

SOUTHERN WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK



Newsletter

April 2024

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 Womens+ Action Network

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

SWAN aspires to be a supportive community for all self-identified cis or transgender women and for those who self-identify as non-binary or gender non-conforming. We are committed to encompassing greater gender diversity in our membership, practices, social justice actions and in the terminology that we use.*

* cis: a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with the sex assigned to them at birth
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

SWAN NEWS Notice

NEW DEADLINE DATE

We've moved the deadline date forward so you get the month's news at the start of each month. Also check out Diary Dates near the end of this newsletter – to keep you informed on what's happening in SWAN and in our area.

CONTRIBUTION END DATES

April 24, May 29, June 26, July 31, August 28, September 25, October 23, November 27.

We appreciate all contributions to SWAN NEWS and encourage members to provide information about events, activities and causes, including photos (as long as those photographed have given permission, and the photograph's author and/or source is included).

SWAN Speaker Meeting

International Women's Day 2024: 'Inspire Inclusion'

The theme of our International Women's Day Meeting, held at Mt Martha House on March 17, was 'Inspire Inclusion'. In commencement we lit our candle in solidarity with all women affected by war and conflict, whether this is directly by rape, famine, being taken hostage or wounded.



Lama Mahmoud with SWAN member Pauline D'Astoli

We then heard a very moving address from Lama Mahmoud, a 20 year old Palestinian woman who shared her personal story of seeking refuge in Australia six months ago.

She arrived with her mother and sister. Her father may not be able to join them due to lack of finances. Since October, the family has lost 40 relatives to the current war in Gaza, including many children.

Communication is an issue as there is no electricity, for example, to charge mobile phones. Going out for food or supplies is dangerous, even if supplies are available. Despite the shortage of water and food, people are observing fasting for Ramadan. Lama's dream in Australia is to complete a medical degree but finance is an issue.

Lama ended her talk with a request for prayer for a ceasefire for the sake of all the innocent people in Palestine and Israel who are suffering as a result of the current conflict. All they want is peace.

Lama asked for the SWAN donation of \$200 to be sent to UNICEF for Children of Gaza. UNICEF is calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, and for the immediate, safe, and unconditional release of all abducted children, and the prevention and end to any grave violations against children, including killing and injuring children.

UNICEF is one of 130 Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) that are involved in international development and humanitarian action. All these NGOs come under a peak body called the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). ACFID is urging a permanent ceasefire to scale up humanitarian response. Many of these NGOs, including Save the Children, OXFAM Australia and Amnesty International Australia are providing crucial and life-saving assistance to those suffering in the current crisis.



SWAN PROJECT: Fostering SWAN's Future

To become involved in developing and actioning strategies that foster SWAN's future, contact the people below and they can brief you on what their group is doing, plus meeting details. **Next meeting dates for each group are listed in Diary Dates p.15.**

SWAN PROMOTION GROUP

Sarah Russell: sarahrussell@comcen.com.au

SWAN DIVERSITY GROUP

Viv Daniels: vivcdaniels@gmail.com

SWAN & YOUNGER WOMEN GROUP

Bonnie Einsiedel: bonnie.einsiedel@gmail.com

Some great ideas these groups are following up include:

- Enhancing SWAN's promotional material, including updating our membership flyer and creating an eye-catching A5 leaflet with a QR code to our website, that can be distributed more broadly to community organisations and media etc.
- Proactively circulating SWAN NEWS to targeted local community organisations.
- Developing a short list of priority 'talking points' that members can refer to when speaking with people who want 'to know a bit about SWAN and what we do.'
- Enabling people who want to join SWAN to register their interest via our website.
- Securing inspiring guest speakers for SWAN bi-monthly meetings on issues of current concern to younger women, to women 40+, and to women of retirement age.
- Increasing our media exposure, including: improved distribution of the flyer advertising SWAN guest speaker meetings and other public events; regular inclusion in the 'What's On' section of local newspapers about SWAN activities, meetings and events.
- Holding a 'skills development' workshop for members who want to improve their ability to write 'powerful letters' to the media; also to learn social media capabilities.
- Researching creating a SWAN T-shirt to wear at public events and rallies, SWAN Meetings and Coffee Catch-Ups, etc. Also, possibly some action-oriented badges eg. 'SWAN supports Climate Action', etc.
- Making some corflutes to advertise SWAN and making better use of the SWAN banner.
- Promoting SWAN in school communities in greater Frankston and across the MP with the aim of reaching parents, teachers and senior student bodies.
- Reorienting the annual SWAN bursaries to provide small grants of around \$400-\$500 each to support the education of a small number of senior students at local State Secondary Schools in greater Frankston and across the MP. These students would be invited as a group to attend at one of the SWAN meetings and to join a panel discussion to speak about their social justice concerns.

