

SWAN newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1

February 2004

Points of interest:

- SWAN auspices Domestic Violence community meeting.
- SWANers in the news!
- Former Senior Intelligence Officer Andrew Wilkie to speak at Mornington.
- Dur-e Dara, a hit at November meeting.
- 2004 — another stimulating year for SWANers!

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE 2003-2004

The Admin Committee met during January to organise meetings for 2004.

Facilitator

Carole Ford

Secretary

Maureen McPhate

Treasurer

Val McKenna

Committee Members

Alleyne Lacy

Jo Diplock

Nola Plackett

Judith Coucaud-Graley

Rosemarie Draper

Debbie Roberts

EXCITING LINE UP OF SPEAKERS FOR 2004

Kate Baillieu, well-known Mornington Peninsula identity, is the first in a great line up of speakers for the 2004 series of SWAN meetings.

Over the years, Ms Baillieu has demonstrated her commitment to environmental and heritage issues and has also been an outspoken critic of government policies in a number of other areas.

Recently, Kate Baillieu played a leadership role in protests about the future of Pt Nepean and has now been appointed to the Pt Nepean Management Trust.

We look forward to listening to, and meeting with, this dynamic woman.

SWAN has already been busy

this year having auspiced a public meeting on the issue of domestic violence while in the process of organising another public community meeting for April 23 with **Andrew Wilkie** — former ONA (Office of National Assessment) senior Intelligence Officer. We are fortunate, indeed, to have the opportunity to hear this speaker in person!

Other speakers for the SWAN year include Pamela Curr, Lillian Holt, Merle Mitchell and Dr Carmen Lawrence. Further details appear on page 2.

We have good reason to anticipate another interesting and stimulating series of meetings for 2004!

GUEST SPEAKER

**SUNDAY
21 MARCH**

KATE BAILLIEU

Mt Martha House

9.30am

ANDREW WILKIE TO SPEAK AT MORNINGTON!

SWAN has arranged for former ONA (Office of National Assessment) Senior Intelligence Officer, **Andrew Wilkie**, to speak to the men and women of the Mornington Peninsula on Friday 23 April. Anyone interested in the reasons given by the Fed-

eral Government to justify joining the 'coalition of the willing' in the invasion of Iraq will not want to miss this opportunity to hear **Andrew Wilkie**.

Mark this important date in your diary **NOW!**

**COMMUNITY MEETING
FRIDAY APRIL 23**

**MORNINGTON
INFORMATION CENTRE
320 MAIN ST MORNINGTON
8PM**

ANDREW WILKIE
FORMER ONA SENIOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

SWAN AUSPICES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MEETING



**COMMUNITY
MULTICULTURAL**

FESTIVAL

**3.30pm
to
7.00pm**

**ROSEBUD
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

**FRIDAY
19 MARCH**

FREE ENTRY

and

ENTERTAINMENT



The experience of victims of domestic violence was likened to wearing a heavy coat of constant frustration, fear, pain, anger, confusion, humiliation, despair and hopelessness according to presenters of a public meeting addressing the issue of domestic violence organised by SWAN at the Mornington Information Centre on Thursday January 29.

The forum aimed to increase public awareness and debate about this pressing social problem and was a further example of SWAN's tradition of promoting social justice issues, bringing them to the attention of the community and providing alternative views, according to Judith Coucaud-Graley who chaired the meeting.

Community Development students from Chisholm TAFE presented a moving performance of music, dance, poetry, masks, and singing, powerfully portraying the devastating and often tragic consequences of domestic violence.

Speakers from Valerie House

Women's Refuge — Neveneka and Gina — said that the Refuge had operated for more than twenty years and cared for women and child victims of domestic violence on the Mornington Peninsula. Domestic violence can take many forms: physical, emotional, social, verbal, financial/economic, sexual and psychological and needed to be addressed in a range of ways, including education and increased government funding.

Rosy Buchanan, MLA, claimed that women parliamentarians were passionate about, and committed to, addressing the many aspects and social consequences of domestic violence. Ms Buchanan responded competently and with fervor to challenging and vigorous questioning from an enthusiastic audience and said that she '[has] listened carefully to what the community is saying.'

A further interesting discussion point was the proposed emergency 24 hour intervention order imposed by qualified/trained police officers to re-

move perpetrators from the house/family to be introduced into Western Australia. Victoria might well emulate this legislation as removing the victim and family was a further disruptive and traumatic experience, adding to their pain.

Men and women in the audience came away with the understanding that domestic violence is about power and control in relationships and in all its many forms is unacceptable and a crime.

Convener of the meeting, Dr Carole Ford SWAN Facilitator, has suggested that anyone wishing to be more fully informed about the present state of the domestic violence problem should read chapter 4 of *The End of Equality*, by Anne Summers.

The meeting received support from The Body Shop (Frankston), Rosy Buchanan MLA, Geoff Hilton MLC and Alistair Harkness MLA.

Another SWAN community initiative.

Tell
your friends
about
SWAN

SWAN DATES – 2004

**19 MARCH
KATE BAILLIEU**

- Well-known Peninsula identity
- Appointed to Pt Nepean Management Trust.

**18 JULY
PAMELA CURR**

- Greens national refugee spokeswoman
- Former organiser Fairwear Campaign

**21 NOVEMBER
Dr CARMEN LAWRENCE, MP**

- Federal MP
- Committed human rights campaigner

**16 MAY
LILLIAN HOLT**

- Former principal 5th Anst. Indigenous school
- Advocate for Aboriginal Community

**19 SEPTEMBER
MERLE MITCHELL, OBE**

- Former president ACOSS
- Former director Springvale Community Aid/Advice Centre

**TELL YOUR FRIENDS
ABOUT
SWAN**

SWANers IN THE NEWS!

