

SOUTHERN WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK



# Newsletter

## December 2023

*SWAN acknowledges the Bunurong / Boon Wurrung people, the Traditional Custodians of these lands and waters where we meet, work and live. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present. In line with our commitment to social justice, SWAN unequivocally supports First Nations People in their campaigns for sovereignty, self-determination, treaties and truth-telling.*

## Southern Women's Action Network

Women of the Mornington Peninsula and across the Southern Metropolitan suburbs of Melbourne striving for social justice.

## SWAN's Future in Action

**On Sunday 19 November**, SWAN women met at Mt Martha House to re-appraise how we can best take action for SWAN's future, including the direction of our social justice platform and the processes we engage to address the following:

**What kind of person is attracted to SWAN? How can we diversify?  
How do women find out about SWAN? How can we grow community relationships?  
What is SWAN's future?**

The event was very well attended and members passionately engaged with strategising for SWAN's future, including valuable input from younger members.

Recommendations in *'When Women Meet'* focused our initial workshop discussion in May on identifying key issues that impact SWAN's future. Four emergent themes informed where we need to strategise to effect a viable and developing presence in the region. These were:

- 1. Strengthen Promotion**
- 2. Broaden Diversity**

### 3. Expand Advocacy & Action

#### 4. Encourage members to join the SWAN Committee

Regarding ‘**Committee membership**’, we are pleased to report that several members have volunteered to join the Committee since the recent AGM. And encouragingly, strategies for ‘**Expand Advocacy and Action**’ are being initiated, such as:

- a) At future bi-monthly meetings members will be invited to report actions that they have taken in the last two months.
- b) We have introduced less formal bi-monthly Discussion ‘Get-Togethers’ over coffee.
- c) The idea of having a Social Justice Theme for the year is currently in development.
- d) In 2024 we plan to have a stronger focus on encouraging members to organise more Special Action Groups – in addition to our Supporting First Nations Working Group.

While discussion of strategies to continue to enhance SWAN’s Social Justice Action will be ongoing, **the focus of the November workshop** was on developing strategies to ‘**Strengthen Promotion**’ and ‘**Broaden Diversity.**’ Using the ideas that were generated in our discussions in May, members broke into small groups to workshop the following topics as follows:

- ‘**Strengthen Promotion**’ via **Networking**
- ‘**Strengthen Promotion**’ via **Publicity**
- ‘**Broaden Diversity**’ via ‘**Representation**’
- ‘**Broaden Diversity**’ via ‘**Younger Women**’

Following this workshop, the next step is for each of the four working groups to determine when and where members who want to be involved in implementing these strategies will meet to plan follow-through action. **This will be SWAN’s focus going into 2024.**

A BIG THANK YOU TO THOSE MEMBERS WHO WERE ABLE TO ATTEND – YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO SWAN’S FUTURE

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

**Our February 2024 Newsletter will provide a list of CONTACT PEOPLE for each of the four working groups and the TOPICS and STRATEGIES they want to action – with your input and help. Information about how you can join one or more of these small groups will be provided.**

# Post-Referendum Reflection

Thanks to everyone who attended the final SWAN member meeting for 2023. It's been a challenging year, to say the least. It was wonderful that many of us could meet up to share how we're feeling following the outcome of the Voice Referendum. This discussion also enabled us to compile a list of what we had learned about ourselves during the campaign. It was both revealing and surprising to realise that as well as limitations, we had greater personal skills than we had imagined.

This led us to identify an impressive list of the organisational strengths that will continue to underpin and help to extend SWAN's social justice learning, advocacy and action as we move forward. Below is a summary of what we said.

