

**Countries of the South
West Pacific Federation:**

- Australia
- Cambodia
- Fijian Islands
- Hong Kong SAR
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- New Zealand
- Papua New Guinea
- Samoa
- Singapore
- Solomon Islands
- Thailand

**SOROPTIMIST
INTERNATIONAL**



BIRTHING IN THE PACIFIC



Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific

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PRESIDENT-ELECT: Siew Yong Gnanalingam
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SISWP Conference Reminder!!!

Early Bird Conference Registrations close on Feb 4th 2012. Make sure you are in time to "catch the worm" and get the early bird reduced fee.

Registrations are rolling in and we are very pleased with the response to date. We are thrilled to have received registrations from clubs from other Federations (Ireland, Wales, Germany, and Canada) as well as SI President Alice Wells from USA. It will be wonderful to have these Soroptimist Sisters with us to share our conference days.

The Friday Friendship evening promises to be something special – and unique to New Zealand. Saturday afternoon workshops consists of smaller groups getting together to discuss programme and training opportunities (ranging from social media, and running meetings with diverse personalities to learning more about successful projects focusing on girls and programme goals set by SI.) The incoming board will have an intensive training and team building session in readiness for the new biennium. The finale will be our celebration dinner and change of insignia on Sunday 6 May.

We are pleased to be able to offer a balance of business, full conference presentations, workshops and celebrations.

Again we would like to reassure you that we start the conference on the western side of Christchurch, the area least affected by the earthquakes. My son and his young family live there safely.

The registration pack is on the front page of the website. Or write to us and we will forward the pack.

Remember, the train journey is where the conference starts so come on along with us and enjoy the ride. See you on the station on the 4th May.

Christine
Conference Chair
swpconferencechair@siswp.org

The deadline for the May SISWP Magazine is 25th March 2012.

The theme will be:
Celebration!

THE SOROPTIMIST -SWP The Magazine of SISWP



My mother, Lorna Brown, presenting me with my Charter Soroptimist badge, May 1985. She was President SI Victoria, at the time.

From the Editor

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Front cover background photo: Papua New Guinea dancers. Port Moresby Hospital Maternity ward photos relating to Birthing in the Pacific.

What are your strongest memories of Soroptimist International? SWP is putting together a booklet of our last 75 years and we must all have something memorable to record. Most of us will have recent memories for not too many of us can think back to being a member in 1937.

My mother was a Soroptimist 17 years before I joined and I met so many women from all four Federations because of her hospitality which was known world-wide. She lived on a farm in the Australian country-side and who could resist a visit away from the bustle of a capital city. Especially as her cooking was legendary.

Visitors would arrive by train or car to be collected and taken out to the farm to eat and relax, with no pressure for a couple of days. Often they were Grant of Friendship recipients, but sometimes just friends of friends hearing about her through word of mouth.

So many amusing stories of little incidents which occurred, so many photographs of Soroptimists that came and their daughters who followed years later. A kalidescope of images that flit through my memory as I write.

We would love to read your memories in our booklet? Please send them to me by the 20th February 2012.

Kerry

Awful & Awesome

Many have looked back on the disasters of 2011 and shuddered. However while we have had serious natural disasters in our Federation, and the world, we have also seen the Soroptimist spirit at its best.

Both "awful" and "awesome" are connected through the root word, "awe". Awe is an emotional response to objects, situations or events considered to be more powerful than us. It is comparable to wonder; a combination of surprise and fear and includes reverence and admiration. The definition of "awful" included "awesome" as an option we could use. The floods and earthquakes in the past year certainly provoked awe. Yesterday I visited Christchurch again – and yes, I had a strong emotional response to the devastation that had occurred last year, despite regular visits to family. I also felt awe at the human spirit, the perseverance, and the kindness shown within the community. Neighbours helping each other, university students who mobilized their peers through social media to dig out liquefaction, the farmers who rallied with their equipment to do the same.

I believe that now is the time we stand by our communities to transform the lives of vulnerable women and girls. We will be holding our 2012 SISWP Board meeting in Christchurch (2 – 3 May) prior to the Conference of clubs (4 – 6 May). We will meet in the west side of the city near the airport. Here the ground is stable and a different world to the eastern suburbs where the land is soft and plagued by liquefaction or the central city where historic buildings have tumbled. My mother lives safely in the west; my stepmother has lost her home twice in the east.

I am humbled by the generosity of Soroptimists from around the world who have supported those in need in the battered city. SI Christchurch is steadily doing an excellent job lightening the load of those around them, while they also contend with their own personal challenges. This dedication is truly "awesome".

I often think about the response from Lucy Heffern, SI Jakarta (aged under 30) to my question "Why are you a Soroptimist?" Her response was "the depth of programme". That response

was like a light being turned on for me: "The **DEPTH** of programme". Many have responded that friendship and programme of service is why they joined and stay. However to be truly inspiring it is the depth, the meaningfulness, the amazing impact, the transforming power of the projects that raises our programme to being awesome.