SWAN members Dalene Salisbury and Carmel Harris recently had letters published in *The Age*. Dalene wrote the following in her capacity as Chairwoman, Housing for the Aged Action Group:

The decision by the Salvation Army to sell aged care facilities (*The Age*, 12/2) will cause enormous distress — not only for the hundreds of older residents of the Salvation Army, but thousands more who are in similar accommodation managed by other welfare organisations.

The major cost burden is due to the fact that these organisations manage accommodation facilities that are often 49 to 50 years old and in need of extensive repair and renovation. The question must be asked: why hadn't they established sinking funds many years ago to ensure their ongoing viability?

It is also apparent that many of these organisations are moving away from the charitable model that for so long met the needs of older people in housing diffi-

culty. Thus, one welfare organisation that forced the relocation of elderly residents after selling their homes told us that they couldn't guarantee security of tenure for their residents because they are a 'business' and it is not possible to predict events in the business world.

Recently, a church-based organisation told its residents that they planned to double their rent and if the residents refused, they would also sell their homes. Such a callous approach causes permanent stress at an age when people are least able to cope.

Let this disaster also be a warning to the State Government, which recently announced plans to expand the provision of privatised welfare housing.

Dalene Salisbury

Carmel Harris wrote about compassion as a 'core value':

Your editorial 'The moral of the Manus Island story' (*The Age* 13/2) highlights the extreme

lengths the Howard Government has gone to over the refugee issue.

The bizarre circumstances of spending \$4.3 million to avoid being seen to back down by allowing Aladdin Sisalem refugee in Australia surely demands condemnation. Such isolation is 'cruel and unnecessary punishment'.

At the same time, there are other equally bizarre circumstances that exist surrounding the refugees on Nauru. Families there have been split by the Government's hard line and lack of compassion. Women and children who have been in Nauru detention centre for two and a half years have been separated from husbands already accepted into Australia on temporary protection visas.

It is time the Government released these women and children, who are no threat to anyone. Compassion is a core value!

Carmel Harris

The decision by the Salvation Army to sell aged care facilities will cause enormous distress not only for the hundreds of older residents...but for thousands more who are in similar accommodation...

Compassion is a core value!

DUR-E DARA A HIT AT NOVEMBER MEETING

In a scintillating talk, the charismatic Dur-e Dara captured the hearts and minds of an enthusiastic SWAN audience at the November meeting.

Dur-e endeared herself to us with tales about aspects of her life that ranged from her own childhood, marriage, relation-

ships, rearing children, food — cooking and eating it — as well as other important social issues such as racism, asylum seekers, government funding (or the lack of it!), music, art and genetically modified food!

A warm and generous soul, Dur-e said that being a woman

is 'special and powerful' because we care for others.

In concluding, Dur-e said that the key to a successful and satisfying life is negotiation — in relationships and in all other areas of our lives.

As life is action and passion, it is required of [men and women] that they should share the passion and action of [their] time, at peril of being judged not to have lived.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.
Justice of United States Supreme Court.

SWAN newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 2

April 2004

Southern Women's Action Network Inc.
Reg No A0038144Z, ABN 84 41627 1331
PO Box 392 Mt Martha 3934

Points of interest:

SWAN auspices Andrew Wilkie address.

Lillian Holt, May speaker.

Pamela Curr states opinion re East Timor.

Karen group fund raiser.

Child refugees remain on Nauru.

Gwen Wilson reports on March meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE 2003-2004

The Admin Committee met during April to plan the Andrew Wilkie Community meeting and to discuss the SWAN May meeting.

Facilitator
Cecile Ford
Secretary
Maureen McPhate
Treasurer
Val McKenna
Committee Members
Lynne Lacy
Diplock
Gola Plackett
Dith Couacaud-Graley
Rosemarie Draper
Lillian Roberts

LILLIAN HOLT – A TIMELY SPEAKER

With Indigenous issues in the news of late, Lillian Holt's topic — Building a Dreaming Track for a better Australia — is surely topical and should prove of great interest to all SWANers.

Lillian Holt was born on the Cherbourg Aboriginal Settlement in Queensland and has been involved in Indigenous education for the past thirty years.

The Director of the Centre for Indigenous Education at the University of Melbourne from 1998-2002, Lillian was appointed a Vice-Chancellor's Fellow in 2003.

Earlier, from 1980 to 1996, Lillian Holt had substantive involvement with Tauondi

(pronounced Towndee), the former Aboriginal Community College in Adelaide, the last seven years as principal, the first Aboriginal to hold this position.

Lillian Holt holds a BA from the University of Queensland, an MA from the University of Colorado, USA and is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Melbourne, her topic is Humor!

Lillian has travelled widely, both in Australia and internationally. She lists her passionate interests as 'people and the human condition, words and language'.

All the indicators point to a stimulating and timely presentation!

**GUEST
SPEAKER**

**SUNDAY
16 MAY**

LILLIAN HOLT

Mt Martha House

9.30am

SWAN AUSPICES ANDREW WILKIE ADDRESS

By the time this edition of the newsletter goes out, Andrew Wilkie, former Lieutenant Colonel and Senior Intelligence Officer, Office of National Assessments, will have addressed a public meeting organised as a community initiative by SWAN. Many of

Wilkie's pre-war assertions and statements have proved to be remarkably accurate. SWAN was able to organise this meeting through the efforts of Val McKenna who contacted Wilkie in support of his willingness to publicly state his concerns.

Judging by the response to publicity, the community is anxious to hear Andrew Wilkie's views on 'the decline of Australian democracy'. The Andrew Wilkie meeting is another example of **SWAN IN ACTION!**



HOW WE FAILED EAST TIMOR – PAMELA CURR

PAMELA CURR

speaker

SUNDAY

18 JULY

Pamela Curr, Greens national spokesperson for refugees recently wrote to the print media expressing her views re East Timor. Pamela Curr will address the July SWAN meeting. Here is what Pamela had to say:

East Timor was Australia's Rwanda. It is time that we acknowledged that 3000 people died in 1999, untold numbers of women were raped and 500,000 people were displaced.