## NOTES FROM SWAN'S POST-REFERENDUM REFLECTION 19 NOVEMBER 2023

### 1. Members brainstormed words to describe HOW THEY ARE FEELING post-referendum:

Shame	Frustration	Gutted	Anger	Sadness	Disappointment
Reality therapy-check		Grateful to those who voted YES			Confusion
Positive	Hopeful	Fear	Relief	Devastated	Resilient

### 2. Members brainstormed words and phrases to describe WHAT THEY LEARNED ABOUT THEMSELVES during the referendum campaign:

Hard to keep my cool.	Hard to stand back.	Learnt when to stop conversations.
Surprised at my naivety about our country – what influences the way people think and how easily they can be swayed.		
The importance of not making assumptions.		
Learnt to listen more.	Learnt to understand boundaries	Learnt to use humour.
Learnt to appreciate friends and family.	I'm not as nice a person as I thought I was!	
Frustrated with my physical limitations.	Learnt to accept my personal limits.	
Recognised that there are limitations to what can be achieved.		
Learnt I <i>can</i> influence the views of others, that I could be persuasive.		
Felt deeply concerned about the international perspective of Australia as racist.		

Learned about the need for me to take breaks from media /news cycles.

I learned I was not as brave as I thought I was. In contrast - I realised I was brave!

Reinforced for me the positive effects of being in solidarity with others.

### 3. Members brainstormed OUR COLLECTIVE STRENGTHS moving forward:

SWAN's commitment and skills to work in solidarity with like-minded people.

SWAN's positive public profile – which has been enhanced through our community education work during the referendum campaign.

SWAN's image of being an inspiring group of women who are focused and get things done.

SWAN has the passion, commitment, and professional and collective skills to conduct successful, well organised, public forums.

SWAN can and does make influential contributions on matters of social justice.

SWAN provides a safe, supportive space in which members can learn about social justice concerns and work together to advocate for change.

SWAN has strong capability to network and build working partnerships with organisations.

### **VALE Gerry McKenna**

*Many of you will fondly remember Gerry, the loving husband of SWAN founding member, Val McKenna. Val and Gerry were married for 73 years. Sadly, Gerry passed away in his sleep at Andrew Kerr, on 11 November.*

*Gerry is described as a 'wonderful', 'loyal' man, who strongly supported Val in her social justice leadership on the Mornington Peninsula. Like Val, he advocated actively against injustice. Gerry was regularly seen just prior to SWAN meetings, helping to carry heavy boxes and platters for morning tea, as well as setting up chairs, before quietly exiting and leaving SWAN members to their discussions.*

*SWAN has sent our sincere condolences to Val in her great loss.*

# SWAN Discussion Get-Together: Xmas Coffee Catch-Up



**New Venue: Higher Ground, Mt Martha**

**SWAN's third and final Discussion Meeting for 2023 will be held at Higher Ground, Mt Martha on Sunday 17 December at 10am.**

**ADDRESS: 5/5 Harvey Rd. Mt Martha RSVP: to Bonnie Einsiedel 0415 899 504**

It would be great if you could get along to this relaxed get-together, and even better, if you can bring a female friend or relative - especially if they're younger! - for them to get an idea of what SWAN is about. The purpose of these meetings is for us to get to know other SWAN members in a friendly and informal way as there is not a lot of time for this at the Sunday Speaker Meetings. Come along and join us!

# SWAN Committee 2023-2024

## MEET OUR MEMBERS

### **Susan Hillman Stolz**

“Apart from a short stint as a Secondary teacher I have mostly worked in the Community Sector in a variety of roles, my last job before retiring in 2019 was in a program for young people involved in the Criminal Justice system”.



### **Marilyn Hoban**

“I have been a member of SWAN for several years. I have a broad interest in Social Justice and have been a member of St Vincent de Paul for 24 years and Grandmothers for Refugees for the past 3 years”.



**SWAN COMMITTEE wishes a relaxing and wonderful Christmas and holiday season to all our members!**

## VALE PETA MURPHY

*I am writing to express our sincere condolences concerning the tragic passing of Peta Murphy. She was much loved and deeply admired by all the members of The Southern Women's Action Network (SWAN).*

*Peta was a woman of great integrity, strong convictions, kindness and compassion. Like so many others who met her, we truly appreciated Peta's warm and engaging personality, her willingness to listen and delightful sense of humour. Most especially we admired her determination to advocate for justice, particularly in support of those who were marginalised. Peta's unfailing determination to achieve the enshrinement of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice in the Constitution will long be remembered.*

*Earlier this year, Peta honoured us by accepting our invitation to launch our new book, 'When Women Meet', that records the 26 year history of our volunteer led, community organisation. In her address she spoke passionately about the important role that women play in community development and social change.*

