

THE SOROPTIMIST SWP

a global voice
for women

Soroptimist International



Federation of the South West Pacific

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Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific

(ACN 147 990 627)

PRESIDENT: Siew Yong Gnanalingam

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Carolyn Hudson

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT : Yvonne Simpson

SECRETARY: Anne Gover

TREASURER: Karen Ford

Administration Officer:

SISWP HEADQUARTERS:

PO Box 746

SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Australia

Phone: +61 2 8096 6072, Fax: + 61 2 9690 2261

Email: hq@siswp.org

Website Address: <www.siswp.org>

SISWP SHOP: As above Email: hq@siswp.org



THE SOROPTIMIST -SWP The Magazine of SISWP

Even if it is only a little bit better each year, Gender Equality can be achieved when we work together, maybe not in my lifetime but in the lives of my granddaughters – just maybe.

These words are to be found on page 4 as part of Robyn Cain's summing up after attending the 57th CSW and they struck a cord with me. I often wonder what the future holds for my grand-daughters when listening to a news report of another violent atrocity against women and girls somewhere in the world. Soroptimists *can make a difference* by working together with our world wide network.

The last three months have been busy in our Federation as you will see when reading this latest publication of the Magazine. There have been lots of IWD and AGM reports sent in which is terrific as this means the clubs are getting together and spreading Soroptimism. I have received a couple of articles through the post with photos enclosed. These are difficult to deal with as they are very time consuming. If club publicity people do not have a computer to email an article, or send a jpg file, it would be appreciated if they could find a club member who can do that for them. **Kerry**

From the Editor

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Kerry Garrett

39 Tulip Street, Violet Town

Victoria 3669 Australia

Phone: (61.3) 5798 1206

Email: garrettb@internode.on.net

Committee:

Judy Hunter, SI Townsville

Maggie Mitchell, SI Business on Collins

Indrani Manuel, SI Damansara

Printer: Prominent Press, Drummond Road, Shepparton, Australia



The deadline for the August SISWP Magazine is **30 June 2013**.

The theme will be:
Sharing and Caring

Photos on the front cover: Main picture, SWP President Siew Yong preparing to march at the 57th CSW in New York. Smaller pictures are of the President's recent visit to Fiji

Red and Black Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Report

Since the first earthquake of 4 September 2010 there have been over 11,000 more earthquakes and aftershocks and we are very grateful for the concern and support that has been shown to us from Soroptimists world-wide.

The donations were given to projects in all sections of the community, and a breakdown of these projects follows:

YOUTH PROJECTS

Percentage total funds donated 31%
Major beneficiaries: Plunket, Korowai Youth Trust, Glenelg Health Camp and Girl Guides.

SCHOOLS

Percentage total funds donated 30%
Major beneficiaries: in the worst affected eastern parts of the city: Lyttelton Main School, Mairehau High School, Kaiapoi North School, Avonside Girls' High School, Phillipstown School and Marian College.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Percentage total funds donated 14%
Major beneficiaries: Right Service, Right Time; (a coalition of many of the Social Service organisations operating in the city), The Pacific Island Community and Age Concern.

WOMEN

Percentage total funds donated 14%
Major beneficiaries: Christchurch City Mission, Club Members' Support.

REHABILITATION

Percentage total funds donated 11%
Major beneficiaries: Burwood Spinal Unit, St Johns.

As the work on the Red and Black Appeal fund is completed, the support and enthusiasm of the club members, and the executive, must be acknowledged in our decision making process. To Yvonne Simpson, then President of SISWP and her team of Karen Ford, Treasurer SISWP and Donna Kennedy appointed as our liaison, our grateful thanks. As was printed in our newspaper following the lifting of our State of Emergency when the rescuers were returning to their home countries.....

**TO THOSE WHO CAME TO
HELP - FROM THE PEOPLE OF
CHRISTCHURCH - THANK YOU**

Our SWP President, Siew Yong, illustrating the Image Factor

As the theme for this issue is "Image Matters", I would like to illustrate the impact of promoting the right image through some recent examples of action that I have personally seen or experienced in the SWP and SI context.



During my Fiji trip, SI Fiji managed to get a full blast of coverage to get SI on the pages of their papers. There was first an interview arranged with the Radio Station in Suva for National Rep (NR) Suman Lal and me. Later on meeting the producer, she also managed to get Suman a slot on a Hindi channel to talk about the work of SI Fiji clubs. At the end of it, the producer even indicated her interest in joining SI Suva.



There was newspaper coverage of my visit to the SI Lautoka water project at the Lololo Primary School, as well as my talk on the subject *End Violence Against Women and Girls* to 500 students at the Votualevu College, arranged by SI Nadi, besides a newspaper interview. I was happy SI Fiji could make use of my visit to lift their image by publicising the projects and causes they support in the communities.