Lieutenant-Lance Collins's re-

port that the Australian intelligence community was unable to identify reality in a timely manner, or convey its significance to the Government and the reasons why, provides some insight into how Australia misread Timor so disastrously.

For too long the Australian Government has been allowed to construct the Australian/Timor success story, and gloss over our failure to provide protection before the slaughter.

Timor is only one of a litany of intelligence failures.

Colonel Collins's claims deserve the fullest examination.

Pamela Curr

Whether or not you agree with Pamela's views, don't miss the opportunity to hear her in person — at the SWAN July meeting.

Jottings...

Meg Merton generously brought along her homemade jams and marmalades to sell at our March meeting. Meg has donated all proceeds for disbursement to causes supported by SWAN. Meg requires glass jars, 500 gram capacity, to continue her efforts. Coffee jars and plastic containers are NOT suitable. It would be helpful to

remove labels. Meg has promised further stock for next meeting. Many thanks, Meg!

The Admin Committee welcomed Janice Gray to its April meeting and thanks her for her contribution. _____

SWAN has written to Prime Minister, John Howard, protesting at the shelving of the

'No respect, No Relationship' campaign. Also letter forwarded to Andrew Demitriou, CEO, AFL re necessity to address the issue of inappropriate behavior and attitudes in football culture. _____

Cheque for \$120 forwarded to Hotham Mission which is actively involved in providing support for refugees. _____

SWAN
in
— ACTION —

SWAN DATES – 2004

MEG MERTON'S
JAMS
and
MARMALADES
on sale at July
meeting

16 MAY
LILLIAN HOLT

- Former principal 5th Aust Indigenous school
- Advocate for Aboriginal community

18 JULY
PAMELA CURR

- Greens national refugee spokeswoman
- Former organiser Fairwear Campaign

19 SEPTEMBER
MERLE MITCHELL, OBE

- Former president ACOSS
- Former director Springvale Community Aid/Advice Centre

21 NOVEMBER
Dr CARMEN LAWRENCE MP

- Federal MP
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TELL YOUR FRIENDS
ABOUT
SWAN



KATE BAILLIEU ATTRACTS LARGE AUDIENCE

Kate Baillieu, the first of SWAN's 2004 speakers, painted a clear picture of the many complex issues relating to the future of Point Nepean.

Before launching into her topic Kate shared with the large audience highlights of her beginnings in journalism: extensive research carried out in Lygon street cafes; a friendship with Claudia Wright; an adventurous 2 week probation with the ABC program AM; and the fact that

she was (and remains) 'able to talk under water'!

Presently her passion and energies are focused on Point Nepean which she described as the most extraordinary bit of land that has been protected from the ravages of 'our lot'!

While most Victorians wanted to see the whole area become a National Park, the Federal government has put forward a 5-year deadline as to whether or not the most desirable section

will be held by them. This raises the possibility of the erection of buildings that could be out of line with state preferences. In other words, a number of questions/issues still need to be resolved.

By raising public awareness of the possible inappropriate and unacceptable use of sections of the Pt Nepean area the matter has now become an important national issue.

Gwen Wilson

Point Nepean is the most extraordinary bit of land that has been protected from the ravages of 'our lot'!

Kate Baillieu
SWAN
21 March 2004

INVITATION FROM AKYP

One of SWAN's most popular 2003 meetings was the Australian Karen Youth Project (AKYP) presentation. The group is primarily a social justice organization advocating human rights, self-empowerment and self-determination for the Karen and other ethnic groups within

a democratic Burma. It focuses on grass roots education projects for Karen youth and works alongside the Karen community in Australia and local NGOs on the Thai Burma border. AKYP also raises awareness about the Burma situation and networks with other organizations to achieve

its aims. AKYP is run by young Karen and Australians in Melbourne. SWANers were deeply moved by the group's presentation last year.

AKYP invites SWAN members to a Benefit Dinner on Friday 11 June. See next column for details.

AKYP

BENEFIT DINNER

FRIDAY 11 JUNE

7.30pm

\$50. per head

further details

Christina

9650 0241 0421 421 074

akyp@bigpond.com

CHILD REFUGEES REMAIN ON NAURU...to Australia's shame!

SWAN member Carmel Harris continues her efforts towards the release of child refugees from detention on Nauru. She believes that raising public awareness about this 'scandalous situation' and bringing the issue into the public arena is one way of achieving

the release of these children.

To this end, Carmel has prepared printed material that can be posted on notice boards; forwarded to politicians across the political spectrum; or distributed personally.

If YOU feel strongly about the

detention of children on Nauru and would like to become involved, all you have to do is ring Carmel who will post the required material. For so little effort YOU can become actively involved in this humanitarian cause. See next column for details.

Carmel Harris

**RELEASE
THE
CHILDREN
CAMPAIGN**

5976 2366



SWAN

Southern Women's Action Network

SUNDAY 16 MAY

Mt Martha House

Cnr Dominion Rd and the Esplanade, Mt Martha

9.30am

Speaker

LILLIAN HOLT

- Involved in Indigenous education for over 30 years
- Appointed a Vice-Chancellor's Fellow Uni of Melb 2003
- Director Centre for Indigenous Education Uni of Melb 1998-2002

**Topic: Building a Dreaming Track for a better
Australia**

COST

\$7.00

BOOKINGS

Val McKenna 5974 3461

Maureen McPhate 5974 4096

To assist with catering

**please
RSVP**

Val or Maureen

by 12 MAY — many thanks!