*Not only that. Within a month, Peta took our book to Canberra and spoke in Parliament about the powerful and important contribution that women, such as the members of SWAN, make towards building a more just and equitable society. We could not have imagined a more fitting and moving tribute to recognise the collective social justice efforts made by women in this southern metropolitan region over the past three decades.*

*Peta Murphy will be fondly remembered by all our members as an exceptional role model, not only for those who knew her, but for future generations of women who seek empowerment, truth and justice. Like her own role model, Louisa Dunkley, she will continue stand tall in this country's historical record.*

Diane McDonald  
Facilitator  
Southern Women's Action Network

**\*Published in the Mornington News 12 December 2023**

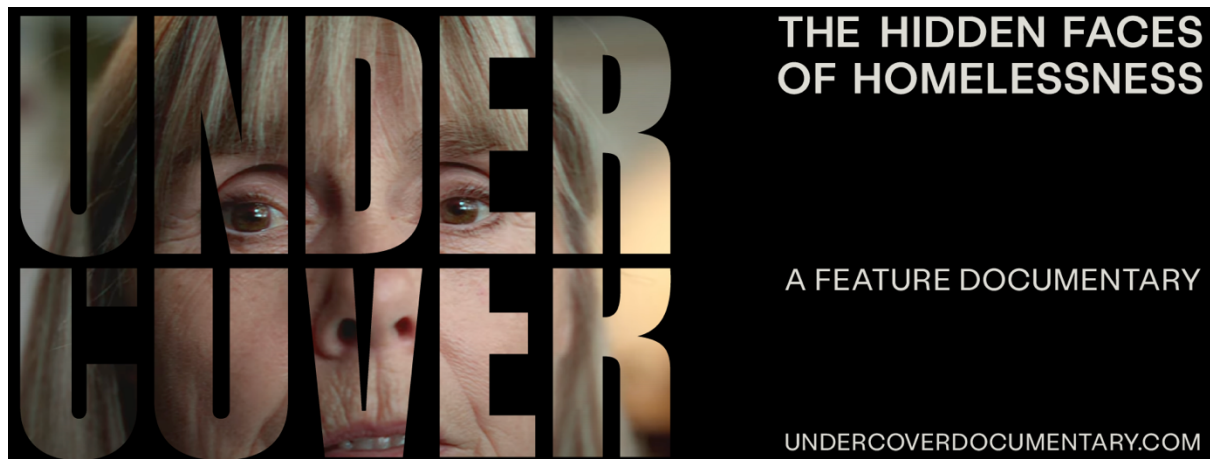
### PUBLIC MEMORIAL SERVICE

**Sunday 17 December  
9.30am arrival for 10am start.  
Jubilee Park Stadium  
83R-85R Hillcrest Road, Frankston.**

# Film Advocates Homelessness Action

On 5 December SWAN members and Councillors Despi O'Connor and Sarah Race organised a showing of the documentary *'Under Cover'* by Sue Thomson at the Peninsula Cinema in Rosebud to raise awareness and generate funds for the three Community Support Centres in Rosebud, Mornington, and Westernport.

You can watch the doco via this link: <https://www.undercoverdocumentary.com/>



The film is a poignant account of the unravelling of life that occurs for ten older women as they become homeless. The sobering reality is that women over 50 are the fastest growing cohort experiencing homelessness in Australia.

Following the film and a compelling Q & A featuring the work of the three Community Centres, Despi issued a **“call to action” for people to sign up to become monthly donors**. If you wish to donate, sign up to volunteer or assist in some way, scan the QR Code below.

Thanks, Belinda

## **Belinda Rodman**

President Board of Management  
Southern Peninsula Community Support

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# Supporting Refugees

## SWAN SUPPORTS COMMUNITY ACTION ON REFUGEES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Recently the SWAN Committee expressed its support for the following two actions initiated by local neighbouring social action groups.