At the CSW57 held in March at the UN, SI was certainly held in high regard. SI was one of 20 international NGOs given the opportunity to have a statement read on the subject of femicide by our Assistant International Programme Director, Anusha Santhirasthipam. This created a great impact on the audience and raised the profile of SI further.

It reminds me of my seizing an opportunity, on behalf of SI, whilst reading a statement to the Health Ministers and delegates of the WHO Western Pacific Regional Meeting to include a paragraph on our BIP project, in response to a concern on the high maternal mortality rate in PNG. As a result the Minister of Health and DG of PNG delegation spoke to me about BIP. So it is critical for us to seize all platforms to raise our image.



SI ran two parallel events at CSW 57. This definitely helped to raise our image on who we are and the work we do. Our SWP team of Robyn Cain, the two scholarship funded Soroptimists Katy Brady Kean and Judy Muliap, and I, took the opportunity to distribute SI, SWP and BIP statements and leaflets to further promote SI.



Soroptimists were seen wearing a striking blue and yellow SI shawl, creating a stir of sorts in stamping the SI identity. The shawls, made by an African club, were bought by SI Programme Director, Hilary Ratcliffe, and distributed to main

delegates to show off SI's image. It's distinctive look certainly attracted a lot of attention.



The social media of Blogging, Facebook and Twitter to promote SI's stand and work at CSW 57 Session, were also used to great advantage to raise SI's image.



Achieving recognition for a mammoth effort can also raise the image of an organization. The SIROM *Walk the Talk*, has been given recognition by Malaysia Book of Records (MBR) for the duo walkers Rose Moguloi and Clarice Mojigoh, completing 846.8kms from Perlis to Johor Bahru. The presentation of the MBR award was made to SIROM as the walk organizers, with press coverage at the Region of Malaysia Conference in Seremban. The SIROM name will be in the MBR till some other organization creates a walk to break the record.

Siew Yong
SWP President



57th Commission for Status of Women



"So, what's it all about - this CSW?"

I've been asking myself that question for some years now and after five visits to New York, in winter, to attend the Commission on the Status of Women, I believe I'm getting closer to an answer. This year I found myself in a different role with three 'newbies' to look after – President Siew Yong and our CSW Scholarship awardees, Judy Muliap from Papua New Guinea and Kate Brady Kean from New Zealand. Perhaps mentoring the younger Soroptimists focussed my mind more clearly this year allowing me to guide them in the right direction.

At the NGO Consultation Day there seemed to be a greater harmony and single mindedness evident amongst the participants who had come from Government and non – Government sectors all around the world. In all, 6,000 people attended. Perhaps people were determined to get member states to produce Agreed Resolutions, which did not happen in 2012.

The work of our UN Reps in New York has to be applauded. It is they who facilitate the side events for Soroptimists to present, and organise other events for us to attend.

The theme of this 57th Session was *the Elimination and Prevention of all Forms of Violence against Women and Girls*. To many of us this seems like re-hashing an old ideal, but believe me there is groundswell from many nations – women, girls and men who realise that we must combat violence in all its forms. Two events just prior to the start of the Commission may have contributed to that feeling of harmony. The highly publicised attack on Malala Yousafzai,

the young student who was shot on her way to school, and the horrific rape, torture and murder of the Indian university student, certainly echoed during conversations. Indeed at the march on March 8th to celebrate IWD, actress Susan Sarandon read a message from Malala.

Along with the general feeling of harmony felt with other participants, there was a real camaraderie amongst the 40 Soroptimists in attendance. The wearing of blue and gold scarves gave us a true sense of identity. Many of us stayed at the same hotel and were able to meet most days before heading off to



the CSW venues.

SI again worked with WAGGGS and the World YWCA to present two workshops. I was unable to see the first one *Tackling Adolescent Dating Violence*, as it was packed out. The second of our side event presentations was a panel discussion on the topic *From Girl to Woman: A Life Course Approach to Gender Empowerment and a Violence-Free Life*. Soroptimists from Pakistan, Moldova and New Zealand spoke on the topic and answered questions from the audience. Kate Brady Kean, who was one of the SWP Scholarship awardees, gave a very polished address. (See Kate's article on Page 5) The young Girl Guide, Emma, from Tunisia, spoke about a national survey carried out in her country, where one in five females face some form of violence in their lives. Emma was shocked to discover how many girls thought it was

normal for men to hit women and they wouldn't marry a man who didn't hit them – 55% didn't think it was a problem. The WAGGGS solution is Empowerment through EDUCATION. Their message was "Voices against Violence". The other speaker, Angela, (World YWCA) from Australia told the audience about programmes being run by the YWCA to target the most vulnerable aged group – 16 to 24. In our region they work in PNG to educate about relationships and responsibilities. Within Australia the development of the *Every Girl* programme which has been developed for girls ages 9-14 years to achieve positive change, enable the development of strong self esteem, to grow in confidence, and to decrease bullying and stereotypes. The programme will ultimately be delivered to schools in disadvantaged communities across Australia and is available. Perhaps this programme provides an opportunity to partner with the YWCA in your area and assist with this work.