In 2011 the Soroptimist International Board adopted the programme goals for the next four years. Our first goal is to "improve" the lives of women and girls. I think with the awesome energy we can muster by working together we can still "transform" the lives of our vulnerable sisters, and empower our girls to reach their potential. We can only do this if we are active.

Programme Goals for the quadrennium 2011-2015.

Goal 1: SI will improve the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment or enabling opportunities.

Objectives:

1. Increase access to formal and non-formal learning opportunities.

2. Improve access to economic empowerment and sustainable opportunities for the employment of women.

3. Eliminate violence against women and girls and ensure women's participation in conflict resolution.

4. Ensure women and girls have food security and access to highest attainable standard of health care.

5. Address the specific needs of women and girls by improving environmental sustainability, and mitigating effects of climate change and disasters.

Goal 2: Soroptimist International will be a global voice for increasing access to education and leadership for women and girls.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen and increase SI's presence as an advocate at all levels.

2. Intensify activities and partnerships that raise the international profile and visibility of Soroptimist International.

3. Ensure that the foundation of SI's global advocacy is local and global project activity.



Yvonne receiving a shawl from SI Damansara President

Birthing in The Pacific

What could be a more fundamental right than to bring babies safely into the world and keep the mothers alive and well to bring up their children?

Our Federation project for **Birthing in The Pacific (BIP)** has the opportunity to make a huge difference at the most fundamental level in Papua New Guinea where the maternal mortality rate is truly awful. Programme Objectives 1 and 4 are being addressed in our project. BIP empowers midwives, village birth attendants and community health workers through education, and resources them with appropriate equipment so they are instrumental in reducing maternal mortality.

Our sisters in the other Federations will also embrace this mission through the SI President's 10 December Appeal. This Appeal will run for at least 12 months – and will provide us with extra funding to make a more consolidated difference. SI President Alice understands this need and has embraced the project because she sees a way to make an awesome difference. President Alice will be attending our SISWP conference. She will join us on the train from Christchurch to Greymouth where we will be inspired by the grandeur of the majestic scenery and the company of magnificent Soroptimists and partners

"Anybody Can Be Cool—But Awesome Takes Practice" Lorraine Peterson

2012 is the year to be awesome.

**Yvonne
President
SISWP**



Left: Robyn with SI Jakarta members and President Yvonne. Right: Robyn in her 'bling' in Singapore; and below Robyn with SI Damansara members, Yvonne and PE Siew Yong.

The PFR where clubs report specific projects is a key instrument to ensure SI can continue the above UN link.

Good projects make for good publicity. Try to use local publicity agencies to inform your community about your club work. Sometimes easier said than done but keep trying. Good publicity can lead to increased membership and greater recognition within the community to gain funds. Reporting wonderful project work can open up funding opportunities.

Programme – Why do we need to report what we do???

Towards the end of 2011, I did quite a lot of travelling and met with many members, especially in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. I was often asked to explain about our reporting system – so here goes. For those who believe they are very informed you don't have to read further - but you just might pick up something you didn't already know.

We have two major reporting procedures:

1. Programme Focus Reports: Can be entered at ANY time to describe project work - optional but essential to collate the Global Impact Report.

2. Club Annual Reports: Due by **October 1st** each year to report ALL the previous year's activities – not optional – required to ensure clubs are maintaining the mission and values set and agreed to when we become Soroptimists.

As we begin the New Year Soroptimist clubs around the world, not just in our Federation, are faced with a greater than ever need for their services in financially unstable times. It is becoming much harder to obtain outside funding for the projects we wish to pursue. "So what does Programme Reporting have to do with funding?" I hear you ask.

The Soroptimist International *Global Impact Report* is a great publication for all clubs to use as a lobbying means and is the basis for SI's reporting to the United Nations (UN) in order to maintain General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. (ECOSOC) The information in this report has been mainly collated from Programme Focus Reports (PFR) entered onto the international database by clubs.

The Federation Best Practice Awards are also decided by using information from the PFR's. Entry is by self-nomination and the award given at the Conference of Clubs. What a great publicity opportunity.

The *Club Programme Report*, in which clubs report all the activities they have done throughout the year in hands-on work, funding activities and awareness of issues for club and community members is the Federation's way of gaining extra information to add to the Global Impact Report. Clubs report by **October 1st** each year on what the club has achieved from the previous September to August. It is a good idea to keep a record of activities or add to club minutes so the information is easy to find when the dreaded call comes from the Programme Team. The form is always available from the SWP website when reporting time is near. This year the form will be revised to reflect the 2011-2015 Goals and Objectives.

Remember if you have any queries about programme reporting there are several people to contact.



Who are these people?

Region P/UN – most clubs fit in regions – do you know your Region P/UN?

Single club and smaller countries often use the National Representative as the programme/UN; Find out who your representative is.