SWAN newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 3

Southern Women's Action Network Inc.
Reg No A0038144Z, ABN 84 41627 1331
PO Box 392 Mt Martha 3934

June 2004

RETURN VISIT FOR PAMELA CURR

Points of interest:

- July meeting details.
- SWAN application for government grant.
- Lillian Holt — a unique character!
- Original anti-violence campaign cancelled.
- SWAN dates
- Bells tolled a message.
- Andrew Wilkie says no regrets.
- Jottings...

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE 2003-2004

The Admin Committee met during June to plan the July meeting and to discuss ideas for future SWAN initiatives.

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Carole Ford
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Judith Couacaud-Graley
Rosemarie Draper
Debbie Roberts

Pamela Curr proved a dynamic and popular speaker on her first visit to SWAN some years ago in her capacity as organizer for the Fairwear campaign.

Today, Pamela is the national spokesperson on refugee and asylum seeker issues for the Greens party as well as Campaign Coordinator at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

Speaking of her present position, Pamela said 'We are currently looking at ways present government policy impacts on asylum seekers and refugees and I would like to discuss this with SWAN under the title *Human rights overboard.*'

Pamela went on to say that

two areas she wished to address in her talk are Community Detention (Bridging Visa E or BVEs) where asylum seekers live for years with no work rights; no Centrelink access; no Medicare — and human rights abuses in the detention camps.

Pamela also wanted SWANers to know that 'We have a food bank at the ASRC for people living on BVEs and we feed about 150 families a week. So, if people could bring along cans of fruit, tomatoes, corn, peas, packets of pasta, jars of coffee, soap, toilet paper, or washing powder they would be gratefully received.' Don't miss —

PAMELA CURR, Sunday 18 July.

GUEST SPEAKER

SUNDAY 18 JULY

PAMELA CURR

Mt Martha House

9.30am

SWAN applies for government grant



The Administrative Committee has submitted an application to the Australian Government Volunteer Small Equipment Grants 2004 (round 2) to fund purchase of a portable amplifier unit with inbuilt cassette player and handheld wireless micro-

phone and speaker.

The Committee has been aware that in some instances audience members, especially those sitting to the back of the hall, have had difficulty in hearing some of our 'softer voiced' speakers. The pur-

chase of this piece of equipment will support SWAN in achieving its aims of empowering women to participate in community activities/ decision-making through its program of guest speakers, community meetings, workshops and conferences.

Examples of Lillian's gems:

- Describing herself as a 'chocolate smarty'!
- Ideals are like the stars: out of our grasp but we can reach for them!
- When you label me, you limit me!
- There is more to reconciliation than walking over a bridge!
- I am wary of experts, but honour expertise.
- We need to look at ourselves rather than at others.
- Racism is gangrene of the soul.
- Courage is fear that has said its prayers.
- We walk on the boulevards as well as in the alley ways.

Lillian Holt – a unique character!

Cascades of shared laughter throughout Lillian Holt's address indicate that her PhD in humor will be a complete success!

At the outset, Lillian made it clear that she spoke for herself and not on anyone's behalf and that her focus was 'the human condition'. Although formally well-educated herself and appreciative of how that enriched her life and opened doors, she acknowledged that formal edu-

cation does not necessarily equate with wisdom.

Her own parents, she said, were illiterate, but full of common-sense, love, and imbued with values that respected others.

There was more to reconciliation than 'walking over a bridge' she stated. It required an 'interior journey' and an honest search for the truth.

Lillian has a unique character full of warmth and charisma.

The measure of her ability to get on the same wave length as her audience was reflected in comments from members at the conclusion of Lillian's address.

A number of members were moved to share their responses and experiences elicited by Lillian's talk — these proved equally as interesting and moving as Lillian's words themselves.

Gwen Wilson

Original anti-violence campaign cancelled

A press release received by SWAN advised that The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has confirmed that dozens of projects and millions of dollars have been wasted by cancelling the original *No Respect, No Relationship anti-violence campaign*.

The new campaign, featuring a

booklet with a message from the Prime Minister, will be sent to all Australian households telling them **what to do once a sexual assault or other violent incident has occurred**. This defeats the whole purpose of the original prevention campaign. Some of the elements of the original campaign that have been cancelled include:

- *Coaching Boys into Men* brochure for the use of sports coaches in promoting positive attitudes to women in young men.
- School curriculum materials to introduce the issue into schools.
- 4 video clips focusing on the prevention of violence against girls.
- An indigenous-specific component re the particular issue of violence in indigenous communities.

SWAN has officially responded to the above with a letter to the Prime Minister

ASRC
(Asylum Seeker Resource Centre)
FOOD BANK APPEAL
Lend you support
to fill a
SWAN basket of food and necessities
We need cans of fruit, tomatoes, corn, peas, packets of pasta, coffee, soap, toilet paper, washing powder.
Bring your contribution to the July meeting

SWAN DATES – 2004

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**TELL YOUR FRIENDS
ABOUT
SWAN**



Melbourne bells tolled a sad message!

Church bells throughout Melbourne rang out on Thursday 10 June to remind Melburnians that 162 refugee children remain in mandatory detention.

SWAN member, Carmel Harris, has worked untiringly to raise public awareness of the urgent need to have these children released. In a brief written report to SWAN, Carmel pointed out that June 10 was the deadline for releasing these children and their families suggested by the May Human Rights and Equal Opportunity report *A Last Resort?*

The report condemned the de-

tention policy as 'cruel, inhumane and degrading' to children. Human Rights Commissioner, Sev Ozdowski, said that children with emotional and physical scars will be a legacy of Australia's mandatory detention policy. The report was dismissed by the Federal Government, however, as unbalanced and backward. Senator Vanstone claimed that releasing the children quickly was 'a dangerous message to send to people smugglers.'