### **Petition to transfer the seriously ill refugees to Australia**

SWAN signed the on-line petition prepared by ‘Casey Cardinia for Refugees’. This calls for the immediate transfer of 15 seriously mentally damaged refugees, who are unable to live independently, and with no hope of any re settlement, to Australia. The petition will be presented to Home Affairs Minister Clare O’Neil and Senator Penny Wong. Information can be found by clicking the link below:

[Petition - Transfer the seriously ill refugees to Australia](#)

### **Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain Project**

You may have seen the front-page article published in MP News (14 November) that raised concern regarding the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain (HESC) project. This project involves the production of hydrogen from brown coal in the La Trobe Valley and shipping it from Hasting to Japan.

A collaboration between ‘Save Westernport’ and ‘Progressives of the Peninsula’ has produced a video to inform Mornington Peninsula residents about this dangerous new fossil fuel project that will cause enormous damage to Western Port. SWAN recently joined with sixteen other community action groups to alert the community about this dangerous fossil fuel project and to promote action to oppose it.

Watch this 4 minute [video](#) to find out more about this proposed project and its likely impact. The video concludes with several actions that can be taken to ensure that it doesn’t go ahead. Here is the link to the video <https://youtu.be/ixEtsKN5zkQ>

## SWAN Members support Grandmothers for Refugees direct action in Frankston

In November several SWAN members joined the Dunkley Grandmothers for Refugees to protest the ongoing detention of refugees in Papua New Guinea, and calling for an end to all mandatory detention.



SWAN members Marilyn Hoban (red hat), and Gael Wallace (right)

## Supporting First Nations

### January 26: Our Survival Day

**Our Survival Day** is coordinated by *Our Songlines* a 100% Aboriginal-owned and woman-led organisation passionate about making Indigenous culture accessible to First Nations and allies, in a supportive, safe environment. As in previous years, the event will be held at **The Briars**, Mt Martha on 26 January.



**With a focus on Indigenous education, cultural entertainment, food and sustainability** through the theme of 'Keep Surviving', *Our Survival Day 2024* will have something for everyone. 2023 has seen racism at an all-time peak, hate speech normalised by politicians and media vilianising mob.

'**Keep Surviving**' is a place to be proud, vulnerable and supported, a culturally safe and environmentally friendly space set amongst the hills of The Briars. You will feel the connection as soon as you walk onto Bunurong land. Be welcomed by the trees, birds, First Nations musical voices, the smell of Indigenous bush foods, friends enjoying picnics and playing games, cultural workshops, dancing, families of diverse backgrounds and many activities to participate in at your leisure.

This is an all-inclusive event, created as an alternative to Australia Day.

**Further information and to purchase tickets:** [www.oursurvivalday.com](http://www.oursurvivalday.com)



### **VICTORIAN TREATY AUTHORITY**

Good News! On 5th December the five inaugural members of the **Victorian Treaty Authority** were announced. The Treaty Authority will serve as an independent umpire during upcoming Treaty negotiations in Victoria. This is another significant step towards Treaty.

## **A MESSAGE FROM ‘GET UP’ FIRST NATIONS GROUP**

In their report *2023 Voice Referendum Outcome Messaging Guide*, the Get Up First Nations Group report identifies several tangible ways we can stand in solidarity through our communications and actions right now:

- Be loud and proud about your support for state-based Treaty and Truth-Telling processes.
- Commit to advocating for long-term change and building capacity of First Nations-led campaigns - for land rights, ending deaths in custody, cultural heritage protection, equitable access to health and education and housing, strengthening water protections so Aboriginal communities can say no to fracking and mining, and a national truth-telling process.
- Support First Nations organisations and staff who are leading on the process of working out what is next after the referendum.

## **LIVING CULTURE: The Last Daughter**

Local Indigenous enterprise, Living Culture, recently screened *'The Last Daughter'*, a moving First Peoples narrative speaking to the Stolen Generation. Wiradjuri woman and writer-director, Brenda Mathews, recounts the heartbreaking injustice her family suffered when authorities took her and her 6 siblings away. Ms Matthews presents the film as a vehicle for the coming together of First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians. Further resources:

<https://www.brendamatthews.com.au/index.php/book/>

<https://www.thelastdaughter.com.au/>

<https://australianstogether.org.au/>

## **NAIRM MARR DJAMBANA: Mai's Story**

The story of **Nairm Marr Djambana Elder, Mai Katona's** remarkable life. Aunty Mai is another child of the Stolen Generation and throughout her life confronted racism, yet overcame, to make a significant contribution to First Nation's struggle for justice and self-determination.