Zone Coordinators – you need to know which zone your club is in – ask me or the Assistant PD's

Zone A – Di Lockwood (*Sandra Richards in 2012 post Conf*) – NZ North, NSW, North Qld, Fiji, Mongolia

Zone B – Helena Cheah – NZ Central, W Aust, Tas, Solomon Islands, Singapore, Hong Kong SAR

Zone C – Julie Marsaban – NZ South, Vic, South Qld, Samoa, Thailand, Cambodia
Zone D – Florence Brennan (*Berenice Ritchie in 2012 post conf*) – PNG, South Aust, Riverina, Malaysia, Indonesia.

Assistant PD – Theresa Lyford (Zones A&B) (*Di Lockwood in 2012 post conf*) Paula Siddle (Zones C&D)

Programme Director – Robyn Cain

As new Goals and Objectives were introduced at the Montreal Convention, clubs will need to use these for 2012

Reporting. The new online reporting form for PFR's reflects the new statements as will the 2012 Club Report.

Good reporting – tell the world – let's break records for PFR's this coming year.

Robyn Cain
Programme Director
SWP 2010 - 2012





the patients come from the remote areas in Mongolia. The parents of the children who are from the rural areas had no place to stay during the break between the sessions and therefore some of the parents were unable to allow the completion of the treatment of their children and stopped it half way. In most cases parents stayed with their children in one room to look after them which increased the risk of infection. The parents of the children needed a comfortable place to stay after treatment so they can support their children.

News from Mongolia

Our SI sisters celebrated a new year party with the blood cancer children. It was nice. Kids were really happy.

**Togsoo Sodnom
SI Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

The background information following has been supplied by SWP PP, Lorna Mead.

DATE: February 7, 2006, SI Ulaanbaatar
PROJECT TITLE: Aid to severely ill children (Parent's house)
FOCUS TOPIC: Supporting children infected with Leukemia at the Children's Hospital in Ulaanbaatar

As part of the continuing project "Aid to severely ill children", to support the children infected with leukemia at the Children's Hospital in Ulaanbaatar, SI Ulaanbaatar Club rebuilt the "Parent's House". The House, located at the National Research Center for Maternal and Child Health, has a capacity of 24 beds. The opening of the house was held on 23rd September, 2005.

In Mongolia there is only one center for children aged 0-18 with blood diseases. Approximately 30 children a month undergo treatment sessions which last from 20 days to 18 months. 60 to 70% of

In 2004 a group of German Soroptimists came to Mongolia and visited the Children's hospital. They saw the situation and the idea was born. SI Ulaanbaatar club negotiated with the local and hospital authorities and decided to rebuild a house which was in ruins. The money for the project which amounts 15 000 euros was donated by the SI German Union and clubs within the Union. The German clubs carried out different activities to earn the necessary amount of money by organizing bazaars, benefit concerts, flea markets, asking for money instead of birthday presents and lots more.

In co-operation with local companies in Mongolia the SI Ulaanbaatar club members delivered presents and food to 30 children at the hospital on the occasion of Children's Day in June, 2005. Within the above mentioned project the club has now furnished the kitchen and bathroom.

Thanks to the friendship with our German sisters SI Ulaanbaatar club was able to help people in need through the implementation of this project. Around 30 children and their carers benefit from this project every month.

Editor



Members of SI Ulaanbaatar with children and staff at the Hospital



Birthing in the Pacific (BIP)

The President's Appeal 2011, has generated world wide focus and interest to "Adopt a Midwife".

January 2012 priorities:-

- Collaborate with the Papua New Guinea Dept. of Health to implement the Community Health Worker Midwifery Skills Competency based programmes. These programmes will be run in PNG communities where the maternal mortality statistics are the worst.
- Acquire a safe, secure and accessible storage space for the project items awaiting distribution.
- Provide administration support and mentoring of the PNG Midwives Society.
- Acquire/purchase nail brushes and head lights to add to the "Karim Work Bilums"

**Janet Askern
Federation Project Manager**

Photo above: Entrance gate to Port Moresby Hospital Maternity Ward; below: PNG Soroptimists with President Yvonne





Malaysia plays host

SI Damansara's Agape Library (above) at Rawang welcomed President Yvonne, Programme Director Robyn Cain, SWP President-Elect Siew Yong and Region President Joanne Yeoh. The Agape Home is home to nearly 100 children most of whom are Myanmar refugees who spend

up to ten years in Malaysia before relocation to another country. They have no access to formal education in local schools. Damansara club has been involved with the Home for the last ten years providing grants for tuition, and monthly allowances for teachers.

The club has sponsored two Myanmar teachers from Agape for an introductory English Course at the British Council. SI Damansara embarked on a book collection and many well wishers donated books, magazines and other reading materials. The children sang a melody of songs for the visitors. This project was sponsored by JP Morgan Chase Foundation and the Library was officially opened by Mr Steve Clayton, Managing Director of JP Morgan Chase Bank in September 2011.