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Next SWAN Coffee Catch-Up

SUNDAY 21 APRIL, 10 – 11.30am: SAGES CAFÉ Baxter

Come along to **SAGES CAFE** a social enterprise café at **Sages Cottage Farm, 85 Sages Rd, Baxter**, and even better, bring a friend or relative - especially if they're younger! - for them to get an idea of what SWAN is about. Over coffee, tea and light refreshments, we aim to get to know other SWAN members in a less formal setting than our Sunday Speaker Meetings and encourage discussion of social justice issues that may be of concern to you.

Sages Cottage Farm is a working farm that provides educational programs and employment pathways for people with a disability. It is managed by Wallara, a leading provider of disability support. Sages Café employs adults who are differently abled, and uses fresh ingredients grown onsite. The café's location on Sages Cottage Farm invites exploration of this 'Land for Wildlife' site and the homestead dating back to the 1850s.

RSVP Moz Lucas by Friday 12 April: maureenfrances21@gmail.com

Remember to wear your SWAN badge! To make it a little easier to get to know one another and as an opportunity to promote SWAN.



Sages Café, Baxter

FUTURE CATCH-UPS:

To invite participation by SWAN members living in different Peninsula locations, we'll be moving around to a different café on the Mornington Peninsula and in Frankston for each Catch-Up – preferably cafés with large tables! Please let Moz know of your café suggestions. Check out each month's SWAN NEWS for details of our other Coffee Catch-Ups in June, August, October and December this year.

Rally for Refugees

A number of SWAN members attended the Palm Sunday rally '**Justice & Peace for Refugees**' on March 24, either as part of Grandmothers for Refugees or of their own volition.

Prior to the march, speakers from various faiths and philosophies read excerpts from sacred texts and scriptures and presented symbols of peace and unity for display.



Sister Brigid Arthur (centre) interviews two women refugees

In addition, **Sister Brigid Arthur** interviewed two young women, one from Sri Lanka and one from Iran about the hardships they have endured living in limbo over the past 10 years as refugees, including being separated from their extended families.

A young Palestinian teenager aged 15 sang a very moving rendition of John Lennon's '*Imagine*'. David Manne from the **Refugee Legal Centre** also gave a rallying call for the need to continue to advocate for justice for refugees as we still have a long way to go despite some asylum seekers and refugees receiving permanent residency.



Let's share this very special late afternoon together in support of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and people seeking asylum.

Hosted by the Southern Peninsula Grandmothers for Refugees and St Johns Church Flinders.

Enjoy delicious gourmet finger food and local Mornington Peninsula wines as twilight settles over Western Port from Flinders Yacht Club.

Bookings: <https://events.humanitix.com/feast-for-freedom-s2v36af9>
Where: Flinders Yacht Club,
Foreshore Reserve, Flinders 3929
When: Saturday 13th April 2024
Time: 4.00pm - 6.00pm
Cost: \$60 per person
Contact: Penny Johns - 0419 366 507



Click here to book now:
events.humanitix.com/feast-for-freedom-s2v36af9

Feast *For Freedom*

Update:

Women's Homelessness on the Mornington Peninsula

'Women over 50 are the fastest growing demographic of homeless in the developed world and are increasingly referred to as the hidden homeless. These women live in their cars, stay on friend's couches or sofa beds, or live in short-term accommodation.'

'UNDER COVER' narrated by Margot Robbie

A report from the SWAN Homelessness Group first meeting:

We met at Mt Martha House on a Tuesday afternoon in March which was a comfortable space and also conducive to good discussion. There was agreement that the situation on the Peninsula is dire and in need of many urgent actions so the plight of homeless women does not further deteriorate.

Many opportunities for improvement to the situation were discussed and it was decided that advocacy is where SWAN can make the most difference. All levels of Government need to be targeted.

Our suggestion is to build a coalition of women from across the area using our organisation and individual contact lists developed during the VOICE campaign.

The first step is to collect suitable statistics and personal stories to provide background and information to share and empower.

Petitions and template letters will be provided for email and snail mail use, complete with envelopes and stamps. Materials will be provided by the group for each stage of the campaign especially at election times.

