

SOUTHERN WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK



Southern Women's Action Network Inc

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

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

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Email: swanwomen@outlook.com

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

Donations: www.trybooking.com/au/donate/swan

SWAN NEWS February 2023

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GREAT NEWS RE SWAN HISTORY PROJECT Now in its 27th year, SWAN is one of very few volunteer-led, community-based women's organisations to survive for longer than a quarter of a century in Victoria. As such, we have been encouraged by many others in the broader women's network to publish our experience as a vital example of the value of the contribution made by women to community development

Having taken up this challenge, we are delighted to say that this task, commencing two years ago, is almost complete. Our book, entitled '*When Women Meet*', is currently with the publisher and will be launched at **SWAN's International Women's Day Meeting on Sunday 19 March.**

We encourage all women who have ever been a SWAN member and those who are interested to learn more about what we do, to join us as we celebrate SWAN's unique history and look to its future on

SUNDAY 19 MARCH

**MAIN HALL MT MARTHA HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE
466 ESPLANADE, MT MARTHA**

9.30-1.30PM

PLEASE PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW

Our guest speaker for the March meeting will be Jean Ker-Walsh, a strategic and media communications professional and co-Chair of Grandmother for Refugees (G4R). Jean has extensive experience in facilitating groups that are engaged in community based social action. Her presentation will focus on the recent history of G4R and the strategic approach that is being taken by the organisation and its members in advocating to change Australia's inhumane refugee policies.

In giving her address, Jean will help us to begin to dream about SWAN's future, and to explore how SWAN can be further developed to ensure that it continues to involve and inspire women in the current context. This discussion will provide some initial 'food for thought' that will be pursued further at our May meeting. We anticipate that allowing time for members to reflect on SWAN's history as recorded in '*When Women Meet*' will also help to stimulate the May discussion.

As usual the formalities of the March meeting will commence at 10.00am. Morning tea will be available for anyone who arrives early (from 9.30am onwards). We anticipate that the meeting, Jean's presentation and follow up discussion will conclude around 11.30am. After that we'll have a coffee/toilet break during which time special guests will start to arrive for the book launch. This includes female councillors and politicians, some of our former guest speakers and representatives from local First Nations organisations and women's groups.

Our book will be launched by the Federal MP for Dunkley, **The Hon. Peta Murphy, MP** at 12.00 noon. Copies available to purchase. A delicious finger food lunch comprising savory and sweet delicacies will be provided by a) Millers, the highly acclaimed bakery in Mornington and Dromana that is run by the twin daughters of SWAN founding members, Judith Graley, and b) Djambana Catering, the Indigenous social enterprise business run by Nairm Marr Djambana Aboriginal Gathering place in Frankston *See the meeting flyer for more details.*

N.B. The price of '*When Women Meet*' will be provided in the March issue of SWAN News.

ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE TO CLOSE WITHOUT URGENT DONATIONS

<https://donate.asrc.org.au/>

If you can please make an urgent donation or sign up for a monthly donation. So many Asylum Seekers, at least some of whom are not allowed to work and have no Medicare, depend on ASRC services. It would be devastating to see it close.

Mailed donations should be addressed to
Fundraising.

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
PO Box 2381 Footscray VIC 3011

SWAN BURSARY DONATIONS

You are probably aware that over the years SWAN has supported various bursaries. More detail of these is included in “When Women Meet” (see separate article).

Since 2011 Bursaries have been organised through Graduate Women Victoria (GWV). Currently the SWAN bursary is awarded to a disadvantaged Masters student whose study and career plans focus on human rights/social justice issues at the local, national or international level.

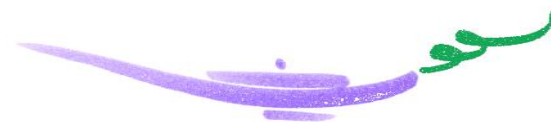
All SWAN Bursary winners have been very deserving and very appreciative of the assistance provided by the Bursary which allows them to focus on their studies, rather than needing to work or to worry about finances.

The Bursary is for \$3,500. If SWAN does not manage to fund all this, other donors make up the difference. Nevertheless, it is embarrassing when (as has happened) we can only provide \$500. Previously a reasonable donation could be made from SWAN funds. However, meetings on Zoom bring in very few donations so funds are short, which restricts our ability to donate to the Bursary from SWAN funds.