The President's visit coincided with the Festival of Lights 'Deepavali' and SI Damansara President Saradha and member Kala organised a dinner at the Temple of Fine Arts, where only vegetarian food is served. The visitors who were adorned in Indian Kurta tops were treated to typical Indian Cuisine. Members from other sister clubs joined in this festivity and there was an atmosphere of lit oil lamps and vibrant

Indian instrumental music pervading the hall. Speeches were made and our two guests from SWP were presented with beautiful shawls wrapped around them by President Saradha assisted by Kala, both of whom had prepared door gifts for all as they left.

Our visitors were keen to visit 'Little India' in all its glory as it was the season for shopping - clothes and Indian sweets and I took them to this area

millling with people where everyone was doing last minute shopping and Tamil and Hindi songs were blarring into the atmosphere. We escaped the crowds and went upstairs and they both managed to pick out lovely Indian outfits. We then



went downstairs where they picked sets of multi-coloured bangles for friends and children. The visitors were always on a tight schedule and we had to leave Little India.

Our visitors were guests of PE Siew Yong

Bangsar celebrates 19 years

SI Bangsar celebrated its 19th anniversary with a Motor Treasure Hunt, "Hunt with a Heart 2011" to raise funds for our Economic and Social Development Fund. SISWP President Yvonne Simpson, who was visiting Malaysia with SISWP Programme Director, Robyn Cain, was invited to join the Hunt.

After a breakfast of Nasi Lemak and fried "beehoon" (rice noodles), President

Yvonne, together with SI Bangsar President, Rohayah Ahmad and Din Merican, COO of Etiqa Insurance & Takaful, the main sponsor, flagged off the long line of cars before joining the hunt.

PD Robyn, SISWP PE Siew Yong Gnanalingam joined President Yvonne on the Hunt in a car driven by SIROM President Joanne Yeoh.

28 cars participated in the Hunt which began at Bangsar in Kuala Lumpur and ended in Kuala Selangor, a coastal town north of Selangor state.

For those not in the know, cars have to drive according to the distances given in the form of "tulips" where they have to get the answers to clues given. The team which gets the most correct answers wins. Each car can have a maximum of four occupants. Cars must arrive at the destination within the time given or be disqualified. All participants were given goody bags.

All 28 cars completed the Treasure Hunt. Everyone enjoyed afternoon tea at De Palma Hotel, Kuala Selangor whilst waiting for the results. Apart from the main prizes, there were lucky dips galore. Everyone went home with a gift, thanks to our various sponsors.

"Hunt with a Heart" 2011 raised RM15000.

Pheng Khoo SI Bangsar, Malaysia



Siew Yong, Yvonne and Robyn looking for answers to clues at one of the stops in Bangsar



Sarojini Harris (middle) with her "award for making a difference"- with Zareena Khan (left) and Suman Lal

of SI clubs in advocating cancer awareness in Fiji.

"Many initiatives and projects provided by government are successful in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, the private sector, and our development partners and the 40 years of successful

existence of Soroptimist International in Fiji is clear evidence of this work," she stressed.

Meanwhile, SI Suva won the award in the Health Category as well as the best practice award, while SI Sigatoka won the Environment, Social and Economic Development category. The awards for Education and Human Rights and Status of Women went to SI Ba and the International Goodwill award went to Rakiraki.

The CITY STAR Newspaper was awarded the Media Excellence award for providing extensive and valuable coverage to all the seven SI clubs in Fiji since the inception of the newspaper in May 2010.

In the individual awards, Sarojini Harris (National Rep for Fiji) was awarded the Selfless Service Award for serving SI Fiji since 1997 and Zareena Khan (SI Lautoka President, and President Elect Fiji Region) was awarded one for making a difference to SI Fiji.

The evening also saw induction of new members by various clubs.

**Zareena Khan
SI Fiji**

SI Ba members at the evening function



SI Lautoka facilitates scholarships

The generosity of an ex-Fiji Citizen's club in Melbourne, Australia, has resulted in a very timely and crucial assistance to more than 20 high school students around Viti Levu. The Fiji Melbourne Community Club Incorporation sent in a donation of FD \$2129.75 to SI Lautoka club to facilitate the distribution of these funds to the needy high school students around Fiji.

The funds were distributed towards the end of the school year which brought much relief to those needy students who were preparing to sit for their annual or external exams and also for some of those who were making their crucial transition from Primary to High School



SI Nadi members presenting scholarships to students at Sabeto College

SI Lautoka was able to identify the students and distribute the fees with the assistance of SI Suva, Sigatoka, Nadi, Ba and Rakiraki clubs.

The 20 students who have been assisted include both male and female and are from Indo-Fijian and Itakei origins. The degree of need, school results and family background were considered in the selection criteria. A portion of funds have also been set aside for needy students in Vanua Levu which will be administered at the beginning of the next school year.

This is the second time this year that the Fiji Melbourne Community Club has distributed school fees assistance to needy students through SI Lautoka. Earlier in the year 22 students were assisted through the kind assistance of the Melbourne Club and some other donors.