A screening of the film 'UNDER COVER' for members and supporters is also being investigated.

Our next get together is Tuesday 9 April at 2pm at Mt Martha House.

If you would like to share some information or let us know your views please email Erica Churchill who is kindly keeping our meeting minutes: churchill.eric@gmail.com

Judith Graley, Belinda Rodman, Susan Blackburn, Erica Churchill, Susan Hillman-Stolz and Lynn Carpenter.

SWAN Support Needed

NEEDED URGENTLY!!!

SWAN CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY

The systems below are already in place, and retiring Correspondence Secretary Vivienne Daniels will help you transition into the role.

1. Maintain our Register of SWAN Members on the Excel spreadsheet.
2. Maintain a Record of Correspondence inwards and outwards.
3. Respond to mail/email in a timely manner.
4. Inform SWAN NEWS Editor about upcoming events.

More info, contact SWAN Facilitator Diane McDonald via email, leave your phone number, and she will call you: dianemcdonald.consult@gmail.com

Donations instead of Gifts

Are you celebrating a special birthday this year? All birthdays are special, I hear you say and I agree! **Have you thought about suggesting a donation to SWAN in lieu of gifts?** This is a way to support our work and actions and especially to ensure the continuation of our Education Bursaries to women who are studying and experiencing hardship or disadvantage.

If this interests you, please direct gift-givers to our website: swanwomen.org.au They should then click on the **'Donate to SWAN'** tab and follow the instructions. In order to keep track of donations, it would be helpful if the gift-giver could forward an email to: swanwomen@outlook.com and in the subject heading enter **'Birthday Donation'**. In the body of the email, record date and amount of donation. Alternatively cash donations can be given to SWAN Treasurer Erica Churchill.

* Please note donations made to SWAN are not tax deductible.

Refocusing the SWAN Bursary Project

YOUR OPINIONS, IDEAS AND EXPERTISE APPRECIATED!

SWAN has had a proud history of providing bursaries to support women in their studies.

Between 2004-06, small grants in the form of a 'Community Participation Encouragement' scholarship enabled several secondary school girls to grow in confidence and improve their public speaking skills. Over the years, our focus shifted to providing larger scholarships through *Graduate Women Victoria*, to support a number of tertiary students whose study had an emphasis on social justice. Several of the recipients were First Nations women.

In recent years, donations for our bursary fund have reduced. This provides an opportunity for us to review and renew the way we support women to pursue their studies and social justice involvement.

We want to think outside the square... and this is where we need YOUR HELP!

***Our basic idea so far* – is that we want to re-orient the SWAN bursary to support a small number of local State High School students each year.** We certainly do not have the capacity to provide large financial contributions. But we know that a grant of \$400 to \$500 can make a real difference by enabling a young woman to complete secondary school. The recipient may decide to use this bursary to help them buy a laptop or other essential study materials, pay for a course fee or allow her to participate in a special research or study activity. The student would decide - SWAN would not dictate.

We would also like to actively engage with each bursary recipient by **inviting them to participate in a SWAN meeting to hear the guest speaker presentation and** to learn about the social justice actions being undertaken by our members. In addition we would provide **an opportunity for a few of them each year to address a SWAN meeting** – perhaps in a 'youth panel' of two or three. This would give them the chance to tell us about the particular social, equity and environmental issues etc. of particular concern to young people. They may be accompanied by their teachers and or parents.

WHAT ARE WE ASKING FROM YOU?

I spoke at the March meeting about SWAN establishing a 'pool' of funds to continue our bursaries. Following are some suggestions that could be considered. We are keen to hear your views on these ideas and we want you to share your own suggestions with us.

1. GOLD COIN DONATIONS

One way to collect funds is by the 'good old model' of students wearing casual clothes to school for a gold coin donation. It's easy to do and needs little promotion. But it needs the school to be on board with the strategy of course.

An additional benefit is that this could involve SWAN speaking to the student body about social justice actions, strategies and projects etc. This could help raise SWAN's profile, might encourage young women and their mothers to become SWAN members, but also 'plants the seed of social justice action and advocacy' in the wider school body.

I am currently compiling a listing of all State Secondary level schools on the Mornington Peninsula and in the greater Frankston area. The bursaries would be applied for and dispersed to students at a few selected schools each year (the number depending on the amount of funding we have available). Principals / teaching staff may be involved in nominating suitable candidates.