Kate and Judy were both able to extend their networks during their stay. Judy was invited to attend the Indigenous Women's Caucus and Kate attended several sessions at the New Zealand UN Mission..

A major highlight for Soroptimists was the invitation to present an Oral Statement on Femicide to the Commission. International Assistant Programme Director Anusha read the statement which is available at this link - <http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/assets/media/documents/csw57-oral-statement-femicide.pdf> or on the Soroptimist International [You Tube channel](#)

Much lobbying and interaction took place amongst the NGO community, with SI members at the forefront, to work with the member states on the final presentation of a document of Agreed Resolutions.

We said goodbye to Michelle Bachelet, the inaugural Executive Director of UN Women. She has provided inspiring leadership in bringing the UN women's groups under the one banner. I have been privileged to hear her speak at two CSW's now and encourage members to look up her speeches on *You Tube*.

Of the many other available parallel events I attended a very disturbing presentation on the *Prostituting of Trafficked persons* which unravelled a few myths about prostitution.

Other sessions included the effects of open cut mining on the health and environmental well - being of communities in USA and Honduras.

The post 2015 Agenda – *What comes after the MDG's?* What items need to be retained, what has succeeded; what failed?

At a review of the 2012 *16 Days of Activism* campaign, I spoke about the SWP *Walk the Talk* event.

Mundin-gal Aboriginal group presented a powerful video aimed at engaging men in the conversation about eliminating domestic violence.

Crossing the Line was an excellent presentation by a group of high school students who called on the implementation of Gender Studies in school curricula across all ages.

I hope that has given you an insight as to why the work you do in the clubs, and reporting this work is so important in the SI relationship with the UN. For me I am closer to having my question answered. CSW brings together people from the world to work on problems which occur all over the world, and to maintain pressure on our governments to make the world just a bit better for women and girls. Even if it is only a little bit better each year, Gender Equality can be achieved when we work together, maybe not in my lifetime but in the lives of my granddaughters – just maybe.

Next year may be my last opportunity to attend as your official representative but I will maintain a keen interest in subsequent CSW sessions. I think SI President Alice Wells summed up the judgment of the SI Delegation

"Violence Against Women is a worldwide problem that often feels insurmountable: rape in India, the Steubenville case in the USA and many others. But, by working together, we can make a difference...whether through lobbying governments as we did at CSW or in our own communities. We can and do make a difference, one woman and girl at a time!"

Robyn Cain
Federation Programme Director (FPD)

Photos: Top L. Alice Wells, Kate Brady Kean, Robyn Cain, Siew Yong. Centre. Robyn Cain & Hilary Ratcliffe IPD at the march, March 8th.



A CSW Panel Speaker

In November of 2012 I was informed that I had been awarded a SWP scholarship to attend the 57th Commission on the status of women at the UN in New York. Having worked in the field of women's advocacy and services for 15 years this opportunity was one I only dreamed of. But, nothing could have prepared me for actually attending the commission.

I was privileged to be invited to be part of the SI panel entitled *From Girl Child to Mature Woman: A Life Course Approach to Gender Empowerment and a Violence-free Life* and shared the floor with members from Moldova and Pakistan plus a representative from WAGGGS and YWCA. I was also part of the Aotearoa/ New Zealand NGO delegation and was kept informed of the document discussion and negotiation from this perspective. This enabled me to follow up discussion with specific countries in regard to conflict points based on the NZ government's information and direction.

I attended many presentations and discussions. The breadth of the work being done to support, empower and heal women and girls around the world was amazing. I witnessed many statements delivered from passionate supporters of women's rights and was privy to some side events where specific governments and NGO's provided examples of good practice.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to attend this amazing event. Being able to return to my country and disseminate this information will make a difference to those who carry out this work on a day to day basis and add to the hope that we can eliminate and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls!

Kate Brady Kean



Dr. Jane Louise Zimmerman AM

Jane has received the Order of Australia Medal, General Division, which is awarded by the Governor General to people for their contribution to the community. It was announced on Australia Day and her investiture will take place at Government House in Hobart on May 3.

Jane was a charter member of SI George Town, Tasmania in 1982 and has served as Region President (1994-1996), Federation President (1996-1998) and International President (1999-2001). Jane was granted Honorary Life membership of SWP Federation.

Her two International President's Appeals were given to *Stop Traffick helping victims in India* via UNIFEM and an awareness campaign in Russia, *Legacy of Learning*, which provided 740 girls in Inner Mongolia with an extra three years education after their basic grade 6. This project was modelled on the All-China Women's "Spring Bud" project and was achieved with the assistance of the Inner Mongolian Women's Federation.