**Zareena Khan
SI Fiji**

all photos for this article are by the courtesy of CITY STAR Newspaper

SI Fiji 40th anniversary

The 40th Anniversary for SI Fiji started on a high note at the Hexagon International Hotel in Nadi on October 29th with the conference being opened by the Special Administrator for Nadi, Mr Aisea Tuidraki who commended SI Fiji for their efforts in assisting the unfortunate members of the society.

Mr Tuidraki congratulated SI Fiji for reaching the 40th milestone and stressed that women play a special role in nation building. He also specially acknowledged all the SI members from around Fiji for taking out time from their personal and professional schedules to carry out projects for the needy. The highlight of the opening session was the official launch of the SI Fiji 40th Anniversary Magazine by Mr Tuidraki.

Another guest speaker during the day was the Divisional Education Officer Western Mr Lorima Voravora who invited all SI clubs in Fiji to work in partnership with the Ministry to bring more quality to both formal and informal education. He highlighted that NGO's can play a vital role for the development of education in the country.

The day programme also included a business meeting of SI Fiji region and training on Extension and member development by Karen Eagles and Laurie Swift. The Conference culminated in the evening awards programme with clubs and individuals walking away with awards. The chief guest for the evening function, Fiji Cancer Society President Nirmala Nambiar acknowledged the support

President Yvonne "Goes West"

The acceptance of an invitation for SWP President Yvonne to visit Western Australia came with the challenge of "visiting all clubs, or as many as possible" and all within one week! For those of you unaware of the spread of our 17 clubs, they stretch as far as from Townsville to Deniliquin, or the length of New Zealand. Obviously driving was not going to be the way to go!

Yvonne flew into Perth on Monday 10 October and that same evening we headed off to Fremantle and a Cocktail Party attended by almost 100 members from all of the 12 metropolitan clubs as a belated Friendship Day event. The President's duties for the evening included drawing the winning ticket for the club's annual Quilt Raffle. The beautiful quilt prize is one of almost 800 made and donated so far, by quilters state-wide. These quilts are given by the club to some of the 4000 Foster children in WA, who have little or nothing to call their own as they are moved from one Foster home to another. The money raised will purchase more materials for future quilts.

The following day I drove Yvonne the 460 kms north to Geraldton via the Swan Valley and the coast, where we attended a club dinner and spent the night hosted by club Secretary and Federation Programme Zone Co-ordinator Florence

Brennan. The next day we returned to Perth via the inland route and saw some of the wildflowers for which our state is famous. (See wildflowers in pic below)

On Thursday morning we were picked up by Robyn Cain and met other members of Executive at the airport for our 2 hour flight to Port Hedland, where we had been invited to share in the festivities for their 40th Birthday. Despite the hour delay in departure (not Qantas), we landed just in time for our 'personalised' tour of the BHP Billiton iron ore handling plant. Here we learned about the processes of the huge iron ore export system, from the extra long (several kilometres) trains out of the mine sites to shipping berths at the port facilities, and all that happens in between.

We were then driven to SI Port Hedland member Jan's house on the beachfront, for an afternoon tea, with scones, jam and cream washed down by tea drunk from the "Royal Albert" set. Here we were joined by members of SI Karratha and Districts who had driven the 242 kms up the road to meet Yvonne and be part of the celebrations.

Later we attended meetings being held by the town council about the future directions of businesses in and around Port Hedland. We returned for a BBQ on the veranda, watching the lights of the huge bulk ships coming and going through the channel to the port.

Early Friday morning we met with Mayor Kelly Howlett at the beach. Kelly, a member of SIPH, and an environmental scientist, started the Turtle Protection Group along that coast. We had an informative walk along the beach looking at the fresh tracks from turtles that had come ashore the night before to lay their eggs. Over 1200 turtles return to

this beach each year, which is amazing considering it is in an urban area.

After breakfast at Jan's house we were off to the port, where we boarded a small pilot boat to have a tour of the harbour. This was another special event, not normally enjoyed by the public, and we were lucky enough to see a huge iron ore tanker enter the port, turn on it's length and be berthed at one of the 7 wharves, all manoeuvred seemingly effortlessly by 4 tugs.

Following lunch, hosted by the Mayor at the Silver Star Café in town, we returned to our 'billets' to have a little rest and get ready for the big party. Guests that evening included prospective members of SI Port Hedland, supporters of the club, and partners. The manager of the Silver Star, a young SIPH member, entertained us with her beautiful singing. After eating delicious finger food, drinking the health of the club, and dancing under the stars, all Soroptimists received a wonderful "goody bag"! We flew back to Perth on Saturday morning, taking wonderful memories of a great two days.

On Sunday, my SI Helena Club assisted me in hosting Yvonne at an informal lunch at the Jane Brook Winery on a day when the mercury reached 38C! Thank goodness we were able to sit indoors. It again provided the opportunity for Yvonne to meet even more Soroptimists from clubs in the Perth area.

