

SWAN Newsletter



Southern Women's Action Network Inc.
Reg No A0038144Z, ABN 84 41627 1331
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October 2011

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**ADMINISTRATIVE
COMMITTEE
2011-2012**

Facilitator

Janice Rowland

Secretary

Daphne Fergusson

Correspondence Secretary

Rosemary Race

Treasurer

June Rance

Speaker Co-Ordinator

Gwen Fletcher

Membership Secretary

Heather Phillips

Newsletter Co-ordinator

Gwen White

Public Officer

Barb Godfrey

Website Co-ordinator

Rosemarie

Draper

**Purchasing
Officer**

Pauline Young

**Committee
Member**

Lynn Carpenter



Members are
welcome to
attend Committee meetings.

Dr Cordelia Fine Will discuss her book "Delusions of Gender"

Dr Cordelia Fine, "a cognitive neuroscientist with a sharp sense of humour and an intelligent sense of reality reveals the mind's remarkable plasticity, shows how profoundly culture influences the way we think about ourselves and, ultimately exposes just how much of what we consider hardwired is actually malleable."
Quote for The Times.



Shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Award in 2011, Dr Cordelia Fine's "Delusions of Gender" explores the differences in the male and female brain. To quote Dr Fine, "if you thought sexism was a thing of the past, then think again." Cordelia argues that the notion that there is an immutable biological difference between the male and the female brain is just another form of sexism—neurosexism.

With qualifications from Oxford, Cambridge and University College, London, Dr Fine has held positions at Monash, ANU and Macquarie Universities and is currently Associate Professor at Melbourne Business School.

2011-2012 SWAN Committee

A huge thank you to our 2011 Committee members and a welcome back to all of them for yet another year of service. All committee members are happy to continue on in their previous roles and we are delighted to welcome Lynn Carpenter as an additional member to assist in the smooth running of our activities.

Jan will continue as Facilitator, providing the friendly, welcoming face for both our Committee meetings and Sunday meetings. Gwen Fletcher continues with her inspired selection of interesting speakers. We thank her for her ongoing efforts. Heather Phillips efficiently manages the membership database, whilst June is the Treasurer and Daphne keeps us all organized in her role as Secretary. Pauline supervises the delicious morning teas and Gwen White continues as the Newsletter Editor. Rosemary manages the correspondence. We are grateful to Rosemarie who maintains the website and also to Barb Godfrey as the Public Officer.

We look forward to another productive and enlightening SWAN year.

Rosemarie Draper–September Speaker

What does one do when the whole family arrives in England anticipating a year long stay, only to be deported within 24 hours? Why...relocate to Darwin to “find out for ourselves” how the Government Intervention is working in reality. Simple!! Rosemarie Draper, her husband and two children spent a year in Darwin doing just that. Not only was the impact of the intervention a surprise, but also living in Darwin had its challenges.

Rosemary, a long time SWAN member and past office bearer, is herself a former Burmese refugee. She works for the Newhope Foundation in Hastings as a social worker, is ideally placed to view the NT Intervention through (from a professional viewpoint) an experienced eye, and SWAN members were most grateful for her considered professional views.

In her own words, the family turned up in the NT completely unprepared for the culture shock. Darwin is a town based on Mining, the Defence Force and the “Aboriginal Industry”- Closing the Gap. Among the challenges were the “monsoonal build up”, the blatant racism, the Northern Territory newspapers, the small scale of the city and the state and the high representation of the indigenous population as clients in the Human Services field. In addition, there was a high turnover of staff in the Human Services area in which she found work.

The “build up” was oppressive with 98% humidity. It is a time renowned for its challenges - electrical storms, torrential downpours, mould in everything in the house and its impact on the “sanity” of the population with high rates of suicides, divorces and assaults at this time of year.

Coping with this was easier than dealing with the sensationalist reporting of the croc attacks, bashings and biased articles, especially the focus on the “Long Grass People” with all its contradictions and absurdities. Here was a carping on cultural differences with little attempt at reconciliation or positive progress.

Surprising to many of us, the population of Darwin is a mere 125,000 with a total of 250,000 in the whole of the Northern Territory. The limited population numbers impact on the infrastructure and resources available as Rosemarie discovered in her work for the Palmerston Child Protection Services. On the positive side, workers with the Department of Human Services were provided with excellent mandatory training on Aboriginal culture, practice care and protection. Unfortunately, the huge caseload of Indigenous clients (90%), together with rapid staff turnover (many social workers were recruited from England or Canada), the lack of sufficient resources to adequately address the many-faceted problems and the difficulties with behavioural change strategies for working with the Indigenous population, made progress slow.

So how effective did Rosemarie feel the Intervention had been?

