

SWAN Newsletter

Volume 11 Issue 3

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ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE 2011

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Gwen White

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Website Co-ordinator

Rosemarie

Draper

Purchasing Officer

Pauline Young



Members are
welcome to
attend Committee meetings.

Southern Women's Action Network Inc.

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Glenys Watts Our NAIDOC Week speaker



Glenys Watts is a Gunai woman from Gippsland. Her ancestors are from the Tambo River and sea area of Metung and Bairnsdale.

Her mother is her inspiration and also in the lives of her two brothers and their families. Her own three children and one grandchild also revolve around her Mum, who has always encouraged the family to do what they believe in. Glenys's mother has instilled in the family strong cultural values and a sense of pride in their Aboriginality. Her mother also works tirelessly for her community in the health field as a cultural healer.

Glenys is a qualified hairdresser and, after having a family, she worked for the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organization for seven years.

She is currently working for the Mornington Shire Council as the team leader of the Aboriginal Support and Development Team where she facilitates and coordinates the aspirations of the Aboriginal Community here on the peninsula. She also develops projects, events and policies which work towards reconciliation.

Glenys is inspired by her Aboriginal culture and is proud of who and where she is from.

Glenys will talk about her family history as well as share with SWAN the role and activities she oversees in her position as team leader of Aboriginal Support and Development at the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Fazila Hajeb May Speaker

Fazila Hajeb provided a window onto a world of suffering and injustice that we do not see in Australia and shared stories of her life's experiences in an open and honest way.

She began her story with a pivotal moment in her life. After a week long trek through the mountains separating Afghanistan and Pakistan, Fazila and her family escaped to freedom. Poised at the mountain pass, her father by her side, the 16 year old vowed she would come back to help her homeland. That was 1982.

Her new life in Australia she described as "a gift from God". For 15 years she has worked to help others, beginning with an SBS Radio program in Dari language she hosted, providing information and addressing problems particularly aimed at women and girls.

Her 2005 return visit to Afghanistan was confronting—particularly the suffering of women and children.

In response to the earthquake in Pakistan in 2006, and in conjunction with Anna Crotty, she raised \$300,000 and founded Tents4Peace, work that resulted in the Pride of Australia Award in 2008. Since then she has continued to fight for the rights of women and children in Afghanistan, establishing Peace House, home to 170 orphaned children and a place to provide education for women. She has plans for a school and Community House in Kabul, but there are difficulties. Government officials are less than supportive. Fazila is relying on donations to her Brick by Brick Foundation to raise the \$350,000 required by the deadline she has been set by the Government.

The conditions for women and children she described as shocking—worse than when she left. 30 years ago; 1 in 4 women dies in childbirth in some areas, domestic violence, forced and early marriage is common (often resulting in suicide) and women begging is widespread. Her own photos were a stark reminder of the confronting reality of poverty juxtaposed with the wealth of those in power and the pervasive corruption. Yet Fazila wanted to focus on the beauty of her homeland—the white pigeons symbolising peace.

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.au/home/swan1/index.html>

Thanks to Rosemarie Draper for looking after the website.

I am a very simple person working from the heart" she said. As women and mothers, we saw her as extraordinary. Most of us were shocked by her words and images and were moved to help. Many thanks to our audience for the spontaneous generosity by donating \$300. The SWAN committee will discuss further donations.

How can you help further? If you wish to support her work as a Non-Government Organisation and therefore more able to target meaningful funding to identifiable projects, go tents4peaceinternational.com for more information.



SWAN Dates-2011

Sunday 18th September
Helen Szoke
The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

Sunday 20th November
Cordelia Fine
Gender Differences

RSVP
for all meetings to:
Heather P—9787 8532
Gwen W—9787 1487

SWAN Bursary Presentation

On 4th June, Pauline Young and Gwen White proudly represented SWAN at a delightful ceremony at Cabrini Hospital Auditorium. The SWAN Indigenous Bursary was presented to Olivia Slater, one of a number of vibrant women to receive scholarships and bursaries at the Australian Federation of University Women of Vic (AFUW) Scholarship Presentation Day.

Olivia, an Undergraduate student in Indigenous Studies at Victoria University, spoke candidly about her fractured educational journey and extended her heartfelt thanks to all SWAN members who donated, so generously.



AFUW Scholarship winners

Olivia Slater – SWAN Bursary winner

As the recipient of the Southern Women's Action Network Bursary for 2011 I am keenly aware that unlike the other amazing Australian Federation of University Women (AFUW) scholarship recipients I am only half way through my undergraduate degree (BA in Indigenous Studies at Victoria University) and as such my career path is not yet defined. I am studying at a tertiary level later in life, having worked full time for over ten years after dropping out of high school and university in my late teens. In a nutshell, I am interested in exploring, understanding and reclaiming traditional and contemporary cultural and artistic expressions within post colonial Indigenous cultures, focussing mainly on Indigenous Australia, including my own Yamatji and Nyoongar cultural heritages.

On receiving the bursary I have been able to focus on meeting my own technological needs as a student in 2011 by purchasing a new lap top, specifically for me to use to study at home and on campus. This purchase has been incredibly beneficial as it is my own piece of equipment that I do not have to share, where all of my school work can be stored together in one place, which is completely portable. I have also invested in a functional mobile phone as my previous mobile phone was a hand-me-down.



After six months of perfect performance the handset would turn off and on at whim and would not stay switched on for any length of time. Needless to say an upgrade was required. These two pieces of equipment keep me connected and easily contactable and I am currently typing this article up on my brand new laptop.

My husband works full time to support our household of myself, our 2 ½ year old son, cat, dog and four chooks. As a result some of the bursary funds will be tied up in child care and general living costs. Essentially I am creating yet another family debt by accruing a HECS/HELP debt while not bringing in any income. This has been a great financial strain, but with an amazingly supportive husband and family, along with initiatives like the SWAN bursary, I am able to knuckle down to focus on and complete my degree. Thank you!

**Energy is
the power
that drives
every hu-
man being.
It is not
lost by ex-
ertion but
main-
tained by
it.**

**Germaine
Greer**

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.

Urgent

**SWAN NEEDS A
NEW
COMMITTEE IN
SEPTEMBER.**

*Please consider
nominating
yourself or some-
one else to sup-
port the efforts of
SWAN
to inspire social
action.*

SWAN



**SUNDAY
17TH JULY**

GLENYS WATTS



- Glenys Watts is a Gunai woman from Gippsland
- Team leader of the **Aboriginal Support and Development Team** Mornington Shire Council
- She will discuss her family background and inspirations
- Aboriginal Issues generally

MANY THANKS TO-

- **The Secret Garden** for the beautiful flowers they continue to donate.
- Many thanks to **Judith Graley** for printing and facilitating distribution of the newsletters
- We acknowledge **Mornington Council** for the provision of a comfortable and central venue for our bi-monthly meetings. Thanks Also to **Elaine Hall-Foote** and **Helen Ridgeway**.

SWAN Donations

Thanks you to our members for their thoughtful ideas put into the Suggestion box at our last meeting. As a result, the following donations have been made:-

Tents4peace \$200

Last Straw for Dirty Water \$200

Personal donations given at the meeting totalled \$300. Thank you so much for your generosity on the day.

The committee would really appreciate members input and welcomes any further suggestions for worthycauses.

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

9.30AM — cost \$7

**BOOKINGS PLEASE
RSVP BY FRIDAY 15th JULY**

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OR

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