



## **WOMEN RISING**

Two zoom member's circles held on 18 and 20 May, 2021

*Report and reflection by Honey Nelson*

These talks were held under the guidance of three of the [Congress's central values](#):

1. Wisdom for the common good
2. Attention to the wisdom of First Peoples
3. Care for our young

**The circles were hosted by Congress founding members, Lyn Stephens and Janet Salisbury.**

**On 20 May we were lucky to also be joined by Dr Kath Kovac.** Kath has a background in science communication and for some years has led a women's circle in her hometown of Gunning, near Yass in NSW, working with girls and women across many ages. This has led to a deep interest in helping women understand their natural cycles, their preferred ways of working and their strength hand power. More recently she has started hosting a weekly program on her local radio station called 'Women's Rising.

*In preface:* We can recollect that in our long 100,000 years of human history, it is only 10,000 years since some of us settled to start farming: within a spiritual pantheon of Sky and sacred Mother Earth. And it is a mere 5000 years or so since humans in the near east started clustering into towns and then cities, began forging metals, developed cuneiform writing, and societal organisation became commandeered by chiefs, kings, male priesthoods, and military imperialists.

We can easily today recognise our world-wide legacy of men's monopoly of collective thought: in hierarchy, autocracy, colonisation, warfare, religious authority, history, arts, engineering, architecture, and until extremely recently an exclusive right to royalty, fealty, politics and religion.

We women, bound by needy children, have remained shrouded, traded, owned, dependent, obedient, unenfranchised, silenced or trivialised in art and literature, and hobbled (sometimes literally) in innumerable ways. Many accept that we must be somehow 'lesser beings'. Indeed, today we are only just starting to hear and know Who We Are, How We Think, rediscover our ancestral strength and endurance and power.

### ***Issues raised in our members' circles on Women Rising:***

Several clear issues captured our talk on both occasions:

- (1) *Female spirit:* We all need not only to hear the thought and voice of women, but also to recognise the female spirit which has been suppressed so long in our cultural cosmology: as we rise now to protect the Mother Earth and all her life-species.
- (2) *Female mind silenced:* The patriarchal ascendancy has largely silenced the feminine mind: which encompasses heart-feeling, relationships, grounding, partnerships — an immense lost legacy of quiet continuous wisdom and lateral connections. The Congress's work is to promote non-adversarial discussion and conflict resolution in a circle of exchange.
- (3) *Social structure and debate remain male-ordered:* Despite the great cultural opportunities opened by enfranchisement of women some 100 years ago, labour-saving home devices, and excellent fertility control, women's voices are still largely sidelined in major political decision-making, including decisions on climate change action. The stratified structure and manners of debate are manmade and inimical to women's broad and receptive arena: we have been 'fitting in' to this hierarchy for 100 years but it is now time for cultural change to allow women to participate on their own terms.
- (4) *Women's leadership is absolutely required in the present life-crisis:* Men's urge and technology for control, have culminated in violence against the Earth itself: in mass land, water and atmospheric intoxications and depletions, and life-threatening climate heating.
- (5) *Change in workplace manners:* There is urgent need for change in rules of conduct for institutions, boards, organisations etc, so that Women can safely and effectively work within them. This is one of the Congress's central missions.
- (6) *We will not change ourselves for this great purpose:* Several participants told stories of work-life in hierarchies; even women who performed 'like men' did not advance, they merely lost something deep inside themselves.
- (7) *Our strength to rise comes with self-knowledge:* Women's lateral attentiveness, lesser egocentricity, strong sense of duty-of-care for the young and old and all life (the fire in our belly!), and our intrinsic preference for cooperation, are essential qualifications for world leadership right now.
- (8) *First Peoples' traditional order* (pre-invasion) was one of mutually significant women's and men's business, recognising the necessary balance of female-and-male mind and spirit, whilst living in relative peace on a revered Mother Earth.
- (9) *Climate change could bring the end of patriarchy:* We agreed that only *great cultural transformation* will lead to effective action and decent survival. Women must lead the way to the solution.

### **Key points**

*Women Are Rising* now, in the face of world-wide political tardiness on climate crisis action. Traditional vertical power structures are mutually competitive or hostile, with a priority on economic advantage and expansion rather than conservation of a living loving landscape for future generations and all the species. Incredibly, in this cultural dead-end of

today, older generations in power are knowingly bequeathing to our descendants a feverish planet of storms, fire and extinctions.

*Women are one-half of the population and, importantly, of the parents of all children on Earth:* and our rightful, necessary and equal place in plans regarding their future is unquestionable.

If women don't stand together with loud voices for a rightly protective future, then present regimes will continue to squander remaining time with 'business as usual' thinking and even (incredibly wars. And amid these human-made climate and humanitarian crises, the human species may finally fail to protect our very own young ones, and our mother planet and her support systems for all life. Such a failing would be an ironic outcome of our so-called advanced intelligence and consciousness since the prevailing evolutionary force is for species to ensure the survival of their young.

Further information: [www.womensclimatecongress.com](http://www.womensclimatecongress.com)

Contact: [womensclimatecongress@gmail.com](mailto:womensclimatecongress@gmail.com)