2. DONATIONS

SWAN members and others can continue to donate directly to SWAN for the bursaries. We are currently researching SWAN applying for a DGR status (deductible gift recipients). This would allow people who donate to have a tax deductible offset. If anyone has experience in this area, please contact me, as it's not a task/ skill that I am familiar with.

3. LEGACIES

SWAN members and others could donate a sum of money once, or annually to the bursary funding pool. For example, I might donate \$500 per annum. Or I might make a one-off allocation to the SWAN Bursary in my Will. Again, I have no experience in this area and would welcome your expertise. Perhaps a bursary could be named after the donor "The (name) SWAN bursary". Or we could simply come up with a catchy title for the fund that, over time, becomes well known in the wider community.

WHAT NEXT?

These are only thoughts on paper. We need your input. Let's keep the SWAN bursaries going into the next millennium!!!! Our young bursary recipients might change the world!! All suggestions will be considered by the SWAN Committee and a decision made about next steps.

Contact Susan Blackburn by email or text.

EMAIL: sbmhome@hotmail.com and write SWAN in the subject line.

TEXT: 0414 253 345

Please note, I don't answer phone numbers I don't know, so text first and include the word SWAN in your message.

I look forward to your support and ideas.

Susan Blackburn

Something New!

SWAN 'Social Justice' BOOK CLUB

Anyone interested in joining a book club? Then look no further ... We could read/listen to books exploring aspects of social justice, then meet up and share our opinions and ideas. Currently, this is just an idea, with no book list or format - we can work out all that when we get together for the first time over a cuppa.

Please contact Lynn Carpenter 0402 499 639
(text or leave a message and I will ring you back)

MEDITATION GROUP

Anyone who has had any experience of meditation will know about the many benefits of meditation practice over time ... Scientifically proven to dampen an overly active nervous system, we notice improvements in our reactivity, mood and resilience amongst other things. Especially during these challenging times there is comfort and strength to be gained from sitting and meditating in a group with others. Ruth, Jan and Lynn met at the recent SWAN Coffee Catch Up and discovered a shared interest in regular meditation and are keen to find other SWAN members who are already practicing or interested in exploring meditation. As this is a very recent idea, nothing has been decided yet other than a wish to set up a regular group to encourage and support each other's practice and to collectively help to make the world a more positive and pleasant place.

*If you are interested please contact **Lynn Carpenter 0402 499 639 (text or leave a message and I will ring you back)**. We look forward to hearing from you.*

NB: This is not a SWAN run activity.

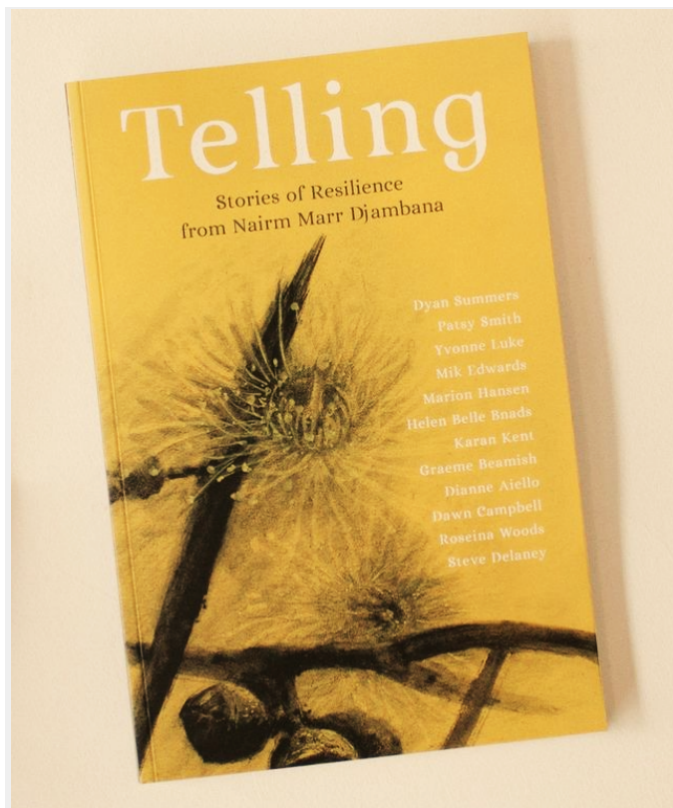
Supporting First Nations

'What next? First Nations Gender Justice'

Listen to this powerful presentation given by June Oscar AO, the outgoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner: **'What next? First Nations Gender Justice'** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBP60Ct7fUU>

June shares her personal story of growing up in a town camp in Fitzroy Crossing and of the significant impact of First Nations women throughout her life. She also provides us with a vision for the future and of her strong belief that Australia can come together after the Referendum.

