to joining the Army Apprentice School, she overcame a range of barriers.

Throughout her military career, Meredith was often the sole woman in male-dominated units. She undertook officer training, becoming the first female apprentice to do so at Duntroon. After graduation, she led a team in rebuilding tanks and armoured personnel carriers. Her deployment to East Timor exposed her to intense challenges that eventually took a toll on her mental health, leading to a medical discharge after 22.5 years of service. Despite the hardships, she cherishes the positive experiences and continues to contribute to her community as President of the Magill RSL, supporting veterans' welfare and fostering inclusivity.



“Follow your dreams, make sure they are big enough and then go hard.”

Mia Fantasia-Copley

Small acts of kindness change the world

Mia is co-founder and office manager of Turkindi, the Aboriginal Information Network of SA, a community information service operated by, and for, South Australian First Nations Peoples which helps them to find meaningful employment, training or information. Turkindi is a Kurna word that means coming together and sharing information.

Mia sends out daily emails to connect, inform and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. She is actively involved in community events and takes great joy in seeing her granddaughter lead 'Welcome to Country' at events and takes pride in her cultural heritage.

“Activate the best
in others' hearts.”



Paddy Mckay

Education breaks the cycle

Paddy believes in the power of volunteering in all aspects of the Campbelltown City area. Paddy was born in Ireland and grew up in Plympton with her adopted family and remembers that she was influenced by her brothers to believe that there was nothing that she couldn't do, being a girl made no difference. She founded, and is President of LAVA (Lions Against Violence Adelaide) and is an Ambassador for Catherine House. She is a powerful advocate for promoting violence prevention programs in schools and the community.

Paddy has three university degrees and as a Special Justice in South Australia she is rostered in the Magistrates Court to hear minor matters. Maintaining family connections is important to Paddy and she always finds time to look after her grandchildren.

“My theme as the Lions Club District Governor was ‘education for change, break the cycle’ which reflects my conviction that if people’s views are to be changed, then it starts with education.”

Pam Schartner

Live your personal values

Pam is the South Australian branch leader of the Australian Knit for Charities group, establishing Adelaide Knit and Natter in 2012. The 800+ members have contributed over 100,000 knitted items for charity since that time.

Pam spent her career with the public service in a range of roles at the State and National level where she appreciated the importance of connections, inclusion and feeling valued; these values have been a feature of Adelaide Knit and Natter. Pam coordinated the two Campbelltown Council poppy projects for the Centenary of the Gallipoli Landing and the hundred years since the end of World War I. Thousands of crafted poppies were donated for displays locally and as part of the National '5000 Poppies' project.



“Step up and take action when needed with fairness, compassion, empathy and caring towards others.”

Sandi Itropico

Trust yourself and be confident in your ability

Sandi has been involved in the catering industry for more than 40 years. She remembers a safe, happy childhood in Campbelltown, close to relatives, sleeping under the stars on hot nights and being treated to fish and chips and ice creams. Her passion for food and cooking developed while she was in her late teenage years when she was working in a range of different positions in the industry. During this time she was also developing her own business and she and her husband moved to Magill in 1999 where their home is also the centre for their commercial catering business.

Words of advice she may give her younger self are that “you get back what you put into whatever you do, if it’s what you love it will show”.

“You can always do something for someone old or young, even if you think you have no time, giving back helps your own mental health and you will feel a sense of purpose as you learn though the experience.”



Shelley Scales

When you love something, it doesn't feel like a chore

Volunteering and netball has always been part of Shelley's life. Her family has a long history with volunteering which set her up for a life committed to volunteering herself. Shelley has been involved on the Committee of Campbelltown Comets Netball Club since she was 18 years old. She joined at a time the Club was really struggling and literally took to the streets to revive it by delivering a flyer to houses around the Club seeking new players. This attracted new people and through word of mouth the Club began to rebuild to where it now has 36 teams.