Historian Klaus Neumann claims the willingness of ordinary Australians to assist asylum seekers is unprecedented. They see it as

their duty to assist fellow humans in distress, whether or not they are fellow citizens — it is their duty as a citizen of a globalised world.

In this vein, Carmel Harris continues her campaign to free the 162 children of asylum seekers still in detention. She still has supplies of her 'free the children kit' comprising photos and lists of the names and addresses of politicians to whom the material can be sent as an indication of **your** concern over this issue.

Sources: *The Age*; (14 May, 11 June) ABC interview (14 May); Carmel Harris.

'No regrets' says Andrew Wilkie

Andrew Wilkie's claim that he had 'no regrets' about his resignation and whistle-blowing role, despite the many demands upon him over the intervening period, was greeted with loud and sustained applause when he addressed a community meeting auspiced by SWAN on 23 April.

Based on intelligence available at the time Andrew Wilkie was

persuaded, and remains convinced, that war was not an appropriate option for resolving the Iraq situation.

The attack on the World Trade Centre caused a misplacement of focus on Iraq. Many accusations were inaccurate and difficult to assess. The invasion of Iraq and the consequent war were likened to 'poking a bull ants nest with a stick' by Wilkie.

The anti-war movement in Australia was the strongest since federation according to Wilkie. The issue should be kept alive and debated so that Australians can go to the elections well informed.

A CD of Andrew Wilkie's address will be available soon.

Gwen Wilson

Jottings...

SWAN member Muneba Papedis (who made a moving response to Lillian Holt's address at the May meeting) took one of Carmel Harris' *Release the children* kits to her child's primary school. It was publicly displayed, offering not only a viewpoint on the issue, but as

an example of how individuals in a democracy can express their views and try 'to make a difference'.

Meg Merton will again have her wonderful jams and marmalades for sale at the July meeting. Proceeds to go to SWAN funds — helping us to fund

projects that assist in achieving SWAN's aims of empowering women to be active in the community and developing their skills and self-esteem.

At the time of printing, copies of Lillian Holt's address are not available. Hopefully we'll have them for the July meeting.

Carmel Harris

**RELEASE
THE
CHILDREN
CAMPAIGN**

**Ring
Carmel
5976 2366
for more info
and
printed material**

ASRC

(Asylum Seeker Resource Centre)

FOOD BANK APPEAL

Lend you support

to fill a

SWAN basket

of

food and necessities.

We need cans of fruit,

tomatoes, corn, peas,

packets of pasta, coffee,

soap, toilet paper, washing

powder.

Bring your contribution to the

July meeting

Contributors

to the

July

issue

of

SWAN newsletter:

Gwen Wilson

Carmel Harris

Maureen McPhate

Debbie Roberts



SWAN

Southern Women's Action Network

SUNDAY 18 JULY

Mt Martha House

Cnr Dominion Rd and the Esplanade, Mt Martha

9.30am

Speaker

PAMELA CURR

- Greens national refugee spokeswoman
- Former organiser Fairwear Campaign
- Campaign Coordinator at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Topic: Human rights overboard!

COST

\$7.00

BOOKINGS

Val McKenna 5974 3461

Maureen McPhate 5974 4096

To assist with catering

**please
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Val or Maureen

by 15 July — many thanks!

SWAN newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 4

August 2004

Southern Women's Action Network Inc.
Reg No A0038144Z, ABN 84 41627 1331
PO Box 392 Mt Martha 3934

Points of interest:

- September meeting details.
- SWAN application for government grant unsuccessful
- Warm response to Pamela Curr
- Annual General Meeting details.
- SWAN dates.
- Gwen Wilson reports.
- Andrew Wilkie CD available.
- Jottings.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE 2003-2004

The Admin Committee conferred during June to plan the September meeting and to discuss ideas for future SWAN initiatives.

Facilitator

To be appointed

Secretary

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Treasurer

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Committee Members

Alleyne Lacy

Jo Diplock

Nola Plackett

Judith Couacaud-Graley

Rosemarie Draper

Debbie Roberts

Marguerite Ryan to journey to Mt Martha!

Considering that Marguerite Ryan travels so frequently to Africa, we are indeed fortunate that she has found time to journey to Mt Martha in September to address SWAN!

Mother of seven children, Marguerite, nevertheless, has managed to devote much of her lifetime to working for a range of non-profit organizations.

In an interview published in the *Age* (10.6.04), Marguerite explained how she and two friends established 'Women for Women' — a fundraising group assisting Kenyan women to set up their own small businesses as a means of extricating themselves from the extreme poverty that so many of them experi-

ence. Indeed, Marguerite said that nothing in her life's experience prepared her for the devastating poverty she found in Kibera, Nairobi. Kibera is a hillside slum area in Nairobi and is home to over one million people.

We are sure you will find Marguerite Ryan a challenging and fascinating speaker with much first-hand knowledge to share with those interested in the lives of others who manage to survive in conditions that we in Australia can hardly imagine.

Mark this date in you diary NOW! Don't miss hearing this inspiring speaker: Marguerite Ryan! Sunday 19 September.

**GUEST
SPEAKER**

**SUNDAY
19 SEPTEMBER**

MARGUERITE RYAN

Mt Martha House
Cnr Dominion Rd and the Esplanade

9.30am

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 19 SEPTEMBER

SWAN Annual General Meeting is scheduled for the September meeting. Including presentation of reports, the AGM should take only some 20 minutes prior to the speaker's presentation.

Nominations for all positions

have been received, but the SWAN Constitution allows for an expanded Administrative Committee if desired.

If anyone would like to nominate for a position on the Administrative Committee, forms will be available on the

day.

For further information and/or queries, please ring Val at 5974 3461 or Maureen at 5974 4096.