Amongst the innumerable important contributions that June has made towards advancing First Nations Gender Justice, in 2020 she published the landmark **'Wiyi Yani U Thangani' - Women's Voices - Report**. June continues to pursue its full implementation to advance First Nations gender justice and equality in Australia <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/wiyi-yanu-thangani>



'Telling: Stories of Resilience from Nairn Marr Djambana'

Available from:
Magabala Books;
Nairn Marr Djambana;
Baluk Arts.

An historical document of survival, Black pride, reconnection and joy, *'Telling'* comprises powerful personal stories by Elders of the Nairn Marr Djambana Aboriginal community.



AUNTY BEA EXHIBITION

NATURE'S DREAMING
18/04

'NATURE'S DREAMING' at BALUK ARTS

Opening night, Thursday 18th April, 6-8pm.

Featuring watercolours and acrylics by Aunty Bea Nambooka Edwards

BALUK ARTS: 5 Davies St, Mt. Eliza <https://balukarts.org.au/>

OPEN: Tuesday – Friday, 10am-5pm
Saturday 10am-3pm

Dates for your Diary



- **THURSDAY 4 APRIL, 2pm: ‘SWAN Promotion Group meeting’,** at Sarah’s.
Contact: Sarah Russell sarahrussell@comcen.com.au
- **TUESDAY 9 APRIL, 2pm: ‘SWAN Homelessness Group meeting’,** Mt Martha House,
cnr The Esplanade & Dominion Rd. Mt Martha.
Inquiries: Erica Churchill churchill.eric@gmail.com
- **FRIDAY 12 APRIL, 11am: ‘SWAN & Younger Women Group meeting’,** at Blackbird
Café, 2D Empire St. Mornington.
Contact: Bonnie Einsiedel bonnie.einsiedel@gmail.com
- **SATURDAY 13 APRIL, 4 - 6pm: ‘Feast for Freedom’** to support the Asylum Seeker
Resource Centre, hosted by Southern Peninsula Grandmothers for Refugees and St Johns
Church Flinders. Cost: \$60. Location: Flinders Yacht Club, Foreshore Reserve, Flinders.
Info: Penny Johns: 0419366507
Bookings: <https://events.humanitix.com/feast-for-freedom-s2v36af9>
- **TUESDAY 16 APRIL, 10.30am: ‘SWAN Diversity Group meeting’,** at Beleura Café,
85-87 Beleura Hill Rd. Mornington. Contact: Viv Daniels vivcdaniels@gmail.com
- **THURSDAY 18 APRIL, 6 - 8pm: ‘Connection to Country’,** exhibition opening, Baluk
Arts, 5 Davies St. Mt. Eliza. Info: <https://balukarts.org.au/>
- **SUNDAY 21 APRIL, 10 - 11.30am: ‘SWAN Coffee Catch-Up’,** Sages Café at Sages
Cottage Farm, 85 Sages Rd, Baxter. Bookings: RSVP Moz Lucas by Friday 12 April
maureenfrances21@gmail.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.

[NEWLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS](#) If you have information of interest to our members, please ensure you let the editor Moz Lucas know via the email below.

Deadline for our next issue Wednesday 24 April 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 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

Postal: PO Box 72 BITTERN VIC 3918

Email: swanwomen@outlook.com

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

Our Sponsors

- * Blackbird Café: 2D Empire St Mornington (03) 5976 8632 blackbird-café.edan.io
- * Bodhi & Me Florist: 5A Bay Rd Mt Martha (03) 5916 1270 bodhiandme.com.au
- * Cape Merchants: 96 Ocean Beach Rd Sorrento (03) 5984 4641 capemerchants.com.au
- * Farrells Bookshop: 143 Main Street Mornington (03) 5975 5034 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
- * Secret Garden: 81 Main Street Mornington (03) 5975 0977 secretgardenflowers.com.au
- * SiSCo Pizza Restaurant: 2113 Point Nepean Rd Rye (03) 5985 3967 melgow3@gmail.com
- * Zen Living: 70 Main St Mornington (03) 5975 1013 zenlivingmornington.com.au

Southern Women's Action Network Inc. Reg: A0038144Z, ABN. 50 089 314 052