Jane graduated as a doctor at the University of Toronto, Canada, in 1969. After two years of general practice in Toronto, Jane and her former husband did locum work in New Zealand for four years, a brief sojourn in New South Wales and then a two year locum in George Town Tasmania where they set up practice in 1981. In 2002 Jane joined the Anne Street Medical Centre where she continues to work. Jane is particularly active in Women's Health working for the Royal Flying Doctor's Rural Women's Health Service in areas where there is no female doctor.



An Update on BIP

Soroptimists from Victorian clubs, members of the soon to be chartered Gippsland club and other interested guests, gathered at Soroptimist House, Melbourne, on February 16, 2013, and listened to then Birthing in the Pacific (BIP) Project Manager, Janet Askern, give a comprehensive update on the project. Janet reviewed how the SI South West Pacific project developed over the past three years from an idea by one club into an extensive programme that has made a positive difference for birthing women in PNG.

BIP aims to up-skill midwives, nurses and birthing attendants enabling them to access in-service education programmes. BIP also provides Nurse Education Facilities specifically built for maternity and reproductive health programmes. Janet indicated a BIP budget of AU\$300,000 has been allocated, and she is confident additional funding will be received as the project can now be measured and evaluated with achievable outcomes. A cheque for \$2,700 was presented by guest Carmel Walker on behalf of RANZCOG (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians) whose social club chose BIP as its featured 2012 charity.

Janet was given a heart-felt THANK YOU for her dedication and hard work over the past three years. She is retiring as Project Manager with the sincere appreciation of every member of the wider SI community. May Lamont will take over as Project Manager.

**Maggie Mitchell,
SI Business On Collins, Victoria**

Above from left, Maggie Mitchell, SI Business on Collins, guest speaker Janet Askern, SI Townsville Focus After Five with two representatives of RANZCOG, Carmel Walker and Tracey Wheeler



From BIP to WIP

The six clubs of SI Tasmania Region held their 2013 AGM and Conference on March 16, 2013. The Conference was opened by Senator Anne Urqhart and was attended by 40+ members.

The first guest speaker, May Lamont, *pictured above with Anne Thomas*, who has recently taken over the position of the Federation Project Manager, presented "Birthing in the Pacific" (BIP). May took us on a journey to the villages in PNG of the BIP project locations. We were totally captivated and convinced of the importance of BIP to reduce preventable maternal deaths.

At the AGM, the new Region Officers were elected and we acknowledged that Jane Zimmerman, SI George Town, has received a Member of the Order of Australia Award, (see page 5). Brenda Gray, SI Devonport also received a Life Membership of the club.

The second speaker was Julie Marsaban who presented the history of the learning games, "the Gender Blender Game" and the "Gentler Gender Game". These games were designed as discussion starters and self awareness tools to trigger positive changes in a communities' attitudes and behaviour in regard to women's roles and responsibilities. It has been further adapted to help prevent young women and teenage girls from becoming victims of exploitation. Julie commented "This game is still a WIP, (a work-in-process) since it is designed for self reflection towards building self-worth, and to make young adolescent girls believe in their full potential, At the Dinner, the proceeds of \$830.70 raised by the raffle were contributed towards the costs of the BIP project. The raffle prize, an exquisite "Chocoholic quilt, was made by Prue Febey, SI Devonport,

**Julie Marsaban,
SI Hobart, Tasmania**



New Zealand Conference of Clubs, March 2013

The invitation to this conference asked members to let the organizers enable them to be Enlightened, Engaged, Empowered, Educated, Entertained in an Environment that Embraces Soroptimist ideals.

A lot to live up to but from the Friday evening in the magnificent Taupo Yacht Club with a wall of windows overlooking Lake Taupo, to the wrap up on Sunday, the programme ticked all the headings above. Saturday we were greeted with a Powhiri, and welcomed by Region North, Taupo club and National Rep (NR) Annette Smith. We heard from Federation IPP Yvonne with an update on BIP, and Dr Teuila Percival, Paediatrician at Kidzfirst Children's Hospital, Auckland. We had presentations from two National rep candidates and National Project proposals. The afternoon session was devoted to workshops on Leadership, Programme and Membership. Saturday evening we were musically entertained and heard the most amazing singing toast to SI by a Soroptimister. An auction of the table decorations netted over \$400 for BIP.

The E theme continued Sunday morning with IPP Yvonne, Secretary Anne and Finance, Membership, Extension and Programme updates on SI and SISWP matters. Two Rotorua members shared information about a local BLSS recipient and a young parent their club had helped, and Kate Brady Keen shared her recent visit to CSW New York as one of the SISWP sponsored attendees. Her presentation was brilliant and her enthusiasm infectious.

We achieved all the needed business matters over the weekend, and the E word missing from above - EXHAUSTED. Thank you to all those exhausted but happy organizers and helpers.

**Annette Smith,
SINZ**



SI South Queensland Conference

Soroptimists from nine clubs gathered in the wonderful pristine Tamborine Mountains in the rainforest hinterland behind the Gold Coast. They elected Ralda Forzin President, were inspired by guest speakers and decided future directions for their Region.

