

VACRO'S Ambassador for the Women's Mentoring Program

Carmel Benjamin AM was founder and later Executive Director of the Victorian Court Information and Welfare Network Inc. She designed and planned the organisation from 1970 to the commencement of services in June 1980, developing and guiding it until her retirement in 1995 by which time it has spread across all court systems. Carmel also designed and established a mentor program to support women in their difficult transition from prison to the community. These innovative programs reflect her philosophy of empowering individuals to take responsibility for the management of their own lives at the earliest opportunity.

Carmel has been a member of numerous Ministerial Advisory Committees and NGOs. She was Chairperson of the Victorian Women's Prison Council, a consultant to the Law Reform Commission and to the Public Advocate. She served on the Sentencing Advisory Council, as a member of the Women's Correctional Services Council and was a foundation member of VARJ, the Victorian Association of Restorative Justice. In 1996 Carmel established SupportService at the request of the then President of the Medical Practitioners of Victoria. *She is an Ambassador to VACRO's Women's Mentoring Program* (which she established in 2000 as 'woman 2 woman') and on the Steering Committee of WAM, the WomenAndMentoring project.

In 1988 Carmel became a finalist in the BHP Awards of Excellence and in 1989 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM). She has been awarded the VACRO A.R. Whatmore Award for services to Corrections and the Women's Electoral Lobby Vida Goldstein Award, and has been inscribed on the Victorian Honour Roll of Women. In 2013 Carmel became the Patron of the WAM organisation.