

Southern Women's Action Network Inc

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

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

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/southernwomensaction>

Email: [swanwomen@outlook.com](mailto:swanwomen@outlook.com)

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

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



SWAN acknowledges the Bunurong / Boon Wurrung people, the Traditional Custodians of these lands and waters where we meet. 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.

## SWAN NEWS September 2022

*To share matters of interest the deadline for next SWAN News issue is 1<sup>st</sup> October.*

**THIS MONTH** we plan to have our SWAN meeting following the AGM, at Mt Martha House, on September 18<sup>th</sup>, when our speaker Dr Diana Johns, senior lecturer in criminology, will address the impacts of childhood imprisonment. The flyer is attached below as a reminder.

SWAN is pro-active in the matter of youth justice, having recently written to the Victorian Minister for Health. However, the reply was disappointing, suggesting 12 years old as the minimum age for criminality; more detailed comment is in the SFN news below.

**Please** use Trybooking, (URL at top of this page), to donate to SWAN, or donate on entry to our meeting.

We need your support to advance young women through further education.

The July donation went to the Djadjowa Foundation, nominated by Stephanie Ross, one of our two July speakers. See: <https://dhadjowa.com.au/pages/about-us>

**Meanwhile**, Diane McDonald continues to diligently investigate SWAN history, as follows:

**UPDATE OF SWAN HISTORY PROJECT** In recent months further progress has been made on SWAN History Project. We have now finalised a summary report based on the input provided by six of SWAN's founding members. This includes their recollections of the 'early days', special highlights and their views on how SWAN has changed over the past 25 years. We have also developed a comprehensive list of the 130+ guest speakers who addressed SWAN meetings in the past 25 years. This is a truly amazing record for a women's only, volunteer-led community organisation. One that would be very hard to beat!

During the next couple of months, we will be gathering further feedback from other members who were involved in SWAN across the different eras. We are also contacting a sample of our guest speakers to find out what the experience of addressing an audience of social justice minded women meant to them. Further feedback is being sought from some of the young women who received a SWAN Bursary to find out how this contributed to their careers.

Once we have collected all this material, we plan to publish it the form of a small ‘booklet’, with photos. SWAN is a unique organisation. For over a quarter of a century it has enabled women of all ages and backgrounds, from across the Mornington Peninsula and elsewhere, to come together to discuss a broad range of social justice issues and to take action to achieve positive change in our own communities and beyond. We want others to hear the SWAN story too.

Recently the SWAN Committee agreed to launch this booklet at our International Women’s Day meeting in March. The meeting will be facilitated by Jean Ker-Walsh who has extensive experience in facilitating groups that are engaged in community based social action. This will be an important occasion for us to celebrate the past and to dream about SWAN’s future, exploring how SWAN can be further developed to ensure that it continues to involve and inspire women in the current context. A delicious celebratory morning tea and lunch will be provided! Further information about this event will be in the next SWAN NEWS.

### **How you can help**

If you can assist us in any of the following ways, please contact Diane McDonald by Email: [dianemcdonald.consult@gmail.com](mailto:dianemcdonald.consult@gmail.com) or on her mobile: 0404 417 485.

- a) We are having difficulty locating a list of all former bursary recipients. Do you recall the name (and year) of any of the young women who received a SWAN award?
- b) Are willing to share your own SWAN memories with us, either in writing your or by telling us in person?
- c) Do you have any good quality photos of SWAN people and/or events that we could copy to include in the history booklet?

**VALE IRMA KEITH**, who passed away in June this year at the age of 92. Irma joined in March 2013 when SWAN met in the Mornington Council Chambers and remained a keen supporter throughout. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Irma’s family.

**GRANDMOTHERS for REFUGEES** are lobbying the new government with four key demands:

1. Provide an adequate and dignified level of economic, social, health and educational supports for all refugees and people seeking asylum, including work rights
2. Prioritise transfer of refugees with temporary, safe haven or bridging visas on to permanent visas
3. Release people seeking asylum from onshore locked and community detention
4. Prioritise family reunion applications by refugees granted permanent protection

SWAN members can support their campaigns at: [www.grandmothersforrefugees.com](http://www.grandmothersforrefugees.com)

**CHHAUADI PRACTICE** Owen Martin has contacted SWAN to raise awareness of a shocking cultural practice inflicted on young girls in Nepal with terrifying results.