We are all delighted that Yvonne was able to spend some time in our region, meeting most of the 300 members, seeing some of the countryside and getting an idea of the distances involved for those in our country clubs. We thank her for coming to support us all.

Berenice Ritchie
SI Western Australia President



SI Port Hedland banner on the railway carriage at the Silver Star Cafe





Students empowered by speakers

Year 11 girls from local schools were amongst the audience of 160 guests at the recent SI Gold Coast "High Tea - Women's Voices" event. The aim of the event was to empower women and girls through inspirational speakers, to showcase SI and its programmes, and to raise awareness of issues that affect women, including family and domestic violence.

Three inspirational speakers captivated the guests with passionate and encouraging words urging the audience to aspire to make a difference in the world through their own energy, insight, self-belief and confidence.

Author and communicator, Karen Phillips, spoke of how she overcame a life-threatening accident, which motivated her to write her successful book "Women's Words of Wisdom, Power and Passion", which features 50 iconic Australian women. Tammy Hamawi is one of those '50 iconic women' and she spoke about attitude, passion and self-belief being essential elements for success in life. Donna Justo spoke

about the courage, hope and resilience of women and children affected by domestic violence, and how the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre (DVPC) provides support on the Gold Coast, which has the highest incidence of domestic violence in Queensland.

The theme of the occasion was Education and Leadership, and SI Gold Coast President, Janet James, urged the students, whose attendance had been sponsored by the club, to embrace their educational opportunities and go forward from their schooling with a vision, and to pursue it with confidence and passion.

The students' response to the occasion was one of great enthusiasm. Comments, such as those that follow, were indicative from all of them:

I left the room feeling uplifted and determined to make a difference within the world.

It was really encouraging to hear words of wisdom from woman from all walks of life who have struggled at one point or another. It creates hope that no matter what challenges you come across in life you can overcome them and achieve something incredible.

I particularly enjoyed the last speaker, Karen Phillips, as she used humour to communicate her ideas. She related humour back to the serious issues faced within the community, making her points memorable.

The truth is women are powerful. The High Tea event did more than just enrich the minds of the invited guests, but highlighted the importance of women in society.

The stories of the three speakers which touched and related to the gender appropriate audience, were refreshing and entertaining. Their influence

has resulted in me taking a new approach to life, through the means of acknowledging the power I have over my own destiny.

Proceeds from the event resulted in a donation of \$2,000 presented to Donna Justo, Director of DVPC, to help fund legal resources for their clients. As well, the donation assisted with expenses for its annual "Purple Tent Event" held during the 16 days of activism to end violence against women in November. It was an uplifting occasion for women experiencing domestic violence – a day of relaxation, pamper treatments, self-defence classes, yoga, zumba, music and dancing - and so much more! Many of the women had never been to an event with other women who had experienced domestic violence so, as you can imagine, emotions were high.

The "High Tea - Women's Voices" was very well supported by Gold Coast businesses and artisans, which enabled wonderful raffle prizes and gift bags. One member designed and created a fabulous wall hanging as one of the prizes. Somerville Funerals Gold Coast donated the flowers for presentation to the speakers. The tables were decorated with fresh begonias grown especially from seedlings for the event in attractive terracotta pots by one member – an inexpensive way to add colour to the room. These were then sold off at the end of the event – not one pot was left!

Janet James
SI Gold Coast Inc, Sth QLD

Photo: Tweed/Gold Coast Lindisfarne Anglican College Year 11 students (L to R) Julia Walker and Saffron King

New Plymouth supports Birthing in the Pacific



New Plymouth collecting \$150 for the Birthing in the Pacific December 10th SI President's Appeal meeting, **Karen Eagles, SI New Plymouth, New Zealand**



International support

Ellen Crocker, SI Benalla and Kristina Petersen from Funen, Denmark attended a film night organised by SI Benalla, and supported by Benalla Rotary and Lions, to raise funds for the African Famine relief. The film was "Red Dog" which gave Kristina a glimpse of Port Hedland and the Australian outback.



an actual cleft palate operation carried out by SIJ member, Karina, a plastic surgeon, who conducts hundreds of free operations annually for underprivileged girls and boys in the community.

SIJ's Founding President, Dr Martha Tilaar, the owner of a major cosmetics factory in Jakarta,

employing hundreds of women, invited our guests to a tour of her factory on the last day of their visit. Over lunch Dr Martha explained how her company helps to improve work conditions for thousands of women across Indonesia, and provides basic skills training programs for women. Dr Martha also described her unique role as Indonesia's only female Ambassador of Human Rights.