Dr Genevive Nelson began the conference with an inspiring talk about *Lighting the Kokoda Track*, Cesarina Gigante gave an overview on UN Women, and then Jemima Edwards spoke on UN Young Women. President Ralda Forzin outlined a possible new project for SISQ Region, *Soroptimists Lighting the way for Climate and Justice*.

SI Beenleigh won the Best Practice Project for Walk the Talk, a march that gained coverage on television. Sponsored walkers raised \$3500. SI Toowoomba accepted the Extension Trophy for their club. Of their 20 members ten are under 50 years of age. Their numbers have doubled in the last two years!

Bev Ditton
SISQ

Photo above: SI South Queensland Executive,



Christine Johnstone, SI Beenleigh accepting the Florence Drury Award for Soroptimist of the year from Florence Drury,



AGM speaker on effects of violence

SI Victoria Region AGM, Saturday 16th March, was attended by members from 11 clubs. Guest speaker was Associate Professor Frances Thomson Salo. A/Prof. Salo works at the Royal Women's Hospital as a consultant infant mental health clinician, and at the Royal Children's Hospital as a senior child psychotherapist. She spoke on the effects of violence on women and how these acts affect the child and developing baby.

After the AGM the outgoing President, Anne Binkley thanked her team of the last two years, and then the new President, Sue Whitehead, presented Anne with flowers.

SI Victoria is organising the charter of a new club, SI Gippsland on Sunday, May 26th, and SWP President Siew Yong will attend the charter.

Maggie Mitchell
SI Victoria

Photo above: L to R. Anne Binkley, A/Prof Salo and Sue Whitehead



New President for NZ Central Region

Retiring SI New Zealand Central Region President Jane Stent (left) who has given two excellent years of leadership to our Region with new incoming President Lyn Stewart, SI Wellington for 2013- 2014.

Karen Eagles
SI New Plymouth, NZ Central



Hazel Dawn Butorac, OAM

26th January, Soroptimist Hazel Butorac was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division of the Australia Day 2013 Honours List. This was, for Hazel, the culmination of a lifetime of selfless service to the community in Western Australia.

The seeds of her well-developed community consciousness were sown while she was growing up in Fremantle as the second eldest of five children in the family of the well-known union leader Paddy Troy. Surrounded by brothers in an era that favoured the education and development of boys over their sisters, her parents did all they could to ensure that she received as much education as her brothers. "I grew up in the sort of environment where things were not always fair," she says. She quickly became aware of the injustices that overshadowed the lives of working men and women when her father's stand against unsafe work practices in the gold mines resulted in the loss of his job.

Hazel was raised in a household where she was encouraged to join community and service groups. Her community involvement and leadership grew through the years.

Hazel came to Soroptimist International in the early 1990s when she joined the SI Helena club and soon got heavily involved in their projects. Years later, she moved to Mandurah where there was no SI club at the time. However, she continued to represent SI in her involvement with Pat Thomas House (women's refuge).

Currently living in Mt Lawley, Hazel has reaffirmed her loyalty to SI by joining SI On The Terrace.

Jean Andersen
SI On the Terrace, WA

International Women's Day (IWD) March 8th



Above: Desley Scott MP, Wendy Lihou President, Lisa Bradley Logan Councillor.

SI Logan hosted a dinner to celebrate IWD and the handover to their new President Wendy Lihou. Guest Speakers on the night were Local Government Councillor Lisa Bradley, and the member for the state seat of Woodridge Desley Scott. Lisa Bradley spoke about her decision to give back to the community by standing for election as a Councillor. Desley Scott MP who is also a member of SI Logan spoke warmly about her love for the diversity of Logan, and was very optimistic that the discussions from the recent Logan Summit would develop into exciting outcomes for the region.

The incoming President Wendy Lihou spoke enthusiastically about the project, Soroptimists Empowering Women (SEW) which will involve education of women and girls in three countries. In New Guinea Maria Mijts will be overseeing the purchase of sewing machines for a high school in Kokopo, while in Sierra Leone Sallymatu Apooyin will oversee the education project there. The club will continue support for an orphanage - Hope for Himalayan Kids in Nepal.

So far this year we have held a garage sale and participated in Clean Up Australia. Sandra McNeil is again collecting winter clothes and blankets for the annual Winter Warmth Project for needy families. Wendy Lihou has begun organising the Year 10 Leadership Day for Girls in May.

Ann McFarlane
SI Logan, Sth Old



On 10th March, 2013, SI Brisbane Water celebrated their sixth annual IWD breakfast at the Reef Restaurant, Terrigal. Over 140 guests including Deborah O'Neill, Federal Member for Robertson, Councillor Bob Ward, Gosford City Deputy Mayor and Councillor Vicki Scott enjoyed a delightful breakfast overlooking the ocean.