See - <https://beartsy.org/rato-baltin-project-chhaupadi-red-bucket-project/>

Ms Sonam Cheozom, a Nepalese Tibetan citizen, is to arrive in Melbourne later this year to present a talking tour on this practice. Owen Martin welcomes your interest and may be contacted on 0402207869 for further information about the tour.

**COUNCIL RECYCLE COLLECTION** If you missed the MP Shire newsletter this URL may be of value if your cleaning out your garage, etc: <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Online-Forms-and-Services/Mobile-recycling-trailer>

**AND ANOTHER THING** We have received news from Stephanie and Alice, our July speakers, re First People's Assembly of Victoria, that the Parliament of Victoria has voted the Treaty Authority Legislation into law:

*"The Treaty Authority will be the independent umpire to oversee the Treaty negotiations between First Peoples and the Government. **This is the first permanent piece of Treaty-making architecture and a huge leap forward on the journey to Treaty.***

*Led by First Peoples, the Treaty Authority will help to resolve disputes that arise and ensure that Treaty negotiations are grounded in our culture, lore and law."*

### **SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS GROUP**

**AN INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN** One of Aboriginal leader, William Barak's supporters, early colonial settler Anne Fraser Bon, might well have been a precursor to SWAN women in the way she fought for justice for the Aboriginal people of Coranderrk. Read her powerful words written in May 1882 and quoted in the book, *Coranderrk* by Mick Woiwod.



Anne Fraser Bon, the 'Widow of Wappan' who could always be depended upon to support the Kulin cause  
Australian War Memorial & Peggy Aeschlimann

*'We have robbed them of their beautiful colony-deprived them of their hunting fields and fishing grounds and in return given them our diseases and vices (sic) even the little children sharing in the bad effects. They are neither paupers, lunatics, or criminals so why treat them as such? The greatest crime of which they have been guilty is having been the original owners of the soil... Forty years ago they were a numerous people, now the total number in Victoria is about 500.'* (p. 20)

**A WORD IN LANGUAGE** The Bunurong word for woman is 'baggarook'. Sonia Marie, Bunurong woman and descendant of one of the women who were abducted by sealers back in the early nineteenth century and taken to the islands of Bass Strait, has written a beautiful book called *Kulin Tales* which has a glossary of Bunurong language words. Available at Mornington Peninsula libraries.

### **UPDATE ON LOCAL ACTION ON THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART**

- **Spreading the word** As reported in the August SWAN NEWS, the SWAN Position Paper on an Indigenous Voice has been given to local State and Federal politicians, MPSC and FCC Councillors, local First Nations organisations, local media, libraries and selected community groups. SWAN members are continuing to discuss this historic Statement with its key reforms in their networks and to encourage them to

sign up to the following websites where they can find updated information and how they can become involved: [ulurustatement.org](http://ulurustatement.org) and [fromtheheart.com.au](http://fromtheheart.com.au) .

\* **A Very Special Yarning Session** Four SWAN members made it to the Willum Warrain Cultural Awareness session on the Uluru Statement from the Heart, on Wednesday 17 August. It was a wonderful learning experience for the allies who went along to listen to a range of First Nations' voices. Perspectives spanned a wide spectrum from committed to concerned. The latter views included a deep concern about a likely racist backlash in the lead up to a referendum, with fear of hurt, harm and trauma as experienced by LGBTQI communities during the same sex marriage debate. More positive, was the very heartening perspective from young Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people, that the possibility of Voice signals a future of real empowerment and uplifting from trauma impacts.

In stark contrast to Western ways, this yarning lead to no certainties, no definitive or conclusive commitment to the Voice but rather sought and heard and respected the different perspectives of those who participated.

## ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

\* **Youth Justice** As you will be well aware children as young as 10 years old are being locked away in prison. The Victorian Government is not supporting the drive to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 - in case it is electorally unpalatable!

Last month we informed you of a letter SWAN sent to Premier Daniel Andrews and relevant MPs expressing concern about the government's decision to delay the introduction of vital, long overdue legislation (already been passed in the Legislative Assembly) that aims to reduce youth offending and to protect the rights and wellbeing of vulnerable First Nations children. This letter sought immediate reintroduction of this Bill to be passed by the Legislative Council to

- i) Raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years without exception; and
- ii) Address the over representation of First Nations children in our youth justice system.