If you would like to and are able to support the 2023 SWAN Bursary with any donation, small or large, it will really help. Donations can be made directly to GWV online or by cheque, via the donation box at meetings or by cheque to the Treasurer, P.O. Box 72, Bittern Vic 3918.

Further details of how to donate directly to GWV follow.

If you have any questions, please call Erica on 0404 811 422.



GRADUATE WOMEN VICTORIA Donations to Scholarship Sub Fund

Funds to support Graduate Women Victoria's Scholarship Program are held by Australian Communities Foundation.

Donations to Graduate Women Victoria Donors Fund with Australian Communities Foundation are tax deductible.

To donate online go to the Australian Communities Foundation website:

<http://communityfoundation.org.au>

and search for Graduate Women Victoria Donors Fund.

Please ensure you put "SWAN Bursary" in the comments. Follow the prompts to pay using credit card or direct debit. A receipt will be issued to your email address.

No credit card fees are incurred for online transactions.

To mail a donation

Fill in the details below and post with cheque made out to Australian Communities Foundation to:

Australian Communities Foundation

Level 6, 126 Wellington Parade

East Melbourne VIC 3002

I request this donation to Australian Communities Foundation be placed within the Graduate Women Victoria Scholarship Donors Fund (tax-deductible) **and marked for the SWAN Bursary.**

..... (signed)

Donations are tax deductible. A receipt will be issued. Please provide contact details:

Name:

Address.....Postcode

Phone: Email.....

SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS

CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN TO ENSHRINE AN INDIGENOUS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT IN THE CONSTITUTION

As you know the media is full of information about the various views being expressed by politicians, journalists, First Nations leaders and people from many other sectors of the Australian community as we approach the **Referendum to Enshrine an Indigenous Voice in our Constitution**. We are regularly updated on the results of different polls that aim to assess how certain groups in the community will vote and to try to predict what the outcome of the vote might be.

Not all information in the public domain is helpful. Some is, in fact, *disinformation*. There is a real danger of information overload. No wonder that even people who say that they will vote 'yes' in the Referendum are feeling confused and are starting to echo some of the same concerns that are being put forward by those who are advocating against the Voice.

As the 'YES' and 'NO' campaigns reach 'fever pitch' over the coming months, you are encouraged to join in community education activities to assist yourself and others to:

- a) **understand why Australia should embed an Indigenous Voice in its Constitution;**
- b) **what the referendum will involve; and**
- c) **how, once the referendum is successful, the Parliament will be responsible for deciding the form and function of the Voice.**

One of the most helpful summaries that has been aired to date explains in simple terms what an Indigenous Voice is, what it is not, and what is involved in the referendum process. This was given by Attorney General Mark Dreyfus in an interview with Laura Tingle (on ABC's 7.30, 16 January). A link to this interview (which runs for 8 minutes) is attached. Scroll down (about halfway) to the photo of Mark Dreyfus and press the 'play button':

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-25/voice-to-parliament-albanese-dutton-strategies-referendum/101886144>

More recently, well known First Nations leader and member of the Referendum Working Group, Pat Anderson advised: *'As commentators and politicians with platforms fill newspapers and airwaves with various views'* the results of an IPSOS poll conducted in late January *'reinforce what we found in the dialogues held in First Nations communities more than 5 years ago'*. This survey shows that 80% of the First Nations respondents from around the country support an Indigenous Voice in the Constitution, with a further 10% saying they were still unsure.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/not-going-to-chuck-the-towel-in-voice-champion-pat-anderson-undaunted-by-criticism-at-invasion-day-rallies-20230126-p5cfqm.html>

One way you can participate in community awareness raising in the lead up to the referendum is by joining the **'Together Yes'** campaign, coordinated by the Victorian Women's Trust (VWT). This is a really exciting initiative that has strong potential to reach an extensive audience across Victoria and beyond. Those who register will be sent resource materials to enable them to host 'kitchen table' conversations with their friends, family and neighbours to assist them to make an informed decision when they vote. Information about **'Together Yes'** can be accessed on the VWT website via the following link:

<https://www.vwt.org.au/final-message-of-2022-from-mary-crooks-ao/>

Finally, the SWAN Committee and members of the SFN group are hoping to organise a **Public Forum** in the lead up to the Referendum that will include one or more prominent First Nations guest speakers. Further information about this event will be provided in the next edition of SWAN NEWS.