Shelley is really proud that the Comets were the first Club in the Eastern District to have the netball dress, that we see being worn today by netballers all over the world. Shelley loves nothing more than looking across the full courts with players being watched by their family and friends. It makes her smile and feel incredibly proud.

“This Club is my baby, my second home.”



Sonia Bruno

Be passionate about what you do with the drive and determination to achieve it

Sonia and the Viscione family have a commitment to preserving traditional products, leading them to establish Continental Taralli Biscuits from their Magill home. Today, their 20 artisan biscuits are found in Australian supermarkets and even exported to Singapore.

Sonia was immersed in the business from a young age, and now manages administration, finance and sales. Inspired by her father's work ethic and her mother's caring support, Sonia strives to take the business to new heights with a vision to export to Italy.

Sonia's dedication extends to promoting local produce through various events, embodying the values she holds dear: kindness, openness, respect and a readiness to help others.



“Remember to make time for yourself, regardless of what the world throws at you.”

Sue Lloyd


Sharing interests builds community

Sue's involvement in community volunteer activities was inspired by the role model set by her parents and having a supportive partner who has enabled her to follow her interests and to take advantage of the many, often unexpected, rewards that community involvement brings.

Sue grew up in the country and while she planned to become a teacher on leaving school, it was not until 30 years later that she returned to TAFE to complete a Diploma in Early Childhood Education.

Travelling and observing other cultures has also been an important component to enhancing her social and cultural understandings.

Sue is well known for her leadership roles in Boomerang Bags since 2017, the Campbelltown Repair Café that she helped establish in 2020 and the local Buy Nothing Group.



“Collaborative projects provide opportunities for people to make use of existing resources, to give their time and add value and also to hand on skills to others. The benefits are not just to the community but also to each individual volunteer.”

Val Amber

Always involved

Val was born in Gumeracha and has lived in the City of Campbelltown for more than 60 years, bringing up three children and supporting her husband Max, as Lady Mayoress. Val was 15 years old when she started work, buying a sewing machine with her first pay. Cooking and gardening remain other passions and her grandchildren look forward to her meals when they get together as a family each week. Both Val and her husband have been actively involved with the Gorge Methodist Church and the Athelstone Uniting Church, supporting youth groups and catering for church events and community weddings. She also volunteered with Meals on Wheels for over 15 years.

“The family is the centre of my life – the happy memories and enjoying being with family are critical factors in my life.”

Vale Pederson

Seizing opportunity

Vale has a strong commitment to the Campbelltown City area and was awarded the Campbelltown Citizen of the Year in 2016. She was a member of Council's Active Ageing Advisory Committee, providing advice on the Council's ageing well agenda. Vale's working life included a wide range of career choices focused on her passions for food and fashion. The value she places on education is reflected in her long standing involvement in the U3A (University of the Third Age). She has been treasurer of the Adelaide Chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI) and has also given 25 years of service to the Campbelltown Landcare Group.

“As one door closes, another opens and taking advantage of the opportunities that has taken my life in different directions have been key factors in my life.”



Vicki de Wit

Commitment to others helps change lives

Vicki's commitment to helping the people of Vanuatu through collecting and sending sewing machines, wheelchairs and educational materials to the villagers earned her the honour of 2011 Campbelltown Citizen of the Year. Vicki has been travelling to Vanuatu for many years developing close relationships with the Ni-Vanuatu. In 1986 more than 2000 villagers attended Vicki's naming day and she became known as 'LynDwyer' and Auntie Vivi to the members of her new family.

Vicki is also an enthusiastic volunteer in the Campbelltown area, providing hair and beauty services and craft classes to the residents at Resthaven, Paradise. She loves gardening and her aim for her own Athelstone garden was to 'make it look like Vanuatu'.

“Helping the wider community begins with maintaining extended family relationships.”



The Women of Campbelltown is an annual project collecting and sharing inspiring stories of local women, launched each year at Council's International Women's Day event. You can see all the stories at www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au/iwd

A huge thank you to:

- all the Women of Campbelltown participants who shared their stories so generously
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The stories contained in this book were accurate at the time they were collected.

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