Following is an extract from a very disappointing response recently received from The Minister for Treaty and First Peoples, The Hon Gabrielle Williams. It does not address the concerns that we raised: '*... Victoria is working in partnership with the Meeting of Attorneys-General to support raising the age of criminal responsibility to a minimum of 12 years of age and has committed to closing the gap in Aboriginal over-representation in the youth justice system by 2031*'.

The SWAN Committee and SFN group members do not want to let this matter lie. You can help to support change by signing:

- a) the online national-wide petition developed by a coalition of legal, medical and social justice organisations, including First Nations organisations at: <https://www.raisetheage.org.au/changetherecord>
- b) a second petition, this one specifically prepared by SWAN about the situation in Victoria. This will be presented at the September SWAN meeting. Members will be invited to add their handwritten signature, then the petition will be posted (yes – by

snail mail) to Daniel Andrews.

\* **Cultural Audit** Our NAIDOC Week guest speakers from the First Peoples' Assembly provided the following cultural audit checklist that SWAN members are encouraged to use in their own contexts:

- Add a recognition/ acknowledgment to our letterhead
- Value and respect Aboriginal decision-making, leadership and self-governance
- Build genuine, meaningful partnerships and relationships with First Nations people
- Support giving power back to the Traditional Owners
- Amplify First Peoples' voices within our community
- Acknowledge and respect First Nations people
- Aim to be more accountable to First Nations people.

\* **A Place to Visit**

Baluk Arts, an urban Aboriginal community arts centre making waves in the art world, has a new home at Mt Eliza. Baluk artists are from diverse Aboriginal backgrounds from all over Australia and artworks created reflect themes of identity in a contemporary cultural context. Check it out!



Check out the latest newsletter for Baluk Arts here:

<https://mailchi.mp/balukarts/opening-exhibition-artist-talk-by-adam-magennis>

**A MEMORABLE QUOTE** *'Your beloved Anzacs all buried so nicely under rows of little white stones in clipped lawns and cared for by Commonwealth gardeners. Our people are in cardboard boxes and jars (sic) on display in glass cabinets in museums.* (From the new book release, *Jesus Town* by Paul Daley (Allen and Unwin), comparing treatment of soldiers who fought for their country in WW1 and First Nations warriors fighting against European invasion).

**A BRIDGE TO RECONCILIATION** To celebrate NAIDOC week, more than a 1000 people, members from all facets of the community, walked the bridge from San Remo to Newhaven in Bunurong Country. Bunurong people, including Elders, along with local community leaders, led the march in this powerful symbolic gesture of bridging the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. (The Koori Mail, July 27, 2022, p:12)

**A BOOK OR TWO TO READ** Adults: *The Wonder of Little Things*, by Vince Copley and Lea McInerney (ABC books). First Nations Elder, Vince Copley shares his extraordinary story, beginning on a government mission in 1936. Children: *Kulin Tales*, by Sonia Marie as referenced above.

SOUTHERN WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK



# DIANA JOHNS

**SWAN's Next  
Guest Speaker**



Photo Credit: Vicki Bell Photography,  
for the School of Social & Political  
Sciences, University of Melbourne

*"The criminalisation of children (how it happens  
and why it needs to stop)."*

Dr Diana Johns is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Melbourne. Her work focuses on the effects of criminalisation, the impacts of imprisonment, and the possibilities of restorative and relational justice practices. Diana has expertise in youth justice, crime prevention, post-prison reintegration, and collaborative research with African-Australian communities. Her first book, *Being and Becoming an Ex-Prisoner* (Routledge, 2017), draws on her PhD research. She is co-author of two new books, *Place, Race and Politics: The anatomy of a law and order crisis* (Weber et al., Emerald, 2021) and *Co-production and Criminal Justice* (Johns et al., Routledge, 2022).

## VENUE

Mt Martha House  
466 Esplanade  
(Cnr Dominion Rd)  
Mt Martha

For women interested  
in deepening their  
knowledge of  
community issues and  
promoting action for  
social justice.

**THIS ACTIVIST EVENT IS ALSO SWAN'S  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING !**

**We would love as many members as possible to attend.**

**Gratefully accepting donations:**

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

**9:30 AM | SUNDAY 18 | SEPT | 2022**



Thanks to Secret Garden for donating the beautiful flowers for our guest speaker



spswan



@southernwomensaction



[www.swanwomen.org.au](http://www.swanwomen.org.au)