Emily Caska, Executive Officer at Lifestyle Solutions, was our guest speaker. She spoke on the history and future of the disability sector, gender-based violence and how women have led the campaign for a National Disability Insurance Scheme. Over \$40 billion is saved every year by the role of 2.9 million unpaid carers.

Among the younger guests (pictured above) were six students from three local secondary schools, St Josephs Catholic College, Erina High School, and Central Coast Grammar School all sponsored by SI Brisbane Water. Funds raised from this event will support the work of Wheeling and Able, a local self funded charity supporting children with chronic physical disabilities, and SI Education projects.

Bronwyn Ward
SI Brisbane Water, NSW



Above: Diane, Chris, her special friend, Soroptimist Sallymatu from Sierra Leone, and our club treasurer Caryl collecting gold coins for the balloon popping game to obliterate violence and oppression of women and girls

Last Saturday, 2nd March our club hosted an amazing Healthy, Wealthy and Wise "Be Inspired" Forum to bring together local women to celebrate IWD. Our keynote speakers were passionate and thought provoking and we all shouted together that Enough is Enough: End Violence Against Women.

A special presentation of a cheque for \$884.50 was given to our club by Diane Mitchell, owner of Blue Mango Hair Dressing Salon at Woody Point. Diane came to our local public screening of Trafficked – The Reckoning last November (16 days of Activism) and was so in awe of what Soroptimist members and their partners are doing to raise awareness of human trafficking and violence against women that she decided that she wanted to help and encouraged all her clients and friends to join her.

We are hoping that Diane will become an active member or a corporate sponsor of SI Moreton North.

Chris Knight
SI Moreton Bay, Sth Old

International Women's Day events continued:



On the 6th March SI Benalla assisted Benalla Community Health with setting up for their IWD breakfast. The committee invited girls from the local secondary schools to attend. These girls are sponsored by local businesses.

Our latest member, Jane Metcalfe, joined SI Benalla members (seen in the photo left) to enjoy the smorgesbord while we listened to the guest speaker, Mary Crooks. Mary is a member of the Victorian Women's Trust and a bastion of women's rights in Australia. She spoke at length on the journey Australian women have taken from obtaining the right to vote to finally achieving a woman as Prime Minister.

Janet Gourley
SI Benalla, Victoria



Friday March 8th and SI Shepparton held their annual IWD breakfast at the Parklake. A large crowd of women of all ages enjoyed a yummy breakfast whilst they listened to the two guest speakers.

Firstly we heard from Elizabeth Redman who grew up in Shepparton. She spoke of her life in general and of her work in psychology. She told us that exercise is more use than doing crosswords to ward off dementia. Our second speaker, Jan Dean, is a radio presenter on the ABC and the MC, Anne, conducted a Q&A style interview with her, which was very entertaining. There followed the raffle draw and the presentations to the speakers, and as most attending had to work there was a general exit for the door after a most enjoyable IWD.

Lyn Bailey
SI Shepparton, Victoria



SI Hobart have been supporting Hobart Women's Shelter (HWS) for many years and recently the bond has been made stronger with the induction of HWS's Executive Officer, Sabine Wagner as SI Hobart's newest member. SI Hobart and HWS are co-hosting events on special international days that highlight women's issues.

On Friday, March 8, 2013 at 5:30 pm SI Hobart and HWS organized a rally to commemorate IWD by joining hands across the Constitution Dock Bridge, Franklin Wharf, Hobart to raise awareness and encourage action in line with the United Nations theme for International Women's Day 2013

Julie Marsaban
SI Hobart, Tasmania



SI Toowoomba held their annual IWD celebration last Saturday afternoon (March 9th), assisted by representatives of WAGGGS. Members and friends met to hear an interesting address by Dannah

Shelling, co-ordinator of GAP House. Dannah alerted us to some of the statistics which illustrate that all is not ideal for many of Toowoomba's young women. Brittany, a current resident of GAP House also spoke to the group about the benefits she has gained from the GAP House programme. This programme aims to assist young women who need a stable environment and support in order to gain qualifications and to move into the adult world.

Estelle Dempster, Girl Guides Darling Downs Regional Leader, addressed the

group about Guiding and Scouting activities.

Following afternoon tea, SI Toowoomba President, Merryn Hodges presented this year's Jean Bryant Memorial Bursary to Amy Fraser. Amy comes from Yarraman, completed her schooling at Fairholme College in 2012, and is enrolling at QUT this year to study Interior Design and Architecture. Soroptimist members presented GAP House with a hedge trimmer which is needed for upkeep of their garden.

Patricia White-Davison
SI Toowoomba, Sth Qld

Photo L to R: Dannah Shelling, GAP House coordinator; Amy Fraser, Jean Bryant Memorial Bursary winner; Merryn Hodges, President SI Toowoomba.