BREAKING NEWS – 'FROM THE HEART CAMPAIGN'

SWAN has been invited to join a volunteer pool that is being coordinated by From the Heart campaign. SWAN has joined at an organisational level, and we will keep you informed of developments. The organisers are also asking those who are members of other community groups to sign up too. Individual supporters are also invited to participate. See the following extract publicised by From the Heart team. If you belong to another group in addition to SWAN - please consider asking them to join.

In order to win the referendum, and to win a double majority, we need to build a people's movement for the YES vote. We know that open conversations within our social groups are the most powerful way to reach new people and ask them to accept the generous invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

As part of our plan to grow our movement of supporters, we're looking for active supporters of our campaign who are also members of a social group or club - like your local CWA branch, Rotary Club, Men's Shed - or any other group. We want to work with you to build a supporter network within these Australian institutions.

Let us know which group/s you're a member of by filling in the form via the link below and we will be in touch to discuss how best to become an advocate within your group!

No memberships to report but still want to help achieve a YES vote? [Become a campaign volunteer today!](#)

From the Heart Team. To join this volunteer pool:

https://fromtheheart.nationbuilder.com/?recruiter_id=38332

ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES AND ISSUES

SWAN members visit Nairn Marr Djambana In early December members of the SWAN Committee and the Supporting First Nations group visited Nairn Marr Djambana Aboriginal Gathering Place in Frankston. The General Manager, Deb Mellett provided an overview of the main health and wellbeing challenges that face the fast growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Frankston. She outlined the various programs and activities being conducted by staff and volunteers to help facilitate cultural strengthening and access to appropriate educational and social support services. She spoke too about the Board's vision for the future. SWAN members then had the opportunity to sample some of the Indigenous inspired menu items being produced by Djambana Catering, the new social enterprise catering business that aims to enhance self-determination and organisational sustainability.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart To amplify community support for the Voice, members of SWAN's Supporting First Nations Group (SFN) are currently drafting a letter to Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) for the Council to provide a public **Statement of Commitment** in support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart similar to statements disseminated by the local councils of Bayside City, Banyule City, and the City of Greater Geelong. At present, several Mornington Peninsula Shire Councillors are already working to have Council endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Indigenous Voice to Parliament, including Councillors David Gill, Sarah Race and Despi O'Connor.

Women's Business Group, Willum Warrain Ange Estacourt, Cultural Lead Women's Business Group at Willum Warrain, has invited SWAN to visit one of their group sessions at the Gathering Place in Hastings. Photos below of members' artwork signify land, sea, mountains and sky, designating the Women's Area at the Gathering Place where culture is practiced in a variety of ways such as art, weaving, and traditional customs like 'Welcome of Baby to Country'. Art activities are led by Aunty Sammy Trist who is also engaged in reviving and speaking traditional language.

Please let [Maureen Donnelly](#) know if you are interested in visiting one of the group's sessions as a SWAN representative. Sessions are held Thursday mornings. To date 5 women have nominated but one or two more can be accommodated. [Maureen Donnelly: 0423 806 525](#)

January 26th Change the Date Many people, including several SWAN women, attended this moving event at Willum Warrain at which, following a Smoking Ceremony, Water Ceremony, and Welcome to Country, First Nations people shared their profound sadness over the dispossession, genocide, dislocation and threat to language and culture that the date represents. Aunty Helen Bnads and Aunty Shirley Slann addressed those present, both Indigenous people and non-Indigenous allies. Uncle Peter Aldenhoven's heart-wrenching address moved through the pain inflicted by online trolls' racist attacks opposed to changing the date and searched for a way to manage such hatred and still move forward. SWAN members who are Facebook users could help by going onto Willum Warrain's Facebook page to support changing the date.



CHANGE THE DATE at Willum Warrain Gathering Place, Hastings, 26 January 2023: Despi O'Connor (SWAN/MPSC), Maureen Donnelly (SWAN/SFN), Aunty Sammy Trist (Cultural Lead Arts & Projects, Willum Warrain), Chris Kirkpatrick (Frankston Community Health Centre)



January 26th Our Survival Day

A very special event held at The Briars in Mt Martha united local First Nations people and allies in an opportunity to engage in truth-telling and to be immersed in Indigenous art, culture and knowledge. Gurrindji woman, event organiser extraordinaire and founding Director of 'Our Songlines', Kayla Cartledge, summed up the purpose of this family focused live music festival. She said: *"For us, we focus on how far our people have come. To consider what they have done that has led us to be here and to be able to create this space and tell our stories and*

continue the 65,000 years of culture.” Organisers reported that over 2,100 people attended this event, including a number of SWAN women members / volunteers.



