

It has certainly been a busy and exciting year. Firstly the speaker meetings.

At the 2022 AGM in September, Diana Johns spoke to us about the criminalisation of children, how it happens and why it needs to stop.

Dr Sarah Russell from Aged Care Matters enlightened us about the issues with Aged Care at the November Meeting. She spoke about her experiences with various Aged Care homes, both good and bad and her advocacy for improvement.

Our March meeting, for International Women's Day, was very special as it was the launch of SWAN's history in the book entitled "When Women Meet. This saw a very good turn out of members who were enthused by the presentation by Jean Ker Walsh on "Riding the Tidal Wave of Justice: the challenge for change-makers". Peta Murphy then launched the book and we celebrated this occasion with a lunch catered by Nairm Marr Djambana. We are grateful that Mornington Peninsula Shire Council provided a grant which has allowed us to break even on the production of the book and the launch.

The production of SWAN's history up to 2022 is a momentous occurrence. A huge effort by Diane McDonald, ably assisted by Judith Graley and many others to proof read, research and contribute ideas saw a comprehensive and interesting book produced. It is so important that SWAN's remarkable history has been recorded. Thanks for Mornington Peninsula Shire for a grant to assist with this production.

Following on from Jean Ker Walsh's presentation in March, the May meeting started with a demonstration of a Kitchen Table conversation, followed by discussion in small groups about how to ensure SWAN endures into the future. This was facilitated by Jean who kindly made the trip from the country again. Many useful suggestions were made, some of which have been implemented and others will be discussed further in November.

One of these suggestions was to have a discussion meeting in the months between the Speaker meetings to allow members to get to know each other better and perhaps to take some action as a result of the most recent speaker. The first of these in August resulted in some interesting discussions although there were only a small number of members present. Hopefully more will be able to join us in the future.

In July we were shocked to hear of the extent of the homelessness situation on the Mornington Peninsula. Belinda Rodman, President of Southern Peninsula Community Support and Kara Van der Heyde, Assertive Outreach Worker for the same organisation spoke of the important work they do to assist those sleeping rough on the foreshore at Rosebud and of the lack of funding for housing and other services to assist these people.

A big thank you to Despi O'Connor, our Speaker Co-ordinator, for arranging these speakers. Thank you also to the fantastic ladies on the Catering Group who provide such an excellent repast at each face to face meeting.

In the past 12 months SWAN members have continued to show their support for First Nations people at a National, State and local level in a variety of ways. Indeed this support has escalated in response to the call from Aboriginal and Torre Strait Island people to walk with them to create a better future for us all.

In February we established a working group to raise awareness within the Mornington Peninsula community about the enshrinement of an Indigenous Voice in the Constitution. Since then, this group has met weekly to plan and promote a range of Voice related community education activities. This included hosting a public information forum in Mt Eliza in July and planning for another in Rosebud next Tuesday

night. These events provide accurate information to help voters to make an informed decision when they vote. They could not have happened without another Mornington Peninsula Shire grant.

The working group also encouraged SWAN members to join the 'Together Yes' campaign led by the Victorian Women's Trust with a focus on conducting kitchen table conversations with people in their networks. Additionally, many SWAN members took whatever opportunity arose to have informal discussions with friends, family and neighbours about the reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people are asking for constitutional recognition in the form of a Voice to Parliament.

Members also joined the nationwide YES23 campaign and took part in other awareness raising activities. As well as the strong focus on promoting the need for lasting structural change, efforts were made to regularly update members on activities and events being held by local First Nations organisations and encouraging members to advocate against a range of injustices facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. This includes supporting the nation-wide Raise the Age campaign.

We have continued with other Social Justice actions including Advocating for more Council assistance for Nairn Mar Djambana Aboriginal Gathering Place in Frankston, for more Government assistance for homeless people and to Raise the Age of incarceration to 14. Our efforts in the previous year to have the Shire reappoint a dedicated position with responsibility to assist Council in the implementation of the RAP has recently met with success.

Disappointingly, the SWAN Bursary was cancelled this year without notice to us. I have very recently been advised that Graduate Women Victoria have, like SWAN, had a reduction in funds during Covid. Due to this they have advised that they cannot support any named bursary with more than \$1,000. This means we need to raise \$2,500 from member donations and a contribution from funds for the SWAN Bursary to be awarded. We are hard pressed to do this with member donations down. I have asked what will happen with those donations members have made towards this year's bursary if we are unable to fund it sufficiently for it to proceed.

Our reduced income due to lower attendance at meetings has also limited our ability to make donations to Social Justice causes other than the \$200 donation to a cause nominated by each of our speakers.

Susan Hillman-Stolz has organised the raffle for us during the year and has organised the vouchers which now form the prizes. For many years donations by members have made up the prizes and were much appreciated. However I suspect we have all reached the stage where we are decluttering and so are not so keen on getting more things, lovely as they have always been.

A big thanks to all Committee members who have been involved in all these decisions and many more, as well as set up for meetings and many other tasks. It has been a great committee to work with. A big thanks also to all members who help with or attend meetings, write letters or take part in Social Justice actions, make suggestions and care for each other.

Thank You

Erica Churchill