On the evening before their departure for Singapore, President Yvonne and Programme Director Robyn were guests

of honour at an SIJ dinner, hosted and fully catered for by SIJ member, Lily Kasoem. Over a delicious "Master Chef" style dinner, SIJ members listened to an update on developments and programme work within SISWP, and engaged in discussions surrounding a number of topics including SI

A welcome from Jakarta

From 18 – 21 October, 2011, SI of Jakarta (SIJ) played host to President Yvonne and Programme Director Robyn visiting Jakarta for the first time. On the first day of their Jakarta program, SIJ President, Isla Winarto, accompanied our special guests to the Nurani Insani slum school in central Jakarta. Once a project partially funded by SIJ, Nurani Insani provides free schooling to street children from kindergarten to senior high school. The highlight of our visit was listening to a song sung by seven year old twins (who live with their single mum under a bridge in Jakarta).



A luncheon at the Jakarta Mercantile Club with SIJ Executive Committee members and Project Directors followed the school visit. Here Yvonne and Robyn were updated on SIJ's current and future projects, the recent Appreciative Inquiry session conducted by/for members, and SIJ's special focus on attracting younger members. In the afternoon, our special guests were able to witness first hand

membership, project ideas, challenges and plans for the future.

Isla Winarto

Right: Jennie Roberts SI Townsville After Five, Joy Morgan SI Townsville. Right of banner. Christine Ross SI Townsville, and one of the migrant women far right.

Beth's picnic

– a collaboration by SI Townsville, the Girl Guides and the Townsville Multicultural Support Group (TMSG).

On Sunday, 30 October, our club joined with these groups to honour our late member, Beth Bennett who died earlier this year as the oldest Cystic Fibrosis sufferer in Australia. Beth had lead our mentoring project with refugee women since its inception and we were delighted that she survived just long enough to learn of our Best practice Award.

On this occasion we transported 55 refugees from Bhutan, the Congo and Somalia to our own Soroptimist Park with the help of volunteer drivers and the RSL and Mission for Seamen buses. Here with twelve Soroptimists, the families joined in an afternoon of fun and fellowship. Some of the families had been here only three days and it was an opportunity to share the Australian way of life, and to enjoy the beach.

The Guides provided a range of equipment, a very popular parachute, balls and skipping ropes which people of all ages enjoyed. Our members provided a sumptuous afternoon tea and everyone enjoyed a treasure hunt. One of Beth's friends from Brisbane had made a wall quilt in her honour and we hung this from a tree in the centre of activities. This quilt will later be presented to TMSG to hang in their premises.

Our objective was to increase cultural understanding and to assist the refugee women in learning more about the Australian culture and seeing that there are no barriers to women taking a leadership role in a happy environment. We received great coverage from the press and the Newspapers in Education team is working on a story from the children's perspective.

Judy Hunter
SI Townsville, Nth QLD





NSW Tidy Towns Award for SI Griffith

At the NSW Tidy Towns awards ceremony held in Lithgow in November, SI Griffith was named a first placegetter in the Sustainable Communities Essential Energy Bush Spirit Award. This award was for SI Griffith's part in the SI Riverina Project, Women Walking 4 Water 4 Food. Following the nomination and initial selection process, two representatives of our club were invited to meet with the Tidy Towns assessor for a one hour discussion and evaluation of the project.

Griffith City Council and SI Griffith are both very proud to win this award. (The Region Project won both an SISWP and SI Best Practice Award in 2010).

**Will Mead
SI Griffith, Riverina**



Our SISWP Under 35 Co-ordinator Lucy Heffern is currently Secretary and ICT Liaison, SI Jakarta



Awards for Mount Gambier

SI Mount Gambier was recently presented with three Runner-Up prizes for the three projects they nominated for the Premier's Community Service Awards. The Mayoress' Family Fun Day was nominated in the Team Category, on behalf of all the Mount Gambier Service clubs involved in the Management Committee. The National United Against Domestic Violence: Engaging Men in Prevention Conference held 13-15 July this year was nominated in the Community Event category; and the Independent Living Skills Project which has been running for 5 years, received an award in the Youth category.

Tony Piccolo MP, Chairman of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Volunteering representing the Premier presented the Awards at a Presentation Dinner during Community Service Week in October. The Runner Up prizes comprised a certificate and a cheque for \$200.00. Soroptimists were represented at the dinner by their President Sonya Mezinec and Anna Spehr. "It was the first time our club had nominated projects for these Awards and it was great to get this recognition for the projects we nominated and are very proud of" said Sonya. "The Awards also recognise our partners in each of these projects and we are sharing these awards with them". The prize money will go towards continuing the work in these three project areas.

The Association of Community Service Organisations co-ordinate the Premier's Community Service Awards. These Organisations include Apex, Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, Soroptimist International and Zonta clubs in South Australia.

**Sonya Mezinec
SI Mount Gambier, SA**

Photo above: Anna Spher (left) and Sonya Mezinec SI Mount Gambier with Tony Piccolo MP,

Stevedoring Soroptimist

In October I travelled to SI Port Hedland to help celebrate their 40th Birthday. Port Hedland is a major iron ore crushing and exporting town approximately 1700 kms north of Perth. One of the surprises was to meet a Soroptimist living in Port Hedland who is also a stevedore on the waterfront. Janette Hartmann, standing just over 5 foot tall and of slim build is not your average wharfie and it is hard to believe that she is an integral part of the North West Mining Boom.