**SWAN
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
19 SEPTEMBER 2004**

ON BEHALF
OF
THE ASYLUM SEEKER
RESOURCE CENTRE

**PAMELA CURR
THANKED
SWAN MEMBERS
FOR THEIR
DONATIONS**

OF
**FOOD
AND
NECESSITIES
AND THE
CASH DONATION**

'HUMAN RIGHTS OVERBOARD' – PAMELA CURR

Present Government policies relating to the detention of asylum seekers and refugees costs millions of dollars and denies these people — who have fled persecution in their own countries — basic human rights.

Some 5000 refugees are currently categorised as VISA E, meaning that they receive no work rights or health and other benefits, amounting to a breach of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by Australia as well as further scarring the peo-

ple concerned. Such a situation can only have a serious and deleterious effect on all Australians Pamela said. While refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan and other areas of the Middle East have access to the Refugee Tribunal, in reality many are assessed up to four times, often without any outcome.

Pamela, currently national spokesperson on refugee and asylum seeker issues for the Greens and Co-ordinator of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

in Melbourne, told of the work of the Resource Centre which offers practical and other support to these needy people. Pamela made two major points: we need to remember that all Australians originally came from another place and secondly that no matter what the outcome of the next election, Australians should demand a national conference on 'Human Rights and the Australian Nation'.

Gwen Wilson

*Do we really know
what it's like to have no
money and no hope?*

Pamela Curr

*Logic suggests that the
ASRC shouldn't work
— but it does, through
the efforts of ordinary
Australians and their
generosity!'*

Pamela Curr

SPECIAL RAFFLE – in aid of ASRC

SWAN member, Miriam McFee has painted a portrait of three Asylum Seekers which she has generously donated to be raffled at the September meeting. Tickets, as usual, will be 3 for \$1.00.

If you would like to participate in the raffle, but are unable to attend the meeting, please ask a

friend to purchase tickets on the day. Or, if you wish to make a donation please send cash or cheque along to the meeting or post to SWAN, PO Box 392, Mt Martha, 3934.

All proceeds from this raffle will be donated to the **Asylum Seeker Resource Centre**.

SWAN thanks Miriam for her generous contribution.

**RAFFLE
in aid of**

**ASYLUM SEEKER
RESOURCE CENTRE**

original painting
by Miriam McFee

TICKETS — 3 FOR \$1.00

SWAN dates – 2004

**MEG MERTON'S
JAMS
and
MARMALADES
on sale at
SEPTEMBER
MEETING**

**SUNDAY
19 SEPTEMBER
MARGUERITE RYAN**

- One of three Victorian women educating African women out of poverty.
- Seven trips to Africa.
- Mother of seven.

**SUNDAY
21 NOVEMBER
Dr CARMEN LAWRENCE**

- Federal MP
- Committed human rights campaigner
- Feminist
- Articulate, challenging speaker.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS

ABOUT

SWAN



Carole Ford farewells SWAN

Dr Carole Ford, SWAN facilitator, recently moved to Cairns with her family. Carole, feminist and community activist, will be sorely missed by the many groups and organizations to which she contributed her energies, intellect and support. The following are excerpts from Carole's farewell letter read to the July meeting by Maureen:

To all my friends at SWAN, ...for those who are not aware, our family has relocated to Cairns after thirty years on the Peninsula. Although we were reluctant to leave friends and the beautiful environment, warmer weather and a more tranquil life-style(!) were hard to resist, and we see this as yet another adventure...

What to say about SWAN? Who would have guessed, all those years ago, that the small group of women around a kitchen table could have had such vision? The need for an organization for progressive, socially aware women was ap-

parent, but the efforts of this original group were astonishing. I am extremely proud and privileged to have been one of these women, and I commend to everyone the enormous contribution that this group made...Since those early days, many women have ensured that the purpose and integrity of the group has been maintained...

The list of speakers who have attended our Sunday meetings is a veritable 'who's who' of Victorian (and Australian) women, all of whom have given their time voluntarily, and provided us with such knowledge and understanding on a diversity of issues. I feel confident that SWAN will continue to grow in its reputation and influence in the community. Early planning for a day conference next year is well-advanced, and I urge everyone to become involved.

...continue to harass and harangue the decision-makers as it is obvious that public pressure has become increasingly impor-

tant in directing their actions. The Women's Electoral Lobby is developing an election campaign to challenge the major parties commitment and response to social justice and the specific needs of women — I hope that SWAN may be able to promote this concept on the Peninsula.

Some people...have asked me what I will do in Cairns! Those who know me well will laugh at this query. If Cairns does not have a radical women's group, then that would certainly be a challenge — how about a Women's Action group Cairns (WANC!) as a sister group to SWAN?...Then there's Amnesty, the Association of Women Educators, politics, local government, community radio and environmental groups if I become too bored!

...I feel very privileged to have been a part of SWAN. What I have gained in friendship, knowledge, self-esteem and enjoyment far exceeds any contribution I made... **Carole**

Jottings...

A burning candle
and flowers
at the July meeting marked
the passing of SWAN
member
Anne Cairns.

Thanks to Barbara Rimington and Paddy Goodman who took responsibility for selling jams and jewellery at the July meeting.

SWAN funding submission for a portable microphone was unsuccessful. The Admin Committee will now consider purchasing one from funds!

Planning continues for the proposed SWAN Conference on Violence next year and the proposed Community Participation Encouragement Bursary for young women.

Congratulations to Bonnie Einsiedel on her contribution to the July meeting.

CDs
ANDREW WILKIE
IRAQ,
INTELLIGENCE
AND THE DECLINE
OF
AUSTRALIAN
DEMOCRACY

Address presented
at
MORNINGTON, 2004
\$10.00

also
MARIAM RAWI

from
Revolutionary Association of
the Women of Afghanistan

Address presented
at

Mt Eliza, 2004
\$10.00



URGENTLY NEEDS
Volunteers and Carers

For Children with
Disabilities

Lesley Hodge

9553 4822

Generous reimbursements
available

Contributors
to the
August
issue
of
SWAN newsletter:
Gwen Wilson
Val McKenna
Carole Ford
Debbie Roberts



SWAN

MARGUERITE RYAN

Even seven trips to Africa could not prepare Marguerite Ryan for the poverty in the slum of Kibera, Nairobi.