News from Clubs



Journey for SI Nadi

I joined SI Nadi in April 2012. As the western side of Fiji had been badly hit by two floods – one in January and the other in March, the region received donations in the form of cash and kind from the Fijian society based in Vanuatu and each affected club received a share from this. There were food packs and blankets which were distributed and cash was used for school fees for students. In the next few months two members resigned. so we were down to two. Given the responsibility of President Elect – I started looking for members and managed to get three girls on board in August.

After much thought we decided to go with the idea of doing a calendar – this would not only get us some funds for projects (via selling) and advertise the club! We sought sponsors and ordered the calendars. However, couldn't get the printouts on time as the country was struck by a cyclone. What a year. It started with a flood and ended with a hurricane.

The calendars were received early January and we started our distributions. We are grateful to SI Lautoka and SI Sigatoka who helped us by taking some calendars to sell on our behalf. The club was approached by a few people affected by the cyclone and with the balance of region/federation funds given to us prior to the cyclone, we bought them building materials. Another family whose house had burnt down in December also approached us and we provided them some kitchen utensils, linen and towels. We held our AGM on the 27th of January and are now looking forward to getting more members, doing more fundraising and taking up some projects in the months to come.

Zebra Rahiman
SI Nadi, Fiji

Above, 2013 members SI Nadi



Funds for scholarship

SI Benalla held a very successful card luncheon on Wednesday March 6th at the home of Judy and Ken Bertalli. Benalla Soroptimists give an annual scholarship to a local year 12 girl who intends to take Tertiary studies in the following year. Thirty local women attended the card day, held as a fundraiser for this scholarship.

Patricia Thompson
SI Benalla, Victoria



Para West Young Mums Project

In October 2012 the SI Eastern Districts of Adelaide won the Premiers Community Service Awards in the Social inclusion Category for their project with Para West Young Mums. The club identified the need for assistance in encouraging teenage mums to complete their education in order to move towards future employment.

The club provided funds for a baby change and feeding room to ensure comfort and privacy for the students. As a follow up additional funds were allocated towards a much needed new examination table for the onsite midwife's clinic.

Louise Bruce
SI Eastern Districts of Adelaide, SA

Photo: left Louise Bruce from SI Eastern Districts and Nerida the midwife from Para west campus



Memorial at Mt Gambier

In January 2013 SI Mount Gambier held a memorial service for former member Margaret Burton. The ceremony was held in Carinya Gardens, the Mount Gambier Cemetery, with the dedication of a plaque on a seat in a rotunda in memory of Margaret, Christine Plunkett from SI Mount Gambier spoke of Margaret's dedicated life as a Soroptimist. Margaret, from 1983, held positions in club, region and Federation until she resigned from the Soroptimist club in 2003, and moved to Queensland for health reasons. Evonne Tyler from SISA spoke on behalf of SISA members of Margaret's achievements and contributions. The service was a moving tribute to her life and contribution to Soroptimism.

Margie Russon
SI Mt Gambier, SA



SI Nth Shore 38th Birthday

North Shore Club celebrated our 38th Birthday with a happy dinner gathering presided over by our incoming President Fay Wakeman. Jenny Harrison a member of Mairangi Bay Writers' Group entertained with an exciting talk on her latest book

The Lives of Alice Pothron illustrated with a slide show. Flowers were presented to our two founder members present, and also to Dr Kantha Soni who has reached the milestone anniversary of 40 years in Soroptimism.

Vivia Whitlock
SI North Shore, NZ



Gogos and girls

Members of our "Gogos and Girls" Project Committee ensured an inspirational start to 2013. The group presented an overview of the club's first international project. *Gogos and Girls* aims to support programmes for HIV affected people in Swaziland in partnership with the organisation Possible Dreams International. This is a non-profit organisation that helps rural and remote communities in Swaziland who are living in extreme poverty, malnutrition and endemic disease. The initial focus of the project is twofold. The first is to build a house for a Gogo (grandmother) to assist in housing AIDS affected orphans, and the second to provide scholarships for girls to complete their secondary education. The highlight of the evening was the Swazi inspired supper. The menu included bobotie, sosatie, avocado and peanut salad, sweet potato cakes with mango chutney, and banana and corn casserole

Sue Mulholland
SI Maylands, WA



Singapore Garden City walk

In support of the theme set for President's Day by SISWP President Siew Yong, Members of SI (Singapore) Garden City held their Walk-the-Talk event on 9 December 2013 at Singapore's new Gardens by the Bay opposite the Marina Bay Sands Resort. Our banner stating "Stop Violence against Women" attracted much attention from locals as well as tourists who asked us what it was about.

SISGC members had also travelled across the border to Johor in neighbouring Malaysia one week earlier on 2 December 2012 to join the Malaysian SI sisters in welcoming their walkers arriving from the north Malaysia on their way to Sabah in the east.

Triena Ong,
NR Singapore



Helping eliminate violence

SI Adelaide held an open meeting in November where our speaker was Dr Fiona Buchanan from Uni SA. Her topic was "How DV impacts on the relationships between mothers and their babies". We have planned another open meeting for November this year.