“Well it’s not quite as straight forward as that.” This was the preface to many of Rosemarie’s responses to audience questions and the complexity of the Intervention. Although it was true that for many families, by quarantining income, women were able to feed their children, on the whole, Aboriginal people felt that the Intervention’s implementation had been heavy handed rather than the dialogue and respect for their input they had expected. Rosemarie felt uncomfortable with the amount of power she had to control aspects of her clients’ decision making. Rosemarie remarked that it was disappointing that for the huge amounts of money that had been poured in to “Close the Gap” results were patchy and outcomes limited.

We were very privileged to have Rosemarie provide a first hand, knowledgeable interpretation and we thank her most gratefully for being our impromptu speaker for November. At Rosemarie’s request, we have forwarded a cheque for \$200 to SWAN—Shan Women’s Action Network (Burmese Shan women working for their community) on behalf of SWAN.

Many thanks also to Heather Boundy for so capably facilitating our September meeting in Jan Rowlands’ absence.

SWAN Dates–2012

SUNDAY MARCH 4TH

ALANA JOHNSON TBC

Please note the early placement
of this meeting to more closely
align with International Women’s
Day

Meeting dates for 2012:

Sunday 4th March

Sunday 20th May

Sunday 15th July

Sunday 16th September

Sunday 18th November

RSVP

for all meetings to:

Heather P—9787 8532

Gwen W—97871487



PHOTOS FROM
OUR SEPTEMBER
MEETING

Clockwise from left:
Rosmarie Draper,
Margaret James from
Graduate Women Vic-
toria (formerly AFUW),
Rosemarie and Mari-
lyn Godley and
Heather Boundy our
guest Facilitator.



SWAN Website
For information
about SWAN or
to read the latest
newsletter and
catch up with
coming events,
check out the
SWAN website
at
[http://
mc2.vicnet.net.a
u/home/swan1/
index.html](http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/swan1/index.html)
Thanks to Rose-
marie Draper for
looking after the

THIS and THAT

SWAN Indigenous Bursary
Margaret James from Graduate Women Victoria (AFUW) is already receiving members donations. If you would like a donation form please contact Gwen White Ph7871487

Asylum Seekers Centre
If you would like to donate food to the

Asylum Seekers Centre, a box will be provided at the next SWAN meeting. Most needed items are :-laundry detergent, cooking oil, rice and lentils.

Donations on behalf of SWAN
At the October Committee meeting it was decided to make the following donations on behalf of SWAN.

\$500 Asylum Seekers Centre in Dandenong

\$100 Mornington Wig Library

\$155 Big Issue Subscription

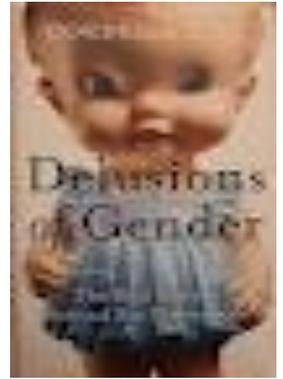
The SWAN Committee wants to donate regularly to organisations supporting Women's empowerment. We'd love your ideas.

SHARE TABLE
If you would like to speak to any item you have placed on our Share Table please speak with Jan Rowland before the meeting.

SWAN



**SUNDAY
20TH NOVEMBER**



DR CORDELIA FINE

Dr Cordelia Fine will discuss her research into gender differences as contained in her recent book "Delusions of Gender". She was shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Award in 2011.

Our beautiful gift bouquets are kindly donated by a Mornington Florist, The Secret Garden



A recommended good read

A Cargo of Women: Susannah Watson and the convicts of the Princess Royal
by Babette Smith. First published 1988.

First published as a groundbreaking study of the 99 women who were transported in 1829 on the ship—The Princess Royal. The book focuses on Susannah Watson, an ancestor of Babette Smith. This book was praised as a significant and "lasting contribution to Australian history".

Quote from Patricia Grimshaw, Associate Professor, University of Melbourne --- "a fascinating detailed account of life for convict women in early NSW. Their hardships, their resilience, their courage are graphically portrayed."

Thanks: to Judith Graley for printing and facilitating distribution of the newsletters.

To Mornington Council for provision of a comfortable and convenient space for our bi-monthly meetings.

PACE –Peninsula Advisory Council for Elders is a group of seniors from across the Shire interested in helping Council respond to issues affecting seniors in our community. For more information or to become involved please visit the Shire website at www.mornpen.vic.gov.au

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

9.30AM — cost \$7

**BOOKINGS PLEASE
RSVP BY FRIDAY 18th November**

Heather Phillips bluerobin15@bigpond.com

OR

Gwen White gwenniewhite@hotmail.com