The Age 10.6.04

Sunday 19 September

at

MT MARTHA HOUSE

Cnr Dominion Road and the Esplanade

- Marguerite Ryan is one of three Victorian women educating African women out of poverty.
- Mother of seven children.
- Has spent most of her life working for non-profit organisations.
- With two friends she set up Women for Women, a fundraising group assisting Kenyan women to establish their own businesses.
- Has had seven trips to Africa.
- No stranger to poverty, she was shocked and devastated by conditions in Kibera.
- Currently works in public relations for Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce and Eastern Palliative Care.
- Kibera is a hillside slum, home to more than a million people in Nairobi.

BOOKINGS

Val 5974 3461

Maureen 5974 4096

RSVP by 16 September

SWAN newsletter

Volume 5, issue 1

February 2005

Special points of interest:

- Inaugural Bursary winner.
- List of speakers
- March meeting details
- Gwen Wilson report
- Jottings
- Comments from Carole
- Human voice of the Asylum seeker issue
- SWAN 2005 dates

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE 2004-2005

The Admin Committee met in February to organise the March meeting and to discuss plans for the coming year..

Facilitator

Debbie Roberts

Secretary

Janice Gray

Treasurer/Speakers

Val McKenna

Committee Members

Maureen McPhate

Alleynne Lacy

Jo Diplock

Judith Couacaud-Graley

Rosemarie Draper

Jenny Hally

Amy Duncan

Members welcome to attend meetings

Southern Women's Action Network Inc.
Reg No A0038144Z, ABN 84 41627 1331
PO Box 392 Mt Martha 3934



Author first speaker for 2005



In the Sept. issue of the *Age Agenda*, Dr Caroline Taylor featured in a major article detailing her encounters with Victoria's legal system as a victim of sexual abuse. Dr Taylor is the author of two books, both published in 2004: *Surviving the Legal System*, and *Court-Licensed Abuse*. Dr Taylor's sexual abuse trauma

and legal system experiences also provided the catalyst for her PhD. Dr Caroline Taylor is a member of the Victorian Law Reform Commission's Advisory Committee on sexual offences and was a key contributor to the Commission's final report also published last year.

SWAN is indeed fortunate that Dr Caroline Taylor has accepted our invitation as first speaker in the SWAN diary for 2005. We encourage you NOT to miss the opportunity of hearing and meeting her!

See back page for topic and RSVP details. Names of speakers for 2005 meetings appear on page 2. Another stimulating and challenging year for SWANers and friends!

**GUEST
SPEAKER**

**SUNDAY
20 MARCH**

Dr CAROLINE TAYLOR

Mt Martha House
Cnr Dominion Rd and the Esplanade
Mt Martha

9.30am
cost: \$7.00
concessions apply

Congratulations Bonnie!

16 year old Bonnie Einsiedel is the recipient of the inaugural SWAN bursary. Heartiest congratulations! Bonnie has attended a number of SWAN meetings and has expressed views and asked questions in a thoughtful, clear and concise way.

In her application, Bonnie stated 'I am a sixteen year old individual with a strong sense of social justice and a passion for making a difference. I am particularly interested in the [issue] of asylum seekers and have visited Dandenong Asylum Seekers Centre...have

corresponded with three asylum seekers in detention; have sent letters to politicians...and formed a social justice group with three of my friends...' A worthy recipient of the SWAN bursary! We look forward to meeting you in March, Bonnie!

CHALLENGING NOVEMBER ADDRESS...Gwen Wilson

In 2004 Australia assumed the Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights...its record as reflected in its voting pattern...has been dismal.

Examples of Australia's voting are cited in Anne O'Rourke's paper 'The Decline of Human Rights in Australia'.

Limited copies available at the March meeting.

Anne O'Rourke's November address challenged her SWAN audience with its breadth of world-wide issues and concerns. Human Rights, attitudes to torture, sweat working conditions in 3rd world countries, the behavior of corporations, the war against terror, and genocide all received attention.

Australia, she claimed, had one of the worst records of any nation in the world in the area of Human Rights. In the period

1998-2000 the government was criticised by the six United Nation's human rights treaty committees for shortcomings in its performance.

Anne argued that the sweat labor conditions in 3rd world countries are worse than former slavery in the Southern states of America in the 19 century where, at least food, clothing, and shelter were provided.

World corporations were becoming more powerful than

governments. Many violations by these companies are being filed at this time. Generally, government reaction to corporate exploitation and crime is the 'soft option'. That is, the situation must be handled with diplomacy, so as not to 'upset' the huge multinational companies — it may be bad for business and investment! Members asked many questions, all of which were well answered by Ms O'Rourke.

Gwen Wilson

Limited copies of Anne's 'The Decline of Human Rights in Australia' are available at the March meeting.

I know Caroline Taylor and cherish her gentleness, resilience and commitment. She is a very special person. I think anyone would be fortunate to meet her at least once in their lives.

Carole Ford

COMMENTS FROM CAROLE!

Carole Ford emails us occasionally and keeps us on our toes about important issues! Here are recent comments:

I thought some SWAN members might take action in relation to the abortion debate. The Australian Democrats have launched a petition that calls for no changes that would make it more difficult for women to access abortions. The petition asks for the Parliament to sup-

port a woman's fundamental right to safe, affordable and legal abortion. The petition can be completed online or printed out. It is available at www.democrats.org.au/campaignspro_choice_petition.

