

SWAN Newsletter



Women striving for
Social Justice

Volume 13 Issue 4

September 2013

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ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE 2012-2013

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Website Co-ordinator
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Purchasing Officer
Pauline Young
Committee Member and Raffle
Claire Chandler
June Rance



Members are
welcome to
attend Committee meetings.

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

Dr Caroline Norma



Dr Caroline Norma is a lecturer in the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University, Melbourne. She teaches within a translation and interpreting Masters program, specialising in Japanese translation.

She has a PHD in Political Science from The University of Melbourne where she researched state and policy approaches to prostitution in Japan. Through her research and activist work, Caroline maintains close links with feminist groups working against the sex industry in Japan.

Caroline is a member of the Coalition Against Trafficking women in Australia and her research into the sex industry in Victoria, violence against women and the impact of social media in relation to this will be included in her talk to SWAN .

AGM at our SEPTEMBER Meeting



This year we will holding the AGM before our guest Speaker at 9:30
We need to postpone discussion of the new Constitution. Legally, we are required to adopt the Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012 and the Committee needs time to address any concerns arising from these changed regulations.
In September, we will be electing a new Administrative Committee for 2013-14. Several of our Committee members have worked for a number of years and will step down. We need nominations for :- President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer and 4 -5 other Committee Members.

PLEASE consider being nominated to become part of this friendly group. (Personally, I am wanting to train someone to take over the newsletter in 2014-15). Nomination forms come with your newsletter.

Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnson July Speaker On connectedness to the community

Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnson, in an animated and feisty way, reminded us of the importance of Community, spirituality, women's role in society and the needs of urban Aboriginal people. Aunty Janet spoke extensively about her work at the Heathmont parish, where she was appointed as the Anglican parish priest. She talked of the interconnected layers of her life – as a woman, a Christian and an Aboriginal person. Particularly, through her involvement in the rigid structures of the Anglican church, she reflected on the need for all of us to “understand who we are” and be true to the various facets of our identity. It seems she challenged the hierarchy when asked to swear allegiance to the Queen...”Bishop, that’s not true for me”....and her role as a priest...”I am not only a priest, but a mother and an Aboriginal woman”. Through her commitment to “being engaged in something bigger than ourselves”, she reinforced the importance of spirit, connectedness and interconnecting relationships. Aunty Janet talked about connectedness to all things and the importance of considering the land, the flora and fauna and the needs of humans in decision making by society. The importance of “place”.

Connecting to people and place segued into the establishment of an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the Outer Eastern suburbs – Mulla Mulla Indigenous Gathering Place. From small beginnings, it has become a valuable resource providing not only services such as after-school care, playgroups and financial literacy assistance, but also links to information and local resources such as Health Services for Aboriginal people with local doctors. By providing a “safe” environment for the local Aboriginal community to meet, issues have been raised and through Community Development programs, these issues are being addressed.

Aunty Janet was justly proud of this work. She was a real reminder to us all about the power we all hold to make a difference. Aunty Janet's spirit and fight is an inspiration to us all. We thank her sincerely.



Far Left, Gwen Fletcher with Aunty Janet. Left, Amy Hanly, Aunty Janet and May Kentish.

Below, Aunty Janet with Georgie Stubbs. Below Right, May Kentish's talk - "Misogyny and Julia Gillard"

SWAN Dates—2013

SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER

**Judith Graley MP
Women in Government
And
Establishing SWAN**





SWAN Indigenous Bursary Winner **Penelope Scott**

Early life and education, ongoing education and hopes for the future

I think I will start off by talking about my pop. My pop had 15 brothers and sisters. He is a very smart man. He doesn't like talking about the past, but I do know that he taught himself how to read. A farmer actually wanted to pay for his schooling, but my pop wasn't allowed to go. Eventually my pop left home and obtained work as a labourer on a sheep farm. I think I get my smarts from my pop.

I was a very shy and introverted child. I loved to read and always had my head in a book. My parent's divorce affected me deeply. I didn't have very good social skills. It wasn't until much later that I learned how to relate to other people. I was bullied at school. School was very hard for me at times. My mother was a disability pensioner. Her health problems were intractable. For a time, we lived with my grandparents in the garage. This was with my brother and sister. Thereafter we lived in government housing. Time went on, high school came and went.