I asked Janette to tell me about her intriguing life loading and unloading the giant ships around the clock in this quintessential man's world.

"Becoming a stevedore in 2007 has been one of the most wonderful experiences in my life. At 47 I had only ever done office work or 'girlie jobs', so the change to outdoor, physical and shift work was quite a shock to the system!

As a stevedore we load copper into ships, send scrap metal overseas and unload project cargo for various minesites in the Pilbara. We also unload locomotives, rail line, ship loaders (very large ones) bulk bags of cement, accommodation units, ore cars and different items for new mines opening up in WA.

When I first started on the wharf there were 6 working berths, there are now 12 with 3 others nearing completion and plans for many more in process. It is just amazing to be in the hub of this massive development, and the sunrises and sunsets are the icing on the cake for this Queensland girl."

It just shows that Soroptimists can turn up in the most unlikely places, and we wish Janette all the best in her chosen career.

**Jennie van Driel
SI Western Australia**



Janette Hartmann with a ship berthed at Port Hedland



Open Heart/Open Door

Within the Soroptimist organization there is a Home Hospitality Programme of International Friendship. It is called "Open Heart/Open Door" and it began in Austria by Heidrun Konrad, 1995 and is now organised by a Dutch Soroptimist, Henny Knap-Go of Hilversum. The programme has various categories:- home hospitality for a visiting Soroptimist, to provide a Guide in a foreign city, to exchange houses for a holiday period or to take part in youth exchange. 407 Soroptimists offer hospitality in 44 countries from Albania to USA. One or two Soroptimists are preferred, or a Soroptimist and partner. Open heart/Open Door is part of Soroptimists bond of sisterhood around the world, and their belief in countries without borders. To take part in this programme a Soroptimist must register her willingness to offer hospitality to other Soroptimists for a few days if asked.

In June of this year my husband and I visited four Soroptimist homes through this programme; one in Northern Germany, two in Denmark and one in Northern Holland. We drove through Holland to Northern Germany to arrive at a peaceful holiday home on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Here we were greeted warmly by Stephanie and Kurt and later that evening after a walk along the shore we were joined by another Soroptimist from SI Kiel, Irmgard and her husband. Next day to Denmark where we met Ulla and Valda in Naestved on the Northern shores of the Baltic Sea. After a delicious

afternoon tea Ulla and Valda took us to their beach house where they gave us a box of groceries and the key and told us to make ourselves at home. We had the house to ourselves! Next morning two Soroptimists from SI Naestved took us to a famous glass works, where one of their club members is a designer. That evening we were entertained to a traditional Danish meal. The next day we drove north through Denmark to Royvig where Bente was waiting for us. Bente had a particular interest in archeology so we visited an exhibition of early bronze age treasures which had been unearthed by a farmer ploughing a field.

Our last visit was to Marijke in Leeuwarden in Northern Holland. Here I attended a fundraising Soroptimist high tea which was organized by the two Soroptimist clubs in Leeuwarden. Marijke took us on a tour of Friesland, the flat northern province of Holland famous for its 11 city skating race. One of the highlights of the visit was to see the special bridge which they skate under. (see photo above) Marijke herself has been involved in the organization.

It was a week of goodwill and acquiring a better understanding of our northern European sisters. To be made so welcome and to feel the warmth of sisterly hospitality was one of the highlights of our recent trip. To find out more about Open heart/Open Door contact: hkhknapgo@chello.nl

Jennie van Driel
SI Western Australia

Needy presentations

Before the SI Fiji 40th anniversary and conference, tours were organized for the International visitors which resulted in presentations to the Golden Age Home in Natabua and to the Treasure Home in Nadi, as well as visits to various other projects. The Resident Nurse and staff of Golden Age Home were pleased when they were presented with "Hudson Mask and Bag" for the residents by Adell Hobson, the President of SI New Plymouth. According to Merelisoni Daveta, the Resident Nurse at the Home, the Hudson Mask is a very important piece of equipment for revival.

"This equipment is extremely vital for emergency situations and we have been trying to secure one for the Home but have been unable to do so as it is so expensive. This is indeed a very important gift for the Home and we are very grateful to the SI members for this thoughtful gesture," Daveta informed.

According to Adell Hobson this equipment is a gift from her Company, Prespertian Support Services, which looks after the services for rest homes in New Zealand. Being a registered nurse and quality coordinator in the Company Adell understands the need for this equipment which can help save lives. (See photo below)

Apart from the Golden Age Home the visitors also toured other projects of SI Lautoka at the Sunshine Special School and Gandhi Bhawan Primary School. The visit in Sigatoka included the Sushila Wati Housing project, Cuvu Settlement Water project and the Sigatoka Special School where an overhead projector was donated to the school as partial donation by SI Sigatoka club.

Zareena Khan
SI Fiji