In a letter to her local Liberal MP Carole wrote re Peter Qasim, Australia's longest serving detainee, ...W.Churchill argued that democracies find abhorrent the arbitrary imprison-

ment of people without trial...the foundation of totalitarian regimes, such action could only be excused in times of extreme danger to the nation...obviously, Peter Qasim is not an 'extreme danger'...the present Government is utilizing his statelessness as an apparent warning to potential asylum-seekers that contemporary Australia is not a haven of democracy.

See *The Age* p. 15, Thursday 17 Feb for feature article on Peter Qasim.

**MEG MERTON'S
JAMS
and
MARMALADES**
on sale
at
**MARCH
MEETING**

SWAN DATES – 2005

Dr Caroline Taylor
20 MARCH

Social Death & Violence Against
Women

PROFESSOR MARCIA NEAVE

Author, Chairwoman Victorian Law
Reform Commission

15 MAY

20 NOVEMBER

STILL NEGOTIATING!

Trish Bolton

Lecturer media studies Swinburne University

17 JULY

The fleeting & fickle nature of news

Dr Clare Wright

Postdoctoral Research Fellow: Women &
Eureka

18 SEPTEMBER

RSVP

all meetings to either

Val 5974 3461

Maureen 5974 4096

JOTTINGS!

Amidst all the horror of the Tsunami tragedy it was heartening to hear that the Karen people were not affected. Remember Christine from the Australia Karen Youth Project who addressed SWAN last year?

Who was it that left toys to the value of over \$100 on Val's doorstep before Christmas? We're pretty sure it wasn't Santa because it was a bit early for his run! Many thanks! The toys were passed on to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

Thank you to Barb Rimington for her letter of thanks to the Admin committee for 'the high caliber' of last year's speakers. Also for her suggestions regarding future SWAN meetings.

Admin member Jo Diplock has generously donated 10 of her handcrafted leadlight doves of peace for sale and/or raffling at the March meeting. See details in end column.

STW (Sharing the Wisdom) an offshoot of SWAN responsible for the highly successful envi-

ronmental forum at which ABC's Robyn Williams was guest presenter, and the popular 'Conversations at the Courthouse' has ceased. Monies will be disbursed to SWAN with the recommendation that they be used for a SWAN bursary open to women of any age. The committee, initially under the chair of Vivienne Nicholson and members including Barb Rimington, Patsy Carpenter, Grace Fraser, Val McKenna, Maureen McPhate, and Debbie Roberts did a great job!

SPECIAL RAFFLE and SALE

proceeds to
**ASYLUM SEEKER
RESOURCE
CENTRE**

**LEADLIGHT
PEACE DOVES**
tickets available

at
**MARCH
meeting.**
Items also
FOR SALE
at
\$20. each

Human voice of the asylum seeker issue

On 13 February, Val answered her phone to hear the voice of Masood — a just released Iranian asylum seeker with whom she had regularly corresponded. He was with a friend, ^{Mahsen} Mahsen, released some two years ago. To hear the joy and relief in their voices was overwhelmingly emotional, said Val.

Fran Rule, another SWANer, had also corresponded with Masood. Fran writes:

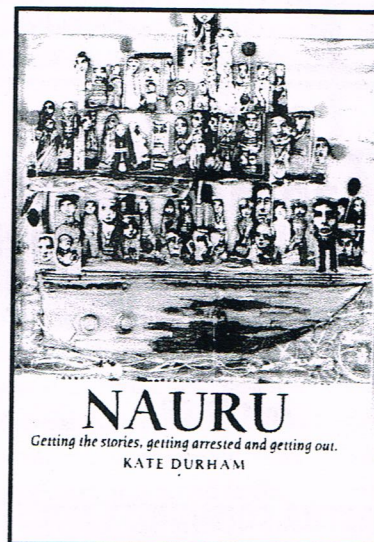
In his letters, Masood gave the impression of being a sensitive, thoughtful young man., horrified at being in detention, first at Port Hedland then in Baxter. He is full of gratitude for the Australians who support detained refugees and still trusts in God...He always ends his letters with a blessing. Once, I mentioned I was preoccupied because of the recent death/

funeral of a friend's husband. In the midst of all that was happening to him, he found time and compassion to write his condolences. Some might be brutalized by the detention experience, clearly he is not one of them! I'll take the liberty of quoting from his letter to me:

First I have one news for you. I get visa, that is protection visa after more than 4 years...First I didn't tell to anyone because this place everyone look at each other and everyone's feeling is down. I am very sad for other people who still here from this situation and for long time...Now I just waiting for time...First I need to rest my mind because I'm very tired. This tired not for body just for my mind...

On release, Masood did not

know whether it was temporary or permanent. Since then, however, Val has learnt that he has only a temporary visa. Both Mahsen and Masood suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome and depression. Masood is about 27 years of age. His 'crime' was to protest against the Iranian government—hence his flight to 'freedom'!



Collection of
non-
perishables for
Asylum Seeker
Resource
Centre
continues
donations can
be brought to
March
meeting

Kate Durham
travelled to Nauru with a
BBC journalist in 2002
Subsequent program
shown around the world
but not in
Australia
Her publication (at left)
tells the story
SWAN has limited numbers
available at March meeting
or ring
Val 5974 3461
\$10. plus postage

SWAN



SOUTHERN WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK

Dr Caroline Taylor

**topic:
Social Death & Violence
against Women**

In 1993 Dr Taylor's father was found guilty of sexually abusing his daughter and sentenced to nine years in jail. After appealing...he was granted a retrial in 1995...found guilty again, but sentence reduced to five years.



**SUNDAY
20 MARCH**

9.30am
cost \$7.00

MT MARTHA COMMUNITY HOUSE
Cnr Dominion Road and the Esplanade
Mt Martha

RSVP
by

16 MARCH

to either

VAL 5974 3461

MAUREEN 5974 4096