I was a bit of a hell raiser. I remember one time, a teacher tried to bribe me stay in school with an old Buddha statute. As it turns out, I did finish high school. I started a Bachelor of Arts/Law at the University of England. I didn't have access to advice. I didn't even know what arts really meant, but I thought I would make a cool arts student. And I totally rocked it. Looking back, advice and mentoring would have been very helpful. It's not like I could ask a family member, I was the first one to go to university.

Moving was hard. Staying in school was difficult. My family couldn't offer me financial support. I had a Smith Family scholarship but it only covered essentials, like textbooks and stationary, and so on. I think other people would have given up. But I am like le terminator, I don't give up!

I would get terribly homesick at times. I would hitchhike from Armidale to Dubbo and back again. I did a lot of work experience. I had to figure out how to relate to people in a professional context. In the end, I graduated with First Class Honours in Law. I took up an associateship in our nation's capital. And moved again. My friends helped me move, two cars and one trailer later. I left the courts to take up a role in government.

But then I had to leave. By this point, my health had seriously deteriorated. I spent some time at home in Dubbo with my family. I tried to re-enter the job market but I had lost all confidence. And then I was accepted into the Masters program at the University of Melbourne. Time for another move. But I managed. My friends helped me. My family helped me.

My mum was very proud. But she didn't really understand. She was like – What is this masters you speak of? Haven't you done enough study already! My mum left school when she was 15 years old. I remember one time in high school, I got into trouble for skipping class. I looked at the note, I looked at the teacher, and laughed. My mum's handwriting was that bad, they thought I forged it.

Fast forward to now. My health is finally being sorted out. I have a wonderful specialist in Sydney. I have been diagnosed with a rare-autoimmune disease: Hashimotos. My mum probably had the same disease, and it was probably what killed her. I miss her terribly.

So now I'm living in Melbourne. I am enjoying my studies immensely. My social justice project is gathering momentum. My health will be under control by the end of this year. I can cover bills, including tests and medication (which are not on the PBS). I would like to start practicing law next year. I am hoping to obtain a junior role in litigation or employment law. For the first time in a long time, I look towards the future with a sense of hope.

I sincerely want to thank SWAN for their assistance through their SWAN Indigenous Bursary.



Don't let the best you have done so far be the standard for the rest of your life.

Gustavus F Swift.

Many thanks to

SECRET GARDEN

Who supply us with our beautiful flowers



SHARE TABLE

If you would like to speak to any item you have placed on our Share Table please speak with The Facilitator before the meeting.



SUNDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER

DR CAROLINE NORMA

- A lecturer in the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University, Melbourne.
- Caroline is a member of the Coalition Against Trafficking women in Australia
- She researched state and policy approaches to prostitution in Japan.

This and That (continued)

AGM at the September Meeting

In September, we will be electing a new Administrative Committee for 2013-14. PLEASE consider being nominated to become part of this friendly group. Fill in the Nomination form which has come with your newsletter and either send it to :-
SWAN Inc Secretary
PO Box 392 Mt Martha

or hand it to Lynn Carpenter at the AGM.

Asylum Seekers Centre
Georgie and Thalia visit the Centre regularly. If you wish to contribute items you can contact them on 5915 2715 or 0438597421 or georgie.stubbs@yahoo.com.au

"A Stitch in Time"

If you wish to access the Victorian Women's Trust publi-

cation "A Stitch in Time" online, go to:
www.vwt.org.au/initiatives-25.html

Dementia Awareness Week Public Forum titled :-

"Dealing with Tricky Situations dementia and Incontinence" will be held on Monday 23 Sept 10-1pm at the Banksia Centre in Frankston.

Phone 87813400 for info

SWAN sincerely thanks

to **Judith Graley** for printing and facilitating distribution of the newsletters and, to **Mornington Council** for provision of a comfortable and convenient space for our meetings.



**Venue: Meeting Room
Shire Offices,
Queen Street,
Mornington**

9.30AM — cost \$8

**Bookings no longer required.
Please feel free to arrive at future meetings
without confirming your attendance.
Pauline Young, our Purchasing Officer, will
provide delicious goodies for us all.**