On November 18th SI Adelaide members sold White Ribbons in the Central Market. We've done this for several years. Later in November, some club members participated in the region Walk the Talk, organised by SI Torrens.

On November 25th, several Soroptimists from SISA attended the Adelaide White Ribbon Breakfast which has been held for the past 5 years. Our speaker this year was Andrew O'Keefe, Chair of the White Ribbon Foundation in Australia. He was an EXCELLENT speaker.

So, SI Adelaide had a full on month, last November raising awareness of the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Walk the Talk Campaign.

Pam Lacey
SI Adelaide, SA

Afia gives a White Ribbon transfer in the Central Market. White Ribbon Ambassador Tod in the background



Australia comes to Coleambally

Region of Riverina held their Conference and AGM at Coleambally 8-10 March. Special guests included Annette Korzeba NR SI Australia, Dianne Lockwood Assistant Programme Director, SA, Berenice Ritchie SWP Programme Coordinator 4, WA, and

Florence Brennan past SWP Programme Coordinator, WA. Six out of seven clubs attended our weekend of friendship and informative presentations. Outgoing President Janet Mills passed on the chain of office to Louise Miller from SI Griffith. Thanks to SI Coleambally for a great weekend.

Louise Miller
SI Griffith, Riverina



SI Nelson and SI Waimea combined for a Walk the Talk event. Joy Oakly, SI Nelson coordinated the event which we felt was very successful.

Sheryl Waterhouse
SI NZ South



President's visit

The SWP President's five day visit to Fiji this month was very motivating for the SI members in this country. Various activities were organized to take full advantage of her visit.

The first official function for President Siew Yong was the opening of the Water project at Lololo Primary School in Drasa. This project was carried out by SI Lautoka which was kindly funded by SI Port Hedland, WA. Located in the

interior of Lautoka 11 kilometres from the main road, the Lololo Primary School still has no access to the government water supply. Now through the work of SI Lautoka club and SI Port Hedland the school and the community

has finally a regular access to clean drinking water. The President visited SI Ba's Shady Cool Enterprises Project in Namasau where single mothers are taught skills to become self sufficient. She took time to visit SI Lautoka's landmark kitchen and dining project at the Golden Age Home.

President Siew Yong also visited SI Sigatoka and Suva clubs.

During her Suva visit she met with the Director of Women's Crisis Centre Ms Shamima Ali to form an important collaboration for future activities and projects. On the last day of her visit she held an information session for the students of Votualevu College (*see below*) on the current issue of Gender violence. She came to inspire and left heartened to see the tremendous work being done by NGO's in this country.

**Zareena Bi
SI Fiji**



SI Canberra celebrates with two astounding projects

2013 is the 100th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone for the Australian capital city, Canberra, and the city is celebrating. SI Canberra was keen to be recognised in some substantial ways during the celebrations, and planned to have two major projects undertaken. These have now come to pass and both will ensure that the name of Soroptimism and the work we do is remembered in the nation's capital.

'Women who made Canberra' - exhibition at Canberra Museum and Gallery

The exhibition features SI members from the past, as well as research done by SI members. Rosemary Follett, former Chief Minister, opened the exhibition and SI Canberra, and particularly Jane

Lesley Lawson Pres E NSW, Carolyn Hudson PE SWP

Shelling, were recognised for their input. The exhibition continues into March. President SI Canberra, Jane Shelling, is speaking at one of the public events associated with the exhibition.

Soroptimist Point

On Saturday 16 February, Soroptimist Point was named, at Yerrabi Ponds, Gungahlin, a northern suburb of Canberra. It is with pride we have Soroptimist Point established in recognition of SI Canberra, and other women's organisations, acknowledged in plaques upon the wall. These include: Girl Guides, YWCA, National Council of Women, Women with Disabilities and Zonta. This marks their contribution to the Canberra Community.

**Sally Milner
SI Canberra, ACT**

Maureen Keating, Jane Shelling, Ella Rosso



SI Bayside 30th Anniversary

SI Bayside recently celebrated 30 years and five of the original charter members attended the evening celebrations. After a traditional Japanese welcome from SI Bayside President, Hisako Bucknall, charter members, Ralda Forzin and Eileen Mitchell, took the audience through a nostalgic journey following the work of SI Redlands, and subsequently SI Bayside, over the years since 1983.

Redland City Councillor and member of SI Bayside, Wendy Boglary, then spoke of the work done by volunteers. Redland City Council Mayor, Karen Williams, proposed the toast to SI Bayside. To conclude the evening, Regional President, SISQ, Maree Lubach, responded to the toast.

**Catherine Heiner
SI Bayside, Sth Qld**

Above L/R Bev Ditton, Robyn Annea-Walker, Eileen Mitchell, Karen Williams, Ralda Forzin, Jocelyn Jenkinson