Contact Nairm Marr Djambana for more information on Mai's book: 03 9783 1521

## **BUNURONG LAND COUNCIL: First Peoples Art and Truth-Telling**

**Bunurong and Palawa woman, artist and education officer Kobi Sainty** will lead an online Education Webinar on Thursday 14 December, 4-5pm about First Peoples' art from a cultural expression and cultural safety perspective. The webinar is free and delivered online by Reconciliation Victoria. To register:

[Reconciliation in Education webinar - First Peoples' Art and Truth Telling | Humanitix](#)

# Dates for your Diary



- **THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER**, 4 – 5pm: ‘First Peoples Art & Truth-Telling’ webinar with Kobi Sainty, Artist and Education Officer, Bunurong Land Council, free online event, register: [Reconciliation in Education webinar - First Peoples' Art and Truth Telling | Humanitix](#)
- **FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER**, 11am - 2pm: ‘*Big Mob Kristmas Cook-Up*’, Willum Warrain Gathering Place, 10c Pound Rd. Hastings. Contact: Karsten 0403 528 034 or visit [willumwarrain.org.au](http://willumwarrain.org.au)
- **SUNDAY 19 NOVEMBER**, 10am: ‘*SWAN Discussion Meeting: Xmas Coffee Catch-Up*’, Higher Ground, 5/5 Harvey Rd, Mt Martha
- **THURSDAY 26 JANUARY 2024**, all day: ‘**Our Survival Day: Keep Surviving**’, OUR SONGLINES, The Briars, Mt Martha. Info: [www.oursurvivalday.com](http://www.oursurvivalday.com)

## Contact Us

SWAN News Editor:  
Moz Lucas

SOUTHERN WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK



**OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER** aims to inform readers of current issues and matters of interest.

**NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS** If you have information of interest to our members, please ensure you let the editor Moz Lucas know via the email below by the first of the month.

**Deadline for our next issue 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024**

**FACEBOOK AND WEBPAGE** Recent events and photos may appear on both the SWAN Facebook page and the website, as well as details of future meetings.

**PHOTO/VIDEO PERMISSION** Please advise [swanwomen@outlook.com](mailto:swanwomen@outlook.com) or at the door at a meeting if you do not wish to be included in photographs or videos, otherwise we will take it that you are happy to have your photo included.

#### **CONTACT**

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**Website:** <https://swanwomen.org.au/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/spwswan/>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHua3ynobWOxAUEfOPLt1yQ>

**Donations** [www.trybooking.com/au/donate/swan](http://www.trybooking.com/au/donate/swan)

#### **Our Sponsors**

- \* Blackbird Café: 2D Empire St Mornington (03) 5976 8632 [blackbird-café.edan.io](http://blackbird-café.edan.io)
- \* Bodhi & Me Florist: 5A Bay Rd Mt Martha (03) 5916 1270 [bodhiandme.com.au](http://bodhiandme.com.au)
- \* Farrells Bookshop: 143 Main Street (corner of Barkly St) Mornington (03) 5975 5034  
[farrells.com.au](http://farrells.com.au)
- \* Higher Ground Café: 5/5 Howey Rd Mt Martha (03) 5974 4733
- \* Rosebud Book Barn: 891 Point Nepean Rd (03) 5986 6770 [info@rosebudbookbarn.com.au](mailto:info@rosebudbookbarn.com.au)
- \* Secret Garden: 81 Main Street Mornington (03) 5975 0977 [secretgardenflowers.com.au](http://secretgardenflowers.com.au)
- \* SiSCo Pizza Restaurant: 2113 Point Nepean Rd Rye (03) 5985 3967 [melgow3@gmail.com](mailto:melgow3@gmail.com)
- \* Zen Living: 70 Main St Mornington (03) 5975 1013 [zenlivingmornington.com.au](http://zenlivingmornington.com.au)

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