Cath John, Maureen Donnelly, Rosemarie Draper



Womin Djeka - Balnarring Ngargee Festival coming up

Another opportunity for SWAN women to engage locally with Indigenous culture and community presents itself on **Saturday 25th March**. The event, which runs from 10am to 7pm at **Emu Plains Reserve, Coolart Road, Balnarring**, aims to honour and celebrate First Peoples cultures through performances, live music, food stalls, craft, cultural workshops, and activities for families. Entry by donation, parking gold coin, an alcohol and dog-free event. For more info and free ticket registration: <https://www.balnarringfestival.com.au>

FURTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST



The Pig & Whistle Tavern,
365 Purves Rd Main Ridge
will be hosting activities,
as per attached flyer, on
the Saturday, 4th March.

Bookings are via
www.thepigandwhistle.com.au/iwdfestivalau

Belinda Rodman, a SWAN member, is on the Board of the Southern Peninsula Community Support which is looking to fill 2 places on the Board. As SPCS does amazing work in the local community suggesting a very fulfilling role, she is hoping that there are other SWAN members who would be interested in filling these 2 vacancies.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about the role should contact the President, Rachel Burdett-Baker, at president@spsic.org.au or on [03 5986 1285](tel:0359861285) Mob: [0401642255](tel:0401642255)

From The Hon. Peta Murphy, MP:



Friday 10 March (Please note change of date)

6.30PM - 7.30PM

Monash University Peninsula Campus, Lecture Theatre F

47-49 Moorooduc Hwy

Frankston VIC 3199

As you know, the Louisa Dunkley Oration is an annual event in Frankston. The keynote speaker is a person who is known for their dedication to the principles demonstrated by Louisa: fairness, equality and community.

Nyadol Nyuon is a lawyer, community advocate, writer, and accomplished public speaker. Her work has focused on legal reform, social justice, human rights and multiculturalism. In January 2022 she was appointed Director of the Sir Zelman Cowen Centre at Victoria University .

Nyadol was born in a refugee camp in Itang, Ethiopia, and raised in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. In 2005, at the age of 18, she moved to Australia as a refugee.

She is the recipient of several prestigious awards including the 2019 Victorian Premier's Award for Community Harmony and the 2019 Australian Financial Review (AFR) Diversity and Inclusion Award. In 2019, she was named as one of the top 11 most influential women in Australia by the Australian Financial Review. To secure your ticket, please click the button below.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT

If you have any questions about this event, please contact my office on 9781 2333 or email peta.murphy.mp@aph.gov.au. I look forward to seeing you there.

FLOOD THEIR IN-BOXES

We urge all SWAN members to write to their local Federal MPs (especially Liberal MPs and Senators) asking them to support the Enshrinement of an Indigenous Voice. Indigenous leaders Professor Megan Davis and Pat Anderson who are the Co-Chairs of the Uluru Dialogue say that it is critical that we to do this now:

"Individual Liberal MPs are out in their communities now, gauging the support of people in their electorates. Let's flood the inboxes of local Liberal MPs, Liberal Senators and the Liberal Leader Peter Dutton. The more messages they get, the greater the chance they'll listen".

We understand that the Federal MP for Flinders, Zoe McKenzie is currently receiving a lot of correspondence re the Indigenous Voice, most of it negative. It is crucial that she also hears from constituents who strongly support the Constitutional enshrinement of an Indigenous Voice. An easy way to do this is via the letter provided in the following link

<https://ulurustatement.org/take-action/write-to-your-mp/>

We also encourage you to write your own personalised letter that can be emailed directly to the Hon. Zoe McKenzie at: zoe.mckenzie.mp@aph.gov.au. If you would find it helpful, we can send you a sample letter or list of key dot point. Please advise via swanwomen@outlook.com if you would appreciate this.

**NB: To share matters of interest the deadline for next SWAN News issue is
1st March**
